

CANADIAN

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SCREENWRITER

FILM | TELEVISION | RADIO | DIGITAL MEDIA

Post War Period Piece
Frankie Drake:
Savvy Dames Against
1920s Underworld

Letterkenny Has
No Problems
Not-So Pastoral
Comedy

The WGC
Screenwriting Awards
The Winners And
The Night

Little Dog

A Mixed Breed
Comedy-Drama
Packs A Punch

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New Benchmark

A recent report by GroupM highlighted the new benchmark in media consumption, noting global consumers will spend 9.73 hours on devouring media each day. This is a modest increase over the previous year, but the real news was how online media eclipsed television: 3.69 hours for online vs. 3.63 for television. The other couple of hours apparently is tied up with radio and newspapers. GroupM is the leading media investment management company for WPP, a British multi-national advertising and public relations company — one of the world's biggest, apparently.

Our magazine is still much heavier on content made for traditional television and OTT services like Netflix and Hulu, but of course we're also following the success of shows that start life as webseries.

For example, in this issue, we look at *Letterkenny* and in a sidebar, examine the successes of *Carmilla* and *The Beaverton*. All have firm digital roots. Our out-going president has been very successful with webseries, breaking ground with her children's series *Ruby Skye P.I.* and *Weirdwood Manor*.

Letterkenny is the latest big success. Heck, they're even getting alcohol products linked into the series. That's big time!

Of course, the internet offers a wider array of entertainment than television and it has become the multi-thousand channel universe we heard about in the 1990s. Traditional television just didn't seem to have the ability to nurture a thousand channels. But the inexpensive nature of launching a webseries allows almost anyone to offer anything to the world. And when you have a world available, well, there's going to be some sort of an audience. And sometimes that audience is bigger than you might think.

So the internet is proving to be a petri dish for creativity. You can sift through zillions of hours of misfires and masterpieces and get something out of either. Whether it is worth those irretrievable minutes spent watching (I'm looking at you, cat videos), well, that's up to you.

But for writers, while unproven genius and talent would have a tough time getting a new show on the sked for traditional and OTT services, almost anyone can launch a webseries with a cellphone camera.

It's still true that the money for scripted series is funneled mostly into television shows, wherever they appear. And the OTT services — with their binge-watching audiences and the ability to accommodate shows of different lengths — may offer more flexibility and creative challenges for writers.

But the internet is a wildly entertaining sideshow that has suddenly found itself sometimes out-attracting the big tent of the circus. These are promising times for well-established and new, untapped writers alike. A wider, more available venue and a diversity of voices, while at times unsettling, is ultimately freeing and satisfying.

It can't help but breathe new life into television and all other media as well. And that is a good thing.

— Tom Villemaire

Summer 2018

Katherine Brodsky is a Vancouver-based writer who has written for *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *Variety*, *Esquire*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and even *Playboy Magazine*. She has interviewed a diverse range of intriguing personalities including Oscar, Emmy, Tony, Pulitzer, and Nobel prize winners. Sometimes she writes scripts, too. Find her on Twitter @mysteriouskat

For over 15 years, **Greg David** was a television critic for *TV Guide Canada*, the country's most trusted source for TV news. A former member of the Television Critics Association, he currently runs TV, eh?, a website devoted to covering the Canadian television industry.

Mark Dillon is a Toronto-based freelance journalist and former editor of *Playback* magazine. He is author of the award-winning *Fifty Sides of The Beach Boys*.

Matthew Hays is a Montreal-based writer, author, and university and college instructor. His articles have appeared in the *Globe and Mail*, *The New York Times*, *Macleans*, *The Toronto Star* and many others. His book, *The View from Here: Conversations with Gay and Lesbian Filmmakers* (Arsenal Pulp), won a 2008 Lambda Literary Award.

Joanie Veitch is a freelance writer and editor living on the east coast. She has just recently discovered the joy of writing short poems on her iPhone while waiting for the next thing to happen.

Diane Wild is a Vancouver-based writer, editor and health care communicator who founded the *TV, eh?* website and gallivants to work on the Olympics every couple of years.

Kendra Wong is a journalist in Victoria, B.C. She has a bachelor of arts from Simon Fraser University and a certificate in journalism from Langara College. She has worked at newspapers in the Lower Mainland including *Metro Vancouver*, *Tri-Cities NOW* and *Smithers Interior News* in northern B.C. She currently works as a reporter with the *Victoria News*.



Reimagining Development

My first official responsibility as president of the Writers Guild of Canada was attending the Banff festival. I discovered my new glamorous role involved sitting all day in a drafty basement room with representatives and staff from the other guilds and unions. We had meeting after meeting with industry and government organizations.

I walked a team from the CRTC, led by then-chair Konrad Von Finckenstein, an imposing, formal man, who seated himself directly across from our executive director. He looked WGC Executive Director Maureen Parker straight in the eye and told her that she had been the one to change his mind about the industry. His decision to require broadcasters to spend a percentage of their revenues on Canadian content was because of her passionate arguments on behalf of the WGC.

That's when I began to see how influential and strong this organization truly is. The WGC signature style of impassioned reason can and does win the day. It was one of the proudest moments of my term.

Not so long ago a more recent CRTC chairperson significantly lowered those spending requirements when he renewed broadcaster licenses. That decision was a terrible one for writers but the WGC and its members weren't going down without a fight. The staff managed to make the obtuse history of broadcaster spending on "programs of national interest" and what lowering it would mean to writers intelligible. Then equipped with a clear understanding of a complicated issue and a ton of passion, members took

to Twitter, emailed politicians and visited local MPs' offices sounding the alarm. The result? In a nearly unprecedented move, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Cabinet of Canada sent the decision back to the CRTC to reconsider. Another stand out moment in my presidency.

There have been many other moments when I've seen the Guild and its members truly shine. Over the last couple of years, I've watched as members embraced the cause of equity, championing, welcoming and mentoring diverse new voices. So many writers have spoken about fairness and equity or quietly volunteered their time. I am filled with admiration for everyone who has stepped up or made space. There is still much work to be done but I am happy to see writers leading the way.

Just a few months ago at Kidscreen Summit, I watched many Canadian screenwriters who ply their trade in children's programming in action. Their professionalism, creativity, deep and specialized knowledge and business acumen, impressed me. It is no wonder Canadian children's writers are respected around the world and sought out by producers and broadcasters from well beyond our shores. They are a magnificent success story.

Every year of my presidency I've had the privilege of attending the International Affiliation of Writers Guilds along with staff and reps from writers' organizations from North America, Europe and as far away as New Zealand, Israel and India. Canada holds a position of considerable respect at the table, admired for our strong agreements and well-run Guild. When I talk to

writers from around the world, I am acutely aware of the advantages of being Canadian. We have so much that writers around the world envy: ambitious producers who know how to make international deals, showrunner and story room traditions, easy access to the U.S. market but a government at home that actually believes in culture. Being at the IAWG always makes me realize how well-poised Canadian screenwriters are to thrive in the global market.

In this, my final column as president, there is nowhere near enough space to mention all the achievements of the Guild and its members that have thrilled me over the years. Before I sign off I can happily report the WGC is strong, financially sound and has a powerful voice that is heard in Ottawa and throughout the industry. Writers have built a great organization to serve our collective needs.

Much of the credit for that goes to our amazing staff. I'd like to offer my thanks Aaron, Antoinette, Cherie, Deanna, Dinesh, Elizabeth, Emily, Jasmina, Laurie, Li, Lillian, Madelyn, Marija, Marisa, Maureen, Natalia, Neal, Sarah, Shonna, Tannis, Terry, Tom and Wennie.

I've been proud to call myself the president of the Writers Guild of Canada and proud of the work we've done together. I am grateful to the screenwriters of Canada for allowing me to represent them for so long.

Story is the most powerful tool there is to change hearts and minds. Keep writing, my friends. Keep searching for ways to bring truth to light.

— **Jill Golick**

WGC Council and Forum Election Results

The WGC held an election for council and national writers' forum this spring. Congratulations to both returning members elected by acclamation and to members stepping into new positions. And a special congratulations and welcome to our new WGC president, Dennis Heaton!

Writers Guild of Canada Council (From May 1, 2018 to April 30, 2020)

Mark Ellis — Central Region
Marsha Greene — Central Region
Alex Levine — Central Region
Dennis Heaton — Pacific Region
Andrew Wreggitt — Western Region
Anne-Marie Perrotta — Quebec Region
Michael Amo — Atlantic Region

Writers Guild of Canada National Writers Forum (April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2020)

Central Region:	Quebec Region:
Kim Coghill	Bruce Smith
Sarah Goodman	
Edward Kay	Western Region:
Joseph Kay	Jason Filiatrault
Elize Morgan	Dave Lawrence
Jiro C. Okada	
Nathalie Younglai	Atlantic Region:
	Andrew Anningson
Pacific Region:	Mark Farrell
Ken Crow	
Sarah Dodd	



Writers Guild of Canada

WGC on Heritage trade mission

The WGC took part of the federal government's "Canadian Creative Industries Delegation," travelling to China in April with Minister of Canadian Heritage Mélanie Joly, along with representatives from over 60 other cultural organizations. The Guild's participation was part of the WGC's ongoing efforts to build Canadian writers' visibility in global markets. China, with its population of 1.37 billion, has a robust appetite for high-quality animation and family-friendly content. Executive Director Maureen Parker and WGC member Lienne Sawatsky had meetings with production and streaming companies including Wings Media, a large production

company with experience collaborating with producers and creators from English-speaking countries, WeKids, which owns children's OTT service BuddiesTV, and Alibaba Pictures Group. Many of the organizations the WGC met with expressed interest in learning more about the WGC Independent Production Agreement (IPA), and about how to hire Canadian screenwriters.

Writer-to-Writer

The WGC's Writer-to-Writer program flourishes with senior members volunteering their time to meet with new members to answer questions about craft and the business of screenwriting, as well as to share information

about what the Guild offers its members. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with comments such as the following:

"Just wanted to let you know that the WGC's Writer-to-Writer program has had an amazing impact on me. Not only did I hit it off with my mentor, but as a result of our meeting, we're pitching a TV series together!"

"... we ended up talking for about two hours. Toward the end of the conversation, my mentor mentioned that he is always available to answer questions and that our sit down yesterday is not just a one-time thing."

"It helped me to keep pushing through a cloud of self-doubt and fear that just hasn't been



Above: The WGC with Canadian Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly's Canadian Creative Industries Delegation;

Above right: WGC Executive Director Maureen Parker and member Lienne Sawatsky in China;

Right: WTTV host Patrick Tarr and Hard Rock Medical co-showrunner Smith Corindia



lifting. Hearing some context wasn't a magic bullet but it did make me more hopeful that I'm not necessarily washed up after my first and only break in the business."

"...now I have someone I can reach out to going forward, so it was a win, all in all."

Thanks to all our volunteers and mentees for participating and giving the WGC feedback on the Writer-to-Writer program. If you're a WGC member who would like to volunteer to be a mentor, please email Natalia Escobar Bohorquez: n.escobarb@wgc.ca.

Writers Talking TV

Writers Talking TV (WTTV) is now in its ninth year, its success due in no small part to outgoing WGC president, Jill Golick, who was key to kickstarting the event. WTTV is a live, on-stage screenwriter-to-screenwriter interview, episode screening, and audience Q&A that dives deep into matters of screenwriting craft. It's taken audiences behind-the-scenes of shows including *Flashpoint*, *Rookie Blue*, *Todd and the Book of Pure Evil*, *Less Than Kind*, *Bomb Girls*, *Orphan Black*, *Murdoch Mysteries*, *Saving Hope*, *19-2*, *Mohawk Girls*, *Sunnyside*, *The Next Step*, *Young Drunk Punk*,

Wynonna Earp, *Cardinal*, *Pure*, *Kim's Convenience*, *Frankie Drake Mysteries*, *Travelers* and more.

Most recently the WGC presented a sneak peek of *The Detail*, with showrunners Ley Lukins and Adam Pettle, hosted by Bruce Smith, and *Hard Rock Medical* with co-creator and showrunner Smith Corindia in conversation with host Patrick Tarr. Both events were held at TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto, and attended by an enthusiastic audience of members, prospective screenwriters, show fans, and others in the industry. You can listen to all the *Writers Talking TV* podcasts on the WGC's website, wgc.ca, and at iTunes. ■

REVENGE OF THE UNDERDOG

The creators and writers of *Little Dog* make underdogs the pick of the litter

By Matthew Hays

As Joel Thomas Hynes tells it, his acclaimed series, *Little Dog*, comes from a very, very dark place.

“I could paint my walls with rejection letters,” says the Newfoundland-bred and -born writer, director and actor. “I liked the idea of someone who is given a second chance. I’ve been given second chances.”

Thus Hynes liked the idea of creating a character who had walked away from being a prize-winning boxer abruptly and dramatically, and then, years later, returned to face his demons after being lifted from obscurity. The little dog that provides the title of the show is played by Hynes himself, and his return to the public eye is a pretty funny gag in itself: he is chided by two men who recognize him in a parking lot. When Hynes punches them senseless, it’s all captured by someone’s cell phone, and the footage then goes viral on social media. Whether he likes it or not, *Little Dog* is back in the public eye as a fighter. The intervening years, we learn, have not been easy: Hynes faces down financial woes, taunts from his former opponent in the ring, and fraught family relations.

Little Dog has met with universal praise, and has found a good audience on the CBC, where it has been green lit for a second season. Its seamless pitch of harsh drama and dark comedy — things normally thought of as opposites — seem so perfectly concocted, it’s hard to believe this isn’t how Hynes originally

imagined the show. “I had some involvement with underground fighting,” he recalls. “I liked the idea of an underground fighter who was returning to the ring, reluctantly. But I originally conceived of it as a one-hour drama.”

Hynes is also honest about wanting to write a role for himself, the actor. “I had a strong desire to play a lead role in a TV series. I was tossing about different ideas for years. The characters I’m often cast as are often a certain type. I usually play degenerates or bad guys. As a performer, I was inspired to write a more neutral character.”

It was Hynes’ long-time friend and frequent collaborator, Sherry White, who suggested he mix up the formula for *Little Dog*. “I urged him to take it less seriously, to develop it both as a drama and a comedy,” she says. ““I also felt making it a half hour rather than an hour [worked],” she said of the half-hour, rather than an hour format. She felt it worked better for the series.

Hynes and White have a long history of collaboration, and that relationship is reflected in both the story behind *Little Dog* and the finished program. White co-wrote the 2008 screen adaptation of Hynes’ novel *Down to the Dirt*, which he also starred in. (And that film, tellingly, also features a central character who must pick himself up and dust



PHOTO: CHRISTINA GAPIĆ



Joel Thomas Hynes takes to the ring in *Little Dog*.

himself off after hitting rock bottom.) They were also once an item, when they produced the ultimate collaboration — offspring (a son who is now 16). “We have a very good working relationship,” says White, who co-wrote and served as showrunner for season one of *Little Dog*. Part of her job as showrunner, was assembling a top-notch group of writers, which included: Cory Bowles, Adriana Maggs, Jane Maggs, Chris Roberts, Lisa Rose Snow and Kerri MacDonald.

“We’re the best of friends,” says White. “Joel really trusted me with this show, and you really need trust to do a show like this one together. Trust is so huge, and it is so rare. This show isn’t typical. We all had a lot of faith in each other in the writers’ room. It helps that I know Joel better than anyone knows him.”

“Sherry saw this as a late-night cable-style comedy,” recalls Hynes. “In terms of tone, we were looking at some of the U.K. shows, but also a show like *Atlanta*. The shows HBO are doing are remarkable.”

The show would also be unabologetically set in Newfoundland, but Hynes didn’t want the geography to define the entire show’s sensibility: “It is in Newfoundland, but we tread a fine line with that. I didn’t grow up in a tourism commercial, and I didn’t

want to create one here. I wanted to write the show set in Newfoundland, but also to have a national and international platform.”

The show’s tone, which shifts gears from pathos-to-comedy so brilliantly, is “probably the most important aspect of it,” says Hynes. “Upon a second viewing, some people have told me they see an entirely different show. That’s a great sign. It feels like it’s layered.”

“I felt like we didn’t have a lot of places to take a show like this,” says White. “The CBC was really good about appreciating where we were trying to go with it. It’s not a typical comedy, nor a typical drama. This show so easily could have been forced onto a comedy peg. They could have insisted we make it a lot more jokey. People still want that procedural hit. They want something that they feel secure audiences will instantly come to. A show like this might get good critical response, but audiences don’t always rush to them. So they’re still a risk. Knowing that the CBC was with us, that gave us great confidence to pursue the kind of high-wire act we were reaching for.”

In one of the show’s pleasingly odd moments, Hynes begins to jog vigorously on a sunny day, the visuals recalling Sly Stallone’s famous outdoor workout

“Sometimes you just need to trust
someone when they urge you
to take a path you hadn’t at first
considered. I had faith in Sherry’s
vision for the show.”

sequence in *Rocky*. But in this rendition, Hynes buckles over to vomit his guts out. He pauses, then continues in stride. *Little Dog* is built on jarring little moments like this, constantly shifting from hilarious to dark and back again. The consistent surprises and unexpected shifts are precisely what make the show so much fun to watch.

The fun part of the writing, says White, was “playing with the tone constantly. Sometimes we had to pull the gags back. Other times it feels like the right time to humiliate him. Is this the right point for him to get knocked over by a mic? It’s intuitive. And it’s also about trial and error. Joel originally saw this as very gritty, and that also came in with his musical choices. That we disagreed on; I felt we needed something lighter. But the disagreements we had worked out really well.”

Hynes agrees, saying “sometimes you just need to trust someone when they urge you to take a path you hadn’t at first considered. I had faith in Sherry’s vision for the show.”

White adds that “I really wanted to see a role for Joel, one which took him out of the usual places he’s in. It’s tricky, because of course he has all these tattoos and people see him a certain way. I was a bit squeamish about the early character description: is this really a time to put another male macho protagonist on the screen? But then we decided to bring much more vulnerability to the character. I don’t think the character wants people to see his more vulnerable side, but he does here, and it works.”

And while the role is one built for Hynes, he acknowledges it has many autobiographical overtones. “What the character goes through is not so far removed from my own career. I feel like there are times I’ve taken huge steps and then sabotaged things. I have realized it doesn’t get easier, it gets harder. I always felt like your ambitions should expand with your resume.

“I’ve tried to remain vital and active, doing music, writing, acting. I struggled for what seemed like a very long time to get my book published. It seemed no one was interested, and at times it felt like it was just over, like it would never happen. And then it [*We’ll All Be Burnt in Our Beds Some Night*] finally got published, and it won the Governor General’s Award last year. That’s why it wasn’t hard for me to imagine a character who was in a slump, and could see walking away from everything he’s worked for.” (The jury who chose Hynes’s book described it as “hilarious yet disturbing,” a tagline that could just as easily apply to *Little Dog*.)

And the down-and-out-but-not-quite-ready-to-surrender spirit of his central character is part of his rough-and-tumble childhood. “I’ve been told I couldn’t and never would. I’ve been told I was a waste of space. And I bought into it. I spent some years imagining I’d just go to jail. I come from a fairly dysfunctional background.

“The show rests on a question I often come back to: how compassionate can humanity be to the outsider?” ■



The writers' room: sitting left to right: James Hurst, Jessie Gabe, Carol Hay, Andrew Burrows-Trotman. Standing left to right: Keri Ferenz; John Callaghan



GREAT DAMES

The women of *Frankie Drake Mysteries*

By Diane Wild

The fictional Frankie Drake exists in 1920s Toronto, in the window of time between the First World War and the Great Depression, a period of optimism, communism, and booze running; when women had the vote and more opportunities for independence but would never be suspected of being a private detective.

As writers on *Murdoch Mysteries*, Carol Hay and Michelle Ricci shared an office, a passion for period mysteries, and an interest in that window of time. While working on *Murdoch*, they found themselves throwing around ideas for cases from a woman's perspective. When *Murdoch* producer Shaftesbury heard CBC was looking for a series to fit the post-*Murdoch* timeslot, their *Frankie Drake Mysteries* was born.

Ricci and Hay found themselves in development on the concept a week after CBC bought the pitch. "Three months later we delivered three of the five scripts we had written to CBC, and within a couple of weeks we were greenlit with a fall airdate," says Ricci. "From ground zero to on the air in almost exactly one year. It was amazingly fast and a once-in-a-lifetime circumstance."

Their office banter had prepared them for the whirlwind their professional lives were about to become. "We often found things researching for *Murdoch* that were too late in time or not right for a

“The show was always about women making their way in the world, and the relationship between two female leads was always at the heart.”

cop show that would work really well for a PI in the 1920s,” says Ricci. “So we already had quite a few things in our back pockets when Frankie was put into development.”

Ricci had already been developing a project based on her great aunt, a wannabe gun moll in the 1920s, and both women were drawn to the era.

“It was a period of an explosion in so many things, in fashion, in music — everything was changing,” says Hay. “After the horror of the first World War, there was a sense of ‘let’s put that behind us. Let’s embrace life.’”

“Suddenly there was an incredible flush of early feminism, of gals being out and about, and we always loved the idea that it was about women getting themselves into a little bit of trouble.”

The show is often grounded in research, with historical characters such as Ernest Hemingway — who wrote for the *Toronto Star* in the early ‘20s — popping up, and books such as *Toronto’s Girl Problem* by Carolyn Strange acting as something of a touchstone.

Knowing their show would be timeslot mates with a long-running period mystery show, the writers did put thought into what makes *Frankie Drake* distinctive. The answer lies not just in the era and the female leads, but the difference in the story engine between a cop and private eye show, and the relationship of Frankie (Lauren Lee Smith) with those around her.

“The show was always about women making their way in the world, and the relationship between two female leads was always at the heart,” Ricci says. “We always wanted the main relationship of the show to be a female friendship, not a romance or a rivalry.”

“It was important that we took that first season to separate ourselves from *Murdoch* by not copying a world or a case that had already happened on *Murdoch*,” says Ricci. “But that said, you can’t do the 1920s and not do a movie set.”

While William Murdoch operates within the police institution, writing for Frankie Drake means finding other ways to have cases come to her.

“There’s not the same kind of template as there is in *Murdoch*,” says Hay. “He’s a policeman, therefore cases come to him. He can walk out, flash his badge, and talk to anybody. He has a certain amount of authority. Given that she’s a private detective, who brings the case to her? How does she get involved? Why aren’t the cops brought in?”

“The types of cases were more flexible as we weren’t forced to have a murder every week, and we wanted to explore a different cross-section of society than *Murdoch*,” adds Ricci. “The idea was to try and be with the unrepresented, the unseen parts of society, the people who couldn’t go to the police for whatever reason.”

That flexibility in cases also gave them some flexibility in who would populate the series. “It was intentional to have more diversity in the show, which is a challenge for period shows in general,” says Ricci. “We worked hard at the beginning to try and establish the cases as being from those sections of society who didn’t have the confidence or the social standing to go through the police. Toronto in the 1920s was mostly white and Protestant. If you were Catholic, or any other race, you were in the minority, and marginalized. So that’s the side of Toronto Frankie lives in, which is why she hangs out at a Chinese speakeasy in the Ward, in turn run by a Chinese woman (played by Grace Lynn Kung), for example.”

Hay considers the characters ahead of their time in many ways, including the character of Trudy (Chantel Riley), a black woman who is Frankie’s partner. “We play some of the reality of how a black woman would have been treated in the 1920s, which is a) she’d be invisible and b) she would have absolutely no power whatsoever,” says Hay. “Sometimes we allow Trudy to play those to her



The cast of Frankie Drake Mysteries.

advantages. She'll be in a situation where she literally is the wallpaper and this allowed her to do some of her detective work unnoticed."

But their research also helped them discover an explosion of "women doing fabulous things," such as Bessie Coleman, the first African-American woman to earn a pilot's licence, in the early '20s. "There were these women who were stepping out of what the gender reality was at the time," says Hay.

"The thing that's sometimes surprising is how we would come up with a notion for the story and then dig into research and find out we were absolutely bang-on, or sometimes we would find things way more progressive than we realized."

The intention was always for the two leads, Frankie and Trudy, to have a network of informants across the city. But when Hay and Ricci saw what two actors in particular brought to their initially small parts, they felt drawn to further develop police morality officer Mary (Rebecca Liddiard) and

morgue attendant Flo (Sharron Matthews) into a core foursome going forward.

With Cal Coons as showrunner on the first season and James Hurst taking on showrunning duties for the upcoming season two, the show will continue to immerse itself in the world of the '20s while offering perspective on and escape from the current day.

"If you want to comment on gender equality it can feel like you're being strident, but you can explore something historically, and then you realize, when you watch it here in 2018, how very little has actually changed," says Hay. "We're doing a story right now set in women's baseball and how appallingly badly women professional baseball players were paid. You can talk about that, and therefore you're shining a light on pay equity."

"With the lightness of touch that we try and bring to the episodes, it's fun to write," says Hay. "And the sense of optimism of the show is something we all need right now."

Letterkenny's unconventional trail towards world domination

It started as a webseries. Now there's a tour and merchandise. How did *that* happen?

By Greg David

"Christ, I hope so." That's Jared Keeso's answer when asked if American and worldwide format sales for *Letterkenny*, his small-town creation for CraveTV, are in the works. But how did he get here — from a webseries called *Letterkenny Problems* — to a 73-episode order for *Letterkenny*, a line of merchandise, and a cross-Canada tour?

First, a quick flashback: In 2013, disillusioned by the film and television roles he was being offered, Keeso — who most recently portrayed cop Ben Chartier on Bravo's original series *19-2* for four seasons — and his friend Nathan Dales created *Letterkenny Problems*. The YouTube series documented small-town boys Wayne (Keeso) and Daryl (Dales), as they waxed poetic about dating, love, and farming in their rural community. Sprinkled with copious curse words and hilariously original, *Letterkenny Problems* garnered millions of views and worldwide attention giving Keeso a base audience and the juice to shop his idea around and get a television series made.

"When I created the webseries, the goal was a television show," Keeso, who co-writes, stars, and executive produces the series says. "I didn't monetize the videos on YouTube and I could have made a good buck that way. The goal was to get

that paycheck from a network. I needed that validation." Enter New Metric Media. Executive producer Mark Montefiore loved Keeso's unique voice (denizens utter catchphrases like "tarps off!" and "pitter patter") and strong vision for what the project would be and — most importantly — didn't want to mess with it. But where *Letterkenny Problems* starred mainly just two characters in 90-second webisodes, *Letterkenny* had to be populated with a community. Montefiore had to find someone who could help Keeso — who admits his strength is dialogue and snipes, not story arc — to expand the world and storylines for a series that didn't have the look and feel of traditional television. That included jettisoning a major part of almost every scripted Canadian television series: the writers' room.

"We started with the idea that, because there's such a strong, specific voice in this already and we don't want to muck it up, what's the quickest and easiest way to muck it up? Fill it with a writers' room," Montefiore says. "Little by little, that voice gets changed or altered or pivoted or whatever it is. On top of that, you add a director and you add more producers and this and that, and that vision that started so clearly ... we were scared that it



Letterkenny has transitioned from really small screen to small screen while retaining its original character and characters.

wouldn't be so clear anymore. It would start to be everybody's baby rather than one person's vision and one person's goal." The interview process began with Keeso meeting people to help bring season one's six episodes to life. Once the Listowel, Ont., native met Jacob Tierney, the interviews stopped. The two clicked.

"I bring experience in structure and storytelling, and the mechanics and mechanisms of making a world work," Tierney, *Letterkenny's* co-writer, director, and executive producer says. "How do you take something that was two minutes and make it 30 minutes? There are so many different ways that it could go." Keeso credits their partnership for him gaining confidence as a writer although they have had one disagreement.

"One time Tierney shouted at me in the Tim Horton's drive-thru for saying Wilco is overrated," Keeso recalls.

Two recurring characters from *Letterkenny Problems* who migrated to *Letterkenny* were Jonesy (Andrew Herr) and Reilly (Dylan Playfair), two hockey players who chirp at the Hicks ("chirp at the Hicks" means to engage in witty or not-so-witty repartee with the country-folk) headed up by Wayne and Daryl. Soon the fictional town — filmed

in Sudbury, Ont. — filled with other regulars via a squad of Skids led by Stewart (Tyler Johnston) and Roald (Evan Stern); Wayne's sister, Katy (Michelle Mylett); Wayne, Daryl, and Katy's friend Dan (K. Trevor Wilson); and bartender Gail (Lisa Codrington). Recurring characters include the *Letterkenny* hockey team's coach (Mark Forward); pastor Glen (Tierney), McMurray (Dan Petronijevic), Mrs. McMurray (Melanie Scrofano) and Gae (Sarah Gadon). Jay Baruchel, Kelly McCormack and Jess Salgueiro appear in the newest six episodes, set to air in 2018.

Keeso and Tierney took home the TV Comedy trophy for their season one script, "Super Soft Birthday," at the 21st annual WGC Screenwriting Awards in 2017. That followed three 2017 Canadian Screen Awards for Best Comedy Series, Best Writing in a Comedy Program or Series, and Best Direction in a Comedy Program or Series. But three years after season one went into production, *Letterkenny* still doesn't have a writers' room.

"We never will," Keeso says. "That sounds boring to me and I don't think I would be productive in that setting. We're fortunate in that our writers don't require much guidance. We hire them because we know they'll get it."

Super-small screen



Carmilla is just one of the recent success stories from the super-small screen.

Letterkenny's success was unconventional at the time, but it's becoming less rare for webseries to become full-blown television or film projects. In the case of *Carmilla* and *The Beaverton*, both projects began online before making the jump to the big and small screen.

Carmilla began as a webseries produced by Shaftesbury, putting a modern spin on the cult classic gothic vampire novella of the same name by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. Producer Steph Ouakine, who was looking for a project comparable to YouTube's *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, approached co-creator and writer Jordan Hall. Re-envisioning Le Fanu's 1871 novella about a young woman named Laura, who is visited by a female vampire named Carmilla, and specifically targeting it for the LGBTQ community online was the original plan from Day 1.

"You do have a lot of communities who have not had their stories told and not had an opportunity to tell their stories," Hall says. "The

lower bar for entry that digital projects offers is a place for the creation of those stories to start. I don't think that there is a magic bullet; we definitely have to put pressure on the upper end of the industry to give diverse creators space and support." Starring Elise Bauman as Laura Hollis and Natasha Negovanlis as Carmilla Karnstein, *Carmilla* quickly became a beloved series, focusing on the life of a university student who has her world upended when a vampire moves into her dorm room.

For Hall — a playwright — penning a webseries wasn't as different as one would think. Both require story beats and scene outs; Hall modeled *Carmilla*'s roughly two- to seven-minute storylines after a feature, using the two-hour film format to lay the groundwork for a season. Expanding the *Carmilla* world, the series evolved into a feature film in 2017 with Laura, Carmilla and their friends reuniting five years after the events of season three, providing Hall and co-writer

Alejandro Alcoba a unique challenge because of the internal battle between fan expectations and writing a compelling story.

"The problem is the relationship," Hall says. "The fans don't want them to break up, they want Laura and Carmilla to be happy together forever. And I do not in any way begrudge them that desire. But sometimes that's not good for the narrative. We'll have conversations about the level of conflict that can be allowed between the two leads. I'm almost always on the side of more conflict because the resolution means more later."

As for Jeff Detsky, he knew *The Beaverton* would make immediate sense as a television series. He'd seen his Facebook feed filling up with stories from the satirical Beaverton website. That, coupled with the site's unique voice, six million views in 2016 and over 500,000 unique views a month, made it a natural choice.

"People are very familiar with the format of a satirical news show," Detsky says. "It was kind of frustrating that we didn't have one in Canada. It just seemed like, here is a property that people are paying attention to, and it seems like a natural fit for that format. It seemed like a can't miss idea to me." But translating a website for television wasn't easy. Detsky and co-writer, co-showrunner and TheBeaverton.com founder Luke Gordon Field originally thought each half-hour installment would cover just six stories. Bell Media's Sarah Fowle, director, comedy original programming, and production executive Bill Lundy urged the pair to utilize the website's rat-a-tat-tat headline delivery on the show by making it

the fast-paced, joke-driven series viewers have seen for two seasons. And having Emma Hunter and Miguel Rivas serve as anchors to *The Beaverton's* three-ring circus of correspondents in Marilla Wex, Aisha Alfa, Dave Barclay, and Laura Cilevitz was a total fluke.

"We just stumbled into that," Detsky admits. "We realized we hadn't really seen that other than [*Saturday Night Live's*] late-era Weekend Update. It was a way to pace up the show, and really just a way to find a character within a framework that doesn't necessarily allow for character."

The writers in the room, meanwhile, had to tweak their joke telling. Unlike the website, *The Beaverton's* jokes have to be shorter and end on a hard joke. As Detsky tells it, the website skewers the news wire while the TV show parodies broadcast news. And because of the fast pace of writing and filming season two, Detsky and Field's room had a rotating group of approximately 20 writers from different backgrounds.

"One thing that we desperately needed on this show was to have a room with diverse points of view and diverse backgrounds," Detsky says. "So having 20 writers enabled us to have a lot of very strong female writers, a lot of very strong people of colour who could bring a point of view that we didn't necessarily have in our core of four straight white dudes."

Seasons one through three of *Carmilla* can be seen on the KindaTV YouTube channel. *The Carmilla Movie* is available on Hollywood Suite.

Seasons one and two of *The Beaverton* are available on The Comedy Network's website. ■

Current scribes include Jonathan Torrens, Jesse McKeown, Lynne Kamm, Trevor Risk, and Sonja Bennett, who write one-off episodes and communicate via phone and email rather than be in a room with cue cards and white boards. No planning is done in advance with regard to story arcs going into future seasons, Keeso stresses, just the season on deck with two chunks of six episodes plus two shoulder episodes — Easter, Halloween, and St. Patrick's Day have been used to drop special installments — for 14 half-hours.

Not planning seasons in advance is ironic considering the deal signed by CraveTV, New Metric Media, and DHX Media last October. In addition to at least 40 new episodes of *Letterkenny*, the multi-year partnership includes cross-promotional support for the recently concluded Letterkenny Live! Tour, and a 90-minute comedy show starring Keeso, Dales, Wilson, and Forward. Montefiore describes how, by season three, fans were asking the cast to appear at nightclubs, bars, and puck drops at hockey games. He recalls one of the first meetings he had with Keeso, in Toronto's Thompson Diner, where they discussed the future of the brand, including a live tour of some sort. Fast-forward to 2017 — a partnership with Joel Baskin of The Feldman Agency — and Letterkenny Live! launched. Thanks to online metrics and where the show's audience is, Montefiore has plans to take Letterkenny Live! into the United States, Australia, Ireland, and the U.K.

Another facet of the deal includes *Letterkenny* merchandise — hockey jerseys, T-shirts, baseball caps, baseball shirts and hoodies — and a deal with Sudbury Ont.'s Stack Brewery to produce Puppies Premium Lager. Keeso says Gus 'n Bru whiskey — the tippie of choice served by Gail at Letterkenny's bar, MoDeans — will soon be in the offering.

In addition to the aforementioned international format sales being done by New Metric Media and DHX Media, the partnership means production of more than 40 new episodes. With three seasons currently streaming, the agreement commits to a total of at least 73 episodes of *Letterkenny* and many years of work for everyone involved. Keeso is just fine with that.

"*Letterkenny* is my dream job," he says. "I will do whatever it takes to maintain and protect it. I will make this show forever if they let me. I'm just happy to have a steady paycheck for a while. I spent my first 10 years in this business being broke off and on. I never want to be broke again."

Seasons one to three of *Letterkenny* are available on CraveTV. ■

IS KIDSCREEN WORTH IT?

This year's schmooze-fest featured the launch of the WGC Writers' Room

By Mark Dillon

The dust has settled on the 2018 Kidscreen Summit, and writers who attended expect a return on their investment in coming months.

Brunico Communications' annual conference is widely considered a must-attend in the kids' entertainment biz, and this year's record 2,070 attendees bears that out. Programming execs, producers, creators and other industry players from 50-plus countries convened at the InterContinental Miami (Feb. 12-15) to hear speakers and panelists from major production companies, research firms, and broadcasters, sip poolside cocktails and watch the presentation of the Kidscreen Awards.

Around 50 WGC members working in animation and live-action kids shows attended — a sizable contingent compared to years past. They were able to participate in speed-pitching sessions with broadcasters and investors, and, of course, could run into decision-makers anywhere around the hotel, and so were wise to have elevator pitches at the ready.

But you have to pay to play. Registration cost \$1,895 (all amounts in U.S. dollars), per person with a \$400 discount for past attendees and \$100 off for early enrollers. The Youth Media Alliance offered its members a savings of several hundred dollars. Master classes for industry veterans and mentor classes for newbies ran an additional \$250 each. And then there is airfare, hotel and meals.

So is it worth it?

"Writers should go if they can swing it," says Toronto's Amanda Smith (*Max & Ruby*), who has seen positive outcomes from her three summits. "The first year I booked a meeting to reconnect with a story editor I had met years earlier. The next week I was writing on her show."

The main advantage for writers is the ability to schedule many pitch and follow-up meetings and

quick hellos in a concentrated timeframe. Some like to touch base with foreign producers who may have work if the Canadian business slows down, but inevitably writers see fellow Canucks.

"I try to arrange meetings with West Coast and East Coast companies I wouldn't normally see," Smith says. As her career has evolved, her meetings have become more fruitful. With CBC and Boat Rocker Media attached to her half-hour teen series *Pass the Star*, she has more to talk about and more people want to speak with her.

Canadian writer Sam Ruano (*Reboot: The Guardian Code*) couldn't pass up this chance for valuable face time, as he currently resides in Bogota, Columbia, where his wife has a diplomatic posting.

"It was crucial for me to go," he says. "My goal was to stay on the radar. It's important to leave your writing cave and see and be seen. We're so focused on coming up with a great story and pitch that sometimes we forget we're selling a product and a brand, which is ourselves."

His main order of business was promoting his medieval fantasy series *Knights of Panterra* — in development with Omnifilm Entertainment and The Jim Henson Company — and to soak up as much as possible.

"The landscape is changing so rapidly," he notes. "You need to stay in touch with what YouTube is doing and what's going on with social media. What's going on with people who identify as non-binary or transgender, and what does that mean for kids? It's good to see what others are doing, what broadcasters are buying and what producers are looking for, so that you know how to change course."

Several panels this year targeted creators, including one on effective character designs and another titled Creating Convincing Teen Dramas.



*Clockwise from above:
Sam Ruano; Amanda Smith;
Anne-Marie Perrotta*

Meanwhile, the Guild launched the WGC Writers' Room, involving 20-minute discussions among three to five WGC members and an indie producer looking to flesh out a project.

The 11 sessions featured producers from Canada, Europe, Asia and Central America invited by WGC president Jill Golick, Natalia Escobar Bohorquez, the WGC's director of strategy and research, and WGC Quebec councillor Anne-Marie Perrotta.

"Canada has a great reputation for children's entertainment, yet many of these producers haven't had any working relationship with Canadian writers. They jumped at the opportunity," says Aaron Unrau, WGC manager of agreement administration, who helped manage the initiative.

Perrotta — whose credits include the live-action *Big Top Academy* and animated *Chop Chop Ninja* — devised the idea in part to promote the idea of writers' rooms for animation.

"You usually meet with the other writers for one to three days and then never see each other again," she explains. "But in live-action you collaborate with a bunch of writers and run with each other's ideas. We wanted to show animation producers how it works."

Perrotta was so impressed with some of the writers she invited a couple to work with her on development of a Canada-Denmark copro.

"To see them in action was fabulous. Until you're in a room with them, you don't know how they collaborate. Do they have great ideas? Do they try to talk over you? It's like dating: is it a good match?" she says.

Of course Kidscreen isn't the only opportunity for kids' writers. Other upcoming conferences include Brunico's Banff World Media Festival (June 10-13) and Scripted (Nov. 6-7 in Los Angeles), at which the kids biz is but one component, and MIP Junior in Cannes (Oct. 13-14), which is all about kids, but involves greater travel and expense and leans toward its sales market. ■

Jill Golick looks back ... and ahead

By Diane Wild

“One of my yoga teachers said walls are there to teach you.”

As outgoing Writers Guild of Canada President Jill Golick prepares to hand over the title, she reflects on what she’s learned about creatively responding to challenges and links that to the ultimate goal: “How do we find a way that Canadians can live on their own soil, tell their own stories, and make a living doing it?” she asks. “That’s the gig.”

Even before she was elected president eight years ago, Jill had been recognized with the WGC Writers Block Award for her work on behalf of screenwriters. She was part of the movement for writers to leave ACTRA and form an independent Guild. She was instrumental in bringing animation writers under the jurisdiction of the Guild, in shaping what’s now the WGC Screenwriting Awards, and in initiating the monthly screening series Writers Watching TV.

Some of her proudest moments as president have come from increased participation by members and their advocacy on issues such as diversity. She’s also proud of Guild efforts to promote Canadian writers to an international marketplace, such as initiatives like “speed dating with a writers’ room” at the Kidscreen conference, and working on common issues with the International Affiliation of Writers Guilds.

Many challenges facing Canadian writers stem from industry partners paying lip service to the Broadcasting Act, which she calls an inspiring read. “It’s supposed to serve all of us as Canadians. If only we could uphold that Act, we’d be in a very good position.”

Broadcasters hold the power and the funding, yet she believes they are out of step with audiences. “The part of the Act they like is the part that protects them from foreign ownership,” she says. “They don’t like the trade-off that they have to create Canadian programming.”

“Look at our writers who move across the border — suddenly they’re superstars in all the genres we don’t make here,” she says. “It’s not because there’s something about the Canadian air or soil. We can only write what we’re commissioned to write. Our broadcast partners don’t make those shows with us, or they note us into PTSD,” she says.

“The future of television is voice. Everything about how the Canadian system works is designed to separate writers from their voices.”

Besides advocacy and lobbying, Jill points out that bargaining is one of the tools available to the Guild. “We didn’t have the most power at the table but we could always stand for what was right and ethical and convince the other side by being reasonable and standing our ground.”

Now, she finds the WGC is bargaining not with the producers that writers do business with every day, but with lawyers and businessmen. “The next president will have to find a new way of bargaining.”

A digital innovator in her own career (*boymeetsgrrl*, *Crushing It*, *Ruby Skye P.I.*), Jill became president with a goal to help guide the WGC in these new digital spaces. “I saw times were changing and that we needed to revolutionize the way we do business as Canadian television writers, and I wanted to be at the table when that happened. But no one else would come to the table.”

And she’s confident the changes will come. “It will happen, just not on my watch. It’s time for new voices.”

For now, she’s looking forward to continuing her efforts to encourage diversity and to support writers in further developing their own voices, as well as finding new ways to innovate in her own work. “I’ve worked in kids, animation, prime time, soap operas, digital. Looking back on my career, the only thing I’ve stuck with for very long is the Writers Guild.” ■

**Thank you,
Jill Golick.**



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BEST SCRIPT FROM SEASON ONE

Anne, Season 1 "I Am No Bird, and No Net Ensnares Me"

Written by **Moira Walley-Beckett**

CHILDREN'S

Mysticons, Season 1 "Sisters in Arms"

Written by **Sean Jara**

DOCUMENTARY

The Hundred-Year-Old Whale

Written by **Mark Leiren-Young**

FEATURE FILM

Entanglement

Written by **Jason Filiatrault**

MOW & MINISERIES

Alias Grace "Part 5"

Written by **Sarah Polley**

SHORTS & WEBSERIES

Spiral, Episode 101 "The Girl in the Dream"

Written by **Karen McClellan**

TV COMEDY

Letterkenny, Season 2 "Relationships"

Written by **Jared Keeso & Jacob Tierney**

TV DRAMA

Cardinal, Season 1 "John Cardinal"

Written by **Aubrey Nealon**

TWEENS & TEENS

The Stanley Dynamic, Season 2 "The Stanley Cheer"

Written by **Matt Kippen**

SPECIAL AWARDS

WGC Showrunner Award — **Michael MacLennan**

Denis McGrath Award for Service to the WGC — **Mark Ellis**

Sondra Kelly Award — **Sarah Dodd**

Alex Barris Mentorship Award — **Sherry White**

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The winners of the 22nd annual WGC Screenwriting Awards



MOIRA WALLEY-BECKETT — Best Script From Season One

Anne, “I Am No Bird, and No Net Ensnares Me”

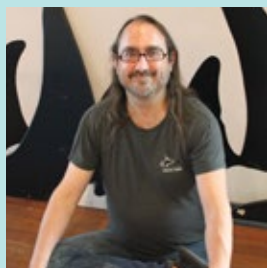
Moira Walley-Beckett is the series creator, showrunner, and executive producer of the Canadian Screen Award-winning CBC/Netflix drama *Anne*. Moira created *Flesh and Bone*, a limited series for Starz, which won a Satellite Award, a Gracie Award, and a Women’s Image Award. Moira spent six years as a writer and co-executive producer on *Breaking Bad* (AMC). In 2014, she received an Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series for her final *Breaking Bad* episode, “Ozymandias.”



SEAN JARA — Children’s

Mysticons, Season 1 “Sisters in Arms”

Sean Jara has written for various animated and live-action shows. His credits include *Ben Ten*, *Inspector Gadget*, *ReBoot: The Guardian Code*, *Spy Kids: Mission Critical*, and *Degrassi: The Next Generation*. But he is most proud of *Mysticons*, an all-girl action-adventure series that was inspired by all the *Dungeons and Dragons* adventures of his misspent youth. The show can be seen on YTV/ Teletoon/ Nickelodeon worldwide.



MARK LEIREN-YOUNG — Documentary

The Hundred-Year-Old Whale

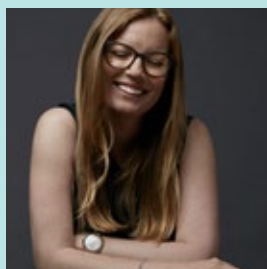
Mark Leiren-Young’s book, *The Killer Whale Who Changed the World* (which launched *The Hundred-Year-Old Whale*) won the 2017 Science Writers and Communicators Book Award. Mark is directing a documentary version of *Killer Whale* and hosting the environmental podcast, *Skaana*. Recent screen credits include writing the MOW thriller, *The Perfect Match*, and writing (and acting in) *ReBoot: The Guardian Code*. Mark is a previous WGC Screenwriting Awards nominee.



JASON FILIATRAULT — Feature Film

Entanglement

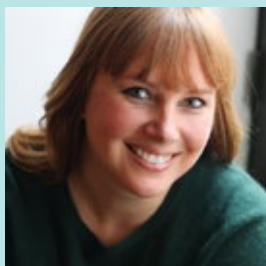
Jason Filiatrault is a slightly award-winning screenwriter whose past credits include the webseries *Bunny Hug*, the CBC series *Young Drunk Punk*, tiny bits of the cult-classic *A Christmas Horror Story*, and an inexplicably popular Twitter account called @SarcasticRover. Jason is a graduate of the Canadian Film Centre and the National Screen Institute — and in spite of all your good advice, he still lives in Calgary, Alberta.



SARAH POLLEY — MOW & Miniseries

Alias Grace “Part 5”

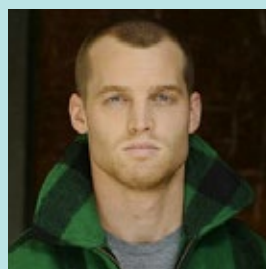
Sarah Polley is a Governor General’s Award-winning writer-director whose dramatic features include *Away from Her* (Academy Award-nominated for Best Adapted Screenplay in 2007) and *Take This Waltz*. Her third film, *Stories We Tell*, was awarded Best Documentary by the Toronto Film Critics Association, the New York Film Critics Circle, the National Board of Review, and the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, and it was shortlisted for the 2013 Academy Awards for Best Documentary Feature. Most recently, Polley adapted Margaret Atwood’s *Alias Grace* for CBC/Netflix and served as executive producer.



KAREN MCCLELLAN — Shorts & Webseries

Spiral, Episode 101 “The Girl in the Dream”

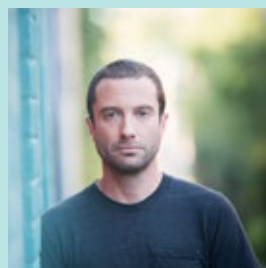
Karen McClellan has enjoyed many incarnations in her career as a writer, most recently assuming the mantle of executive producer and co-showrunner of *The Next Step*. Inspired by a lifetime (or perhaps several) of obsession with reincarnation, *Spiral* has been a labor of love and way to finally scratch that itch. She lives in Toronto with her husband and son.



JARED KEESO — TV Comedy

Letterkenny, Season 2 “Relationships”

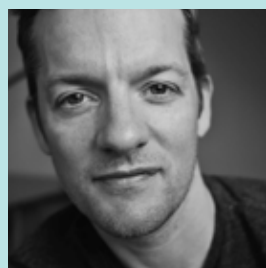
Jared Keeso is a Gemini and Canadian Screen Award-winning actor, and is currently working on season four of *Letterkenny*, a comedy that he created, writes and stars in. *Letterkenny* won the Canadian Screen Award for Best Comedy Series in 2017. Jared (and co-writer Jacob Tierney) also won Best Writing in a Comedy Program or Series at the CSA’s, as well as the WGC Screenwriting Award for TV Comedy in 2017.



JACOB TIERNEY — TV Comedy

Letterkenny, Season 2 “Relationships”

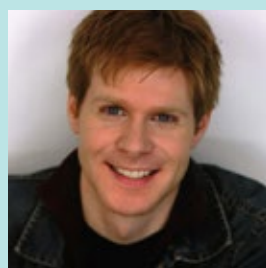
Jacob Tierney is a writer and director who has received Canadian Screen Awards for Best Direction, Comedy, and Best Writing, Comedy, for his work on *Letterkenny*, on which he is also a series regular actor. Jacob was Genie-Award-nominated for Best Adapted Screenplay for *Twist* and won the Genie for Best Original Screenplay for *The Trotsky*. Jacob recently collaborated with Xavier Dolan on the script for *The Death and Life of John F. Donovan*.



AUBREY NEALON — TV Drama

Cardinal, Season 1 “John Cardinal”

Aubrey Nealon’s first TV script won a Canadian Screen Award for Best Writing in a Dramatic Series (*Flashpoint*, 2013). Since then he’s written episodes of *Rookie Blue* (ABC/Global), *Saving Hope* (CTV), *Frontier* (Netflix), *Ten Days in the Valley* (ABC), and the Emmy-winning hit *Orphan Black* (BBCA/Space). His series *Cardinal* (CTV), adapted from the Giles Blunt novel *Forty Words for Sorrow*, became the most watched new Canadian show of 2017 and sold in over 100 territories worldwide.



MATT KIPPEN — Tweens & Teens

The Stanley Dynamic, Season 2 “The Stanley Cheer”

Matt Kippen has written for *Kim’s Convenience*, *Schitt’s Creek*, *The Stanley Dynamic*, *The Ron James Show*, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, *Insecurity*, and *George Stroumboulopoulos Tonight*. He co-created and co-wrote the show *House Party*. Matt is represented by The Alpern Group. He is older than he appears in his photo.

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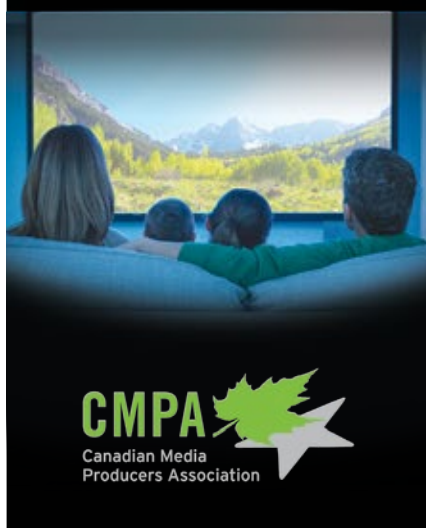
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Alias Grace "Part 5"

Adam Barken & Mike McPhaden
*Bruno & Boots: This Can't Be
Happening at Macdonald Hall!*

Mike McPhaden
Bruno & Boots: The Wizzle War

BEST SCRIPT FROM SEASON ONE

Jane Maggs
Bellevue, Season 1 "You Don't
Understand Me At All"

Rachel Langer
Ghost Wars, Season 1 "Whatever
Happened to Maggie Rennie"

SHORTS AND WEBSERIES

Karen McClellan
Spiral, Episode 101 "The Girl in
the Dream"

TV DRAMA

Aubrey Nealon
Cardinal,
Season 1 "John Cardinal"

Tara Armstrong
Mary Kills People, Season 1
"Bloody Mary"

Nicolas Billon
X Company, Season 3 "Promises"



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2018 WGC SCREENWRITING AWARD WINNER

Karen McClellan

Best Writing in a Short or Webseries
Spiral – “The Girl in the Dream”

2018 WGC SCREENWRITING AWARD NOMINEES

Elize Morgan

Best Writing in a Children's Program
Mysticons I – “Heart of Gold”

Mike McPhaden

Best Writing in a MOW or Miniseries
Bruno & Boots: The Wizzle War

Mike McPhaden*

Best Writing in a MOW and Miniseries
Bruno & Boots: This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall

Anita Kapila

Best Writing in a TV Comedy
Kim's Convenience II – “Resting Place”

*Shared Nomination



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MOIRA WALLEY-BECKETT**

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MICHAEL MACLENNAN

The WGC Showrunner Award

Michael MacLennan is the winner of the 12th annual WGC Showrunner Award. Currently the showrunner of *The Bletchley Circle: San Francisco*, Michael's showrunning history includes the hit series *Bomb Girls* and the BBC series *Super Rupert*. Michael is known as a showrunner who will "go to the mat" to defend the vision of a show, and writers working in his rooms have praised his collaborative approach, diplomatic leadership style, and his great humour and patience. The WGC presents this award to Michael for being a consummate professional who shows grace under pressure, has a tireless work ethic, and is a visionary showrunner.



MARK ELLIS

The Denis McGrath Award for Service to the WGC

Mark Ellis exemplifies service to the WGC: as one of the country's busiest screenwriters, known for co-showrunning (with Stephanie Morgenstern) the acclaimed series *Flashpoint* and *X Company*, Mark has at the same time given unstintingly of his time to the Guild. Mark was elected to WGC council in 2010, serving as treasurer since 2012, and chairs the investments committee as well as the WGC's diversity committee. Mark has also been on the core Independent Production Agreement (IPA) negotiating team since 2011. Mark's excellence as a screenwriter and his understanding of screenwriters' issues make him invaluable to the WGC and to Canadian screenwriters.



SHERRY WHITE

Alex Barris Mentorship Award

The Alex Barris Mentorship Award was created in memory of Alex Barris, a writer, broadcaster and journalist who had a tremendous commitment to mentoring throughout his career. The 2018 recipient, Sherry White, (writer of the award-winning feature film, *Maudie*, and showrunner of the series *Little Dog*), has been called an "amazing mentor" for the way she generously gives of her time and energy. Sherry has also been praised for championing diverse writers and helping talented emerging writers to get their first opportunities in television. Sherry's generosity of spirit, her willingness to "walk the walk," and her genuine enthusiasm for drawing attention to the strength of others' work all make her an appropriate recipient of the 2018 Alex Barris Mentorship Award.



Sarah Dodd

Sondra Kelly Award

The Sondra Kelly Award, sponsored by the Actra Fraternal Benefits Society, honours the memory of Sondra Kelly, who was the first writer's voice on the AFBS board (1998-2003). As well, she served on the WGC council from 1997 to 2003. Sondra's career as a screenwriter included developing her own projects and advocating for other women writers to do the same. The 2018 winner of the Sondra Kelly Award is Sarah Dodd for her project *City of Gardens*, a crime drama series set in Victoria B.C. The Sondra Kelly Award will help Sarah to develop a pitch package and write the pilot script for *City of Gardens*.





1. Chris Regina; Josh Korn, Netflix
2. Screenwriter Simon Racioppa; author Tanis Rideout
3. WGC Executive Director Maureen Parker; outgoing WGC president, Jill Golick
4. Awards host Gavin Crawford (as "Kathleen")
5. Members of BIPOC TV & Film
6. Awards presenters, screenwriters Rachel Langer and Marsha Greene
7. Award host Gavin Crawford (as himself)
8. Jill Golick, WGC president 2010-18
9. Sugith Varughese presents Sarah Dodd with the Sondra Kelly Award
10. Sherry White, Alex Barris Mentorship Award recipient





1. Mark Leiren-Young, winner, Documentary
2. Matt Kippen, winner, Teens & Tweens; Mairi Babb, actor
3. Joseph Kay, Michael MacLennan (winner of the WGC Showrunner Award), Scott Belluz, Mackenzie Sinclair
4. Jason Filiatrault, winner, Feature Film
5. Adriana Maggs, Jane Maggs, Caledonia Brown, Tassie Cameron
6. Sugith Varughese, Lucy Ellis, Mark Ellis (winner of the Denis McGrath Award for Service to the WGC), Kim Coghil
7. Sarah Polley, winner of MOW & Webseries; agent Pam Winter
8. Producer-director Andrew Williamson; Karen McClellan, winner, Shorts & Webseries
9. Sean Jara, winner, Children's; screenwriter Alexandra Zarowny
10. WGC Councillor, screenwriter Michael Amo; Mhairi Fyfe



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Waneta Storms

Aspiring screenwriters,
“be the grasshopper”

By Kendra Wong

Waneta Storms’ screenwriting career began with a trunk load of marijuana and a cross-country road trip. Originally working as an actor on various shows including *The Eleventh Hour*, Storms, along with her co-star Tanya Reid, decided to pitch an episode of the *Trailer Park Boys* to producer Matt Clattenburg. The scenes included two female characters from B.C. — one of whom was the cousin of the *Trailer Park Boys* character Julian — who would drive a car full of marijuana from British Columbia all the way out east. While it didn’t get picked up, it helped pave the way for Storms’ transition from actor to screenwriter. Now, with *Saving Hope* and *Bellevue* under her writing belt, Storms is focused on two shows, *Pure* with WGN America and *The Coroner* on CBC. *Pure* season two will be on Super Channel in Canada and Hulu and WGN America in the U.S.

What inspired you to make the transition from actor to screenwriter?

I started writing even before I got a lead role on a television series. I found I would wake up in the morning, make myself a cup of coffee and really enjoy my time

writing. This urge to write was always about being the primary creator and storytelling.

How has being an actor helped you as a screenwriter?

When you’re an actor, you try the scene and the director says, “Okay, I like this and I like that, but can we try it like this?” You say yes and you do it. I was really accustomed to saying yes and that has helped me stay open to change. When I get notes on a script, you can’t hold on tight; you have to just go with the next thing, even if it’s radically different.

How do you approach the writing process?

I can easily get frightened to start. Ultimately what I’ve discovered is I just have to start typing, even if it’s crap and then things start to feel right or wrong. The wrong doesn’t matter, I just move on and I pursue the right. The biggest part is getting through the fear of, will I be able to tap into all these characters? Will I be able to hold on to the theme? Will I be able to tell the story in a unique way?

You worked on *Saving Hope* and *Bellevue*. How were you able to

transition from one show to the other?

It was definitely a transition for me to work on *Bellevue*, because when I was working on *Saving Hope*, I was there for most of the seasons. Even when I was finished my scripts, I was there to help break other people’s scripts. You’re there constantly. But on *Bellevue*, for the first time in my writing career, I was sent home to write. All the writers went off to write their scripts and sent them in by email. It was very different and I started to worry that I needed to send in something that was right instead of something that was mine.

What advice do you have for people who are looking to break into the industry?

Get trained. You have to show people that you’re willing to go back to basics and be the grasshopper learning from your mentor. People ask me “Who can I send my scripts to?” and actually it doesn’t work that way easily, that’s what training is for. Once you do your training, hopefully the people you did your training with, will set you up with workshops, you’ll meet people from the industry, meet agents. You have to just start from scratch and prove that you’re serious about it. ■

Unfair Engagers

The Guild has declared the following engagers “unfair” for failing to abide by grievance procedures or the decision of a joint standing committee. The WGC’s working rules prohibit members from working with unfair engagers.

All I Want Productions Inc.

Principal: Kirk Shaw

Battered Productions Inc.

Principal: Kirk Shaw

Christmas Town Productions Inc.

Principal: Kirk Shaw

FOTP Productions Inc.

Principal: Richard Rapkowski

**Guardian Films Inc./
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Principal: Kirk Shaw

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Principal: Nicolas Stiliadis

Hiding Productions Inc.

Principal: Kirk Shaw

High Seas Rescue Productions Inc.

Principal: F. Whitman Trecartin

Ice Planet (1) Canada Ltd.

Principal: Philip Jackson

Justice Productions Inc.

Principal: Kirk Shaw

Kangaroo Court Productions Ltd.

Principal: Robin Payne

Les Productions les Plus Belles Routes du Monde Inc.

*Principal: Andre Belanger
(not affiliated with Spectra Animation Inc.)*

Lester Beach Entertainment

Principal: Jeff Lester

Mikisew Keemiwan Productions, Ltd.

Principal: Norman Champagne

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Numb Productions Inc.

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Perfect Stranger Productions Inc.

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Prospero Entertainment Group Inc.

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Richard Lowry Productions Inc.

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She Productions Inc.

Principal: Kirk Shaw

Spiritual Productions Inc.

Principal: Kirk Shaw

System Productions Inc.

Principal: Kirk Shaw

T Man Productions Inc.

Principal: Kirk Shaw

Zolar Productions Inc.

Principal: Kirk Shaw

Please Help Us Find These Writers!

The CSCS is holding foreign secondary authors' levies for writers

The Canadian Screenwriters Collection Society (CSCS) is holding foreign secondary authors' levies for a number of writers and uncredited productions. As CSCS does not have a current address for these writers or the productions do not have complete credit information we have not been able to forward any monies to the entitled writers. The complete list of writers and productions is available on the CSCS website at:

www.wgc.ca/cscs/hot_news/index.html

If you have any information that would allow us to contact any of these writers or their agents, or if you are a credited writer on the listed production, please contact:

Marisa King at m.king@wgc.ca

or call (416) 979.7907 ext. 5231 or

1.800.567.9974 ext. 5231.

Please note that CSCS may require writers to furnish contracts in support of their claim. According to CSCS regulations, if a writer does not claim his or her monies within two years of being posted on our website these monies revert to the operating expenses of CSCS.



Damon Vignale

Don't be afraid to go too far

By Katherine Brodsky

Saturday matinees at the local cinema were the bait for young Damon Vignale. And as soon as he was old enough, he became an usher at that very same theatre. By his 20s, he'd fallen hook, line, and sinker for a career in film and television, starting off writing spec scripts, taking classes, and producing a film with some fellow filmmakers. "It wasn't a very good film," recalls Vignale, "It was terrible, but we learned." Fast-forward many years later and one of the producers of that 'terrible' film remembered Vignale's gifts as a writer and hired him to write on *Blackstone*. That's when his focus truly shifted toward television writing, and he continued on the path, working on the likes of *Motive* and *Ghost Wars*.

When you're writing for a TV series that has multiple writers, is there a way that you keep your own voice/style? Or does it become really entirely about the show?

That's a great question. It definitely becomes about the show I think. When I go onto a show, I really go in with the attitude that I'm there to help realize the showrunner's vision of the show. Obviously in your drafts, part of yourself is going to come out, and I tend to think big, dig deep — I like the emotional

stuff, I like to lift the carpet up and show the dirt underneath. I don't know if that always comes out in my writing, but it's certainly something we did a lot on *Blackstone*, and if there's an opportunity for me to go to a place like that in a story, I will.

For Blackstone, you won some awards including the Alberta Media Production Industries Association award for Best Production Reflecting Cultural Diversity. So how did you make sure that you got the representation of Indigenous people right?

With that show, creator Ron E. Scott himself is Metis, and I really relied on him a lot for that. A lot of the episodes were torn from the headlines, so we were telling stories that were based in the realities of what's going on in that community. So we were being really relevant and true to the realities of that world. Outside of that, I would just write the characters as I felt. I didn't think, oh they're native, they're black, they're white, they're — I just wrote from the human condition and, if I was stepping outside the lines, I allowed Ron to call me out on that.

You've also produced on shows like Motive and Ghost Wars. Did

wearing that producer hat teach you something as a writer?

Coming from an indie film background, I think whenever I go into writing a script, I'm pretty aware of the realities of what is realistic and what isn't. It's definitely coming up through a production background. I AP'd on commercials, I've done a lot of self-production work to support my writing before I got the breaks to be on television shows. And all of that definitely comes into play. I've also directed before, sometimes that can influence your writing too, in terms of how you approach a scene and write about it visually.

What do you do when your writing gets stuck?

Truthfully I clean the apartment. [laughs]. That's my thing. I guess my wife comes home and she goes: "oh my God I'm so glad you're writing!" [laughs]

What is the best advice you've ever gotten?

When I was starting out, I was working with a story editor, and he wanted me to make a deal with him, and that was when I wrote, he wanted to hear the bone break. Don't be afraid to go too far. We can always pull it back, but don't be safe. Go after it. ■

News from WGC Members

Maya Gallus's documentary *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution* launched Hot Docs Documentary Film Festival. *The Heat* is screening at the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema and across Canada, before an international festival and theatrical run, with TVO broadcast in the fall.

Aron Dunn is writing the whole second season of *Chuck Chicken* for Animasia Studio (Netflix) and a third of the first season of *Cosmi Academy* for White Ball Animation (Russian All-State TV). He hopes to see his loved ones again soon.

Josh Sager & Jerome Simpson underwent surgery to end their seven-year writing partnership. They're focusing on solo ventures — Josh in L.A., Jerome in Toronto — but their ampersand-shaped scars will forever connect them.

Writer/director **Carolyn Saunders'** feature *The Wasting* opened to a sellout at Toronto's Carlton Cinema in March. Her next, *Island West*, is in pre-prep. Carolyn was also story editor on the Richard Dreyfuss film *Astronaut*, now in post.

Kirsten Hansen is currently in her third season writing on the drama series *Chesapeake Shores* for Hallmark Channel. Her MOW *Love on the Slopes* premiered in January. *Love Under the Rainbow* and *Fly By Christmas* will air later this year.

Dennis Heaton's *The Order* has been picked up by Netflix and is now filming in Vancouver. **Shelley**

Eriksen, Rachel Langer, Jennica Harper, Penny Gummerson and Jason Filiatrault are helping him come up with the most disturbing ideas possible

WGC members **Hannah Cheesman & Julian De Zotti** took home top honours at the inaugural Canneseries/MIPTV InDevelopment pitch competition for their hour-long television series *Whatever, Linda*. Currently in development with Bell, it was the winner amongst 12 finalists after a worldwide search of 300 projects.

Garry Campbell's new one-hour procedural, *Carter*, has already premiered in markets around the world and came to Canada in May. It airs Tuesdays on Bravo and stars Jerry O'Connell, Sydney Tamiia Poitier and Kristian Bruun.

Arne Olsen's paranoid-thriller *Distorted*, directed by Rob King, starring Christina Ricci, John Cusack, and Brendan Fletcher, will have a day-and-date 10-city Barco Escape theatrical and SVOD release in June. He's still trying to figure out what that means.

Richard Bell's survival/adventure 1920s drama *Brotherhood* (which he also directed) is currently in post-production at The Rolling Picture Co., with visual effects wizardry at work at SPIN VFX.

Joëlle Bourjolly's and **Alexandre Franchi's** dark feature *Happy Face* is in post-production in Montréal.

Desperate to become less shallow, a handsome teenage boy deforms his face with bandages and attends a support group for disfigured people.

Rob King is adapting the 2018 Canada Reads winning book *Forgiveness* into a four-part dramatic mini series with DCTV and CBC. The memoir, written by Mark Sakamoto, tells the emotional and ultimately converging stories of his grandfather Ralph MacLean and his grandmother Mitsue Sakamoto during and after the Second World War. King also helped pen and direct the mini-series, *Tokyo Trial* (Netflix), which was nominated for an International Emmy in 2017.

Jeremy Rafuse was nominated for the Golden Palm in Screenwriting at the 2018 Beverly Hills Film Festival for his screenplay titled *6th Man*. This is his third nomination at the prestigious event.

Writer/showrunner **Edward Kay** is wrapping the second season of *Addison* for CBC Kids, and shopping a new half-hour live-action supernatural mystery anthology series, with the working title *Dark Realms*.

Girl In The Bunker, from writer/director/ executive producer **Stephen Kemp** premiered on Lifetime in May. Following Kemp's highly successful *Girl In The Box*, it stars Henry Thomas (*E.T.*),



Moira Kelly (*West Wing*) and Julia LaLonde (*Anne of Green Gables*).

Steve Galluccio's new movie, *Little Italy*, co-written with **Vinay Virmani** and starring Hayden Christensen and Emma Roberts, will be released in 2018. The movie is produced by Take One, was shot in Toronto, and was directed by Don Petrie (*Mystic Pizza*, *Miss Congeniality*). This is Galluccio's fourth feature film.

Derek Harvie is showrunning *Greenfields*, a single-camera comedy premiering this fall on NBC Universal Kids and Family Channel. *Greenfields* is produced by Six Eleven Media and DHX.

Darren Curtis was nominated for a Quebec Cinema (Prix Iris) award for writing and directing his first feature film entitled *Boost*. The lead actor in the film, Nabil Rajo, won the Canadian Screen Award for Best Lead Performance.

Peter Behrens' novel *Carry Me* won the 2017 Vine Award for Canadian Jewish Literature. "Behrens captures his narrator's naïveté and the casual anti-Semitism of the times with great skill and intelligence ... as true an observation about human nature as there is."
— Dennis Bock, *The New York Times*

Sugith Varughese joins the team at Beevision as story editor for their Bell Fund SLATE winning short format digital story project *Alice Highcroft*. ■

Welcome (February 12 — April 20, 2018)

Romeo Gabaya Candido Toronto ON
Corrie Clark Aurora ON
Thomas Conway Scarborough ON
Kevin Coughlin Toronto ON
Julian De Zotti Toronto ON
Charles Daniel David Demers Vancouver BC
Daniel Gold Toronto ON
Ashley Elizabeth Good Victoria BC
Ryan Grassby Toronto ON
Kirsten Sonya Hansen Langley BC
Emily Hurson Toronto ON
Fracaswell Hyman Wilmington NC
Bill Keenan Toronto ON
JP Larocque Toronto ON
Sabrina Nouadir Toronto ON
Maria Perez-Brown New York NY
Gillian Beth Pike Scarborough ON
Richard Conrad Richter Okotoks AB
Keith Russell Toronto ON
Naomi Marie Snieckus Toronto ON

Our condolences

Shirley Barrie Toronto ON
Arthur Black Salt Spring Island BC
Martin Hunter Toronto ON
Gary R. Johnson Moorpark CA
Mike MacDonald Ottawa ON

Remembering Shirley Barrie (1945-2018)

The WGC mourns the passing of Shirley Barrie, screenwriter, playwright, and producer, and a WGC member since 1987. She was known to the WGC for her lovely, gentle ways, and, of course, for her work, which included being senior story editor on the hospital drama *Jozi-H*. As well, Shirley contributed to the Guild during bargaining with the CBC in the mid-1990s, and by volunteering her time as a "Top Ten Awards" judge. Throughout her career she received many awards including the Playwrights Guild of Canada's Lifetime Membership Award. Shirley viewed her own work as a writer as mining history for "golden nuggets that shine today," and she was drawn to stories of women who didn't play by the rules. In her own words, Shirley Barrie was "fascinated by the many shades of grey that make up the human experience." We send our condolences to Shirley's family.

The Rick Mercer Report takes a bow

By Joanie Veitch

After 277 episodes, *The Rick Mercer Report* aired for the last time on April 10. Since it launched in 2004, the show has won plenty of accolades — most recently the Academy Icon Award at the 2018 Canadian Screen Awards. Still pulling in almost a million viewers per episode in its final season, the show went out on a high note.

With his trademark rants, shot with Mercer walking down a graffiti-tied back alley, goofy parodies of commercials, and travels across the country to meet Canadians where they live, such as visiting a wildlife rescue centre on Vancouver Island, going char fishing near Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, and travelling with sheep farmers to a small island off Ferryland, NL, *The Rick Mercer Report* has served up a unique view of the country week after week.

“It’s been the best job ever, hands down,” Mercer said as the show was wrapping up. “I loved every minute of it. We had one goal in mind when we started this show and that was to explore and celebrate Canada every single week. When you love your subject matter that is an easy thing to do.”

Mercer himself has always been a key ingredient to the show’s success. As a young performer and writer of one-man shows in his hometown St. John’s, NL, Mercer had already made a name for himself on the east coast before his first television role as one of the creators, performers and writers on *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. After leaving *22 Minutes*, Mercer went on to co-create, write and star as the central character in the comedy series *Made in Canada* from 1998

to 2003. In 2001, his CBC special *Talking to Americans*, pulled in 2.7 million viewers, making it the highest rated Canadian television comedy ever.

Following *The Rick Mercer Report* series finale, we talked with Greg Eckler, one of the show’s long-time writers, about what the show’s departure means for Canadian television satire, what it was like being a writer on the show, and Mercer’s “cagey poker player” instincts.

Rick Mercer has become like a Canadian institution and his leaving television (for now at least) leaves a void in the market. What do you think could be next?

The way media is splintered, I presume everything will be next. For ’80s Light Satire, you’ll turn on Sirius XM channel 730. For heavier stuff just about Manitoba, you’ll watch Legislature Bile Duct on Hulu Canada Central. But the chance of another Rick Mercer coming along is a longshot. The range of skills and instincts is too far off the charts.

What did your years with The Rick Mercer Report teach you about writing comedy?

To try to avoid paths really well traveled. Things you don’t do can

be as defining as things you do. And truthfully, it will always depend what show you’re working at. If I find myself at a place that wants a lot of Kardashian jokes, I’ll have to unlearn some RMR lessons fast.

What was the writing process like at The Rick Mercer Report?

The default position was to write individually but we always had the option of collaborating. I partnered up with Tim Steeves much of the time because he’s way funnier. No idea what he got out of it, but that’s not my problem.

Some people have said the show was too nice, giving politicians an easy ride with more goofy bits than biting satire.

From my vantage point, Rick was like a cagey poker player who knew when to go all in. There was a rant in the middle of the show where he said what needed to be said. And some of the other bits did hit very hard. But keep hectoring people and you’ll cut your audience in half and the impact is muted.

What’s next for you?

I’d like to work at the Burger King at Eglinton and Pharmacy in Toronto. It’s close to my house, but not too close, you know? ■

May

25 - 26 — T.O. WebFest towebfest.com

24 - June 3 — Inside Out Film Festival insideout.ca

26 - June 3 — Leo Awards leoawards.com

June

10 - 13 — Banff World Media Festival banffmediafestival.playbackonline.ca/2017/

23 - 24 — Toronto Screenwriting Conference torontoscreenwritingconference.com

28 — Writers Talking TV, TIFF Bell Lightbox wgc.ca

August

23 - September 3 — Montreal World Film Festival ffm-montreal.org

30 - September 2 — Fan Expo Canada fanexpocanada.com

September

6 - 16 — Toronto International Film Festival tiff.net

13 - 20 — Atlantic Film Festival atlanticfilm.com

19 - 30 — Calgary International Film Festival calgaryfilm.com

27 - October 6 — Edmonton Film Festival edmontonfilmfest.com

27 - October 12 — Vancouver International Film Festival viff.org

October

8 - 9 — International Affiliation of Writers Guilds, Berlin iawg.org



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BEST SCRIPT FROM SEASON ONE

Anne, Season 1 "I Am No Bird,
and No Net Ensnares Me"
Written by **Moirá Walley-Beckett**

CHILDREN'S

Mysticons, Season 1
"Sisters in Arms"
Written by **Sean Jara**

DOCUMENTARY

The Hundred-Year-Old Whale
Written by **Mark Leiren-Young**

FEATURE FILM

Entanglement
Written by **Jason Filiatrault**

MOW & MINISERIES

Alias Grace "Part 5"
Written by **Sarah Polley**

SHORTS & WEBSERIES

Spiral, Episode 101
"The Girl in the Dream"
Written by **Karen McClellan**

TV COMEDY

Letterkenny, Season 2
"Relationships"
Written by **Jared Keeso & Jacob Tierney**

TV DRAMA

Cardinal, Season 1 "John Cardinal"
Written by **Aubrey Nealon**

TWEENS & TEENS

The Stanley Dynamic, Season 2
"The Stanley Cheer"
Written by **Matt Kippen**

THE SPECIAL AWARDS

WGC Showrunner Award
Michael MacLennan

Denis McGrath Award for Service to the WGC
Mark Ellis

Sondra Kelly Award
Sarah Dodd

Alex Barris Mentorship Award
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