

Pride Films and Plays

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Seventeen Screenplays Named as Semi-Finalists in the Great Gay Screenplay Competition

Chicago, IL - Seventeen screenplays with GLBT themes or characters have been named semifinalists in the first Great Gay Screenplay Contest sponsored by Pride Films and Plays.

PFP's Executive Director David Zak says "I am thrilled with the quality of the work received, and with the semi-finalists chosen by our judging panel of film and theater professionals from across the country. We firmly believe in the need for fresh GLBT stories that are important to the community and ready for the world." He continued, "The screenplays were submitted to the panel blindly, and I am delighted that the seven women and eleven men whose work was chosen represent six different states (CA, IL, GA, KS, NY, WI), and international entries from France and Australia."

The next round of judging by film and theater professionals will winnow the field to five finalists, and those works will be performed as stage readings at the Hoover-Leppen Theater at the Center on Halsted on November 20 and 21, 2010 as the conclusion of Reeling: The Chicago International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival.

The screenplays selected are:

Bethlehem by Chris French, Astoria NY

With a baby on the way, gay thirty-somethings in New York City struggle to reconcile their definitions of "family" with their Christian upbringings and parents' expectations -- in a modern retelling of the Christmas story.

Boner's High School Reunion by Michael Phillips, Atlanta, GA

Haunted by the memories of an arousal malfunction in high school, one man returns home to face his demons and find closure with the person who's prevented him from ever keeping a boyfriend.

Bre'gan's Fist by Tom Emerick, Chicago, IL

The fate of the planet hangs in the balance when a lonely fry cook discovers his lover is an extra-dimensional traveler who must race to save the Earth against a wizard bent on universal domination.

Cooper's War by Timothy Jay Smith, Paris, France

In this coming of age story, a deserter from the war in Iraq is given a chance to prove his patriotism, redeem himself for other past failures, and return home.

Detasseling by Tom Hietter, Los Angeles, CA

In **Detasseling**, a gay teen's urgent desire to flee his small and stifling Midwestern town sets off a bittersweet and, at times, harrowing journey of self-discovery over the summer of 1985.

Directions by Emma L. P. Lundberg, Brooklyn, NY

In a story that unravels in reverse, **Directions** follows three 26-year-old New Yorkers as they struggle with relationships that exist outside of heteronormativity. Is that which separates us, what ultimately binds us to one another?

Gay For Pay by Reid Waterer, Los Angeles, CA

A con artist posing as gay to scam a young millionaire begins to question his identity when the two men develop both a sexual and emotional relationship.

The Good One by Dawn Marie Guernsey, Lawrence, KS

Lynn vaguely remembers murdering the man lying at her feet. But that's all she recalls. Now she needs to figure out who she is and why she did it.

Hay's Code by Andrew B. Smith

In Andrew B. Smith's comedy **Hay's Code**, a gay director in 1934 Hollywood must adapt a gay novel for the screen without revealing its true content -- or his own homosexuality -- to anyone else in the production.

Lost Dog by Mary Guzmán, San Francisco, CA

Cristina stumbles out of rehab with no job, no money, one friend and a 90-day chip. When her friend is murdered, she is so devastated she vows to find the killer.

One Good Man by Jennifer Leigh Selig, Calistoga, CA

One Good Man is a broad sex comedy-of-errors about a mid-30ish career lesbian who wreaks chaos and confusion with her community when she comes out of the closet in her search for "One Good Man."

Put It On! by Reid Waterer & John McCarthy, Los Angeles, CA

When a troupe of male strippers are confused for a legitimate theater company and mistakenly hired to put on a musical in a small town, they decide to give it a go.

The Queen of Harts by Gary Polston, Aliso Viejo, CA

Suffering an identity crisis, a famous drag queen returns to his southern roots seeking a more masculine way of life. He discovers the road to acceptance is full of bumps and leads to unexpected places.

Simple Treasures by Alan Chin, San Rafael, CA

A young Native American performs an ancestral ritual to transfer the life force of a dying rancher into the body of a falcon so he can continue living, and finds love with the rancher's grandson.

Skirt by Chris Mason Johnson and Kate Stayman-London, San Francisco, CA

When idealistic campaign worker Allie agrees to pose as her female boss's girlfriend in order to help promote marriage equality, she soon finds herself in political and romantic hot water.

The Trouble With e by Louise Wadley, Sydney, NSW

Beautiful, sexy DJ e seems to have it all, but looks are deceiving. Stumbling on a stash of cash, e goes on the run. To stay alive, e has to find the courage to follow her dreams.

Welcome To Freedom, by Laura Lynn MacDonald, Milwaukee, WI

In the small town of Freedom, Maine, a young man sells his body over the internet to raise enough money to free his boyfriend from having to go to war and hide his sexual identity.

Screenwriter Bios:

Alan Chin (Simple Treasures) has published four novels: *Island Song* (2008), *The Lonely War*, (2009), *Match Maker* (2010), and *Butterfly's Child* (2010) and the screenplay *Daddy's Money*.

He is a literary critic for several online publications which include: *Examiner.com* GLBT Literature column, *Queer Magazine Online*, and *Lambda Literary website*.

Tom Emerick (*Bre'gan's Fist*) writes short stories, poems, songs and essays in addition to screenplays.

Chris French (*Bethlehem*) spends much of the year at high altitudes. He runs the world's largest club for LGBT skiers and snowboarders, exploring terrain from the Alps to the Andes. When he's not in the mountains, he's writing. Originally from rural Illinois, Chris currently lives in New York City.

Dawn Marie Guernsey (The Good One) creates paintings, prints and drawings that have been exhibited in commercial and museum venues nationwide. She began writing for the screen a year ago and has completed four feature length scripts. Her work has placed in Bluecat Screenwriting Competition, Inside The Box, Vail Film Festival, Mountain Film Festival, Beverly Hills Film Festival, Page Awards, Flagstaff Film Festival.

Mary Guzman (Lost Dog) is an award-winning writer/director with three films in distribution. Some of the many places her films have screened are Paris, Madrid, Jakarta and across the United States. She is currently creating a TV pilot about college women's basketball titled *Starting Five*.

Tom Hietter has been working as a freelance Reality Television Writer/Story Producer for over 7 years. In 2007, he wrote and produced the feature comedy-documentary FELLOWSHIP OF THE DICE which won "Best Professional Film" at GenCon 2007 and a "Spewgie" for Best Geek Film of 2008.

Chris Mason Johnson, Writer-Director (Skirt) freelanced as a Script Analyst and Editor for Miramax, Dimension, Fine Line, ABC Family and Disney, and rose to the position of Head of Development at Open City Films in New York. In addition to *Skirt*, Johnson is developing *Static*, a psychological horror-sci-fi set in a small California town. He was a mentor in Film Independent's Project:Involve and has taught screenwriting at Amherst College and Rutgers.

Growing up in Wisconsin, Emma L. P. Lundberg (Directions) yearned to assert her individuality and creativity through storytelling. New York University's Tisch School of the Arts became the foreground for her cinematic exploration. She aims to be the driving force behind the next generation of authentic GLBTQ movies.

Laura Lynn MacDonald (Welcome to Freedom) is a playwright, screenwriter and literary advisor. Screenwriting: *Mattress World*, (Blue Damen Pictures): *The Insomniac Chronicles*, and *Bye Bye Baby*, (Mutant Bar Monkey Productions). Filming in September: *The Bloodlines Of Isaac Diggs*, which began as a play in Chicago. Her plays have been produced in New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Norway.

John McCarthy (Co-Writer, Put It On!) was fortunate enough to star in Harvey Fierstein's play *Safe Sex* on Broadway. Unfortunately... the reviews sucked. Two of John's stories about AIDS-era life appear in Random House's "From A Burning House". A successful Casting Director, he recently married Tom Smith. Their reception was at Applebees. No press was invited.

Michael Phillips (Boner's High School Reunion) started writing screenplays in 2004 and it quickly became an obsession. Since then, he's completed five full-length scripts and two shorts, with more on the way. Originally from Ohio, he lives in Atlanta with his ever-patient boyfriend, Corbin, and their three cats, Shady Lynne, Dorko and Sammy.

Gary Polson (The Queen of Harts) is an active member of the LGBT community. Raised in the backdrop of small town religious conservatism, coming out was an adventure that continues to bring smiles along with some great writing material. Gary lives in Southern California with his partner and their twenty pound cat, Monster.

Besides writing screenplays, Jennifer Leigh Selig (One Good Man) is a published author and professional photographer. She has her PhD in Depth Psychology and teaches at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara, California. *One Good Man* is Jennifer's third screenplay. The other two have also won contest recognition, including as a semi-finalist in the Nicholl Fellowship.

Andrew B. Smith (Hays Code) received an honorary degree in theoretical math from a fictional university. He spent his pre-Hollywood career marketing a lot of things -- some of which were interesting, like art, and some of which were not, like telecommunications mediation solutions. Currently he's writing a sequel to the remake of an adaptation of a movie that was never made from a TV series that never aired. The studio hopes to turn the project into a trilogy, releasing the sequel first, a prequel second, and finally a spin-off of unrelated characters inspired by the original work.

Timothy Jay Smith (Cooper's War) has won competitions sponsored by the American Screenwriters Association, Hollywood Screenwriting Institute, and Houston WorldFest, and he has placed repeatedly in the Nicholl Fellowships. His first play, staged successfully in NYC, won the prestigious Stanley Drama Award, and his first novel won the Paris Prize for Fiction.

Kate Stayman-London, Writer (Skirt) is a current candidate for an MFA in Writing for Film and Television at USC's School of Cinematic Arts. Her first solo screenplay, a baseball sex comedy called *Slump Busters*, was awarded the Frank R. Volpe Scholarship and the National Association of Theater Owners Scholarship. Stayman-London has strong roots in playwriting: at Amherst College, she studied with acclaimed playwright Connie Congdon, and she's currently writing the book for the next musical from this year's Ovation Award winner, Erin Kamler.

Reid Waterer (writer *Gay For Pay*, and co-writer *Put It On!*) was labeled "a talent to watch" by one newspaper, has played 60+ film festivals, on TV, and on DVD on five continents. Top 10 in one screenwriting competition and a Semi-Finalist and Quarter-Finalist in two others, he edits movie ads for Hollywood including *Mamma Mia!* and *The Hangover*.

Writer / Director Louise Wadley (*The Trouble with E*) attended the National Film and Television School in London. Her short films have played at festivals around the world. Her screenplay *She Sells Seashells by the Seashore* is a quarter finalist in the 2010 Nicholl Fellowship Competition. She is aiming to shoot *The Trouble with e* in spring, 2011.

Founded in 2010 to foster excellence in great GLBT writing for the stage and screen, Pride Films and Plays links an international network of writers with professionals working in film and theater.

Through readings, contests, classes, screenings and full theater productions, Pride Films and Plays engages artists and audiences in the full developmental process needed to make great artistic experiences.

For more information about the company, including details about the upcoming performances of the five finalists, visit www.pridefilmsandplays.com.