



Loyola Marymount University  
School of Film and Television

# MFA SCREENWRITING

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# GRADUATES 2019

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**2019 MFA Screenwriting Graduates**  
**Loyola Marymount University School of Film and Television**

As Dean of the School of Film and Television at LMU, I'm pleased to present to you our 2019 MFA Screenwriting Directory, featuring the work of our incredibly talented Writing for the Screen and Writing and Producing for Television graduates.

The directory includes loglines for the original screenplays and pilots our graduates have written, rewritten, and polished in anticipation of our annual First Pitch event. Also included are bios for all our current MFA graduates, a diverse group of fresh voices from all over the world who bring unique perspectives and experiences to bear on their work here at LMU. Their projects encompass a wide variety of formats and genres, penned by creators who have been encouraged to discover, nurture, and effectively express the stories they feel compelled to tell.

I encourage you to contact our screenwriters, enjoy reading their work, and get to know our gifted cohort, all of whom are more than ready to embark on their professional writing and producing careers.

Wishing you all the best!

Best regards,



Peggy Rajski  
Dean, School of Film and Television

1 LMU Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
[www.sftv.lmu.edu](http://www.sftv.lmu.edu)

Office 310.338.5800  
Email [peggy.rajski@lmu.edu](mailto:peggy.rajski@lmu.edu)



**WRITING FOR THE SCREEN**

Chikodili Agwuna  
Burak Azakoglu  
Melissa Bloomer  
Anand Fozard-McCall  
Melia Gabriel  
Meredith Garcia-Painter  
Cassie Hess  
Timothy Kontje  
William Krauss  
James "Carlton" Norris  
Amanda Prentiss  
Ben Robertson-McLeod  
Rene Rodriguez  
Jordan Sandfer  
Joshua Liu Singer  
Chelsea Urech

# CHIKODILI AGWUNA



443-538-7084  
cagwuna@gmail.com

Chikodili Agwuna is a never-ending collection of thoughts left unsaid. Growing up in a talkative Nigerian family (so, like every other Nigerian family), it was hard for her to get a word in edgewise. Instead, she filled journals with all the things she wished she could say. From witty retorts hours after an argument, to a flirtatious sentence she thought but never uttered, writing gave her a way to find her voice. She began to write about people who were bold enough to say what she wished she could. Her protagonists find their voices and use them to succeed, whether their goal is to take over Rome, find love, or just to function normally in society.

**High-Functioning Mess (Half-Hour, Dramey)** A self-deprecating woman finds unconventional ways to cope with her depression in order to function 'normally' in society.

**Bitopia (Web Series, Comedy)** A newly out bisexual woman tries to play the field, but her bisexual utopia isn't quite what she dreamed it would be.

**Zenobia (Feature, Epic)** A Palmyrene Queen challenges the authority of Rome, facing political threats and risking her life to build an empire for her soon-to-be-king son.

**Yet I Love Her Well (Feature, Dark Comedy)** A bureaucratic teenager helps her power-hungry crush become Class President, but she must compromise her beliefs to protect the President from their conspiratorial peers.

# BURAK AZAKOGLU



424-305-9847  
ba2340@columbia.edu

A gay man from Turkey, Burak is on a quest to fit as many sex scenes as possible into his scripts. No stranger to discrimination on either side of the world, Burak has decided to take matters into his own hands. He writes heartfelt and hilarious romantic dramedies with a fresh, dynamic voice that screams: "Love is love!"

**Avocado Lovers (Feature, Romantic Comedy)** A gay investment banker is forced to act straight at his homophobic Wall Street job. But when he is tasked to seduce an out-and-proud client by "acting" gay, he finds himself wrapped up in a tragically hilarious romance.

**Discreet (Half-Hour, Comedy)** In a futile attempt at networking, a gay college senior attends an elitist international society's initiation party with his two best friends. But things quickly go south when his hookup from the other night—and potentially the love of his life—turns out to be the president's boyfriend.

*Austin Film Festival Screenplay Competition Second Rounder*

**Two Boys on a Strange Planet (Feature, Drama/Romance)** When his suppressed grief manifests in repetitive thoughts about his mother's death, a gay college freshman distracts himself with excessive drinking and sex. But when he falls for his RA, he must face his grief head-on in order to win his love and affection.

**As I Was Leaving (Web-Series, Sci-Fi/Dramedy)** When his lesbian best friend is diagnosed with a rare cancer that is only treatable via cutting-edge technology on Mars, a gay man agrees to act as her husband in order to gain access to the program that will permanently relocate them.

# MELISSA BLOOMER



914-500-5681  
mstormbloomer@gmail.com



Before Kathryn Bigelow beat her to it, Mel was predicted to be "the first female to win a Best Director Oscar" in her high school yearbook. After getting her B.A. in Cinema Studies from Oberlin College, Mel defected to the U.S. Virgin Islands where she bartended, rolled sushi, and accumulated adventures for her storytelling career. Since then, Mel's dream of becoming the second female director to win an Oscar has been put on the back burner while she develops her screenwriting craft. A firm practitioner of 'write what you know,' Mel gives voice to female anti-heroes that dash social convention in their quest for love.

**Polly (One-Hour, Drama)** A college art student falls into a polyamorous relationship with a professor and her husband.

**The Library (One-Hour, Dramey)** An intimate exploration of a New Orleans Strip Club and the vastly different women who work there.

**Carousel (Half-Hour, Comedy)** An anthology series tracking a chain of millennials connected by digitally-initiated sexual encounters.

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# ANAND FOZARD-McCALL

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● [arfm2409@yahoo.com](mailto:arfm2409@yahoo.com)  
919-358-5242

Once Anand was old enough to say, "Duke sucks," he was ready for the requisite N.C. rite of passage-picking a side in the famous Duke vs. UNC rivalry. As a devoted fan, Anand gained a deep appreciation for the thrill of those games-action-packed, complete with a whirlwind of emotions and an unpredictable outcome. Fast forward a few years, and Anand has blended those elements into his style of writing. He is versatile when it comes to crossing genres and specializes in illuminating the unexpected heroics of the minority underdog.

**Brown Condor (Feature, Historical Action/Drama)** The true story of maverick African American John Robinson who broke through racial barriers to become a pilot and commander of the Ethiopian Air Force in their 1935 fight for freedom against fascist Italy.

**The Reaper Unit (Feature, Action)** After a group of African-American star athletes run into legal trouble, they are blackmailed into becoming a CIA black ops team. When they discover their handler is a double agent, they must find the proof that will save their own lives and expose the corruption within the agency.

**Black Wall Street (One-Hour, Historical Drama)** During the emergence of the Jim Crow era, two black entrepreneurs arrive in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and must find a way to overcome their differences as they build the most successful black community America has ever seen: Black Wall Street. Based on true events.

*Semifinalist: 2018 ScreenCraft Public Domain Screenplay Contest*

**HBCU (Half-Hour, Comedy)** Five incompatible roommates must figure out a way to coexist as they chaotically navigate their way through an Historically Black College University.

**Retribution (Feature, Horror)** When his long-missing sister mysteriously reappears, an aggrieved son returns home from college to confront family demons while fending off an ambush of vicious killers.

*Quarterfinalist: 2018 ScreenCraft Horror Screenplay Contest*

# MELIA GABRIEL



925-216-8951  
msmeliagabriel@gmail.com

Melia Gabriel always assumed she would grow up to be a fairy princess or a super hero. However, as the years went by and her powers never manifested, she turned to the only real magic she knew—writing. Melia writes to help others navigate a challenging world. Whether this means exploring how a family overcomes addiction or how a spoiled princess develops compassion, Melia believes that her writing can aid those in need. Further fueled by her many years of working with kids, Melia aims to write children’s programming in order to guide them and encourage them to find their own magic in their everyday lives.

**This Is How It Ends (Hybrid Live Action/Animated Family Drama)** Unable to save her opioid-addicted father in the real world, an imaginative ten-year-old girl creates a comic book where she can rescue him.

**4th and Long (Feature, Family Sports Drama)** When she loses her job, a sports reporter is forced to return to the family she abandoned and coach her father’s struggling high school football team.

**Uncommon (Half-Hour Tween Comedy)** At the insistence of her royal parents, a spoiled princess must go undercover at a middle school to develop her compassion for ordinary people.

**Submerged (One-Act Play, Tween)** When their middle school turns to vaping as the latest craze, two best friends must navigate peer pressure and toxic relationships as they struggle to keep their friendship alive.

*Premiered at Charlotte Wood Middle School on March 12th, 2019*

# MEREDITH GARCIA-PAINTER



440-949-9071  
mgarciapainter12@gmail.com

Fleeing a dying industrial town outside of Cleveland, Ohio, Meredith was encouraged to settle into a practical career as a teacher or a lawyer. Unfulfilled by the mundane, she was enticed by the twisted and hilarious world of her imagination and has been writing about it ever since. Drawing from her own diverse background, her stories often feature women of color struggling with identity, family secrets, and being a misfit among the crowd. She likes to dwell in a world between comical sarcasm and the dark twisted underbelly of science fiction and crime.

**Birth Plan (Feature, Family Dramedy)** A neurotic young woman's Birth Plan is turned upside down when her long-divorced parents come to town to help prepare for the delivery of her first child.

**Disappeared (One-Hour, Sci-Fi)** A young F.B.I. Agent is accidentally transported to the future while investigating a series of child kidnappings and discovers a conspiracy that may have ties to her own sister's disappearance.

**The Guilty (One-Hour, Crime Drama)** After being pulled back to her dying hometown, a Mexican-American journalist uncovers a conspiracy linked to a decades-old cold case that may have ties to a present-day murder involving her brother.

**The Wedding War (Feature, Family Dramedy)** An overly protective young woman tries to plan her sister's perfect wedding while clashing with the ultra-traditional Chinese mother of the groom.

**Adler (One-Hour, Supernatural Drama)** A troubled young woman learns of an unexpected inheritance and travels to a mysterious southern town where she learns of her hidden past and the dangerous supernatural forces hunting her.

# CASSIE HESS



989-928-1051  
CassieMaeHess@gmail.com



After changing schools six times in three years, Cassie quickly learned not to call any one place home. Instead she found her stability in books and films that were set in worlds vastly different from her own. Now, with some of her favorite fantasy elements such as magical powers, corrupt governments, and royal dilemmas in her arsenal, Cassie creates stories that comment on a woman's journey to take back her power, find her voice, and kick ass while she does it.

**The Crown's Eyes (One-Hour, Fantasy Drama)** In a medieval world where an endless war rages on between humans and witches, a young human princess finds herself torn between each side when she develops magical powers.

**The Keeper of Secrets (One-Hour, Fantasy Drama)** In a world where the men in power secretly kill women that show signs of magical ability, a gifted young woman hides in plain sight as she attempts to stop them from the inside out.

**More Than Anything (Feature, Psychological Drama)** When a traumatized ballerina discovers a system of sexual assault in her company, she grapples with the decision to expose her abuser at the risk of ruining her career.

# TIMOTHY KONTJE



760-936-6694  
trkontje@gmail.com

When twelve-year-old Tim's family moved to Berlin, he watched movies on TV to practice German. He realized he could follow what was going on just through the visuals and developed a newfound appreciation for storytelling through action. These days he writes action/adventure scripts about teams of characters forced to work together on challenging missions.

**Zero Line (Feature, Action/Adventure)** A war correspondent, seeking to uncover an antiquities smuggling operation, teams up with a former special forces soldier and an Iraqi archaeologist as her harrowing journey takes her to the front lines of the fight against ISIS.

**Grierson's Raid (Feature, Action/Adventure)** The true story of the Civil War's most daring cavalry mission. Outnumbered forty to one, a Union Colonel must lead his men deep into the heart of the Confederacy to destroy a railroad vital to the outcome of the entire war.

**Abigail's Outlaws (Feature, Action/Adventure, Western) 1870.** When a ruthless industrialist ruins her family, a spirited woman travels to California to gather a motley crew of outlaws and seek revenge.

**Stunted (Half-Hour, Action/Comedy)** An endlessly optimistic young woman joins a misfit Hollywood stunt team and immediately clashes with her cynical boss on a job where surviving car chases, explosions, and movie star egos is all in a day's work.

# WILLIAM KRAUSS



507-206-1203  
bkrauss1992@gmail.com

Hailing from the grey wastes of Minnesota, Billy will apologize if you bump into him, but never for his writing (though sometimes he probably should). His dark period pieces peel back the frilly dresses and stilted manners, leaving his audience with the bloody guts of reality, which often involve actual bloody guts. He tells the stories that most history books refuse to and explore points-of-view all too often ignored.

**Children of the War (Feature, Drama)** In 1948 Berlin, the OSS forces a young mother to infiltrate the home of the woman the Nazis gave her son to, but soon discovers that the new mother might be able to give her son a better life than she can.

**Flight of the Sabines (Feature, Sword and Sandal Drama)** Separated from her young son during the fall of ancient Carthage, a young mother desperately searches for him as the Roman Legions sack the city.

**My Last Duchess (Feature Adaptation, Drama)** In Renaissance Italy, a young noble woman marries a dashing duke, the man of her dreams, only to discover that he's actually a murderous and controlling psychopath. Based on the Robert Browning poem.

**Daemon (Feature, Period Horror)** In an isolated Alpine medieval village ravaged by the plague, the son of a friar and the daughter of a Moorish merchant, both only twelve and unable to speak the same language, must team up to save the boy's demon-possessed mother.

**Riders on the Storm (One-Hour Drama)** Told from Helen's viewpoint, this modernization moves the Trojan War to 1970s California with warring biker gangs.

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# JAMES "CARLTON" ● NORRIS



● 501-681-1214  
jcarltonnorris@gmail.com

● Growing up with the baggage of the most painfully normal straight white guy life, Carlton quickly found himself trying to spice things up lest he go insane and pick up an axe instead of a pen. It's a good thing he did. Even now he can practically hear his neighbors speaking to the police, "He was just so normal..." And then he'd be even more of a cliché. He's happy in comedy or drama, so long as he can pretend to be someone else for just a bit.

**Of Fire (Feature, Coming of Age)** The teenage daughter of a summer camp slasher, trained to kill sexually active adolescents, questions her father's work when the camp she's assigned to terrorize hands out bibles instead of condoms. That's right, it's a Christian camp.

**Out to Pasture (Feature, Comedy)** Two lifelong feuding actors must overcome their differences to solve the mystery of their fellow nursing home residents who start dropping dead... at least, more than normal.

● **Corpus (One-Hour Drama)** When a dirty cop causes the death of everyone in his unit, his guilt manifests in the ghost of his dead partner haunting him as he starts his long walk of redemption.

# AMANDA PRENTISS



310-429-8092  
me@amandaprentiss.com



Desolate forests shrouded by murky skies evoke Amanda's childhood in Oregon, where beauty and gloom were synonymous. Her stories navigate the dark intersections of human morality, in which survival seems little more than a dream and unknown terrors are matched only by the consequences of unforeseen choices. Amanda is a recipient of the 2018 Henry Bromell Fellowship and holds membership in the Producers Guild of America, the Television Academy, and Women in Film.

**A Custom of the Sea (Feature, Historical Drama)** An ambitious barrister jeopardizes his career and morals to prosecute a group of shipwrecked sailors accused of cannibalism. Inspired by true events.

- 3rd Place (Historical): *The PAGE Screenwriting Awards, 2018*
- Top 10%: *Academy Nicholl Fellowships, 2018*
- Semifinalist: *BlueCat Screenplay Competition, 2019*
- Second Rounder: *Austin Film Festival Script Competition, 2018*

**Lyre (Pilot, Period Drama)** A post-WWII housewife desperate to escape her abusive marriage spins an ever-growing web of deceit when she frames her husband for a murder she committed.

- 3rd Place (TV Pilot): *Shore Scripts Screenplay Contest, 2018*
- Semifinalist: *American Zoetrope Screenplay Competition, 2018*
- Semifinalist: *Script Pipeline TV Writing Contest, 2018*
- Second Rounder: *Austin Film Festival Script Competition, 2018*

**Sol Invictus (Pilot, Historical Drama)** Eight would-be emperors plunge Rome into a nineteen-year civil war, but only one emerges victorious, reshaping the empire under his sole rule. Based on historical events.

- Semifinalist: *BlueCat Screenplay Competition, 2019*

**The Windigo (Feature, Gothic Horror)** A half-Algonquin guide and two priests traversing the Canadian wilderness face a diabolical foe that haunts their souls as it hunts their lives.

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# BEN ROBERTSON-McLEOD

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● 310-710-6522  
benrobertsonmacleod@gmail.com

Born with one foot in the East and the other in the West, Ben had an unusual upbringing, routinely bouncing between England, Hong Kong, and Thailand, which allowed him to develop a unique perspective on popular culture. Ben writes stories that explore the adderalled-out, social media-saturated generation who abuse modern vices to cope and advance themselves in a relentlessly evolving world.

**Lucy In The Sky (Feature, Drama)** Lucy, a pill-addicted portrait artist with a flair for fabulism, ends her adulterous affair with an older, psychologically abusive gallery owner and travels to Bangkok in hopes of reconnecting with her estranged father and his new family.

**The Last Superhero (Half-Hour Dark Comedy)** Milo, a nihilistically unstable graphic novelist on the cusp of his "big break", plunges himself into the dark underworld of vigilante justice after severing ties with his one and only friend, Xander, a sociopathic saboteur who also happens to be the beloved "Mr. Magnificent," the sole superhero of Capitol City.

**Six In The City (Half-Hour Comedy)** Abrasive misfits and reluctant roommates, Claire, a neurotic overachiever, and Marc, an apathetic slacker, struggle with their individual transitions into adulthood as they pursue their own versions of success in LA.

# RENE RODRIGUEZ



813-597-6077  
renet23@gmail.com

For his entire life, Rene has had to correct people about the roots of his name and how in Tampa, the males are referred to phonetically as Ree-nee. In fact, one will soon realize that cultural identity and music are the two central components to Rene's stories that depict the immigrant experience and characters chasing the American Dream. Whether set in the back roads of Sicily, Nashville's music scene, or his hometown of Tampa, Rene's stories reflect the cultural heritage in which he comes from, with humor and a great playlist that guide them toward redemption and personal fulfillment.

**High Lonesome Sound (Feature, Drama)** A Chinese immigrant maneuvers the highs and lows of Nashville's Country music scene while trying to uphold his family obligations.

**Café Havana (Limited One-Hour Drama)** Set in the 1960s and 70s, a struggling restaurant owner turns to the Tampa mob to save his business while falling in love with a transgender Salsa band leader. Based on a true story.

**Cigar City (Feature, Drama)** A young woman, disconnected from her Cuban roots, tries to save her family's cigar factory from a greedy developer planning to gentrify their Latin neighborhood in Tampa.

**Fortunate Pilgrims (Feature, Comedy/Drama)** After fifty years, an affable grandfather returns to Sicily with his introverted grandson for a funeral and comes to terms with his sordid past.

# JORDAN SANDFER



949-300-1002  
jordansandfer@gmail.com

Jordan Sandfer grew up thinking he was the Switzerland of kids, with a foot in different cliques and a petrifying fear of taking the plunge into any one camp. Today, Jordan knows who he is - hard-working, kind-hearted, adaptable, and deeply committed to friends and family. He wants to help others with quiet voices be heard by handing his characters a microphone. Jordan writes to breathe new life into family films by illuminating the destructive yet revitalizing nature that love and community possess.

**Host City, Inishmore (Feature, Family Dramey)** A nomadic con artist, bent on inflating the price of his family land, deceives a small Irish town on the verge of bankruptcy into hosting an international sporting event.

**Pot Committed (Feature, Family Drama)** After her cancer returns, a high-spirited woman persuades her agoraphobic sister into traversing the U.S. to compete in a Vegas poker tournament.

*-Semifinalist: 2018 Scriptapalooza Screenplay Competition*

*-Semifinalist: 2018 ScreenCraft Drama Contest*

**Leopold: The Lost Elephant (Half-Hour, Children's Animated Series)** While on his first trek to the watering hole, a newborn elephant gets separated from the herd and must navigate all of Africa to return to his family.

# JOSHUA LIU SINGER



808-393-6673  
Joshuamlsinger@gmail.com



Comedy has been the only thing Joshua Liu Singer's ever been good at, and he's failed at several things: ice skating, hula hooping, even a brief flirtation with competitive yodeling. Lost in new found adulthood, he looked for an easy job to fall back on, something notorious for providing a stable income and being readily accessible. So he decided to become a comedy screenwriter in LA.

**I Call Shotgun (Feature/Comedy)** A 17-year-old mama's boy, who's afraid of everything, gets kidnapped in an Uber by an infamous crook - a 70-year-old wild woman - and changes from bumbling captive to confident, armed accomplice.

**It Rains in ClearSkies (Feature/Dark Comedy)** In the suicide capital of the world, an antisocial corpse cleaner must harvest his boss's organs to pay back his and his brother's immense debt, and in doing so, he miraculously discovers empathy toward others.

**The Cult That Meets on Weekends (Half-Hour/Comedy)** A student, afraid of society's degenerates, joins her crazy uncle's doomsday cult to improve her odds of getting into Yale.

**Obstacle Intercourse (Animated/Half-Hour/Comedy)** A man fiercely determined to do everything himself joins an alliance-based game show where the prize isn't money, but intercourse with a model.

**Look Honey, It's Dogshit (Animated/Half-Hour/Comedy)** An overly optimistic husband who puts the "I" in "Idiot" goes on a rescue mission with a suicide vest and a random hooker to save his kidnapped wife from a giant, talking rat.

# CHELSEA URECH



832-518-8963  
clurech@comcast.net

Raised by a Trekkie and a thespian in Texas, Chelsea was practically thrown into the world of entertainment straight from the womb. In between ballet practices as a child, she would read gothic novellas and draw graphic, detailed illustrations of body horror. Her writing reflects her appreciation for the morbid and grotesque whether it has to do with the intensity surrounding sex workers or the fetishizing nature of necrophilia.

**This Won't Hurt (Feature, Drama)** In a 1970's big city, Samuel Caul doesn't have any control over his life. He volunteers at a suicide hotline nightly and, after one strenuous day, tells a caller to kill themselves. This launches a sexual awakening wherein his appetite for control must be satiated.

**Sugaring (One-Hour Drama)** Vera, a sex worker who has always supported herself via sugar daddies, learns that her primary source of income is leaving her. She struggles to find a man willing to support her current lifestyle in the city of Toronto.

**Cobra Lily (Feature, Drama)** Set in the city of Houston during the 1990's, an organization of kids work to hunt down pedophiles. But a power struggle within the group raises questions of whether the hunted are guilty until proven innocent or innocent until proven guilty.

**Writing & Producing for Television**

Nicholas Arciero  
Marion Arrou-Vignod  
Araceli Aviles  
CeCe Brooks  
Jessica Esteves  
Kelby George  
Juan Gutierrez  
Nikki Hudgens  
Katherine Krohn  
Cierra Lockett  
Anton Vinokurov  
Hayley Voudouris

# NICHOLAS ARCIERO



763-377-0798  
narciero1@gmail.com

Nick Arciero was born in a small Minnesota town best known for a statue of a mermaid atop a bowling alley. His imagination had some heavy lifting to do. He was always world-building in the back yard—sanding down 2x4s to use as swords, mixing “potions” out of whatever he found in the cupboards, pretending the bean trellis was a lush jungle and the sandbox an arid desert. Little did he know these worlds would one day receive a second life in the pages of his fantasy and sci-fi scripts. There, he spent his life-so-far determining what he didn’t want to do: warehouse manager, delivery driver, children’s party entertainer, barista, diner cashier, publisher, library tech support, editor, and brewery trivia host. There was only one thing left that he was even remotely qualified to do: write and produce TV.

**Misi-Zaaga’igan (Feature, Action/Thriller)** In a small, Northern Minnesota town, Emma Hermann is forced to dive deep into the community’s seedy, drug-infected underbelly to learn the truth of what happened to her missing father.

**Hell Patrol (One-Hour Drama, Supernatural Police Procedural)** Tiff, a terminally ill teenager with a penchant for the dark arts, opens portals into Hell so she and her homicide-detective-turned-demon-hunter Uncle John can fight the evil forces that plague their town.

**Pale Horse (One-Hour Drama, Fantasy-Thriller)** A low-level employee for the US Department of Death, Sam is tasked with rounding up high-quality souls for the Rapture, but must go on the run when he falls in love with Mary, a woman whose soul he’s supposed to harvest.

**Dastardly (Half-Hour Comedy, Sci-Fi)** A washed-up supervillain, Captain Nefarious, must team up with the superheroes who so often thwarted him, after his evil empire is co-opted by his mutinous and much-more-competent right-hand man, Skeevy.

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# MARION ARROU-VIGNOD



● 323-474-9237  
marion.arrou@gmail.com

"Where are you from?" "Say something in French!" These were the first words uttered to Marion when she immigrated to California as a wide-eyed aspiring writer. Hailing from a Cannes Film Festival-adjacent city, she found solace in television shows when admission to the film elite was just a pipe dream. Marion grew up with *NCIS* and *The Big Bang Theory*, but everything swiftly fell into place when she discovered *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* in its original version. French may be the language of love, but English contains all the rhythm and emotion vital to crafting compelling stories in any medium. In truth, don't be fooled by her accent and tongue-twisting name: Marion may be the most American woman you've ever met. She intends to find her *Good Place*, one word at a time, the elite be damned.

**Intangible (One-Hour Drama, Supernatural/Period)** As a member of a 1920s magic troupe, a young woman hides her incapacity to love behind her ability to pass through matter, while being pursued by a religious zealot hellbent on eradicating her kind and a psychopath intent on exploiting her power.

**Checkmate (One-Hour Drama, Sci-Fi)** In an alternate world where chess has become a matter of life and death, an addict with eidetic memory must put the pills away to investigate and avenge his best friend's murder at the hand of a powerful corporation that has taken over for the government.

**Running Still (Feature, Drama)** A high school girl, lost in the foster care system and trapped in the drug underworld, must save her recovering surrogate father when he is threatened by a dirty cop.

**The Last Video Store (Half-Hour Dramey)** A middle-aged video store owner, struggling to keep his business afloat, acts as a father figure to stray employees in need of someone to build them back up—or is it the other way around?



# ARACELI AVILES



323-547-8215  
araceliaviles323@gmail.com

Growing up on the edge of East L.A., Araceli knew the real city, not just the glitz and glamour of Hollywood. She knew its history, its landscape, and how much time, down to the minute, she would spend in traffic. When Araceli wasn't searching for her place in her big Latino family, she was watching her favorite show, ER. For a while she was convinced that her destiny was to become a doctor. However, she preferred drama over chemistry. Even so, ER inspired a young Latina writer to look at the diverse world around her and write meaningful stories which weren't being told: Stories of strong-willed families who could trace their lineage as far back as their languages; characters who defy stereotype, and embrace tradition. Araceli chooses to tell stories about real people, with all their struggles and triumphs, and how the real connection that binds us all is family.

**Dreamers (One-Hour Drama)** A new teacher returns to her East Los Angeles high school to bridge the gap of understanding between the students and educators, but must contend with memories of a painful past with far-reaching consequences.

**Mi Cancion (Feature, Musical Period Drama)** In 1950s New York, a Puerto Rican cocktail waitress rebels against cultural expectations in order to find her voice as a successful crossover singer.

**The Nightingale (Feature, Musical Period Drama)** Swedish opera singer and first notable female celebrity Jenny Lind, struggles throughout her career for autonomy from the infamous men who used, loved, and obsessed over her.

**Colibrí (Animated Short)** After the death of her grandfather, a grief-stricken little girl seeks solace in her interactions with a hummingbird she believes carries his spirit.

# CECE BROOKS



803-331-0978  
bycecebrooks@gmail.com

Here's a riddle for you: CeCe is an only child, the youngest of three, and the youngest of five. How is this possible? She's the only child of her parents together, who separately each had two daughters from previous marriages. And what can you do to rebel when you have four older siblings who've already done it all? Nothing! So CeCe decided to sit back, observe and write it all down. While CeCe would never recommend laughter as the only medicine, she would say it definitely can't hurt. And like most people working in comedy, CeCe is on anti-depressants. Life is inherently dark, so she wants to help people find the light, whether through silliness or dark comedy, but always with an optimistic lens.

**Fumble (Half-Hour Comedy, Family)** South Carolina football reigns supreme in the Jenkins household. But when life threatens to pull patriarch Alton away from his beloved team, his teenage daughter, Leslie, must find a way to keep the family (and tailgates!) intact.

**Keep Calm (Half-Hour Comedy)** A young American woman escapes to London to avoid dealing with the grief of her mother's death. There, she creates a fake British identity with the unwitting help of her elegant English best friend.

**Wacko Tobacco (Half-Hour Comedy, Workplace)** A string of bad luck and bad choices force Lorie to work for an evil Big Tobacco company with her larger-than-life godfather. She's then blackmailed into spying on her new employer for an anti-smoking organization.

**Chicks Over Dicks (Half-Hour Comedy, Ensemble)** When a workaholic investment banker reaches a professional plateau, she realizes she's sacrificed any semblance of a life to get where she is. In order to gain deeper connections and add more feminine energy in her life, she starts an all-female improv group.

**The Gentleman (Half-Hour Comedy, Workplace/Family)** Buttoned-up Vanity Fair editor Vivi Pearson and her bombshell mother Victoria couldn't be more different. But when Victoria's own mistakes threaten to take her Playboy-esque magazine away from her, she must convince the prudish Vivi to help her save it.

# JESSICA ESTEVEES



301-351-3216  
jess.esteves@gmail.com

A friend asked Jessica to share a happy story from her childhood, but she found herself tongue-tied. There were moments but stories? No way. Little Jessica was surrounded by sad, angry, adults who liked to yell, drink, smoke, and sometimes hit. Every story she could think of was, at best, bittersweet. And when the bitterness was strong, and the sweetness absent, little Jessica turned to television & film. There she was in a world all her own, with characters who understood her, and that felt nicer than anything in her reality. Jessica has turned all those lemons into lemonade. Her journey to lovingly embracing her sexuality, her various cultural identities, and her feminism, became an empowering act of rebellion against a world keen on reducing her to less than who she is. Now she writes stories about strong women of color who find their way to empowerment through failure and resilience: Stories that she hopes will help someone feel less alone and little more emboldened. And that's what Jessica writes about, the journey of finding sweetness in all of life's bitterness.

**Smoke. Whiskey. Love. (Feature, Drama)** Inspired by a true story. A bisexual college student on the brink of a nervous breakdown struggles to confront her demons when a few chance encounters with a young woman saves her from falling over the edge and changes the course of her life.

**A Glass Darkly (One-Hour Drama, Supernatural)** After the murder of a loved one, P.I. Valerie Camden moves her family to a small town in North Carolina to start anew when they find themselves entangled in a crime that seems connected to one of Valerie's previous cases.

**Death's Guardian (One-Hour Dramey, Supernatural)** When her Death Guardian fails to take her soul on time, Victoria Santos becomes immortal and must help him reap 333 people in order to earn back her mortality and to keep the universe from imploding.

# KELBY GEORGE



801-419-5669  
kelbygeorge@gmail.com

Despite being born and raised in the Mormon homeland of Provo, Utah, Kelby grew up in a Muslim home. Weird, right? From Southwest U.S. to Southern Iraq. This, coupled with a childhood spent traveling the USA in his dad's semi, gave rise to an interest in history. He wanted to know how people can come from such different worlds and yet share so much in common. Growing up amongst a tiny minority, Kelby saw how inside these powerless and maligned communities exist powerful stories that are never heard. Kelby brings uncommon stories and characters under a microscope and explores how they relate to our modern world.

**The American War (One-Hour Drama, Period)** After a French colonel murders her partner over stolen opium money, a female journalist is caught between a CIA agent haunted by his past mistakes and a Vietcong soldier with a personal secret.

**Imperator (Feature, Historical)** As the Roman Army is surrounded by Gauls, Titus Laebinius must help Caesar lead them to victory, all while figuring out who is the traitor among their ranks.

**Uinta (One-Hour Drama)** A recovering opioid addict gets invited by her gambling father to a mysterious casino where gamblers can bet everything from money to body parts.

**Mountain Man (Half-Hour Comedy)** In a desperate attempt to reconnect with his children, a divorced dad buys an RV and starts living out his "Jeremiah Johnson" fantasies, despite having no outdoor skills.



# JUAN GUTIERREZ



409-365-4878  
tezcajuan@gmail.com

A writer since the age of nine, Juan took to storytelling as a means of getting the fuck out of his humid, mosquito-ridden Southeast Texas town. After a few years of swearing he'd never pen his personal story, he found his voice in reclaiming his identity as a gay, disabled man of color. Whether he's writing about sassy Aztec priests, computer-simulated utopias, or flamboyant Mexican witches, Juan transforms queer, diverse, and disabled sidekicks into the leads of his incredibly imaginative worlds.

**Hugowood (One-Hour Dramedy)** At a TV-centric film school, complete with ableist mean girls, a wheelchair-bound writer creates a gay space opera TV series, sparking a feud with his former mentor who's having an affair with his co-star.

**Cuauhtemoc In The Sky With Jade Beads (Half-Hour Comedy, Animated)** After attempting to steal spicy hot chocolate reserved for the king, the gods name a foodie Aztec priest their mouthpiece, forcing him to wedge divine duties in between his snack breaks.

**Pulse (One-Hour Drama, Sci-Fi)** After experiencing a hate crime, a young gay man voluntarily enters a simulation fronted as a paradise for the LGBT community that is secretly a digital conversion camp.

**Parrots of the East Side (Half-Hour Comedy)** When his parrot exposes his torrid affair with his best man, a power-hungry warlock must contend with his vengeful witch bride.

# NIKKI HUDGENS



720-979-8561  
nikkihwrites@gmail.com

Nikki Hudgens, a black female veteran from Colorado, joined the Navy out of high school. She was an overweight, insecure girl with little direction, but she had the heart of a lion - a very lazy, out-of-shape-lion. Nikki served two years in GTMO and another two in Bahrain before she could no longer say nothing and blend into the ranks. She put her Naval career behind her and rejoined the civilian world to say everything and be like no one. Today Nikki crafts stories to show the best and worst parts of humanity. She finds comedy in tragedy and sadness in bliss. She's learned that life isn't all good or all bad; it's everything all at once, and it's one hell of a story.

**Bad Conduct (One-Hour Drama)** A corpswoman in the Afghanistan War serves ten years in the brig for selling heroin. Now that she's free, she sets her sights on the marines who framed.

**Pendulum (One-Hour Drama)** Two brilliant litigators with a shared sordid history enter a high stakes world of sex, drugs and money to expose corruption in the justice system.

**So Fucking Funny (Half-Hour Comedy)** An aging porn star uses stand-up comedy as an outlet after her mother's death leaves her with full custody of her estranged son. Sizzle available.

**Sugar Kane (Half-Hour Comedy, Animated)** A retiring teacher is forced to unleash her alter ego—an ancient African deity with a penchant for doling out justice—after dozens of girls go missing without a trace.

# KATHERINE KROHN



909-373-6791  
krohn.katherine@yahoo.com

At age nine Katherine watched her first episode of *CSI: Miami* and instantly became hooked on the series and led her to believe three things: A) Anyone could be a serial killer; B) If she ever did something bad she would most definitely get caught; and C) An infinite number of "what if's?" can occur in any scenario. This profound sense of paranoia, coupled with her far-reaching imagination - and her love of storytelling was born. Katherine uses her life experiences, such as exploring haunted castles throughout Europe, watching shootouts in Wild West towns, to dancing at raves in California, as inspiration for her writing. She loves to create dark and fantastical worlds that are filled with tough, sarcastic, and occasionally unhinged characters that are flawed, but have a deep sense of loyalty.

**The Night Maiden (One-Hour Mini-Series, Supernatural/Mystery)** A medium returns to her family castle in Germany to prove that her father's recent death and her sister's abduction from a decade earlier were caused by a ghost that haunts the castle.

**Devil's Hallow (One-Hour Drama, Supernatural/Western-Thriller)** After becoming stranded in a rundown town, a family discovers that they must fulfill a decades-old bargain with the Devil in order to survive.

**Quest for Nero (Feature, Rom-Com)** While attending a rave to see their favorite DJ group, a neurotic and obsessive young woman jeopardizes her relationship with her best friend as she secretly attempts to win back her ex-boyfriend.

**Without A Clue (Half-Hour Comedy)** A struggling writer, who supports her three freeloading roommates, tries to figure out her life as a freshly divorced twenty-five year old woman.

# CIERRA LOCKETT



901-338-0855  
cierra.l.lockett@gmail.com

Once upon a time, Cierra's mother wrote a screenplay in which Cierra was a princess. Had it been made, Cierra would be fantasy film royalty, but since it wasn't, she's a writer. Her mom supported her storytelling from childhood. Growing up in Memphis, complex characters, diverse cultures, and edgy situations spoke to her more than those of the average fair maiden. She wanted to see more women and people of color as the heroes and villains of natural and supernatural worlds. Beyond that, she wanted to explore relationships and trauma through stories as a manner of therapy and entertainment. Because being a princess is cool, but it's cooler to create the whole kingdom.

**Conjure (One-Hour Drama, Supernatural)** A psychic photographer teams up with her grandmother to use voodoo magic against the supernatural beings that haunt Memphis.

*Quarter-Finalist: \*MACRO Episodic Lab 2018*

**Hustle (One-Hour Drama)** Three best friends fight for their friendship and sanity in the entertainment industry as secrets and success threaten to tear them apart.

**Skin Deep (Feature, Supernatural Horror)** When a black woman crashes her white fiancé's family retreat, she discovers that her future in-laws are vampires with a taste for melanin.

**Bandit Bae (Feature, Crime Dramey)** Inspired by true events. hellbent on justice, a black woman leads a crime spree to drug and rob rich men who harass women in the nightclub she was fired from.

**Diane Nash (Feature, Historical Drama)** Based on a true story. When a Chicago beauty queen goes to college in the south, she trades in pageants for protests as a leader in the 1960 Nashville Student Sit-Ins.

*Semi-Finalist: Nashville Film Festival 2018, Historical Feature*



# ANTON VINOKUROV



213-258-9778  
antonvinokurov@mail.ru

Born and raised in the icy wilderness of Mother Russia, Anton swam across the Atlantic Ocean into the wonderful land of bacon and freedom for one mission and one mission only: To entertain kids. Anton remembers when he was just a shy, bullied nerd stuffed in the locker by mean Russian bears. Life was hard, but good cartoons and movies kept him happy. They inspired Anton and gave him courage. Heroes, such as *Spider-Man* and *Aang the Last Airbender*, were like friends to him.

Anton wants to offer his viewers the same. Let them have a good chuckle and make a few friends in the land of make-believe. And while they can't spend all the time in fictional worlds, the opposite is also true. People need time to take a break from their troubles, to have a good laugh and get inspired by the examples of amazing heroes! If that sounds like something you want, then Anton is the guy for you!

**The Traders Of Basilisk Road (Half-Hour Comedy, Animated)** In a world of goblins and dragons, two merchant brothers struggle to make ends meet. One's uptight, the other's a rascal; and they can barely stand each other. However, in order to make it big, they'll have to learn to get along.

**Helen Sing in the City of Monsters (Half-Hour Comedy, Animated)** Helen is an ordinary girl growing up in a fantastical city of monsters. When your teacher's a wicked gorgon, the meanest girl in class is a harpy and the little kid you babysit is a werewolf, surviving high school is that much more challenging.

**Tag Team Underworld (One-Hour Drama, Action)** A professional wrestler and a cop enter an underground fighting tournament to free their neighborhood from the cartel.

**Vera (Feature, Supernatural Drama)** WW2. Eastern front. A Nazi soldier goes AWOL, rescuing a Jewish girl with psychic powers out of a secret Nazi compound.

# HAYLEY VOUDOURIS



916-300-7047  
hayleyaannikki@gmail.com

From a worldwide rock tour to divided Berlin, the Carson-era late-night circuit and back, Hayley writes character-driven dramedies about extraordinary people in unordinary subsets of life. Having grown up in a real-life soap-opera-esque version of the infamous mockumentary *This is Spinal Tap*, before segueing into political campaign management at a very young age, Hayley has never lived a typical existence, and neither do her characters. She writes about people with incredible lives, daunting odds, and relatable problems. Her style is noted for its dependence on angst, sarcasm, and her inability to resist machine-gunning punchlines anywhere they might (or might not) fit.

**With the Band (One-Hour Dramedy)** Grammy-winning songwriter Julie Sawyer must take the reins of the legendary group she started 40 years prior, while dealing with the competing egos of her bandmates, her family, and the demons of a lifelong secret.

**The Mentor (Half-Hour Comedy)** When the prime-time soap she starred in decades before is rebooted, fading starlet Isobel Lombardi, who happens to be dead, becomes the reluctant mentor to the actress reprising the role that made her a household name.

**Lawless (One-Hour Drama, Horror)** An eccentric husband and wife bounty-hunting team hunt an elusive serial killer with the aid of his only surviving victim: a snarky, best-selling novelist with a secret of her own.

**Late Night with Elle Concord (One-Hour Dramedy)** In 1970's LA, Late Night talk show host and legendary partier Elle Concord has everything she could ever want until a murder at her home, and the reemergence of the daughter she abandoned, ruin her non-stop fun.

**Fangirled (Comedy-Webseries)** Four best friends who've never met obsess over a campy horror series while trolling its online fandom for bullies who deserve to be brought down.

**Loyola Marymount University**  
**School of Film and Television**

Founded in 1911, Loyola Marymount University (LMU) is a premier Catholic university rooted in the Jesuit and Marymount traditions. Movie industry moguls helped establish Loyola Marymount University's current campus on the bluffs above west Los Angeles in the 1920s. By 1964, LMU was formally teaching film and television curriculum, and in 2001, the School of Film and Television (SFTV) was established as its own entity.

The School of Film and Television offers two intensive three-year graduate screenwriting programs, conferring Masters of Fine Arts degrees in *Writing for the Screen* and *Writing and Producing for Television*. Admission to these programs is selective, enrolling up to eighteen students per year in each track. Each program provides time, space and professional mentoring enabling candidates to discover and develop their individual voices, while also preparing them to navigate the inherent realities of the rapidly changing entertainment industry.

NOTABLE LMU SCREENWRITING ALUMNI

Melissa Blake (*One Mississippi, Sleepy Hollow, Ghost Whisperer*)  
Gloria Calderon Kellett (*One Day at a Time, How I Met Your Mother*)  
Brian Helgeland (*Legend, 42, Mystic River, L.A. Confidential*)  
Sarah Nicole Jones (*Legends of Tomorrow, Longmire, Waco*)  
Emily Spivey (*Modern Family, Masterminds, Saturday Night Live*)  
James Wong (*The X-Files, Scream Queens, American Horror Story*)

SCREENWRITING FACULTY

Jeffrey Davis (Chair 2011 - 2019)  
Karol Ann Hoeffner (Chair 2019 +)  
Patricia K. Meyer (Graduate Director)  
Marilyn Beker  
Paul Chitlik  
David Clawson  
Michael F.X. Daley  
Stephen V. Duncan  
Michelle Amor Gillie  
Marc Pitre  
Mark Evan Schwartz  
Beth Serlin

Learn more: [sftv.lmu.edu](http://sftv.lmu.edu)

