



PRESS AREA

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**Academy Announces
 Nicholl Screenwriting Fellowship
 Finalists for 2006**

Beverly Hills, CA — Ten scripts have been selected as finalists for the 21st annual Don and Gee Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting, presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The scripts will now be read and judged by the Nicholl Committee, which may award as many as five of the prestigious \$30,000 fellowships.

- This year's finalists are (listed alphabetically by script title):
- "Abilene," Michael Raymond, Auckland, New Zealand, and Seattle, Washington
 - "Armored," James V. Simpson, New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada
 - "Beatrice Creek," Eric J. Litra, Monroe, Michigan
 - "The Free Republic of Bobistan," Arthur M. Jolly, Marina del Rey, California
 - "Mr. Burnout," Eric T. Gravning, Santa Monica, California
 - "Palau Rain," Stephanie Lord, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
 - "Peepers," Clark E. Morrow, Olathe, Kansas
 - "10 Day Contract," Josh D. Schorr, South Pasadena, California
 - "38 Mercury," Alfred E. Carpenter, Alexandria, Virginia, and Mark A. Matusof, Woodbridge, Virginia
 - "Tides of Summer," Scott K. Simonsen, Hermosa Beach, California

Litra was a finalist in the competition in 2001 with "God's Water." Raymond is the first New Zealand writer to reach the finalist round. He also resides part-time in Seattle, Washington.

The finalists were selected from 4,899 scripts submitted for this year's competition. The competition is open to any individual who has not sold or optioned a screenplay or teleplay for more than \$5,000 or received a fellowship or prize that includes a "first look" clause, an option, or any other quid pro quo involving the writer's work.

The ten finalist scripts will now be judged by the Nicholl Committee, chaired by writer and 1992 Nicholl Fellow Susannah Grant and composed of writers Naomi Foner, Fay Kanin, Hal Kanter and Dan Petrie Jr., cinematographers John Bailey and Steven Poster, editor Mia Goldman, actor Eva Marie Saint, executive Bill Mechanic, producers Gale Anne Hurd, David Nicksay, Robert Shapiro and Buffy Shutt, and agent Ron Mardigan.

Fellowships are awarded with the understanding that the recipients will each complete a feature-length screenplay during the fellowship year. The Academy acquires no rights to the works of Nicholl Fellows and does not involve itself commercially in any way with their completed scripts.

Since the program's inception in 1985, 93 fellowships have been awarded, and a number of the fellows have achieved considerable success. Doug Atchison, a 2000 fellow, directed his Nicholl-winning script, "Akeelah and the Bee," and the film was released theatrically earlier this year. Robert Edwards, who received a fellowship in 2001, directed his Nicholl-winning script, "Land of the Blind," and the film premiered at this year's Rotterdam Film Festival. Raymond De Felitta, a 1991 fellow, directed "Tis Autumn: The Search for Jackie Paris," a documentary feature that premiered at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival. De Felitta also directed last year's "The Thing about My Folks," and prior to that, he directed "Two Family House" (from his Nicholl fellowship-year script) and "Cafe Society." Susannah Grant shares writing credit on the upcoming "Charlotte's Web." She also wrote last year's "In Her Shoes" and in 2000, she received an Academy Award® nomination for her "Erin Brockovich" screenplay. Grant also earned writing credits on "28 Days," "Ever After," and "Pocahontas." "The Dead Girl," written and directed by 1998 fellow Karen Moncrieff, will premiere at the 2006 AFI Fest next month. Moncrieff also directed 2002's "Blue Car" from her Nicholl-winning script. "The Nativity Story," written by 1998 fellow Mike Rich, is scheduled for release in December. Rich also wrote "Radio," "The Rookie" and "Finding Forrester," the latter of which originated as his 1998 Nicholl-winning script.

In 2005 three films written by 1996 fellow Ehren Kruger were released: "The Ring Two," "The Skeleton Key" and "The Brothers Grimm." Kruger's previously produced credits include "Arlington Road," "The Ring," "Scream 3" and "Reindeer Games." Other notable successes include the critically acclaimed "Mean Creek," written and directed by Jacob Estes from his 1998 Nicholl-winning script, and "Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights," co-written by 1993 fellow Victoria Arch. "Admissions" (aka "Island of Brilliance"), from Dawn O'Leary's 1993 Nicholl-winning script, premiered at the Mill Valley Film Festival in 2004. Allison Anders, a 1986 fellow, is the co-writer and director of "Things Behind the Sun" and the writer-director of "Gas Food Lodging" and "Mi Vida Loca." 1992 fellow Andrew Marlowe wrote "Air Force One," "Hollow Man" and "End of Days." 1986 fellow Jeffrey Eugenides won a 2003 Pulitzer Prize for his novel "Middlesex."

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