

Cracked: *After Hours*, Why Sauron Is Secretly The Good Guy In 'Lord of the Rings', Describe and Analyse

**Series name:** Cracked: After Hours

**Episode name/number:** After Hours - Why Sauron Is Secretly The Good Guy In 'Lord Of The Rings'

Aesthetic	Narrative	Industrial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shot-reverse-shot</li> <li>● Medium shots to medium close ups - cuts from the medium shot to the medium close up when one of the characters says a one liner</li> <li>● All four characters are never on the screen at once, there is always a maximum of two</li> <li>● Soren and Daniel always look to the right of the screen, whereas Katie and Michael are looking to the right. This gives the illusion that the two are sitting opposite each other without giving an establishing shot</li> <li>● Cuts between the group's discussion and assisting visuals/audio</li> <li>● Episodes usually run from 8-12 minutes</li> <li>● The dialogue between the four characters is diegetic, which takes up most of the audio</li> <li>● When the video does the occasional cut to a scene from Lord Of The Rings, it sometimes includes the</li> </ul>	<p><u>Characters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Soren               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The 'cool' one of the group, most socially adept.</li> <li>○ This episode plays with his character type by showing his deep knowledge of Lord of the Rings, giving him a chance to play the nerdy side of the character</li> <li>○ This helps to develop him as more than the 'cool' one of the group.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Daniel               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The opposite of Soren                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Why they are in the same shot, sitting next to each other</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Completely socially inept but has a near infinite knowledge of all things popular culture</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Michael               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The 'weirdo' of the group</li> <li>○ Has a knowledge to match</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><u>Starring</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Daniel O'Brien</li> <li>● Michael Swaim</li> <li>● Soren Bowie</li> <li>● Katie Willert</li> </ul> <p><u>Crew</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Edited by Nick Rood</li> <li>● Animation by Jim Sass and Dilara Karabas</li> <li>● Written by Joshua Sargent</li> <li>● Directed by Adam Ganser</li> <li>● Filmed at Los Feliz Cafe in Los Feliz CA</li> <li>● Created by Jack O'Brien and Dan O'Brien</li> </ul> <p><u>Illustrators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Anthony Clark for Daniel</li> <li>● Starline Hodge for Katie</li> <li>● Winston Rowntree for Michael</li> <li>● Matt Barrs for Soren</li> </ul> <p><u>Equipment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1-2 cameras</li> <li>● 3 lights (3 point lighting)</li> <li>● Boom mic</li> </ul>

<p>audio from the scene, which is non-diegetic to the scene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The subtle whipping sound that assists the video slide when it switches between the diner scene and the Lord Of The Rings scenes is also non-diegetic</li> <li>• All dialogue audio is recorded live (no voiceover or added diegetic sound in post production)</li> <li>• Artificial light appearing to look natural to the setting (diner)</li> <li>• Standard 3 point lighting, nothing extraordinary to heavily stylize it</li> <li>• Both camera angles were possibly done with one single camera, but done in two takes, or done with two cameras in one take</li> </ul>	<p>most of the group yet is the member most likely to make a stupid comment/joke about sex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Katie <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The only female in the group of four</li> <li>○ Passionate about her arguments and social issues</li> <li>○ Usually the catalyst for continuing arguments</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Story Arc and Conflict</u>  As this is about the 60th episode released for the series, the fan base is aware of the formula of the show and so it opens with the group in the middle of a discussion at their regular table. The catalyst for the broader discussion is Katie's confusion concerning the One Ring from The Lord of the Rings. The story arc follows for the episode begins at the point where Katie presents the idea of the Ring being evil and Sauron being good and Sauren rejecting this idea because of his love for the narrative. Using arguments and systematically tackling discussion points in a rational, yet highly pointedly way, Katie convinces the others to see her point of view.</p> <p><u>Setting</u>  Unlike the majority of <i>After Hours</i> episodes, his one does not begin with an establishment shot of the diner the group is sitting in. They are eating dinner at this diner after work at their jobs at Cracked.com, referred to when</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tripod (camera always remains steady)</li> </ul>
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	<p>they discuss their jobs.</p> <p><u>Cause and Effect</u> The episode, and the entire series, is based off verbal conflict and so the presentation of an opposing view on a popular culture artefact, Katie's misunderstanding of LOTR, affects the flow of the conversation and keeps the narrative going through the character's different reactions, based on their own established personality traits.</p>	
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Analyse

Audience	Genre	Contextual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The subject matter of the video makes the target audience people who have watched and are a fan of the Lord of the Rings series</li> <li>● It's a common stereotype for Lord of the Rings fans to be classified as geeky</li> <li>● Geeks main space is the internet, and so a web series would most likely appeal to them</li> <li>● There is the occasional dark, or sexual humoured joke which renders the target audience to be of a relatively mature age (probably 15 onwards)</li> <li>● Shows will usually use character personality to appeal to different demographics</li> <li>● Soren's character appeals to those who are quite socially active, and more outgoing, but also have an interest in popular culture, and what people consider 'geeky'.</li> <li>● Katie's character appeals to those who are very passionate and knowledgeable about social issues</li> <li>● Daniel's character appeals to the slightly 'geekier' side, who are passionate about their personal interests</li> </ul>	<p><u>Style of Comedy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Alternative comedy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More in the subgenre of observational comedy</li> <li>○ Instead of everyday life observation, the comedy comes from placing that style of comedy into a fictionalised world                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ They apply real world problems such as economics, social classes to Middle Earth to create a sort of absurdist take on films and real life</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Character comedy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Each of the four characters are distilled into a four archetypes. Their personalities are distilled into a few traits and then exaggerated. The comedy stems from how they approach the topic through their recognisable traits.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Language and Themes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This episode of the series is focused on Lord of the Rings and so they use terminology from the fictional world. The ease of which they use these</li> </ul>	<p><u>Where to Find It</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Crack's Youtube channel               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Found at: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/Cracked">https://www.youtube.com/user/Cracked</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Crack's website               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Found at: <a href="http://www.cracked.com/">http://www.cracked.com/</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Recognition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In 2014, <i>After Hours</i> won a Webby Award for 'Best Writing' in the Online Film and Video category.</li> </ul> <p><u>Creating <i>After Hours</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The writers/creators/stars of the show have stated that <i>After Hours</i> is an attempt to bring Cracked articles into a video format. Keeping the subject matter and comedic tone consistent with their written pieces, and the company's brand, is core to the show. They have themselves, real life editors for Cracked, discussing the topics casually at a diner, 'after work hours', to ground the series and make it uniform with the website it is made for.</li> <li>● <u>Writing Process</u></li> <li>● The following is an excerpt from a profile of Cracked.com and more specifically, <i>After Hours</i> by Stated</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Michael's character appeals to those who have a slightly darker and inappropriate sense of humor</li></ul>	<p>terms shows their deep knowledge of the subject which in turn suggests the viewer holds similar knowledge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● By knowing their target audience are mainly people who have a deep interest in popular culture, the discussion reaches out to other fantasy films such as Harry Potter.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ By highlighting the fact that Lavender Brown was recast for a white women to play her in Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, the discussion starts to reveal problems with the Hollywood system, while also providing comedic commentary on both the real and fictional world.</li></ul></li></ul>	<p>Magazine.</p> <p><b>When writing <i>After Hours</i>, do you sit and have a conversation similar to the flow of an episode, or does one of you attempt to write the whole episode? What is the creative process?</b></p> <p>When we create a new episode, all the writers and the director, Justin Viar, will get in a room together and have a conversation where we come up with the seeds of the arguments you see in the final episode. The difference is that the episodes are about six minutes long, while the meeting is usually about three or four hours. Someone will either come in with a topic and three or four great arguments for it, or it will be as simple as someone saying, "I want to do an episode about vampires," and then we sit around pulling out the points we think are most interesting about the subject and arguing over them.</p> <p>Once we have the bare bones of an episode, usually the person who brought in the idea or who feels the most passionately about it will go off and write the episode based on what we discovered in the meeting. We'll usually try to match the arguments to the personality types in the scriptwriting process so we never end up in a situation where we think, "Well, that doesn't sound like something Michael would say." After that, we'll bring it back for another meeting and come up with more jokes and</p>
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