

AMAGI BEGINS

Written by
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Based on
The Life and Times of Ethan Schulteis

FIRST DRAFT - 05/19/2023
SECOND DRAFT - 05/26/2023

NOTE: The following video will be comprised of voiceover narration, short clips from Anime shows, with either stock footage or shot reenactment pieces peppered in. It will also be composed, either with a live composer we hire, or based on stock music we can use without ruffling any copyright feathers.

NEWS MONTAGE

Shots of article text, overlapping on-screen as different narrators read passages from the various articles about ETHAN SCHULTEIS. The text being read is highlighted on the screen.

NARRATOR 1 (V.O.)

In 2016, a stone's throw from Milwaukee, Ethan Schulteis—then a 14-year-old student from Central Wisconsin—made a life-altering decision. It was then that the YouTuber, who surpassed 1,000,000 subscribers and over 200 million views in August 2021, and achieved the platform's celebrated Gold Play Button, created his channel "The Amagi."

NARRATOR 2 (V.O.)

Ethan Schulteis has over 5 million subscribers combined on YouTube, with his most popular channels being TheAmagi, ChannelFrederator, and Cinematica. In 2021, he won the Best YouTube Channel award at the Anime Awards and has been recognized as a rising star.

NARRATOR 3

Today, "The Amagi" has more than 1.3 million subscribers and about 20 million views per month.

We cut to a clip of Ethan on the news.

CUT TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK.

ETHAN (V.O.)

How did a 20 year old kid from Wisconsin buy a house from anime? That's easy. I'll show you.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A computer monitor sits on a desk, illuminating the room around it.

On screen, a fresh browser.

The mouse moves. Search bar.

CUT TO:

COMPUTER SCREEN.

The computer screen now fills the entire frame.

We close up on the search bar.

Text is being typed into it, one letter at a time. It reads:
"www.YouTube.com/..."

We hear more being typed out but cannot see the URL.

ENTER.

A YouTube search results page pops up on screen.

Close up on the logo for "The Amagi."

The mouse hovers over it. CLICK.

The page opens and we BLAST in to clips from "Avatar: The Last Airbender," "Naruto," "Attack on Titan," "Dragonball Z," and "One Piece."

The clips are quick and flashy (NOTE: keeping each clip to 5 seconds each will help us avoid copyright issues) but also high octane and exhilarating. Pulsating, in and out. Over high-intensity music, we see fight sequences, running sequences, jumping, flying, car chases, Appa chases, swimming, screaming, laughing, yelling. It's a damn ride.

The clips and music crescendo as we FREEZE on Ang's face.

ETHAN (V.O.)

All you have to do is produce over
100 videos a week, amass over a
BILLION YouTube views, and that's
it. Simple as that. Well actually,
let me back up a bit.

Everything we just saw is now being reversed in high speed, like a tape rewinding. As it stops, we land back on a blank browser screen.

ETHAN (V.O.)

You're probably wondering, what's
going on? And hey, that's a valid
question.

The computer mouse travels to the top of the screen, and minimizes the YouTube page. As the web browser collapses, we reveal what was behind it - a Quicktime video of Ethan sitting at his desk and talking to the camera.

ETHAN

Hi. My name is Ethan Schulteis, and YouTube changed my life. But I'll get to that in a second. First, let me tell you how I got here.

Over nice, happy music, we see the computer mouse hover over a folder and click it. Hundreds of images pop up in a slideshow.

The last one to appear is an image of Ethan as a young boy, in Wisconsin.

ETHAN (V.O.)

I grew up in a small town, just north of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Next image; one of Ethan and his family. Over the following narration, we will continue with a photo montage of Ethan's childhood, participating in the following activities.

ETHAN (V.O.)

I've had many passions throughout my life; theater, boy scouts, baseball, soccer, track and field, cross-country, karate. But one hobby stood above the rest, YouTube.

The computer mouse clicks a link, throwing to a high-paced and quick-cutting montage of Ethan's early YouTube videos, namely the "Eat It Or Wear It Challenge" from Teen Pranksters.

EAT IT OR WEAR IT CHALLENGE - TEEN PRANKSTERS

EXT. YARD - DAY

Mason, Ethan, and Bobby sit at a table with a dozen paper bags.

ETHAN

Hello guys. Today we're doing the "Eat It Or Wear It" challenge.

Quick cuts to the following time code (generally).

CUT TO:

Bobby cracks a raw egg on the table and eats it. [00:59]

CUT TO:

Bobby cracks an egg on Ethan's head, followed by a slow-motion shot. [01:44]

CUT TO:

Mason dumps cottage cheese on Ethan's head. [01:42]

CUT TO:

Mason dumps tuna on Bobby's head. [05:28]

CUT TO:

Bobby eats a spoonful of dog food. [07:51]

CUT TO:

Bobby dumps dog food on Mason's head. [08:35]

CUT TO:

Ethan throws peaches at Mason. [10:11]

CUT TO:

Mason sprays whipped cream down Bobby's shirt and on Ethan's head. [11:25]

CUT TO:

Ethan dumps spaghetti-os on Mason's head, followed by a slow-motion shot. [14:10]

CUT TO:

Mason and Bobby dump canned chicken and whipped cream on Ethan. [16:10]

Over the above clips, Ethan says the following.

ETHAN (V.O.)

I was fascinated by it. But like I said - it was a hobby, nothing more. I didn't see myself making a profession out of it. I didn't even know you COULD do that.

(MORE)

ETHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

To me, it was a fun playground where my friends and I could do whatever made us laugh, upload it for others to see, and hopefully make them laugh too. So, that's exactly what we did.

We see the video upload page (circa 2015-ish). The progress bar quickly fills, hits 100%, and we're taken to the video page.

We close up on the VIEW COUNT ticker. It's at 0. We stay for a few beats.

It hits 1. Then 2. Then 3. Then starts to increase, into the dozens, before stopping at several dozen.

ETHAN (V.O.)

I wasn't getting a lot of views, but that's okay - at that point in my life, uploading to YouTube was just for me and my friends. It was fun, but in no way did it open my eyes to making a living off of YouTube. I actually wanted to make a living another way, because uploading funny videos of me and my friends to YouTube wasn't the only thing I spent my time doing. Another massive interest of mine was the thing that actually opened my eyes and led me to find my calling, and that eye-opening moment came from watching the "Avatar: The Last Airbender" DVDs.

Fade into a blank canvas, with a pen and marker.

ETHAN (V.O.)

Watching both this incredible show and the BTS footage on the DVDs over and over again helped me realize that making cartoons was somebody's JOB. And I have to say, as far as jobs go, what's cooler than making cartoons?

Cut to animation footage montage: old Walt Disney animation artists, drawing on canvases. We slowly progress through the ages. New footage of animators drawing on paper. Matt Groening drawing "The Simpsons." Early computer animators pointing and clicking away, working on Pixar films. Footage of Matt Stone and Trey Parker animating early "South Park" with cardboard cutouts.

Nick Park animating "Wallace and Gromit" and "Chicken Run." Laika Studios moving character models around while they make "ParaNorman" and "Coraline," frame-by-frame. BTS footage of "Avatar: The Last Airbender" being animated.

ETHAN (V.O.)

That was the moment where I decided that I wanted to be a cartoon showrunner. And at the ripe age of TWELVE, I pitched a series idea to a tiny and obscure company you've probably never heard of called Nickelodeon.

Cut to a shot of google search results for "NICKELODEON ADDRESS". In a google image search, we see an image of Nickelodeon's MASSIVE corporate offices in Los Angeles.

ETHAN (V.O.)

They never responded.

Old and new footage of animation students drawing characters, sitting in lectures halls at animation schools, and flipping pages back and forth as they animate frame by frame).

ETHAN (V.O.)

I wasn't gonna let one measly little media mega-conglomerate stop me, though. I was determined to make my dreams a reality. So, I took all of the birthday money and the Christmas money I had saved from over the years, pooled it together, and found an animation course.

Footage montage of piggy banks being SMASHED with a hammer in slow-motion. It's glorious.

ETHAN (V.O.)

Like I said, I was determined. I mean, come on, I spent all the money I had ever seen in my life on this course. And let me tell you, money well spent. The course was just what I needed.

Cut to slides from the PowerPoint montage, "Reasons Why I Need Animation Trainer," created by Ethan.

Cut to footage / images from Ethan's earliest animations, and maybe even footage of him learning how to animate, interspersed with stock footage of animators working on early stuff, without showing faces.

ETHAN (V.O.)

Over the course of that year, all of my free time was focused on the course. I dropped everything else, devoting my every waking moment to becoming an animator. At the end of that course, I had written, voiced, and animated the very first episode of my own show, "The Amagi."

We cut to footage from the pilot episode of Ethan's animated show, "The Amagi."

ETHAN (V.O.)

I uploaded it to YouTube and, well...

Triumphant and inspirational music swells as we see the 2015 / 2016-ish video upload page from before, with the progress bar humming away. When it hits 100%, we're again taken to the video page.

We close up on the VIEW COUNT ticker. It's at 0. Similar to before, we stay for a few beats.

It hits 1. Then 2. Then 3. Then rapidly starts to increase, teetering off at about 200 or 300. The music falters off.

ETHAN (V.O.)

...nothing really happened. I didn't understand. In my mind, the episode would go viral, Nickelodeon would see it, and they'd come crawling back, saying how sorry they were for not buying it last year, and dump tons and tons of cash in my lap. But it didn't go viral, Nickelodeon never called, and my lap was cashless. I was devastated. From that moment on, I hung up my pen and paper, so to speak, and decided not to continue with the series.

Cut to a FaceTime screen. It's not on an active call, just video on screen.

In the video viewfinder, we see Ethan's dark bedroom, with the blinds drawn, he lays curled up on the bed. He's depressed.

ETHAN (V.O.)

I was at a fork in the road. I had just spent all my time and money on the series, and I didn't really know what to do with my new found free time.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ethan wrapped in a blanket, sits at his desk, on the computer. He scrolls through the front page of YouTube.

ETHAN (V.O.)

I had given up on animation, but I wasn't ready to give up on YouTube. So, I decided to try a more traditional approach.

CUT TO:

COMPUTER SCREEN.

Footage montage of Ethan's early non-animation YouTube videos. Interviews, Top 10s, product reviews, news.

ETHAN (V.O.)

It's really not that hard to figure out what's gonna work on YouTube - you just have to follow two things; trends and views. So, that's what I did. I began posting the kind of stuff that seemed to be working for others. News, Top 10 videos, product reviews, interviews with minor celebrities. You name it. If it was working for someone on YouTube, I was gonna try to make it work for me.

Shot of Ethan's channel page. We close up on the subscriber count ticker, ticking up and up and up. Picking up speed and racking up subscriber count after subscriber count.

ETHAN (V.O.)

And ya know what, it kinda did! Slowly and surely, people were starting to tune in. And after half a dozen uploads, I hit my first major YouTube creator milestone...

We freeze on the sub count as it hits 10,000. Triumphant music plays in the background.

ETHAN (V.O.)
 ...10,000 Subs. I felt untouchable.
 But it wasn't for long. Up until
 now, I had been cruising down the
 YouTube road, but soon enough, I
 hit a nasty speed bump.

CUT TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK.

Ethan gulps.

ETHAN (V.O.)
 High School.

FADE IN:

EXT. REDACTED HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

We see a quicktime video shot of students trickling in and out of the entrance of REDACTED High School (we keep the name hidden by a tree branch).

ETHAN (V.O.)
 Yes, you heard that correctly.
 After all that work and dedication,
 it didn't change the fact that I
 was in High School, and that's not
 an easy thing to juggle when you're
 a full time YouTube creator. So I
 took a break from YouTube to focus
 on my studies. Plus, I got to enjoy
 some of my old hobbies again.
 Theater, track and field, cross
 country, forensics, bowling. I even
 picked up a new hobby; music.

Footage of Ethan performing in theater productions.

ETHAN (V.O.)
 I didn't know this at the time, but
 my new hobby was about to forever
 change how I used YouTube. I was
 starting to get good at playing
 music. So much so, that I decided
 to record myself covering songs I
 like, and uploading them.
 (MORE)

ETHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I did this two times, one video for
"Evermore" from "Beauty and the
Beast" and one video for "A Million
Dreams" from "The Greatest
Showman."

Back on the view count ticker. Going up. Going up. Going up.

ETHAN (V.O.)
The views were coming in. It was a
great feeling, and luckily, one I
had experienced before. But this
time, I had no idea where I was
about to go.

We zoom in closer as the views climb and climb and climb. We
finally land on 100,000.

ETHAN (V.O.)
My music videos had over 100,000
views. Both of them. I was floored.
But I was also a self conscious kid
in the throes of high school, so,
to save myself any potential
embarrassment from classmates, I
set the videos to private and took
another break.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK.

Text appears on screen, reading: **2019**

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Close up on Ethan's Netflix feed. He's clicking through
titles on the front page of Netflix.

ETHAN (V.O.)
One day, while browsing through
titles on Netflix, I stumbled upon
something huge.

He's cycling through a bunch of reality garbage; stuff like,
"Love is Blind," "Love is Deaf," "Love is Dead." (obviously
those last two are not real shows but could be funny little
easter eggs to see if people are paying attention to the
titles on screen)

Suddenly, he stops scrolling. He has landed on a title.

ETHAN (V.O.)
I was reacquainted with an old
friend.

Close up on the title he has selected - "Avatar: The Last
Airbender."

ETHAN (V.O.)
That's right, Avatar: The Last
Airbender was on Netflix. I had
owned the DVDs for years, but
still, there was something really
exciting about seeing this title
pop up on Netflix. It was that
moment that I decided to combine
the two things I was most
interested in, Avatar and YouTube,
and thus breathe new life into my
YouTube channel again. And whoever
came up with that phrase "third
time's a charm" couldn't have been
more right.

We see footage of Ethan's first video back, about
Lavabending.

ETHAN (V.O.)
My first video back from hiatus was
all about one of my favorite things
on "Avatar: The Last Airbender;"
and that's lavabending.

Cut to shots of "A:TLE" characters lavabending.

ETHAN (V.O.)
If you don't know what lavabending
is, I'd recommend first asking
yourself, "what am I doing? Why
haven't I watched the greatest show
of all time?" And second, I'd
recommend checking out the video.
It rules. And if you **DO** know what
lavabending is, you should ALSO
watch the video. Because, like I
said, it rules.

The view count ticker, going up and up and up and up and up.

ETHAN (V.O.)
I wasn't aware of this yet, but
"Avatar: The Last Airbender" was
riding a MASSIVE surge in
popularity since it was added to
Netflix, and my post was a
beautiful example of "right place,
right time."

The view counter stops at just over 1,000,000.

ETHAN (V.O.)
The video amassed over one MILLION
views, and that changed everything
for me. I was faced with a once-in-
a-lifetime opportunity, and I
wasn't going to squander it.

Shot of "The Amagi" uploads page, growing from a handful of
videos, to a dozen, to two dozen, to three dozen, to over a
hundred.

ETHAN (V.O.)
I uploaded over 150 Avatar: The
Last Airbender videos to my
channel, and proceeded to watch it
grow like crazy. It was amazing.
And that's when I realized, this
wasn't just a hobby. This was a
business. So, while the channel was
growing, so was my business.

Cut to a FaceTime shot of Jeremy waving to the camera and
smiling.

ETHAN (V.O.)
I hired Jeremy, my first employee.
He was a talented voice actor,
which really helped my output
speed. And not just that, but it
added a layer of professionalism to
my videos.

Cut to Ethan's YouTube channel page.

We close up on his subscriber count, frozen at "99,999."

In super slow motion, like an old clock with rotating
numbers, the sub count hits 100,000, as triumphant music
swells.

ETHAN (V.O.)

On June 28th, 2020, the same month I finished my Junior year of High School, "The Amagi" passed 100,000 subscribers. It was an honor to see my channel go from a fun hobby to a full-on successful operation. I even got a plaque!

Cut to Ethan holding the shiny silver 100K Subs Plaque.

ETHAN (V.O.)

My channel was experiencing some serious momentum, so I decided the best move was to hire a full time editor. Everything was moving in the right direction. That is, until the dip came.

Graphic of a chart, showing A:TLE views going down.

ETHAN (V.O.)

It was late 2020 when I started to notice the Avatar franchise losing popularity, so I made the decision to shift my focus towards a variety of subjects, to see what worked. Then, the flood doors blew off the hinges.

BLAST IN to short and intense clips from NARUTO.

ETHAN (V.O.)

Shortly after my shift, I posted a video about Naruto, titled "The Life of Kurama." To say the video blew up would be a grave understatement. It peaked at #22 on trending and garnered 17 million views. Suddenly, my mission was clear. From now on, I would treat the Naruto franchise like I had treated the Avatar franchise.

Back at the channel uploads page, again growing from a handful of videos, to a dozen, to two dozen, to three dozen, to over a hundred, this time Naruto instead of A:TLA.

ETHAN (V.O.)

Over the next few months, I posted over 100 Naruto videos to my channel, as well as an array of other topics, and I quickly reached 500,000 subscribers.

Similar to Jeremy, we cut to a FaceTime shot of each new employee, smiling and waving. NOTE: The frame is locked off and we rapidly cut them together the exact frame.

ETHAN (V.O.)

After 500K, I was able to bring on a team of voice actors, writers, and graphic designers. Most of them had come from a recently-acquired production company called Frederator Media. They had just restructured, letting go of their entire content creation team. Luckily, I was a big fan of their work and was excited to bring them over to my operation. I didn't think much of it at the time, but this was one of the most important business decisions of my career.

Shots of the Frederator Media channel, close ups on sub counts and view counts.

ETHAN (V.O.)

When I hit 1,000,000 subscribers in August of 2021, I received the kind of phone call I had been waiting for my whole life. Frederator Media wanted me to run their flagship channels. They were impressed with what I had done with The Amagi! Plus, they liked that my team was made up of most of their former employees. All that was left to do now was hammer out the details and I'd get to run a killer channel I loved. Plus, it was massive. Like, double-the-amount-of-subscribers-I-had massive. The opportunity was at my front door, and wasn't going to let anything get in the way.

The music crescendos as we...

CUT TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

COMPUTER SCREEN.

A blank computer desktop.

Cut to a close up of the email app. DING. "1 new message."

The mouse hovers over it and clicks, opening up an email that reads:

"Ethan,

There's something you need to see. Check this out and give me a call."

At the bottom of the message, there's a link. A YouTube link.

One of Ethan's videos from "The Amagi" channel plays on screen, although there's something different about it. All of Ethan's videos are in English. And this one's not. It's in Hindi.

We zoom in on the channel logo below the video - it's not from "The Amagi" official channel. It's from a channel that looks just like it, called something else.

ETHAN (V.O.)

My managers informed me that there was a YouTube channel, ripping content off of mine and re-uploading it in Hindi to their own. Now, this isn't super uncommon in the YouTube world, so when that happens, the first thing you want to do is claim the videos. Soon enough, the creator of "The Amagi Hindi" reached out, begging me not to delete their channel. I told him I would never dream of doing that, I only wanted to claim the videos that had been ripped from my channel. Videos that I had made. After some thought, I decided to acquire "The Amagi Hindi" channel and even hired the man who started it, where I was able to pay him even more than he was making from uploads. He agreed, and we quickly re-branded.

Cut to the "Life of Kashin Koki in Hindi" video, playing on screen.

ETHAN (V.O.)

On September 23, 2021, we launched our first video under the re-brand, titled "Life of Kashin Koki in Hindi." All had been fixed and everything was smooth sailing from this point on...or at least, I thought it was.

We cut to an image of Ethan shaking hands with Finn from "Adventure Time."

ETHAN (V.O.)

Frederator Media and I hammered out some details and on October 2nd, the announcement was made. I would be running their flagship "ChannelFrederator." I was absolutely thrilled and wasted no time, uploading a video to their channel the next day.

Once again, we cut to the channel upload page. Progress bar humming away. It hits 100% as we fade out.

CUT TO:

ETHAN (V.O.)

It reached 300,000 views in two months. Then before we could look up, we had added 100,000 new subscribers to the channel, with several of our uploads going viral with millions of views. Things were going great for my original "The Amagi" channel, for the Frederator channel, and for "The Amagi Hindi," which was rapidly growing to hundreds of thousands of subscribers. In February 2022, I made a discovery that I wish wasn't true.

Cut to "The Amagi Hindi" copycat channel, steadily growing subs and views. Moody and dark music trickles in.

ETHAN (V.O.)

The guy I had hired to run "The Amagi Hindi," the creator of the first copycat channel my managers had discovered, was again ripping the new videos, the ones I had paid him to create, and uploading them to his own channel days before ours. And to make matters worse, he was constantly hitting me up for more and more money, despite the higher salary I was paying him. I was starting to see that this guy was very untrustworthy, and I quickly shut down the channel.

(MORE)

ETHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Some people suggested I take action against his personal channel, which now had close to 70,000 subscribers, but I decided to leave it be. I had a lot of good stuff going for me and I didn't want anything to get in the way. So leave it be I did and from then on, I focused only on "The Amagi" and "ChannelFredator." And I gotta say, they were KILLING it.

Cut to the channels "Cinematica" and "The Leaderboard."

ETHAN (V.O.)

The "ChannelFrederator" team was so happy with the success under my guard that they asked me to run another one of their channels, "Cinematica," focusing on live action TV and film, with hundreds of thousands of subscribers. Then, another one. This time, a gaming channel called "The Leaderboard," with 1.5 MILLION subscribers.

Cut to images and / or video of Ethan receiving the award from YouTube.

ETHAN (V.O.)

I even received a special custom award from YouTube, for amassing over 1 billion views across all my channels. I'm 20 years old, and I'm the owner of Amagi Publishing, a video production company founded by me and my team. We produce over 100 videos a week. We have 6 million subscribers. And as I mentioned before, we have 1.5 BILLION views.

CUT TO:

INT. ETHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Same as before, we cut to a Quicktime video of Ethan sitting at his desk, speaking to the camera. For the first time since the beginning, he speaks directly to the camera.

ETHAN (V.O.)

I'm about to say something that I'm very proud of, so here it is.

(MORE)

ETHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Last spring, at the age of 19 years old, I bought a house for myself. Because of YouTube. YouTube did this. And so did you guys. I couldn't have done it without you, so if you want to keep hanging out, go and click that red bu - actually, wait, there's one more thing.

Ethan shuts his laptop, the camera shot falls forwards with the screen closing.

INT. ETHAN'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ethan at his desk, speaking to the camera, as his computer behind him has "The Amagi Hindi" channel up on screen. **This is the first time we are seeing Ethan not in the screen.**

ETHAN

Last month I noticed something...kind of interesting. The channel I had shut down, "The Amagi Hindi," was still growing. I haven't touched it in a year, and somehow I've doubled in size to 200,000 subscribers. SO, you're the first people I've told, but I'm gonna relaunch it. I don't have the details right now, but I will soon. Stay tuned for that. And check back here every week. There's gonna be a lot of cool stuff coming outta this channel, so you're gonna wanna stay up. I'm Ethan. See you soon.

CUT TO BLACK.

END