



Welcome to the seventh 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 work of five of our exemplary students, two who are enrolled in our Master's in Screenwriting program and three from our undergraduate program. Each of the pieces is an excerpt of a feature-length script, written at the capstone levels of our programs. It will not be theater, as there will be no 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 literary scholar Kenneth Burke considered literature – stories – to be “equipment for living.” The exploits and experiences of fictional characters, though woven from the writer's imagination, have the potential to register as real with the reader or viewer. When, kissed by the muse, the writer can bestow emotional flesh on a character's well wrought bones, the effect is palpable – empathy is engaged, intellect is joined, inspiration derived. We read stories and watch movies and television and reflect inevitably upon ourselves. We consider how we might behave in circumstances similar to those faced by the dramatic personae. We applaud or question their choices and wonder which ones we would make. We thus are better prepared – better equipped – to proceed through life. Stories, therefore, and the screenplays that carry them, are not frivolous or incidental diversions, they are instructive, beneficial, essential. Equipment for living. We hope you will find tonight's passages to be so.

This evening would not be possible without the help and efforts of many individuals. I heartily thank: Screenwriting Professors Eric Edson, Alexis Krasilovsky and Ken Portnoy; 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 Lillian Lehman, for her generosity of spirit and her artful direction of the actors; and Professor Jared Rappaport, who produced this evening's event with me. He ignited the torch for our Showcase seven 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



## John Altschuler Showcase Host

**John Altschuler** grew up in Carbondale, Illinois and then Greenville, North Carolina. He attended the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where he co-created the first student-produced comedy show on UNC Student Television. He then wrote for the now defunct humor magazine *National Lampoon* before moving to Hollywood to spend a few glorious years as a production assistant (errand boy) on various movies and commercials. His first professional job was on the World Wide Pants-produced *The High Life* series for HBO before moving on to *King of the Hill* for 13 years. He was the Executive Producer/Show Runner for the last 8 seasons of the series.

In features, he co-wrote *Blades of Glory* starring Will Ferrell and independently produced Mike Judge's *Extract*, starring Jason Bateman, Mila Kunis, and Ben Affleck. He is also producing the Napoleonic War comedy *The Adventures of Brigadier Gerard* with Steve Carell attached to star and Jay Roach attached to direct. He has received several Emmy nominations and has won an Environmental Media Award.

Currently, John is Executive Producing the relaunch of MTV's *Beavis & Butt-Head* and developing various projects with his production company, Ternion Pictures, including an animated pilot with Adam Carolla and producing *Green*, a one-hour, live-action television show starring Academy Award-winner Geena Davis. He is also writing the Woody Woodpecker animated feature film for Illumination Entertainment/Universal Studios.

# **7th Annual Screenwriting Showcase**

Welcoming Remarks by Jon Stahl

Screenplay Introductions by John Altschuler

*The Light Keeper*

by Gina Ruoti

*Wilderness Island*

by Lacey Dyer

*Perfect Penny*

by Yuri Polissky

*Desert Eagles*

by Tely Morrison

*Ignorance Is Bliss*

by Beckie Lombardi

Reception

(Immediately Following)



## **Gina Ruoti**

Gina received her undergraduate degree from Cortland College in New York State. She worked as a production assistant on various TV and film sets in NYC and also freelanced as a corporate video editor. Her love of storytelling

compelled her to move cross-country to attend the M.A. in Screenwriting Program at CSUN. As a graduate student, Gina secured wins in both the CSU Media Arts Festival Screenwriting Contest and the Broadcast Education Association's Screenwriting Competition. She also earned the David Levy Screenwriting Scholarship and wrote "Tree of Knowledge," a short film selected as a CSUN senior film project. In addition to her writing pursuits, Gina serves as a Petty Officer 2nd Class in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve.

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## ***The Light Keeper***

For years, Sonia has played the part of the supportive wife, putting her dreams on hold to help her husband's career. After a homeless woman rescues her from a near-fatal fall, though, Sonia embarks on a journey of self-discovery. She finds herself opposing the unfair policies of the city's mayor, who happens to be her husband's boss. Determined to improve the lives of those less fortunate in her community, Sonia risks everything, including her marriage, to fight corruption and bring the mayor to justice.

CHARLIE  
Let the lady speak!

Sonia looks to Dottie. Dottie shrugs.

SONIA  
If we work together--

Gus spills his coffee cup and doubles over in his chair.  
Sonia approaches. His stink is overwhelming.

SONIA (CONT'D)  
Are you okay?

He lifts his head to her.

GUS  
(gargles)  
Communists are dead...

He vomits. His spew hits the floor, soaking Sonia's shoes. He  
wipes the bile from his beard with his shirt sleeve.

GUS (CONT'D)  
Sorry, did I get ya?

Sonia's face drains of color. She pulls her feet from the  
chunky puddle.

VENUS  
That's nasty.

Dottie steps beside Sonia. They both take in the scene.

Big Ben's smoker's cough turns into a violent HACKING of  
phlegm. Daryl swats at flies that aren't there.

DOTTIE  
Rome wasn't built in a day.

SONIA  
No. It took five hundred years.

Sonia stares, shell-shocked.

EXT. BRIGHTON HOUSE - DAY

Automatic sprinklers spray water droplets on the lush  
landscape.



## Lacey Dyer

Lacey Dyer grew up in Presque Isle, Maine, a frigidly cold winter wonderland at the tip-top of the state. After graduating from high school, she hopped on the first bus out of town (not literally) and enrolled at Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts. At Emerson, she focused on her two passions: television production and writing. In 2008, with a freshly-earned diploma and a suitcase, she traveled the 3000 miles to Los Angeles and has been there ever since. Lacey has worked in television for the past four years, most recently as a staff writer on the daytime drama *Days of Our Lives*, and is in pursuit of an M.A. in Screenwriting at the wonderful CSUN. She plans to graduate next spring

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## *Wilderness Island*

Detective Jacob Theriault's world is flipped upside down when his wife is brutally murdered in front of him. Overcome with guilt and grief, Jacob retreats to Wilderness Island, a secluded refuge in northern Maine. But the sanctuary he's seeking is quickly cut short once bodies start piling up around him. There's a killer on the island and that killer wants Jacob's head. In the midst of a torrential storm, Jacob must fight for his life and face the damning reality that not everything is as it seems.

FADE IN:

EXT. WILDERNESS ISLAND - ESTABLISHING SHOT - SUNRISE

A pink sun peeks over the lake's horizon. Morning birds CHIRP, mosquitoes BUZZ, and the water ripples from the jumping fish.

While the island's five rental cabins remain quiet, wisps of smoke escape from the chimney of the main house.

EXT. MAIN HOUSE

ANDREW BREYER, a cheerful, yet tired old man, exits onto to the porch. He uses all his strength to pick up a steel mallet and RING the dinner bell. Breakfast is served.

INT. CABIN FIVE BEDROOM

JACOB THERIAULT, late twenties and disheveled from sleep, peers out at the calm lake. The RINGING dinner bell stops. He turns from the window and looks at his sleeping wife, ANNA, 28, almost angelic-looking.

JACOB

Anna. Time to get up.

Anna rolls around.

ANNA

No.

Stubbornly, she buries her head under a pillow. Jacob moves to her side and gently pulls it away.

JACOB

Aren't you hungry?

She shakes her head.

JACOB (CONT'D)

You sure? Because Mr. Breyer is making the pancakes you like.

ANNA

Walnut?

JACOB

Uh huh.

ANNA

I don't want them.



## **Yury Polissky**

What can be said about Yury Polissky that hasn't been said before? He was born (as most people are), he grew up and the rest is history.

After serving five years active duty in the U.S. Navy, Yury returned to Los Angeles to pursue his passion for the silver screen. He received his Associates Degree from College of Canyons in Valencia, CA then transferred to California State University, Northridge and will graduate this summer with a Bachelor of Arts in Screenwriting. Eventually, Yury would like to write and direct his own feature length films.

Yury is also a "professional" amateur photographer, has produced a number of short films and is a Magician member of The Magic Castle in Hollywood. His life motto is, "If plan 'A' didn't work, the alphabet still has 25 more letters."

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## *Perfect Penny*

Penny Roman is a sixteen-year-old who lives with her foster parents, Annie and Harry. When Penny was thirteen, a drunk driver killed her mother, forcing Penny into foster care. After reading an article that her biological father, whom she's never met, is dying of cancer, she runs away from home with her best friend Adam, heading west from Ohio to Los Angeles to find him.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS STOP - MORNING

Penny walks up to the bus stop and finds Adam sitting on the bench. There are several other teenagers wearing backpacks waiting around.

Penny takes a seat next to Adam.

ADAM  
So how long is your sentence?

PENNY  
I used Annie as my public defender  
and got a week.

The bus approaches in the distance. Adam picks up his backpack to put it on.

ADAM  
I call the window.

PENNY  
Let's get outta here.

ADAM  
What?

Penny JUMPS over a small brick wall and hides.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

PENNY (O.S.)  
Hide!

ADAM  
Are you crazy? The bus is almost  
here.

PENNY (O.S.)  
That's why you need to hide!

ADAM  
I can't ditch school...

The bus starts to pull up.

PENNY  
HIDE!

Adam awkwardly stands there for a moment.

The bus pulls up and students get on it.



## **Tely Morrison**

Tely was born in Caracas, Venezuela and grew up in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Shortly after graduating from high school he enlisted in the Marine Corps. Stationed at Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar in San Diego, he served for five years, earning the rank of Sergeant. During his enlistment, Tely deployed to Iraq, the South Pacific, and throughout the U.S. in support of combat operations and training exercises. After being discharged from active duty in 2010, Tely moved to Los Angeles to study screenwriting at CSUN. He recently took part in the Writer's Guild Foundation Veteran's writing workshop. This is Tely's final semester at CSUN.

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## *Desert Eagles*

It's the closing days of the war in Iraq and Sergeant Jeremy Burke is ready to go on a much-needed trip to Aruba with his fiancée, when he and a flight crew of Marines are tasked with recovering millions in buried U.S. currency before they can go home. Led by Federal Agent Will Benson, they fly to the Kurdish region of Iraq, on the outskirts of the country, under the guise of a humanitarian mission. Once there, they split up; some stay in the village, while Sgt. Burke and Agent Benson trek into the mountainous desert landscape to locate the buried money. They soon find it in a hidden bunker, from which Agent Benson also takes a set of ancient Persian armor. This leads to a series of supernatural events, which culminates with the Marines fighting a demon army, resurrected from the desert, forcing them to confront their inner demons and the deceptions of the war they've been fighting.

BENSON

Good. Pick the crate up and put it inside.

Burke pushes Kurdish Soldier 1's body off the crate and picks it up while Benson keeps the gun pointed at him.

INT. AIRCRAFT - CARGO COMPARTMENT

They step up the ramp with Benson slightly in front.

Major Ryker emerges from the cockpit.

RYKER

What's going on back here? Who fired their weapon?

BENSON

Damn Kurd tried to kill me.

Major Ryker listens with disbelief.

RYKER

What?

BURKE

He's lying sir!

Benson FIRES at Burke, but it misses him as he drops to the floor with the crate.

Major Ryker pull out his pistol and aims it at Benson.

RYKER

Stand down Agent Benson. This is my aircraft. I'm in command here.

BENSON

Cut the captain America bullshit. You don't have the balls to pull that trigger.

Major Ryker sweats profusely. His grip on the pistol is shaky.

RYKER

Stand dow--

Benson FIRES twice and drops Major Ryker.

BENSON

But I do.



## Beckie Lombardi

Beckie grew up in Boise, Idaho and spent the first eighteen years of her life there writing, shooting, directing and editing short horror films starring her sister Kate, a large cast of Barbies and miscellaneous action figures, and on occasion, her dogs. Her love of dark comedies and monster movies was encouraged by her loving family and their dedication to the weekly B-movie festivals on USA's Up All Night and SyFy. While working as a character in the Idaho Shakespeare Festival's annual haunted house, she discovered that nothing in life brought her more pleasure than scaring the holy living crap out of other people.

Beckie's career aspirations include writing for episodic television, but her true holy grail is to shoot a monster movie and have it achieve cult status. Someone please let Syfy know she's graduating...and looking for a job..

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## *Ignorance Is Bliss*

All Madeline Preston wants to do is to go to Bliss, Idaho and spend the summer interning with her favorite uncle, local veterinarian Doc Braddock. Instead, she finds herself trapped in the tiny town by the storm of the century, surrounded by locals who would rather send her home than help her out, and, to make matters even worse, something, or rather, some *things* are eating the townsfolk, one redneck at a time. It's up to her and Cody, the town's failed football hero, to figure out how to turn the tables on these beasts and put mankind back on the top of the food chain.

INT. BOOT SCOOTERS - EVENING

A few LOCALS mill about, sitting at the bar drinking beers.

Doc and Madeline sit in a red vinyl booth sharing onion rings and a pitcher of beer.

Hank walks over with his beer, sliding into the booth with them.

HANK

Whoee--Doc, Madeline.

Cody walks up with two beers and an empty dog bowl, his Australian Shepard, Blue, hot on his heels.

Cody puts the bowl down on the ground and fills it with one of the beers. Blue happily starts to lap it up.

Cody nods to the occupants at the table.

CODY

Doc --

He glances at Madeline, arches an eyebrow.

CODY (CONT'D)

Mad.

MADELINE

(correcting him)

Madeline.

He shrugs. Whatever.

Madeline looks down at Blue, who is still going to town on his beer.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

You know that's not good for him.

HANK

Hell, he's over three years old--  
that's twenty one in dog years.  
Makes him legal.

CODY

And it's not like we let him  
drive.

Blue finishes his beer, belches and flops down at Hank's feet, happy.

## **Cast**

**Julia Aks**

**Jackie Anglin**

**Neil Arnote**

**Alana Cheuvront**

**Isaac Diaz**

**Mike Fox**

**Wali Habib**

**Monica Hall**

**Mike Hernandez**

**David Johnson**

**James McCartney**

**Alex Meth**

**Sherrie Quannea**

**William Taylor**

**Alex Tordi**

**Emily Warfield**

**Colin Willkie**

# **Student Screenwriting Showcase**

Produced By  
**Jared Rappaport and Jon Stahl**

Co-Produced By  
**Lillian Lehman**

Directed By  
**Lillian Lehman**

Hosted By  
**John Altschuler**

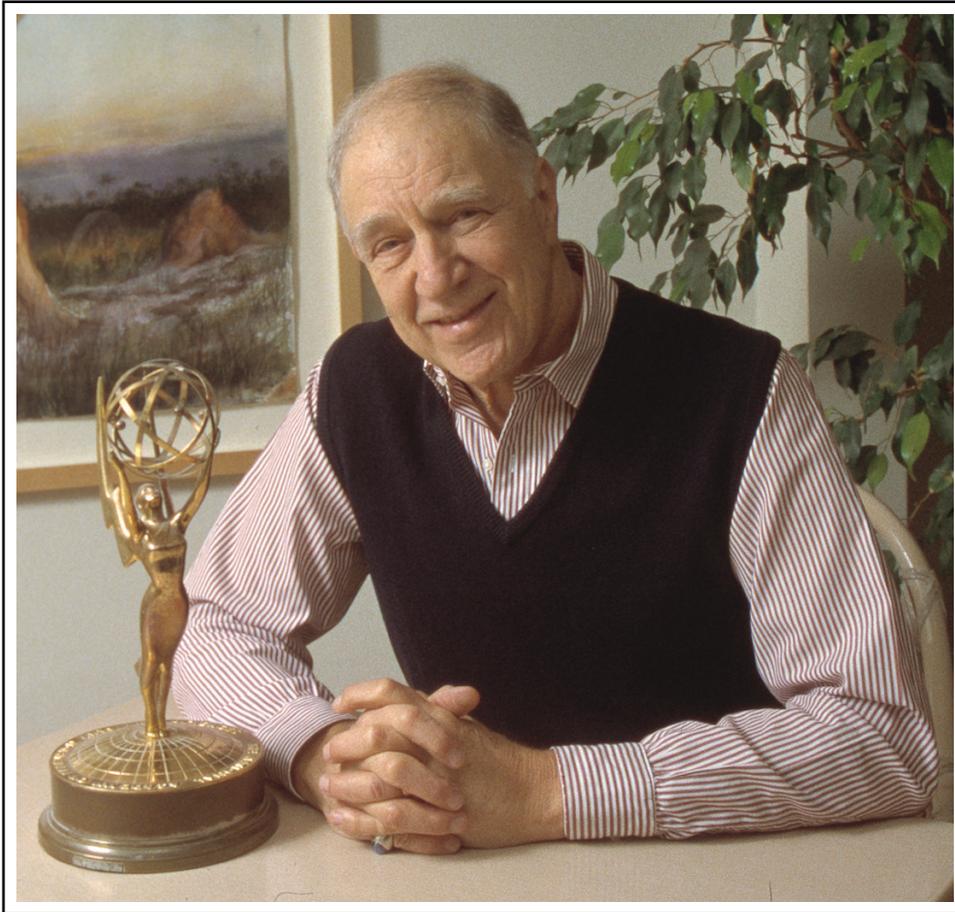
Stage Manager  
**Bryan Neyer**

Assistant Stage Manager  
**Gail Zweben**

Sound Design  
**Joseph Tran**

Graphic Design  
**Mark Schaubert**

Special Thanks To:  
**Eric Edson, Ken Portnoy  
and Alexis Krasilovsky**



*In Memory Of*

**ALAN ARMER**

*TV Writer, Producer, Director  
CSUN Professor  
Mentor, Benefactor, Friend*