

32ND ANNUAL
AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL
THE WRITERS FESTIVAL

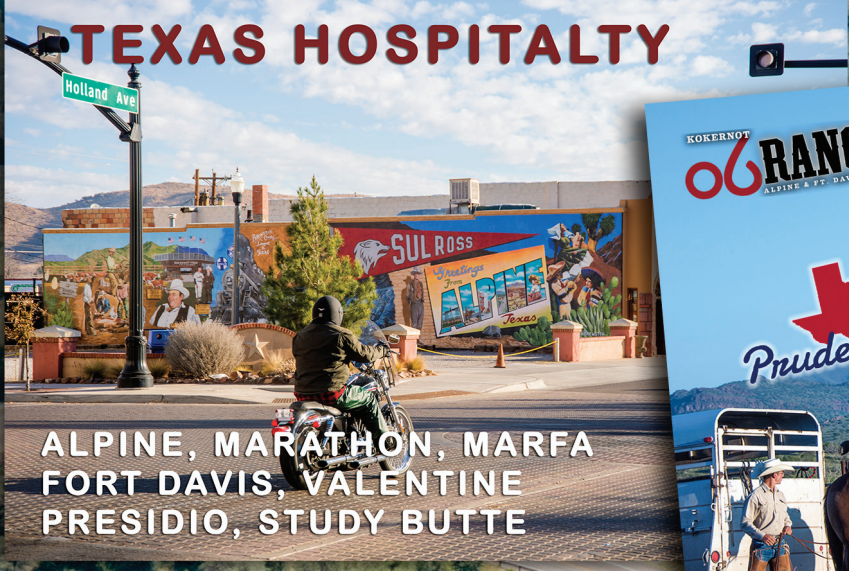


OCTOBER 23 - 30, 2025

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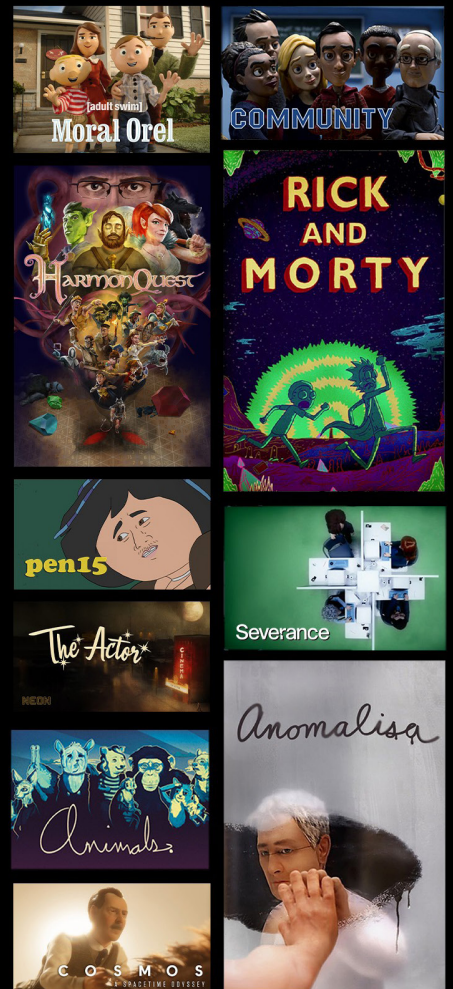
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A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 32nd Annual Austin Film Festival & Writers Conference.

I write to you not only as the Festival's Co-Founder and Executive Director, but as a lifelong advocate for the power of storytelling and the role Texas plays in shaping the future of film and television.

The Austin Film Festival and Writers Conference is unlike any other film event in the country, focused squarely on the craft of storytelling. We bring together the individuals who shape the very inception of film and television projects, those who decide what stories get told and, critically, where they are made.

With the recent increase in the state's film incentive package, Austin Film Festival is an ideal showcase for Texas as a competitive and welcoming home for content creators and production companies. Our presence helps solidify Texas' connection to the birthplace of great stories and storytellers.

The Festival's Screenplay Competition, the largest in the world, has launched careers and guided the industry's attention to fresh, high-quality storytelling born here in Texas. Winning or placing in the competition is not just an accolade; it can be a career-defining moment.

In Hollywood, when someone says, "You need to read this script that just won Austin," they're referring to our competition. Studios, production companies, and agents actively track our winners and finalists for their next big projects. The name "Austin" has become synonymous with discovery, originality, and opportunity, largely due to the work AFF has done to connect emerging talent with the film industry.

Whether you're a new registrant or regular attendee, an aspiring writer or film fan, I'm thrilled to welcome you to this unique experience, tailor-made for writers and story-lovers alike.

Keep writing,

Barbara Morgan
Co-Founder/Executive Director
Austin Film Festival



FESTIVAL CREDITS

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Executive Director, Co-Founder*

Barbara Morgan

Executive Administrator* Logan Kelly

Operations Director* Colin Hyer

Office Manager* Ty Hawton

Administrative Interns and Volunteers

Soloman Dunaway, May Winkelman, Caleb Sosa, Brandy Rocha, Kevin Lopez, Zoe Schrader, Mauricio Sigler, Lauren Stevens, Madison Kneffter, Brianna Grier, Hannah Ackermann, Ari Diaz, Seth Rogers, Haley Paulin, Camille Dutel

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Sponsorship Director* David Gil

Ad Sales and Development Coordinator

Shannon Dennard-Fair

Development Interns and Volunteers

Calista Perkins, Allura Salazar, Ava McConnell, Sasha Dixon, Isabella Mantilla, Anna Vaughan

SCRIPT COMPETITION TEAM

Script Director* Grace Donaldson

Script Manager* Paige Parker

Script Assistant Yasmin Al-Omair-Nuncio

Pitch Coordinator Ava Williams

Script Competition Interns and

Volunteers Adam Howell, Thomas

Dupuy, Brady Hill, Ali Steadman, Presley

Dotson, Ishan Bhakta, Jennifer Vu,

Brayden Rieck, Lorelei Howard, Sydney

Trahan, James Alexander Lamas, Sophia

Nunez, Larissa Bates, Grace Drais,

Max Kinser, Carley Cors, Hailee Sneed,

Jacqueline Michel Mirrielees, Molly

Keenan, Kevin Kopp, Dashiell Byrne

Script Competition Placement Callers

Thomas Dupuy, Lucia Vico, Sabrina

Barton, Sabrina Garcia, Alyssa Walker,

Allison Moseley, Bill Williams, Juliana

Cohen, Vicki Solis, Stephanie Seiler, Najah

Arthur, Emilie Budjaja, Valerie Nies, Peter

Ostebo, Benjamin Steele

FILM COMPETITION TEAM

Film Department Coordinator Joe Lee

Feature Film Coordinator Matt Dy

Short Film Coordinator May Winkelman

Theater Operations Manager Max Otho

Production Manager Mitch Collier

Film Program Interns and Volunteers

Zachary Geller, Robert Coyle, Steph

Elizondo, Nicholas Palmay, Sarah Adil,

Valerie Lisbey, Ashlynn Dalley, Eva

Stewart, RG Sureshkumar, Tammy

Mathis, Krista McNair, Reagan Sells, Riley

Chesney, Joshua Lisciandro, Wyatt Harris,

Maycee Griffin

CONFERENCE TEAM

Creative Director* Emily Lock

Conference Coordinator Andrea

Arrellaga

Conference Interns and Volunteers

Ana Guimaraes, Ava Oliver, Ana Taveira, Mina Raja, Andrew Cushman, Elyse Hopfe, Dylan Recker, Sandra Gomez, Daniella Garcia, Nona Yarbough, Sarah Richards, Victoria Duarte, Noah Chao-Detiveaux, Arin Adams, Sydney O'Donnell

MARKETING TEAM

Marketing Director* Travis Broughton

Marketing Manager* Alexandra Garcia

Marketing Assistant Kennedy Heath

Public Relations Sarah Post and Kayla

Williams

Photography Coordinator Kylie Garcia

Staff Photographer Jack Plunkett

Marketing Interns and Volunteers Lily

Brewer, Trinita Adam, Isabella Molinar, Kaili

Ochoa, Marley Page, Ava Andrews, Alex

Beyerlein, Lola Rodriguez, Shreya Jadhav,

Enrique Rivas Carbajal, Miranda Villeda,

Jolee Levitin, A'riel King, Shawn Gonzalez,

Camille Napier, Keegan Caskey, Sophia

Minke, Lola Rodriguez, Shreya Jadhav

ON STORY TEAM

Executive Producers* Liz Mims, Barbara

Morgan

TV Station Relations Robyn DeShields

On Story Interns and Volunteers Finn

Bishop, Mazzy Smallwood, Trevor Kobe,

Cameron Horrigan, Christina Suarez,

Duncan Rattray, Peyton Brush, Finn

McCreery, Kayla Gertner, Natalie Erzal,

Christian Drake Kidd

YOUNG FILMMAKERS PROGRAM

Young Filmmaker Festival Coordinator

Mason Kitzis

Summer Film Camp Director Mitch

Collier

Summer Film Camp Coordinator Mason

Kitzis

Summer Film Camp Instructors Bastian

York, Maddy Bethard, Jose Manzo, Samuel

Wofford, Andrew Fisher, Max Otho, Katrina

Villarreal, Trey Burns

Summer Film Camp Interns and

Volunteers RG Sureshkumar, Shawn

Gonzalez, Daniel Blair, Chelsea May Tran,

Jules Murillo, Michelle Le, Dylan Harrison,

Cristian Rivera

SUPPORT AND TECH TEAM

IT Specialist Bill Pashel

Bookkeeper Allison Kindred

Volunteer Manager Justin Schmidt

Volunteer Assistant Andrew Luna

Venue Logistics Coordinator Chris Vann

Program Book Designer Alexandra

Garcia

Poster Designer Mishka Westell

Registration Director Gareth Turner

Registration Assistant Russell

Kinscherff

Merchandise Design Alexandra Garcia

*Year Round Staff

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

We would like to recognize the following individuals for their generous friendship and support during the past year. We have made every effort to acknowledge all contributions; however, if we have made an omission, please let us know. Austin Film Festival is made possible by your support and we thank each member for his or her contribution.

Screenwriter

Sascha Gutfreund

Director

Jae Jacob, Carl Jacob, Carmen Bright,

Mary LaViolette

Film Duo

Linda Sherbert, Sharon Hewitt

Film Fan

Kathleen Lancaster, Maya Perez, Benjamin

Unanaowo, Natanael Fernandez Monroy

Member

Susan Sargent, Erika Gutierrez, Laura

Furgeson, Sarah Lewis, Jessica Peterson,

Kate Clower, Dan Portnoy, Victoria Brooks,

Graham Scarbrough, Susan Showalter,

Leslie Blanton, Colin Scully, Destin

McIntosh, Monica Haddican, Cullen Nash

Student/Senior/Veteran

Leslie Ashton, Ester Arispe, Ray Schafer,

Dianne Lee Blomberg, Chidima Okoli,

Marion Trent, Ramona Kelly, Robin Tate,

John May, Sandy May, Zane Bratton, Ted

Spalding, Kyle Edwards



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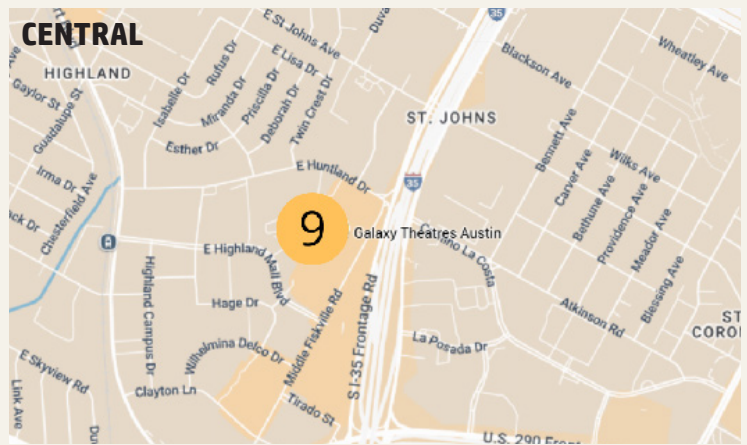
**AFF
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CONFERENCE VENUES

- 1 **The Omni Austin Hotel Downtown**
700 San Jacinto Street
Austin, TX 78701
- 2 **The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta**
701 Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701
- 3 **The Austin Club**
110 E 9th Street
Austin, TX 78701
- 4 **Central Presbyterian Church**
200 E 8th Street
Austin, TX 78701
- 5 **St. David's Episcopal Church**
301 E 8th Street
Austin, TX 78701



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SPONSORS

FILM TEXAS, TooFar MEDIA, BEERBURG, GOODNIGHT LOVING, LMU/LA School of Film and Television, UCLA, UNDER THE SUN, ALASKA, ACCESS, HOLLINS Graduate Screenwriting Program, BLACKWING, BIG BEND COMMISSION ALPINE TEXAS, MCW, The University of Texas at Austin Radio-Television-Film, BAYLOR UNIVERSITY, Highland Pro, Ford, GROUP FUND South Austin

COMPETITION SPONSORS

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FILM VENUES

- 6 **The Paramount Theatre**
713 Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701
- 7 **The State Theatre**
719 Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701
- 8 **Bullock Museum IMAX & Texas Spirit Theater**
1800 N Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701
- 9 **Galaxy Highland Theatre**
6700 Middle Fiskville Road
Austin, TX 78752
- 10 **Rollins Theatre at The Long Center for the Performing Arts**
701 W Riverside Drive
Austin, TX 78704



BADGE GRID INFORMATION

WITH YOUR BADGE YOU GET...	LONE STAR BADGE	WEEKEND BADGE	CONFERENCE BADGE	PRODUCERS BADGE
Access to 8 days of all film screenings	•	•	•	•
Priority access to all film screenings (before film passes and general admission)	•	•	•	•
Access to Awards Luncheon <small>Presented by Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation (with luncheon ticket purchase)</small>				•
Access to Pitch Competition <small>(with Pitch Competition ticket purchase)</small>				•
Access to Personal Pitching Workshop				•
Access to Industry Insights Panel				•
All Conference panels Thursday			•	•
All Conference panels Friday			•	•
All Conference panels Saturday	•	•	•	•
All Conference panels Sunday		•	•	•
Access to Advance Panel Sign-Ups				•
Opening Night Reception Party <small>presented by Highland Pro</small>				•
Late Night Welcome Party			•	•
Film Texas BBQ Supper <small>presented by Texas Association of Film Commissions</small>				•
Filmmakers Happy Hour				•
Pitch Finale Party	•	•	•	•
Heart of Film Conference Party		•	•	•
“Hair of the Dog” Brunch				•
Closing Night Party				•



GENERAL INFORMATION

PRODUCERS BADGE: Producers Badges are available at Registration for \$775.

A Producers Badge grants admission to the Opening Night Reception presented by Highland Pro, Late Night Welcome Party, Film Texas BBQ Supper presented by Texas Association of Film Commissions, Filmmakers Happy Hour, Pitch Finale Party, Heart of Film Conference Party, "Hair of the Dog" Brunch, Closing Night Party, the Exhibit Hall at the Omni Hotel, all open Conference panels, and all eight days of films and Q&As during the 2025 Austin Film Festival.

CONFERENCE BADGE: Conference Badges are available at Registration for \$525. A Conference Badge grants admission to the Late Night Welcome Party, Pitch Finale Party, Heart of Film Conference Party, the Exhibit Hall at the Omni Hotel, all open Conference panels, and all eight days of films and Q&As during the 2025 Austin Film Festival.

WEEKEND BADGE: Weekend Badges are available at Registration for \$390.

A Weekend Badge grants admission to the Pitch Finale Party, Heart of Film Conference Party, the Exhibit Hall at the Omni Hotel, open Conference panels on Saturday and Sunday, and all eight days of films and Q&As during the 2025 Austin Film Festival.

LONE STAR BADGE: Lone Star Badges are available at Registration for \$200. A Lone Star Badge grants admission to the Pitch Finale Party, the Exhibit Hall at the Omni Hotel, open Conference panels on Saturday, and all eight days of films and Q&As during the 2025 Austin Film Festival.

FILM PASSES: Film Passes are available at Registration for \$85. A Film Pass grants access to all eight days of films and Q&As during the 2025 Austin Film Festival.

INDIVIDUAL SCREENINGS: General Admission tickets will go on sale 20 minutes prior to each screening for \$20 for Paramount or State films, \$15 for all other screenings. For further General Admission ticket policy information, please visit www.austinfilmfestival.com/about/aff-policies/.

For information on admission to "Special Event" individual screenings, check the AFF website, www.austinfilmfestival.com.

FESTIVAL POLICIES

Special Events may require purchase of separate ticket for entry. If you have questions about the Festival, your membership, Badge, or Film Pass purchase, please contact info@austinfilmfestival.com or call (512) 478-4795. Please refer to www.austinfilmfestival.com/shop/refund-policy/ for full list of policies.

FILM LINE POLICY

Badgeholders and Film Passholders MUST be in line no later than 20 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Priority admission is given to all Badgeholders. Film Pass holders will be seated after all Badgeholders have entered the theater. General Admission (GA) tickets will go on sale 20 minutes prior to each screening. Once General Admission tickets have gone on sale, Badgeholders and Film Passholders will no longer have priority admittance. Badgeholders and Film Passholders arriving AFTER the 20 minutes mark must go to the back of the General Admission line. ALL theater seating will be on a first come, first served basis. Neither Badgeholders nor Film Passholders are guaranteed a seat, only admission up to capacity. NO ONE will be admitted into the theater 15 minutes after start time. Austin Film Festival Staff will adhere to this policy even in the event of a delayed screening. *SPECIAL EVENTS MAY REQUIRE PURCHASE OF SEPARATE TICKET FOR ENTRY.

PARAMOUNT AND STATE THEATRE CLEAR BAG POLICY

Clear bags should not exceed 14" x 12" x 6" in size.

Small, non-clear clutch bags will be allowed and should not exceed 4.5" x 6.5" in size.

The following personal items are NOT permitted: food or beverage of any kind, weapons of any shape or size (including firearms, explosives, pocket knives, etc.), cameras or recorders of any kind.

Please note: This list is in no way exhaustive, and other items may be prohibited at the discretion of Austin Theatre Alliance management. Visit <https://www.austintheatre.org/health-safety-update/> for more.

ADA COMPLIANCE

AFF strives to be accessible to all patrons of the arts. To ensure that all AFF Conference panels, films, and parties are accessible to registrants, AFF offers certain accommodations to patrons with disabilities. AFF will provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters at select Conference panels. The online festival schedule on our website (available at www.austinfilmfestival.com) will be regularly updated to indicate which events will have interpreters present. Limited ASL interpreters can be made available during film screenings and Q&As upon request. Select screenings will have the option to be played with on-screen subtitles in English or closed captions. AFF's online festival schedule will note the accessibility options available at each of the Festival's events. An accessible shuttle will be available for standard shuttle routes. Service animals are welcome at all events in compliance with venue policies. Please contact accessibility@austinfilmfestival.com or call (512) 478-4795 with any questions or concerns regarding accessibility accommodations. Accommodations must be requested 10 days in advance, then reconfirmed by the attendee 24 hours in advance of the event.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Please be informed of the preventative health measures that may be required to attend AFF events. AFF will be following government-mandated guidelines in effect at the time of the event. Please note that select partner venues may require additional steps prior to admittance, and attendees of these AFF events should be prepared to adapt to each of AFF venue's specific protocols. This is Austin Film Festival's policy for the foreseeable future, and it is subject to change. For the latest updates, visit www.austinfilmfestival.com/covid-19-policies/

AWARDS LUNCHEON PRESENTED BY ALICE KLEBERG REYNOLDS FOUNDATION

The Awards Luncheon is held from 12:15 PM–2:15 PM on Saturday, October 25 at the Austin Club. If tickets are available, they will be on sale at Registration for \$75. Registrants must have a Producers Badge to purchase a ticket, limit one per Badge.

PITCH COMPETITION

The Pitch Competition sessions run Thursday, October 23 through Saturday, October 25. The Pitch Finale Party is Saturday evening; check the AFF website for more details on pitch slot availability. If tickets are available, they will be on sale at Registration for \$30. You must have a Producers Badge to purchase a Pitch Competition ticket.

St. David's Vestry Room
Thursday, October 23: 1:00 PM – 5:30 PM
Friday, October 24: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Saturday, October 25: 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Pitch Finale Party 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM at the Austin Club (110 E. 9th Street, Austin, TX 78701)

SCRIPT LIBRARY

The Script Library is in the St. David's Episcopal Church, Crail Hall A (301 E 8th Street, Austin, TX 78701) and is available during the hours of the Conference. The Script Library houses scripts by all Semifinalists, Finalists, and Winners from the 2025 Screenplay Competition.

REGISTRATION HOURS

Omni Austin Hotel Downtown, Bridge Ballroom
700 San Jacinto Street, Austin, TX 78701
Wednesday, October 22: 12:00 PM – 11:00 PM
Thursday, October 23: 8:00 AM – 11:00 PM
Friday, October 24: 8:00 AM – 11:00 PM
Saturday, October 25: 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM
Sunday, October 26: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Registration then moves to
221 E. 9th Street
Austin, TX 78701
Monday, October 27 – Thursday October 30: 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM

ROUNDTABLE REGISTRATION HOURS

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel, Second Floor
700 San Jacinto Street, Austin, TX 78701
Wednesday, October 22: 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Thursday, October 23: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Friday, October 24: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM
Saturday, October 25: 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Please note that Roundtable sessions take place at:
St. David's Episcopal Church, Crail Hall BC, 301 E 8th Street, Austin, TX 78701
St. David's Episcopal Church, Sumners Hall, 301 E 8th Street, Austin, TX 78701
See schedule at www.austinfilmfestival.com for exact location of each session.

TRANSPORATION INFORMATION

Transportation will be provided for the following events. Shuttle pick-up will take place on the east side of the Omni Austin Hotel Downtown along San Jacinto.

Film Texas BBQ Supper presented by the Texas Association of Film Commissions is happening Friday, October 24 from 4:45-6:45 PM at Troublemaker Studios (4900 Old Manor Road, Austin, TX 78723.) Shuttles will be provided, see online schedule for departure times.

Six Square Industry Roundtables: The Art, Craft, and Business of Writing as a Career & First 3 Pages, Live! at Six Square are happening Saturday, October 25 from 3:00-5:30 PM at a TBD venue. Shuttles will be provided, see online schedule for departure times.

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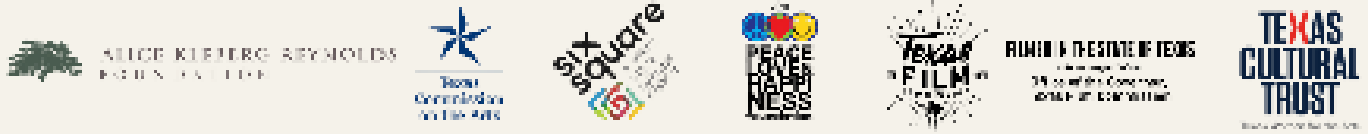
We congratulate all of this year's participants and winners, with special regard to all who entered and placed in our Wonder Project | Stand Together Writing Fellowship.

May your courageous stories inspire hope and restore faith in things worth believing in.

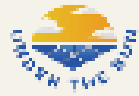
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Austin Film Festival would like to thank our sponsors for their generous support.

GRANT SUPPORTERS

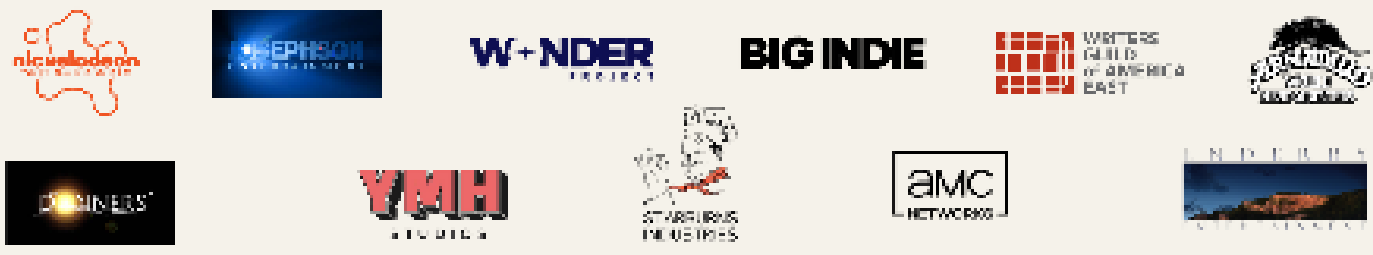


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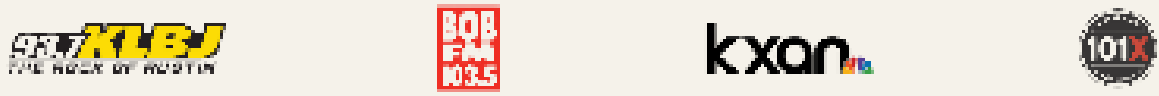


BLACKWING

COMPETITION SPONSORS



MEDIA PARTNERS



FESTIVAL PARTNERS



2025 PARTY SCHEDULE

Visit www.austinfilmfestival.com for the most up-to-date party information.

FILM & FOOD FUNDRAISING PARTY

Wednesday, October 22 | 7:00PM-10:00PM
Distribution Hall
1500 E. 4th St., Austin, TX 78702
Tickets purchased separately

OPENING NIGHT RECEPTION PRESENTED BY HIGHLAND PRO

Thursday, October 23 | 5:00PM-7:00PM
Voodoo Room
419 E. 6th St. Austin, TX 78701
Producers Badge Only

LATE NIGHT WELCOME PARTY

Thursday, October 23 | 11:00PM-1:00AM
Vulcan Gas Company
418 E. 6th St. Austin, TX 78701
Conference, Producers, and Press Badge Only

FILM TEXAS BBQ SUPPER PRESENTED BY TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF FILM COMMISSIONS

Friday, October 24 | 4:45PM-6:45PM
Troublemaker Studios
4900 Old Manor Rd., Austin, TX 78723
Producers Badge Only

FILMMAKERS HAPPY HOUR

Friday, October 24 | 11:00PM-1:00AM
Pour Choices
401 E. 6th St, Austin, TX 78701
Producers Badge Only

AWARDS LUNCHEON PRESENTED BY ALICE KLEBERG REYNOLDS FOUNDATION

Saturday, October 25 | 12:15PM-2:15PM
Austin Club Ballroom
110 E. 9th Street Austin, TX 78701
Tickets purchased separately
Producers Badge only

PITCH FINALE PARTY

Saturday, October 25 | 7:30PM-9:30PM
Austin Club Ballroom
110 E. 9th Street, Austin, TX 78701
Lone Star, Weekend, Conference, Producers, and Press Badge Only

HEART OF FILM CONFERENCE PARTY

Saturday, October 25 | 11:00PM-1:00AM
Vulcan Gas Company
418 E. 6th St, Austin, TX 78701
Weekend, Conference, Producers, & Press Badge Only

"HAIR OF THE DOG" BRUNCH

Sunday, October 26 | 10:00AM-11:15AM
Ranch 616
616 Nueces St, Austin, TX 78701
Producers Badge Only

CLOSING NIGHT PARTY

Thursday, October 30 | 10:00PM-12:00AM
The Creek and The Cave
611 E. 7th St, Austin, TX 78701
Producers Badge Only

*Must be 21 or older to attend parties

For the latest updates, visit www.austinfilmfestival.com



EXHIBIT HALL INFORMATION

We are fortunate to have a wide variety of well-respected businesses and organizations present at this year's Exhibit Hall. The Exhibit Hall is held in the Bridge Ballroom Foyer on the 2nd Floor of the Omni Hotel and is only open for four days, so please take advantage of this opportunity to visit with the exhibitors.

HOURS:

Wednesday, October 22, 12:00PM – 5:00PM | Thursday, October 23, 8:30AM- 5:30PM | Friday, October 24, 8:30AM- 5:30PM | Saturday, October 25, 8:30AM-5:30PM



FADE IN:
to
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EVENTS

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FESTIVAL AT A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22**12:00PM–11:00PM**

Registration/Information
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
Bridge Ballroom

12:00PM–5:00PM

Roundtable Registration
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
2nd floor

12:00PM–5:00PM

Exhibit Hall
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
Bridge Ballroom foyer

7:00PM–10:00PM

Film & Food Fundraising Party
Distribution Hall

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23**8:00AM–11:00PM**

Registration/Information
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
Bridge Ballroom

8:30AM–5:00PM

Roundtable Registration
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
2nd floor

8:30PM–5:30PM

Exhibit Hall
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
Bridge Ballroom foyer

11:30AM–12:30PM

Opening Remarks
Austin Club, Medallion Ballroom

1:00PM–4:00PM

Script Library
St. David's Episcopal Church, Crail A

1:00PM–4:00PM

Conference Panels
The Stephen F Austin Hotel, The Omni
Austin Downtown Hotel, Austin Club,
St. David's Episcopal Church, Central
Presbyterian Church

1:00PM–5:30PM

Austin Pitch Competition
St. David's Episcopal Church, Vestry

1:00PM–4:00PM

Industry Roundtables
St. David's Episcopal Church, Crail BC

5:00PM–7:00PM

Opening Night Reception presented by
Highland Pro
Voodoo Room

6:30PM

Films Begin
Paramount Theatre, State Theatre,
Rollins Theatre, Galaxy Highland

11:00PM–1:00AM

Late Night Welcome Party
Vulcan Gas Company

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24**8:00AM–11:00PM**

Registration/Information
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
Bridge Ballroom

8:30AM–5:00PM

Roundtable Registration
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
2nd floor

8:30AM–5:30PM

Exhibit Hall
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
Bridge Ballroom foyer

9:00AM–4:30PM

Conference Panels
The Stephen F Austin Hotel, Omni
Hotel Downtown, Austin Club, St.
David's Episcopal Church, Central
Presbyterian Church

9:00AM–4:00PM

Script Library
St. David's Episcopal Church, Crail A

9:00AM–4:30PM

Austin Pitch Competition
St. David's Episcopal Church, Vestry

9:00AM–4:30PM

Industry Roundtables
St. David's Episcopal Church, Crail BC

12:00PM

Films Begin
Paramount Theatre, State Theatre,
Bullock Theatre, Rollins Theatre,
Galaxy Highland

4:45PM–6:45PM

Film Texas BBQ Supper presented
by Texas Association of Film
Commissions
Troublemaker Studios

11:00PM–1:00AM

Filmmakers Happy Hour
Pour Choices

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25**8:00AM–9:00PM**

Registration/Information
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
Bridge Ballroom

8:30AM–3:00PM

Roundtable Registration
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
2nd floor

8:30AM–5:30PM

Exhibit Hall
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,

Bridge Ballroom foyer

9:00AM–6:00PM

Conference Panels
The Stephen F Austin Hotel, Omni
Hotel Downtown, Austin Club, St.
David's Episcopal Church, Central
Presbyterian Church

9:00AM–6:00PM

Script Library
St. David's Episcopal Church, Crail A

9:00AM–5:45PM

Pitch Competition
St. David's Episcopal Church, Vestry

9:00AM–6:00PM

Industry Roundtables
St. David's Episcopal Church, Crail BC

11:00AM

Films Begin
State Theatre, Bullock Theatre, Rollins
Theatre, Galaxy Highland

12:15PM–2:15PM

Awards Luncheon presented by Alice
Kleberg Reynolds Foundation
The Austin Club, Medallion Ballroom

7:30PM–9:30PM

Pitch Finale Party
The Austin Club, Medallion Ballroom

11:00PM–1:00AM

Heart of Film Conference Party
Vulcan Gas Company

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26**8:00AM–4:00PM**

Registration/Information
The Omni Austin Downtown Hotel,
Bridge Ballroom

10:00AM–11:15AM

"Hair of the Dog" Brunch
Ranch 616

12:00PM

Films Begin
Paramount Theatre, State Theatre,
Bullock Theatre, Rollins Theatre,
Galaxy Highland

11:30AM–4:15PM

Conference Panels
The Stephen F Austin Hotel, Omni
Hotel Downtown, Austin Club, St.
David's Episcopal Church, Central
Presbyterian Church

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27**12:00PM–6:00PM**

Registration/Information
Tech Center | 221 E. 9th Street

1:00PM

Films Begin

Bullock Theatre, Galaxy Highland

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28**12:00PM–6:00PM**

Registration/Information
Tech Center | 221 E. 9th Street

12:30PM

Films Begin
Bullock Theatre, Galaxy Highland

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29**12:00PM–6:00PM**

Registration/Information
Tech Center | 221 E. 9th Street

12:30PM

Films Begin
Bullock Theatre, Galaxy Highland

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30**12:00PM–6:00PM**

Registration/Information
Tech Center | 221 E. 9th Street

3:30PM

Films Begin
Bullock Theatre, Galaxy Highland

10:00PM–12:00AM

Closing Night Party
The Creek and The Cave



YOUNG FILMMAKERS PROGRAM (YFP)

Austin Film Festival's Young Filmmakers Program (YFP) introduces the arts of screenwriting and filmmaking to children ages 9-18, and provides them with venues, instruction, equipment, and mentorship that develops their storytelling abilities. Established in Austin Film Festival's inaugural year, the program continues to offer students the opportunity to share creative work with peers, the community, and industry professionals. The Young Filmmakers Program consists of four different key initiatives: the in-school Digital Storytelling Program, the annual Summer Film Camp, the Young Filmmakers Competition, and the Festival and Conference Scholarship Program. Thanks to the support from grants and donors, Austin Film Festival can offer the majority of these initiatives free of charge.

Using AFF's abundant catalog of screenwriting material, collected and preserved from its 32 years, the Festival has worked with Austin Independent School District (AISD) to develop a comprehensive TEKS-aligned Digital Storytelling Program (DS) to teach screenwriting, fiction podcasting, and film production. The curriculum provides students with a multimedia experience in a blended learning environment, all while staying true to proven pedagogical practices. Digital Storytelling has served thousands of students across AISD since its launch in 2005 and continues to expand.

Summer Film Camp provides an engaging environment where students receive in-depth, personal instruction from accomplished filmmakers, and team up with their fellow campers to create animated and live action short films. At camp, students also participate in panel discussions with inspiring guest speakers, who in the past have included Steph Swope (*Undone, Apollo 10 1/2: A Space Age Childhood*), Katrin Benedikt (*Olympus Has Fallen, The Expendables 3*), Pamela Ribbon (*Moana, Ralph Breaks the Internet*), Justin Marks (*Shogun*), and Wendy Calhoun (*Empire, Nashville, Prodigal Son*). Students have the opportunity to see their films on the big screen at a local theater during the annual Summer Film Camp Showcase.

The Festival and Conference Scholarship Program grants 400 high school students, teachers, and chaperones access to the annual Festival & Conference for free. At the Festival, students have the opportunity to attend panels, participate in pitch sessions, and learn from the world's preeminent screenwriters and filmmakers, including special panels and events which are curated specifically for students.

Each year, the Young Filmmakers Competition showcases the best animated, documentary, and narrative films created by young filmmakers from around the world. The Competition is free to enter and open to all students ages 13 to 18. Selected filmmakers are awarded a Badge to attend the Festival & Conference, where their films will play on the big screen at our Young Filmmakers Showcase. Each Festival, one short film is awarded the Young Filmmakers Program Jury Award, where the filmmaker is awarded a cash prize and a ticket to the Awards Luncheon alongside AFF's other awardees.



YFP FESTIVAL SESSIONS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 | 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Young Filmmakers Program Roundtable: The Art, Craft, & Business of Film & Television

St. David's Episcopal Church, Sumners Hall

Get in-depth answers to your questions about the art, craft, and business of writing for film and television. This roundtable session offers registrants exclusive access to screenwriters, directors, producers, executives, and studio reps in an informal setting. Come prepared with questions that focus on both the creative and business sides of breaking into and writing for film and television.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 | 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

Young Filmmakers Student Pitch Session

Central Presbyterian Church, Smoot Hall

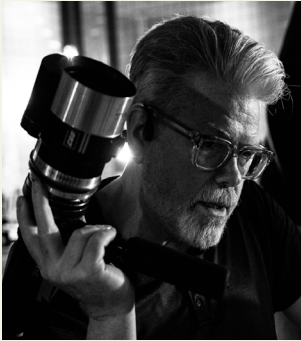
The Young Filmmakers Program Student Pitch Session is designed to provide high school students with a unique opportunity to showcase their best ideas to a panel of experienced industry professionals. During these sessions, students will receive valuable feedback and insights on their ideas in an encouraging setting, while learning more about the art of the pitch.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Young Filmmakers Program: Bridging the Gap Between Craft and Career
Central Presbyterian Church, Smoot Hall

Hear from writers across mediums, all of whom will share the highs, lows, and everything in between the realities of becoming a working writer.

2025 AWARDEES



CHRISTOPHER MCQUARRIE

2025 Recipient of the Extraordinary Contribution to Filmmaking Award

Christopher McQuarrie is an acclaimed director, producer, and screenwriter. His 1995 screenplay for *The Usual Suspects* was named by the Writer's Guild of America as one of the greatest screenplays of all time. In 2008, he co-wrote and produced *Valkyrie*, starring Tom Cruise; a film which would lead to many more McQuarrie/Cruise collaborations, starting in 2012 with McQuarrie's sophomore directorial effort, *Jack Reacher*. As a writer/producer/director he went on to helm the last four installments of *Mission: Impossible* (*Rogue Nation*, *Fallout*, *Dead Reckoning* and *The Final Reckoning*), comprising some of the largest and most complex practical action films ever made. In between these, he continued to work as a writer/producer on such films as *Edge of Tomorrow* and *Top Gun: Maverick*. In addition to his credited work, McQuarrie is known throughout the industry for his uncredited contributions as a writer, editor, 2nd unit director and production consultant.



CHRISTINE VACHON

2025 Recipient of the Polly Platt Award for Producing

Christine Vachon is an Independent Spirit Award and Gotham Award winner who co-founded powerhouse Killer Films with partner Pamela Koffler in 1995. Over three decades, they have produced more than 100 films, including some of the most celebrated and important American independent features: *Kids*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*, *Happiness*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Far From Heaven*, *One Hour Photo*, *Still Alice*, *Carol*, *Beatriz At Dinner*, and *Dark Waters*. In television, Vachon executive-produced the Emmy and Golden Globe-awarded miniseries *Mildred Pierce* for HBO as well as the Emmy Award-winning limited series *Halston* for Netflix. Recent releases include Todd Haynes' *May December* (Netflix), starring Natalie Portman and Julianne Moore, and Celine Song's *Past Lives* (A24), which marks her first Oscar nomination in the Best Picture category.



RIAN JOHNSON

2025 Recipient of the Bill Wittliff Award for Screenwriting

Rian Johnson is an Academy Award® and Golden Globe®-nominated filmmaker known for his distinctive cinematic style and storytelling that blends genre elements with a heartfelt, soulful core.

Johnson recently wrapped production on *Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery*, the third film in the popular series. With *Wake Up Dead Man*, Johnson re-teams with Daniel Craig as famed private detective Benoit Blanc in his most dangerous case yet with a colorful new cast of suspects. The all-star ensemble includes Josh O'Connor, Glenn Close, Josh Brolin, Mila Kunis, Jeremy Renner, Kerry Washington, Andrew Scott, Cailee Spaeny, Daryl McCormack, and Thomas Haden Church. With Johnson at the helm, each actor finds space to shine, contributing to the film's dynamic character interplay and tonal precision.

Produced by Johnson and Ram Bergman's T-Street, *Wake Up Dead Man* exemplifies Johnson's singular approach to storytelling and unrivaled ability to weave narrative and emotional complexity into his work. With sharp observational humor and mysteries at every turn, Johnson honors the genre's traditions while boldly reimagining them through his distinctive creative vision.



YVETTE LEE BOWSER

2025 Recipient of the Outstanding Television Writer Award

Writer-producer **Yvette Lee Bowser** is the youngest Black woman to create and run her own television series. She also has the distinction of executive producing and shepherding ten series onto myriad primetime, cable, and streaming platforms. Bowser began her career in television as an apprentice writer on the culture-shifting series *A Different World* where she penned 25 episodes and became a producer during her five-year tenure. Bowser went on to produce the hit comedy *Hangin' with Mr. Cooper* before creating the seminal series *Living Single* for FOX when she was just 27 years old. Bowser also helped launch *black-ish* on ABC and served as Executive Producer and Showrunner on the Netflix series, *Dear White People*, and the Starz series, *Run The World*. Most recently, Bowser guided the acclaimed Kerry Washington/Delroy Lindo dramedy, *UnPrisoned*, as Showrunner and Executive Producer.





CLINT BENTLEY & GREG KWEDAR

2025 Recipients of the Writer's Writer Award

Academy Award nominee **Clint Bentley** is a writer-director-producer whose debut directorial feature, *JOCKEY* (Song Pictures Classics), premiered In Competition at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival, where Clifton Collins Jr. was awarded the Special Jury Prize for Best Actor for his role. Bentley and his long-time collaborator Greg Kwedar co-wrote and produced the film which went on to enjoy further global festival success with screenings at TIFF, AFI and over 30 festivals worldwide, winning the Audience Award at the AFI Film Festival. *JOCKEY* also received awards recognition, including two Independent Spirit Award nominations, plus The National Board of Review named it one of the Top 10 Independent Films of 2021.

Bentley and his producing partner Kwedar recently launched their production company ETHOS to develop their own original, individual and joint projects, and to champion artists under the innovative and equitable financing model that they pioneered on *JOCKEY* and further developed with *SING SING* (A24). Bentley co-wrote and produced *SING SING* with Kwedar, which earned them an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Screenplay. *SING SING* received a further two Academy Awards nominations with one for lead actor Colman Domingo, as well as numerous Golden Globe, Independent Spirit Award, BAFTA and Critics Choice Awards nominations. Both AFI and the National Board of Review named *SING SING* in their top films of the year lists.

Bentley's previous work includes co-writing and producing *TRANSPECOS*, which won the Audience Award at the 2016 SXSW Film Festival, while *Moviemaker Magazine* named Bentley (and Kwedar) on their 'Screenwriters to Watch' list. Most recently, Bentley directed *TRAIN DREAMS* (Netflix), an adaptation of Denis Johnson's Pulitzer Prize finalist novella of the same name. Co-written by Bentley and Kwedar, the film premiered at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival, and stars Joel Edgerton, Felicity Jones, William H. Macy and Kerry Condon.

In addition to his film work, Bentley received a 2026 Pushcart Prize for his short story "Cairn" that first appeared in *The Iowa Review*. His fiction has also appeared in *The Baltimore Review*.

Greg Kwedar is an Academy Award nominated filmmaker.

His sophomore film, *SING SING*, was over eight years in the making. He both directed and co-wrote the film, which premiered at the 2023 Toronto Film Festival and won the 2024 SXSW Festival Audience Award. Acquired and theatrically released by A24, the critical darling garnered three Academy Award nominations (including Best Adapted Screenplay), three BAFTA nominations, and five Critics Choice Award nominations, including Best Picture. It was also nominated for three Independent Spirit Awards, including Best Feature and was named one of the AFI and National Board of Review Top 10 Films of the Year. The film won the National Board of Review Award for Best Adapted Screenplay and the Gotham Awards for Best Lead Performance and Best Supporting Performance.

Kwedar made his feature directorial debut with *TRANSPECOS*, which premiered in competition at the 2016 SXSW FILM FESTIVAL, winning the Audience Award. He co-wrote and produced *JOCKEY*, which premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival in the U.S. Dramatic Competition where it won the Special Jury Award for Best Actor (Clifton Collins Jr.). *JOCKEY* also won the Audience Award at the AFI Film Festival and was acquired by Sony Pictures Classics for theatrical release. The film was later nominated for an Indie Spirit Award for Best Male Lead and the John Cassavetes Award, and was one of the National Board of Review Top 10 Independent Film of 2021. Kwedar also produced *RISING FROM ASHES*, *RUNNING WITH BETO* (Winner: SXSW Audience Award 2019), and was co-producer on *GHOST FLEET* (Telluride & TIFF, 2018).

Recently Greg served as co-writer and executive producer on Clint Bentley's sophomore feature *TRAIN DREAMS*, adapted from the Pulitzer Prize finalist novella *Train Dreams* by Denis Johnson. The film debuted at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival where it was acquired by Netflix.

Kwedar and his producing partner Clint Bentley recently launched a production company called ETHOS to develop their original work and to champion artists under the innovative and equitable financing model they pioneered.

He has spoken to thousands of students across the country and sat on panels about his work at SXSW, Sundance, UNESCO, the United Nations, and more.

2025 AWARDEE SCHEDULE

CHRISTOPHER MCQUARRIE

Extraordinary Contribution to Filmmaking Award

Dissecting Top Gun: Maverick

Friday, October 24

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

The State Theatre

A Conversation with Christopher McQuarrie

Saturday, October 25

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

The Stephen F Austin Capital Ballroom

The Art of Time travel with Rian Johnson and Chris McQuarrie

Saturday, October 25

4:45 PM - 6:00 PM

Central Presbyterian Church

CLINT BENTLEY & GREG KWEDAR

Writers Writer Award

On Train Dreams and Creative Collaboration: A Conversation with Greg Kwedar & Clint Bentley

Saturday, October 25

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

St. David's Episcopal Church Bethel Hall

CHRISTINE VACHON

Polly Platt Award for Producing

A Conversation with Christine Vachon

Friday, October 24

1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

Austin Club

The Writer- Producer Relationship with Christine Vachon & Celine Song

Sunday, October 26

11:30 PM - 12:45 PM

The Stephen F Austin Capital Ballroom

RIAN JOHNSON

Bill Wittliff Award for Screenwriting

Reinventing the Classic Whodunnit: A Conversation with Rian Johnson

Saturday, October 25

10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

The Stephen F Austin Capital Ballroom

The Art of Time Travel with Rian Johnson and Chris McQuarrie

Saturday, October 25

4:45 PM - 6:00 PM

Central Presbyterian Church

YVETTE LEE BOWSER

Outstanding Television Writer Award

A Conversation with Yvette Lee Bowser

Friday, October 24

10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

The Stephen F Austin Capital Ballroom

Juror on Pitch Finale Party

Saturday, October 25

7:30 PM - 9:30 PM

Austin Club

PAST AWARD RECIPIENTS

BILL WITTLIFF AWARD FOR SCREENWRITING

2024 Robin Swicord
 2023 Scott Alexander & Larry Karaszewski
 2022 James Gray
 2021 Scott Frank
 2019 Ron Bass
 2018 Tony Gilroy
 2017 Kenneth Lonergan
 2016 Nancy Meyers
 2015 Brian Helgeland
 2014 Jim Sheridan
 2013 Callie Khouri
 2012 Eric Roth
 2011 Caroline Thompson
 2010 David Webb Peoples
 2009 Steven Zaillian
 2007 John Milius
 2006 Shane Black
 2005 Harold Ramis
 2004 Barry Levinson
 2003 Frank Pierson
 2002 Richard LaGravenese
 2001 Lawrence Kasdan
 2000 Paul Mazursky
 1999 James L. Brooks
 1998 Paul Schrader
 1997 Buck Henry
 1996 William Wittliff
 1995 Horton Foote

OUTSTANDING TELEVISION WRITER AWARD

2024 Ronald D. Moore
 2023 Damon Lindelof
 2022 Stephen Merchant
 2021 Michael Schur
 2019 David Benioff & D.B. Weiss
 2018 Larry Wilmore
 2017 Keenen Ivory Wayans
 2016 Marta Kauffman
 2015 Norman Lear
 2014 Matthew Weiner
 2013 Vince Gilligan
 2012 Chris Carter
 2011 Hart Hanson
 2010 David Simon
 2009 Mitchell Hurwitz
 2008 Greg Daniels
 2007 Glenn Gordon Caron
 2006 David Milch
 2005 Mike Judge
 2004 Garry Shandling
 2003 Tom Fontana
 2002 Darren Star
 2001 Gary David Goldberg
 2000 David Chase

EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTION TO FILMMAKING AWARD

2022 Darren Aronofsky
 2019 James Ivory
 2018 Roger Corman
 2017 Walter Hill
 2016 Paul Feig
 2015 John Singleton
 2014 Edward Zwick
 2013 Jonathan Demme
 2012 Frank Darabont
 2011 John Lasseter
 2010 Robert Rodriguez
 2009 Ron Howard
 2008 Danny Boyle
 2007 Oliver Stone
 2006 Sydney Pollack

WRITER'S WRITER AWARD

2024 Justin Marks
 2023 Cord Jefferson

NEW VOICE AWARD

2024 Rachel Kondo
 2023 So Young Shelly Yo
 2022 Nikyatu Jusu
 2021 Channing Godfrey Peoples
 2019 Catherine Reitman

POLLY PLATT AWARD FOR PRODUCING

2024 Kathleen Kennedy
 2023 Lauren Shuler Donner
 2022 Dede Gardner
 2021 Stephanie Allain
 2019 Sarah Green

EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTION TO FILMMAKING - ACTOR AWARD

2015 Chris Cooper
 2013 Susan Sarandon
 2011 Johnny Depp

HEART OF FILM AWARD

2023 James V. Hart
 2018 Daniel Petrie Jr.
 2013 Barry Josephson





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2025 SCRIPT COMPETITION JUDGES

We'd like to extend our sincerest gratitude to this year's Script Competition Judges!

SEMIFINALIST JUDGES

- Adam Kolbrenner
- Adrian Gonzalez
- Alex Rotaru
- Alyss Masundire
- Andrea Dimity
- Angelina Chen
- Annie Huang
- Ansley Martinez
- Ashley Jeffalone
- Ashley Mathew
- Beth Bruckner O'Brien
- Brandon Bui
- Carolyn Daucher
- Chloe Morris
- Chris Sablan
- Chris Cook
- Chris Coggins
- David Binns
- Elissa Friedman
- Ethan Labouisse
- Evan J. Anglin
- Gabriel Mena
- Glen Cockburn
- Greg Bekkers
- Jacob Hayman
- Jason Lubin
- Jason Tamasco
- Jeff Portnoy
- Jennifer A. DaRe
- Jennifer A. Au
- John Zaozirny
- Judi G. Farkas
- Justin Horowitz
- Karen Kirkland
- Katie Cates
- Katie Ziplin-Leed
- Kendrick Tan
- Kesila Childers
- Lindsay Goffman
- Lindy Goldstein
- Linette Hache
- Liz Kelly
- Maddy Weese
- Mark Marshall
- Mary Rohlich
- Meta Valentic
- Mike Vanderhei
- Mikhail Nayfeld
- Monica Lund
- Natalie Burkardt
- Nick Oleksiw
- Noah Jones
- Noreen O'Toole
- Omar Tarbush
- Patrick White
- Raquelle David
- Ray Utarnachitt
- Samantha Shear
- Samantha Henderson
- Sandhya Shardanand
- Sandra Avila
- Scott Schulman
- Sean Butler

- Shelby Eggers
- Suzanne Weinert
- Tracy Brigden
- Troy Miller
- Walford Campbell
- Zak Kristofek
- Zoe Dennis

FINALIST JUDGES

- Alison Flierl
- Alvaro Rodriguez
- Andrew Nallathambi
- Bill Collage
- Brian Siegele
- Christina Moore
- Christy Gressman
- Chuck Hayward
- Craig Brody
- Craig Cegielski
- Francis McDonough
- Jameel Saleem
- Jennifer Fox
- Jihan Crowther
- Joanna Calo
- John Hoberg
- Jovan Robinson
- Kat Likkel
- Kelly Edwards
- Kelvin Yu
- Kor Adana
- Marc Bernardin
- Matthew Cirulnick
- Nancy Savoca
- Nicole Perlman
- Oren Uziel
- Peter Craig
- Pia Wilson
- Raamla Mohamed
- Rebecca Windsor
- Sarah Beckett
- Sofya Levitsky-Weitz
- Stuti Malhotra
- Sylvia Batey Alcalá
- Tripper Clancy
- VJ Boyd
- Wendy Calhoun
- Zach Baylin

2025 SCRIPT COMPETITION SPONSORS

This year, we're thrilled to partner with many new and returning sponsors for AFF's Script Competitions to provide tailored fellowships and awards.

Through these fellowship programs, emerging artists will receive invaluable guidance, script feedback, and development experience to propel their careers forward.

- AMC Networks
- Starburns Industries
- Big Indie Pictures
- The Donners' Company
- Enderby Entertainment
- Wonder Project | Stand
- Josephson Entertainment
- Together
- Nickelodeon Writing Program
- Writers Guild of America, East
- YMH Studios



prolific producer and head of The Donners' Company, Lauren Shuler Donner at the 2024 AFF Writers Conference



2024 Script Competition Winners



Ryan P. Hall, President of YMH Studios at the 2024 Awards Luncheon



2025 SCRIPT COMPETITION SEMIFINALISTS

AMC ONE-HOUR PILOT AWARD

Affection of a Tiger by Khalid Abdulqaadir
Blind Tiger by Amarik Singh Khosa
BLOODY NOSES by Matilda Schulman
Carrión Bird by Zackary D. Hill and Matthew D. Riffle
Courier Girl by Anna Zabel
Culture Fit: Welcome to the Jungle by Caity-Shea Violette
DISPLACED by Amanda Kowalski
Fallen Gods by Daniel Pappas
Gone Hollywood by Sara Hallowell
House of Miracles by Annina Black
Initiative by Jeremy Henthorn
Lady Em by Cristina Pippa
One Thread by Adam Nichols Russell
Room 39 by Will Franke
S.A.R. by Saraphina Redalieu
Self-Made by Caren Rubenstone
Snow White and the Seven Bullets by B.A. Buffong
TELL NO ONE by Christopher O. Lukens
Terminal Island by Christian Palacios Canterbury
The Badlands Women's Clinic by Brennan Cusack
The Dark Lady by Lauren Loesberg
The Difference Engine by Jacob Coakley
The Entitled by Sloane Avery Smith
The Gray Area by Dmitry Milkin
The Iron Heel by Emily Nye
The Rails by Kate Gleason
THE UNDERSTUDY by Remy Solomon
Where the Sky Meets the Earth by K.E. Lanning
You Can Never Go Home by Chasey Ridgley
Z by Stuart Feldman

COMEDY FEATURE

#SOHIGH SCHOOL by Ariel Schmiedhauser
ACCORD by Maggie Lane
ANYONE ELSE ALIVE by Gareth Wronski
Baked Cakes by Shellie Lewis
Banana by Joe Tyler Gold
Body Count by Shreyas Ayaluri and Adham Ossama Adham
BONEHEADS by Kelly Karam
Carnappers by Jim Harkins
Cheat Day by Alex Fletcher
Creative Retreat by Jared Robbins
Damsel Dash by Adrien Callahan
Dogcatchers by Darren Moran
Felini the Flea by Bruno Bonugli
Follow The Money by Patrick Franklin
Frames by Shane Jonathan Collins
Guy Who Just Bought a Boat by Patrick Tierney
Heaven Help Us by Megan Frith
It Had To Be You by Kate Johnson
Just Ignore It by Ben Fickes
Lauren Lindsay Can Go to Hell by Kate Beacom and Lacey Jeka
Like, Forever by Diana Wright and Annie Girard
Moon Landing by Xann Smith
My K-Drama Moment by Kyla Clark
Pray Hard, Play Hard-er by Matthew Campanella
Promise by D. Wilmos Paul
Roots of Conflict by Ari Mostow
The Charm Offensive by Erin Williams and Shawn Jain
The Idiots Guide to American History by Taylor Tobin
THE RECALL by Rebecca Sharp
The Virgin and the Beast by Zoey Towner
Twilight of the Idols by Wes Driver and Greg Greene
Undead Women Don't Wear Black by Jennifer Saenz

Yay Verily by Nate Currier
Zombie Apocalypse (Taylor's Version) by Steven Lankenau

COMEDY TELEPLAY PILOT

CRAPSHOOT by Drew McInturff
Dead Babysitters Club by Taylor Hill
Dead Clever by Nick Taylor Buck
Destiny's Diary by Kerri Stephenson
D-Force by Daisy Noh
Donner by J Taylor DAndrea and David Espey
Gawk by Seth Birkan
Genius High by Nadia Osman
Hoi Polloi by Liz Eccher
Influenced by Brett Maier
Intercourse by Dylan Pidich
Judge Conroy by Jonathan Carlone
Live From Studio 7C by Zack Morrison
Lord Help Us by Lauren Vernea
LOVE ME TO DEATH by Anthony O'Brien
Love Psycho by Jim Picariello
Mall Madness by Natalie Higdon
Medusa: An Animated Series by Ruby Mainieri
On the Sidelines by Mark Greene
Out of Orbit by Martin Fleming
Rec League by Maria Vainer and Ian Bibby
Sober Living by Kasi Brown and Brandon Walter
The Second Coming of Jesse Christ by Darren Moran
Time Traveling Cum Cops by Austin Schauer
Written by Kids by Michael Hale
Zeros by Ron Kim and TJ Lutkins

COMEDY TELEPLAY SPEC

Abbott Elementary: Skip Skampi's by Scott Olsen
Curb Your Enthusiasm: No Recommendations by Kevin Murphy
Digman: A Very Digman Christmas by Sam Buttress
Ghosts: Higgintoot - The Musical! by Marcus Perkins Bejarano
Krapopolis: Tysistrata by Ari Donnelly
Star Trek Lower Decks: Kal If Fee by James Allen
The Neighborhood: Welcome to the Jungle by William Hunter

DRAMA FEATURE PRESENTED BY WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA, EAST

27 Cows by Christopher Holt
A Bad Corner by Lance Malbon
A Grave In Deep Water by James Wright
Across Enemy Lines by Julia Bergeron
And Behold, There Was a Ram by Isaiah Mouw
Animal Style by Daniel Valero Fletcher
Apache by Adam Seidel
Arcadia by Paul Sheridan
Aryana by Zsofia Darida
Ashes by Maaman Rezaee
Believe/Верим by Ryan Werner
Black & Blues by Greg Machlin and Aoife Baker
Black Silk by Patrick Michael
Blue Skies by Olivia Cevasco
BORDERLORE by J. Angel Sierra
Buttercup by Harry Hunsicker
Clear Waters by Joseph Mueller
Conviction by Glenn Forbes
Cox by Ted Beck
Dad Undead by Kyle Kelley and Adam Brown

Dada is Dead is Dada by Noa Godrich
Darken the Doorstep by Dave Rock
Daughter of Gonder by Arnon Shorr
Detention Diary by Bryan Matthews
Disco Demolition Night by Matthew Taub
Dog Mom by Madi Stine
DRC by Christian de la Cortina
Escape From Hong Kong by Kelly Yaksich
Far From Here by Matthew McLachlan
Film School and Other Terrible Life Choices by Jake Duerden
Fish Head Blues by Conor King Devitt
Ghost Karate by Dallas Brooks
Girls vs. Hell by Juliette Roberts
God Makers by Quinn Spicker
Green Care Lawn Care by Schuyler Willson
HELLHOUND by Bryce Carlisle
Highways by Ollie Giles
I MET THE DEVIL by Rachel Coomes
I Wasted My Tears by Ashlyn Anderson
In Theory by Matthew Sprosty
King for a Night by Nicholas Blauner
Land of Hunger by Madeleine (Max) Olson
LITTLE ISLAND OF JOY by Christopher Carlson
Moose Jaw by Melissa Puente and Ryan Sonderegger
Oberlin by Rikki Stinnette
Obie and the Specter by Dezi Gallegos
On Pins and Needles by Katie Jung
On the Other Side by Lanre Olabisi
Orwell by Connor McLean
Peace So Sweet by Sarah Lawrence
Perspectives by Matthew Minson
Pretty Baby by Evangeline Lopez
Purple America by Travis Hodgkins
Revolutionary Medicine by Kristen McNaule
Rosanna by Abigail Melbye
School by Henry Behar
SHIFT by Danny Salemme
Sojourn by Christopher Murray
SOMNIARCH by Ben Monaco
The 300 Year Old Man by Adrian Morphy
THE 53rd by Elise Salomon
The Bells by Judith Posey
The Big Break by Rachael Low
The Boy and the Cobbler by Hira Sheraz
The Burn by James Warren
THE COLD GREY MIDNIGHT by Ansel Faraj
THE COMEBACK by Jan Bastien
The Deep Blue by Brendan Sullivan
The Dirty Oyster by Noah Wagner and Michael Koehler
The Elaborate Schemes of Little Big Teeth by Omar Ammar
The Fault Line by Larry Collins
The Firedogs by Lit Kilpatrick
The Furies Inside by Peter Mitchell
The Glenn St. Girls by Philadelphia Elder
The Last Run by Steve Kangas
The Man Who Came From The River by Kieran O'Dea and Brennan O'Dea
The One Percent by Ray Keller and Richard Schmidt
The Open Air by Stacey Russell
The Other Side of 25 by Becca Hurd
The Plumed Serpent by Ashley Sarikaya
The Sun Always Sets in the West by Zach Smith
The Valley of Hinnom by Jacob Marx Rice
The Valley of Hinnom by Jacob Marx Rice
This is Real by Amanda Kowalski
Unbound by Renn Tan

Valley of Bones by Craig Cosgray
Vena Sewn In by Ann Marie Martin
Waterloo by Eileen Dennehy
Wet Paint by Jonathan Shatoff and Fred Soligan
Where They Walk by Krista Gallagher

DRAMA TELEPLAY PILOT

(in) Fuse (an) Echo by Zackary D. Hill and Matthew D. Riffle
Affection of a Tiger by Khalid Abdulqaadir
Blind Tiger by Amarik Singh Khosa
Body Brokers by Gisella Bustillos
Burned Secrets by Mehrnaz Mohammadi
Claims by Jill Hoppe
Culture Fit: Welcome to the Jungle by Caity-Shea Violette
Dark Spring by Emily Carr
DISPLACED by Amanda Kowalski
Dr. Nash by Cassidy Nash Davis
Fates by Bronwen Pailthorpe
Generations by Darryl Mansel
Girl of the Year by Michael Lucid
Hero and Nim by Lauren Swintek
House of Miracles by Annina Black
Initiative by Jeremy Henthorn
it's a whole thing by Courtney Taylor
Lady Em by Cristina Pippa
Louis the Monster Conservationist by Toby Tieger
Monsters and Gemstones by Don Donahue
Pitch Slappers by Jesse Stimpson
Red Harlem by Kimba Henderson
Room 39 by Will Franke
S.A.R. by Saraphina Redalieu
Snow White and the Seven Bullets by B.A. Buffong
TELL NO ONE by Christopher Lukens
The Badlands Women's Clinic by Brennan Cusack
The Blanked by Glenn Acosta
The Difference Engine by Jacob Coakley
The Observer: The Path of Totality by Justin Hunt
The Project by Xavier Galva
The Rails by Kate Gleason

DRAMA TELEPLAY SPEC

BLACK MIRROR: NEWER MODEL by Nic Cohen
Bridgerton: Look Back, Don't Stare by Haley Rice
Slow Horses "Ghosts of Berlin" by Anthony Philips
The White Lotus: Call to Prayer by Jeffrey Schick
Yellowjackets: Thicker than Water by Cynthia He

ENDERBY ENTERTAINMENT AWARD

5 for Fighting by Maritsa Flaherty
Black Silk by Patrick Michael
Disco Demolition Night by Matthew Taub
Dog Sitter by Sarah Jean Kruchowski
Fish Head Blues by Conor King Devitt
Land of Hunger by Madeleine (Max) Olson
Percy's Choice by Patricia Parisi
The Open Air by Stacey Russell
The Other Side of 25 by Becca Hurd
The Valley of Hinnom by Jacob Marx Rice
Violet by Cecilia Contreras and Amy Garcia
Waterloo by Eileen Dennehy
Wet Paint by Jonathan Shatoff and Fred Soligan

FICTION PODCAST

A GOOD LISTENER by Jacob Dorn and Brandon Garegnani
Beneath the Lair by June Neely
Dial it Up by Philip Thorne and Oystein Brager

Dremé by Jenny Donheiser
The Gray Side by Jacob Levy

HORROR FEATURE AWARD

A.P. by CM Barnes
Brain Worms by Will Reese
Dad? by Max Otho
Dog Mom by Madi Stine
HELLHOUND by Bryce Carlisle
I MET THE DEVIL by Rachel Coomes
Jilted by Alex Gratzler
KOOSHMA by Seth Beaugh
Metalhead Massacre by Peyton McLeod
On Pins and Needles by Katie Jung
PSITHURISM by Michael Mortimer
SHIFT by Danny Salemme
SOMNIARCH by Ben Monaco
The Dead House by Shannon Pestock
The Deep Blue by Brendan Sullivan
The Elaborate Schemes of Little Big Teeth by Omar Ammar
The Glenn St. Girls by Philadelphia Elder
Vena Sewn In by Ann Marie Martin

SCI-FI FEATURE AWARD

Brain Worms by Will Reese
Daughter of Gonder by Arnon Shorr
DESTROYER by Joel Jensen
Encounter by Mike Million and Kevin Hamedani
INVASIVE SPECIES by Daniel Shafer
On the Other Side by Lanre Olabisi
The Man Who Came From The River by Kieran O'Dea and Brennan O'Dea
The Plumed Serpent by Ashley Sarikaya
The Redacted by Roman S. Koenig
This is Real by Amanda Kowalski

SCRIPTED DIGITAL SERIES

BOTH by Jack Sentell and Emme Harris
Five Eyes by Matthew Greenberg
String City by Suemedha Sood
Unconditional by Nelson Downend

SHORT SCREENPLAY

Ahead of the Storm by Traci Vanderbush
Blue Ticket by Julz Feit
BULLSEYE by Riley Scott
Calm Down by Cody Acquista
Cottonmouth by Ama Anane
Did You Have a Good Time? by Kevin Talley
Displacement by David Dean
Everything Sucks in America by Alla Volkova
Gigged by Joseph Atkins
Have you eaten yet? by Sherry Li
Here Lies the King by Siho Ellsmore
Icarus by Shaler Keenum
Into the Desert by Robert Armanyous
Joe Nales and The Case of The Two Jacks by Chris Churilla
Manclave by Frederik Ehrhardt
Nowhere To Go by Ana Mendez
OASIS by Liggera Edmonds-Allen and Eliza Joy Hallinan
The Analog Blizzard by Normann Pokorny
The Decision Making Center by Kevin Vincenti
The Hole Troll by Loring Weisenberger
The Nightingale in Burka by Abhilash Mohan
The Pallbearers by Natalie Hunt

STAGE PLAY

Appearances by M Felicity Rogers-Chapman
BETTE DAVIS AND THE HOLLYWOOD CANTEEN by Janet J. Lawler
big deal by Lauren Ferebee
Billy to His Friends by Cassandra Rose
BOAZ by Nurit Chinn
Broom Maker (Stage Play-Comedy) by Lee Kitchen
Hemingway Country by Darren C. Sullivan
In the Middle by Megan Sass
Mixed Doubles by Kathleen Jaimet
Moving The Eruv by Ira Gartnerman
Professional Learning by Amy Hanson
Saffron Stain by Ferdos Heidari
Shepherd by Gregory Paul
Thank You For The Opportunity by Claire Greising
The Tomb by Darren, Andrew Nash
WORLDCON by Fred Shahadi

WONDER PROJECT | STAND TOGETHER FELLOWSHIP

27 Cows by Christopher Holt
ACCORD by Maggie Lane
American Girl by Sarah Walker
Damsel Dash by Adrien Callahan
Disco Demolition Night by Matthew Taub
F.A.M.E. by Evan Johnston
From Bedside by Mark Violi and Fred Goldstein
LUNCH LADIES by Kate Torgovnick May
Riptide by Christopher Robert Smith
RORO & JULES by James Murphy
Sandy Gray by Teddy Cecil
The 300 Year Old Man by Adrian Morphy
The Bravest Women by Kenneth Offricht
The Dirty Oyster by Noah Wagner and Michael Koehler
The Fastest Game in the World by Jane Nolan
The Great Creator by Avi Glick
The High Tide by John Saveland
The Open Air by Stacey Russell
The Other Side of 25 by Becca Hurd
The Sound of Sprinklers on Grass by Joel Vázquez Cárdenas
Wait Till Next Year by Paul Knauer
WILD MAN by Maureen McEly
Wisdom of a Wish by Amanda Kowalski



SCRIPT COMPETITION PANELS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23 | 2:45 PM - 4:00 PM

Second Rounders and Above: The Art of Writing a Sellable Spec

Join these writers who have successfully sold their specs to hear how they did it!

Melanie Toast; Alex Convery; Mark Bianculli
Omni Austin Hotel Downtown, Pennybacker Room

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 | 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Second Rounders and Above: Mock Writers Room

This panel might have an extra-special guest: You! Join the raffle for a chance to participate in this mock writers room and break a story with working writers Sean Present (*Almost Paradise*) and Lorien McKenna (*Inside Out, Up*). Raffle and observation are only open to Second Rounders.

Lorien McKenna; Sean Present
St. David's Episcopal Church Bethel Hall

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 | 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Second Rounders and Above: An Industry Perspective

This candid conversation will explore the art of the producer and executive's read, from identifying a compelling concept to spotting a fresh new voice. Learn what the powers that be are truly looking for, how to build a professional relationship, and the key steps to moving your screenplay forward towards production!

Karl Hartman; Maresa Pullman; Mike Blizzard; Jade-Addon Hall
Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 | 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

Second Rounders and Above: Competition to Career

Hear from these working writers about the steps they took to bridge the gap from competition placement to writing career.

Nkechi Okoro Carroll; Andy Siara; Christina Moore; Stuti Malhotra; Warren Wagner
Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Second Rounders and Above: Mock Writers Room

This panel might have an extra-special guest: You! Join the raffle for a chance to participate in this mock writers room and break a story with working writers Sean Present (*Almost Paradise*) and Lorien McKenna (*Inside Out, Up*). Raffle and observation are only open to Second Rounders.

Lorien McKenna; Sean Present
Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Filmmakers, Semifinalists and Above: What the Guild Does for Writers presented by Writers Guild of America, East

Presented by the Writers Guild of America, East, Dana Weissman, will discuss the work of the WGA and support available for writers including pension, health, residuals, a strong community, and other

details of how the Guild can support the writing craft.

Dana Weissman
The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Assembly Room

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 3:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Filmmakers, Semifinalists and Above: Forging a Career as a Writer

Listen to a working writers discuss not only how to break into the industry, but how to keep moving forward and creating opportunities at every level of your career.

Kimberly Harrison; John Hoberg; Gary Lennon; Kat Likkel
St. David's Episcopal Church Bethel Hall

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 4:45 PM - 6:00 PM

Filmmakers, Semifinalists and Above: Inside the WB Discovery Access Program

Join Warner Brothers Discovery and alumnus Heidi-Marie Ferren of the WBD Access Writers Program for a discussion about their career accelerating entry-level writers program and how to impress in the application process. Enjoy a bite to eat and mingle with your fellow writers at the reception held afterwards!

Jamie Hernandez; Heidi-Marie Ferren
Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

Script Competition Roundtables: The Art, Craft, and Business of Film & Television

St. David's Episcopal Church Summers Hall
 Get in-depth answers to your questions about the art, craft, and business of writing for film and television. This roundtable session offers registrants exclusive access to screenwriters, directors, producers, executives, and studio reps in an informal setting. Come prepared with questions that focus on both the creative and business sides of breaking into and writing for film and television.

Second Rounder Roundtables

Thursday, October 23 | 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM
 Thursday, October 23 | 2:45 PM - 4:00 PM
 Saturday, October 25 | 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM
 Saturday, October 25 | 4:45 PM - 6:00 PM

Semifinalist Roundtables

Friday, October 24 | 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM
 Saturday, October 25 | 3:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Filmmakers Roundtables

Friday, October 24 | 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM
 Saturday, October 25 | 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

UPLIFTING STORYTELLERS INITIATIVE

Austin Film Festival is guided by its mission — to further the art and craft of storytelling by inspiring and championing the work of writers, filmmakers, and all artists who use written and visual language to tell a story. Committed to the elevation of all artists within an industry notorious for its barriers, hurdles, and inaccessibility, AFF's Uplifting Storytellers Initiative encourages, connects, and uplifts talented new voices from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds through the execution of skills-based and career-focused enrichment programs. A natural progression of the Festival's Diversity Focus Program — AFF's programmatic promise launched in 2016 which commits to a Writers Conference slate with no less than 50% of panelists who are women and non-binary individuals and/or from a minority or underrepresented background — The Uplifting Storytellers Initiative is interwoven into all aspects of AFF's expansive year-round programming and is designed to promote inclusion within the media arts, thereby usurping trends of inequality.



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23 | 2:45 PM - 4:00 PM

Your Second Act: A Writer's Guide to Breaking In Over 40

It's never too late to chase your screenwriting dreams! Join our panel of industry pros and writers who broke in after 40 for inspiration and actionable insights on leveraging life experience, turning challenges into opportunities, and discovering how your age can be an advantage as you carve your path in the industry.

Larry Postel; Nadia Abass-Madden
Central Presbyterian Church

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Women in the Room

Join us for an authentic and unfiltered discussion about the experiences of women in the industry. Listen in on their highs, lows, and everything in between.

Alison Flierl; Charmaine DeGraté; Amy Talkington
Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 3:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Six Square Industry Roundtables: The Art, Craft, and Business of Writing as a Career & First 3 Pages, Live! at Six Square

As part of AFF's Uplifting Storytellers Initiative, AFF will host free Writers Conference programming within Six Square, Austin's Black Cultural District. This event will be open to both Festival Badge holders and the general public to connect, cultivate, and celebrate BIPOC artists. The event will consist of an Industry Roundtable session and a live reading of the First 3 Pages for selected scripts. At the Roundtables, writers, managers, producers, and/or executives will speak openly about their experiences in the industry. Attendees will have the opportunity to personally interact with the panelists and ask directed questions about the art, craft, and business of working in film, television, and new media.

Lindsey Villarreal; Micah Cyrus; Niceole Levy; Saeed Crumpler; Steven Paul Judd; Jade-Addon Hall
Location TBA. Transportation provided

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 | 11:30 AM - 12:45 PM

On LGBTQIA+ Storytelling & Representation

Join a group of LGBTQIA+ writers for an intimate conversation on authentic storytelling. Panelists will explore how to weave character identity into the fabric of their stories, and the power of representation on the page and screen.

Tracie Laymon; Alvaro Rodriguez; Warren Wagner



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Learn about how you can get involved with the Guild through the Low Budget Agreement, Indie & Documentary Caucuses, and more.



Still from *Norma Rae*, 1979 (Screenplay by Irving Ravetch and Harriet Frank Jr., Directed by Martin Ritt)

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Austin Film Festival's On Story Project is a multi-platform initiative that encompasses an award-winning television show, podcast, public radio show, series of screenwriting books, and comprehensive archive hosted at The Wittliff Collections at Texas State University. The Project shares exclusive in-depth conversations on the art and craft of storytelling with the public, sourced from over 30 years of archived footage from the annual Austin Film Festival & Writers Conference and other year-round events.

WATCH: Catch industry luminaries like Cord Jefferson, Celine Song, Rian Johnson, Kathleen Kennedy, Gia Coppola, Sarah Polley, and David Koepp through *On Story*, AFF's half-hour PBS-affiliated TV series that features an inside look at the creative process behind popular and critically acclaimed films and television shows. Explore season after season of inspirational and powerful insight from writers, directors, and producers at the top of their game. See full episodes for free at www.onstory.tv or check your local PBS listings for air dates.

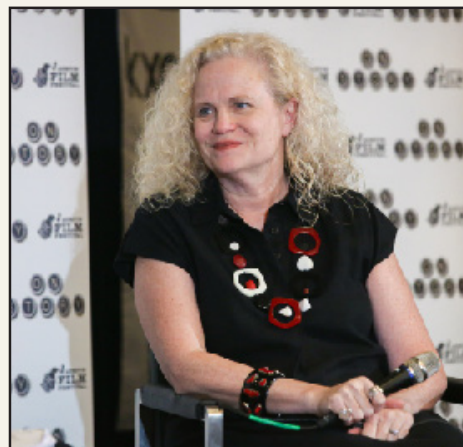
LISTEN: Subscribe to the *On Story* podcast on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or Stitcher to hear conversations with David Chase, Catherine Reitman, Kevin Willmott, Akiva Goldsman, and many more. *On Story* is also available as a weekly radio program distributed to public radio stations nationwide through Public Radio Exchange (PRX). *On Story's* one-hour series provides a front row seat to the elusive world of storytellers in film and television, exploring the stories behind the stories, and the journey from script-to-screen.

READ: The *On Story* book series, published by The University of Texas Press, offers first-hand experience from some of the industry's most respected creators, writers, and filmmakers. The first installment, *On Story — Screenwriters and Their Craft*, was released at the Festival's 20th anniversary in 2013. The second book, *On Story — Screenwriters and Filmmakers on Their Iconic Films*, was published in October 2016. The last of the companion series, *On Story — The Golden Ages of Television* was released during the 25th annual Festival in 2018. The book series is available to purchase at Registration, the Austin Film Festival website or www.onstory.tv

ATTEND: See *On Story* LIVE at this year's Festival & Writers Conference! Attend a recorded panel for an up-close-and-personal experience with this year's remarkable lineup of screenwriters, filmmakers, and awardees. *On Story* will be filming content in all conference venues.

For more On Story visit: www.onstory.tv

On Story is supported by the Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation, Bogle Family Vineyards, Texas Commission on the Arts Texas Film Commission.



ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

Austin Film Festival's roundtable sessions offer registrants exclusive access to writers, producers, and executives. The atmosphere is casual and registrants are encouraged to ask specific questions about the creative and business aspects of writing for film, television, and other forms of media. Each session provides an opportunity for registrants to speak with three professionals among a small group of peers.

All roundtables take place in St. David's Episcopal Church, located at 301 E 8th Street

Please visit www.austinfilmfestival.com for panelist information and specific room locations.

SCHEDULED DATES & TIMES:

<p>Thursday, October 23 1:00 PM–2:15 PM 2:45 PM–4:00 PM</p>	<p>Friday, October 24 9:00 AM–10:15 AM 10:45 AM–12:00 PM 1:00 PM–2:15 PM 2:45 PM–4:00 PM</p>	<p>Saturday, October 25 9:00 AM–10:15 AM 10:45 AM–12:00 PM 12:30 PM–1:45 PM 3:00 PM–4:15 PM 4:45 PM–6:00 PM</p>
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PITCH COMPETITION

Austin Film Festival's popular Pitch Competition is now in its 23rd year and is an AFF fixture you won't want to miss. This unique event allows contestants to pitch their own original ideas to a panel of judges made up of agents, producers, managers, and screenwriters in a constructive and friendly environment.

How it works: You'll have 90 seconds to deliver your best pitch to a panel of judges who critique and score your overall performance. The top two finalists from each Pitch Session (12 in total) will go on to participate in the Pitch Finale Party on Saturday, October 25. The overall winner will receive a prize package including a Producers Badge for the 2026 Festival!

Tickets sell out before the Festival each year but you can check at the Registration Room at the Omni Downtown Austin Hotel for any last minute cancellations and available spots.

All pitch sessions take place at St. David's Episcopal Church in the Vestry room, located at 301 E 8th Street

SCHEDULED DATES & TIMES:

Thursday, October 23:

1:00 PM – 2:15 PM | Pitch Session 1
Justin Boyd; Jill Chamberlain
2:45 PM – 4:00 PM | Pitch Session 2
Taylor Streitz; Chris Provenzano
4:15 PM – 5:30 PM | Pitch Session 3
Jameel Saleem; Heidi-Marie Ferren

Friday, October 24:

9:00 AM – 10:15 PM | Pitch Session 4
Taylor Blackburn; Nadia Abass-Madden
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM | Pitch Session 5
Isabella Mastrodicasa; Bill True
1:30 PM – 2:45 PM | Pitch Session 6
Pamela Ribon; Mikhail Nayfeld
3:15 PM – 4:30 PM | Pitch Session 7
Saeed Crumpler; Rebecca Windsor

Saturday, October 25:

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM | Pitch Session 8
Stuti Malhotra; Kelly Younger
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM | Pitch Session 9
Patrick Schumacker; Auri Maruri
12:30 PM – 1:45 PM | Pitch Session 10
Jennifer Flackett; Mark Levin
3:00 PM – 4:15 PM | Pitch Session 11
Jameel Saleem; Roxie Rodriguez
4:45 PM – 6:00 PM | Pitch Session 12
Kara Durrett; Karl Hartman
7:30 PM – 9:30 PM | **Pitch Finale Party – Austin Club**
Yvette Lee Bowser; Doug Mand; Dan Gregor

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23 | 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

OPENING REMARKS

Austin Club

Austin Film Festival (AFF) welcomes you to its 32nd annual celebration of storytelling through film, television, and new media! Bringing together industry icons, independent filmmakers, aspiring storytellers, and everyone in between, this year's Festival features intimate discussions, workshops, film premieres, retrospectives, parties, and limitless networking opportunities. Join **Alvaro Rodriguez** and AFF staff for Opening Remarks to learn more about the week ahead, last-minute additions and changes, and new special guests.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23 | 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

World Building Across Mediums

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

Join a panel of visionary writers and creators as they dissect the art of world-building across different mediums. From the interactive lore of games and VR to the visual shorthand of live-action film and the boundless imagination of animation, they will explore how the same core principles of creating an immersive and believable world shift with each platform.

Pamela Ribon; Alvaro Rodriguez; Lucas Martell

Film Texas: A New Era for Texas Production Incentives presented by Texas Association of Film Commissions

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

Join Texas film commissioners from across the state along with industry luminaries for an in-depth discussion focusing on the newly refreshed Texas Moving Image Industry Incentive Program. Now funded at a robust \$1.5 billion over the next 10 years, the revised TMIIIP offers qualified film, television, commercial and digital media productions up to 31% back in a cash grant. The panel will also touch on formalized city-level monetized incentives available across Texas and savings that are part of the Tex-Factor — tools and resources that will help filmmakers and studios alike economically produce their dream projects. This is the crash course of how to do film business in Texas.

Drew Mayer-Oakes; Alfred Cervantes; Brian Gannon; Christine Hill; Emily Zertuche; Sherman Bass; Stephanie Whallon; Kimberly LeBlanc

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Pitch

St. David's Episcopal Church Historic Sanctuary

Jason Headley used to hate to pitch. Probably not half as much as the people to whom he was pitching hated it. Until one day he decided to dig deep, get out of his own way, and learn to embrace this other type of storytelling. Come hear how he helped himself and how it might help you.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23 | 2:45 PM – 4:00 PM

Your Second Act: A Writer's Guide to Breaking In Over 40

Central Presbyterian Church

It's never too late to chase your screenwriting dreams! Join our panel of industry pros and writers who broke in after 40 for inspiration and actionable insights on leveraging life experience, turning challenges into opportunities, and discovering how your age can be an advantage as you carve your path in the industry.

Larry Postel; Nadia Abass-Madden

HartChart: Severance

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta, Assembly Room

A renowned story mapping tool, Hartchart is the key to developing strong character arcs and a well-paced plot. Learn how to master structure in your writing from the mind behind *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *August Rush*, and *Hook*, using the shooting final draft of *Severance's* acclaimed "Cold Harbour" episode as a case study.

James V. Hart

So Tell Me About Yourself: Crafting Your Origin Story for

How to Work the Writers Conference

Austin Club

Sit down with these returning panelists and friends of AFF for prep and a pep talk on what the Conference has to offer: panels, pitches, and all the ways you can get the most out of your week.

Jovan Robinson; Jono Matt; Kevin Hamedani; Rebecca Windsor

The Myth of Three Act Structure presented by Jacob Krueger Studio

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta, Assembly Room

In this groundbreaking seminar, WGA Paul Selvin Award Winner **Jacob Krueger** shows you why more and more successful writers are abandoning 3 act structure for a more intuitive approach. Learn why writers get "lost in the second act" and how to make sure that never happens to you again. Plus, discover a new way of thinking about structure that helps you transcend the tired old formulas, and grow your script organically, by connecting to your characters and your instincts as a writer.

On The Making of: *Sharp Objects*

St. David's Episcopal Church Bethel Hall

Join veteran writer-producer **Marti Noxon** as she elaborates on the process of adapting beloved writer Gillian Flynn's debut novel *Sharp Objects* into an Emmy-nominated mini series. Learn how she carefully crafted the dark, eerie, town of Wind Gap Missouri and its heartbreakingly tortured residents.

Script to Screen: *Silicon Valley*

Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Ballroom

Seinfeld, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Silicon Valley*, *Barry*. This prolific writer and producer, responsible for bringing countless laughs to our TV screens, will break down his storied career and contributions to the comedy cannon.

Alec Berg

Meetings and Pitches

St. David's Episcopal Church Historic Sanctuary

When a development exec, showrunner, or producer opens with "So, tell me about yourself," most writers panic or start pitching their latest project. Big mistake. Your answer to this question can make you memorable or forgettable before you have even talked about your work. In this panel, you will learn how to shape and deliver your personal "origin story" so it is engaging, concise, and completely you. Using four simple but revealing questions, we will build a short, conversational monologue that you can memorize, practice, and confidently use in general meetings, networking events, and pitches.

Kelly Younger

A Conversation with Mike Jones

St. David's Episcopal Church Bethel Hall

Join Pixar writer **Mike Jones** for a candid conversation about building fantastical worlds grounded in profound human emotion. From *Soul* to *Luca*, he'll take us behind the scenes of his creative process and his journey from film journalist to celebrated screenwriter.



Inside the World of Indie Podcasting

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Lamar Room

Get inspired by this panel featuring independent creators who will discuss their unique journeys of creating their own podcasts. The panel represents a diverse mix of creators at different stages and with various experiences in this medium who can speak to all aspects of the podcast production process.

Elizabeth Quinn; Jake Emanuel; Jana Naomi Smith; Laura Knight

On *Wicked*: A Conversation with Winnie Holzman & Dana Fox

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

Step into the world of Oz with the brilliant minds behind the “*Wicked*” stage-to-film adaptations. Tony and Emmy nominated screenwriter **Winnie Holzman** and acclaimed screenwriter **Dana Fox** will delve into the monumental task of bringing this beloved Broadway phenomenon to the big screen. From the joys and challenges of adapting an iconic stage musical book, to the thrills of expanding upon that universe for film, Holzman and Fox will discuss how they crafted a cinematic experience that reaches its epic, electrifying conclusion this November with “*Wicked: For Good*.”

Personal Pitch Workshop

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

In this interactive experience, you can volunteer to pitch your project in front of your peers and a panel of industry leaders. Panelists will evaluate your answers, simulate a real life pitching experience, and give you real-time feedback on how to present yourself to studio executives. You will receive straightforward, valuable guidance on how to pivot during a presentation, pitch your personal logline, and answer unexpected questions. *OPEN TO PRODUCERS BADGEHOLDERS ONLY.*

Craig Cegielski; Jack Glascott; Alexis Greer; Jovan Robinson; Glenn Cockburn

Demystifying the Agency System

Austin Club

We’re bringing together literary agents to shed light on the agent-client relationship and offer invaluable insights on what they look for in a new writer. Learn what it takes to get noticed, how to build a lasting professional partnership, and the key steps to navigate your screenwriting career with a powerful ally in your corner.

Auri Maruri, Andrew Mathes

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 | 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Meeting a Manager

Austin Club

We’re bringing together literary managers from across the industry who will weigh in on the dos and don’ts of meeting and signing with a manager. Learn how to stand out and find the rep who’s right for you.

Isabella Mastrodicasa; Jason Lubin; Raquelle David

On Book to TV Adaptations: A Conversation With Liz Tigelaar

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

As a master of adapting beloved books into hit shows like *Little Fires Everywhere* and *Tiny Beautiful Things*, **Liz Tigelaar** will share her approach to bringing complex characters and big themes to life on screen. She’ll share her process for navigating nonlinear narratives, creating a collaborative writers’ room, and finding the universal truths in deeply personal stories.

Morning Improv

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Assembly Room

Back by popular demand, we’re offering improv comedy to help you warm up before embarking on today’s journey. Say “yes, and” to new skills that will help you market yourself and your script during the Festival.

Dave Buckman

From Stage to Screen

Omni Austin Hotel Downtown Hotel Lamar Room

Learning how to write for the theater brings distinct advantages to the screen: compelling dialogue, strong pacing, and well-crafted characters. Come hear from panelists who have worked in both mediums and learn what one can teach you about the other.

Gary Lennon; Nkechi Okoro Carroll; Ben Snyder

Personal Pitch Workshop

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

In this interactive experience, you can volunteer to pitch your project in front of your peers and a panel of industry leaders. Panelists will evaluate your answers, simulate a real life pitching experience, and give you real-time feedback on how to present yourself to studio executives. You will receive straightforward, valuable guidance on how to pivot during a presentation, pitch your personal logline, and answer unexpected questions. *OPEN TO PRODUCERS BADGEHOLDERS ONLY.*

Roxie Rodriguez; Josh Flanagan; Joe Forte; Kevin Hamedani

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 | 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

On Writing A Great First Act with Michael Arndt

Paramount Theatre

Billy Wilder once said that if you have a problem in your Third Act, the real problem is in your First Act. What makes a great First Act, and how do you write one? In his new video presentation, followed by an audience Q&A, Academy Award winner **Michael Arndt** will delve into the art of crafting a great First Act, using examples from *The Godfather*, *The Bicycle Thief*, *Tootsie*, and *Cinderella*.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 | 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Leveraging Your Audience: The Content Creation to Legacy Media PipelineThe Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Assembly Room

Learn how to build your own online audience and social media presence, and leverage its success to launch a career in film and television – an increasingly proven path for emerging artists. Our experts will offer a roadmap for translating digital success into a sustainable career as a writer and filmmaker.

Chris Burns; Fernando Morett; Meta Valentic; Steve Beckman

The Writer's Toolkit: InspirationAustin Club

This panel of writers will share their personal toolkits for finding new ideas, overcoming creative blocks, and reigniting their passion for the page. From travel and research to unexpected exercises, they'll offer practical advice and techniques for a sustainable creative practice.

Nicole Perlman; Virgil Williams; Scott Rosenberg

A Conversation with Yvette Lee BowserThe Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

Yvette Lee Bowser redefined the television landscape with her first hit show, *Living Single*, as she was the first (and youngest) Black woman to create and run her own primetime series at 27 years old. Continuing to inspire and share her distinct voice with the next generation, she went on to create, mentor, and produce for many beloved series including: *Black-Ish*, *Dear White People*, and *Unprisoned*.

Industry Insights Presented by The Donners' CompanySt. David's Episcopal Church Historic Sanctuary

The producers and executives who brought you *Wednesday*, *Harriet*, *Ready Player One*, *X-Men*, *Between Two Ferns*, *You've Got Mail*, and so much more, grace AFF to share their insights on the state of the industry, what makes a great script, and how emerging writers can stand out amongst the fray.

OPEN TO PRODUCERS BADGES ONLY.

Lauren Shuler Donner; Mike Farah; Debra Martin Chase; Gail Berman

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 | 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Inside the Making of: *Battlefield*The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Assembly Room

Look behind the scenes of the highly anticipated sixth installment of *Battlefield* with the team of writers who brought it to life.

Adrian Vershinin; Justin Sloan; Alexandra Mercer Lucas

Inside the Writers Room: *Poker Face*The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

Join the writer and producer of the hit show for an inside look at the star-studded mystery-of-the-week series *Poker Face* known for its incredible character work and intricate plotting.

Chris Provenzano; Laura Deeley

On After the Hunt: A Conversation with Nora GarrettOmni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

Actor and screenwriter **Nora Garrett** will discuss process for crafting stories that are both emotionally resonant and intellectually provocative. She will offer a candid look at breaking into the industry, and her unique approach to writing layered characters and high-stakes narratives.

Inside the Writers Room: *Dark Winds*Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

Following three Navajo Tribal Police Officers, *Dark Winds* explores the criminal underbelly of the 1970s Four Corners area. Hear from showrunner, **John Wirth** and writer **Steven Paul Judd** on crafting suspense and historical world building on this critically acclaimed series.

Screenwriting in Highland Pro with John AugustOmni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

Join screenwriter **John August** as he explores the features and philosophy of Highland Pro: clean design with seamless tools that create a writing experience focused on keeping you in your flow wherever inspiration strikes. Plus, a sneak peek of new never-before-seen features!

Indie Film Track: Big Stories in Small PackagesOmni Austin Downtown Hotel Lamar Room

Creating a short film poses its own set of challenges. Panelists will share tips on developing characters under a time constraint, creating a thorough story arc, and establishing a clear beginning, middle and end with a limited runtime.

Everything Everyone Else Is Telling You Is WrongCentral Presbyterian Church

Craig Mazin and **Alec Berg** dispel myths, debunk bad advice, and set you free to write the way you want.

The Problems Never StopSt. David's Episcopal Church Bethel Hall

Join the four friends who brought you the Failure, Inner Critic, and Mistakes panels of years past for an honest, off-the-record conversation about how the problems you're going through now are only training you for the problems yet to come. (But the problems never stop.) You'll discover you think you're out there waxing cars, but you're really learning karate.

Jason Headley; Christina Hodson; Pamela Ribon; Oren Uziel

The Craft of Writing Audio FictionOmni Austin Downtown Hotel Lamar Room

What techniques are effective in creating moving character and story development for an audio medium? How can writing for audio make you a better writer overall? Join this session for a look behind the curtain in podcast writing, and how to put your skills to the best use.

Elijah Sariñana; James Kim; Caroline Slaughter

Return of the Spec SaleCentral Presbyterian Church

It's every screenwriter's dream - the script you wrote on spec sparks a bidding war, sells for millions, and secures Tom Cruise as the star. But before you can collect your record-breaking box office results and Oscars, how do you write the story that will garner Hollywood's attention? Hear from the writers who have successfully sold their spec on how they did it!

Buck Bloomingdale; Brandon Cohen; Melanie Toast

Breaking and Entering: How We Got Our First JobsSt. David's Episcopal Church Historic Sanctuary

Everyone starts somewhere! Learn how these experienced writers got their big breaks in film and TV, and how you can apply their strategies to your own career.

Christina Hodson; Jameel Saleem; Kelvin Yu



A Conversation with Christine Vachon

Austin Club

This year's recipient of the Polly Platt Award is a titan of independent cinema and a trailblazer for fearless storytelling. She has produced some of the most influential and critically acclaimed movies of the last three decades. Join us for this masterclass in independent filmmaking, as we explore her prolific body of work, including groundbreaking works such as *Safe*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Still Alice*, *Far from Heaven*, *Carol*, *Past Lives*, and *The Brutalist*.

Christine Vachon

Dissecting Top Gun: Maverick

The State Theatre

Join **Christopher McQuarrie** as he deconstructs the film phenomenon *Top Gun: Maverick*. The writer-director will walk his audience through screenwriting and shot composition choices in the film's key scenes.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 | 2:45 PM - 4:00 PM

Inside the Writers Room: Abbott Elementary

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

Go behind the scenes of ABC's Emmy, SAG and Golden Globe-winning sensation, *Abbott Elementary*, with one of the show's executive producers, **Patrick Schumacker**. Hailed by critics as a refreshingly authentic and heartwarming mockumentary comedy, *Abbott Elementary* has been celebrated for its sharp humor, relatable characters, and poignant exploration of community.

What Writers Do in the Shadows: First Gigs and Flexibility Presented by Hollins University Graduate Screenwriting Department

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Assembly Room

Join writers **Jonell Lennon** (*Pretty Little Liars*, *The L-Word: GQ*), **Lauren Wells** (*What We Do in the Shadows*, *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*) and Creative Producer **Bri Kaisen** (*Life Out Loud Films*) as they offer candid insights into points of entry in today's industry, capitalizing on those rare opportunities, how to be creatively flexible without losing your voice, and the path forward for TV and feature writers. Moderated by Hunter Phillips. Presented by Hollins University Graduate Screenwriting Department.

Inside the World of Indie Film Financing

St. David's Episcopal Church Historic Sanctuary

Navigating the complex landscape of independent film financing can be a filmmaker's greatest challenge. Join producers **Kara Durrett** of Pinky Promise (*Eleanor the Great*, *Bird*, *The Last Showgirl*), and **Dave Caplan** of C2 Motion Picture Group (*Longlegs*, *The Monkey*) as they pull back the curtain on securing funding for indie projects, and what they look for in a script.

The Writer's Toolkit: Resilience

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

What does it take to keep going—and growing—as a writer or filmmaker? **Ethan Ogilby**, **Michele Giannusa**, **Kevin Hamedani**, and **Tracie Laymon** dive into the role of resilience in a creative career, sharing how persistence and dedication to the craft paved their way. A must for anyone writing their way toward their next big leap.

The Showrunner's Guide to Staff Writing

Central Presbyterian Church

Go inside the writers' room with top showrunners as they reveal what it takes to get hired and become an indispensable staff writer. Learn the essential skills and professional conduct needed to thrive in a collaborative creative environment and build a lasting career.

Hannah Bos; Anthony Sparks; Paul Thureen; John Wirth

On American Born Chinese: A Conversation with Kelvin Yu

St. David's Episcopal Church Bethel Hall

Praised for its ambition and creativity, *American Born Chinese* tells a coming-of-age story about the importance of self-acceptance and family. Join creator, **Kelvin Yu**, to get an inside look at how they brought the show's fantasy elements and charming characters to life from the beloved graphic novel.

Script to Screen: The Nice Guys

Austin Club

Join writer-director **Shane Black** as he dissects his update on a classic detective story, *The Nice Guys*. He'll explore the film's carefully balanced blend of action and humor, creating rich characters to drive the actors' dynamic performances, and writing sharp dialogue to keep audiences riveted.

How to Solve a Story Crisis Like A Veteran Pixar Writer

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

No matter your level of experience, story problems are inevitable in any project. Learn how to diagnose and overcome some story crises through specific examples encountered in *Soul*, *Toy Story 3*, *Inside Out*, and other beloved Pixar films.

Megan Alderson; Michael Arndt; Mike Jones; Meg LeFauve

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 | 9:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Scriptnotes, Live!

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

Join hosts **John August** (*Big Fish*) and **Craig Mazin** (*The Last of Us*) for a live recording of their critically acclaimed podcast. Featuring surprise guests, an audience Q&A, disastrous games, and lively conversations about screenwriting and things that are interesting to screenwriters.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

A Conversation with Christopher McQuarrieThe Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

From *The Usual Suspects* to *Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning*, **Christopher McQuarrie** has redefined the modern action film through masterful storytelling and high-stakes collaboration. Join the Oscar-winning writer-director for a conversation about screenwriting, directing, and the evolving art of crafting large scale spectacle.

The New Frontier: Writing Live Service GamesThe Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Assembly Room

Many of the biggest games today are regularly updated with new stories and gameplay, alongside a playerbase that constantly impacts the creative process. Learn from writers working in this space how teams deal with the challenges, chaos, and rewards that spring up from this dance.

Ashley Poprik; Matthew Garcia-Dunn; Stephen Flowers; Westin Lee**State of the Industry: Securing Representation**St. David's Episcopal Church Historic Sanctuary

This panel will provide a current, candid look at the evolving landscape of literary representation. We'll discuss what reps are actually looking for in an ever-shifting business model, and how writers can best position themselves for success.

Ryan Cunningham; Adam Kolbrenner; Auri Maruri; Mikhail Nayfeld**Women in the Room**Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Inside the Development ProcessCentral Presbyterian Church

Welcome to your crash course in story development: what executives look for in a script, and how writers, executives, and producers work together to get a new project ready for production.

Megan Alderson; Jack Glascott; Maresa Pullman; Roxie Rodriguez; Kelsi Fleming**Reinventing the Classic Whodunnit: A Conversation with Rian Johnson**The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

Rian Johnson has built a career on subverting expectations and crafting smart, stylish stories across genres. Join the Academy Award nominated filmmaker as he delves into the creation of the Benoit Blanc murder mystery universe - structuring intricate narratives, assembling unforgettable ensembles and bringing a bold, modern twist to the classic whodunnit.

Script to Screen: Man on FireSt. David's Episcopal Church Bethel Hall

Join Academy Award winning writer-director **Brian Helgeland** as he discusses the process of bringing his critically acclaimed 2004 action thriller *Man on Fire* to life. He will elaborate on the ways he built on, and departed from, the original 1987 film, and how he skillfully juxtaposed the film's tender moments with its intense action sequences.

The Right Note: Navigating the Revision ProcessOmni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

Learn how to take constructive criticism, identify the "note behind the note," and strategically push back as needed. The conversation will demystify the revision process across the industry, from working with managers to handling notes

Join us for an authentic and unfiltered discussion about the experiences of women in the industry. Listen in on their highs, lows, and everything in between.
Alison Flierl; Charmaine DeGraté, Emilia Serrano; Amy Talkington

Writing Between the Lines: Action and Description on the PageCentral Presbyterian Church

We've all heard the advice "show, don't tell," but mastering this skill is easier said than done. Join this panel of veteran screenwriters as they pull back the curtain on the writing you never hear in the movie—the subtext that builds the world and breathes life into the characters we love.

Andrew Kevin Walker; Virgil Williams; Brian Helgeland; Tamara Chestna**The Podcast to TV Series Pipeline**Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Lamar Room

Using the acclaimed podcast *Tom Slick: Mystery Hunter* as a case study, this panel will examine the path from narrative fiction podcast to television series.

Caroline Slaughter**On Train Dreams and Creative Collaboration: A Conversation with Greg Kwedar and Clint Bentley**St. David's Episcopal Church Bethel Hall

From the highly acclaimed writer-director duo of *Sing Sing*, comes their newest, highly anticipated dramatic feature, *Train Dreams*. Join **Greg Kwedar** and **Clint Bentley** for an in depth look at how they adapted themes of loss and change from the original novella to the screen.

from studios, networks, and streamers. This is a must-attend for any writer seeking to turn feedback into their strongest draft.

Jennie Church-Cooper; Jovan Robinson; Alex Convery; Oren Uziel**Indie Film Track: Documentary Storytelling**Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Lamar Room

Documentary filmmaking requires a multi-layered writing process: adapting to unforeseen circumstances throughout production and working to accurately represent your subjects. Hear from a panel of documentary filmmakers on how to master the craft.

A Seminar on Story EngineSt. David's Episcopal Church Historic Sanctuary

"All notes go back to Act One." It's important to know the elements that make up your story's engine. These elements are established in Act One and then propel your story, create character arcs, and help the story illuminate theme. These elements aren't "rules" as much as tools to help you discover why your story just isn't clicking.

Meg LeFauve**On Dear White People: A Conversation with Justin Simien**Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

Explore the impactful world of *Dear White People* with its creator, **Justin Simien**. This conversation will delve into the origins of the acclaimed film and series, Simien's approach to social commentary, and the show's signature character-driven storytelling. Gain insights into the challenges of tackling complex themes with humor and poignancy.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 12:15 PM - 2:15 PM

Awards Luncheon

Austin Club

While attending the festival, don't miss the opportunity to attend AFF's Awards Luncheon, where you can dine with panelists, awardees, and hear inspiring speeches from this year's honorees and winners. A must attend event to make the most of your AFF experience.

**Additional ticket purchase required.*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

State of the Industry: Genre Filmmaking

St. David's Episcopal Church Historic Sanctuary

We're bringing together horror industry experts **Dave Caplan** (Chairman and CEO of C2 Motion Picture Group) and **Jakob Pollack** (Creative executive at Vertigo Entertainment) to talk about what it takes to develop, finance, and produce successful horror films in today's entertainment landscape.

On The Naked Gun

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

Join the screenwriters of this year's biggest comedic hit to discuss their approach to updating a classic for the next generation.

Dan Gregor; Doug Mand

On Sorry, Baby: A Conversation with Eva Victor

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

Multi-hyphenate **Eva Victor** wrote, directed, and starred in this debut feature that lit the independent film world on fire. Join them as they discuss the making of their breathtaking film which so perfectly blends humor and trauma to present a truly authentic story.

Inside the Writers Room: The Studio

Central Presbyterian Church

Celebrated for its biting satire, relentless pace, and immersive peek behind Hollywood's curtain, *The Studio* offers a heightened, hilarious insider's perspective of today's film and TV industry. Co-creator and co-showrunner **Alex Gregory** will discuss how the show's writers mined their own experiences to develop its uniquely dysfunctional characters and kinetic storytelling style.

Betting on Yourself: Why Writing on Spec Is Always a Good Idea presented by Jim Burnstein & Bill Collage

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

Betting on yourself can be scary, but investing in your craft is the first step. Dive into this insightful panel that will cover the benefits of writing on spec and finding attainable ways to jumpstart your writing career.

Bill Collage; Marti Noxon; Scott Rosenberg; Monica Macer

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 3:00 PM - 4:15 PM

On Grounded Storytelling: Somebody Somewhere

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

Go behind the scenes of the Peabody Award-winning HBO series *Somebody Somewhere* with co-creators and showrunners, **Hannah Bos** and **Paul Thureen**. The pair will explore their longstanding creative partnership and their knack compelling character dynamics that turn small moments into universally human stories.

State of the Industry: TV

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

Understading the Writer- Exec Dynamic: The Making of Black Rabbit

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Assembly Room

Join showrunners **Zach Baylin** and **Kate Susman**, as well as VP of Television at Jason Bateman's Aggregate Films, **Roxie Rodriguez**, as they discuss how to craft a propulsive and character-driven suspense story. The conversation will offer a rare look into the creative partnership between showrunners and a leading production company, exploring the challenges and triumphs of bringing a high-concept series to a global audience.

The Screenwriter as Entrepreneur: Navigating the New Normal presented by Loyola Marymount University

St. David's Episcopal Church Bethel Hall

In today's ever-evolving entertainment landscape, successful screenwriters must embody adaptability and an entrepreneurial spirit. This panel explores how writers can pivot their careers and embrace the DIY mode to forge their own paths, all while nurturing the emotional resilience necessary to thrive in an industry without rules.

Jonathan Talbert; Taylor Blackburn; Jamil Akim O'Quinn

Anatomy of an Interactive Scene

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Lamar Room

In this conversation, dive into writing interactive conversations in video games. Learn how players can navigate conflict and drive plot forward through dialogue options.

Craig Sherman; Evan Narcisse; Shanon Ingles

Personal Pitch Workshop

Central Presbyterian Church Smoot Hall

In this interactive experience, you can volunteer to pitch your project in front of your peers and a panel of industry leaders. Panelists will evaluate your answers, simulate a real life pitching experience, and give you real-time feedback on how to present yourself to studio executives. You will receive straightforward, valuable guidance on how to pivot during a presentation, pitch your personal logline, and answer unexpected questions. *OPEN TO PRODUCERS BADGEHOLDERS ONLY.*

Roxie Rodriguez; Josh Flanagan; Joe Forte; Kevin Hamedani

We're bringing together a group of seasoned industry players to discuss the current state of television. Get behind-the-scenes insight into current trends, popular series, and future predictions of where the business is heading.

VJ Boyd; Wendy Calhoun; Chris Provenzano; Scott Rosenberg

From Script to MP3

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Lamar Room

A case study on recently released podcasts *Red for Revolution* and *The Harbingers*, on how these writers and producers brought a story from concept to execution.

How to Take Advantage of Texas Incentives

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Assembly Room

Dive into the future of Texas filmmaking with an essential panel on the new incentives package. Experts will break down how the historic increase in funding will impact film and television productions within the Lone Star state.

Duncan Montgomery; Paul Merryman; Alisa Perren

Inside the Writers Room: *The Chosen*

Central Presbyterian Church

This fan-funded series achieved record shattering popularity and garnered attention from the Hollywood gatekeepers. Join key members of the writing team to discuss their tall task of breathing life into familiar Biblical figures and stories.

Ryan Swanson; Tyler Thompson

Script to Screen: *Materialists*

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

Join acclaimed writer-director Celine Song as she dissects her sophomore feature, a sharp, witty deconstruction of modern romance. She will explore the film's carefully balanced blend of cynicism and romance, creating rich characters to drive actors' nuanced performances, and writing sharp dialogue that draws audiences into their dynamics.

Celine Song

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 4:15 - 5:30 PM

First 3 Pages, Live! at Six Square

Location TBA

As part of AFF's Uplifting Storytellers Initiative, AFF will host free Writers Conference programming within Six Square, Austin's Black Cultural District. This event will be open to both Festival Badge holders and the general public to connect, cultivate, and celebrate BIPOC artists. At the First 3 Pages reading, selected writers will have their work read aloud by working actors and will receive notes from attending panelists.

Lindsey Villarreal; Micah Cyrus; Niceole Levy; Saeed Crumpler; Steven Paul Judd; Jade-Addon Hall

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 4:45 PM - 6:00 PM

What Do You Want? The Key Ingredient for Your Story and Writing Life

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

Learn how a character's wants become the driving story engine in your screenplay.

Meg LeFauve; Lorien McKenna

Three Page Challenge

St. David's Episcopal Church Historic Sanctuary

In this live, interactive session, **Craig Mazin** and **John August** will offer their insightful feedback on submitted screenplays – focusing on the all-important first three pages. Learn firsthand what makes a script demand attention, the common pitfalls to avoid, and essential techniques for hooking your audience from the very start.

On the Making of: *All American*

St. David's Episcopal Church Bethel Hall

Praised for its realistic characters and witty commentary on class and race, *All American* became a television phenomenon. Sit down with showrunner **Nkechi Okoro Carroll** as she gives her insight on the impactful themes of collaboration and youthful ambition, and learn what can be expected of the upcoming season as the series comes to a close.

Writing Great Characters to Attract Top Talent

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

Explore how to build authentic, flawed, and rich characters that attract the top-tier talent who can bring your script to life. Learn the secrets to creating indelible characters and the dialogue that makes them pop off the page from these actors and writers.

Kelvin Yu; Mark Bianculli; Nora Garrett

Mock Game Writers Room

Central Presbyterian Church Smoot Hall

Experience a live game writers' room with these experts in narrative interactive storytelling.

Ashley Poprik; Craig Sherman; Matthew Garcia-Dunn; Pierre Shorette; Shanon Ingles; Westin Lee

The Art of Time Travel with Rian Johnson and Christopher McQuarrie

Central Presbyterian Church

Join Oscar nominated writer-directors **Rian Johnson** (*Looper*) and **Christopher McQuarrie** (*Edge of Tomorrow*) as they discuss intricate world building and internal story logic in two iconic time traveling films. Guaranteed to leave you begging for more time with this masterful filmmaking duo.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 9:00 PM - 11:00 PM

UCLA Storybreak Live!

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

Come experience the controlled chaos of a writer's room in person, led by UCLA's Jill Goldsmith. A group of panelists will break a pilot live, with no prior knowledge of the story, and have it (hopefully) whipped into a pitchable state before the panel ends. One random Second Rounder in attendance will be chosen to participate.

Alec Berg; Wendy Calhoun; Micah Fitzerman-Blue; Noah Harpster; Jill Goldsmith; Marti Noxon; Micah Cyrus



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 | 11:30 AM - 12:45 PM

The Writer- Producer Relationship with Christine Vachon & Celine Song

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

Join writer-director **Celine Song** and legendary independent producer **Christine Vachon** for a conversation about building and sustaining the essential writer-producer relationship. Song and Vachon will share insights into the nuances of their own successful collaborations, including *Past Lives* and *Materialists*, offering advice on how to foster trust, manage expectations, and effectively navigate the creative and business challenges inherent in bringing a story from script to screen.

On LGBTQIA+ Storytelling & Representation

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Assembly Room

Join a group of LGBTQIA+ writers for an intimate conversation on authentic storytelling. Panelists will explore how to weave character identity into the fabric of their stories, and the power of representation on the page and screen.

Tracie Laymon; Alvaro Rodriguez; Warren Wagner

The Invisible Truth: Disability Representation vs. Reality

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

More than 25% of the US population has some form of disability, yet less than 4% of those stories are explored onscreen. Join a candid conversation about why integrating people with lived experience, both onscreen and behind the camera, ensures impactful stories for America's most underserved majority in entertainment. Discover how filmmakers shatter stereotypes, disrupt ableism, and explore a wide range of characters with riveting narratives about caregiving, empowerment, and unity within the disability community.

Wendy Calhoun; Maddy Ullman; Julie Ann Crommelt; Sandi Johnson

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 | 1:00 PM - 2:45 PM

Live From New York: It's Saturday Night Live Writers

Paramount Theatre

In partnership with Harry Ransom Center's Lorne Michaels Collection, AFF is excited to celebrate the role of the writer at this comedic institution. Join us for a screening of the SNL50 Writers episode and an in-depth conversation on what it's really like to be in the writers room at the storied halls of 30 Rock. Former SNL head writer and celebrated comedy screenwriter **Tim Herlihy** will shed light on his experiences at the always iconic *Saturday Night Live*, and explore how they trained him for a writing career.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 | 1:15 PM - 2:30 PM

Inside the Final Season: Big Mouth

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

As *Big Mouth* takes its final bow, join co-creators **Mark Levin** and **Jennifer Flackett** to explore the evolution of the show, from its initial concept and controversial humor to its nuanced portrayal of adolescence. Hear how they crafted the final season's emotional arc, brought beloved characters to a conclusion, and navigated the challenges of ending such a beloved and impactful show.

Indie Film Track: The Filmmaker's Team

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Lamar Room

Learn how to build creative partnerships to make the journey from pre-production to post as seamless as possible.

A Conversation with Michael Arndt

Austin Club

An Academy Award winner for both original and adapted screenplays, Michael Arndt is a master of screenwriting craft. In this conversation, the writer of *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Catching Fire*, and *Toy Story 3* will deconstruct his approach to great storytelling.

Personal Pitch Workshop

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

In this interactive experience, you can volunteer to pitch your project in front of your peers and a panel of industry leaders. Panelists will evaluate your answers, simulate a real life pitching experience, and give you real-time feedback on how to present yourself to studio executives. You will receive straightforward, valuable guidance on how to pivot during a presentation, pitch your personal logline, and answer unexpected questions. *OPEN TO PRODUCERS BADGEHOLDERS ONLY.*

Karl Hartman; Alison Flierl; Dan Rosen; Kely Edwards; Jamil Akim O'Quinn

Procedural Storytelling: NCIS

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

Join these showrunners for a look inside the writers room of the beloved drama *NCIS* and *NCIS: Origins*, a prequel to the long-running series. Learn the 'nuts and bolts' of writing a procedural crime drama, and the challenges they faced revamping a beloved franchise for a new generation.

Steve Binder; David North

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 | 3:00 PM - 4:15 PM

State of the Industry: Features

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Pennybacker Room

We're bringing together a group of seasoned storytellers and entertainment executives to discuss the current state of the film industry. Get behind-the-scenes insight into current trends, popular releases, and future predictions of where the business is heading.

Kara Durrett; Duncan Montgomery

Page to Production: *El Tigre*

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Mansfield Room

With comedy spec sales making more noise in the Hollywood ecosystem, and the burgeoning return of stand-up comedians front and center in scripted series and feature films, comedy is having a moment! The creative team behind the upcoming film *El Tigre* breaks down the remarkable 15 year journey to the screen and how this upcoming independent film speaks to the current landscape, what audiences are after and how to best navigate bringing the funny to the big screen.

Ryan P. Hall; Tyler Cornack; Aaron Buschbaum; Teddy Riley; Will Meldman

On Creating Your Own Video Game

Omni Austin Downtown Hotel Lamar Room

What does it take to write and produce an original video game concept? Hear from the team at AdHoc Studio on how they did just that.

Ashley Jeffalone; Pierre Shorette

Closing Remarks

The Stephen F Austin Royal Sonesta Capital Ballroom

After the whirlwind of panels, new friends, and loads of inspiration for your next project, join returning panelist **Shane Black** for a candid conversation on how to carry lessons and connections from the Conference into real life.



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ABASS-
MADDEN**

writer/executive story editor *9-1-1*



**KOR
ADANA**

writer/producer *Mr. Robot, Star Wars: The Acolyte, Dune: Prophecy*



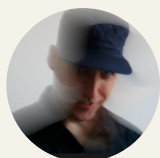
**JAMIL
AKIM
O'QUINN**

writer *S.W.A.T., NCIS Los Angeles*



**MEGAN
ALDERSON**

Creative Development Executive, Pixar Animation Studios



**MICHAEL
ARNDT**

writer *Little Miss Sunshine, Toy Story 3, Hunger Games: Catching Fire, Star Wars: The Force Awakens*



**JOHN
AUGUST**

co-host *Scriptnotes*; writer *Frankenweenie, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Big Fish, Charlie's Angels, Go*



**JULIA
BARNETT**

writer/director *Texas Cult House, A Christmas In New Hope, Chasing Grace*



**LENNY
BARSZAP**

Co-founder *Been There*; writer/producer *Home Free, Derek's Dead, Hot Tub, The Unbelievable Show*



**ZACH
BAYLIN**

writer/EP *Black Rabbit*; writer *The Order, Bob Marley: One Love, King Richard, The Crow, Gran Turismo*



**ALEC
BERG**

writer/EP *Seinfeld*; writer/director/executive producer *Curb Your Enthusiasm, Silicon Valley*; creator/writer/EP *Barry*



**GAIL
BERMAN**

Chairman and CEO of The Jackal Group; producer *Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Malcolm in the Middle, Tidying Up with Marie Kondo, Elvis, Wednesday, The Addams Family, The Perfect Couple*



**MARK
BIANCULLI**

EP *How to Rob a Bank, Cliffhanger, Hunters*



**STEVE D.
BINDER**

showrunner *NCIS*



**SHANE
BLACK**

writer/director *The Predator, The Nice Guys, Iron Man 3, Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*; writer *Lethal Weapon, Last Action Hero, The Last Boy Scout, The Long Kiss Goodnight*



**TAYLOR
BLACKBURN**

writer *Grown-ish*



**MIKE
BLIZZARD**

producer/director *Hit Man, Apollo 10 1/2: A Space Age Childhood, No No: A Dockumentary*



**BUCK
BLOOMING-
DALE**

writer *Riding Hurt*



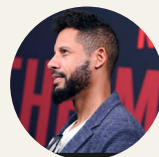
**HANNAH
BOS**

co-creator/showrunner *Somebody Somewhere*; co-writer *Driveways*



**JUSTIN
BOYD**

writer/producer *The Walking Dead: Dead City, Fear the Walking Dead, Sweet Tooth, Channel Zero*



**VJ
BOYD**

co-showrunner *The Madness*; writer/producer *S.W.A.T. and Justified*



**MATTHEW
BROWN**

writer/producer *S.W.A.T., N.C.I.S.: ORIGINS*



**DAVE
BUCKMAN**

director/producer *The Second City: Boom Chicago, Upright Citizens Brigade*; ctor *Apt. 413, Home Free, Sell Out*



CHRIS BURNS

Manager/Producer Underscore Talent



WENDY CALHOUN

writer/producer *The Rookie: Feds, Prodigal Son, Station 19, Empire, Nashville, Revenge, Justified*



DAVE CAPLAN

Chairman and CEO of C2 Motion Picture Group



CRAIG CEGIELSKI

CEO Centinel Media; former Co-CEO Fremantle North America; EP *American Gods, The Returned, Camelot, Tomorrow People*



JILL CHAMBERLAIN

author *The Nutshell Technique: Crack the Secret of Successful Screenwriting*



DEBRA MARTIN CHASE

EP CBS's *The Equalizer, Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*; producer *The Princess Diaries, Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, Harriet, Becoming Mary Tyler Moore*; Winner of 4 Tony Awards



TAMARA CHESTNA

writer/producer *Something from Tiffany's, Moxie, Sneakerella, After*



ALEX CHEW

Co-founder Sequence 8 & Black Auteur Film Festival



JENNIE CHURCH-COOPER

Lit & Talent Manager, Levity Entertainment



MATTHEW CIRULNICK

writer *Rambo: Last Blood, Absentia, Earp: Saints for Sinners*



GLENN COCKBURN

Founder Meridian Artists



BRANDON COHEN

writer *Fade To Black, I Can See You're Angry, Bald Eagles*



BILL COLLAGE

writer *Emancipation, Exodus, Allegiant, Accepted, Tower Heist, The Transporter: Refueled*



SEAN COLLINS-SMITH

story editor *Chicago PD*; staff writer *Field of Dreams*



ALEX CONVERY

writer *Air*



MATT COOK

writer/co-producer *Triple Nine, By Way of Helena*; co-writer *Patriots Day, The Informer, Angel Has Fallen, Plane*; producer *Murder Before the Marathons*



SAEED CRUMPLER

writer *Flatbush Misdemeanors*



RYAN CUNNINGHAM

Manager/producer Anonymous Content



MICAH CYRUS

supervising producer *Enigma Variations*



MICHAEL DALEY

Clinical Associate Professor at LMU



RAQUELLE DAVID

Manager Authentic Talent



IRIS DAVIS-QUICK

Co-founder Sequence 8



CHAR-MAINE DEGRATÉ

writer *House of the Dragon, Daisy Jones and the Six, The Acolyte*





JAKE DILLMAN

Manager, Anonymous Content



KARA DURRETT

producer *Eleanor the Great, I Don't Understand You, Caddo Lake, The Starling Girl, Honk For Jesus. Save Your Soul*; executive producer *The Last Showgirl, Bird*



CARL EFFENSON

producer *Mudbound, Bob Trevino Likes It, Mending The Line*



JAKE EMANUEL

creator *The Edge Of Sleep*; writer *Reunion*



MIKE FARAH

producer *Between Two Ferns, Billy on the Street, Weird: The Al Yankovic Story, American Vandal*



HEIDI-MARIE FERREN

Memory of a Killer, Station 19



MICAH FITZERMAN-BLUE

writer/EP *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood, Transparent*; creator/showrunner *Painkiller, The USA vs. Vince McMahon*; writer *Bambi, Maleficent: Mistress of Evil, Beautiful Ruins*; writer/director *Bottomless Belly Button*



JENNIFER FLACKETT & MARK LEVIN

co-creators *Big Mouth, Human Resources*; writer *The Adam Project, Wimbledon, Journey to the Center of the Earth, Madeline*; writer-directors *Little Manhattan, Nim's Island*



JOSH FLANAGAN

producer/director *Pickleheads*; head writer/supervising producer *Elkhorn (INSP)*; head writer *How Are We Today? (PBS)*



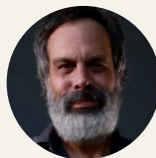
KELSI FLEMING

Senior Vice President of Film & TV Josephson Entertainment



ALISON FLIERL

writer *BoJack Horseman, School Of Rock, Conan*



JOE FORTE

writer *Firewall*; director *The Man Who Saved Ben-Hur*



DANA FOX

screenwriter, executive producer *Wicked, Wicked: For Good*



MICHAEL FRY

writer/co-creator *Over The Hedge*; writer/illustrator *How To Be A Supervillain Series, Ghosted*; co-writer/illustrator *The Naughty List, Odd Squad Series*



MATTHEW GARCIA-DUNN

screenwriter *Screamboat*; narrative lead *Saber Interactive*, writer *Space Marine 2, Midnight Suns, League of Legends, Silent Hill, Free Fire, TMNT: Splintered Fate*



NORA GARRETT

writer/EP *After the Hunt*



MICHELE GIANNUSA

consulting producer/writer *Dead Girls' Detective Agency*, EP/creator *Ripple*



LOVINDER S. GILL

host *Scriptcake* podcast; author of *Scriptcake Secrets: The Top 10 Mistakes Novice Screenwriters Make and How to Fix Them*



JACK GLASCOTT

Vice President of Development and Current Programming, AMC Networks



JILL GOLD-SMITH

writer/producer *Law & Order, The Practice, Boston Legal, Ally McBeal, NYPD Blue*



ALEXIS GREER

Director of Development and Current Programming at AMC Networks



DAN GREGOR

co-writer *The Naked Gun, Chip N' Dale Rescue Rangers*; writer/producer *How I Met Your Mother, Crazy Ex Girlfriend*



ALEX GREGORY

co-creator *The Studio, White House Plumbers*; EP *Veep*



JADE-ADDON HALL

TV Executive *Power Universe, Heels, Average Joe and Twenties*



KEVIN HAMEDANI

showrunner/writer *Tether*; writer/director *Junk, Zombies of Mass Destruction*; co-writer/director *The Saviors*; writer *Infidel, Darius the Great is Not Ok, Stephen King's N*



NOAH HARPSTER

writer/executive producer *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood, Transparent*; creator/showrunner *Painkiller*; writer *Bambi, Maleficent: Mistress of Evil, Beautiful Ruins, The Dress, Flight of the Navigator*



KIMBERLY HARRISON

showrunner/executive producer *Washington Black*



JAMES V. HART

creator *TheHartChart Story Mapping Tools*, writer *Hook, Bram Stoker's Dracula, Contact, Muppet Treasure Island, August Rush, The Hot Zone*



KARL HARTMAN

Partner at Big Indie Pictures; producer *Eric LaRue, Manchester by the Sea, Still Alice*



JASON HEADLEY

writer *Lightyear, Onward*; writer/director *A Bad Idea Gone Wrong*



BRIAN HELGELAND

writer/director *Finestkind, Legend, 42, A Knight's Tale, Payback*; writer *L.A. Confidential, Man on Fire, Conspiracy Theory, Mystic River, Green Zone, Robin Hood, The Taking of Pelham 123, Spenser Confidential*



JAMIE HERNANDEZ

Sr. Programs Manager, Warner Brothers Discovery Access



JOHN HOBERG

writer/EP *Paradise*, co-writer *Elemental*, writer/producer *Galavant, Better off Ted, My Name is Earl, Black-ish, Downward Dog*



CHRISTINA HODSON

writer *The Flash, Bumblebee, Harley Quinn: Birds of Prey*



WINNIE HOLZMAN

screenwriter/EP *Wicked, Wicked: For Good*



ELEANOR HYDE

EP *The Harbingers, Unwell: A Midwestern Gothic Mystery, World Gone Wrong*



SHANON INGLES

writer/narrative designer *Judas, Marvel's Midnight Suns, God of War: Ragnarok, Batman: The Enemy Within, Batman: A Telltale Series; Series*



ASHLEY JEFFALONE

writer *Dispatch, Flintlock: Siege of Dawn*



MIKE JONES

writer/director at Pixar Animation Studios; writer/director *Dream Productions*; writer *Elio, Luca, Soul*



STEVEN PAUL JUDD

writer *Echo*; writer/director *Dark Winds, Zeke and Luther*



BRI KAISSEN

Associate Creative Producer at Life Out Loud Films



JAMES KIM

Founder: Overtones Media, creator iHeartRadio's *You Feeling This*, producer *Everybody's Live with John Mulaney*, writer *Wastelanders: Doom*





LAURA KNIGHT

co-creator/EP/director upcoming *Podcast Going Reno*, producer *Bar Karma*, *Fugly!*, *The Babysitters*, *Room 314*



**ADAM KOLBREN-
NER**

Founder, Lit Entertainment Group



JACOB KRUEGER

writer *The Matthew Shepard Story*; WGA Paul Selvin Award Winner



TRACIE LAYMON

director/writer/producer *Bob Trevino Likes It*



WESTIN LEE

writer *Secret Project for Dying Light 2*; narrative designer *Just Cause Mobile*



MEG LEFAUVE

co-writer *Inside Out*, *Inside Out 2*; writer *My Father's Dragon*, *The Good Dinosaur*; co-story *Captain Marvel*; co-host *The Screenwriting Life Podcast*



GARY LENNON

writer/EP *Power*, *Hightown*, *Euphoria*, *Justified*, *The Shield*



JONELL LENNON

writer *Pretty Little Liars*, *The L-Word: GQ*



NICEOLE LEVY

writer/producer, *The Banker*, *Found*, *The Recruit*, *Cloak & Dagger*



KAT LIKKE

co-writer *Elemental*, writer/producer *Galavant*, *Better off Ted*, *My Name is Earl*, *Black-ish*, *Downward Dog*



WEIKO LIN

author *Crazy Screenwriting Secrets: How to Capture a Global Audience*; writer/producer *100 Days*



ANDREW LOGAN

screenwriter *Chappaquiddick*; producer *6 Years*; journalist *Texas Monthly* & *Texas Observer*



JASON LUBIN

Literary Manager/Producer, First Story Entertainment



KEITH MAITLAND

writer/director *Dear Mr. Brody*, *Tower*



STUTI MALHOTRA

supervising producer *The Body*; producer *The Testaments*; co-producer *Under the Bridge*



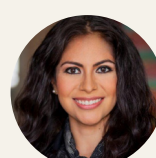
DOUG MAND

writer *The Naked Gun*, *Chip N' Dale Rescue Rangers*, *Crazy Ex Girlfriend*, *How I Met Your Mother*



LUCAS MARTELL

co-creator *Spies in Disguise*; creator *Walkabout Mini Golf*



AURI MARURI

Literary Agent, Gersh



ISABELLA MASTRODI-CASA

Manager/producer, CEO of Never Settle Media



JONO MATT

Above The Line, yet-to-be-announced *Shrek* spin-off



MICHAEL MAYER

Out in the Dark, *Happy Times*



DREW MAYER-OAKES

El Paso Film & Creative Industries Commission, Visit El Paso



CRAIG MAZIN

co-host Scriptnotes; writer *The Last of Us*, *Chernobyl*, *The Hangover: Parts II & III*



DANIELLE MCCARTHY-BOLES

VP Publicity, Magnolia Pictures; producer *Big Star: Nothing Can Hurt Me*



CINDY MCCREERY

Chair of The Department of Radio-TV-Film at UT Austin



DAVID MCKENNA

writer *American History X*, *Get Carter*, *Blow*, *S.W.A.T.*, *The Downing*



LORIEN MCKENNA

showrunner *Tab Time*; story manager *Brave*, *Inside Out*, *The Good Dinosaur*; co-host The Screenwriting Life podcast



PAUL MERRYMAN

producer *The Outpost*, *House of Abraham*, *the Long Shot*, *American Baby*



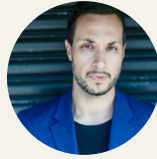
DUNCAN MONTGOMERY

producer *Roofman*, *Lurker*, *Sorry Baby*, *The Last Showgirl*, *His Three Daughters*, *Memory*, *Windfall*, *Silk Road*, *Freeheld*, *Bernie*



CHRISTINA MOORE

writer *Are You Afraid of the Dark?*



JAYLEN MOORE

producer *Hunting Season*; executive producer/actor *Trapped Inn*; EP *Family Movie*, *Untitled Nick Cassavetes Film*; producer *Parallel*, *American Sicario*



FERNANDO MORETT

co-producer *Grow*, contributor *Open Gardens*



MARK MYERS

producer upcoming *Gunn*, *Street Gang*, *12 Feet Deep*, *Glorious*



SCOTT MYERS

writer *K-9*, *Alaska*, *Trojan War*; author *The Protagonist's Journey*; host *GoIntoTheStory.com*



EVAN NARCISSE

Senior Writer, Brass Lion Entertainment



MIKHAIL NAYFELD

Co-Founder & President, Heroes and Villains Entertainment



VAN B. NGUYEN

writer *Blue Bloods*, *Blackout*



DAVID NORTH

co-showrunner/EP *NCIS: ORIGINS*



MARTI NOXON

producer/writer *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Sharp Objects*, *To the Bone*



ETHAN OGILBY

writer *The Threesome*



NKECHI OKORO CARROLL

showrunner *All American*; showrunner/creator *Found*, *All American: Homecoming*, *The Fed*



RAJIV PARIKH

President at TooFar Media



MAYA PEREZ

writer/producer; Screenwriting Area Head at University of Texas at Austin



NICOLE PERLMAN

co-writer *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Captain Marvel*, *Detective Pikachu*





ALISA PERREN

Indie, Inc.: *Miramax and the Transformation of Hollywood in the 1990s*; *The American Comic Book Industry and Hollywood*; host of Media Industry Conversations podcast



HUNTER PHILLIPS

Director of Hollins University Graduate Screenwriting Program, TWST Consulting, "Pitch it Up a Notch"®, Free Radical Pictures



JAKOB POLLACK

Creative Executive, Film Vertigo Entertainment



ASHLEY POPRIK

writer *Destiny 2*, *Call of Duty: Black Ops 6*, *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare III*, *Marvel's Spider-Man 2*, *Marvel Mayhem*, *Clue: Disney Villains*



LARRY POSTEL

writer *The Main Event*, *5000 Blankets*, *High Holiday*, *Flip Turn*



SEAN PRESENT

writer/producer *The Wayne Brady Show*, *Happily Divorced*, *Wipeout*, *Instant Mom*, *Almost Paradise*, *Planet Sheen*; showrunner *Tab Time*



CHRIS PROVENZANO

EP/writer *Poker Face*, *Justified: City Primeval*, *Silicon Valley*, *Archer*, *Justified*, *Mad Men*



MARESA PULLMAN

Head of Development & Production for Film and TV at Wondaland Pictures; EP *Invisible City*; co-producer *Polidoro*, *Cyrus*; executive *Fitting In*, *Prometheus*, *Unstoppable*, *Cyrus*, *American Gangster*, *Robin Hood*, *Body of Lies*



ELIZABETH QUINN

writer/co-creator/EP *Going Reno* podcast; contributing author *Ted Lasso & Philosophy: No Question is Into Touch*



MINDY RAYMOND

Co-owner of Rolling Reels Productions, Co-founder The Shine Company



TONJA RENE

producer/writer *Wisdom County Ranch*; producer *Serena Y*; producer/script consultant *I Know You, You Know Me*, *Rue De Criminal*; co-producer *In the End Everything Will Be Okay*, *D.I.D.*, *Dawn at Dominion*; script consultant *The Strange*



PAMELA RIBON

writer *My Year of Dicks*, *Moana*, *Ralph Breaks the Internet*



JOVAN ROBINSON

writer *For All Mankind*, *Made For Love*, *Secret Invasion*



ALVARO RODRIGUEZ

writer/producer, *Hell Followed With Us*, *American Rust: Broken Justice*, *Florida Man*, *Seis Manos*, *Machete*



ROXIE RODRIGUEZ

SVP at Aggregate Films; co-EP *Black Rabbit*



DAN ROSEN

writer *The Last Supper*; writer/director *Dead Man's Curve*, *Vacationland*; Professor of Film/Dramatic Writing at SCAD



SCOTT ROSENBERG

writer *Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle*, *Venom*, *Con Air*, *Beautiful Girls*



JAMEEL SALEEM

writer/producer *Bob's Burgers*, *South Park*, *Tulsa King*, *Disenchantment*



ELIJAH SARINANA

creator *Vastland Saga*; writer *Nocturno: Tales From the Shadows*, *Zone of Silence*



PATRICK SCHUMACKER

co-showrunner *Abbott Elementary*, *Powerless*; co-creator *Harley Quinn*, *Kite Man Hell Yeah!*, *Surviving Jack*



RICHARD DANE SCOTT

writer *A Tooth Fairy Tale*, *Avengers of Justice: Farce Wars*, *Operation Hitman: Sacrificial Pets*; staff writer *5th Ward*



**CRAIG
SHERMAN**

writer/co-writer of over ten video games including *World War Z*, *Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine 2* and *Jurassic Park: Survival*



**PIERRE
SHORETTE**

Co-founder AdHoc Studio; writer *Dispatch*, *Tales from the Borderlands*, *Wolf Among Us*, Telltale's *The Walking Dead*



**LAUREN
SHULER
DONNER**

producer *Logan*, *Deadpool*, *You've Got Mail*, *Pretty in Pink*, *Free Willy*, *St. Elmo's Fire*



**ANDY
SIARA**

writer *Palm Springs*, creator/showrunner *The Resort*



**JUSTIN
SIMIEN**

writer/director *Dear White People* (film), *Bad Hair*; director *Haunted Mansion*, *Hollywood Black*; creator/showrunner *Dear White People*



**JUSTIN
SLOAN**

senior writer *Battlefield 6*; writer *Telltale's Game of Thrones*; creative manager *Silent Hill: Ascension*



**JANA
NAOMI
SMITH**

creator/writer/director *Red for Revolution*



**CELINE
SONG**

writer/director *Past Lives*, *Materialists*



**ANTHONY
SPARKS**

showrunner/EP/writer *Queen Sugar*, *Bel-Air*, *Mike*, *The Blacklist*; Founder Creative Sparks Media



**TAYLOR
STREITZ**

writer/producer *Tulsa King*, *Stargirl*, *NCIS: New Orleans*



**KATE
SUSMAN**

Founder, Youngblood Pictures; showrunner *Black Rabbit*; EP *The Order*



**RYAN
SWANSON**

writer *The Chosen*, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*; producer *The Chosen*, *House of David*, *Joseph of Egypt*; creator *The Chosen Adventures*



**JONATHAN
TALBERT**

producer *Ponies*, *High Desert*, *Fatal Attraction*, *The Morning Show*, *Dirty John*



**SUSIE
TALBOT**

Co-founder Puff Piece Productions; EP/producer *I Need Your Love*; producer *Knead*, *Hi Friends!*, *Clam Shack Blues*



**TYLER
THOMPSON**

co-writer *The Chosen*



**PAUL
THUREEN**

co-creator/showrunner *Somebody Somewhere*; co-writer *Driveways*



**LIZ
TIGELAAR**

creator/showrunner/EP *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *Little Fires Everywhere*, *Life Unexpected*; writer *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*; EP *Under the Bridge*



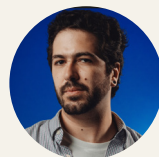
**MELANIE
TOAST**

writer *Shut In*, *Cliffhanger*



**NIKKI
TOSCANO**

co-creator/showrunner/writer/director/EP *Long Bright River*



**GABRIEL
URBINA**

creator *Wolf 359*, *Hit Singles*, *Dracula: The Danse Macabre*; co-creator *Time: Bombs*, *Zero Hours*, *Unseen*



**RAY
UTAR-
NACHITT**

writer/producer *DC's Legends of Tomorrow*, *Supergirl*, *The Flash*, *Person of Interest*





**OREN
UZIEL**

writer *The Lost City*, *22 Jump Street*, *Mortal Kombat*; writer/director *Shimmer Lake*



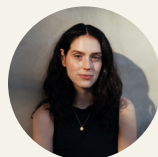
**META
VALENTIC**

EP *The Donors*; assistant director *Nixon*, *Castle*, *Lost*, *Bones*, *The Dropout*, *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*



**ADRIAN
VERSHININ**

Battlefield 6, *Star Wars: Battlefront*, *Need for Speed: Most Wanted*, *Battlefield 1*, *Battlefield 4*, *Battlefield 3*, *Homeworld: Deserts of Kharak*



**EVA
VICTOR**

writer/director *Sorry, Baby*



**LINDSEY
VILLARREAL**

writer *La Máquina*, *The Mayfair Witches*, *George and Tammy*, *Tales of the Walking Dead*, *Resident Evil*, *Vida*, *The Purge*



**WARREN
WAGNER**

co-writer *Hell Followed With Us*; debut novella *The Only Safe Place Left is the Dark*



**ANDREW
KEVIN
WALKER**

writer *The Killer*, *Se7en*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *Nerdland*



**DANA
WEISSMAN**

Director of Programs & Education at the Writers Guild of America East



**LAUREN
WELLS**

writer *What We Do in the Shadows*



**VIRGIL
WILLIAMS**

writer *Mudbound*, *A Journal for Jordan*, *The Piano Lesson*, *24*, *ER*, *Criminal Minds*



**RENEE
WILSON**

executive producer/lead actor *Red for Revolution*; filmmaker *Ode to Joy*, *Crepe Covered Sidewalks*; recording artist *Divine Ratio of Love*



**REBECCA
WINDSOR**

Independent Producer, former Head of the Warner Bros. Television Workshops, former WBTV Current Programming executive



**JOHN
WIRTH**

EP/showrunner *Dark Winds*, *Hap and Leonard*, *Hell on Wheels*, *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*, *Love Monkey*, *Nash Bridges*, *The District*



**KELLY
YOUNGER**

writer *The Muppet Show*, *Muppets Haunted Mansion*, *Candy Cane Lane*



**KELVIN
YU**

writer/producer/actor *Bob's Burgers*, *Dying For Sex*, *American Born Chinese*

COMPETITION FILMS

ANIMATED SHORTS

Beyond Measure

Writer/Director: David Ferrier

Fundie

Writer: Zachariah O'Hara

Director: Tom Jolliffe

If/When

Writer: Richie Black

Director: Courtney Westbrook

Like Friend, Like Deer

Writer/Director: Malek Eghbali

Machine Heart

Writer: Hilarion Banks, Mary Blake

Director: Hilarion Banks

Son

Writer: Zhanna Bekmambetova,

Dmitry Kiselev

Director: Zhanna Bekmambetova

The Catch

Writer/Director: Andrew Tian

COMEDY VANGUARD FEATURE

Crystal Cross

Writer/Director: Richie James Follin

(Don't Know) How to Be

Writer: Tato Alexander

Director: Salvador Espinosa

Dreaming of Lions

Writer/Director: Paolo Marinou-Blanco

Let's Call the Whole Thing Off

Writer/Director: Elizabeth Guest

Theatre People

Writer/Director: Michael B. Breen

Yesterday Island

Writer/Director: Sam Voutas

DARK MATTERS FEATURE

A Mother's Love

Writer/Director: Patrick Q. Roberts

ANSWR

Writer/Director: Stephen Kay

Kind

Writer: Johan Paul de Vrijer

Director: Jan Verdijk

Sacrificios

Writer: Mauricio Chernovetzky,

Alexander Iosjpe

Director: Mauricio Chernovetzky

Spite

Writer/Director: Carolynn Cecilia

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

Bite to Bite

Director: Kelly Lipscomb

Gregg Allmann: The Music of My Soul

Director: James Keach

Searching for Satyrus

Writer/Director: Rena Effendi

Seconds Away

Director: Benjamin Keegan

Stronger Than You Think

Director: Melissa Forman, Janice

Molinari

The Sky Was on Fire

Writer: Joan Finn Adkison, Michael

Germano, Michelle Provenzano

Director: Jonathan Maricle, Joan Finn

Adkison

Voices

Writer/Director: Andrew Davies Gans

Zaslow K-427

Writer: Robert Ham, Adam Zaslow

Director: Robert Ham

DOCUMENTARY SHORTS

Senakulo

Writer/Director: Aaron Laserna

Stitch & Time

Writer/Director: David Munro, V. Scott

Balcerek

Strangers On Our Land

Director: Zane Karram, Kelsey Oliver

The Moleman

Writer/Director: Billy Miossi

We're Fine

Director: Misha Karpenko

Woman in the Sky

Writer/Director: Max Woertendyke

NARRATIVE FEATURES

A Man Walks Down the Street

Writer/Director: Yuval Hadadi

American Baby

Writer: Tanya Leonova, Ellen

Rodnianski

Director: Ellen Rodnianski

Ethan Bloom

Writer: Maylen Dominguez

Director: Herschel Faber

It Comes in Waves

Writer: Sammy Mohamed

Director: Fitch Jean

*Nobody Wants to Be Here, Nobody**Wants to Leave*

Writer: Caleb Samples

Director: Cash Robinson

Rhythm is a Dancer

Writer/Director: Lauren Caster

Signing Tony Raymond

Writer/Director: Glen Owen

Tuesday's Flu

Writer: Brian Parri, Stephen Perri

Director: Daniel Roebuck

NARRATIVE SHORTS

América

Writer/Director: Javier Arias-Stella

Blackout

Writer/Director: Ahmed El Zoghby

Couples Retreat

Writer/Director: Ari Shapiro

Foxhole

Writer/Director: Nick Dugan

Little Fishies

Writer/Director: Mallika Juneja

Me (And You)

Writer/Director: Ilia Christmas Wayans

More Than Dust

Writer/Director: Julia Weisberg Cortés

Sento

Writer/Director: Noemie Nakai

Solo Un Poco Aqui

Writer/Director: Diego Saram

Those Who Love Me Will Follow Me

Writer: Alessandro Giovanni Lunghi,

Ailish Elzy

Director: Alessandro Giovanni Lunghi

XOLO

Writer/Director: Matthew Serrano

NARRATIVE STUDENT SHORTS

Bury Me in Color

Writer: Susan Jones

Director: Ari Johnson

Dreamline

Writer/Director: Harshith Surya Kotni

Family Ties

Writer/Director: Vanessa Darko

It's Not a Monster

Writer/Director: Vanessa Hu

Matter

Writer/Director: Pujit Kalash

Pretty Boy

Writer/Director: Sky Byun

Recess

Writer/Director: Jan Saczek

PRODUCED DIGITAL SERIES

Betsy Fucking Ross

Writer/Director: Kayla Baken

Bliss Talent

Writer: Rachel Ravel, Elvira

Ibragimova

Director: Elvira Ibragimova

Delivery Guy

Writer/Director: Trey Munden, Hugh

Westhoff

Just Be Nice

Writer/Director: Kay Dooner Scinto

Noble Homes

Writer: Bridget Bell McMahon

Director: Chloe Ray

Wingo's World

Writer/Director: Hoag Kepner



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FELLOWSHIP & AUDIENCE AWARDS

AUDIENCE AWARDS

Audience Awards will be given to the Best Marquee Feature, Best Narrative Feature, Best Documentary Feature, Best Comedy Vanguard Feature, Best Dark Matters Feature, Best Texas Independent Feature, Best Narrative Short, Best Narrative Student Short, Best Documentary Short, Best Animated Short, and Best Produced Digital Series. Directly following each screening, viewers will be asked to fill out a ballot to judge each film on its overall quality. Don't forget to vote!

2025 FILM COMPETITION SPONSORS

This year, we're thrilled to partner with new and returning sponsors for AFF's Film Competitions to provide tailored fellowships and awards including the Enderby Entertainment Fellowship Award, Narrative Feature presented by Big Indie Pictures, and the Jim Franklin "the Armadillo Man" Film Fellowship.

Through these fellowship programs, emerging artists will receive invaluable guidance, feedback, and development experience to propel their careers forward.



JOIN THE ALUMNI NETWORK: 2026 AFF SCRIPT & FILM COMPETITIONS

AFF Competitions are a cornerstone of our programming, dedicated to discovering, empowering, and celebrating the talents of emerging writers and filmmakers each year. AFF winners leverage their accolades to secure representation, film distribution, and to propel their careers to new heights.

Our competitions aim not only to honor the best, but also to amplify the visibility of visionary writers and filmmakers on the brink of a breakthrough. This is evident in the growing success of our distinguished alumni network, which continues to expand year after year.

2026 Competitions will open in December 2025.
See austinfilmfestival.com/submit for more info.

The infographic features a central vertical line with colored circles (orange, teal, blue, orange, teal) that branches out to six colored boxes. Each box contains a circular portrait of an alumni member, their name, and a short biography of their achievements.

- MEGAN PARK** (Teal box): Park's short film *Lucy In My Eyes* played at AFF in 2016. Today, the breakout writer director is best known for Writers Guild Award nominated film *My Old Ass* starring Aubrey Plaza.
- SO YOUNG SHELLY YO** (Teal box): An AFF alumni three times over, So Young Shelly Yo played short films at AFF in 2018 and 2022. In 2023, she was named AFF's New Voice Award recipient for her debut feature *Smoking Tigers*, now streaming on MAX.
- ALEX CONVERY** (Orange box): Convery, who was a Semifinalist in our Script Competition in 2014, is now best known for writing the excellent sports drama *Air* directed by Ben Affleck and starring Viola Davis.
- ASHLEY LYLE** (Red box): In 2005 Lyle was a finalist in the Teleplay Comedy competition. She is now co-creator and showrunner for the critically acclaimed psychological thriller series, *Yellowjackets*.
- GREG KWEDAR & CLINT BENTLEY** (Orange box): The writer filmmaker duo behind *Sing Sing*, the Oscar® nominated independent feature starring Colman Domingo, screened their narrative short film *Dakota* at the 2015 Austin Film Festival.
- VJ BOYD** (Blue box): Boyd was a finalist for the 2008 Teleplay Drama script competition. His credits include writing on the beloved drama *Justified* and showrunning hit Netflix series *The Madness*.



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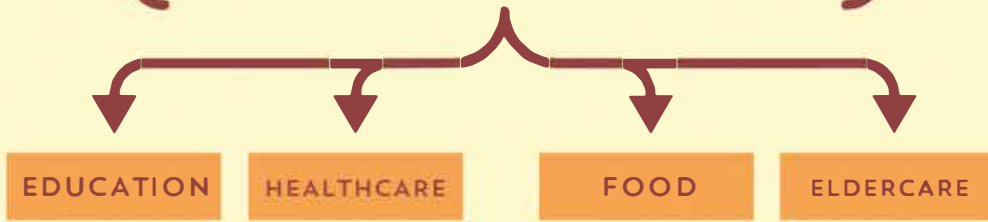
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GREG DANIELS, Creator, *The Office (US), Parks and Rec*

“BEAUTIFUL”

JOE BRUMM, Creator, *Bluey*

“HEARTBREAKING IN THE BEST WAY.”

DAN SCANLON, Director, *Monsters University, Onward*

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RETROSPECTIVES



A KNIGHT'S TALE

(USA, 130 MIN)

Writer/Director: Brian Helgeland

Cast: Heath Ledger, Rufus Sewell, Shannyn Sossamon, Paul Bettany

After serving a number of years as a squire, an earnest young commoner poses as a knight and establishes himself in the jousting tournaments of Europe. He and a princess fall in love, but she is unaware of his deceit and common roots. The false knight is estranged from the princess once his true roots are revealed. He struggles to amend their relationship.

In Attendance: Brian Helgeland



SE7EN

(USA, 132 MIN)

Writer: Andrew Kevin Walker

Director: David Fincher

Cast: Brad Pitt, Morgan Freeman, Kevin Spacey, Gwyneth Paltrow

Two detectives, a rookie and a veteran, hunt a serial killer who uses the seven deadly sins as his motives.

In Attendance: Andrew Kevin Walker



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OPENING NIGHT FILM



CHRISTY

(USA, 135 MIN)

Writer: David Michôd, Mirrah Foulkes

Director: David Michôd

Cast: Sydney Sweeney, Merritt Weaver, Ben Foster, Katy O'Brian

Fueled by grit, raw determination, and an unshakable desire to win, Christy Martin charges into the world of boxing under the guidance of her trainer and manager-turned-husband, Jim. But while Christy flaunts a fiery persona in the ring, her toughest battles unfold outside it—confronting family, identity, and a relationship that just might become life-or-death.

In Attendance: David Michôd, Mirrah Foulkes, Christy Martin

FRIDAY NIGHT FILM



WAKE UP DEAD MAN: A KNIVES OUT MYSTERY

(USA, 144 MIN)

Writer/Director: Rian Johnson

Cast: Daniel Craig, Josh O'Connor, Glenn Close, Josh Brolin, Mila Kunis, Jeremy Renner, Kerry Washington, Andrew Scott, Cailee Spaeny, Daryl McCormack, Thomas Haden Church

Benoit Blanc returns for his most dangerous case yet.

In Attendance: Rian Johnson

CENTERPIECE FILM



ETERNITY

(USA, 114 MIN)

Writer: Patrick Cunnane, David Freyne

Director: David Freyne

Cast: Miles Teller, Elizabeth Olsen, Callum Turner

In an afterlife where souls have one week to decide where to spend eternity, Joan (Elizabeth Olsen) is faced with the impossible choice between the man she spent her life with (Miles Teller) and her first love (Callum Turner), who died young and has waited decades for her to arrive.

In Attendance: Elizabeth Olsen

MARQUEES



THE BOY FROM ST. CROIX

(USA, 105 MIN)

Director: Scott Duncan

After keeping the world at arm's length for decades, basketball legend Tim Duncan reveals himself in an intimate portrait directed by his brother Scott, reflecting on the game, his career, and his enduring connection to his native island of St. Croix.





CHARLIEBIRD

(USA, 98 MIN)

Writer: Samantha Smart

Director: Libby Ewing

Cast: Samantha Smart, Gabriela Ochoa Perez, Maria Peyramaure

Al (Samantha Smart) works as a music therapist at a children's hospital, taking things day by day and trying to make ends meet. Charlie (Gabriela Ochoa Perez) comes into her life as a patient, an ever immovable and unmotivated teenager.



FORELOCK

(USA, 96 MIN)

Writer/Director: Caleb Alexander Smith

Cast: David Krumholtz, Caleb Alexander Smith, Emily Swallow, Jason Wiles

A naive fitness enthusiast moves to LA with dreams of becoming a trainer, but collides with a crooked Hollywood Boulevard impersonator in a tragicomic romp through the shadows of the American dream.



HAMNET

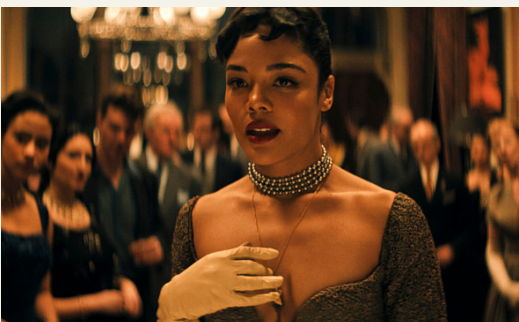
(UK, 125 MIN)

Writer: Chloé Zhao, Maggie O'Farrell

Director: Chloé Zhao

Cast: Jessie Buckley, Paul Mescal, Zac Wishart

From Academy Award® winning writer/director Chloé Zhao, *Hamnet* tells the powerful story of love and loss that inspired the creation of Shakespeare's timeless masterpiece, *Hamlet*.



HEDDA

(USA, 107 MIN)

Writer/Director: Nia DaCosta

Cast: Tessa Thompson, Nina Hoss, Imogen Poots

Nia DaCosta's *Hedda* stars Tessa Thompson as a woman caught between past love and present despair in a charged, modern take on Ibsen's classic.



IS THIS THING ON?

(USA, 117 MIN)

Writer: Bradley Cooper, Will Arnett, Mark Chappell

Director: Bradley Cooper

Cast: Will Arnett, Laura Dern, Andra Day, Bradley Cooper

As their marriage quietly unravels, Alex (Will Arnett) faces middle age and an impending divorce, seeking new purpose in the New York comedy scene while Tess (Laura Dern) confronts the sacrifices she made for their family—forcing them to navigate co-parenting, identity, and whether love can take a new form.



THE INQUISITOR

(USA, 98 MIN)

Director: Angela Lynn Tucker

In 1972, Barbara Jordan became the first Southern Black woman to join Congress. *THE INQUISITOR* chronicles Representative Jordan's meteoric rise offering a blueprint for uniting a divided America through a turbulent political era.



JAY KELLY

(USA, UK, Italy, 132 MIN)

Writer: Noah Baumbach, Emily Mortimer

Director: Noah Baumbach

Cast: George Clooney, Adam Sandler, Laura Dern

From Academy Award® nominee Noah Baumbach, *Jay Kelly* follows famous movie actor Jay Kelly (George Clooney) and his devoted manager Ron (Adam Sandler) as they embark on a whirlwind and unexpectedly profound journey through Europe. Along the way, both men are forced to confront the choices they've made, the relationships with their loved ones, and the legacies they'll leave behind.



LA GRAZIA

(Italy, 133 MIN)

Writer/Director: Paolo Sorrentino

Cast: Toni Servillo, Anna Ferzetti, Orlando Cinque

Mariano De Santis is the President of the Italian Republic. No connection to any real-life presidents; he is entirely a product of the author's imagination. A widower and a Catholic, he has a daughter, Dorotea, a legal scholar like himself. As his term draws to a close, amid uneventful days, two final duties arise: deciding on two delicate petitions for a presidential pardon. True moral dilemmas, which become tangled, in ways that seem impossible to unravel, with his private life. Driven by doubt, he will have to decide. And, with a deep sense of responsibility, that is exactly what this remarkable Italian President will do.



LEADS

(USA, 102 MIN)

Writer: Bryan Poyser, Heather Kafka, Justin Arnold

Director: Bryan Poyser

Cast: Heather Kafka, Justin Arnold, Macon Blair

An acting professor has her life upended when her charming but volatile baby brother joins her acting class, setting off a battle of wills between them for the hearts and minds of her eager students that could bring them all to the brink of success or debilitating ruin.



THE LONG SHOT

(USA, 95 MIN)

Writer: Drew Mackintosh

Director: Austin Nichols

Cast: Ryan Hansen, Adrienne Palicki, Dulce Sloan, Temple Baker, Justin Chatwin, Bill Wise, Chris St. Mary, Bobo Hoang, Joe Hursley

Set in Austin, Texas, *The Long Shot* follows a municipal golf pro and his slacker friends as they band together to save their beloved golf course and way of life from extinction.





NO OTHER CHOICE

(South Korea, 139 MIN)

Writer: Park Chan-wook, Don McKellar, Lee Kyoung-mi, Lee Ja-hye

Director: Park Chan-wook

Cast: Lee Byung Hun, Son Yejin, Park Hee Soon, Lee Sung Min, Yeom Hye Ran, Cha Seung Won

From director Park Chan-wook and based on Donald E. Westlake's novel *The Ax*, the story follows Mansu on his desperate hunt for a new job after his abrupt layoff from the paper company he served for 25 years.



NOT WITHOUT HOPE

(USA, Malta, 120 MIN)

Writer: E. Nicholas Mariani, Joe Carnahan, Nick Schuyler

Director: Joe Carnahan

Cast: Zachary Levi, Josh Duhamel, Quentin Plair, Terrence Terrell

Based on the New York Times bestseller of the same name, *Not Without Hope* tells the harrowing true story of a tragic 2009 fishing trip taken by four friends — including NFL players Marquis Cooper and Corey Smith — who are stranded at sea 70 miles off the coast of Clearwater, Florida after their boat capsizes. With the storm of the century fast approaching, the four friends are left to battle hypothermia, dehydration and the unrelenting elements in a fight for survival.



NUREMBERG

(USA, 148 MIN)

Writer/Director: James Vanderbilt

Cast: Russell Crowe, Rami Malek, Michael Shannon

The Allies, led by the unyielding chief prosecutor, Robert H. Jackson (Michael Shannon), have the task of ensuring the Nazi regime answers for the unveiled horrors of the Holocaust while a US Army psychiatrist (Rami Malek) is locked in a dramatic psychological duel with former Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring (Russell Crowe).



A PRIVATE LIFE

(France, 105 MIN)

Writer: Anne Berest, Rebecca Zlotowski, Gaëlle Macé

Director: Rebecca Zlotowski

Cast: Jodie Foster, Daniel Auteuil, Virginie Efira

A Private Life is a frisky, feminine, film noir about psychoanalysis and many other things... Renowned psychiatrist Lilian Steiner (Jodie Foster in a kinetic performance) is deeply troubled by the sudden death of one of her patients. Convinced that it was murder, she decides to investigate.



RENTAL FAMILY

(USA, Japan, 110 MIN)

Writer: Hikari, Stephen Blahut

Director: Hikari

Cast: Brendan Fraser, Takehiro Hira, Mari Yamamoto, Shannon Gorman, Akira Emoto

Set in modern-day Tokyo, *Rental Family* follows an American actor (Brendan Fraser) who struggles to find purpose until he lands an unusual gig: working for a Japanese “rental family” agency, playing stand-in roles for strangers. As he immerses himself in his clients’ worlds, he begins to form genuine bonds that blur the lines between performance and reality. Confronting the moral complexities of his work, he rediscovers purpose, belonging, and the quiet beauty of human connection.



SENTIMENTAL VALUE

(Norway, France, Denmark, Germany, 133 MIN)

Writer: Joachim Trier, Eskil Vogt
Director: Joachim Trier
Cast: Renate Reinsve, Stellan Skarsgård, Inga Ibsdotter Lilleaas, Elle Fanning

Sisters Nora and Agnes reunite with their estranged father, the charismatic Gustav, a once-renowned director who offers stage actress Nora a role in what he hopes will be his comeback film. When Nora turns it down, she soon discovers he has given her part to an eager young Hollywood star. Suddenly, the two sisters must navigate their complicated relationship with their father — and deal with an American star dropped right into the middle of their complex family dynamics.

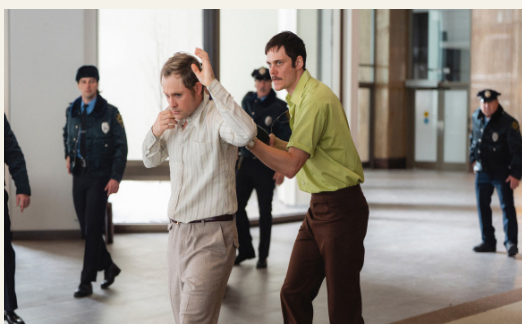


TRAIN DREAMS

(USA, 148 MIN)

Writer: Clint Bentley, Greg Kwedar
Director: Clint Bentley
Cast: Joel Edgerton, Clifton Collins Jr., Felicity Jones

Based on Denis Johnson's beloved novella, *Train Dreams* is the moving portrait of Robert Grainier, a logger and railroad worker who leads a life of unexpected depth and beauty in the rapidly-changing America of the early 20th Century.
In Attendance: Clint Bentley, Greg Kwedar



DEAD MAN'S WIRE

(USA, 104 MIN)

Writer: Austin Kolodney
Director: Gus Van Sant
Cast: Bill Skarsgård, Dacre Montgomery, Colman Domingo, Cary Elwes, Myha'la, Al Pacino

The morning of February 8, 1977, Anthony G. "Tony" Kiritis, 44, entered the office of Richard O. Hall, president of the Meridian Mortgage Company, and took him hostage with a sawed-off 12-gauge shotgun wired with a "dead man's wire" from the trigger to the Hall's head. This is the true story of the stand-off that took the world by storm.
In Attendance: Austin Kolodney

NARRATIVE FEATURES

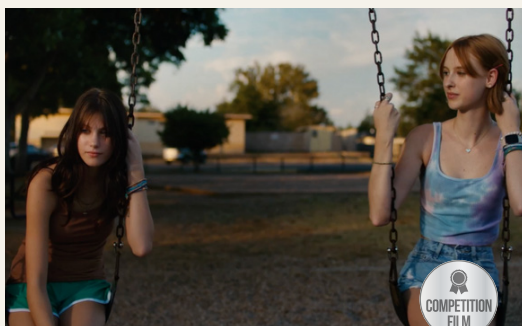


A MAN WALKS DOWN THE STREET

(ISRAEL, 91 MIN)

Writer/Director: Yuval Hadadi
Cast: Angel Bonanni, Uri Banai, Gili Blum, Yotam Rotshtain

Raanan, a middle aged man, returns home after 30 years abroad. A chance encounter with an elderly man unlocks troubled memories, and a brief affair with a much younger man, sends him spiraling through generational rifts, and force him to confront his internalized homophobia and emotional wounds of his past.



AMERICAN BABY

(USA, 85 MIN)

Writer: Tanya Leonova, Ellen Rodnianski
Director: Ellen Rodnianski
Cast: Abigail Pniowsky, Elisha Henig, Claire Capek, Janel Koloski

American Baby follows Oli as she navigates the repercussions of being very young and very pregnant in small town Texas. As she seeks out the suddenly absent teenage father-to-be of her child, Oli confronts the growing isolation from her community.





ETHAN BLOOM

(USA, 95 MIN)

Writer: Maylen Dominguez

Director: Herschel Faber

Cast: Joshua Malina, Rachelle Lefevre, Carlos Ponce, Hank Greenspan

Ethan Bloom paints a raw and authentic portrait of adolescence, exploring the struggles of an awkward teenager navigating the loss of his mother, his search for faith, and the pressures of his father's expectations—all while grappling with first love and the complexities of growing up.



HELLO OUT THERE

(USA, 90 MIN)

Writer/Director: Otis Blum

Cast: Chloe Bennet, Phil Dunster, Jennifer Beals

Minnie, a journalist, and Rex, her cousin and punk rock guitarist recently out of rehab, embark on a road trip to investigate Area 51 and uncover the truth about extraterrestrials. However, their journey unveils a deeper, personal motive.



IT COMES IN WAVES

(Canada, 104 MIN)

Writer: Sammy Mohamed

Director: Fitch Jean

Cast: Adrian Walters, Nendia Lewars, Olunike Adeliyi

A young Rwandan-Canadian man struggles to raise his younger sister while their mother battles addiction, forcing him to confront generational trauma that threatens to tear apart the only family he has left.



MILES AWAY

(USA, 81 MIN)

Writer/Director: Jackie Quinones

Cast: Jackie Quinones, Luis Guzman, Andre Royo, Jessica Pacheco

Jess, a socially awkward driver with Hollywood dreams, navigates eccentric passengers and relentless family chaos, only to realize she's become the spectator of her own unraveling life.



NOBODY WANTS TO BE HERE, NOBODY WANTS TO LEAVE

(USA, 110 MIN)

Writer: Caleb Samples

Director: Cash Robinson

Cast: Tine Justra, Mabel Thomas, Brian Childers, Jeff Huth

At a rundown roadside lodge, a cynical caretaker and a desperate stripper collide with the wreckage of their pasts, discovering in each other the possibility of truth, mercy, and a fleeting sense of home..



RHYTHM IS A DANCER

(USA, 93 MIN)

Writer/Director: Lauren Caster

Cast: Lauren Caster, Tate Donovan, Amy Aquino, Marianne Muellerleile

Born to Susan (Amy Aquino), a lesbian who opted for insemination, Ro grapples with the complexities of her unconventional family dynamic and soon forms a bond at her new job with three spirited octogenarians, who help her reconnect with her family, her roots and herself.



SIGNING TONY RAYMOND

(USA, 111 MIN)

Writer/Director: Glen Owen

Cast: Michael Mosley, Mira Sorvino, Rob Morgan, Marshawn Lynch

A young college football coach is sent to rural Alabama to try and sign the nation's top high school defensive end and soon finds himself trying to outflank rival recruiters, fight off grifting townsfolk and win over the player's wildly dysfunctional family.



TUESDAY'S FLU

(USA, 101 MIN)

Writer: Brian Parri, Stephen Perri

Director: Daniel Roebuck

Cast: Ross Marquand, Jackie Earle Haley, Jon Gries, Daniel Roebuck

Drowning in debt to a ruthless bookie and blackmailed by his ex-wife, a recovering gambler sees one last chance to break free—but pulling it off means risking everything to win back his son.



YOU'RE DATING A NARCISSIST!

(USA, 91 MIN)

Writer: Ann Marie Allison, Jenna Milly

Director: Ann Marie Allison

Cast: Marisa Tomei, Sherry Cola, Ciara Bravo, Marco Pigossi

An outspoken psychologist rushes to Los Angeles with her best friend to stop her lovesick daughter's wedding, fearing the groom is a narcissist.



DOCUMENTARY FEATURES



BITE TO BITE

(USA, 78 MIN)

Director: Kelly Lipscomb

Cast: Dennis Cameron, Lloyd MacInnes, Robbie Schallert, Scott Marshall

The fascinating story of one giant Bluefin Tuna on an unlikely journey around the world with two fishermen from Nova Scotia to the legendary Tsukiji Seafood Market in Japan and the underbelly of a lucrative but controversial global sushi industry.



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CORAJE



DESTINO

(Courage or Destiny)



Inspired by true events

a film by
Nicolás P. Villarreal



CHARLEY CROCKETT: \$10 COWBOY

(USA, 75 MIN)

Director: Patrick Heaphy

Cast: Charley Crockett

\$10 Cowboy takes viewers on-the-road and front row for Charley Crockett's record kick off tour at home in Texas. Director Patrick Heaphy's intimate on-the-fly interviews capture Charley's vision of his brand of Texas, his view of the music industry, and what it means to be a Texan.



GREGG ALLMAN: THE MUSIC OF MY SOUL

(USA, 100 MIN)

Director: James Keach

This soaring music documentary traces Gregg Allman's journey from a childhood scarred by his father's murder to the heights of Southern rock and late-life sobriety, exploring grief, addiction, love, and the racially charged American South through his transcendent music. Tender and unsparing, featuring electrifying performances and archival recordings, the film reveals how Gregg's unforgettable blend of rock, country and blues mirrored the music and struggles of his soul.

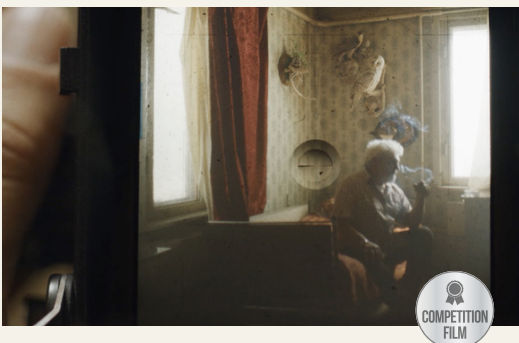


LOOT: A STORY OF CRIME AND REDEMPTION

(Canada, 87 MIN)

Director: Don Millar

A daring look at the underbelly of the global art market, *Loot* exposes the criminal network that used child soldiers to violently raid Cambodian temples then delivered blood antiquities to the homes of billionaires and elite western museums.



SEARCHING FOR SATYRUS

(USA, Azerbaijan, 102 MIN)

Writer/Director: Rena Effendi

Cast: Rena Effendi, Elmira Abbasova, Dmitrii Morgun, Pavlik Kazaryan

On a quest to find a rare butterfly named after her late father, a Soviet entomologist, a photographer journeys into the borderlands of two warring nations—where the fragile insect becomes an unexpected guide into her father's past.



SECONDS AWAY

(USA, Belgium, 84 MIN)

Director: Benjamin Kegan

Cast: Peter Callahan, Kathy McHugh, Donn Cabral

A runner chasing Olympic dreams. A coach facing cancer. A story about mentorship, resilience, and showing up for each other.





STRONGER THAN YOU THINK

(USA, 100 MIN)

Director: Janice Molinari, Melissa Forman

Cast: Ali Truwit, Jody Truwit, Mitch Truwit, Jamie Barone

After losing her leg in a brutal shark attack, the accomplished collegiate swimmer set her sights on an unimaginable goal, to earn a spot on the 2024 US Paralympic team just one year after her amputation.

This film captures her incredible journey and stands as a testament to what's possible when resilience meets purpose.



THE SKY WAS ON FIRE: BALLET AND WAR IN UKRAINE

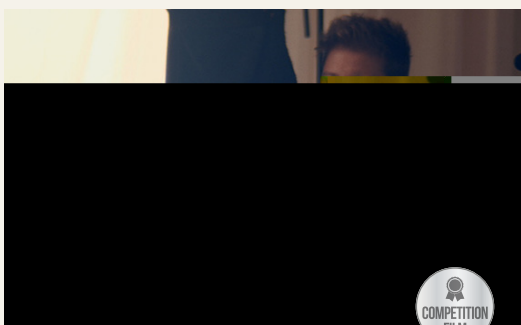
(USA, 106 MIN)

Writer: Joan Finn Adkison, Michael Germano, Michelle Provenzano

Director: Jonathan Maricle, Joan Finn Adkison

Cast: Oleh Tokar, Khrystyna Shyshpor, Krystyna Shyshkarova, Olha Tokar

This film tells the story of Russia's attempt to erase Ukrainian culture — and of the ballerinas, dancers, and cultural stewards who face an impossible choice: to flee, to stay and preserve their art, or to pick up arms and fight.



VOICES: THE DANNY GANS STORY

(USA, 102 MIN)

Writer/Director: Andrew Davies Gans

Voices follows filmmaker Andrew Davies Gans as he retraces the improbable rise of his father, Danny Gans — a complete unknown who became a Las Vegas legend. What begins as a son's search for answers becomes a haunting meditation on the voices that shape us, and the choice to carry them, or give voice to something new.

ZZASLOW K-427

(USA, 79 MIN)

Writer: Robert Ham, Adam Zaslow

Director: Robert Ham

Cast: Juan Josue Colón Estrada, Adam Zaslow, John Starks, John Feal

Zzaslow K-427 is a feature documentary that tells the extraordinary story of the longest-serving bomb-sniffing dog in U.S. Army history, a black Labrador retriever whose courage saved countless lives in combat and whose quiet presence brought healing far.



COMEDY VANGUARD FEATURES



CRYSTAL CROSS

(USA, 88 MIN)

Writer/Director: Richie James Follin

Cast: Rubyrose Hill, Richie James Follin, Lukas Haas, Luke Baines, Missi Pyle, Samantha Robinson

A quirky Christian singer and a suicidal dad drive cross-country, forging an unlikely bond through bad decisions, bizarre roadside attractions, and an all-original soundtrack. *Crystal Cross* is a hilarious, bittersweet road trip about two lost souls finding comfort (but not salvation) in each other's messes.



(DON'T KNOW) HOW TO BE

(Mexico, 85 MIN)

Writer: Tato Alexander

Director: Salvador Espinosa

Cast: Tato Alexander, Memo Villegas, Arcelia Ramírez, Gerardo Trejoluna

When Majo and Cris join his boomer parents for a birthday dinner, a night meant for celebration unravels into a comic battleground of clashing values, family pressures, and generational identity crises, where everyone must face that nowadays no one really knows "how to be."



DREAMING OF LIONS

(Brazil, Portugal, Spain, 88 MIN)

Writer/Director: Paolo Marinou-Blanco

Cast: Denise Fraga, João Nunes Monteiro, Joana Ribeiro, Victoria Guerra

Dreaming of Lions is an absurdist tragicomedy about euthanasia and assisted suicide. Gilda and Amadeu meet at an underground organisation that helps the terminally ill kill themselves painlessly. When they discover it's a scam, they escape to Spain to finalize their plans.



LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF

(USA, 87 MIN)

Writer/Director: Elizabeth Guest

Cast: Ed Begley Jr., Nicholas Guest, Rachele Carson-Begley, Craig Bullock

Love addict Lydia thinks she is finally ready to settle down but when her boyfriend Tim surprises her with a Christmas-in-New York proposal, she panics and goes home for the holidays where she must discover who she really is with the help of her four (yes, four!) parents.



MODERN WOMEN

(UK, 69 MIN)

Writer/Director: Hugo Santa Cruz

Cast: Shirley Both, Ian Reddington, Domino Soko, Alexandra Smith

The lives of six women suffering the consequences of the London Housing Crisis converge during the course of one day.



THEATRE PEOPLE

(USA, 80 MIN)

Writer/Director: Michael B. Breen

Cast: Hayley Huntley, Christopher Matias Aguila, James Urbaniak, Madeline Wise

Two no-name actors aren't having the Broadway careers they dreamed of. The only thing that keeps them going are the small roles they've consistently booked in New York's off-broadway theatre scene. But when they both fail to land good roles for the upcoming season, the future looks bleak. With no alternative, the actors decide they're going to do the only thing that will get them back in the game: they're going to become playwrights and write a new play with the biggest, longest, most dramatic scenes possible. And, most importantly, they'll cast themselves.





YESTERDAY ISLAND

(Australia, 91 MIN)

Writer/Director: Sam Voutas

Cast: Ivan Aristeguieta, Florence Noble, Francis Greenslade, Genevieve Neve

A midnight phone call from a friend asking for a favor leads a failed writer to be trapped on a surreal subantarctic island, with darkly comedic consequences.

DARK MATTERS FEATURES



A MOTHER'S LOVE

(USA, 90 MIN)

Writer/Director: Patrick Q. Roberts

Cast: Emily Hall, Nathan Owens, Abi Van Andel, Kara Hayward

Strange occurrences haunt a new mother struggling with postpartum after the discovery of a dead body hidden inside the walls of the house she and her husband are remodeling into their dream home leads down a path of dark secrets.



ANSWR

(USA, 98 MIN)

Writer/Director: Stephen Kay

Cast: Moises Arias, Rain Spencer, Lilli Kay, Siddiq Sauderson

Tech "wunderkind," Colton Ray, escapes the pain of mourning the loss of his father by taking a gig at a remote Icelandic weather station. When he accepts a side hustle, as part of an alignment group for a next-gen chatbot, Colton develops a dangerous relationship with his "new best friend."



CRUEL HANDS

(Australia, 75 MIN)

Writer: Al & Matthew Kalyk

Director: Al Kalyk

Cast: Mavournee Hazel, Diesel La Torraca, Josh McConville, Harry Greenwood

A mother and her young son escape from an abusive husband to an isolated farmhouse, only to find themselves trapped between him and a raging bushfire that surrounds them.



KIND
(Netherlands, 83 MIN)

Writer: Johan Paul de Vrijer
Director: Jan Verdijk
Cast: Vincent van der Valk, Noortje Herlaar, Tamar van den Dop

Desperate to save their unborn daughter from fatal complications, an expectant couple turns to a mysterious midwife.



SACRIFICIOS
(Mexico, 92 MIN)

Writer: Mauricio Chernovetzky, Alexander Iosjpe
Director: Mauricio Chernovetzky
Cast: Jorge A. Jimenez, Siddhartha Tonalli, Frida Astrid, Costanza Andrade

After suffering a traumatic loss, Juan attempts to find solace in the vastness of the sea. There a miraculous event promises to reverse everything...but at what cost?



SPITE
(USA, 86 MIN)

Writer/Director: Carolynn Cecilia
Cast: Masha Cima, Eileen Weisinger, Maxwell Scott, Shannon Hamm

Johanna, a struggling social worker, returns to her late mother's home where bruises, nightmares, and a hostile presence blur reality. As she spirals into isolation, she must confront the abuse of her childhood and reclaim agency—or remain trapped in the cycle forever.

TEXAS INDEPENDENT FEATURES



DO NO HARM
(USA, 83 MIN)

Writer/Director: Chris Hartwell
Cast: Harry Shum Jr., Rosaline Elbay, Ronny Chieng, Jimmy Gonzales

When a simple mistake turns into a fatal error, a burned out nurse becomes trapped by the system, dangerous expectations, and the corrosive lies we tell to survive.



PICKLEHEADS
(USA, 77 MIN)

Writer: Jared Bonner
Director: Josh Flanagan
Cast: Kristine Froseth, Jared Bonner, Harvey Guillen, John O'Hurley

A disgraced ping pong star is dragged back into the limelight by a documentary crew, hoping to capture his redemption tale in a plucky, new sport — pickleball.





SELL OUT

(USA, 90 MIN)

Writer/Director: Nicholas Jude Holden, Joshua Ashy Holden

Cast: Nick Holden, Stephanie Hunt, Olivia Applegate, Adrienne Palicki, Temple Baker, Gabriel Luna, Jimmy Gonzalez, Bill Wise

A neurotic novelist can't tell if his biggest problem is the blank page, his Southern family —or his best friend's off-the-rails political campaign.



VALENTINA

(USA, 78 MIN)

Writer: Noelle Forougi, Tatti Ribeiro

Director: Tatti Ribeiro

Cast: Keyla Monterroso Mejia

A series of bureaucratic mishaps plagues Valentina as she tries to tackle a simple to-do list at the El Paso-Juarez border.

THE DINNER'S' COMPANY

SHORTS PROGRAM 1: ANIMATED SHORTS



THE CATCH

(New Zealand, 7 MIN)

Writer/Director: Andrew Tian

In a bleak industrial future, a lonely fisherman clings to memories of a once thriving ocean and the life it once gave him. Isolated and consumed by nostalgia, he struggles with the emptiness left behind by environmental collapse.

LIKE FRIEND, LIKE DEER

(Iraq, 13 MIN)

Writer/Director: Malek Eghbali

A short film about the deep connection and hidden similarities between humans, animals, and the environment they live in.

SON

(Russia, Kazakhstan, 21 MIN)

Writer: Zhanna Bekmambetova, Dmitry Kiselev
Director: Zhanna Bekmambetova

The story of a boy and his dad who live in a small house on the edge of the steppe. The boy is confined to a wheelchair and can't even take a spoon with porridge. The dad is close to despair, but everything changes when one day the TV shows the landing of the newest robot on Mars... This tale is dedicated to all parents who don't give up.

FUNDIE

(Canada, 6 MIN)

Writer: Zachariah O'Hora
Director: Tom Jolliffe

Fundie is a slice of life comedy about a child's journey to buy cigarettes for an adult, based on the upcoming graphic novel *Fundie Surviving my Fundamentalist Childhood in the 1980's* by Zach O'Hora.

MACHINE HEART

(USA, 9 MIN)

Writer: Hilarion Banks, Mary Blake
Director: Hilarion Banks

A machine built to be a warrior is at home on the battlefield but its life is threatened when its heart can't handle falling in love.

IF/WHEN

(Australia, 10 MIN)

Writer: Richie Black
Director: Courtney Westbrook

In a world where time is anything but linear, lonely traveller Ollie Quatch glimpses a future without Az—the one person who makes them feel grounded. Defying fate, they risk everything to hold onto love in their unpredictable journey.

BEYOND MEASURE

(Australia, 8 MIN)

Writer/Director: David Ferrier

A man discovers he is physically shrinking, forcing him and his wife to navigate life's ups and downs with increasing creativity and adaptability as his stature diminishes.



SHORTS PROGRAM 2: TEXAS DOCS



COSMIC COWBOYS

(UK, 20 MIN)

Writer/Director: Parker Donaldson

People gather in Bandera, Texas, the “Cowboy Capital of the World”, to witness the Great North American Eclipse on April 8, 2024.

THE NIGHT HERONS

(USA, 11 MIN)

Writer/Director: Will Hammond

The Night Herons Running Club, a group of 48 men from Houston, enter into the Texas Independence Relay. This epic 200 mile relay race through the center of Texas forces the team on a journey of camaraderie, endurance, and faith over a 22 hour period.

ROLLING FILM, ROCKING HISTORY, AL MAYSLES CAPTURES THE BEATLES

(USA, 11 MIN)

Director: Bart Weiss

Al Maysles tells the story about how he and his brother David filmed the Beatles when they invaded New York in 1964.

PINSETTERS NEEDED

(USA, 16 MIN)

Writer/Director: Gary Galonek

Pinsetters Needed explores the forgotten world of early 20th-century ‘pin boys,’ the young workers who kept bowling alleys alive before automation changed the game forever.

SHORTS PROGRAM 3: SHORTS THAT BUMP IN THE NIGHT



THE DAUGHTER

(USA, 7 MIN)

Writer/Director: Mary Ann Anane

A day at the beach turns sinister when ten-year-old Lana spies her father’s interactions with a young woman.

THE DOULA

(USA, 9 MIN)

Writer/Director: Missy Greenberg

A new mom gets more than what she bargained for from her doula.

THE WRITER

(USA, 27 MIN)

Writer/Director: Austin Glasser, Luke Madenwald

Self isolated, a writer navigates the pressure of the film industry, family, and the looming presence of his father, only to lose himself to his ambitions.

M.U.B. - MONSTER UNDER THE BED

(USA, 12 MIN)

Writer: James V. Hart, Serena Dykman

Director: Serena Dykman

A one-night stand takes a surreal turn when a childhood Monster creeps from Under the Bed.

WEREWOLF

(USA, 7 MIN)

Writer: Andre Lascaris, Nick Kreiss
Director: Andre Lascaris

A single mother confronts her demons when her hunger gets unbearable and the only thing standing in her way is her nine year old son.

COUPLES RETREAT

(USA, 15 MIN)

Writer/Director: Ari Shapiro

At an isolated Vermont cabin, a couple invites their friends up for a double date weekend. But when one friend shows up without his partner, their relaxing weekend turns into one of paranoia, resentment, and even violence.

MAGPIE

(USA, 11 MIN)

Writer/Director: Sylvia Hoeks

While on a remote camping trip, a woman struggling with infertility becomes increasingly unsettled by her best friend's pregnancy- until longing and grief blur the line between reality and desire.

THE DEATH OF THERAPY

(USA, 13 MIN)

Writer/Director: Jared Hirsch

In a reality where happiness is at an all time high, an unemployed therapist desperate for purpose plots to unravel an ex-patient's life to lure him back into therapy.

THE MIRROR

(USA, 13 MIN)

Writer: Andrew Jenner
Director: Benjamin Harrison

A loser cop finds himself as the last line of defense against a murderous sniper trying to free his serial killer partner.



SHORTS PROGRAM 4: STRANGE ENCOUNTERS



SINGLE PEOPLE AT THE END OF THE WORLD

(UK, 5 MIN)

Writer: Jessica Riches
Director: Jessica Riches, Casey J. Newell

When a meteor strike leaves Lola with minutes to live, she declares her love to her childhood best friend. His response is... not what she expected.

ONE LAST ROUND

(USA, 25 MIN)

Writer/Director: Kor Adana

When Renee receives the devastating news of her terminal illness, she and her husband Don debate an impossible decision: aggressive therapy with the hope of adding a few more final days with her loved ones, or sacrifice herself now to create a "Ripple"-- a perfect digital snapshot of her consciousness that she can leave behind for her young daughter.

BAKO REMOVAL ACT

(Nigeria, 9 MIN)

Writer: Boma Iluma, Andres Centero-Fischer
Director: Boma Iluma

In a fractured Abuja of 2060, where humanity and an alien underclass coexist uneasily, a raw documentary captures a city spiraling into conflict as identity, land, and power collide in the fight for its soul.

MY ONLY FRIEND IS A ROBOT NAMED BEANS

(USA, 14 MIN)

Writer/Director: Anika Kan Grevstad

In an isolated future, Ruby finds her lonesome routines disrupted when she makes an unlikely new friend: a mail-order robot. Ruby finds herself reluctantly learning lessons from her new robot friend: the power of opening up, the importance of platonic intimacy, and how to quell that anxious voice in the back of your head that wonders why anyone would want to be friends with you.

EMPANO GLEASIUM

(USA, 10 MIN)

Writer/Director: Joe Bowden

A couple uses their love for each other and a magical spell to summon a galactic deity, but when they recite the spell's magic words, they learn there's more to magic than love...

SOLO UN POCO AQUI

(Australia, 18 MIN)

Writer/Director: Diego Saram

In a world where every day could be your last, Theo, a young survivor, still grapples with the loss of his little brother. When Lucía, a resilient Hispanic woman, insists on joining him for the solemn ritual of burning her friend's body, Theo reluctantly steps out of his isolated routine. As they journey through the desolate Australian bush, they realize that forging human connections may be their last hope in the midst of desolation.

I WALKED THROUGH THE WALL

(USA, 8 MIN)

Writer/Director: Pablo Larcuen

A wife and mother who feels trapped in a life of service to her family, accidentally discovers the power to walk through walls.

THOSE WHO LOVE ME WILL FOLLOW ME

(USA, 19 MIN)

Writer: Alessandro Giovanni Lunghi, Ailish Elzy
Director: Alessandro Giovanni Lunghi

When 8-year old Adom performs a holy miracle in his small Texas town, his mother Daniela is forced to fight against her church, her husband, and the community in order to protect him from media and religious exploitation.



WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY LAUREN CASTER

RHYTHM IS A DANCER

LAUREN CASTER AMY AQUINO & TATE DONOVAN

HMJ72 PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS RHYTHM IS A DANCER, STARRING LAUREN CASTER, AMY AQUINO, TATE DONOVAN, MARIANNE MUELLERLEILE, JASMINE ASHANTI, CONOR DONNALLY, BEAU BILLINGSLER, BOBBY GUSTANZO. COSTUME DESIGNER SUNDAY KENNEDY. CAS & MEG MURMAN. CAS. PRODUCTION DESIGNER BRYON BENISON. COSTUME DESIGNER HALEY MEEKER. EDITOR CHRISTOPHER SCHAMFF. CINEMATOGRAPHER JOE M. HAN. PRODUCED BY LAUREN CASTER. CO-PRODUCED BY ROBIN CONLY & JOE M. HAN. EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY JERRY MOREY, NDIL GREVEMBERG, SALLY GREVEMBERG.

starring EMMY AWARD WINNER Tate Donovan
and SAG AWARD NOMINEE Amy Aquino
written & directed by GLAAD AWARD NOMINEE Lauren Caster



World Premiering at Austin Film Festival
Check schedule for theater & show times

SHORTS PROGRAM 5: DARK COMEDY



A FENCE IS A FENCE OF COURSE

(USA, 17 MIN)

Writer/Director: Jeff Alper

After discovering a wolf raiding his chicken coup, Leon builds a fence around his property, much to the dismay of his neighbor, Kirby.

BLACKOUT

(Egypt, 15 MIN)

Writer/Director: Ahmed El Zoghby

It's the Eid holiday. We're in an apartment building that is owned and lived in by three generations of a very conservative family. When the elderly grandfather gets sick, his daughters believe that his illness is because of bad luck brought on by a young woman who rents an apartment in the building. Mohamed, the grandson of the sick man, has a crush on this young woman. But when the young woman comes home in the middle of the night, bringing a man who she's taking up to her apartment, Mohamed and the women decide to punish her for her "impure" and "scandalous" ways.

HAIL MARY

(USA, 8 MIN)

Writer: Dylan Stanley, Zachary Fields

Director: Zachary Fields, Carter Evan Coleman, Dylan Stanley

Two clueless best friends pose as priests to cash in on a desperate family's plea for an exorcism, only to find themselves in way over their heads when the possessed girl might actually be the real deal.

FOXHOLE

(USA, 13 MIN)

Writer/Director: Nick Dugan

A meditative groundskeeper seeks refuge in the quiet rhythms of a countryside inn, but his past refuses to stay silent.

DESERTEUR

(USA, 12 MIN)

Writer: Justin Heller

Director: Sarah Joy Byington

After escaping a concentration camp in Nazi-occupied France, a refugee encounters a Nazi deserter standing on a landmine rigged to explode.

SENTO

(Japan, 10 MIN)

Writer/Director: Noemie Nakai

For 40 years, Chieko has faithfully cleaned the neighborhood bathhouse. One morning she finds a young man about to end his life there. Their absurd quarrel over routine and death slowly turns into a fragile connection that restores their sense of humanity.

SWEET CESSPOOL

(USA, 6 MIN)

Writer/Director: Daniel Paredes

A broke ghostwriter is hired to help a man craft his suicide letter. On the day the letter is delivered, the writer has doubts.

THE HANGUP

(USA, 7 MIN)

Writer: James Francis Ginty

Director: Tyler Coon

Struggling to pick-up the pieces of a broken heart...Kevin finds himself a bit hung up.

SHORTS PROGRAM 6: EMOTIONAL THREADS



WEATHERMAKER

(USA, 11 MIN)

Writer/Director: Kyle Jarrow

A woman is contacted out of the blue by the father she hasn't seen since age five. She soon discovers the real – and really strange – reason that he bowed out of her life. It's a story about parents, children, love, loss and superheroes

XOLO

(USA, 13 MIN)

Writer/Director: Matthew Serrano

After finding his owner's body on the couch, a little dog named Skippy must convince Xolotl, the Aztec god of death, that his owner deserves a good afterlife.

HUNTSVILLE

(USA, 11 MIN)

Writer: Johnny McAllister, Annie Silverstein
Director: Johnny McAllister

J.W. drives across Texas to pick up his old friend, Will, on the day of his release from a three year stint at the State Penitentiary. He brings along Will's son, nine year old Cole, perhaps unwisely.

BRIGHT FUTURE

(USA, 7 MIN)

Writer: Jack Auger, Hope Yohn
Director: Jack Auger

Stephanie must convince her boss that his son-in-law is not who he thinks he is. Her job and her sanity are at stake.

COMETS

(USA, 12 MIN)

Writer/Director: Amy Roy

Nan is eighty years old, and living in a nursing home. Scared and alone, and with her Alzheimer's getting worse, she asks every day to "go home." As she loses precious memories, and stops recognizing those closest to her, a new resident brings her hope.

SCRATCH

(Canada, 10 MIN)

Writer: Taye Alvis, Ella Lou Henning
Director: Taye Alvis

After an accident leaves his camera shattered, Junior struggles to maintain his friendship with his fellow players.

BE A MAN

(Spain, 20 MIN)

Writer: Lucas Parra, Valèria Cuní
Director: Lucas Parra

A seven-year-old boy is taken by his father and grandfather on his first hunting trip, a rite of passage where violence, loyalty, and fear force him to grow up too soon.

ME (AND YOU)

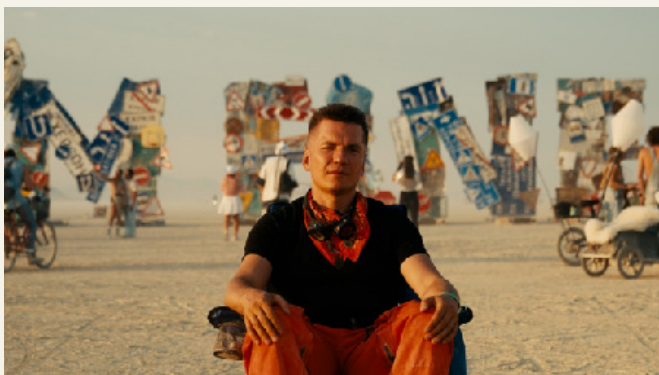
(USA, 17 MIN)

Writer/Director: Ilia Christmas Wayans

Fourteen-year-old Odella tries to save her single mother from going back to her abusive ex-boyfriend on their way out of town.



SHORTS PROGRAM 7: DOCUMENTARY SHORTS



SENAKULO

(USA, 15 MIN)

Writer/Director: Aaron Laserna

Ruben Enaje, a man locally well-known for his portrayals of Jesus Christ's Crucifixion, reflects on the twilight of his 35-year long ritual, while confronting a shifting spiritual landscape in the Philippines.

STRANGERS ON OUR LAND

(USA, 26 MIN)

Director: Zane Karram, Kelsey Oliver

When a Tohono O'odham man is killed by Border Patrol in front of his home, his case becomes a window into a deeper history — one between a sovereign Indigenous nation and a U.S. federal presence growing more entrenched by the day.

STITCH & TIME

(USA, 13 MIN)

Writer/Director: David Munro, V. Scott Balcerek

Two lifers in a California prison start a crochet group to make warm items for fellow inmates in hospice. What begins as a craft project becomes a rare source of meaning, dignity, and belonging behind bars.

WE'RE FINE

(Ukraine, 25 MIN)

Director: Misha Karpenko

Two years into the war, Ukrainian artists unite at Burning Man to build a massive sculpture from war-scarred road signs, turning trauma into art. Strangers become family as their creation transforms rubble into a symbol of resilience, hidden pain, and unity.

WOMAN IN THE SKY

(USA, 16 MIN)

Writer/Director: Max Woertendyke

Woman In The Sky is an epic love story writ small across hundreds of canvases and thousands of pieces of archival grade paper, and a fascinating glimpse at the often overlooked and invisible labor that goes into preserving an artist's legacy.

THE MOLEMAN

(USA, 15 MIN)

Writer/Director: Billy Miossi

Confronting loss and grief and moles, an aging mole hunter grapples with a decades-long obsession.

SHORTS PROGRAM 8: EVERYTHING IS SHORTER IN TEXAS

presented by *ShootBigBend.com*



ROADSIDE

(USA, 10 MIN)

Writer: Meron Ewnetou, Grant Norsworthy
Director: Macey Moser

A man and boy are stranded on the side of the road in the middle of the night.

TECH FREE RETREAT

(USA, 7 MIN)

Writer: Kelsey Pribilski, C. Bailey Werner
Director: Willie Rockefeller

Cut off from smartphones during a secluded work retreat, a team of coworkers sees one member's compulsive fact-checking habit unravel into madness.

HEATED

(USA, 7 MIN)

Writer/Director: Shianne Salazar

A 10-year-old Black girl grows frustrated with her natural hair and decides to straighten it without considering the damage it will cause to her scalp and her psyche.

BLASPHEMY

(USA, 14 MIN)

Writer/Director: Adam Tinius

A grieving man at the end of his rope attends a church community group and quickly spirals out of control.

ICE CREAM MAN

(USA, 12 MIN)

Writer: Dax Flame
Director: Maddox Stockton

Based on the memoir by Dax Flame; a former internet star with a stunted film career struggles to find his place while working at an ice cream shop.

GOBLIN

(USA, 12 MIN)

Writer/Director: Santiago Gardner Berkley

Through a game of imagination, a determined young girl and her isolated, distant uncle gradually find a shared desire for friendship.

YER SMACKIN

(USA, 7 MIN)

Writer/Director: John Field Brown

In this nostalgic and heartfelt comedy, an exasperated older brother celebrates his birthday with the person he loves the most—his whiny, obnoxious little sister.

VANDALS

(USA, 11 MIN)

Writer: Meghan Falcone, Josh Brener
Director: C. Bailey Werner

Jay and Maggie want to change... without having to actually change.

BLOOD

(USA, 10 MIN)

Writer: Phoebe Voss
Director: Emily Quinn Potter, Grace K. Potter

During a crucial dinner with a career-changing opportunity at stake, a lesbian artist and her girlfriend's night spirals out of control when accusations about their current dating lives come to the surface, putting both love and success at risk.

ARMADILLO MAN: THE TRIPS OF JIM FRANKLIN

(USA, 27 MIN)

Director: Emil Lozada

Armadillo Man: The Trips of Jim Franklin tells the story of Jim Franklin - the iconic concert poster artist who helped establish the Austin music venue, Armadillo World Headquarters, and is credited with making Austin "weird."



SHORTS PROGRAM 9: COMING OF AGE



JUANA PELOS

(USA, 7 MIN)

Writer/Director: Maria Mealla

Juana is entering puberty and one thing comes guaranteed with that - body hair. Relentlessly bullied and finding no support from her mother in shedding her hairy shame, Juana crusades into the world of hair removal behind her mom's back.

HEAT ME

(Greece, 15 MIN)

Writer: Mata Kourti
Director: Kelly Sarri

Under the weight of a relentless heatwave in Athens, three generations of women are forced into close quarters, where love, humor, and generational clashes rise to a boiling point.

LITTLE DINNERS

(USA, 13 MIN)

Writer/Director: Peter Henry Bussian

All alone on New Year's Eve, Vera chases away the big city blues by throwing a dinner part for one.

CHOCOLATE CAKE

(USA, 13 MIN)

Writer: Jack Craymer, Jesse Suchomel, Logan Custer
Director: Jack Craymer, Jesse Suchomel

Desperate to simmer down his bubbling anxiety, a stressed-out line cook enters a contest and seeks to complete one simple objective: bake the best chocolate cake in the world.

IT'S NOT A MONSTER

(USA, 15 MIN)

Writer/Director: Vanessa Hu

When a brave but stubborn eight-year-old orphan, Toby, overhears that his beloved Grandma is fighting a "monster," he prepares for an epic battle with swords and shields, only to discover that the real fight is against something far scarier.

STUCK & LEAVING

(USA, 15 MIN)

Writer/Director: Zoe Dahmen

Two best friends believe they've found evidence of a missing teenager in a box of photos from the eighties and race to solve the puzzle before one of them has to leave town for a new life in New York.

PRETTY BOY

(USA, 6 MIN)

Writer/Director: Sky Byun

Two best friends on the same basketball team find their lives forever changed when one of them confesses to the other.

SHORTS PROGRAM 10: FUNNY HAHA



DECOY

(France, UK, 5 MIN)

Writer/Director: Sarah Nocquet

Moments after winning a prestigious award, a jaded celebrity's conversation with a young fan through a toilet stall door makes her reckon with what her success really means to her.

FAN

(Canada, 9 MIN)

Writer/Director: Philippe Berthelet

Victor is Camille's table fan. Following a rough heatwave, she decides to replace him with an air conditioner. Victor will try to surmount this act of treason.

LADYLIKE

(USA, 15 MIN)

Writer/Director: Taylor Coriell

Ladylike is a post-Gilded Age buddy comedy set in 1911 about two young society women who disguise themselves as men to sneak into a gentleman-only club in NYC for a chance to meet their heroine, the great Sarah Bernhardt. Inspired by a true event.

RACCOON SOUP

(USA, 15 MIN)

Writer/Director: Janie Gentry

A young waitress battles crazy customers, a feral raccoon, and her sexist boss to earn a sponsorship to the state knife-throwing championship.

THE FELTBAGS

(UK, 7 MIN)

Writer: Kat Likkel, John Hoberg, Glenn Slater

Director: Paul Murphy

A faux documentary short about a family of immigrant puppets who move to Pittsburgh, PA.

THE MAIL GAZE

(USA, 9 MIN)

Writer: Kathryn Ross

Director: Jonny Diaz

Roommates Gemma and Lainie are smitten with their handsome UPS man. So, the two girls make a bet: first one to get a date with him wins; loser does the dishes. As the girls do their best to woo him, things go hilariously and dangerously awry.

THREE LADIES & A FAKE I.D.

(USA, 11 MIN)

Writer: Sheena Santamaria

Director: Brandon Okumura

When their favorite lunch spot hikes its prices, three middle-aged women, Mary, Sue, and Esther, scheme to get fake IDs to score a senior discount at a new restaurant.

HOUSTON WE HAVE A CRUSH

(USA, 10 MIN)

Writer: Jen Kim, Omer Ben-Shachar

Director: Omer Ben-Shachar

After finding a phone accidentally left behind by an astronaut, a lonely alien develops an all-consuming crush that tests his hold on reality.

DIY

(Australia, 12 MIN)

Writer: Lachlan Marks

Director: Tony Gardiner

After a bizarre mishap hanging a picture frame in her apartment, a young woman rushes to check on her neighbor, inadvertently entering a situation she might never walk out of.

STRIPPER MOMS

(USA, 14 MIN)

Writer/Director: Tricia Horvath

When a suburban housewife finds out her husband is cheating, she returns to her roots as a stripper in order to win him back.



SHORTS PROGRAM 11: FAMILY TIES



HIT ME

(USA, 19 MIN)

Writer/Director: Antonello Velez

A retired boxer seeks to mend his relationship with his estranged daughter, who's following in his footsteps by becoming a fighter. The catch: she'll only accept him as her trainer if he defeats her in the ring.

MORE THAN DUST

(USA, 17 MIN)

Writer/Director: Julia Weisberg Cortés

Ana, a single mom and immigrant housekeeper, has built her life around shielding her daughter, Isabel. But when a terminal diagnosis forces her to face the future, Ana must let go of control and find the courage to be vulnerable before it's too late.

BURY ME IN COLOR

(USA, 10 MIN)

Writer: Susan Jones
Director: Ari Johnson

When two estranged sisters reunite for their mother's funeral, their opposing approaches to grief spark tension, leading them to rediscover the bond they thought they'd lost.

BIG BABY

(USA, 11 MIN)

Writer/Director: Caleb McDonald

Big Baby is a dark comedy that follows Mitchell, an insecure man determined to propose to his girlfriend, Lydia. The only problem? Her disapproving father—and the adult baby on the run.

LEOPARD

(Canada, 11 MIN)

Writer/Director: Dan Abramovici

Diego is being a dick, and Tish doesn't know why. Is he jealous because his little sister is an incredible artist while he's just a poser playing JV soccer? Or is it because their parents have been fighting ever since they immigrated to Canada? Tish is gonna find out.

MATTER

(UK, 24 MIN)

Writer/Director: Pujit Kalash

Karthik, a 25-year-old corporate employee, wants to attend his grandmother's 80th birthday party on the other side of Mumbai. However, he becomes embroiled in a perilous mission to rescue his best friend Ankit, who's been trapped by the ruthless Shetty Anna. As he navigates this chaos, Karthik encounters intense action, all while racing against time.

CANCER KID

(Canada, 16 MIN)

Writer/Director: Vasili Manikas

A school yard prank gone wrong sends the naive Elliot on a desperate quest to make sense of his mortality.

SHORTS PROGRAM 12: DIGITAL SERIES



BLISS TALENT

(USA, 24 MIN)

Writer: Rachel Ravel, Elvira Ibragimova
Director: Elvira Ibragimova

Following the departure of her star client, Tammy Bliss, a delusional children's talent agent in rural Texas, strives to dazzle (and deceive) a documentary film crew while picking up the pieces of her fading career.

WINGO'S WORLD

(USA, 11 MIN)

Writer/Director: Hoag Kepner

Born under Austin's Congress Avenue Bat Bridge, the lovable but demanding Wingo the Bat is the city's top record producer, whose unmatched hearing and musical instincts collide with indie band Two Player during a chaotic pilot episode of Wingo's World.

BETSY FUCKING ROSS

(USA, 14 MIN)

Writer/Director: Kayla Baken

The untrue story of America's greatest sew job.

JUST BE NICE

(USA, 25 MIN)

Writer/Director: Kay Dooner Scinto

Beth arrives for her first day of work to find that she is the only woman at a marketing company that sells products to women.

DELIVERY GUY

(USA, 8 MIN)

Writer/Director: Trey Munden, Hugh Westhoff

A pizza delivery guy's career ambitions are put on hold when he gets mixed up in the criminal underground.

NOBLE HOMES

(USA, 27 MIN)

Writer: Bridget Bell McMahon
Director: Chloe Ray

In a quaint resort town, a surge of second-home vacation buyers forces the Noble Homes Real Estate team to struggle between pursuing profits and preserving the quirky charm of their community – because when selling paradise turns into a high-stakes comedic showdown, it's not just property at stake, but the neighborhood they love.



SHORTS PROGRAM 13: DATE NIGHT



SOFIA

(USA, 10 MIN)

Writer/Director: Camila de Ilhéus

A quick waxing session turns into a nightmare when a Brazilian accidentally gets a Brazilian.

RECESS

(Poland, 20 MIN)

Writer/Director: Jan Saczek

A young English teacher accidentally sends her nude photo to one of her students.

BREAKUPS SUCK

(USA, 13 MIN)

Writer/Director: Ben Arndt

Luca fears for his life while preparing to dump his girlfriend Ruby, who may or may not be a vampire.

LAST CALL

(USA, 8 MIN)

Writer/Director: Janelle Lee Austin, Kasey Villalta

After a long day behind the bar, an eager bartender hurries to close up for a time-sensitive hookup—but when a grief-stricken man walks in at the last minute, his night of self-gratification collides with an unexpected call for compassion.

ROLE PLAY

(UK, 17 MIN)

Writer: Kit Loyd

Director: Kyle Jon Shephard

In Role Play, Tim and Lucy, a couple struggling to revive their relationship, experiment with role-playing. After a failed attempt at intimacy, things take a bizarre turn when a creepy man named Mick unexpectedly appears in their home.

SOMETHING BETWEEN US

(USA, 14 MIN)

Writer/Director: Prashanth Sampathkumaran

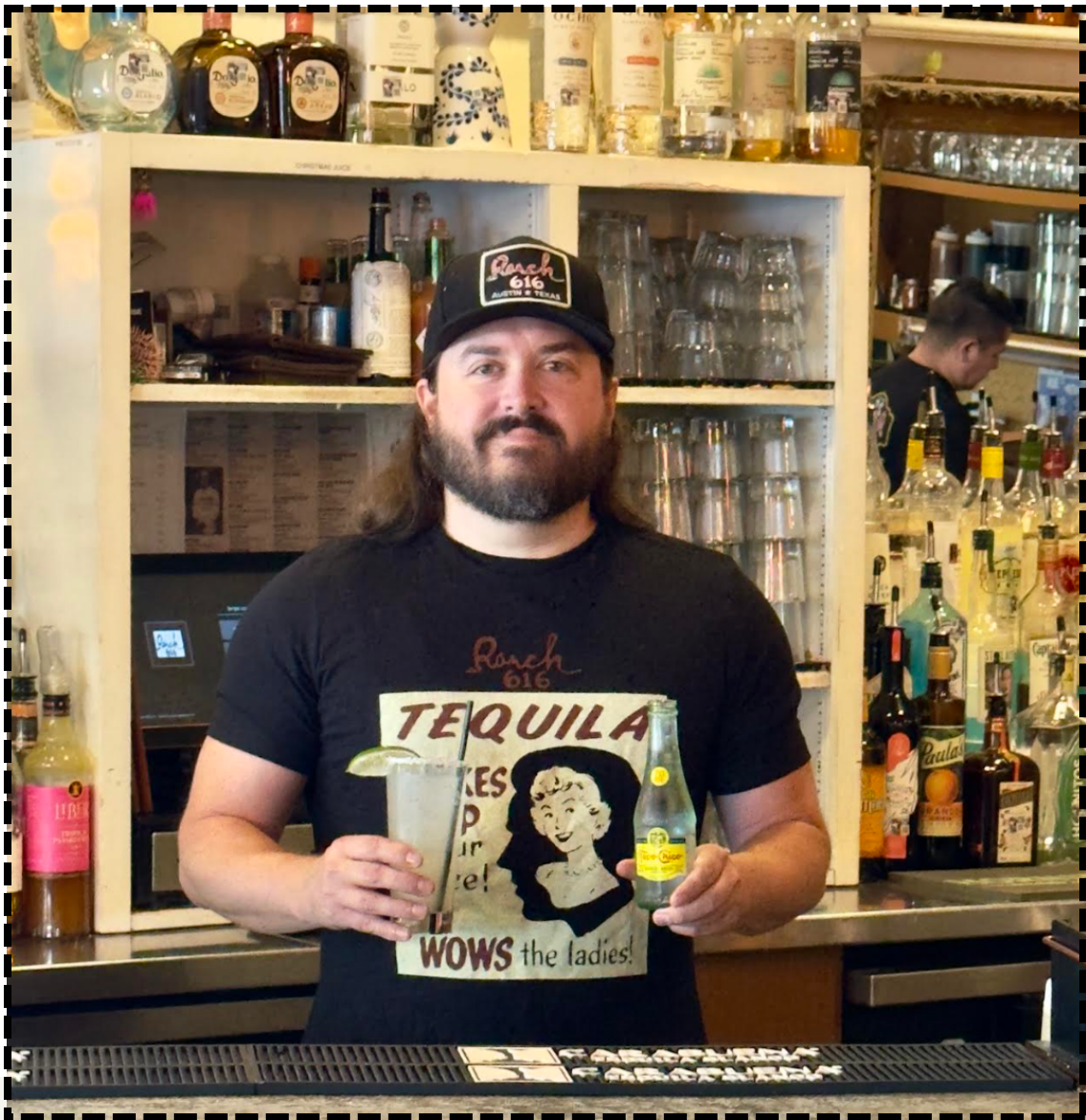
An Indian-American dance choreographer must make an impression on her first big job but finds herself falling for her new client, an unteachable Bollywood star.

NO THOUGHTS!

(USA, 18 MIN)

Writer/Director: Steve McJones

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SHORTS PROGRAM 14: MODERN FAMILIES



SCONES

(USA, 6 MIN)

Writer: Logan Peach
Director: Madison Cavin

A young baker remembers where her passion was born by reflecting on her complicated relationship with her mother.

LITTLE FISHIES

(India, 20 MIN)

Writer/Director: Mallika Juneja

A tender drama set in Mumbai, Little Fishies follows 13-year-old Raya as she decides to break free from the suffocating atmosphere of her own father's funeral ceremony by taking her sister to the beach — against her family's wishes.

UNCLE JOHNNY

(USA, 12 MIN)

Writer: Angela Giarratana
Director: Margaux Susi

As Rose spends the day bowling with her neurodivergent Uncle, she grapples with the secret that he is dying of cancer.

FAMILY TIES

(USA, 8 MIN)

Writer/Director: Vanessa Darko

When Katerina is forced to spend the day taking care of her hostile grandmother, Adela, the two must learn to navigate their misguided perceptions of each other.

DREAMLINE

(USA, 18 MIN)

Writer/Director: Harshith Surya Kotni

After getting caught making a hip-hop beat with his friends instead of attending an important career networking event, a high school senior tries to find common ground with his father by sharing his original rap music.

SECOND BEDROOM

(USA, 12 MIN)

Writer/Director: Beatrix Chu

Over the course of a day, 12-year-old Agnes goes apartment hunting in Brooklyn with her dad Peter, and struggles to come to terms with her parents' separation.

KING OF GAMES

(USA, 10 MIN)

Writer: Gabriella Bartley, Tyler Cino Maradiaga
Director: Tyler Cino Maradiaga

A young child loses his prized deck of playing cards amidst a life-changing day for him and his family.

KANSAS, 1989

(USA, 13 MIN)

Writer/Director: Clayton Dean Smith

A Midwestern teen on the verge of coming out is ready to come into his own—and one night of danger changes everything.

SHORTS PROGRAM 15: FAMILY: FOR THE KIDS



FANTASIES OF A RESCUE DUMMY

(UK, 7 MIN)

Writer/Director: Adrian Maganza

A rescue dummy gets forgotten at the bottom of a swimming pool. Behind his fixed smile, a whirlwind of emotions floods his plastic carcass as he fantasises about being picked up and brought to the surface in the strong and reassuring arms of a swimmer.

DOGS OF BISHKEK

(USA, 3 MIN)

Writer/Director: Viktor Niksdorf

On a journey home from the market, a young boy Sasha is being stalked and chased by the ruthless monster dog of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan during a cold, foggy, winter night.

BABY FREEZE

(USA, 11 MIN)

Writer/Director: Kendra Alesha McGee

When father-daughter breakdancing duo, Will and Riley, prepare for their final dance battle before Will's deployment, Riley must overcome her newfound fear of losing her dad in order to take home the victory.

COURAGE OR DESTINY

(Argentina, 20 MIN)

Writer/Director: Nicolas Villarreal

"Courage or Destiny" follows a young boy as he is confronted with his future and the decisions he must make to fulfill his destiny. Inspired by the 1955 Formula 1 Grand Prix in Argentina, where Juan Manuel Fangio had to suffer third-degree burns.

MAN

(USA, 7 MIN)

Writer/Director: Quinnolyn Benson-Yates

A sheriff arm wrestles opponents for the right to keep his badge, but not everything is as it seems in this Wild West!

AHOY!

(USA, 14 MIN)

Writer/Director: Julian Alvarez

Generations after a global environmental collapse, a young boy raised at sea discovers a map and embarks on a voyage to a mythical place once known as: "Land".

AMÉRICA

(Peru, 15 MIN)

Writer/Director: Javier Arias-Stella

América, a 10-year-old girl from a remote Andean village, dreams of buying a bicycle so she'll never be late to class again.



kxan 12.5

JOSH
HINKLE

KELLY
WILEY

MATT
GRANT

TAYLOR
ALANIS

They don't just ask
HARD QUESTIONS.

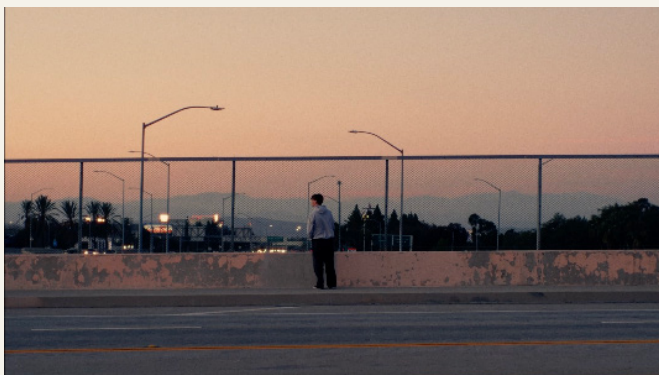
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HARD ANSWERS.

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YOUNG FILMMAKERS SHOWCASE



LUISA

(USA, 2 MIN)

Writer/Director: Kiyomi Dallas Kidd

Overwhelmed by the discord of her parents' arguments, a little girl, Luisa, uses her imagination to help heal her fractured family.

RATED

(USA, 4 MIN)

Writer/Director: Finnegan James Collins

A group of boys try to sneak into an R-rated movie.

MUSE

(USA, 6 MIN)

Writer/Director: Audrey Jiang, Sophia He

Drawn to the wisdom of a past champion, a college student determined to win a campus-wide speech competition turns to an AI writing tool named Muse to emulate her style — only to realize the line between profundity and performance is thinner than he imagined.

MY LIFE

(USA, 10 MIN)

Writer/Director: Nelan Castillo

Based on real life events, *My Life* follows a high schooler who right before his senior year begins his father passes away. As he struggles to grieve, he finds that the only way to comfort him is to document his senior year for his father. This film is a coming of age, where it touches topics such as grief, identity, acceptance, and starting a new chapter.

THE MAN IN THE GREEN AND GOLD SUIT I THE JAMES WILLIAMS STORY

(USA, 6 MIN)

Writer/Director: Kady Serlin

Follow James Williams, Glenbrook North Class of 2010, on his journey to becoming the ultimate Spartan superfan. From cheering on every game to embodying school spirit like no other, his passion for GBN knows no bounds. But what drives his dedication, and how has he earned his title as the biggest fan in Spartan history?

WHAT HAPPENED TO US?

(USA, 6 MIN)

Writer/Director: Dhruvi Tank, Trip Breslin, Cade Johnson

After losing his wife, a father tries to reconnect with his daughter.

TIME WILL TELL

(USA, 10 MIN)

Writer/Director: Peyton Cooper

A high school relationship built on a debate over the significance of moments unravels when one moment never occurs.

DREAMS UNPAINTED

(USA, 11 MIN)

Writer/Director: Dilan Arjun Koganti, Winston Lin

A budding young artist's dreams clash with his Chinese immigrant mother's wishes; they later seek reconciliation.



MICHAEL
MOSLEY

ROB
MORGAN

MIRA
SORVINO

MARSHAWN
LYNCH

BRIAN
BOSWORTH



SIGNING
TONY RAYMOND



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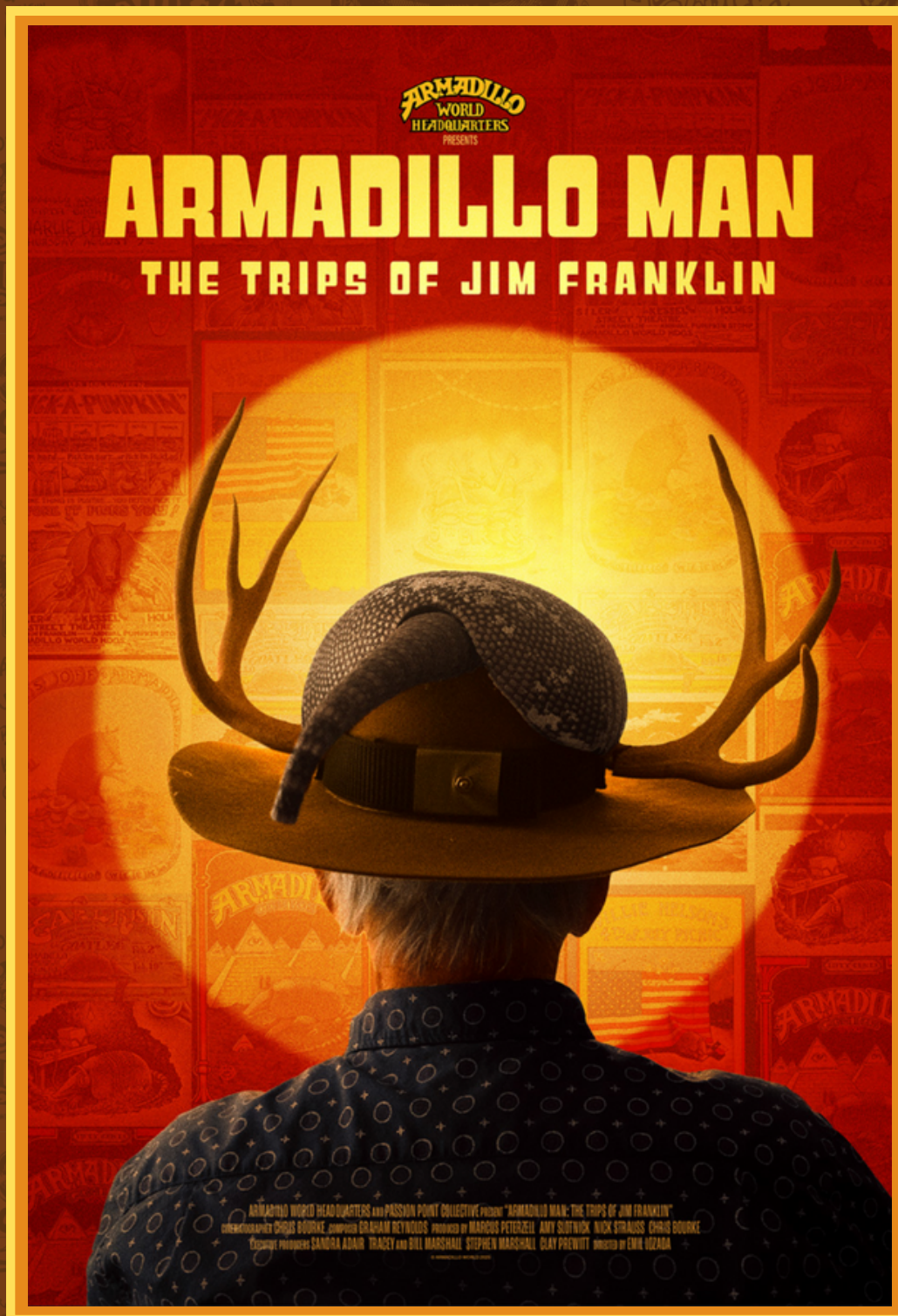
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