

CANADIAN SCREENWRITER

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FILM | TELEVISION | RADIO | DIGITAL MEDIA

A Rock Star in the
Writers' Room:
Bringing Jann Arden
to the small screen

Crafting Canadian
Horror Stories —
and why we're so
good at it

Celebrating the
23rd annual WGC
Screenwriting
Awards

A portrait of Emily Andras, a woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a green V-neck sweater and large gold hoop earrings. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

Emily Andras

How she turned
Wynonna Earp into a
fan phenomenon

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Congratulations

to Emily Andras of SPACE's Wynonna Earp,
Sarah Dodd of CTV's Cardinal, and all of
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Black flies and grizzlies and desolate wilderness, oh my...

It's hard to believe that Canadians could be so good at the whole horror thing.

Seriously, we live in one of the most stable, wealthy, happy countries in the world. You could call it a paradise. So, where are Canadian screenwriters getting their ghoulish inspiration?

I mean, when you grow up in a place plagued by gun culture, home invasions and mass shootings, like the U.S., or the U.K. and Europe, with their long histories beset by war and religious struggle — it's not hard to see where inspiration might come from.

And yet, I'm sure the folks sitting in Vienna or Glasgow or Seattle all think the same about their country when they compare them with Canada — and our black flies, grizzlies and relative isolation — and nod, “Oh yeah. Canada is pretty freakin' scary.”

Canada's history of producing horror movies is not that long. The first full-length Canadian horror movie came out in 1961. It was a low-budget doozy, but a doozy, nonetheless. A 3D flick, complete with Magic Mystic Mask Glasses, *The Mask/Eyes of Hell*, was restored in 2015 and is now available on Blu-ray. It kicked off a succession of projects that led to today's successes.

I remember it from my teen years as something that would pop up on late-night television (*sans* the 3D, sadly).

There were plenty of others that didn't require any special glasses to watch, while transmitting plenty of chills, though.

Probably the creepiest was 1974's *Black Christmas*. I know people who still watch this as part of their lead-up to the holidays, along with tamer, more traditional family fare.

1976 had a couple of offerings showing the Canadian countryside: *Shoot and Death Weekend/The House by The Lake*. *Pontypool* from 2008, one of my all-time faves, captures small-town Ontario in a zombie flick.

All of these titles, with the exception of *The Mask/Eyes of Hell*, have a certain “Canadian-ness” about them, which makes them even creepier. After all, a run-down gothic pile on the edge of town is naturally spooky. We've been told over and over: “That's what a haunted house looks like. That's where Frankenstein is making his monster! That's where Ed Gein lives with his mom.” But in Canada, it's the lake house, the serene forest, the beautiful, grizzly-filled foothills that hide the horror.

Canada's success with horror on the small screen is even stronger, in some ways. *Strange Paradise* was a horror soap opera and it ran for almost 200 episodes. It started in 1969 and is still on air to this day in reruns. In fact, it was the first soap opera to be marketed in reruns!

We just have to accept that we can be happy and stable and fairly comfortable and yet still able to scare the bejeebers out of not just ourselves, but others. I guess that makes Canada a strange paradise, indeed.

— Tom Villemaire

Summer 2019

Cameron Archer runs the Canadian television and media site Gloryosky (www.gloryosky.ca), and is also a freelance arts and media writer. He currently lives in Eastern Ontario.

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*.

Christina Gapic is a Toronto based photographer specializing in environmental portraiture, visual storytelling and behind-the-scenes documentation.

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*, *Maclean's*, *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.

Li Robbins is a freelance writer and editor whose work has appeared in the *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*, *The Walrus*, *Toronto Life* and on CBC.ca, among other publications and websites.

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.

Jeremy Woodcock has been a staff writer for *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, performed stand-up at Just For Laughs, won some Canadian Comedy awards, and been published in *Reader's Digest*, which is what finally impressed his grandma.



In case I wasn't clear, I f***ing love horror

When someone asks me how long I've been writing, I use *The Brothers Grunt*, an animated series I worked on back in 1994, as my baseline. After all, this was the first writing job I ever had that resulted in an actual paycheck. I was also the producer on the series. Coincidence? Absolutely not.

But if I really think about it, I've been writing since high school. First there was an aborted short film project for Grade 9 art class. Then there was the Grade 11 school play I co-wrote, a whole hour of British-style pantomime that my parents declared was "okay."

And all throughout, right up to that job in 1994 with that incredibly astute producer, were a myriad of grisly little short stories and scripts. I don't say grisly because of the quality (even though that is accurate), I say "grisly" because they were all horror stories.

Why? Because I f***ing love horror.

I also love fantasy. And science fiction. And every other sub-genre that branches out from these three umbrellas. But given my druthers (and someday, I hope someone gives me some druthers so I can finally see what the hell they actually are), I'll always default to a horror film. Whether I'm watching it, or writing it.

If you look at my CV, though, you'll see that the majority of my work probably wouldn't fall into the "genre" umbrella, let alone horror. Most of my work is fairly straightforward comedy and/or drama. Or is it?

There's the *Being Ian* script I wrote where Ian and his friends get trapped in their high school after a snowstorm and may have to resort to cannibalism to survive; there's the *Call Me Fitz* episode where Fitz goes up against satanic cultists at the golf club; the *Motive* episode with a copycat serial killer reminiscent of a Dario Argento "giallo" film...

Sure, these shows may be classified as comedies and dramas, but the inspiration for these stories (and many, many others) are straight out of horror movies.

Horror — and my love of it — is a vital ingredient in all of my writing. I would argue that horror is the "special sauce" I mix into my scripts. And when I actually get to write straight-up horror, that's when I'm in my happy place.

And yet, horror continues to be a genre that is still typically maligned by the entertainment industry. Science fiction and fantasy have taken a step forward, thanks in part to superheroes, Harry Potter, and any YA movie that puts teens into a post-apocalyptic thunderdome of some kind, but horror still gets treated like the heavy metal fan that showed up at an Enya concert, or your fart in the middle of a wedding.

And I honestly don't get it. Because if there was ever a "bullet-proof" or "evergreen" genre, it's horror.

You don't need a big budget to make an effective horror movie. You don't need name actors. You don't need a lot of locations. You may not even need a big effects budget.

The filmmakers that are making horror here are kicking ass. Karen Lam, the Soska Sisters, Doug Taylor, Astron-6 are the tip of the iceberg of the current crop of a feature film fraternity that dates back decades. Then there's the horror on TV, including (but definitely not limited to) Emily Andras's amazing *Wynonna Earp*.

So many of the global entertainment industry's top filmmakers cut their teeth in the trenches of low-budget horror. Hell, I still prefer some of those movies to their later efforts.

And it's still a dream of mine to write and direct a grisly (hopefully not in script quality) horror film.

So forget that old adage, write what you know. Write what you love.

And in case I wasn't clear, I f***ing love horror.

— **Dennis Heaton**

CMF Early Stage Development Program Opens June 20

The Canada Media Fund's Early Stage Development Program was announced at the end of March. What differentiates this CMF funding program from others is that it's the first time since the government org's founding that it is giving writers the chance to access development money directly, without a producer or broadcaster attached. The WGC has been working with the federal government for several years to get more direct financial support for content development led by Canadian screenwriters — and this is the first step. The CMF has established two funding streams for the program: The Writer Access Point and the Creator Collaborator Access Point.

Eligible applicants for the Writer Access Point must have: 10 produced hours of written work in one of the CMF's four supported genres (drama, children & youth, documentary, or variety & performing arts) that has been broadcast by a Canadian broadcaster; received one producer-level credit; and be incorporated in Canada as a single-shareholder company. The CMF will only accept "Teleplay by" or "Written by" credits. If a team of writers has a "Written by" credit, each writer gets to claim that credit and the hours associated with it. And, for example, if you have a 45-minute written drama script, the CMF will count that as 60 minutes of produced work, as it was made for commercial television. Additionally, the CMF has determined that the project should be in the same genre as the credits obtained by the writer. For example, if the writer has earned their 10 hours writing in the children & youth genre, the project they are applying with should also be in that genre. However, the project format does not have to match those listed in the 10 hours of writing credits.

For the Creator Collaborator Access Point an applicant must be a Canadian company that has a writing agreement with a writer and a letter of interest from a Canadian broadcaster, "Eligible Distributor," provincial funding agency, or CRTC-recognized certified independent production fund. Applicants are *not* subject to a minimum requirement for produced hours of written work, and do not need any financial commitment from a broadcaster. Nothing in the Creator Collaborator Access Point guidelines prevents screenwriters from applying that way if they prefer, either by themselves or in partnership with a producer, provided that they meet the eligibility requirements for that access point.

Materials are now available on the CMF website so that interested writers can begin assembling their applications to either stream of the program, which is being administered by Telefilm. The WGC was fortunate to host an info session about the program and the application process on May 3, led by Telefilm Deputy Director and CMF Program Administrator, Mireille Darveau, and Telefilm Coordinator, Selvina Rajoo.

The CMF has allotted \$1.25 million each to the English-language Writer Access Point and the Creator Collaborator Access Point. Applications to both streams will be accepted starting June 20, 2019 at 6 a.m. EST. As a first-come, first-serve program, the CMF expects that all funds for the Writer Access Point will be assigned to successful applicants on the first day, or shortly thereafter. So, if you are interested in applying to this program, it is crucial to have all supporting documentation ready to go on June 20, when the Telefilm Dialogue submission portal opens for applications. Links to a recording of the May 3 session, an application FAQ and relevant CMF and Telefilm

application links is available here: wgc.ca/node/101072. So what are you waiting for? Good luck to all who apply!

WGC and CFC Establish Denis McGrath Bursary



In 2017, the WGC set up the Denis McGrath Memorial fund, dedicated to Canadian screenwriters, to honor the legacy of one of their most fierce and relentless advocates. We have partnered with the Canadian Film Centre to put that money raised to use with the joint establishment of the Denis McGrath Bursary Award, which Executive Director Maureen Parker and CFC Chief Programs Officer Kathryn Emslie were pleased to announce at the WGC Screenwriting Awards on April 29. The \$5,000 bursary will be awarded annually to a deserving CFC TV writer enrolled in the Bell Media Prime Time TV Program.

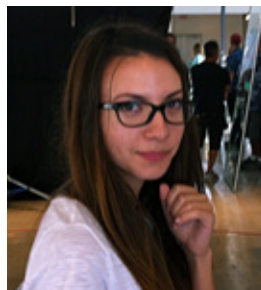
"This bursary honours Denis's two passions — writing and advocating for Canadian content and Canadian screenwriters," says Parker. "Denis was an exceptional writer and human being and this bursary assures that his extraordinary character and contributions to the industry will not be forgotten."

The WGC and CFC, with Denis's loving wife and CFC writer alumna Kim Coghill, created this opportunity to raise funds that will extend this bursary in Denis's name over many years. The Guild is inviting members interested in honouring Denis to make a tax-deductible donation to the Denis McGrath Bursary. The CFC will issue tax receipts to all new donors.

To contribute funds online to the Denis McGrath Bursary, head over to cfccreates.com/support/donate-now, and in the "Message for the Canadian Film Centre" section please specify that the donation is solely for the Denis McGrath Bursary. Also select "In memory of" under Dedication Information and add Denis McGrath. Interested donors can also call Michelle Johnson, CFC Manager, Annual Giving, at 416-445-1446 x227 to make a contribution.

Diversity Script of the Month 2019 Finalists

Created in 2018, the WGC Diversity Script of the Month initiative is designed to help emerging screenwriter members from diverse backgrounds move forward in their careers. Here are our first three finalists of 2019. Congratulations to all!



March Sabrina Sherif

With writing credits on Netflix sci-fi series *Another Life*, her supernatural drama script, *Something Wicked*, won March.



April Thomas Conway

His comedic grand space opera, *Illegal Alien*, builds on his credits on *Odd Squad* and *Endlings*.



May Hiro Kanagawa

His credits include *Da Vinci City Hall* and *Blackstone*, but Hiro turned to feature film for his winning script, *The Day Player*.



Graham Kent Clegg

Remembering Graham Clegg (1971-2019)

Graham Kent Clegg was the kind of guy that could give you chronic impostor syndrome. He knew how to write and direct well before attending York University's film program, and story had an almost sacred quality to him — whether he was writing or holding court socially.

Dave Dias (*True and the Rainbow Kingdom*, *Fangbone*, *Dot*) became friends with Graham at York. "When I wanted to pursue animation writing, Graham offered to 'head writer' me through the process. His guidance literally paid off when my spec script got bought and made. His generosity taught me the importance of helping new writers."

Graham had talent and ambition and nerve. He optioned his first feature screenplay at a

young age, and began his working life in the writers' room of *Traders*, continuing with *Cold Squad*, *Godiva's*, *ReGenesis* and *Murdoch Mysteries*.

Ian Carpenter (showrunner, *Slasher*, season 3) recalls, "Graham was brilliant, soulful, warm, and drew from the deepest, most fan-obsessed well of old films in his pitches. He was always making story rooms fun. He and I got in trouble for hysterical laughing jags that started just by looking across a table at each other."

Graham's story was sadly cut short in his second act. But since his passing, a common sentiment has been repeated: He was "one-of-a-kind." He literally changed the lives of his family, friends and colleagues, and it's in every one of their triumphs, each act of courage or kindness, and in their memories, that he will live on. ■

The #FightForWynonna

How Emily Andras, her writers' room, and some social media savvy made *Wynonna Earp* the people's choice

By Li Robbins

There is #NoChill in the world of *Wynonna Earp* fandom — the show's fans (a.k.a. Earpers) truly embody that hashtag in their fervour for all things Earp. But there was a definite chill for fans and the show's writers, cast and crew when news broke in February that season four production had been halted due to financial issues — even though the show was renewed for not one, but two seasons by both SPACE and Syfy.

"We had already started the writing room in September," recalls showrunner Emily Andras, "so I had no reason to think anything other than, 'Oh right, making a show out of whole cloth is always hard, even when you're four seasons in.' Finding out we were going to be delayed due to financial problems felt like a punch to the gut."

She took that hit to the people, hinting on Twitter that the show's status had suddenly turned from greenlight to limbo. Earpers didn't reel for long though — they swiftly rallied via yet another hashtag, #FightForWynonna, which trended worldwide after the news broke. The fight was also "IRL," with Earpers buying #FightForWynonna billboards in New York City's Times Square and on Melrose Ave. in L.A. (Andras says that, as of mid-April, fans had bought more than 125 billboards in NYC alone.)

Despite the outpouring of support, at press time, IDW Entertainment, the studio behind *Wynonna Earp*, has yet to solve the financial problems that put the show on hold. Going from a two-season renewal to suddenly being in limbo feels "surreal and ridiculous" to Andras, particularly on the heels of the show's People's Choice Award win for Favourite Sci-Fi/Fantasy Show of 2018. That was a much better kind of "surreal," she says. "Just to be able to walk the red carpet as a writer is sort of insane. I feel very humbled that the fandom is so engaged with the show."

Cult audience, big impact

From the start, *Wynonna Earp* fan engagement has been turbo-charged by social media, but it's unlikely anyone could have predicted the proliferation of *Wynonna Earp*-specific conventions (cons), podcasts, fanfiction and art (for instance, popular needlepoint items by self-declared "Earpiest Earp," @Nuutmeg). The community that fans have created goes well beyond the show. Earpers support each other through breakups, breakdowns and more, says Bridget Liszewski, a journalist who runs the website *The TV Junkies*, and she also happens to be a huge fan of the show.



PHOTO: CHRISTINA GAPIC

Emily Andras has built a fan-favourite in Wynonna Earp and a reputation as one of the most creative and empowering showrunners in the business

“Emily is the queen of fan interaction and does it with an open heart and an energy I’ve never seen before. It’s a huge part of why the fandom is what it is. They take their cues from her.”

– Noelle Carbone

“*Wynonna Earp* is so much more than a series,” Liszewski says. “The show has fostered a community that’s kind, inclusive and welcoming. Personally, I’ve met so many people through *Wynonna* that are now my best friends and family. I couldn’t imagine my life without them, and *Wynonna Earp* gave me that.”

The fan phenomenon hasn’t gone unnoticed. Earpers have been the subject of at least one academic paper (“Earpers, interactions, and emotions: *Wynonna Earp*, ‘the best fandom ever’”), and numerous think pieces appearing in the likes of *Variety* and *The New York Times*. The #FightForWynonna story has also been widely covered by publications as varied as the *Globe and Mail*, *Hollywood Reporter*, *Vulture* and *Den of Geek*.

If the show’s fans define what it is to be a cult audience, they’ve been, to date, a heckuva powerful cult. Aside from the People’s Choice win, (the show wasn’t originally on the ballot; fans made it a “write-in”), Earpers have also played a significant part in previous season renewals. Liszewski recalls that after the first season it took Earpers “three weeks of making noise on social media and emailing to get across to the network why they loved the show so much.” And they’ve been doing the same thing for every subsequent season.

Andras is keenly aware of just how special that level of fan involvement really is. “Our ratings have been fine, our critical acclaim is good, but without a doubt the fandom has mobilized and told the networks, ‘We want more,’” she says. “In an era with 500 scripted shows a season, you just can’t buy that passion and engagement. Networks are really looking at that.”

Full fan engagement

Back in season one though, who knew? *Wynonna Earp* writer Brendon Yorke remembers fan engagement as “a fairly gradual, yet steady climb.” Even so, it wasn’t

long before the writers realized there was something out of the ordinary about this show.

“It became increasingly obvious that there wasn’t just a growing number of people who thought the show was worth checking out and keeping up with, but there was a growing number of people for whom the show was a fundamental ingredient to the very essence of their being,” says Yorke.

Weighty stuff for a series that is, after all, based on a comic book about a gun-slinging, demon-battling descendent of legendary frontiersman Wyatt Earp. But while the show’s wild ride of plot twists (punctuated by zingy quips) is on one level pure entertainment, on another it has something important to say: It’s unabashedly feminist and queer.

“It makes me realize how much of a niche market we really tapped,” says Andras. “I think there were people looking for something a little subversive, a little bit more diverse, a little more LGBTQ-friendly, and at the same time really fun.”

Wynonna Earp is all of those things. It turns the conventional western upside down — instead of laconic dudes riding around doling out justice, it’s women and people of colour and of different sexualities. Interestingly, sharing that unique world directly with fans via live tweeting was one of the ways the show first caught on.

“We were proud of our show, but were aware it was a weird sell,” says Andras. “It had a weird title. It was very high concept. So, we got together and poked jokes at our own show and were excited about it. I feel like that genuine delight is missing sometimes in the social media space, and people responded to that.”

Live tweeting also helped make the show “appointment viewing,” something Andras thinks is underrated in the age of streaming. “There’s something to be said for ending on a Friday night with a cliffhanger and having to wait an entire week to find out what happens — the fans love speculating and talking about it.”



Andras and Wynonna Earp have inspired countless pieces of fan art and fanfiction. Andras even has her own fan following known as "Fandras"



Earpers' enthusiasm for epic plot twists has always helped fuel the writers' fire to keep 'em coming. "We burn through stories so quickly," says Andras. "It's a challenge because the structure has six act breaks, so it's constantly trying to find those moments that are shocks, and at the same time, it has to be genuine and the emotions have to be real. But I relish the challenge; it's one of my favourite things about the show."

Andras also relishes being on Twitter, where she has more than 66,000 followers. Her frequent tweets help followers feel directly connected, imploring her by name in fan reaction videos when one of those cliffhangers leaves them on a ledge more precipitous than her characters. It's a level of intensity that writer Noelle Carbone, who joined the show in its third season, found both inspiring and daunting.

"I watched the fan engagement over the first two seasons and saw how incredible it was ... It's a lot

of pressure coming onto a show that is so beloved, especially by the LGBTQ community."

Carbone adds, "it's a community that has been painfully underserved in mainstream television." And she's right — historically there are multiple instances where LGBTQ characters, if they exist at all, have been disposable — literally, as in the infamous season of 2016 when some 25 lesbian characters met their deaths in short order, fulfilling the TV trope known as "bury your gays." Audiences were appalled by the consistent offing of non-heterosexual characters, so Andras did something she'd never done before; she dropped a major spoiler, publicly guaranteeing the two queer characters, Waverly Earp and Nicole Haught (a.k.a. #WayHaught), would survive the season.

"In the LGBTQ community, especially amongst teenagers, there was a real sense of despair with young lesbians, in particular, seeing themselves

get killed in exorbitant quantities,” says Andras. “I thought it was really important to make it clear that we had trust with that community, which went a long way to winning some good will among our fans.”

Giving 'em what they need vs. what they want

The show's networks seemed to get it too — never asking the writers to tone down the LGBTQ characters or the show's feminist outlook, in part, perhaps, because the show proved a hit in unexpected places, like the American south. But the plot reveal was something of an anomaly — ultimately the writers have never lost sight of the fact that the fans aren't the storytellers — they are.

“The story has to be told in the context of who these characters are. That's my one rule. If you don't betray the audience through how the characters would react to a certain situation, mostly they'll stay with you,” says Andras.

Besides, as Yorke points out, it's important to distinguish between fans (“very vested followers”) and audience (“the hundreds of thousand of viewers across various networks and platforms”), and making sure as writers to serve both.

“The most satisfying things to put on screen are events that the fans/audience didn't even know they wanted,” says Yorke. “It all comes down to basic good storytelling. Sometimes not giving the fans something they think they want, or giving them something even better than the thing they thought they wanted, can be the most satisfying creative decisions to make.”

That said, the show's fans are never far from the writers' minds.

“Obviously we care about what the fans think,” says Carbone, “and we read what they post...Fan engagement — especially at this level — is a two-way street. We can't take all the love and ignore the criticisms.”

After three seasons, of course, criticism was inevitable, but Earpers' legendary goodwill has outstripped the negativity of naysayers and embraced new writers like Carbone. That embrace is due in no small part to Andras.

The personal touch

“To be honest,” says Carbone, “all the things the writers worry about when engaging with the fans — being funny, being charming, being witty — the pressure is off because we know we're not gonna be nearly as charming or witty or hilarious as Emily. She is the queen of fan interaction and does it with an



After news of a delayed fourth season broke, fan-funded #FightForWynonna billboards lit up Times Square in support of the show's writers, cast and crew

open heart and an energy I've never seen before. It's a huge part of why the fandom is what it is. They take their cues from her.”

Andras has never expected *Wynonna Earp* writers, or any writers for that matter, to follow her lead when it comes to social media though. “Some showrunners say that being on Twitter is ‘My nightmare and the story is my way of talking to the audience,’ and I really support that. It's just another tool in your toolbox.”

Yet another tool, at least for genre shows, is the phenomenon of the con. In *Wynonna Earp*'s case, fans have created cons strictly for Earpers — Earp Fest in Lisbon, Earpercon UK and Eh Con Canada, for example. In 2018, the inaugural edition of Eh Con featured the entire *Wynonna Earp* writing room.

“It made my heart swell to see these people behind the scenes, these awkward introverts like me celebrated,” says Andras. “The con also showed an

“This show belongs to its fandom like no other I’ve ever seen, so I’m glad the Earpers became aware [of the production delay] and were given the chance to help turn the tide ... it’s their show, too.”

– Emily Andras

episode, and all the writers got to hear the response from the audience. To hear them gasping and cheering and yelling — I wish for every writer to get to watch their show with an engaged audience like that, it makes you realize the struggle was worth it.”

More recently, at April’s ClexaCon, (a “multi-fandom event for LGBTQ women & allies”) a standing room-only *Wynonna Earp* panel saw more than a thousand fans attend, many of whom would no doubt identify with journalist/fan Liszewski’s point of connection to the show. “*Wynonna Earp* reminds me of shows like *Buffy* that really spoke to me, changed my life, and got right into my heart,” she admits.

In Liszewski’s case, the show changed her life so much so that she’s become its primary media champion, teaming up with Kevin Bachelder and Bonnie Ferrar, (hosts of *Wynonna Earp* fan podcast *Tales of the Black Badge*) to create the website *Fight for Wynonna*, a rallying point for Earpers. And although the slow-moving financial machinations are daunting, Liszewski holds out hope for the show’s continuation, saying the “real-life heroes” are the writers, cast and crew, adding that “as Waverly Earp says in season one, ‘Heroes always win.’”

Andras and her writers sure hope that’s true.

“We have a lot of typically nutty ideas for season four that we’re ready to unleash,” says Andras, adding that everyone is “more or less ready to go” if they get the greenlight. Of course, a fourth season would also be the best reward for Andras going public about what was going on when production was put on hold.

“My feelings [about being public] are complicated. We have a really wonderful team of producers behind the scenes ... busting their butts trying to save the show. So, I think it’s important to stay encouraging while also allowing them time to do their job. That being said, this show belongs to its fandom like no other I’ve ever seen, so I’m glad the Earpers became aware and were given the chance to help turn the tide ... It’s their show, too, and they have the right to try and save it while there’s still a chance.”

Right now, a happy ending is definitely in the offing. On April 11, IDW tweeted its appreciation of fan support saying, “We love *Wynonna* just as much as everyone else, & have appreciated all of your support. Everyone involved with this show is working behind the scenes to bring back another season. We’ll keep you updated when we have more to share.”

Whatever happens, one thing is beyond doubt: *Wynonna Earp* is a veritable phenom. In fact, truly grasping the hows and whys of its success may be a bit like “trying to catch lightning in a bottle” as Andras says. Still, there are *Wynonna Earp* lessons others might do well to heed. Carbone sums it up pithily: “If you don’t love the shit out of the show you’re making, the audience will be able to tell.” And maybe another lesson is to encourage fans in their sense of ownership.

“It really feels like we all own the show, we’re family,” says Andras. “And at the end of the day, that’s what anyone wants, for people to fall in love with your characters and the tale you’re trying to tell. What a gift that is.” ■

LAUGHS IMITATE LIFE

The writers behind comedy *JANN* borrowed from musician Jann Arden's real life to craft a series that's uproarious, poignant — and a genuine Canadian hit

By Mark Dillon

Looking back, it sounds like a no-brainer: A half-hour, single-camera comedy with celebrity singer-songwriter Jann Arden playing a heightened version of herself, like Larry David on *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. She had already made Canada laugh on *Rick Mercer Report*, bumbling through zip-lining, the CN Tower EdgeWalk and other misadventures.

But as *JANN* co-creator Leah Gauthier explains, the idea gestated and took some retooling.

"Jann and I had talked for a long time about doing a show, but nothing happened until I was at her house and said, 'Let's just write down what we would want it to look like,'" recalls the Vancouver-based Gauthier, who had worked on the production end of Arden's tours in between casting and producing reality series.

"Jann has an amazing reputation and everybody loves her for good reason. I knew she would open a lot of doors," Gauthier continues. "I knew the opportunity would come to me relatively easily, so it's what I was going to do with it that would make the difference. It was on us to produce something that wasn't [bad]."

Toronto's Project 10 Productions was on board and convinced Arden — who had also been a guest co-host on CTV talk show *The Social* and played a supporting role on CBC comedy *Workin' Moms* — that she was prime for a bigger TV role.

"I've been inundated with TV show offers for the last 15 years: Cooking shows, talk shows, travel shows

— you name it — and I just couldn't do them," Arden says from her hometown of Calgary, where *JANN*'s six episodes were directed by Ron Murphy and produced along with Seven24 Films. "But my manager Bruce Allen said, 'You'll know when the time is right.'"

In the series' final iteration, self-absorbed Jann tries to resuscitate a sagging music career while getting over a split from girlfriend Cynthia (Sharon Taylor) and trading off responsibility for her Alzheimer's-stricken mother Nora (Deborah Grover) with sister Max (Zoie Palmer). Meanwhile, ambitious manager Cale (Elena Juatco) is looking to usurp control of Jann's career from easygoing Todd (Jason Blicher).

But what Gauthier and Arden initially put to paper was markedly different.

"We didn't have Jann playing a version of herself," Gauthier says. "We had a concept in which she was running a trailer park, and that morphed into the idea of her owning a strip mall and living above one of the stores. Then we took a step back and thought she should just be the easiest form of herself. She was nervous going into it, so playing close to herself was the natural way to get her comfortable."

Arden says she enjoys her character being unsympathetic, but at the same time was "mindful of what people would perceive as real and not real. She just doesn't get that it's not all about her and probably



Co-created by Jann Arden, Leah Gauthier and Jennica Harper, JANN has scored top ratings by gently mining Arden's real life for big laughs



The JANN writers' room (top) regularly spent time with the show's star to get inspired. Showrunner Jennica Harper (middle) and co-creator Leah Gauthier (right), brought Mike McPhaden (left) in for his experience in structural story-breaking and Nelu Handa (top right) for her comedy chops and approach to diversity.



“I knew [Jann] would open a lot of doors. I knew the opportunity would come to me relatively easily, so it’s what I was going to do with it that would make the difference.”

– Leah Gauthier

never will, which I think is funny. But it’s important that the character has some redeemable quality and endears herself on some level.”

Her most relatable moments come from her interactions with her mother. In the third episode “Weekend at Charley’s,” written by Mike McPhaden, Jann barks at Nora for her forgetfulness and Nora calls her out for it. A close-up reaction on Jann shows the guilt she feels. It’s a moment that viewers will recognize as borrowed from Arden’s real life, as she has been very public — and even wrote a book — about caring for her mother Joan Richards, who passed away last year after battling Alzheimer’s.

“That was my mom when she would say, ‘You always sound mad at me’ — and I did — so the writers put that in,” Arden says. “I want the show to be an enlightening vehicle about dementia. There are a million families dealing with this in Canada. We bring some laughs to it and Deborah Grover is amazing, and it’s an opportunity to educate because there’s a lot of shame attached to the disease.”

Their pitch document attracted Bell Media, which eyed the show for its main CTV network. As Arden and Gauthier were newbies to creating scripted TV, they knew they needed an experienced writer as showrunner. Enter Jennica Harper, whose scripting credits included *Cardinal* and *Motive*. She discussed the series with Project 10’s Ben Murray at the Banff World Media Festival, and that led to a phone interview with Arden and Gauthier.

“I know my strengths, but I’m also aware of my weaknesses,” Gauthier says. “When we built our team, I needed empathetic teachers to help navigate this. Jennica was a natural fit because she had all the skills I didn’t. We interviewed a lot of people, but she came out of the gate super-prepared. She had read the material, thought about it, and came up with alternative story ideas.”

Harper, also based in Vancouver, reflects, “Who wouldn’t want to be part of this show? I thought their pitch document was so funny. What they had on the page sparked a lot of other ideas.” One of those, which she suggested in their interview, was a running gag about singer-songwriter Sarah McLachlan being Jann’s arch-enemy.

“The idea of somebody thinking of Sarah McLachlan — who is extraordinarily talented and by all accounts generous and kind — as a nemesis who needs to be taken down made me laugh,” Harper continues. “That’s the kind of thing I pitched them on — places we could go in terms of the world and the character setups.”

The trio sealed the deal after hitting it off over dinner in Vancouver. “We have similar tastes in what we watch. What excites us in comedy are shows with many layers and tonal dimensions. We love shows that go very silly but also get to something relatable or heartfelt,” says Harper, who shares creator credit with Gauthier and Arden.

They felt their way through deciding which other elements from Arden’s real life to include. One of the biggest alterations was giving Jann a sister — one who feels overwhelmed with her fourth child on the way — when in real life she has two brothers, one of whom is in prison.

“Instead of touching on any of that and potentially treading into hurtful places, we decided to go in a different direction,” Harper explains. “We thought it would be fun if Jann had a female sibling to butt heads with — one who was similar in a lot of ways and different in others.”

Despite airing on CTV, the series plays like a cable show with its tonal shifts, occasional swearing — with offending words bleeped out — and boundary-pushing elements such as bisexual Jann kissing another woman. Notes from Bell Media executives

The room relocated for one week to Arden's house outside Calgary ... It was sort of a writers' summer camp: The group slept there and bonded over movies and hikes. Arden chimed in during story meetings while preparing meals for everybody

Corrie Coe, Sarah Fowlie and Chris Kelley helped the writers land in the appropriate spot.

"Their feedback was more in the form of questions than dictating to us," Harper explains. "This show takes some chances for network comedy, so we had to figure out what are good chances and what would take us over the edge for CTV's viewership, as well as the balance of comedy and dramatic moments."

The writers cite many single-camera comedies as influences, including British series *Fleabag* with its issue-laden lead character, although they didn't want to go as dark; and *The Comeback*, which features an actress similarly trying to rebound in her career, although they didn't want to go as cringey. Harper notes a resemblance to *Veep*, "if you actually cared about everybody instead of nobody. You can root for everybody on our show, which makes it warmer and more network-friendly."

When recruiting the rest of the writing staff, the creators looked for somebody seasoned in structural story-breaking to compensate for Gauthier's lack of experience. Harper says Toronto-based McPhaden, whose credits include *Corner Gas Animated* and *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, "filled that gap, as well as being really funny and being a male voice in the room."

Meanwhile, Nelu Handa, a writer/performer on *Baroness von Sketch Show* and *The Beaverton*, was somebody Arden had in mind after they met as actors on *Workin' Moms*. She impressed Gauthier and Harper with the suggestion the Cale character be a woman of colour — East Asian, ultimately — instead of another white male like her rival Todd, as was originally conceived. It's part of a mission for Handa, who created *Yas Queen*, a monthly comedy showcase for women of colour.

"I've always been an advocate for helping women of colour and doing anything I can to get

more diversity on the scene," Handa says. "Calgary has new immigrant populations and Cale is very much mainstream and of the times. And she's just one of the gang. Having characters who are diverse but normalized is impactful."

In addition to breaking stories, Handa collaborated with Gauthier on the script for the fourth episode "Major Party Foul," in which Jann plans Nora's 75th birthday party and it entails blackmailing Rick Mercer (playing himself) to perform. (Harper ranks it as her favourite episode.) Handa also got to play Cale's nemesis Sage, a hard-as-nails publisher whom Cale can't convince to take Jann's memoir in episode five, "You've Been Soft Served," written by Gauthier and Harper.

The room kicked off with two weeks in Bruce Allen's Vancouver office before relocating for one week to Arden's house outside Calgary, which resembles the one used on the show with a cottage next door. It was a sort of writers' summer camp: The group slept there and bonded over movies and hikes. Arden chimed in during story meetings while preparing meals for everybody and going about her domestic chores.

"She was very much a part of the writing room in Vancouver, where there was no cooking to be done," Toronto-based McPhaden says with a laugh. "At her place, there was a little more distance. By then we had outlines and I think we'd earned her trust. She had trust in Leah and Jennica from the beginning, but from Vancouver and the first documents we created, she got the sense we all had our eyes on the same course. So, she could just keep an ear open for ideas she liked or thought might be problematic."

Having this rare window into Arden's world inspired the writers. For example, they were amused that she would vacuum while they were brainstorming. So McPhaden incorporated that into his episode, in which a lifestyle journalist's attempt to



A scene from "Major Party Foul," Jennica Harper's favourite episode, in which Jann plans her on-screen mom's 75th birthday party and blackmails Rick Mercer

interview Jann in her home is similarly thwarted by her housekeeping.

Jason Filiatrault, the show's only Calgary-based writer, rounded out the team. He participated in the development process, which he characterizes as "helping put together the pieces of what an episode could look like." He was also present at Arden's house, although his time was limited as he had just come off a season of Vancouver-shot Netflix horror series *The Order*, on which he had worked with Harper.

He was particularly impressed by the show's casual approach to Jann's sexuality. "The idea that it was a show embracing bisexuality and that aspect of a nationally known person in a character was tertiary," he says. "It was never discussed as a thing worth worrying about. It was just a fact of the character and they created the show around that."

Filiatrault split scripting duties with Harper on season ender "WWJD (What Will Jann Do?), based on Harper's story. They stacked the deck with cliffhangers

to stoke interest in another season: What will happen on Jann's tour? Will she break up again with Cynthia and get back together with tour manager Reggie (Julian Black Antelope)? How will Max balance a risky pregnancy with Nora's needs?

Viewers will likely get answers to these questions. According to CTV and Numeris, the series' average audience grew to 1.1 million for the April 18 broadcast of episode five (including two days of PVR playback), making *JANN* the most-watched Canadian comedy this broadcast year.

Although a CTV spokesperson could not confirm a renewal, chances are good for a return of the series sprung from ideas Gauthier and Arden casually put to paper.

"It's been the greatest experience of my adult life and I'm so grateful for it," Gauthier says. "I'm excited to continue to do it. Now that we know the characters it will be so much fun to write to their personalities. I can't wait." ■

CANADIAN HORROR STORY

Screenwriters chime in on the sinister streak running through the collective Canuck psyche

By Matthew Hays

It is a truth universally acknowledged that somewhere deep down in the Canadian spirit there are very, very dark and creepy things lurking. Some of the most profitable films in our nation's history have been horror, everything from the early work of David Cronenberg (once famously dismissed as a mere shlockmeister) and various other twisted tax-shelter projects to our own Saturday-morning horror parody, *The Hilarious House of Frightenstein*.

While horror is one of the most resilient genres, it comes in fits and starts, declared dead one moment only to stage a zombie-like recovery at another. And right now, horror is definitely experiencing a renaissance, with Canadian-written and -produced series like *Van Helsing*, *Slasher*, *The Order* and *Wynonna Earp* sitting shoulder-to-shoulder with U.S. series like *The Walking Dead* to expand themes, ideas and boundaries of the genre.

Its connection to Canada is one that has long been pondered, with some arguing that horror's very outsider status makes its kinship with such a remote and frozen country entirely logical. It was Cronenberg himself who once said that "No horror film is truly mainstream," a telling statement about a marginalized genre from Canada's most recognizable auteur.

So, horror and Canadian cinema are connected, in that both are seen as marginal.

The Canuck-horror connection makes perfect sense to Emily Andras, creator of *Wynonna Earp*. "I think we are used to seeing ourselves as the 'other' and as underdogs. After all, we live directly in the shadow of the greatest god/monster nation on Earth."

It's an echo of Pierre Trudeau's thoughts on Canada's relationship with the U.S. "We love and loathe, depend on and fear our southern neighbours, and as much as we try to deny it, much of our cultural identity comes from a desire to survive them."

Aaron Martin, who created and wrote much of the Netflix hit *Slasher*, argues horror is actually something that runs through many, if not most national cultures, but might just stand out more because our nice-guy reputation makes it counterintuitive. "I think every culture has its own connection to horror," he says. "It might stand out more when it comes to Canada because we're perceived as being so nice. So, when you have us polite types ripping people apart or sewing people together against their will, it's going to be a little more shocking."

Certainly, some of Canada's unique connection to horror can be found in our harrowing landscape.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: STUDIO OURS



Aaron Martin, creator of Slasher, (both top), believes it's far easier for Canadians to tap into that base physical fear of "I'm going to die just from being outside!" than people from other countries, while Wynonna Earp creator Emily Andras (bottom) thinks horror is having a moment right now because the world is dark and divided and people are looking for stories that can express and explain why that is

“All those bleak winters
open up the idea of overcoming
difficult circumstances that are
tied to the land. It lends itself
to parable and myth.”

– Jonathan Lloyd Walker

As critic Katherine Monk put it in her 2001 book on Canadian cinema *Weird Sex and Snowshoes*, “Death is an intrinsic part of the Canadian landscape and as much a part of our national psyche as weird sex and snow imagery.”

“Speaking of survival, most of our huge country is still terrifyingly wild,” notes Andras. “One wrong turn on the way to the cottage, and you’re fighting frostbite in an old growth forest while outrunning a rabid grizzly bear. That lives deep in our souls.”

And for Andras, that’s part of why a great Canadian horror story is rooted at least in part in “a sense of place and a hint of history, both of the land and of other Canadian horror content that has preceded the work, with of course, some classic Canuck self-deprecating humour to break the tension now and then.”

Shelley Eriksen is headed into the writers’ room for season two of the revenge-werewolf mashup *The Order*, and she says Canadian horror is all about location, location and location. “We’ve just come out of a hard winter. Let’s face it: The Canadian environment wants to kill you. You go outside for much of the year and you’re entering an environment that is happy to destroy you. You’re under assault! Getting through the winter is a daily struggle.”

Eriksen says reading *Survival*, Margaret Atwood’s landmark 1972 book of literary criticism, led to a series of a-ha moments. “That book explained so much to me about the Canadian character, about the meaning of landscape in literature and film. She really showed how many characters in Canlit die in the elements.”

“There is certainly a connection between countries in the northern hemisphere and horror,” confirms Jonathan Lloyd Walker, showrunner for post-apocalyptic vampire series *Van Helsing*. “All those bleak winters open up the idea of overcoming difficult circumstances that are tied to the land. It lends itself to parable and myth. It seems some of the stories are about teaching children to be wary of danger.

It also supplies an obvious adrenaline rush: The danger of the unknown.”

Martin says the survival instinct didn’t occupy a huge place in his psyche, but acknowledges it might tap into many Canadian’s deep-rooted fears. “My whole life has been in urban Canada, and other than an occasional blizzard or tornado warning, it’s pretty simple to survive up here,” he contends. “I think that it’s far easier for Canadians, however, to tap into that base physical fear of ‘I’m going to die from just being outside!’ than people from other countries. One of my favourite Canadian horror films is Adam MacDonald’s *Backcountry*. It uses the great outdoors — and the psychic impact it has on people — as ‘the big bad.’ It’s terrifying, plays internationally, and yet is uniquely Canadian.”

Walker says that working in horror can itself feel precarious, as “you don’t want to get pigeonholed as a writer. The genre can get weighty at times.” And here, he echoes the sentiments of many filmmakers associated with horror (including Wes Craven and Clive Barker), who have argued that once you get branded as a creator of horror, it’s tough to shift into other areas.

Part of the ability to write horror comes from a vantage point that could be seen as Canadian, Walker notes. “You have to start with characters that people will relate to, ordinary people. And you have to make people care about them. So, part of the genre comes with building compassion for characters.”

And then, Walker acknowledges, it’s about putting them in the worst circumstances imaginable. “Most of us try to live our lives within the lines. What if all of that went away? When you write horror, you have to put yourself into the mindset of what is going to mess with people,” he says. “What is going to make people dig their fingers into the couch? What am I trying to get from people? It’s much different than writing conventional drama. It really is about an extreme escapism. And it opens up a lot to think about: What makes people really frightened?”



Current Van Helsing showrunner Jonathan Lloyd Walker (top) says we're in a very dark political and cultural place, people are fearful and horror feeds into that paranoia, but Shelley Eriksen, writer and exec producer on The Order (bottom), says this current horror renaissance has been percolating for years

Martin says his early horror influences were clear. “I loved *The Changeling* and *Prom Night*, and grew up on a lot of slasher movies in the ’80s,” he recalls. “I didn’t even realize a lot of them were Canadian at the time. I think part of our appeal is that Canadians seem very nice on the surface. But if you look at these movies, something is lurking underneath. We don’t do it in real life, but we do it in our movies.”

After executive producing *Saving Hope*, Martin says he wanted to prove he could do something other than soapy relationship shows. “I wrote *Slasher* on spec,” he says. He went on to sell it to Chiller and then Netflix picked it up. “Horror is different. The fun part is the kills. In the writers’ room, you’re having meetings about how to chop people up. ‘How do I cut someone in half with a chainsaw?’ But it’s not that simple,” he admits. “You do have to make people care about characters before you kill them. And the thing about writing horror is, the audience comes to it with a great knowledge and appreciation of the genre and its history. So, you really have to deliver. You have to figure out new ways to shock the audience.”

Part of Canada’s proclivity for horror is removed from lofty cultural theory. The attachment is far more practical than that. With limited budgets (or no budget at all) and a star system that has mainly bailed for L.A. or New York, Canada’s means of production lend themselves perfectly to the genre. “The economics of horror films works perfectly in Canada,” says Eriksen. “That’s part of the thrill. You don’t need a huge budget. You can do things with very little money, ingenuity and good ideas.” Unlike a lot of other low-budget films, she explains, there is a significant community built around horror and it’s always hungry for new additions to the genre. “The audience is always out there. Simply put, horror is a budget-friendly way to get teenagers and young adults into movie theatres.”

“The fact is,” adds Walker, “on an extremely limited budget, you can still tell a very horrifying story. Even with limited resources; it feels like you have no limits.”

If the “Why here?” has been answered, “Why Now?” is a little harder to nail down. Zombies, monsters, body-snatchers and serial killers are all experiencing resurrections, largely serving as go-to allegories for current political and existential crises. “I think a lot of the resurgence has to do with *American Horror Story*,” says Martin. “It revitalized it as a genre of TV. And horror sells well around the world; it travels well, which is something producers and networks think about.”

“We are in a very dark political and cultural place,” says Walker. “We’re at a tipping point, with the rise of the alt-right, with fear being used as a political

weapon throughout the world. Campaigns are being waged on fear, not hope. People feel hopeless. Horror feeds into that paranoia.

“If you look at *The Walking Dead*, it is very clever, because you often don’t see things coming. The show is constantly taking us off guard, especially when we lose characters who are central to the show. I remember watching the first season and having the feeling of being thrown off. There are other examples of horror becoming a cultural phenomenon, in particular Jordan Peele’s *Get Out*.”

“Horror is absolutely having a moment right now,” says Andras. “It’s both popular and increasingly seen as legitimate storytelling. See how well Jordan Peele is doing. The world feels dark and divided right now, and people are looking for stories that can both express and explain why.”

Eriksen isn’t entirely convinced about the timing, just because of the lag in production, with concepts taking years to blossom into actual movies or TV series. “I’m mystified by the horror renaissance right now, in the sense that we’re *living* in a horror renaissance. So, shouldn’t we be seeing boatloads of musicals and comedies being released? However, knowing the long arc of how things get made, I’d guess the latest ‘classy’ horror — you know, where TV stars are directing or you managed to land Toni Collette — we’ve been seeing, got its footing long before Trump was elected, and just happened to stick the landing perfectly.”

If horror is about being marginalized on some level, Walker believes the new push for diversity in writers’ rooms and the director’s chair is leading to new ideas and perspectives. “People who haven’t traditionally been telling stories — indigenous people, black and Latino people and people of colour, LGBT people — are now getting access, and the ability to tell their stories, or to illustrate their fears. This creates whole new worlds of horror and fear. I look forward to more of these stories being told.”

Andras strongly believes that the possibilities are endless. After all, the horror genre has been popular since cinema’s beginnings, unlike various other once-popular genres that have since bit the dust (the Musical and Western being two of the most obvious examples). The horror genre is rich precisely because its history is ripe for ongoing cannibalism: It’s the genre that never stops devouring itself, to the sado-masochistic cheers of a diehard audience. “You just need would-be victims worth cheering for,” she says, “and a monster worth hiding from. Plus twists that feel earned.”

And after a pause, Andras adds a distinctly Canadian possibility: “When in doubt, toss in a rabid grizzly bear. Never fails.” ■



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DAEGAN FRYKLIND — Best New Series Script

The Bletchley Circle: San Francisco "Presidio"

Currently writer/co-EP on *Shadow and Bone* (Netflix/21 Laps), Daegan was previously writer/co-EP on *In the Dark* (CW) and had *Project 13* and *Feral* in development with CW/WBTV/Brownstone Entertainment. Prior to this, Daegan was creator/showrunner of *Bitten* for SPACE/SyFy. Previous credits include *The Bletchley Circle: San Francisco*, *Motive*, *Being Erica*, *jPod*, *Robson Arms* and *Cold Squad*. Hardware includes awards for *jPod*, *Edison* and *Leo*, and nominations for *Robson Arms* and *Motive*.

JOSH SAGER & JEROME SIMPSON — Children's

Wishfart "I Wear This Hat Ironically"

Josh and Jerome have written more than a million hours of cartoons. (Unverified.) Josh is a party dude. Jerome does machines. Josh and Jerome were a Writing Duo from 2011 to 2018. Highlights include showrunning the digital episodes of *The Bagel & Becky Show*, and winning 7% of a BAFTA nomination for *Counterfeit Cat*. Josh and Jerome are both Tauruses, and so is Jerome's car. (Josh's car is a Sagittarius.) They remain a Friend Duo.



RUPINDER GILL — Comedy Series

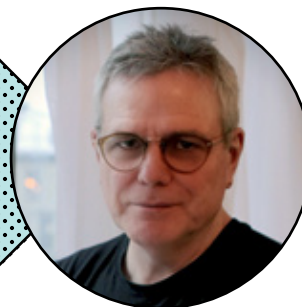
Schitt's Creek "RIP Moira Rose"

Rupinder is the author of the bestselling Leacock-nominated book *On the Outside Looking Indian*, and has contributed to *The Onion*, *McSweeney's* and *O Magazine*. In television, she has written for *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* (CBC), *Sunnyside* (Citytv), *The Beaverton* (CTV), *The Stanley Dynamic* (YTV), *Working the Engels* (Global/NBC), *Schitt's Creek* (CBC/Pop) and *I Feel Bad* (NBC). She enjoys watching TV, petting dogs — and getting other people to write her bios.

MICHAEL MCNAMARA — Documentary

Catwalk: Tales from the Cat Show Circuit

Michael and Judy Holm's Markham Street Films makes dramas and documentaries about culture, science and social issues. He is drawn to stories about ordinary people with extraordinary passions and talents, which led to his outsider art series, *Driven by Vision*, and *Fanboy Confessional*, a series about pop culture obsessives. He wrote and co-directed (with Aaron Hancox) *Catwalk: Tales from the Cat Show Circuit*. Despite an allergy to cat fur, more feline films are forthcoming. Michael received a WGC Screenwriting Award in 2015 for *The Cholesterol Question*.





SARAH DODD — Drama Series

Cardinal: Blackfly Season "Red"

Sarah is currently the executive producer in residence at the Pacific Screenwriting Program, where she is developing an original eight-part crime series. She was the showrunner of *Cardinal: Blackfly Season*, which was nominated for 14 Canadian Screen Awards, including Best Writing. Recent drama credits include *Cardinal: Until the Night*. Last year, Sarah was honoured to receive the Sondra Kelly Award from the WGC.

JEREMY BOXEN — Feature Film

22 Chaser

Jeremy feels pretty lucky to have spent the last decade writing and producing from one end of Canada to the other and in the U.S. and Mexico, all with lovely, talented weirdos. Most recently, he was co-EP on *Killjoys* (Seasons 1 & 2) and *Orphan Black* (Season 5), and EP and co-showrunner on *Imposters*. In addition to *22 Chaser*, his feature writing experience includes the comedy-thriller *Cottage Country*.



TIM MCKEON — MOW & Miniseries

Odd Squad: World Turned Odd

Tim is a three-time Emmy-winning writer. He is co-creator, executive producer and head writer for *Odd Squad*. Other writing credits include Disney's *Gravity Falls* and Cartoon Network's *Adventure Time*. He enjoys pie of all kinds.

ALEX EPSTEIN & LISA HUNTER — Shorts & Webseries

We've Come to the End of Our Time

Alex is the Narrative Director at Compulsion Games. His video game credits include *We Happy Few*, *Contrast* and Spearhead Games' *Stories: The Path of Destiny*. As a screenwriter, Alex co-wrote the Genie-winning *Bon Cop Bad Cop* and co-created the comedy series *Naked Josh*, which ran for three seasons. Lisa, meanwhile, is a writer for Compulsion Games/Microsoft Studios, where she co-wrote *We Happy Few* and the upcoming game *Lightbearer*. Lisa co-created the kids' series *Big Top Academy* and *The Wacky Word Show* and was head writer for the International Emmy-nominated show *Look Kool*.



COLE BASTEDO — Tweens & Teens

Star Falls "The Picnic Auction"

Cole is a WGC Screenwriting Award-winning writer, and was featured in *Playback Magazine's* Top Ten to Watch in 2010. He requests that you continue to watch him. Cole spends his time yo-yoing between Toronto and Los Angeles, and yo-yoing between 160 and 170 pounds. It's a bit of a binge problem, he thinks, but he tries to exercise a few times a week to even it out. It's just, getting up in the morning is SOOO HARD.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE NOMINATION!



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San Francisco, "Presidio"*

Joel Thomas Hynes
Little Dog, "Round One"

Christopher Roberts
Little Dog, "Round Five"

CHILDREN'S

John Hazlett
Wishart, "Litterfools Ain't Cool"
(co-written with Lienne Sawatsky
& Dan Williams)

DOCUMENTARY

Michael McNamara
*Catwalk: Tales from the
Cat Show Circuit*

FEATURE FILM

Jeremy Boxen
22 CHASER (a film produced
by CFC Features)

COMEDY SERIES

Sonja Bennett
*Letterkenny, "A Letterkenny
Christmas: The Three Wise Men"*

DRAMA SERIES

Sarah Dodd
*Cardinal: Blackfly Season,
Season 2, "Red"*



22 CHASER

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TWEENS & TEENS - STAR FALLS - "THE PICNIC AUCTION"

JEROME SIMPSON

CHILDREN'S - WISHFART - "I WEAR THIS HAT IRONICALLY"

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Special Awards Winners



Emily Andras — WGC Showrunner Award

Emily Andras is 2019's deserving winner of the WGC Showrunner Award. Congratulations, Emily! From her first experiences running writers' rooms on teen drama *Instant Star* and critically acclaimed series *Lost Girl*, to creating and leading People's Choice Award-winning hit series *Wynonna Earp*, she has cemented her reputation as one of the most passionate, innovative and empowering showrunners in the business.

Bruce Smith — McGrath Service Award

In addition to being one of Canada's most successful screenwriters, working as a showrunner on well-known series like *19-2*, Bruce's service to the Guild has been nothing short of exemplary. Bruce's contributions to the Guild's bargaining teams have been invaluable since he first took on the role in 2006. He is a passionate, intelligent negotiator and we are so fortunate to have him on our side. Bruce is also no stranger to excelling in his chosen craft of screenwriting. He won the 2012 WGC Screenwriting Award for Movies and Miniseries for *John A: Birth of A Country* and he went on to win the coveted WGC Showrunner Award in 2015.



Jinder Oujla-Chalmers — Sondra Kelly Award

The WGC is pleased to name Jinder Oujla-Chalmers as 2019's recipient of the Sondra Kelly Award. Her project, *The Komagata Maru*, is based on the true story of the 1914 voyage of the ship of the same name. Carrying 376 passengers from India, the Komagata Maru sailed from Hong Kong, to India and then Vancouver, where 352 of its passengers were denied entry to Canada. It's in this setting that the proposed miniseries tells the tale of passenger Preetham and how she becomes an emblem of strength and change in Vancouver Indian society. The Sondra Kelly Award will help Jinder with additional scripting and getting her passion project *The Komagata Maru* onto screens far and wide.

Pat Holden and Amir Kahn mouee — Jim Burt Screenwriting Prize (tied)

Pat started his career in advertising. This led to commercials direction, and forays into shorts and features. His second movie, the seminal *Awaydays*, opened the London Film Festival. Pat's TV pilot *Helios Rising* won the ISA Fast Track Fellowship in 2017 and his drama *The Beekeeper's Daughter* was supported by the Harold Greenberg Fund in 2018. He received this prize for his latest screenplay, *Mirsada*. A recent émigré from the U.K., Pat is focusing on screenwriting and spending time with his wife and children.

Amir is an Iranian-Canadian writer based in Toronto. He was the recipient of the 2018 Daryl Duke Prize for excellence in a screenplay for an unproduced long-form dramatic film and was a participant in the 2018 Praxis Screenwriting Lab (Whistler Film Festival). His script *Harbour House*, for which he received this prize, was also a finalist in the 2017 Canadian Film Fest Harold Greenberg Fund Script Contest.







1. Children's category nominees John Hazlett, Lienne Sawatsky, Dan Williams
2. Feature Film winner Jeremy Boxen
3. Alison Lea Bingeman, Drama Series winner Sarah Dodd, nominee Jennica Harper
4. The CFC's Kathryn Emslie announces the establishment of the Denis McGrath Bursary Award
5. CFC Bell Media Prime Time Program writers Heather Taylor, Michael Rinaldi, Jessica Meya, Sophia Fabiilli, Mackenzie Sinclair, Veronika Paz
6. Actor Murry Peters, Councillor Marsha Greene
7. Presenters Adam Pettle, showrunner, and actor Jordan Johnson-Hinds
8. Brendon Yorke, WGC Showrunner Award winner Emily Andras
9. JANN's showrunner Jennica Harper, actor Elena Juatco and co-creator Leah Gauthier
10. Christine Van Moorsel, 2019 McGrath Service Award recipient Bruce Smith





1. Children's winners Josh Sager and Jerome Simpson
2. Presenters Kathleen Phillips, writer Workin' Moms, and Baroness von Sketch Show showrunner/star Jennifer Whalen
3. Documentary winner Michael McNamara, Judy Holm
4. Maddi Patton, nominee Mark De Angelis (representing on behalf of MOW & Miniseries winner Tim McKeon), Matt Doyle
5. John Hazlett, Mike Kiss, Dave Lawrence, Tanis Rideo, Simon Racioppa
6. WGC Director of Industrial Relations Laurie Channer marks 25 years at the Guild
7. Doug Taylor, Carol Hay, Laurie Finstad
8. Office of the Minister of Canadian Heritage's Faizel Gulamhussein, Andrew Anningson, WGC Executive Director Maureen Parker, Andy Fillmore MP
9. Show host Gavin Crawford, Don Ferguson Productions' Lucy Stewart, and show writer Kyle Tingley
10. Natty Moher, Tweens & Teens winner Cole Bastedo



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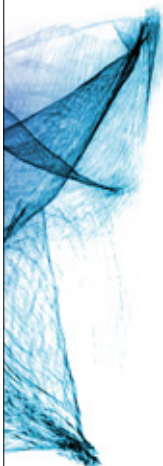
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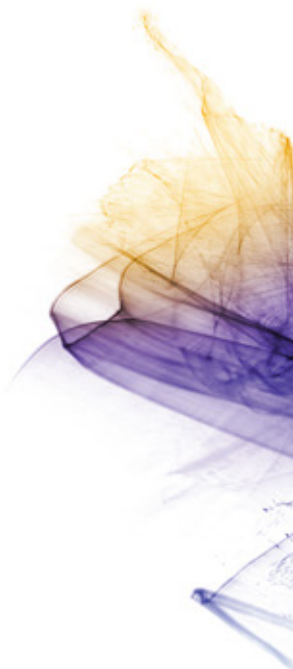
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Caitlin D. Fryers

Finding great mentors and following storytelling instincts

By Diane Wild

Caitlin Fryers's TV writer origin story sounds, well, perfectly scripted. She seemingly went from earning a Masters of Fine Arts in Screenwriting to winning the Sir Peter Ustinov Television Scriptwriting Award, right to landing an agent and a regular gig — season one of *Wynonna Earp*, no less. Of course, that story leaves out the hard work, sharp instincts, talent and decency that accompanied it. She was also received the only double nomination at this year's WGC Screenwriting Awards, for her movie of the week script, *No One Would Tell*, and for her script for *Wynonna Earp* ep "When You Call My Name" in the Drama Series category.

Your path to becoming a screenwriter sounds like it followed an unusually straight line from MFA to writers' room.

It was a domino effect. I know it sounds like it happened really easily for me, but it didn't. I started as a story coordinator with *Wynonna*. Emily [Andras, the showrunner] knows how to develop new writers. She gave me scenes to write, to test whether I could write in the voice of the show, and the more I proved myself, the more she gave me.

How important has mentorship been to your career?

Writing is a lonely endeavour, especially when you're starting out and don't have a writers' room to fall back on for encouragement. Finding someone who can encourage you and use whatever connections they have to support you is everything.

I exited the MFA program with no idea how to get my foot in the door. But I did have a connection to Becky Schechter. She was the first person in Toronto to say, "Let me introduce you to producers."

This business is all about relationships and being someone who is fun to be around, who is supportive and kind and other people want to work with. It's especially important for women that whenever we see an opportunity to lift up another woman, we do. That's how we change the industry and get more women in positions where they can hire others.

What's the best advice you've gotten as a screenwriter?

Not to chase the market. For the Ustinov application, I started to write what I thought would be a marketable script and it was like pulling teeth. I kept thinking what

I really want to write is a period drama that probably no one will ever be able to make. That was the script that won.

What are some of the most important attributes to bring to a writers' room?

Knowing when to listen. As a young writer, you feel the need to prove yourself to the people in the room and also to yourself. We have these voices telling us we don't deserve to be where we are. Knowing when to think and when to pitch like crazy is something you have to learn. Also learning to trust the process. Sometimes you have a great day where the story seems to be breaking itself, and then you have days where it's ... not. You're a team. One person doesn't have to solve every problem.

How has the delay surrounding the fourth season of Wynonna Earp affected you?

This business is hard. It feels like it's feast or famine. One second, you're working on a show, and then you have six months off and you have to learn to manage your mental health, how to keep your creative brain working and not get so discouraged that you can't keep working on other opportunities. ■

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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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

Nikolai Productions

Principal: Cindy Lamb

Norfolk International Ltd.

Principal: William Macadam

Numb Productions Inc.

Principal: Kirk Shaw

Perfect Stranger Productions Inc.

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Prospero Entertainment Group Inc.

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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.



Floyd Kane

From the boardroom to the writers' room

By Cameron Archer

Admitting he's always been a writer, Floyd Kane's career trajectory in the field hasn't exactly been straightforward. Trained as a lawyer, he worked on the business side of production companies, moving all the way up to VP of creative and business affairs at Halifax Film Company (now DHX Media), before he walked away from the executive suite in 2010 to launch his own shingle, Freddie Films. But even before that, he got his first taste of showrunning with the Halifax-based soap opera *North/South* in 2006, wrote feature film *Across the Line* and for series including *Continuum*. Kane returned to his Haligonian (and legal) roots to create/showrun law-focused drama *Diggstown* (Freddie Films/Circle Blue Entertainment/DHX Media) for CBC. A well-reviewed first season, which broke new ground for the pubcaster in featuring a black female lead, went to air this past winter.

How difficult was the transition from law to scripted television?

The transition was incredibly difficult. In our industry, I feel that when people have placed you into one box — in my case, business affairs — there is a reluctance to see you as anything else. Writing was my first love. I have been writing since I was eight years old. I wrote

a novel — garbage. But still, I was in Grade 8 at the time. Ten years ago, I decided to quit my job as a senior executive and write full time.

What challenges arose in pitching *Diggstown* to CBC, given the overall market in Canada?

CBC was entirely open to a show like *Diggstown*. I think they've always been open to shows exploring these sorts of characters and communities. Like all of us, however, we need partners, and finding international financing partners for series with black leads can be challenging. I'm not sure five years ago I would have been able to pitch this show with the same result, but I think things are starting to change, internationally. At the moment, I see opportunities, not challenges. *North/South* [which lasted just one season] is the one that got away. The construction industry is a perfect reflection of class in society. I loved that show. Still do. One day...

What are the challenges in producing and writing a network television drama like *Diggstown*, compared to a feature film like *Across the Line*?

I wanted a show that was close to the structure of *The Good Wife* —

an ensemble with an ostensible lead. Marcie Diggs is our anchor character, but the show is about the team. The challenges are the same, I think, but film is considered a director's medium and the other, a writer's medium.

To be honest, I feel I have more control over how *Diggstown* unfolds. With a feature film, I know that for the relationship with the director to work — especially if I'm producing, as well — I have to hand over the script to the director and allow him or her to make their film. In television, I'm in the editing room with the editor, solving problems and locking the picture. I'm in the grade with the colourist. I'm in the spotting sessions. It feels very different than making a film.

Why do you keep returning to Halifax as a site for your storytelling?

Halifax/Dartmouth, Nova Scotia as a whole, has this reputation for being quaint. But I think there's an edginess to Halifax that is different from Toronto and Vancouver. Some of this is the result of how everyone is living on top of one another — neighbours. It can be a bit of a hothouse sometimes. All we're trying to do is capture that in our frames and visually share that with the rest of the country. ■

News from WGC Members

Lester Alfonso has been shortlisted for Outstanding Mid-Career Artist in the 2019 Peterborough Arts Awards. He is currently working on a documentary film *Circus Boy*, after premiering his feature-length creative nonfiction film *Birthmark* at the 2018 ReFrame Film Festival.

Larry Bambrick is down in Los Angeles working on a brand-new series for Hallmark. *When Hope Calls* will air this fall.

Michael Betcherman is delighted to announce that his latest novel, *The Justice Project*, will be published this September by Orca Book Publishers.

Ian Carpenter just finished showrunning season 3 of **Aaron Martin's** *Slasher*, which premiered May 23 on Netflix. The writers Martin, **Lucie Page**, **Duana Taha**, **Jp Larocque** and **Matt MacLennan** killed it. Well, they attacked, taunted, chased down and finally killed it. And sometimes chopped it up.

Michael Collins and Fiona Winning's Vancouver-based prodco Calypso35 has optioned *Rupture* — a one-hour TV drama by writer **Adrian Cunningham**.

Jon Cooksey is developing a series and VR/AR experiences for Titan1 Studios, and finishing up a high-tech project with Sphere Media Plus, AMD and Epic Games. In addition to looking super-cool and being a great story, it also demos a new way of making TV — he's looking forward to digging more into that!

Nicole Demerse has been honoured to work with the amazing team on the new Sonar/Hulu sci-fi drama series, *Utopia Falls*, as a writer and consulting producer.

The WGC's youngest member and actor, **Jadiel Dowlin**, has been named the recipient of the inaugural BFF Rising Star Award by Geena Davis's Bentonville Film Festival. It's awarded to performers who have demonstrated exceptional talent and are destined for bright futures in the TV and film industries.

Paramount has snapped up **Josh Epstein** and **Kyle Rideout's** feature film pitch for *Astrid's Death List*, with di Bonaventura Pictures producing. The duo wrote the comedy *Adventures in Public School*, which Rideout directed, and Netflix bought in 2017.

Steve Galluccio's fourth feature *Little Italy*, co-written with **Vinay Virmani** was released in August 2018 and became the top-grossing English-language Canadian film of 2019, raking in \$1.5 million at the box office. The film was distributed by Lionsgate in the U.S. and was sold worldwide. This August *Mambo Italiano: The Musical*, the Broadway-bound project based on Galluccio's highly successful film and play will be produced at the Westchester Broadway Theatre in Westchester, New York.

Jennifer Kassabian has wrapped on Season 2 of *Carter* and is happy to be joining the *Frankie Drake* team as a writer/co-producer.

Following the successful worldwide launch of **Edward Kay's** first non-fiction book, *Stinky Science*, Kids Can Press has commissioned him to write two more comedy-inflected science titles, which he promises will be even more revolting than the first one.

Donald Martin's TV movie *The Christmas Town*, starring Candace Cameron Bure, was shot in B.C. in May and will premiere on Hallmark in December. His feature film *The Gift* shoots this summer in L.A., directed by Anna Chi.



Tom Mason just signed on to write his 22nd Captain Awesome book for Simon & Schuster, and is developing an adult animated series for Netflix.

David Merry and his writing partner, Larry Horowitz, optioned their second screenplay to Wald Pictures in L.A. — a gritty suspense thriller called *The Cage*. David is also writing and directing a new comedy/golf/travel show called *Off the Hozzle* that will debut this fall on two Bell Media outlets in Canada and Amazon globally.

Andrew Nicholls and **Darrell Vickers** are creating and executive producing an animation project for Nickelodeon. It has just been greenlit to go to pilot, with additional scripts ordered. Previously, Andrew and Darrell had written on *Back at the Barnyard*, *Fairly Oddparents* and *Jimmy Neutron* for the network, in addition to story editing two seasons of *Pelswick*.

Will Pascoe is currently running season 3 of Amazon's series *Absentia*, and developing a television series for director James Wan.

Thomas Pound is thrilled to be returning to The CW's *The Flash* for his third year.

Alex Pugsley has just signed a three-book deal with the literary publisher Biblioasis. The first novel, collecting award-winning work from The Journey Prize Anthology and Best Canadian Stories, will be published in February 2020. His feature, *Dirty Singles*, is streaming now on CBC Gem. He is represented by Jennifer Hollyer.

Larry Raskin is proud and grateful that *ReBoot: The Guardian Code*, the YTV/Netflix series on which he was executive producer/showrunner, received two Canadian Screen Award nominations, two daytime Emmy Award nominations, and a YMA Award of Excellence nomination. As well, Larry is delighted that his dance documentary *Behind The Wall* had its world premiere at the Festival International du Film sur l'Art in Montreal.

David Schmidt is story editing for both *The Age of A.I.* for Network Entertainment/Team Downey/YouTube Premium, and *Paramedics: Emergency Response* for Fahrenheit Films/Rogers Citytv. The sci-fi web series he writes and executive produces, *NarcoLeap*, has received second-season funding from the CMF.

Amanda Smith is having a hoof-tastic time writing on the Nelvana series *Corn and Peg*. In addition, she is developing a new family drama series, and putting the final (probably not final) polish on her grounded sci-fi pilot, *Incipient*.

The feature film, *Volition*, which **Ryan W. Smith** co-wrote and produced with his brother, Tony Dean Smith, won Best Feature at the Philip K. Dick Film Festival. Ryan is currently adapting an undisclosed political feature film for Anonymous Content.

Orca Book Publishers has purchased the publication rights to **Michael F. Stewart's** young adult novel *Heart Sister*, about one teen's quest to put his sister back together again — in spirit — by creating a virtual reality movie of the people she helped with her transplanted organs. It's slated for a fall 2020 release.

Beachwood Canyon Productions is back at it, and this time they're bringing the heartache with a new gymnastics dramedy for Family Channel and CBBC. The writing crew includes **Frank Van Keeken**, **Emma Campbell**, **Lyndon Casey**, **Conor Casey**, **Ian Malone**, **Nelu Handa**, **Kara Harun**, **Cheryl Meyer**, **Reem Morsi** and **Stephen Cooke**. ■

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Katrina Onstad Toronto ON

Tiffany Paulsen Sherman Oaks CA

Lee Piazza Toronto ON

Erica Rothschild Los Angeles CA

Matt Smith Encino CA

Nia Vardalos Studio City CA

Our condolences

Graham Clegg Toronto ON

Jeremy Hole Toronto ON

Money for Missing Writers

The Writers Guild of Canada is holding monies for the writers listed below. The WGC has been unable to locate the writers and forward the money to them. If you have any information that would help us reach these writers (or their agents or estates), please contact the staff member indicated below. These writers would thank you.

IPA - contact Aaron Unrau at a.unrau@wgc.ca
1-800-567-9975 ext. 5270

NFB - contact Aaron Unrau at a.unrau@wgc.ca
1-800-567-9975 ext. 5270

Dawn Cumberbatch — *Top Cops*

Warren Easton — *Odyssey II*

Gerald Fourier — *Littlest Hobo*

John Hollard — *Littlest Hobo*

Laszlo Gefin — *Revolution's Orphans*

János Szanyi — *Revolution's Orphans*

Gilles Toupin — *Cycling: Still the Greatest*

Peter Vogler — *Ernie's Idea*

Banff Tips. For Banff.

By Don Danielson

Greetings, television writers, producers, and all others who have wrangled their way onto the mailing list. Don Danielson here.

I'm happy to be on the back page for yet another issue. I enjoy it, and I feel like it's actually a good fit. I think of myself as being a lot like the back page of a magazine: I often smell of cologne, and people tend to come to me if they're looking to sell an old couch.

Anyway, turning from the back page to the front (that's a segue: Listen up, writers, this column is always full of gold you can use, for a fee), I've been thinking a lot about the Banff World Media Festival lately. I've also been speaking a lot about the Banff World Media Festival, but to be honest that's mostly to myself — it's just fun to say the word "Banff" out loud. Try it. Banff. Banff.

See? It's even more fun to say than "Guelph," which is also good, though their television festival pales in comparison, as do their mountains.

Anyway, I was Banffing my way around the office when I realized that I should share some of my Banff thoughts with the rest of you, to see if they could help any of you headed to the fest.

You see, in another life I was a writer before I became a suit. Sort of a reverse reincarnation kind of thing. I gave up the writing life, embittered, when someone stole my idea of doing a reboot of *Friends* about Joey (that person was the creator of *Friends*).

I rededicated myself to offering help to writers like I used to be, and by help I mean notes — for a fee. Because of this, I have experience on both sides of the desk, and may have some helpful

notes to give those attending Banff. Obviously you don't have to pay me for these, though I'd be a fool to take that off the table.

Let me take you through what I feel to be your ideal approach to the fest, whether you're a suit like me, or you have paid for your own plane ticket.

If you're a writer, the process should go something like this:

1. Pitch.
2. Pitch more.
3. Never stop pitching.
4. Listen to your friends when they're pitching. And genuinely listen; you might find something you can work into your pitch. When they're done, go, "Huh. That reminds me of a pitch of mine."
5. Pitch that.
6. But:
7. Don't just stick with the writers who are your friends. Find the stranger most heavily adorned in lanyards, passes, complimentary keychains, etc.
8. Make sure they have a look on their face like they don't know where the refreshments table is. That's how you know it's a writer and not someone who works at the festival. Speak to this person.
- 8(a). You likely just attended the always-smashing WGC Screenwriting Awards, where, after having a great time at the show and a similiary great time at the after-party, you probably pitched this person already.
- 8(b). Apologize for pitching them at the awards.
- 8(c). Remind them of what you pitched them at the awards, with a little extra polish this time.

9. Say that you've also got something new on the go, but it's not quite ready to pitch.

10. Pitch that.

11. Direct them to the refreshments table. They'll be grateful.

And if you're not a writer, but rather a suit, like myself?

1. Wear a suit. How else will they know?
2. When pitched, be polite. You're not going to greenlight their idea, but someone else might, and you want to be on their good side for the next idea they pitch after that, because they'll be red-hot and you want to be on their good side when you won't have had to do as much reading.
3. When it looks like they're finished pitching (their eyes may start to dart around, looking for the refreshments table), say, "I think there's something there. Stay on my radar," and walk away. I find this works well, because it sounds good, but doesn't actually mean anything — nothing has been promised. And also they don't know exactly how to do it (for instance, you haven't given them your email address).
4. This moment of confusion should give you an opening to head to the refreshments table, where we are all equals.

Thanks for your time. I really think we've got something here. Stay on my radar!

— Don Danielson
(a.k.a. Jeremy Woodcock)

May

23 - June 2 — Inside Out Toronto LGBT Film Festival insideout.ca

25 - June 1 — Leo Awards leoawards.com

June

9 - 12 — BANFF World Media Festival banffmediafestival.com

25 - 30 — Female Eye Film Festival femaleeyefilmfestival.com

26 — WGC Presents Writers Talking TV wgc.ca

July

11 - 13 — T.O. Webfest towebfest.com

August

22 - 25 — Fan Expo Canada fanexpocanada.com

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

September

5 - 15 — Toronto International Film Festival tiff.net

12 - 19 — Atlantic International Film Festival finfestival.ca

18 - 29 — Calgary International Film Festival calgaryfilm.com

25 - 29 — Ottawa International Animation Festival animationfestival.ca

26 - October 5 — Edmonton Film Festival edmontonfilmfest.com

26 - October 11 — Vancouver International Film Festival viff.org



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Congratulations to this year's winners!

BEST NEW SERIES SCRIPT

The Bletchley Circle: San Francisco "Presidio"
Written by **Daegan Fryklind**

CHILDREN'S

Wishfart "I Wear This Hat Ironically"
Written by **Josh Sager & Jerome Simpson**

COMEDY SERIES

Schitt's Creek "RIP Moira Rose"
Written by **Rupinder Gill**

DOCUMENTARY

Catwalk: Tales from the Cat Show Circuit
Written by **Michael McNamara**

DRAMA SERIES

Cardinal: Blackfly Season "Red"
Written by **Sarah Dodd**

FEATURE FILM

22 Chaser
Written by **Jeremy Boxen**

MOW & MINISERIES

Odd Squad: World Turned Odd
Written by **Tim McKeon**

SHORTS & WEBSERIES

We've Come to the End of Our Time
Written by **Alex Epstein & Lisa Hunter**

TWEENS & TEENS

Star Falls "The Picnic Auction"
Written by **Cole Bastedo**

SPECIAL AWARDS

WGC SHOWRUNNER AWARD **Emily Andras**

McGRATH SERVICE AWARD **Bruce Smith**

SONDRA KELLY AWARD **Jinder Oujla-Chalmers**

JIM BURT SCREENWRITING PRIZE

Pat Holden for *Mirsada*

Amir Kahn mouee for *Harbour House*

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