



Welcome to the eleventh 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 written in our undergraduate Screenwriting program and one in our Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting 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 design that spreads across the front and back of this printed program provides a perfect pictorialization of one of the most significant tasks in which screenwriters must engage – the construction of characters. The main character – the protagonist, or, in screenwriting parlance, the hero (whether male or female, burly or slight) – is and must be at the very core of the narrative the author intends to create. Indeed, the plot *is* what the character does. Therefore, before the writer concocts the events that will comprise the plot, she must devote as much time as possible to the development of the hero, the opponent (or adversary or antagonist – the other critical dramatic persona at the heart of the story), and any other principal character. The depictions of puzzle pieces and scaffolding on the cover are particularly apt – we encourage our screenwriting students to build dimensional, or multi-faceted characters, individuals who are as complex, as rich, as complicated as anyone in “real life.” Somehow, these pieces must fit together into a coherent whole, even if that unity is composed of seemingly discordant traits. Who among us is not rife with inherent, internal contradictions? It is that reflection of reality in the make-up of the fictional hero that allows for audience empathy, for us to understand, relate and root for the protagonist as he acts to achieve his objective in the face of escalating opposition. This is what ensures our engagement. This is what our student writers have been encouraged to orchestrate, and I trust and hope you'll experience the fruits of those efforts in tonight's showcase performances.

This evening's event would not be possible without the help and efforts of many individuals. I heartily thank: Dan Hosken, Interim 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; Dr. Ah-Jeong Kim, Acting Chair of the Theatre Department, and all her 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 eleven 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



Joelle Garfinkel Cornett
Writer & Alumna
Showcase Host

JOELLE GARFINKEL CORNETT was born and raised in Los Angeles. While the rest of her family found success in the steel and financial businesses, Joelle spent most of her childhood pounding away on an old typewriter. She graduated from California State University, Northridge with a B.A. in Screenwriting, where one of her scripts was featured in the university's annual Screenwriting Showcase. Joelle has worked as an assistant for several shows, including *Smallville*, *In Plain Sight*, *Lie to Me*, *Terra Nova*, and *Emerald City*. She has also worked as a development assistant for Josh Friedman, helping him develop pilots for 20th Century Fox and Universal Television.

As a writer, Joelle was hired to pen an episode of NBC's upcoming *Emerald City*. She is also the writer, creator, and Executive Producer of the critically acclaimed webseries, *Cam Girls* (camgirlsseries.com). Currently, she's the script coordinator on CW's *The Originals*. She is repped by UTA.

2007



Joelle Garfinkel

Second Annual Screenwriting Showcase
Psychotherapy

11th Annual Screenwriting Showcase

Welcoming Remarks by Jon Stahl

Screenplay Introductions by Joelle Garfinkel Cornett

Among the Cherry Trees

feature-length screenplay by Brenna O'Neill

Chasing Jesus

short screenplay by Doug Jansen

Dirty Talk

TV pilot by S. Christian Roe

Zen Estates

feature-length screenplay by Nikki Capshaw

A Safe Girl To Love

short screenplay by Christopher Runyon

Reception

(Immediately Following)



Brenna O'Neill

The whiteboards full of storylines, the late nights attempting to meet deadlines, and the pages filled with red edits comprise merely the most recent stage in Brenna's life as a storyteller. It began in kindergarten. Brenna's teachers were creating an art project for Back to School Night and had asked the students to complete one simple sentence. "I am _____." The idea was for students to indicate their identity, which usually meant gender, ethnicity, or name. Brenna, though, finished the sentence with seven little letters that continue to define her: "a writer."

In 2013, Brenna became her grandmother's caretaker during the summers in between school. It was during this time that she heard countless stories about her grandmother's experience as a secretary at the war department in Washington, D.C. Prompted by these memories, she wrote *Among the Cherry Trees*. While few of her grandmother's stories made it into the final draft, they sparked Brenna's interest in the location and time period. After taking a Queer Studies class at CSUN, Brenna learned about the history of queer culture in the 1940s, and she became fascinated by the stories of women who sought outlawed companionship during a particularly tumultuous time in American history. Over the course of the next year, she completed the script for her senior thesis under the supervision and encouragement of Professor Alexis Krasilovsky.

Among the Cherry Trees

Among the Cherry Trees explores the notion that one can have a passionate life or a safe one, but rarely both. In 1943, Anna Miller leaves her family farm in Wyoming in favor of a more adventurous life as a secretary at the War Department in Washington, D.C. She quickly becomes enchanted with another young secretary, Rosie Griffin. Rosie is a politician's daughter and seems to have a charmed life, but she moves in with Anna to escape her abusive husband. Anna supports Rosie as she works through PTSD, and in turn, Rosie helps expose Anna to the glamorous life that drew her to the city. As their bond grows, it doesn't take long for both women to realize their feelings go deeper than friendship.

MRS. MACY

We expect our employees to adhere to every rule.

Mrs. Macy trails further into the office, Anna at her heels. She pats down her hair as they walk past a row of secretaries.

ROSIE (24), perfectly coifed and dressed in the highest of fashion, watches as Mrs. Macy gives Anna the tour. Anna catches Rosie's eyes. Rosie smirks. Anna gapes.

MRS. MACY (CONT'D)

Every day, you will receive memos to be transcribed, letters to be mailed, attend meetings and take notes.

Anna, no longer paying attention to Mrs. Macy, tries to catch another glimpse of Rosie as they continue to move around the office.

MRS. MACY (CONT'D)

Under no circumstances are you permitted to engage in relations with any men in this building.

Mrs. Macy notices Anna isn't paying attention.

MRS. MACY (CONT'D)

Ahem!
(beat)
We do not want any drama or tomfoolery.

In one of the corner offices, a secretary looks on the verge of tears as a male employee yells at her.

MRS. MACY (CONT'D)

Failure to complete these tasks or follow our dress code will result in termination of employment.

Mrs. Macy looks Anna up and down.

MRS. MACY (CONT'D)

Do I make myself clear?

Anna looks Mrs. Macy right in the eyes.

ANNA

Abundantly.



Doug Jansen

Doug is a senior at CSUN who will be completing his coursework in Film Production this fall. He currently interns at the ASKtheARTIST Company, where he connects and interviews several viral artists each year.

At a young age, Doug developed a passion for writing both screenplays and narrative fiction. He received his first Best Screenplay award at the Corona Goes Hollywood Film Festival, for his directorial debut short film, "The Arsonist."

His work at CSUN has allowed him to be actively involved in a variety of short films. Some of these include "Over the Edge," "Dinner for Two," and "A Change of Plans," all of which he helped write, produce, and direct. He is currently in the process of shooting the CSUN Senior Thesis Film "Golden Age," the capstone work of his college career.

With a dedication and a passion for the medium, Doug strives to absorb as much knowledge as he can about the film industry while expressing his creative ideas through writing. With graduation approaching, he is ecstatic about finding internships and grounding himself in the business.

Chasing Jesus

Disillusioned with her faith, seventeen-year-old Angelica begins to question her purpose in life and the existence of a higher power. Needless to say, she is shocked when she sees Jesus Christ roaming around her high-school grounds. "Chasing Jesus" explores just how far one high schooler will go in search of the answer to life's greatest mystery.

ANGELICA

Right.
(beat)
Which is what exactly?

PRIEST

You said it yourself. Chase him.
Hunt him.

ANGELICA

Hunt him!?

The priest nods solemnly.

PRIEST

Catch Jesus.

INT. ANGELICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Angelica sits in her bedroom with a HOTGLUE GUN, TWO GOLF BALLS, and a PIECE OF ROPE. A TV gives the only light in the room.

ANGELICA V/O

Dear God, Angie again. I don't know what game you're trying to pull here but I. Don't. Like it. I ask time and time again for a sign and now you make me jump through hoops just to find out if you're real. Fine. I'll play your game.

A commercial comes on promoting a church. Three crosses appear and Jesus overlaps them, SMILING at the audience. Angelica SCOWLS.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

Angelica stands atop the hill where she had seen Jesus the day before. The SCHOOL BELL rings in the background, indicating the start of a new day.

ANGELICA V/O (CONT'D)

Today this ends. Today's the day I get my answers. I'm going to chase you. And I'm going to catch you. I'm coming for you, Jesus.

Her EYES glow with a fierce determination.



S. Christian Roe

S. Christian Roe has been writing ever since he could hold a pen. However, it wasn't until he finished high school that he realized he loved creating stories for the screen. His first success was writing and directing a short horror film called "Parasite," which placed in the top ten in a nationwide competition sponsored by Rob Zombie and Universal Studios' Halloween Horror Nights. That success pushed him to create other award-winning short films such as "Danny Boy" and "R.E.M.ember." He was also the first recipient of a grant from Moorpark College to bring his play, *The Good Doctor*, to Hollywood as part of the 2014 Hollywood Fringe Festival, where it received rave reviews and sold out performances. Following that, he placed as a finalist in the 2015 NYC Midnight Screenwriting Challenge and a quarterfinalist in the 2015 Cinequest one-hour pilot competition. His latest short film, "Apartment," will have its world premiere at the 2016 Festival de Cannes in France.

In addition to writing and directing his own work, Christian has worked tirelessly throughout the film industry. He has served as a member of a casting team at Uncut Casting Services, a marketing coordinator at Allied Integrated Marketing for major film studios, and as a script development intern at Valhalla Entertainment. In May 2016, he will work as a part of the Talent Agency team at the Festival de Cannes in France.

Christian is an active participant in helping the screenwriting community of CSUN and the members of neighboring programs as they all strive to make their mark on Hollywood. His motto: if one of us succeeds, we all succeed.

Dirty Talk

Dirty Talk is a one-hour television drama set in the height of the disc jockey era in 1990s Los Angeles. Richard Black, a closeted gay man, runs a late-night, sex-themed talk radio show as his on-air persona, Rex Black, a womanizing lady killer. As Richard struggles to maintain both his on- and off-air personalities, his world is shaken when he's saddled with a new co-host and discovers that he's a father.

He takes a deep breath and--

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Now...
(pause)
...let's get dirty.

INT. 101.5 STUDIO - SOUND ROOM - LATER

PAUL GILROY (58), Richard's oily boss, watches Richard through the soundproof window.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(through Sound Room speakers)
Well, L.A. it's been fun. I hope you all can bear to be without me for a few days...

LEE (31), a meek sound technician, watches with devoted interest. He looks at his WATCH and signals. Richard nods.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
...I'll be back to tease and torture you in the best of ways.

PAUL
How much longer is he on?

LEE
Thirty seconds.

PAUL
After you wrap, I want to have a word with him. Got it?

LEE
What's the problem?

PAUL
None of your concern. **Just his.**

Paul leaves and Lee turns his attention back to Richard.

INT. 101.5 STUDIO - BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

RICHARD (CONT'D)
This is Rex Black, telling you all to behave. Until we meet again.

His fanfare plays, as the ON AIR light turns off.

Lee gives him a thumbs up and smiles. Richard does the same.



Nikki Capshaw

A third-generation Valley Girl who really just likes to have fun, Nikki grew up surrounded by all things Hollywood. In college, while working as a photographer's assistant, she had the pleasure of being in the presence of countless rock and roll luminaries, including David Bowie, Prince, Mick Jagger, Stevie Nicks, and Michael Jackson. In her first job out of USC film school, she worked with Warren Beatty and Dustin Hoffman on the soundtrack of the ill-fated *Ishtar*. She then went on to spend ten years in the most thankless job in Hollywood – that of talent agent. Her professional writing career was cut short when she was fired from MTV's *Big Urban Myth* reality program because she was seemingly incapable of removing the undertone of snark from her assignments.

Nikki took a hiatus from career exploration to raise two daughters whom, she is proud to say, she successfully encouraged to escape the SFV. A mid-life crisis prompted her to return to academia in 2007, where she had a wild time pursuing her M.A. at CSUN, and then answered the call to come back for the M.F.A.

A true believer in rigorous honesty, Nikki discovered writing as an outlet for her secret desire to lie. And she hopes her newest incarnation, writing for the first time with a partner, will be the most fun. Ever.

Zen Estates

Rather than having to face a move back in with his over-bearing Jewish mother after his fiancée left him at the altar, Zach quickly comes to realize the virtue in seeking his inner truth in the lush and loony surroundings of "Zen Estates." He'll discover there that fear isn't always what you think it is, and love can be found where you least expect it.

SARAH
It doesn't seem any different than
Smoking Boy.

ZACH
What?

SARAH
You know. That place you go.
(off Zach's look)
Every year!
(waiting for it to click)
In the desert!

ZACH
Burning Man?

SARAH
That's it!

ZACH
This is why dad left you.

Sarah tenses, flabbergasted.

SARAH
Zachary!

ZACH
Do not "Zachary" me! What were you
thinking?

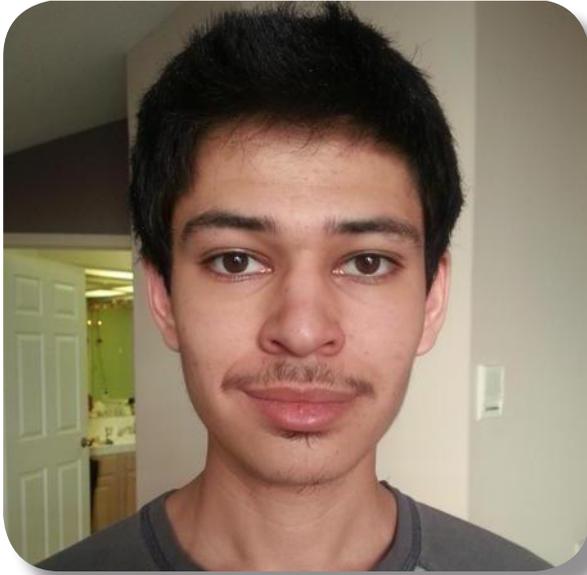
SARAH
(righteously indignant)
You have no job and no plan.

ZACH
And I'll find those here.

Sarah lifts an eyebrow.

SARAH
(whispers)
Maybe. Maybe not. But what would
people think if they --

ZACH
I don't care what people think.
You do!
(beat)
I'm outta here.



Christopher Runyon

Christopher Runyon was born in San Francisco, but moved to Los Angeles when he was barely one year old, and he has remained there ever since. He's always been a movie-obsessive, even writing an essay on Steven Spielberg's career in the second grade, but it wasn't until a chance viewing of Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* that it became apparent he was meant to be a filmmaker. After working for two years as a film critic for *Movie Mezzanine*, he started writing feature scripts at a regular pace, and he continues to this day as he works on his Bachelor's Degree in Film Production at CSUN. When he's not writing film criticism or scripts, he's usually at L.A.'s rep scene, regularly attending the Cinefamily, New Beverly, and American Cinematheque in search of new, weird movies to learn from, new voices to listen to. When he's not doing either of those things, he's volunteering for the Los Angeles LGBT Center.

A Safe Girl to Love

After spending two years away from her home in Winnipeg, Canada to transition, Sophie returns to the home she'd left behind -- a home that, unfortunately, still remembers her as a man. But that's not going to stop her from introducing the Real Her, the person she was always meant to live as, and it'll take more than her religious family to bring her down. Or is she not as strong as she thinks? Based on Casey Plett's heart-wrenching short story, "Other Women," from her anthology of stories focusing on the inner lives and struggles of transgender women, "A Safe Girl to Love" crafts an unflinching, intimate portrait of a woman caught between the way the world sees her and her inner truth.

SOPHIE
What else I miss?

MEGAN
Eh, not much. Same boring town...
(beat)
It fucking sucks here without you.

SOPHIE
Aw, you don't mean that.

A beat. Megan's voice then turns deathly serious.

MEGAN
No. I do... You're out there,
becoming this new and better
person, and I'm still stuck here in
shitsville Winnipeg, Canada.

Sophie drunkenly rests her head on Megan's arm.

SOPHIE
Ugh, I'm hardly better. I mean... I
don't say it much, because I'm busy
doing Portland stuff, but... I miss
you a lot, too... I miss us...

Megan tries her best to pick up the mood, smiling again.

MEGAN
Ehh, I'm still glad you're doing
well. Too bad you had to become a
fucking Yank, though.

SOPHIE
I'm not a Yank!

MEGAN
You so are! You're like Donald Trump
with a machine gun, and, like, a
baseball glove! Filled with apples!

SOPHIE
(giggling)
Quiet, you! I can send a fucking
tank up here! I'll do it!

They start play-fighting, laughing and slapping each other.

Then Megan RESTS her hand on the skin of Sophie's stomach.
She then RUBS it. Sophie doesn't know how to respond.

MEGAN
You're so soft...

Cast

Ethan Barker

Nathaniel Culpepper

Hank Doughan

Linda Fitak

Lulu Mack

Robert Murray

Hannah Peterson

JayCee Porter

Fatima Said

Kaileigh Valdez

Shad Willingham

Student Screenwriting Showcase

Produced By

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Directed By

Shad Willingham

Hosted By

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Joseph Tran

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