



Welcome to the tenth annual Student Screenwriting Showcase presented by the Department of Cinema and Television Arts at California State University, Northridge.

Tonight, you will be treated to readings from the works of five of our exemplary students, four from our Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting program and one from our undergraduate program. Two of the pieces are excerpts of feature-length scripts, one is an excerpt of a television pilot script, and two are short screenplays that will be presented in their entireties. It will not be theater, as there will be little in the way of staging; it will not be mere recitation, as the performances have been directed; it will not be cinema. It will be, we expect, an invigorating, engaging and entertaining display of our students' artistry and imagination.

The depiction of railroad tracks on the cover of this program serves as a triply rich metaphor for screenwriting, suggesting the peregrinations traversed by the writer, the fictional character at the story's core, and the reader or viewer. For each of the three constituencies, the experience of a narrative is that of a voyage, coursing in directions both unexpected and familiar. The rails of the cover image, disappearing as they do into the distance, suggest a trip into parts unknown, and that is what the writer who surrenders herself to the muses will encounter, what the story's protagonist undoubtedly will undergo, and upon which, we hope, the reader/viewer will willingly embark. Conversely but equally true, a traveller who rides the rails purchases a ticket for a specific destination and expects, ultimately, to arrive there. So, too, a story, although curving as do railroad tracks in directions and at intervals unanticipated, eventually reaches the only appropriate terminal possible, the cathartic release of the climax. Additionally, the very creation of a tale can be thought of as a journey, from the initial spark of inspiration through the churning construction of character and plot, and onward to the actual writing of the script, culminating in the destination of "Fade Out." The metaphoric rails provide stability, the spine of the saga, while the horizontal ties, or slats, can be seen as the plot events themselves, each leading to the next as one plot moment is linked causally to that which succeeds it. The story's protagonist follows this course, evolving and changing as she goes, and the reader/viewer, we hope, will hitch his empathy to the character's engine as it chugs along the narrative tracks. To the litany of locomotives, then – steam, diesel, electric – let us add a new variant – the story engine. All aboard!

This evening's journey would not be possible without the help and efforts of many individuals. I heartily thank: Jay Kvapil, Dean of the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communication; Screenwriting Professors Eric Edson, Alexis Krasilovsky, Ken Portnoy and Scott Sturgeon; CSUN Associated Students, for their financial assistance; Mark Schaubert, for the creation of the printed program; Professor Garry Lennon, Chair of the Theatre Department, and all his colleagues, for their time and help and for the use of their beautiful venue; all the wonderful actors who have donated their talent and time; Professor Shad Willingham, for his artful direction of the actors; and Professor Jared Rappaport, who produced this evening's event with me. He ignited the torch for our Showcase ten years ago and has kept it illuminated ever since.

We hope you will enjoy, and we thank you for attending.

Professor Jon Stahl
Chair, Department of Cinema and Television Arts
Head, CTVA Screenwriting Option



Glenn Williamson

Producer Showcase Host

GLENN WILLIAMSON is an independent film producer with more than 20 years of experience in the entertainment industry. Through his production company Back Lot Pictures, he has produced such films as *Hollywoodland*, starring Ben Affleck, Adrien Brody and Diane Lane; *Sunshine Cleaning*, starring Amy Adams and Emily Blunt; *Push*, starring Dakota Fanning, Chris Evans and Camilla Belle; *Wonderful World*, starring Matthew Broderick and Sanaa Lathan; and the 2010 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award-

winning film *Happythankyoumoreplease*, written, directed and starring Josh Radnor. He is currently in post-production on *The Runner*, starring Nicolas Cage, Peter Fonda and Sarah Paulson.

After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, Williamson began his professional career in New York City, working in the advertising industry for two years, before moving to Los Angeles. In 1988, he started his film career at Castle Rock Entertainment, then joined Walter Parkes' and Laurie MacDonald's production company as an executive. He moved with them to Amblin Entertainment, and then to DreamWorks SKG, where he served as a senior production executive. During his time there, he supervised such films as Sam Mendes' Academy Award-winning *American Beauty* and *Road to Perdition*; and Cameron Crowe's *Almost Famous*, which won the best original screenplay Oscar in 2001.

When Focus Features formed in 2002, Williamson became the specialty label's president of production. During his tenure there, he supervised Todd Haynes' *Far From Heaven*; Mira Nair's *Vanity Fair*; and Michelle Gondry's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (also serving as an executive producer), for which Charlie Kaufman's script won the Academy Award.

Williamson is a member of the Producers Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science, he sits on the Foreign Language Executive Committee, and he is a board member of the annual Virginia Film Festival. Additionally, he teaches "The Art and Business of Producing" at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television and has taught film and television industry courses at both Chapman University and Sonoma State University.

10th Annual Screenwriting Showcase

Welcoming Remarks by Jon Stahl

Screenplay Introductions by Glenn Williamson

Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea

feature by Mariana Sabeva

Parked

short by Cassie Brown

Filter

short by Lara Ameen

Finding Funny

feature by Lisa Lumar

Florida

TV pilot by Matt Young

Reception

(Immediately Following)



Mariana Sabeva

Mariana Sabeva was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, the child of a theater director and a stage designer. When she was six, Mariana recited to her father her first original poem – “Down the sidewalk black and vain/the darkness writes a letter” – thus setting her future career path (that of an Edgar Allan Poe wannabe). Convinced by her mother that the job of a journalist involved traveling around the world for free, Mariana enrolled in the Journalism undergrad program at Sofia University. Meanwhile, she worked as a contributing writer for *Kultura Magazine*, as a book translator, and as a copywriter for McCann Erickson. After graduating, Mariana realized that journalism doesn’t guarantee the debauchery promised by her mother, so she set a new goal – a career in TV. After a few freelance gigs as a 1st A.D., Mariana managed to get her first staff writer job for a sketch comedy show. In the following years, she wrote for various TV shows, including the most watched Bulgarian one-hour drama, *Sofia Hillbillies*. She was also the content editor and supervising producer of a documentary series and a weekly talk-variety show. Soon, Mariana decided it was time for a new challenge – to test her film writing skills. She applied for the Fulbright scholarship award and was one of six Bulgarians chosen to pursue a graduate degree in the U.S. Mariana is about to graduate from the M.A. in Screenwriting program at CSUN, and she is currently interning at Bold Films, the production company behind some of her favorite American art house movies – *Drive*, *Only God Forgives*, *Nightcrawler* and *Whiplash*.

Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea

Eva is an audacious community theater director in Austin, Texas. She acts as everybody’s mama, pragmatic and always in control. But she fails to provide her own, confused teenage daughter with the necessary guidance, and Veronica finds a new mentor. Her school’s conservative, religious principal, Amanda Meyers, sees in Veronica a potential she never knew she had. When Eva is diagnosed with terminal ALS, she faces her biggest fear – losing her independence. After Veronica announces the news of Eva’s disease to the family, Eva’s mother Stella and her stepfather Ed move into the house, uninvited and determined to cure Eva’s incurable disease. Not wanting to end her life in a dysfunctional body, Eva chooses to die with dignity, and the only person who supports her is Derek, her re-married ex-husband. With the disapproval of the community in Texas, where death with dignity is illegal, and with a lack of understanding from her daughter, Eva soon realizes that scheduling her own end is not like staging a play. The estranged Veronica and the manipulative Principal Meyers embark on a mission to stop Eva from committing a “sin.”

JOHN

What's up, grouchy? Wanna play later?

Not clear if John means the pool table or his bed.

EVA

I'm good, thanks.

John shrugs shoulders indifferently, goes back to the pool table. Eva takes her bag, heads towards the exit of the bar.

On her way out, she bumps into Robert, stepping out of the rest room.

EVA (CONT'D)

Please tell the others I had to leave. I don't feel like saying goodbye.

Eva strides past Robert. He stares after her, baffled.

INT. EVA'S HONDA - DRIVING - NIGHT

Red light. The wipers rapidly move as the rain comes down hard. Eva makes a right a turn when --

A PEDESTRIAN pops up in front of the car.

Eva fails to hit the brakes with her right foot, veers the car, manages to hit the brakes with her left foot at the last moment.

Eva glances down at her right leg - trembling. She looks outside - the Pedestrian SHOUTS indistinct obscenities.

Eva, shocked and scared, rolls down her window. Rain pours in. The Pedestrian notices Eva's numb right arm in a sling.

PEDESTRIAN

Are your legs broken too?

Cars HONK behind and the Pedestrian is forced to walk off.

Eva pulls over. She looks up John's contact in her cell phone, dials, but immediately hangs up. Eva looks at her legs, then the road. Turns off the engine, closes eyes.

Eva takes her umbrella, gets out, walks in the rain.

A cab approaches. Eva fails to stop it, as her functional arm holds the umbrella. The cab passes by and disappears in the night.



Cassie Brown

Cassie Brown is a full-time writer and a part-time Netflix entrepreneur. She is a recent graduate of CSUN, with a bachelor's degree in Cinema and Television and Arts with an emphasis in screenwriting.

Based in Los Angeles, Cassie Brown works as a blogger, is a contributor to the web site Hellogiggles, and she moonlights as a Goonie. For the last six years, Cassie has co-ordinated the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival. She has taught film camp for children of all ages and runs the Filmmakers of Tomorrow competition for young filmmakers.

When she isn't in pursuit of a good story, Cassie frequently is on the lookout for geeky events in Los Angeles. You can find her at the Nerdmelt Showroom on weekends, as well digging for new treasures at Amoeba Music. And, if you ask politely, she will dazzle you with her action figure collection (but don't touch any of them).

Cassie likes her life like she likes her movies, full of good dialogue and zombies.

Parked

Luke can find neither a love connection nor his car on the night of his date with Lauren. He doesn't quite know which one is worse. In "Parked," a short script, love truly becomes blind in the searches for a beat-up sedan and a spark, any spark, between two polar opposites.

FADE IN:

INT. BOOTH. RESTAURANT. MALL - NIGHT

LAUREN, 22, sits across from LUKE, 21. They stare blankly at one another. Lauren tries to force a smile...the situation is awkward. Between Luke and Lauren sits the CHECK.

LAUREN
I guess I got this.

Luke nervously reaches out for the bill.

LUKE
No it's okay.

LAUREN
No trust me. I got it.

LUKE
We can split it. It should be easy.

Luke opens the check.

LUKE (CONT'D)
You had a beer, and the ribs. And I had the salmon salad, and just a water so-

LAUREN
You eat like it's an Irish famine.

LUKE
Excuse me?

LAUREN
It's a joke.

LUKE
Some of my family died in that famine.

LAUREN
You know what, give me the check.

Lauren slams her credit card down on the bill.

LUKE
Are you sure?

LAUREN
Anything to speed this night up.



Lara Ameen

Lara grew up in Orange County, California. When she was 10 years old, she had the opportunity to visit the set of Nickelodeon's *The Secret World of Alex Mack* and get behind the camera to film a scene for the series finale.

She received her B.A. in Film Studies with a minor in Disability Studies from UC Berkeley. While at Berkeley, she wrote and directed a documentary entitled *Art and Soul*, and was a judge for the Superfest International Disability Film Festival.

Last semester, as an Instructor's Aide for Professor Krasilovsky's Advanced Screenwriting class, she gave a lecture entitled "Disability Portrayals in the Media," which was later presented to the Writers with Disabilities Committee at the Writers Guild of America. Most recently, she acted in and executive produced the short romantic comedy film "She Inspires" for the 2015 48 Hour Disability Film Challenge.

After graduating with her M.F.A. in Screenwriting from CSUN, Lara would like to write television dramas and web series, obtain a Ph.D in Disability Studies and teach at the university level. She also hopes to have more opportunities to act in front of the camera.

Filter

When twenty-one-year-old photographer Abby goes on a trip in hopes of reuniting with her father, her younger brother, Hunter, decides to tag along. However, when a major argument between them ensues, Abby must reevaluate who is truly important in her life.

When the bus stops and the doors open, she carefully maneuvers her crutches and climbs aboard.

INT. BUS - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

Scanning for an empty seat, she selects a vacant row on the left side. She props up her crutches and removes her backpack, leaning down to place it next to her legs.

She hears a faint RUSTLE OF MOVEMENT, and when she looks over, she GASPS in surprise.

Hunter occupies the seat beside her, slipping a BLACK BACKPACK from his shoulders with a smirk on his face.

ABBY

Did you follow me here?

Hunter holds up her raincoat.

HUNTER

Call it younger brother intuition, but I thought you might need this.

ABBY

Half-brother.

Abby grabs the raincoat from him, stuffing it into her backpack.

HUNTER

Anyway, you left it at the cemetery. Went by your apartment, but you were already gone. Saw you heading over here and--

ABBY

Well, now that I have it, you can go.

HUNTER

I wanna come with you. I told David you asked me to spend the weekend.
(off Abby's disapproving glare)

Where ya goin' anyway?

ABBY

No. You are *not* coming with me. Get off the bus, Hunter.

A few MEN and WOMEN get onto the bus. The doors close and it starts to drive off.



Lisa Lumar

Originally from Virginia and raised in Colorado, Lisa's love of sweet orange blossoms, Charlie Kaufman movies, and clever turns of phrase brought her to California to study screenwriting. While attending CSUN, she received the Dean's Scholarship for Academic Achievement and Service Award, served as a CTV Ambassador, and will complete her Master of Fine Arts degree in Screenwriting this spring. She has worked on multiple web and television projects for Will Ferrell and Adam McKay's company, *Funny or Die*, including Sarah Silverman's *We are Miracles*, *Between Two Ferns: The Oscars Edition*, *American Muscle*, *Spoils of Babylon*, *Brody Stevens: Enjoy It!*, *Billy On The Street: Seasons 1, 2 and 3*, and *At Midnight*. She is currently a producer for the Investigative Discovery show *Cry Wolfe*.

Finding Funny

Otis Chanowski, a junior insurance broker at *Assurance Insurance*, thinks he's found the girl of his dreams in co-worker Reagan Ricci, until she tells him he's not her type – he's waaaaay too serious for her. Reagan tells Otis she only likes funny guys, like Chase Van Landingham, the top broker at work and an amateur comedian. With the help of a washed-up comedian and a snarky-but-cute bartender, Otis sets out to rediscover his sense of humor. Will he be able to find his funny in time to beat Chase in a final comedy standoff and get the girl of his dreams?

RASHIUD
You going to tell me what happened
to your face?

OTIS
I went to find my pain.

RASHIUD
I meant emotional pain, not physical!

OTIS
I know. I just happened to find
both simultaneously...with Bryan.

RASHIUD
(winces at wound)
She is a tough mother--

OTIS
No, I thought I really liked
Reagan, no, *loved* her, but then
Bryan just kind of happened...

RASHIUD
You know how you asked me if I ever
worked so hard for something I
thought I wanted so badly?

OTIS
You mean like when I asked that
exact question two seconds ago?
Yeah, I remember.

RASHIUD
I sit every night and stare at that
piano? Why? It's not because I
can't play it anymore, because I
put the *Grand* in Grand piano, son.
(beat)
It's a reminder. I let him have
Felicia and I didn't do anything to
stop it. Don't be like me.

OTIS
So should I fight for Reagan or
Bryan?

RASHIUD
Win or lose, who do you want to see
when it's over? Marinate in it for
a minute, and then...
(yells)
Get your head back in the game! We
got work to do!



Matt Young

Matt got his start in the entertainment industry as a television actor. He has appeared in more than fifty national commercials and has had roles on *How I Met Your Mother*, *Without a Trace*, and *Desperate Housewives*. Also an improvisational comedian, Matt has taught and performed at improv theatres throughout the United States and Canada, for

nearly twenty-five years. He is a regular cast member of *Opening Night: the Improvised Musical*, which can be seen every Friday night at Hollywood's IO West Theatre. Matt received a B.A. in Screenwriting from CSUN in 2011, then continued into the M.F.A. program, from which he will graduate in Spring 2015. During his time in the graduate program, Matt taught two semesters of CTVA 220, "Foundations of Media Writing."

Within the last year, Matt has been hired to write two feature films – a ripped-from-the-headlines, true-crime thriller for MarVista Entertainment, and an adaptation of a Young Adult sci-fi novel for the German-based Rat Pack Filmproduktion. Matt was one of just ten writers invited to participate in the 2014 inaugural Sundance Episodic Story Lab, where he presented his original pilot, *Still*. At the Lab, he worked closely with prestigious showrunners including Noah Hawley (*Fargo*), Charles "Chic" Eglee (*The Shield*, *Dexter*), Elwood Reid (*The Bridge*), and Kerry Ehrin (*Bates Motel*). Recently, Matt was included in the Blacklist's 2015 TV Writers Staffing Book.

When he's not writing or doing improv, Matt enjoys spending time with his family, playing board games, reading comic books, and playing bluegrass music with his band The Dust Bowl Cavaliers. He is represented by CAA and Echo Lake Management.

Florida

In this TV pilot, a troubled clairvoyant mother who is running from an abusive ex-husband returns to her estranged father's rural Florida home to start a new life. She must deal with the unpredictability of her psychic gift (which she sees as a curse), repairing her relationship with her ailing father, providing for her children, and living under the radar in the gritty and dangerous world she left behind long ago.

EXT. CHET'S TRAILER - DAY

A double-wide that's seen better days. Maya and the kids sit on the front steps. They stand as Chet's cart pulls up. Chet kills the engine, gives Maya a long, sour look, gestures to the kids.

CHET
Got three now, huh?

Maya nods.

CHET (CONT'D)
(points to Lucy)
One of these things is not like the others.

Lucy stares at her shoes.

MAYA
We need a place to stay.

CHET
I got a half-dead dog here. Help me get it to the vet.

Tiger and Scott move up to get a closer look.

CHET (CONT'D)
Dog lives, we can talk about you staying.

MAYA
Really? That's how you want to -

CHET
Really.

SCOTT
Mom, he's hurt bad.

Maya takes it in. Did Chet just smile?

MAYA
Help him get the dog in the car.

The boys lift the animal.

LUCY
(to Maya, under her breath)
Who is that?

MAYA
That's your grandpa.

Cast

Jessamyn Arnstein

Ben Birmingham

Shayla Cudd

Heidi Dippold

Valerie Gould

Leigh Kennicott

Jordan R. Murphy

Avery Rodriguez

Harrison Seeley

William Taylor

Shad Willingham

Dahlia Yablon

Student Screenwriting Showcase

Produced By

Jared Rappaport and Jon Stahl

Directed By

Shad Willingham

Hosted By

Glenn Williamson

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Kenji Kang

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Mark Schaubert

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