SLEEP LIKE A BICOASTAL BABY.

INTRODUCING FLAT BEDS ON SELECTED FLIGHTS TO JFK.

Craig Zadan and Neil Meron

“You get up in the morning, and Hollywood doesn’t owe you a thing.”

In this issue:
2014 Producers Guild Awards
A Buyers market for Brenner and Winter
Introducing the PGA Women’s Impact Network
PRODUCERS GUILD OF AMERICA
BEST PICTURE
WINNER

CRITICS’ CHOICE AWARD NOMINEE • BEST PICTURE
CRITICS’ CHOICE AWARD NOMINEE • BEST ACTOR • MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY
CRITICS’ CHOICE AWARD NOMINEE • BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR • JARED LETO
SCREEN ACTORS GUILD AWARD NOMINEE • BEST CAST
SCREEN ACTORS GUILD AWARD NOMINEE • BEST ACTOR • MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY
SCREEN ACTORS GUILD AWARD NOMINEE • BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR • JARED LETO
WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA NOMINEE • BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY
CRAIG BORTEN & MELISA WALLACK

“IMPOSSIBLE TO FORGET. EXHILARATING.”
LOS ANGELES TIMES

“HUGELY ENTERTAINING AND DEEPLY AFFECTING.”
WALL STREET JOURNAL

MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY
DALLAS BUYERS CLUB
JENNIFER GARNER AND JARED LETO

CELEBRATE THE YEAR’S MOST TRANSFORMATIVE PERFORMANCES IN THIS EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF SURVIVAL, COURAGE, REDEMPTION AND ACCEPTANCE.

FOCUS FEATURES THANKS THE PRODUCERS GUILD OF AMERICA AND PROUDLY CONGRATULATES PRODUCERS ROBBIE BRENNER AND RACHEL WINTER ON THEIR NOMINATION.

FOCUS FEATURES THANKS THE ASSOCIATIONS AND PRODUCERS FOR ALL THEIR SUPPORT.

Produced by

Case Study:
Craig Zadan and Neil Meron
“Climb every mountain,” the song said. So they did.

Queens of Club
Producers Robbie Brenner and Rachel Winter beat the odds.

2014 Producers Guild Awards

Naked
Part Three: Story to revenue using the direct-to-consumer video.

Stepping Up to Set
The Agenda for Change
Introducing the PGA Women’s Impact Network.

Spidey Senses Are Tingling
2013 Weekend Shorts Challenge honors Laura Ziskin’s legacy.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR
PGA NOMINEES

THE NORMAN FELTON AWARD
FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER
OF EPISODIC TELEVISION, DRAMA:
BREAKING BAD
Producers: Melissa Bernstein, Sam Catlin,
Bryan Cranston, Vince Gilligan, Peter Gould,
Mark Johnson, Stewart A. Lyons, Michele Maclaren,
George Mastras, Diane Mercer, Thomas Schneau,
Mora Wailey-Beckett

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It’s the 25th anniversary of the Producers Guild Awards. The Producers Guild itself now numbers 6,000 members. The Producers Mark has been embraced by the industry, and is well on its way to appearing on over 100 motion pictures. There’s a temptation to want to make this column something like a victory lap. I’m going to resist that temptation. If the history of organizations such as ours teaches anything, it’s that achieving our collective goals doesn’t eliminate the threats to our Guild, but simply causes them to change shape. The key is not to be blinded by our success, and recognize that our achievements, impressive as they are, only present further opportunities, which come with their own challenges.

The nature of producing has become more complicated then ever before. Just so, our Producers Guild is a complicated one, representing the interests — usually common, but sometimes competing — of both producers and the many different members of their producing teams, across the spectrum of film, television and new media. The priorities of a TV showrunner are not going to be the same as those of a production coordinator in feature film, and both of them will differ radically from those of a producer of online programming or console games. Yet our Guild has bound their fortunes together, based on the passionate conviction that our professional similarities ultimately outweigh our differences.

This unity of purpose has been the fundamental reason for our success to this point, and as we continue to grow, maintaining and reinforcing that sense of unity will be our primary challenge for the foreseeable future. The history of our industry is rife with organizations that fell victim to factionalization. It took decades, for instance, for the television world to adjust to the split between ATAS and NATAS that took place in 1977. A schism of that kind would gravely wound an organization like ours, and render all the progress we’ve made for nought.

How do we safeguard against disunity? By recommitting ourselves to the essential identity of our Guild as a professional organization, as opposed to a membership organization. Which is to say that the mission of the PGA extends beyond merely securing benefits for our members and giving them a platform from which to learn, network and develop their skills. Rather, our chief commitment is not only to our members, but to the professional standards that their membership allows us to uphold.

Being a member of the PGA means something more than access to a job board, or the ability to receive screener DVDs at the end of the year. It means that you’re an active, working producer or producing team member, whose experience and skills are an essential part of the knowledge base of the profession. It means that your work has value to your peers and your industry.

That value is based on the professional standards we’ve developed, embraced and promulgated. Our Producers Mark best exemplifies that value. And as our business continues to grow and evolve with breathtaking speed, it requires us to re-affirm, reinforce and stand behind the consistency of those standards. Genres, platforms, even media itself come and go. But stories are still stories, and the future of our Guild rests — as it always has — on our ongoing, consistent collective dedication to the craft of producing them.

FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by Vance Van Petten

The Trouble with Success

**SCORSESE DELIVERS ANOTHER CINEMATIC LANDMARK.**
**A BOLT OF BRILLIANCE.**
**SCORSESE’S HIGH-WIRE ACT OF BRAVURA FILMMAKING IS LETHALLY HILARIOUS.**

“ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR.”
— The New York Times

**BEST PICTURE**

**FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION**

PRODUCED BY

MARTIN SCORSESE | LEONARDO DICAPRIO | RIZA AZIZ | JOEY McFARLAND | EMMA TILLINGER KOSKOFF

THE WOLF OF WALL STREET
The epitaph for the American musical has been written plenty of times, the consequence of everything from the bloat of *Doctor Dolittle* in 1967 to the 1992 failure of Disney’s *Newsies* — recently reimagined as a Broadway hit, but at the time of its theatrical release, seemingly another in the continuing sequence of nails in the musical’s coffin. It was shortly thereafter that the producing team of Craig Zadan and Neil Meron put forth what was seen at the time as a thoroughly quixotic endeavor: a three-hour adaptation of the classic musical *Gypsy* — on television, no less.

The broadcast proved to be one of the surprise hits of the year. And the surprises kept coming: the duo’s TV broadcasts of *Cinderella* (1997) and *Annie* (1999) bested even the most optimistic expectations, and in 2002, the team pulled off its biggest show-stopper of all. Despite having only one big-screen success between them (Zadan produced the 1980s mega-hit *Footloose*), the pair shepherded their protégé Rob Marshall’s *Chicago* not only into movie theaters, but all the way to the winner’s circle of the Oscars, making it the first musical in 34 years to win the Academy’s Best Picture honors.

Since that coup, Zadan and Meron have pressed ahead on all fronts, producing further long-form television productions, feature films and television series, some of them musicals (*Hairspray, The Music Man* and *Smash* among them) and some not (*A Raisin in the Sun, Steel Magnolias, The Bucket List, It’s All Relative*). Last year saw a triumphant return to the Oscars — as the show’s producers, a role they’ll reprise this year. The past decade has likewise seen them realize their longstanding ambitions for Broadway, with the successful New York runs of *Promises, Promises* and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. Throughout their careers, the team has proudly stood as the industry’s prime avatars for colorblind casting, readily featuring performers of color in roles that were originally created by white actors, a proud legacy from their apprenticeship at the feet of New York theater titan Joseph Papp.

This is the 64th in *Produced by*’s ongoing series of Case Studies of successful producers and their work. Mere days after the team’s groundbreaking live broadcast of *The Sound of Music* scored epochal ratings for NBC and their long-form remake of *Bonnie and Clyde* premiered simultaneously on A&E, Lifetime and History, *Produced by* editor Chris Green sat down with Craig Zadan and Neil Meron at the Oscar production offices in Century City. The ensuing conversation ran well over its allotted time, and still ended too soon, touching on everything from the team’s discovery of Rob Marshall, to their repeat “audition” to produce *Hairspray*, to the jubilant chaos of *Footloose*’s first test screenings.
Zadan: I had written a book on Stephen Sondheim, called Sondheim & Co. Sondheim had three shows running on Broadway, which was a record at that time. He had Company and Follies, and when A Little Night Music opened in 1973, there was a sense it was time to pay tribute to him and do a benefit. They asked me to be one of the producers of it. I didn’t have any idea what a producer did, so I was making it up as I went along. In the end, I did very well with it, because I didn’t know any better. For instance, I contacted Warner Bros. and I said to them, “You need to do a live recording of the Tribute and release it as a two-album set.” At that point, I had never been an album editor. I was on Broadway, so they said, “It’s not going to sell.” And not only did I get them to do it, I got them to pay for all the new orchestrations. So they said, “It’s not going to sell.” And not only did I get them to do it, I got them to pay for all the new orchestrations. I got them to pay for orchestra expenses. And the show came off spectacularly.

Afterward, people asked me, “How did you do that? You don’t ask record companies to do that sort of stuff.” After that show ended, I realized: This is what producing is. I want to see this bright, industrious young man who was soon going to be on the job market. And that’s how I met Craig, because he had written the Sondheim book and I invited him to come and speak about Stephen Sondheim. So doing that lecture series kind of set up my life to be a producer.

I know that Joseph Papp was a defining figure for your careers; as someone who grew up seeing his productions in the West End, I had never known what that was like.

Zadan: I can speak for myself and also include Neil in most of this. Everything that I feel that I am as a producer comes out of what I learned from Stephen Sondheim. He treated us like his kids. We sat in his office, of this. Everything that I feel that I am as a producer comes from having worked for Joe Papp. We not only worked for him, but became very close to him. He really took us in and embraced us. He treated us like his kids. We sat in his office, day after day, night after night, and learned from him. It was like studying with a genius. Even today, thinking about how to do things, I go back to sitting in his office and hearing him say, “You have to treat actors like this.” “You must treat playwrights like that.” “This is how you fix a script that doesn’t work.” Every bit of knowledge that I have about the creativity of producing came from him.

He was an inspiration. He led us to his idea of color-blind casting. He was outraged by the fact that theater around that time mostly consisted of all white people. And so he would cast either all-black productions, or he would cast a production that had whites, blacks, Latinos, Asians — he would mix everything up. We can look back over a lot of our productions where we insisted on color-blind casting, and we did it very successfully. Give 100% of that credit to Joe Papp.

Meron: What Joe Papp always acknowledged was the world outside the theater doors. How do you reflect that world in your work? So when we approach a project, we always ask each other, “What does this mean to people today? What is the contemporary theme?” Even if we’re doing a period piece, “What does this say to a contemporary audience? How will people relate to this?” It informs our approach to the material. And we took that with us on our journey to Hollywood.

Of course, plenty of people start out in theater in New York and stay in theater in New York. But you chose to come out to Hollywood. How did that decision arise?

Zadan: I personally started feeling a little claustrophobic. As much as I enjoyed and was grateful for those years, I started to feel like we were putting in a tremendous amount of creative work, and in some cases, the show would be playing to a theater of 80 people. There had to be a bigger world out there, a way to reach more people.

Around that time, a guy by the name of Peter Guber was looking to bring people into Casablanca Records & Filmsworks, and expand into theater and other stuff. He had heard about us through a mutual friend, and he offered us a job. Making the decision to leave Joe Papp was very painful. I don’t remember a day in my life as difficult as the day I had to go into his office and tell him we were leaving. Part of me didn’t want to leave New York. But I realized we might never have this opportunity again. So we had to take it.

What was that transition like, having learned at the feet of Joe Papp then shifting to an industry insider like Peter Guber?

Zadan: The differences were black and white in terms of Joe Papp and Peter Guber. Both approaches were completely, equally valid. For Joe, if you wanted to do a show, you would go to him and say, “I am passionate about this. I can’t sleep at night. We have to produce this.” But you’d never come in and say, “We’ll make a lot of money.” Joe was about learning to follow your passion, not whether it translates to box office. If you mentioned those words to him, he wouldn’t do the show.

Peter was the complete opposite. He was, and is, living in a commercial world where the goal was to find projects that are going to be big and make a lot of money. So they were both equally valid points of view, but polar opposites. If the show that you do for Peter happens to be creatively great,
that’s wonderful, so long as it was commercially successful. Joe wanted to make something creatively great, and if it made money, so much the better. If it didn’t, that was okay.

So early in your career, how did you synthesize those influences in terms of developing projects?

Meron: Well, there was a moment in time where Craig left Casablanca and joined up with Dan Melnick and produced Footloose, while I worked directly with Jon Peters and Peter Guber at Polygram Pictures. But it was Craig’s Footloose that really started the next chapter.

Zadan: It was one of those lucky breaks. I mean, if you’re going to start producing movies, start off with Footloose.

I went to work with Dan Melnick, who had just produced Altered States and All That Jazz. He was the classiest producer around, and he basically said, “go develop whatever you want, because we want a younger point of view.” A friend of mine, Dean Pitchford, had just won the Oscar for Fame. And he told me he had an idea for a movie musical, based on a paragraph in People magazine about a town in the Midwest that had banned public dancing. He asked me, “Doesn’t it sound like a movie to you?” He got on a plane and actually went to that town and came back a week later and said, “I have the movie.”

I worked with him while he wrote the screenplay and the songs. We sold it to Paramount. They made it for $8.5 million. It was probably one of the cheapest movies they made during that era, and because of that, they basically left us alone. There was very little studio oversight. We went off to Provo, Utah, and made Footloose, and we knew from day one that this thing was going to be something special. Still, no one at Paramount paid any attention to it until we had our first test screening with an audience. And the audience — I know it’s a cliché, but it’s true — was literally dancing in the aisle. They wouldn’t sit in their seats. They were going crazy. Paramount looked at the test scores and was wondering, “Oh my God. What is this?”

It became a phenomenon. We had a triple platinum soundtrack album — 3 million copies — in the first week. And then the movie was number one in the country for a long time. It was one of those things that nobody saw coming. One reason it was so successful was that Paramount marketing had made a deal with MTV to go into business together. And one result of that is that a music video from Footloose was on MTV every 10 minutes. That’s why we ended up with six top 40 singles. Overnight, all of a sudden, everybody in town wanted to meet, which led to our creating a new company. And the first thing I did was call Neil and tell him, “I’ve been offered a studio deal,” which was at Tristar. “Do you want to come join me and start a movie company?”

Do you remember getting that call? What was it like?

Meron: Oh, ecstasy. I mean, you want your friends to succeed. And then to be able to rejoin Craig and to be on our own and create something with a shared vision... That’s the greatest phone call you can ever get.

So, given this world-is-your-oyster moment, how did you proceed?

Zadan: We actually entered into a difficult time after that. Because what we didn’t realize, until we were in it, is how difficult it is to get a feature film developed and produced. Nobody bats an eye when they say, “Oh, we’ll make it in three years.” But what were we gonna do for three years? We
wanted to be in production. Development is fine but we were bored. So we started to talk about TV. Because it seemed like TV was very fast.

Meron: And TV was a medium where producers could actually produce.

Zadan: We got a call one day from some friends of ours who controlled the rights to a big musical, and they asked, “What do you think about doing Gypsy on TV?” And we went, “Wow. Gypsy on TV... That sounds amazing, but I don’t know that anyone is gonna do it.”

Meron: Nobody had ever done a Broadway musical as a movie for television.

Zadan: We were very friendly with a guy by the name of Jeff Sagansky, who was running CBS. He had been the executive at Tristar who we worked with. Later, he became head of CBS. We went to him and asked, “Would you consider this?” and he said, “It seems sort of like a terrible idea, but on the other hand, it’s kind of groundbreaking, and if it works, it could work big time.” And he said, “If you can get a superstar to play this part, I would consider it.”

We had been friendly for many, many years with this amazing woman, Bette Midler. She was, at that moment, extremely successful in movies. She was starring in those Disney films every year, and every one was a hit. She was a huge movie star. So we went to Bette and said, “How would you like to play Mama Rose in Gypsy?” and she said, “Oh, I’d kill to play that part.”

I see where this is going. “In what theater?”

Zadan: Right. And we said, “CBS.” And she said, “I’m not gonna do a TV movie.” And we said, “But it’s not a TV movie. It’s Gypsy.” We spent a month talking to her... Phone calls, lunches, breakfast, coffee. At the end of that month we said, “Look, we can’t go on like this. Yes or no?” And she said, “Yeah, let’s do it.” We called Sagansky and we said, “We got Bette Midler.” And he said, “Well, you have a show.”

Meron: The truth of the matter is that Bette saying yes really launched our trajectory — in terms of musicals, the discovery of how popular they were on TV; which led to Cinderella with Whitney Houston and Brandy, and working with a young choreographer by the name of Rob Marshall; which led to us believing in him and then doing Annie for TV with him, where he directed for the first time; which then led to Chicago. If it wasn’t for Bette Midler saying yes, none of that would have happened.

Did you have any strong sense, when you put that final question to her, that she would agree to do it?

Meron: No.

Zadan: No.

Meron: The truth of the matter is that what we learned from Bette, and from other extremely talented people, is that “no” doesn’t necessarily mean “no.” “No” means “keep on talking to me.” That was a great lesson.

Zadan: But Jeff was the laughing stock of the town...

Meron: Yeah.

Zadan: People were telling him, “You’re out of your mind. It’s gonna be a disaster.” He would call us and say, “Oh, you know who called me today and said I’m an idiot?” [laughs]

Meron: They called it “Sagansky’s folly.”

Zadan: But to his credit, he said, “I don’t really care. This is...
Zadan: Everywhere you looked there were black, white, and Filipino.

Meron: Whoopi Goldberg was the queen, Victor Garber was the king.

Zadan: That was, more than anything, the test case for color-blind casting. We were determined to do the first African-American, Latino, Asian actors and dancers.

Meron: And Jason Alexander and Bernadette Peters. Houston and Brandy and Whoopi Goldberg...

Zadan: Before that, it’s worth saying that after Gypsy, we were very cognizant of the fact that we had this danger light flashing in our faces. Because we saw that we could get thrown into a niche and never get out of it. So the very next thing we did after Gypsy was a movie called Serving in Silence: The Margarethe Cammermeyer Story, with Glenn Close and Judy Davis, that we produced with Barbra Streisand and Glenn. It was “ripped from the headlines.” Margarethe Cammermeyer was the highest ranking woman in the military who came out as a lesbian. That was an absolute killer to get made and sold, because nobody wanted to put a “gays in the military” movie on network television. Nobody. And what made it even more difficult was the reason Cammermeyer came out: because she met a woman who she fell in love with. So it was not only a courtroom drama, but also a lesbian love story. With a kiss. And at that point, that was not on television.

Meron: And NBC thought they were only buying the courtroom drama. Little did they know... [laughs]

Zadan: But we only got it made because our friend Barbra Streisand had seen the same article and wanted to team up with us to make the movie. Barbra was the leading advocate of gay rights.

Meron: And still is.

Zadan: And she still is. Her clout at that moment pushed this project through when everybody said, “No, no, no, no, no. You can’t do this.” We owe her everything. Agents were calling us and saying, “You guys are really stupid. Why would you try and do something like this when no one is gonna make it and no one’s gonna air it?” But Barbra got it made. And instead of saying, “They’re wrong,” we thought, “Okay, let’s say they have a point. How do we get it made?” The moment we teamed up with Barbra we thought, “Ah, that’s the way this project gets produced.”

Meron: And then just to bring it over the top, having Glenn Close play the role and serve as a producer as well. We kind of stacked the deck and scared people not to make it.

Zadan: So Serving in Silence became a very important movie for us, because, first of all, we were passionate about the subject and about making that movie. But it also meant a lot to us. We were successful because we could immediately say to people, “we don’t only do musicals. This couldn’t be more dramatic, and powerful, and political...”

Meron: And we did, and we did it. Having Glenn Close play the role and serve as a producer as well. We kind of stacked the deck and scared people not to make it.

Zadan: But that’s where we discovered Rob Marshall.

Meron: And that’s where’s we discovered Rob Marshall.

What was it about Rob that led you to think, here’s a guy that we can nurture and make a part of our team?

Meron: He was great to work with, brilliant and unafraid of taking the next step in his progression as an artist. It was a simpatico relationship. We spoke the same language.

Zadan: But the following year, when we did Chicago, and we did Annie and we hired him to direct for the first time, Disney was not happy with us.

Joe Papp, we wanted our work to reflect the world outside, and that’s what our work looks like.

What was it about Rob that led you to think, here’s a guy that we can nurture and make a part of our team?

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Meron: And from audiences?

Meron: None.

Zadan: And from critics?

Meron: None.

Was there any pushback from the network?

Meron: None.

Or from audiences?

Meron: None.

Everybody embraced this?

Meron: It was totally embraced. Going back to the lesson of
Was that just based on his lack of a track record?
Meron: He had never directed before. He did great choreography on Cinderella. He won the Emmy for that.
Zadan: But when we did Cinderella, we noticed that he was involved in every aspect of the production. He didn’t just choreograph. He was involved in the lighting and the camera movement... everything. In terms of producing, this was a key moment for us, putting forth somebody who had no formal training as a director. We were taking a risk. We believed in him. But Disney was saying, “Wait a minute. This is Annie. This is one of the biggest titles ever, and you’re giving it to somebody who’s never directed before? Absolutely not. Give us a list of names of other people.” And we wouldn’t. We dug our heels in, and for a month they kept calling us and saying, “Okay. When are we getting the list?” and we said, get some other producers. We were honestly ready to walk away. On the other hand, we guessed that they wouldn’t walk away, because we had just delivered the biggest television event at ABC. So after a month of very tough, combative arguments, they finally threw in the towel because they saw we weren’t going to cave. They said, “Okay. Go do it. But you’d better be right.” And, boy, were we right. And we were certainly right about Rob.
Meron: And from that day forward, Rob did not skip a beat. It was one of the happiest experiences we’ve had making anything. And again, a success of multicultural casting. It was slightly controversial, however, that we hired Audra McDonald to play Miss Grace.
Zadan: People were saying, “Wait a minute. Warbucks wouldn’t have had a black secretary at that time. And at the end, they’re engaged to get married? You can’t do that.”
Meron: And, boy, were we right. And we were certainly right about Rob.
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And Chicago followed from that?
Zadan: Rob got called by Harvey Weinstein because he and his kids watched Annie, and Harvey said, “Who the hell is Rob Marshall?” They had a meeting, and Harvey offered Rob to direct Rent, which Harvey was going to do at the time. And Rob said, “I don’t have any interest in Rent. But I know that for 10 years, you’ve been trying to get Chicago off the ground.”
Meron: They were about to drop the option on it, too.
Zadan: Rob pitched his concept and Harvey immediately realized, “Oh, my God. You’ve solved it. You’ve cracked it.” And they hired him instantly. Rob brought us over to produce Chicago for him. People were very dubious about us doing the movie. “This is not gonna work,” we were told. “You’re crazy. No one wants to see this. This is potentially a bomb.” But you looked at the first day of dailies on Chicago, and it was all there.
Meron: It was All That Jazz, that first day.
Zadan: And we just thought “This is unbelievable.” But it was Rob, and a wonderful collaboration with screenwriter Bill Condon, that made it what it was. Making that movie was such an extraordinary experience. And it was our first experience working with Harvey Weinstein, which was a trip.
Meron: And still is.
Zadan: For certain.
Meron: We love Harvey, frankly. We brought him in as a co-producer on Promises, Promises, our first Broadway musical. And he was extremely supportive and helpful during the Oscars last year.
Zadan: But after everyone said musicals absolutely would not work on the big screen, Chicago ended up being the first musical viral in 34 years, since Oliver! in 1968, to win Best Picture. It was the highest grossing film in the history of
Miramax. So to go from “This is gonna be a bomb,” to where it ended up... it was extraordinary.

Obviously, your success with Chicago enabled you to do further musicals, like Hairspray.

Meron: We looked at a lot of projects, but after we went to a preview of Hairspray, we said, “This is it. This has to be our next movie musical.” We had a vision of exactly how to make the movie. We knew precisely the tone, the look, the color palette... we knew exactly what we wanted to do. And we went after the movie. We decided we had to produce this film. But New Line was dragging its feet.

Zadan: We were coming off Chicago, so you would think that it’s not such a stretch to hope that the studio would let you produce another movie musical, right? But they put us through an audition process. They had us going back for several meetings. Our agents were saying, “You shouldn’t do this. They should just offer it to you.”

And we said: “We want this movie. This is our movie. We’re going to produce this movie. And if we have to go back 100 times, we’re going to go back 100 times, because they’re going to see that we’re the right people to produce this film.”

And we did. But it was a real lesson as a producer, that if there’s something that you are dying for, that you really believe in, and for whatever reason you’re not immediately getting offered to produce it, just keep going back and going back. You can’t have an ego and say, “You should be offered this to us.” We were humbled by the experience, but we weren’t going to stop.

Right. And so then at what point does producing the Oscars enter the picture?

Meron: The Oscars was a phone call. We were in the middle of Smash, season two. I was in New York when you called.

Zadan: I was in Los Angeles at the time. The phone rang, and it was Hawk Koch. And he said, “What would you say if I asked you and Neil to produce the Oscars this year?” It came so out of left field. I said, “I don’t know.” Hawk said, “What do you mean, you don’t know?” I told him I needed to speak to Neil, and that our schedule was jam packed, and we wouldn’t want to give the show short shrift. So I called Neil, and together, we called Bob Greenblatt at NBC and Helen Verno at Sony, and had to tell them that this would be taking us away from some projects we were doing with them. We learned so much last year. And this time, collaborating the Cheryl Boone Isaacs, the new Academy President, has been a great experience. One of the reasons that they brought us back is that they came to the conclusion that it doesn’t make sense to hire a producer who gets to do it once, and never gets to do it again! And the Academy said, “Why does that make sense? Why not let the producers actually learn how to produce the show and bring them back, so they can do an even better job?” That thinking makes sense. Having done it once, we now know how it works. We know the people we want to hire and the people that we can trust and depend on.

Meron: Also, the hiring of Ellen [DeGeneres] as the host was a key factor, just in terms of determining what our show is going to be. So we’re just now having our meetings with Ellen and cracking what the show will feel like.

What were the attendant challenges to putting on a live broadcast? Plus the fact that some people would call producing the Oscars the most thankless job in the business.

Meron: It is. You get beat up for doing it. But you have a good time. And it’s an honor, because it is carrying on a great tradition.

Zadan: I’ve seen Oscar shows that I thought were great, really well-produced and with great hosts, and they got creamed. And then I’ve seen shows that were not well-produced, with mediocre hosts, and they got creamed. So as proud as we were of the show — and we were incredibly proud of the show... Meron: You get beat up.

Zadan: You get ripped apart. And you have to be okay with that. You do the show for the viewing audience and not for the bloggers.

Meron: You need thick skin in this business to begin with, but you need armor when you’re doing the Oscars. And thank goodness, we were ready.

Now that you’ve been around the block on this job, how are you approaching round two?

Zadan: We learned so much last year. And this time, collaborating the Cheryl Boone Isaacs, the new Academy President, has been a great experience. One of the reasons that they brought us back is that they came to the conclusion that it doesn’t make sense to hire a producer who gets to do it once, and never gets to do it again! And the Academy said, “Why does that make sense? Why not let the producers actually learn how to produce the show and bring them back, so they can do an even better job?” That thinking makes sense. Having done it once, we now know how it works. We know the people we want to hire and the people that we can trust and depend on.

Meron: Also, the hiring of Ellen [DeGeneres] as the host was a key factor, just in terms of determining what our show is going to be. So we’re just now having our meetings with Ellen and cracking what the show will feel like.
Apart from just knowing the personnel, what did you learn about the process last year that you can apply this year?

Meron: That it’s always going to be challenging. And not only do you need Plan B, but you need Plan C, Plan D, Plan E, Plan F, Plan G. You need the whole alphabet of plans, following Plan A. It’s such a hard show to get your arms around, because it’s so big and under such scrutiny. It has a lot of masters to serve. Everybody has an opinion, and everybody wants it to be what they want to be. And that’s great, because it means people are passionate about it.

Zadan: It was kind of like a trial run for doing The Sound of Music, because by then we really understood the complexity of putting on a live show. Nobody had ever attempted to do a musical live on TV in more than 50 years. The real surprise of The Sound of Music was pulling in an audience of 22 million viewers. Even being optimistic, no one was expecting that kind of tune-in.

What did you learn from the Oscars experience that you were able to apply in that case?

Zadan: I think that the most important thing is being comfortable enough with the idea of a live broadcast so that you can be calm on the day of the telecast. I mean, it sounds simplistic but it’s true. If you are freaking out, you’re not going to do a good job. There’s no way to get through it properly if you’re a bundle of nerves. And by going through the Academy Awards telecast last year, and seeing how it ebbs and flows, and seeing how all the components come together, it made it easier. We were in the truck for The Sound of Music, and we were so calm. We had no reason to be, because anything could’ve gone wrong. You’re dealing with this mammoth production. It should have been absolutely terrifying and it wasn’t. I would say the reason for that is because of our experience producing the Oscars.

Meron: Right. Our only real fear was worrying about actors getting sick, and thank God that didn’t happen.

How long did it take you guys to put the production together?

Meron: I would say since the summer.

Zadan: Thank God they hired us for the 2014 Oscars immediately after the last telecast, which meant that the next day we could go right to work. We started having the sets designed. We decided on the theme of the show and the performance sequences.

Meron: If it wasn’t for that, we wouldn’t have been able to do The Sound of Music. I mean, we would’ve had to have made a choice. But thankfully they hired us early enough so we were able to get a lot of preliminary work done.

Zadan: That allowed us to squeeze in not only Sound of Music, but also Bonnie and Clyde.

Bonnie and Clyde broke its own new ground, with the three-network broadcast.

Zadan: Airing it simultaneously on A&E, History Channel and Lifetime was a great experiment.

Meron: It’s like the wild, wild west now in programming. I think it’s exciting to be working now, as people try to figure out the new way, of getting people to watch. It keeps you fresh. It keeps you curious and interested. You’re always learning. I think that’s the key. When you think you know it all and just do it by rote, it would seem to be very boring. But by switching mediums, switching genres, you’re dealing with different executives. You’re dealing with different skill sets. So we feel, more than anything, lucky, I would say.

Zadan: We still feel like we’re auditioning every day. We feel like nothing is coming to us. You get up in the morning, and Hollywood doesn’t owe you a thing. You’ve got to go out there and start each day prepared for that audition. It’s about the hard work, and about the passion, and doing stuff that you love. And we love what we do. We have a great time doing it. It’s really hard work, but we’re lucky that people allow us to do it.
Luck wasn’t with them at the blackjack tables on that trip, but their most recent high-stakes gamble has paid off spectacularly. Together, Brenner and Winter have produced Dallas Buyers Club, a film about an accidental drug smuggler and AIDS activist Ron Woodruff. So far, the film and its cast and crew have racked up Golden Globe, Independent Spirit, SAG and Producers Guild Award nominations, plus a stack of critics association and festival awards. It’s not surprising: the film is a unique mixture of mainstream storytelling and uncompromising indie aesthetics, anchored by career-best performances from Matthew McConaughey and Jared Leto. And it took more than 20 years to make it to the screen.

Robbie Brenner knew about the screenplay for Dallas Buyers Club years before she met her future co-producer. Screenwriter Craig Borten conducted the interviews with Ron Woodruff that became the basis for the screenplay in the summer of 1992. Borten, one of the first people Brenner met in Los Angeles, pitched her the story one evening in the mid-1990s, and she was immediately taken with it. At the time, other producers and actors were attached — the list of one-time attachments includes Woody Harrelson, Ryan Gosling, and even the late Dennis Hopper — but Brenner followed the script’s ups and downs for the rest of the decade. Around 2000, according to Brenner, Borten brought in co-screenwriter Melisa Wallack to collaborate on a new draft. When another producer dropped out, Borten reached out to Brenner for help.

Producers Robbie Brenner and Rachel Winter beat the odds

by Matthew Dessem

Robbie Brenner and Rachel Winter have always been gamblers at heart. Within hours of meeting each other through a mutual friend some 14 years ago, they embarked on a spur-of-the-moment trip to Las Vegas. As Winter puts it, “It was one of those sounded-like-a-good-idea-at-the-time kind of things.” Brenner tells the story a little differently: she remembers looking at her new friend as they got on the roller coaster at New York, New York and telling her, “Now I know you’re truly insane.”
Brenner knew just who to talk to. She’d gone to Tisch Film School with Marc Forster, who had just finished making *Monster’s Ball*, and thought the script would appeal to him. She was right — Forster wanted to make it his next film. Brad Pitt signed on to star after seeing *Monster’s Ball*.

Universal bought the script in 2001. Everything seemed to be on track. And then, as so often happens in development, nothing happened. Brenner was attached as a producer but wasn’t involved in the day-to-day development decisions. Over a period of years, Universal brought in writer after writer to revise the project, but being attached to a large studio was as much curse as blessing. Different executives cycled on and off the project, each with their own voice and their own vision for the film. In the end, it was difficult to find people at a large studio willing to champion a film as risky as *Dallas Buyers Club*. “This movie was probably meant to be made in a more independent spirit-minded way,” states Brenner, “the way that, ultimately, Rachel and I made it.”

In 2009, Brenner got the chance to change course. Due to the WGA’s reversion clause, which allows writers to repurchase their rights to underlying material if a studio fails to make a film, Borten and Wallack were able to buy back the rights to their script from Universal. And once again, they asked Robbie Brenner if she’d like to try to help *Dallas Buyers Club* make its way to the screen. After that, things happened quickly, at least compared to the preceding 15 years. The first order of business was attaching a star. “Matthew [McConaughey] was really the first person I sent the script to,” Brenner explains. “I want to say it was within a week’s timeframe that [agent Jim Toff] called me back and said, ‘Matthew’s in.’”

Now that *Dallas Buyers Club* looked like it might actually have a chance, Robbie Brenner knew that with a full-time job at Relativity Media (she is currently President of Production), she wouldn’t be able to work day-to-day on the project. Giving Rachel Winter a call was an easy decision. Over the intervening years, Brenner had often called Winter with material she’d loved, but for some reason or another wasn’t going to be able to produce herself. (One such call, about the script which later became *Brooklyn Rules*, ultimately was responsible for introducing Rachel to her husband Terence Winter.) Brenner knew she wanted to work with Winter to shepherd *Dallas Buyers Club* to the screen. “Rachel and I have been friends for so long and we really see creatively eye-to-eye,” she says. “She always loved the script.” Winter had a personal connection to the material: an uncle who had been treated with AZT before dying from AIDS. As Winter remembers it, her reaction was an immediate, “Hell yeah, let’s do it.”

To build a solid team to support the material, Robbie Brenner and Rachel Winter had slowly begun to tilt the once-insurmountable odds in their favor. As Brenner describes the process, “You have to align yourself with the best people possible when you’re making a movie. You start out with just the foundation, with having a great script, which we had. We had the luxury of having these great writers who created these amazing characters, and then we stacked the deck with an incredible, inspired director, and then we had Matthew.”

What they didn’t have was money. Any independent film has an uphill battle securing financing, but Brenner and Winter had to start over from square one only weeks before cameras started rolling. Initially, a Canadian financier was attached. But as the start of shooting loomed, both Winter and Brenner began to get a bad feeling about things. “We kept asking them to escrow the money for Matthew, and that never

“As the walls closed in and the shoot date loomed, McConaughey’s newly-gaunt appearance sent a message to the producers: ‘I dare you to leave me hanging.’”

Rachel Winter on the set of *Dallas Buyers Club*. Out standing Producer of Animated Theatrical Motion Pictures

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producers that Winter summarized as, Brenner. As the walls closed in and the shoot date loomed, into Ron Woodruff. “He’d lost probably 30 to 35 pounds,” says dramatic weight loss that marked his physical transformation derailments, insofar as McConaughey already had begun the sooner. This was even more catastrophic than most indie film way he would walk, the way he would talk.”

it’s for the whole picture of how it affects the performance: the transformations to inhabit a role. “It’s not just for the aesthetic; she learned a great deal about the way actors can use physical ule. Winter admits that while witnessing both actors’ dramatic much weight as McConaughey, but on a much tighter sched- sexual. To prepare for the role, Leto needed to lose nearly as part of an HIV-positive trans- to bring in new investors — Truth Entertainment, a Texas-based move on to other projects, or it would never happen at all. “With

The supporting actors, anchored by Jared Leto and Jennifer
Brenner agree was both extraordinary, and extraordinarily

There was one final gamble. Focus Features was interested

in buying Dallas Buyers Club, but had been thrown into a

prom. Jeb Brody, President of Production, called Brenner — a

friend — to ask if the completed film was as good as the footage he’d seen. According to Brenner, she told him flat-out, “Rachel

and I are incredibly bullish on the movie and if you don’t want it, we’ll sell it to somebody else today.” Focus made the deal.

After decades of development, Dallas Buyers Club pre-

miered at the Toronto Film Festival, and audience reaction and

Brenner agreed was both extraordinary, and extraordinarily

stressful. As with every other experience over the years it took

to bring the film to the screen, their friendship and partner-

ship was key. Winter says, “I personally am so thankful to have

Robbie to experience all of this with. You’re standing there in

your very high heels, your knees are knocking, and it’s like, ‘Hold my hand… since your knees are knocking and you’re in

high heels too.” Brenner agrees. “It was a relief that Rachel and I have each other to… pick each other up when we’re down.”

But finally seeing the film with an audience after so many

years was a bittersweet experience. “You make a movie that as a producer, you sort of dream will have all of these qualities, the inspiration, the emotion, it’s a real story, it’s about something, and you sort of check off all those boxes and you go, ‘Wow, I probably won’t make a movie again this good in my entire life.’” Of course, the chances of making a movie as good as Dallas Buyers Club are almost insurmountable to begin with, but Robbie Brenner and Rachel Winter beat those odds. Time will tell if they’re impossible lucky streak continues — they’ve been threatening to make that return trip to Vegas. 
In 1990, the Producers Guild of America held a cocktail party at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. The highlight was a short ceremony, emceed by none other than Ronald Reagan. During the proceedings, the recently retired President presented honorary awards to legendary producers Hal Roach and David L. Wolper, after which Richard Zanuck and Lili Fini Zanuck took the stage to receive the first-ever competitive award given by the Producers Guild, recognizing them as producer of the year’s best feature film, *Driving Miss Daisy*. In recognition of the Guild’s laurel wreath emblem, the event was called the Golden Laurel Awards.

24 years later, you’ll find the event still in Beverly Hills, though a little further west down Wilshire Boulevard, at the Beverly Hilton. But what was once a modest cocktail party has become one of the must-attend gala events of the Hollywood awards season. Rechristened the Producers Guild Awards in 2002, the affair now presents competitive awards to producers in eight categories of film and television. Additionally, the Awards recognize a half-dozen individuals and teams for unique and outstanding work. The honors once given to Roach and Wolper have become the David O. Selznick and Norman Lear Achievement Awards in Motion Pictures and Television, respectively. From 1951–1966, the Producers Guild presented its most prestigious honor, the Milestone Award, to a figure of historic importance in the industry; the Milestone Award was revived in 1997, and its presentation (to such figures as Steven Spielberg, Clint Eastwood and James Cameron) has become a centerpiece of this generation’s Producers Guild Awards. The creation of the Stanley Kramer Award in 2002 has given the season one of its most prestigious distinctions, and remains the only honorary award typically bestowed upon a production rather than an individual producer.

We’ve seen other big changes since those early years… a star-studded red carpet, for one, and a cavalcade of famous presenters and guests, to say nothing of the occasional music legend — the Producers Guild Awards has played host to such talents as Natalie Cole, Sarah McLachlan, Bonnie Raitt, Paul Simon and Stevie Wonder. But some things have stayed resolutely the same, such as the intimate, convivial atmosphere. The Awards have never been televised, allowing for a sense of warmth and informality that’s always been unique to the event.

Welcome to the silver anniversary of the Producers Guild Awards.
As Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of The Walt Disney Company, Robert A. Iger is the steward of the world's largest media company and some of the most beloved brands around the globe, from Mickey Mouse to Captain America to Buzz Lightyear. Focusing on creativity, innovation and global growth, Iger has led the company to a position of unparalleled stature. 

A Long Island native, Iger attended Ithaca College and got his start in television as a local weatherman. After joining ABC, he worked his way up through the ranks, eventually serving as President and Chief Operating Officer of Capital Cities/ABC, a position he retained after Disney's purchase of the company in 1996. In 2000, Iger became President and Chief Operating Officer of The Walt Disney Company, second to Michael Eisner, whom he succeeded as Chief Executive Officer in 2005.

Under Iger’s tenure, The Walt Disney Company has seen a period of unprecedented growth, spurred by the company’s acquisition of Pixar in 2006, Marvel in 2009 and most recently, Lucasfilm in 2012. The company has been named as one of “America’s Most Admired Companies” by Fortune magazine and one of the “World’s Most Respected Companies” by Forbes. During this same period, Walt Disney Studios has consistently been one of the most successful film studios in Hollywood, grossing over $9 billion in U.S. theatrical revenue, led by such hits as Alice in Wonderland, Toy Story 3 and The Avengers. In addition, Iger has been a staunch supporter of Disney’s traditional role as a leader in the field of animation, supporting not only the work of Pixar but Walt Disney Animation Studios, leading to the hit movies Tangled, Wreck-It Ralph and this season’s blockbuster, Frozen.

For his visionary success and contributions to the business of motion picture filmmaking, the Producers Guild is proud to present Robert A. Iger with the Milestone Award.

Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson are the producers of the James Bond movie franchise through their company, Eon Productions, guiding the franchise to its current status as one of the world’s preeminent movie series, featuring one of the most iconic characters of the modern age. Born in New York City, Michael G. Wilson is the stepson of the legendary Albert R. “Cubby” Broccoli, original producer of the James Bond films. After graduating from Harvard and Stanford and practicing law for several years, he joined the legal team of Eon Productions in 1972. In 1979, he became executive producer of Moonraker and has served as producer or executive producer on every subsequent Bond film. In addition, Wilson has worked as a co-screenwriter on five Bond films, beginning with For Your Eyes Only in 1981.

Barbara Broccoli is a native of Los Angeles and the daughter of Albert R. Broccoli. A graduate of Loyola University, she got her start in entertainment in 1977, working on publicity for The Spy Who Loved Me. After working as an assistant director on two Bond films, she served as associate producer of The Living Daylights and License to Kill. Broccoli was elevated to producer of GoldenEye in 1995, and has served in that capacity on every subsequent Bond film. She also was executive producer of the 1996 HBO movie Crime of the Century, about the Lindbergh kidnapping, and Stolen Childhoods, the 2005 documentary about global child labor.

During their tenure as producers of the franchise, Wilson and Broccoli have led the James Bond series to unparalleled international popularity and critical esteem, with the most recent film, Skyfall, grossing over $1 billion in global theatrical revenue and winning the BAFTA for Best British Film.

As a result of their continued and long-lasting string of successes, the Producers Guild is pleased to honor Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson with the David O. Selznick Achievement Award.
CHUCK LORRE

One of the most accomplished comedy writers and producers of his generation, Chuck Lorre is the creator and executive producer of several of the most successful shows of the last 20 years, including The Big Bang Theory and the long-running Two and a Half Men. In addition, he created the much-loved Dharma & Greg, Grace Under Fire and Cybill. His most recent show is Mom.

A native of Long Island, Lorre got his start in entertainment as a musician, touring the country and writing pop songs for Debbie Harry and others. After more than a decade on the road, Lorre turned his attention to television, writing for DIC and Marvel Productions, and producing the themes and scores for animated series such as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. As a comedy writer, Lorre got his start on Charles in Charge and My Two Dads before becoming a writer and producer for Roseanne.

Lorre’s first show as creator was Grace Under Fire, which was followed by Cybill and Dharma & Greg, each of which was nominated for numerous Emmy and Golden Globe awards. His next show, Two and a Half Men, soon became the highest-rated sitcom in America, a feat repeated with his next show, The Big Bang Theory, which has won Emmy awards for its star, Jim Parsons, along with a variety of other awards and nominations, including multiple nominations for the Producers Guild’s Danny Thomas Award. In addition to these series, Lorre is executive producer and writer for the hit Mike & Molly.

Lorre has become known for his witty and acerbic comments in the split-second ‘vanity cards’ in the end credits of his shows, which were collected into the 2012 book What Doesn’t Kill Us Makes Us Bitter. Proceeds from the book have gone to benefit the Dharma-Grace Foundation, started by Lorre in 1999 to support healthcare and educational institutions.

The Producers Guild is proud to recognize Chuck Lorre for his achievements in television with its highest honor for the medium, the Norman Lear Achievement Award.

PETER JACKSON, JOE LETTERI and WETA DIGITAL

The Wellington, New Zealand-based company Weta Digital is one of the world’s premier digital effects houses. Led by co-founder Peter Jackson and senior visual effects artist and director Joe Letteri, Weta Digital is responsible for some of the most astounding effects and images ever seen onscreen, from the majesty of King Kong to the creepy charisma of Gollum.

Weta was founded in 1993 by Peter Jackson, Richard Taylor and Jamie Selkirk to develop and design visual effects for Jackson’s film Heavenly Creatures. Since then, the company has become a leader in visual effects thanks to uncompromising creativity and a commitment to develop innovative technology. After crafting visual effects for such films as The Frighteners and Contact, Weta won its first Academy Award for Best Visual Effects for 2001’s The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring. Weta won further Academy Awards for the other two Lord of the Rings films, Jackson’s King Kong and James Cameron’s Avatar.

The artists of Weta have become especially renowned for their groundbreaking performance-based character work, bringing to life such digital creations as Gollum, the giant ape Kong and the crafty chimpanzee Caesar from Rise of the Planet of the Apes. Other films that have featured work from Weta Digital include District 9, The Adventures of Tintin, The Avengers, Man of Steel and Jackson’s The Hobbit films.

Joe Letteri gained his visual effects experience working at Industrial Light & Magic on such films as The Abyss and Jurassic Park, before becoming visual effects supervisor on Daylight and the 1997 Special Edition of Star Wars. In 2001, he joined Weta Digital, where he worked as visual effects supervisor on The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers. For this film, Letteri shared his first of five Academy Awards, including a Technical Achievement Award. In 2007, Letteri was appointed Director of Weta Digital. As senior visual effects supervisor on Avatar, he led a four-year process of design and development to craft some of the most technically complex visual effects shots ever achieved.

For their resounding imaginative achievements and matchless craftsmanship, the Producers Guild is proud to honor Peter Jackson, Joe Letteri and the entire Weta Digital team with the Vanguard Award.
The goal of Stanley Kramer was a simple one: to depict — clearly and unflinchingly — the reality of the world in which we live. Kramer believed that filmmakers have a responsibility to not just entertain but also to enlighten and inform audiences, to throw a light on the corners of life that might otherwise go unnoticed and unrepresented. In Kramer's best films, there are also no easy answers, no simple resolutions. It's in the act of seeing clearly, of witnessing the problems, that is the first step toward progress.

The film Fruitvale Station is more than a fit honoree for the Stanley Kramer Award, not because it attempts to explain a complex issue or display vast sociopolitical trends, but because it tells, in an unadorned and direct style, the story of one day in the life of an ordinary man. Oscar Grant was an unexceptional young man with his share of problems in life — two stints in jail for dealing drugs, difficulty holding down jobs — and his very ordinariness, in the hands of writer/director Ryan Coogler, actor Michael B. Jordan and producers Nina Yang Bongiovi and Forest Whitaker, makes his story universal. Fruitvale Station takes a documentary-style approach in showing Grant as a young man weighed down by his past mistakes, but buoyed by his potential and the support of his friends and family. Had he not been killed in a moment of senseless violence, the film suggests, who knows where his life could have taken him? By showing us the life of Oscar Grant on what would turn out to be its last day, Fruitvale Station reaffirms the value of every life, especially those all too often ignored or demonized by mainstream society.

In a time when young African-American men are often seen as the villains of their own stories, a film such as this reminds us that the legacy of Stanley Kramer lives on in work that seeks not to sensationalize or carry us away into fantasies, but rather to recognize our common humanity. The Producers Guild is proud to honor Fruitvale Station with this year’s Stanley Kramer Award.
Another year with 10 nominees for the Zanuck Award means another year with a remarkable range of diversity in the honored films. But first, a word for those highly esteemed films that didn’t make the cut: *Inside Llewyn Davis* has been met with the rave reviews that are now routine for the Coen brothers; Lee Daniels’ *The Butler* was a surprise hit with audiences that many thought would resonate with Guild voters; and hopes were high among such smaller, well-regarded contenders as *Mud*, *Philomena* and *Short Term 12*. But in the end, the ten films chosen by the Producers Guild are a dynamic and well-rounded bunch that fully reflects the state of the art in theatrical motion pictures.

Several of the films are about survival in perilous, remote conditions, although there’s a huge difference between the pirates and oceanic dangers faced by Tom Hanks in *Captain Phillips* and the orbital hazards Sandra Bullock contends with in *Gravity*. Another theme is that of deal-making, ranging from the subtle back-and-forth between Walt Disney and P.L. Travers in *Saving Mr. Banks* to the two-timing con artists of *American Hustle*. The allure of wealth and the horror of its loss can be felt in both the exquisite neurosis of *Blue Jasmine* and the sublime decadence of *The Wolf of Wall Street*. Both Ron Woodroof, in *Dallas Buyers Club*, and Solomon Northup, in *12 Years a Slave*, face life-or-death struggles against entrenched social institutions. And two very different kinds of love stories make the list, with *Nebraska*’s gruff, acerbic relationship between an aging father and his son sharing the list with the unique sci-fi love fable *Her*.

As in previous years, the films in this category are so strong as to defy predictions. Going by PGA history, we could say last year’s win for *Argo* predicts a win this year for the similarly ‘70s-set *American Hustle*; or past winner *The Hurt Locker* indicates a victory for *Captain Phillips*, and so on. But despite the undeniable power and historic significance of *12 Years a Slave*, our intuition says that the technical virtuosity and seemingly real-time propulsive drama of *Gravity* will be enough to pull the majority of voters into its orbit.
"The Croods" is Awesome!
Not just a great animated movie, it's a great movie, period.
Groundbreaking, breathtaking, and Oscar-ready.

Mark S. Allen, Good Day Sacramento

"I call it a hug."
- Grug
It's a testament to the strength of modern animation that this category, long dominated by Pixar, has opened up in recent years to become anyone's game. And just as there are more players in the animation game, the competition has elevated the overall quality of the nominees to a particularly high level.

This year a common theme among the nominated films is family. The squabbling clan of cavemen in DreamWorks’ *The Croods* bonds during a perilous trek to a new home across some of this year’s most lushly rendered landscapes. The little girls adopted by criminal mastermind Gru continue to form a family with him, and his new girlfriend, in Universal’s *Despicable Me 2*. The sisters in Disney’s *Frozen* overcome their mutual distrust (with thanks to a wacky snowman named Olaf), and the heroine of Fox’s *Epic* learns to appreciate her mad scientist father when she realizes that his claims of a race of tiny Leafmen is correct. And of course, Pixar’s *Monsters University* shows the meeting and growing brotherhood between those beloved creatures Mike and Sully. Some had hoped that this year would see a nomination for *The Wind Rises*, the final film from director Hayao Miyazaki, but that was not to be.

More than any other category this year, this race is hard to predict. Last year’s winner, *Wreck-It Ralph*, was a sign of the resurgence of Disney’s in-house animation team, and we’re predicting *Frozen* to give a second consecutive win to the Mouse House.
The intersection of politics with everyday life takes center stage in this year’s Documentary Motion Picture category, with five nominees covering a rich range of subjects, showing how interconnected our lives are, and how each of us can make a difference.

A Place at the Table explores the problem of hunger in America, using the stories of ordinary individuals to show how pervasive food insecurity has become in one of the richest nations on Earth.

We Steal Secrets tells the story of Julian Assange and Wikileaks, going back to explore the group’s history of whistleblowing and leaks over the last decade. The film was denounced by people on both sides of the controversy, and highlights some of the most fascinating national-security issues in politics.

The life story of artist Tomi Ungerer is chronicled in Far Out Isn’t Far Enough, which explores the life and work of the controversial children’s book author. Ungerer grew up during World War II, emigrated to America, and designed posters denouncing the Vietnam War, while building a career as a bold, satirical and unapologetically political author and artist of children’s books.

A different kind of artist, no less bold, is recognized in Which Way Is the Front Line from Here? Tim Hetherington was a celebrated photographer who covered battlefields from Liberia to Afghanistan. After co-directing the Academy Award-nominated Restrepo, he was killed while covering the civil war in Libya. Last but not least, Life According to Sam tells the story of Sam Berns, a young man suffering from the rare disease progeria, and his family’s insistence on finding a cure and a normal life for their son.

As usual, the theatrical documentary world involves films that are often among the most passionate of passion projects for their makers, who often spend years of their lives laboring with little hope for theatrical release, let alone financial gain. Each of these films is a worthy recipient of attention, and each deserves wider viewership and recognition. It’s a tough call, but this year our guess is that We Steal Secrets, with its ripped-from-the-headlines urgency, will be the winner.

A Place at the Table (Magnolia)
Julie Goldman
Ryan Harrington
Kristi Jacobson
Lori Silverbush
Far Out Isn’t Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story
(First Run Features)
Brad Bernstein
Rick Cikowski
Life According to Sam
(HBO Documentary Films)
Andrea Nix Fine
Sean Fine
Miriam Weintraub
We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks (Focus)
Alexis Bloom
Alex Gibney
Marc Shmuger
Which Way Is the Front Line from Here?
The Life and Time of Tim Hetherington
(HBO Documentary Films)
James Brabazon
Nick Quested

Which Way Is the Front Line from Here?
The Life and Time of Tim Hetherington

A Place at the Table

Life According to Sam

We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks
In what may be this year’s most broad-ranging awards category, we have everything from a sober and fact-based historical docudrama to a pair of biopics of turbulent entertainment figures to a pair of twisty, gripping mini-series, but all are linked by their interest in the hidden, dark corners of life and how we respond to them.

It’s fitting that the 50th anniversary of the JFK assassination should be commemorated by a well-made account of the events leading to that shattering moment, with National Geographic’s *Killing Kennedy* serving as a fine recounting of the intersecting lives of John F. Kennedy and Lee Harvey Oswald. A different kind of crime story, *Top of the Lake* took viewers on a Twin Peaks-esque journey into the dark side of small-town New Zealand. HBO’s *Phil Spector* pointedly didn’t explore the music mogul’s guilt or innocence for murder, but instead provided a rich and fascinating character study of this brilliant figure, with bravura performances from Al Pacino and Helen Mirren. And FX’s *American Horror Story* picks up a second Wolper Award nomination with this year’s installment, *Asylum*, featuring some of the juiciest, most luridly compelling storytelling seen on TV today.

In the past this category has been dominated by HBO, which has two nominees this year and seems poised to repeat once again with Steven Soderbergh’s *Behind the Candelabra*. The true story of the relationship between Liberace and his lover, Scott Thorson, was one of the most fascinating tales we saw all year in theaters or on television, and features a top-notch combination of high-stakes storytelling, star power and Hollywood lore.
Four of this year's Felton Award nominees repeat from last year, with the Netflix Web sensation *House of Cards* making a splash and bumping three-time winner *Mad Men* out of the nominees for the first time in its run. Picking up the banner for AMC is *Breaking Bad*, with its fourth nomination in five years.

*Game of Thrones* may have raised eyebrows when it was first nominated, with prestige television not known for dragons and swordplay. But with its third nomination in three seasons, the HBO series is fully established as a landmark in genre television. The PGA continues to favor last year’s winner, *Homeland*, with its second nomination after a roller-coaster season. And *Downton Abbey* remains a safe bet for recognition after a lavish and star-studded string of episodes.

It’s *House of Cards* that been the subject of the most spilled ink this year, due to Netflix’s bold experiment in production and distribution. And while the show surely represents the future of online television, it would be an awards contender on any platform thanks to its combination of inside-politics insight and deviously brilliant craft.

From Washington, D.C. to Westeros, each of these five shows is fantastic in its own way. But the safe money is on *Breaking Bad* to continue its victory lap after its spectacular final season.
after seven long years in limbo, Arrested Development returns and picks up its third Thomas Award nomination. After one of the most experimental seasons in television history in terms of both structure and delivery, the PGA saw fit to welcome back the Bluths and recognize the much-loved show’s Netflix resurgence.

Three of the other nominees have dominated this category in recent years, one from each of the old Big Three networks: CBS’s The Big Bang Theory, with its third straight nomination; ABC’s Modern Family, winner for the last three years; and NBC’s 30 Rock, winner for the three years prior to that. The consistently high quality of these shows and their success with audiences continues to be recognized by the PGA, year after year. Meanwhile, last year’s nominee Louie drops out of the nominees circle, while six-time nominee and two-time winner Curb Your Enthusiasm will be a likely nominee when (and if) it airs new episodes again.

New to the circle is HBO’s Veep, which picked up steam and extra critical acclaim in its second season, thanks to added sharpness in the writers’ room and the addition of new cast members. The abrasive wit of Veep contrasts with the more family-friendly nominees to produce a cross-section of TV comedy at its best: wide-ranging, bold, and in sharp engagement with modern life.

It would be tempting to predict this year’s win for 30 Rock for its final season, or for Arrested Development in recognition of its innovations. But our bet is to look for Modern Family to take an unprecedented fourth straight Thomas Award.
THE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF NON-FICTION TELEVISION

Two of this year’s Non-Fiction nominees repeat from last year, with ABC’s Shark Tank and Bravo’s Inside the Actors Studio facing off once more against three new nominees — or is that only two? CNN’s Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown takes the baton from Travel Channel’s Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations, which racked up two previous nominations. Meanwhile, American Masters, a surprise winner for the previous two years, was left out.

ESPN’s 30 for 30 series, with its unique format of sports documentaries from a variety of different directors, gets its second nomination in three years, thanks to a compelling mix of episodes covering everything from surfing legends to Tonya Harding. And despite (or perhaps because of) the controversies that have surrounded it recently, A&E’s Duck Dynasty has become a television phenomenon, and regardless of one’s opinion of the Robertson clan, the show is a fascinating portrayal of a unique, little-seen slice of America.

The spread of documentary-style and reality television has been one of the most fascinating developments in television over the last decade, and these five shows couldn’t illustrate more diversity in format and subject matter, from James Lipton’s stage to the archives of the NFL to the kitchens of South Africa.

Simply because these five shows are all so different from each other (and in the case of 30 for 30, so different from episode to episode), it’s hard to say which will be the victor. But our best bet is on the only nominee to appear on a broadcast network, Shark Tank, with its of-the-moment blend of high-stakes drama and business-world insight.
THE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AND TALK TELEVISION

Will it be seven out of seven? That’s the main suspense in the Live Entertainment and Talk category: Will The Colbert Report win its seventh straight Producers Guild Award? The show’s six wins are already more than any other show in the Awards’ history, but the show (and the host) show no sign of slowing down. Confession time: When the Report launched, we were skeptical that Colbert could maintain the extreme persona of the clueless talk-show host for more than a season or two — surely he’d simply run out of material at some point, right? Well boy, is our collective face red, white and blue with embarrassment and perhaps some vitamin deficiencies.

It’s small consolation to the other four nominees that all are repeating from last year, demonstrating the PGA’s recognition of their consistently strong work. HBO’s Real Time with Bill Maher receives an eighth nomination, with one previous win. NBC’s war horse Saturday Night Live takes its fourth PGA nomination, while relative newcomers Late Night with Jimmy Fallon and Jimmy Kimmel Live each pick up their second nomination. And while all five shows are firing on all cylinders, we’re making a safe bet that the honor will once again go to Colbert and company.

The Colbert Report
Meredith Bennett
Stephen T. Colbert
Richard Dahm
Paul Dinello
Barry Julien
Matt Lappin
Emily Lazar
Tanya Michnevich Bracco
Tom Purcell
Jon Stewart

Jimmy Kimmel Live (ABC)
David Craig
Ken Crosby
Doug DeLuca
Gary Greenberg
Erin Irwin
Jimmy Kimmel
Jill Leiderman
Molly McNearney
Tony Romero
Jason Schrift
Jennifer Sharron
Josh Weintraub

Late Night with Jimmy Fallon (NBC)
Hillary Hunn
Lorne Michaels
Gavin Purcell
Michael Shoemaker

Real Time with Bill Maher (HBO)
Scott Carter
Sheila Griffiths
Marc Gurvitz
Dean Johnsen
Bill Maher
Billy Martin
Matt Wood

Saturday Night Live (NBC)
Ken Aymong
Erin Doyle
Steve Higgins
Erik Kenward
Lorne Michaels
Lindsay Shookus

In an effort to provide studios a more efficient way to approach production, world-leading post production house Encore has teamed with Clairmont Camera and William F. White International. This strategic partnership will offer studios the ability to package grip/lighting, camera and post services, providing clients with financial savings and a one-stop shop for all their TV production needs!
THE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF COMPETITION TELEVISION

It’s déjà vu all over again, as all five of the nominees from last year repeat this year, demonstrating the top-flight quality which these shows continue to deliver. It’s almost as if the people making these series know something about how to elbow their way past their rivals, attract all eyes to their best efforts, and make their unique contributions seen, heard, and tasted by judges and voters.

CBS’s powerhouse *The Amazing Race* loads up with its 11th PGA nomination, with three wins under its belt. Lifetime’s *Project Runway*, with seven consecutive nominations and no wins, is fast becoming the Susan Lucci of the competition-television world, while Bravo’s *Top Chef*, with its fifth nomination in six years, remains a force to be reckoned with. ABC’s *Dancing with the Stars* twirls its way to its third nomination, while NBC’s *The Voice* is still the new kid on the block, with its second straight nomination — although if any show were to make an upset, we’d bet on *The Voice*. Still, *The Amazing Race* seems the show most likely to sprint to the finish line this year.

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**The Amazing Race**
- CBS
- Producers: Jerry Bruckheimer, Elise Doganieri, Jonathan Littman, Bertram van Munster, Mark Vertullo

**Dancing with the Stars**
- ABC
- Producers: Ashley Eden-Shaffer, Conrad Green, Joe Sungkur

**Project Runway**
- Lifetime
- Producers: Jane Cha Cutler, Desiree Gruber, Tim Gunn, Heidi Klum, Jonathan Murray, Sara Rea, Colleen Sands

**Top Chef**
- Bravo
- Producers: Tom Colicchio, Daniel Cutforth, Casey Kriley, Jane Lipsitz, Erica Ross, Nan Strait, Andrew Wallace

**The Voice**
- NBC
- Producers: Stijn Bakkers, Mark Burnett, John de Mol, Chad Hines, Lee Metzger, Audrey Morrissey, Jim Roush, Kyra Thompson, Nicolle Yaron, Mike Yurchuk, Amanda Zucker
ANNOUNCED CATEGORIES

We look forward to the day when the Guild’s collective membership is broad, deep and diverse enough for us to be able to vet accurately the credits of nominees in these categories and welcome the winning producers onstage. Faced with the prospect of potentially presenting an award to a producer who didn’t perform a majority of the producing functions on the project, our Guild opts to play it safe, and simply honor the work as a whole.

So who’s gonna win? These categories don’t have quite the same track record that our others do, but a lack of insight has never stopped us (or many other awards prognosticators) before. In this year’s twonetwork rumble between ESPN and HBO, we’ll put our money on the boys from Connecticut and say it’s gonna be *Monday Night Football* taking the Sports Program award. In the Children’s Programs category, it often seems like a vote against *Sesame Street* is a vote against one’s own childhood; we expect Elmo and company to take their third straight award, though as in years past, we keep holding out for that *Phineas and Ferb* upset.

Digital Series represents the true wild card among the three. With five series “native” to broadband, no entry can claim the advantage of affiliation with an existing entertainment property (as the previous two *30 Rock*-derived winners did). Our guess is that the instantly accessible and supremely clever *Epic Rap Battles of History* edges out the intricate, boundary-busting teen drama of *Lizzie Bennet* to take the prize.
Welcome back to “Naked: Story to Revenue Using the Direct-to-Consumer Video.” Here we are at the halfway mark, but there will be no halftime break for us. “No rest for the creative!”

In the last installment, we covered the developmental and cultural differences of traditional versus digital media spaces, the identification of our subject Kim Castle’s core message, the list of topics that will be explored on the channel and the opening of the virtual doors to revenue using a “making of” private membership video series site called “naked kim.”

Since speaking last, it has been a whirlwind... I can’t even cover it all in this episode. So let me get straight to it... I sat down and had a great discussion with Malik Ducard, Content Partnerships Director of YouTube. The YouTube Partner Program has gone through a number of iterations, in harmony with the true essence of Google development — for Partners, are those that share in ad revenue throughout the Google universe including, of course, YouTube. There is personal support, such as Malik’s, for channels that gain recognition via subscribers, views and total engagement, or that are leveraging significant existing market presence. Malik helps them find organic ways to expand a channel’s worldwide reach, pointing them toward new formats, new content, and even new platform technology (more on that later).

Malik shared with me how Ellen DeGeneres and Jimmy Kimmel have reached new heights in online engagement by integrating their online “conversation” into their television programs. He also noted an independent filmmaker that has made his mark on YouTube, Freddie “W” Wong. Since speaking last, it has been a whirlwind... I can’t even cover it all in this episode. So let me get straight to it... I sat down and had a great discussion with Malik Ducard, Content Partnerships Director of YouTube. The YouTube Partner Program has gone through a number of iterations, in harmony with the true essence of Google development — forever Beta. Members of the Partner Program, or Partners, are those that share in ad revenue throughout the Google universe including, of course, YouTube. There is personal support, such as Malik’s, for channels that gain recognition via subscribers, views and total engagement, or that are leveraging significant existing market presence. Malik helps them find organic ways to expand a channel’s worldwide reach, pointing them toward new formats, new content, and even new platform technology (more on that later).

Malik shared with me how Ellen DeGeneres and Jimmy Kimmel have reached new heights in online engagement by integrating their online “conversation” into their television programming. He also noted an independent filmmaker that has made his mark on YouTube, Freddie “W” Wong. So as expected, both studios and independents are making good use of the digital platform for revenue generation and promotion. For Malik, YouTube should not result in cannibalization of the traditional platforms. Done well, it provides both creative and business benefits. I will sit down with some independent standouts, including Freddie “W,” before our next installment.

Content Creation & Production Methodology

I have been diving deep into the YouTube world, and have discovered a wide range of support beyond the premium care from Malik and his team. Use your browser to search for YouTube’s Creator Hub; its centerpiece is an ever-evolving online document called the YouTube’s Creator Playbook, which focuses on education and support. It is filled with crucial information to increase a creator’s (or a producer’s) skills and optimize the use of the YouTube platform. Of course, the subjects, the talent and the storytelling are left to you.

YouTube Space

Plus, if you are in a select handful of cities worldwide, there is a growing network of YouTube Spaces available — multi-million dollar, state-of-the-art studios and broadcast facilities available for free to channels with a sufficient number of subscribers. Of course, Los Angeles is the flagship of the YouTube Space program, flush with classes and events, including frequent Friday Happy Hours with tours, demonstrations and time to meet and network with those in this burgeoning space. To experience it, all you need is a channel and to request attendance.

Armed with platform-building knowledge and amazing tools and resources, I’ve been producing one show per week (I missed only one show so far, but it was for a great reason, keep reading...) covering a variety of subjects, in a variety of running times. Each episode fit into the subjects previously discussed here — Born Again Foodie*, Escaping Karma, What’s Up with Women?, Aging Ungracefully and Better Homes and Gardens Syndrome. Kim is finding her rhythm in defining content that is true to her own viewpoint and crafting her YouTube “voice.”

Every episode includes a pre-production discussion with a show rundown, production and post, and a process post-mortem reviewing our experiences to improve the process. Some shows are simple, Vlog-style with post-production comedic enhancements. Others are elaborate three-camera cooking segments. Each week, we tweak the production techniques, post-production enhancements and show promotion with improved titling, tagging and annotations (e.g., clickable calls to action layered over the video).

Audience Development

There is still no audience development campaign just yet... only organic discovery and sharing. The channel grew quickly from zero to a few hundred subscribers and a few thousand views without creating anything particularly shocking or wild designed to go viral. I wanted the production and content honed so that the audience push, when it comes, will provide at least 20 or more videos to discover. Nothing would be worse than having viewers visiting the channel and finding scant offerings, or being forced to wait for new material. The real audience push will come when we are ready to release multiple shows per week, with a recognizable content pattern.

True to the platform, the conversation with the small but loyal audience has begun and we can easily gauge which subjects most resonate with them. This provides an editorial direction that could help break the channel through. And based on audience engagement, we have discovered which of Kim’s subjects was the stickiest. This engagement even resonated beyond YouTube to Kim’s blog, Facebook, Linkedin and Twitter. With some trend and Web search analysis, we recognized that one subject was heating up for us. That subject is aging. So content based on “Aging Ungracefully” could be our lightning rod to expedited audience growth.

“Aging Ungracefully”

A preliminary multi-show arc was developed for “Aging Ungracefully” exploring women’s health and vitality, understanding hormones and stress on the body, beauty, health,
Thanks to Michael Andres Palmieri, a past New Media Council Chair I served with on the Council’s Board of Delegates, we also learned of the Creative Lab Broadband Accelerator program. The Creative Lab’s Broadband Accelerator provides creative entrepreneurs with an opportunity to deepen their relationship with their craft, providing them with on-the-ground, real-life coaching in the business of creating, producing, marketing and monetizing content on the Internet, helping to create a plan for their next steps.

Based in Honolulu, the Creative Lab is an initiative championed by Georja Skinner, Chief Officer for the state of Hawaii’s Creative Industries/DBEDT division. It is also supported by Film Honolulu’s Commissioner Walea Constantini and local organizations such as the Hawaii International Film Festival. Michael has been charged with expanding the initiative and growing it into Hawaii’s version of SXSX.

Michael created a three-day immersive program, with 12 months of follow-up coaching, for Web-based writers, directors, producers and performers. As mentors, Michael brought in Bernie Su, the creator, writer and producer of the award-winning Lizzie Bennet Diaries; Laura Allen, head of 3rd Party Productions at Yahoo! (and an NMC Board member); and Wendy Jo Carlton, creator, writer and director of the successful Every Abby Web series.

While it felt odd to leave LA for a week in Honolulu to work on the project when we had so much to do here, we realized it would provide an immersive creative environment that could do exactly what we desired for this project — accelerate our progress. We applied to the program, and I’m pleased to report that kimTV was selected to take part. Our one missed Saturday show was the result of our time in Honolulu participating in the Creative Lab Broadband Accelerator program.

While all the mentors were very supportive, kimTV was paired with Laura Allen, a PGA member and perfect match. It was a wonderful experience.

We learned how successful Web projects had unfolded, both creatively and commercially. While I reported previously that there is a range of digital outlet opportunities, we now explored what does and what fit may exist for us. This focus, coupled with Malik’s advice, added a new layer of strategy to the project.

We’ve come to embrace that the goal of creating a variety/talk show for Kim did not necessary mean we had to produce a variety/talk show and release it only on YouTube. Yes, the content enabling that possibility had to be built around Kim, but by using different formats, we can see Kim’s content reside in a variety of venues. There can be a Web strip on YouTube, a series offered on digital platforms such as Yahoo!, AOL or Hulu; specials or documentaries on Netflix and Amazon and a variety/talk strip show on traditional network or cable. As Malik counseled, the platforms should not cannibalize each other, but should provide synergy. (Wow, there’s a flashback to my tenure at Mouse House in the late ’90s, when “synergy” was all the rage.)

So, Malik counseled, a producer in the direct digital age is to see early on that each outlet will want something unique and to “draft” the other outlets. (Drafting is what race car drivers do to reduce their car’s drag and engine load and increase their speed using the car in front of them. It doesn’t really sound that profound...) Each audience touch point supports the others...Facebook leads to Twitter, which leads to YouTube, to Yahoo!, to cable, to your own Web presence, but the key is dividing up the content with that in mind from the start. It is not necessary to create a successful channel or show, then convert to other venues. The venues can be used to create an audience that you own which will follow your content from venue to venue. Just make sure you do “own” your audience...our next episode will take that on.

As a result of the Creative Lab Broadband Accelerator program, I’m lifting the multishow through-line of “Aging Ungracefully” off YouTube and adapting it as a stand-alone series that can work on any digital or cable venue that serves 40+ women. The subject of aging will still be a presence on kimTV to keep the audience engaged as the series is developed and placed. The series shooting is underway and its sizzle is in development.

Creative Lab Broadband Accelerator program participants also got to sit down with Bing Chen, the YouTube Global Creator Development & Management Lead at Google. He is responsible for generating and aligning the strategic vision for initiatives that identify, develop and distribute the next generation of premier channels and creators. We learned of some inside directions for Google and about additional resources such as www.google.com/trends and www.youtube.com/developers/dashboard to help refine content opportunity for our channels.

Next up is setting monetization of kimTV into motion. This will involve:

- YouTube Partner Program with Google Adwords
- Preparing for the channel sponsorship
- Evaluating multi-channel networks (MCNs) that can help raise ad rates and leverage sponsorships
- Developing sizzle and pitch for the Aging Ungracefully series
- Developing branded entertainment that fits with kimTV
- The MCNs identified for meetings so far are Maker Studios, Full Screen, Big Frame and Kin. I also want to explore how The Collective fits into the mix.

In the last episode, I included a screenshot of the original kimTV channel art and homepage in YouTube. It may sound silly, but I want you to see both the original and our new channel art because in the next installment, I will share why it changed...a great lesson!

The next installment of “Naked: Story to Revenue Using Direct-to-Consumer Video,” will tackle monetization, MCNs and audience development, with excerpts from interviews with Freddie “W” and other digital industry players. If you have questions or suggestions of what you think I should do or research for all our benefit, please let me know. Email me at vito.montone@whycom.com.

See you next time...
PGA Women’s Impact Network

STEPPING UP TO SET THE AGENDA FOR CHANGE

by Dana Kuznetzkoff

The news is troubling, and there’s no way to spin it: For the past 15 years, there has been no perceptible change in the proportion of women working behind the camera in the entertainment industry. The Celluloid Ceiling, a study by the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University, in assessing 250 of the top-grossing U.S. movies of 2012, found that women comprised only 9% of directors, 15% of writers, and 25% of producers. (The 1998 numbers: directors 9%; writers 13%; producers 24.) As the size of films’ budgets drop (i.e., studio films to independent films to documentaries), the percentage of female participation rises. But even so, the lack of change over time at each level persists.

Assessments like this one have prompted the creation of the PGA Women’s Impact Network to broaden the Guild’s commitment to diversity with a focus on gender inequity.

At the 2013 Sundance Film Festival, Sundance Institute Executive Director Keri Putnam and President of Women In Film Los Angeles Cathy Schulman announced the results of a first-of-its-kind research study examining gender disparity in American independent film in the last decade, followed by a plan of action to collaborate with other key organizations. Sundance/WIF’s efforts inspired PGA member Lydia Dean Pilcher to reach out to colleagues on the East and West Coasts to ask: “Are we doing enough? Can we do more?”

The responses from 50+ members, collected by Pilcher and Deborah Calla, Chair of the PGA Diversity Committee in LA, were resounding in favor of further action.

Pilcher, one of the Chairs of PGA Green, cites the progress that has emerged from direct collaboration with the major studios and independent production companies. “By using the same model of a national committee, I have no doubt that PGA can make a significant social impact around gender inequity in the entertainment industry,” she asserts. The Guild’s membership is 47% female. Not only are we uniquely positioned by the strength of our membership, but we have a wealth of resources to offer in terms of utilizing our relationships with studios, unions, fellow guilds, and other allied organizations.”

The newly-formed PGA Women’s Impact Network was approved as a national committee on November 11, 2013, at the Guild’s All Boards of Delegates Meeting in Los Angeles.

PGA Women’s Impact Network

Mission Statement

- To promote gender equity as part of the PGA’s larger vision of diversity.
- To form a communication network within the PGA that will be focused on sharing information around examining and addressing barriers facing women in the entertainment industry. This network will support an organic practice of mentorship and celebrate contemporary and historical women’s film and media culture.
- To create a portal for the PGA to interact with other external groups and initiatives that may benefit female producers.
- To support the Women Filmmaker Initiative created by the Sundance Institute and Women In Film Los Angeles, and reflect their program priorities: mentorship, finance education and access; raising awareness through research and information sharing with industry decision makers; and network building with key organizations committed to gender equity in the entertainment field.

The Sundance/WIF landmark study was led by professor Stacy L. Smith, Ph.D., a renowned expert on diversity and the media, of USC’s Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism. In the report, Dr. Smith explores individual, financial and industrial frameworks that have limited female creative professionals in distinct ways, as well as pathways and opportunities utilized by successful women subjects.

One producer in the study stated, “The majority of films made, in terms of content, are men’s stories... The stories [women] want to tell are women’s stories, and those don’t have the same commercial value. Or whether they really do have the same commercial capacity or not, they’re [not] perceived to have the same commercial potential as stories driven by men.”
Highlights of the Study include:

- **FEMALE-SPECIFIC FINANCIAL BARRIERS** emerged as the most frequently-cited barrier to women filmmakers. Interviews with content creators and industry gatekeepers yielded comments including the subject matter or sensibility of female-directed films being perceived as not commercially viable, confidence in a filmmaker's ability, amount of funding, access or knowledge about finance, and finance-specific confidence.

- **MALE-DOMINATED NETWORKS** permeate the upper ranks of the industry’s corporate structure, resulting in a “tilt” toward male priorities (at the expense of female priorities) in both the corporate culture of the industry and the types of stories and projects supported by the studios, networks, and major production and finance companies.

- **SOCIAL NORMS AND STEREOTYPES** about women and filmmaking were cited during production activities from financing through delivery. This incorporated the token status of females on set, objectification of women, which can contribute to lower performance, decreased technical resources or knowledge, and stereotype threat triggers. Gender equality in on set is more common when females fill key leadership positions. This environment may also affect on-set experiences of emerging and/or seasoned content creators.

- **STRUGGLE FOR WORK/LIFE BALANCE** This was reported less often than the aforementioned financial barriers and male-dominated networks. But it is acknowledged that framing female unemployment after motherhood as a choice to “opt out,” neglects the fact that this choice is made within a context of workplace practices, which do not support a healthy career and family balance.

- **EXCLUSIONARY HIRING PRACTICES** Female directors face a real restriction in the range of properties they are hired to helm, thus foreclosing the opportunities to gain the experience needed to later attach to larger budget films.

The full study can be found at: http://www.sundance.org/programs/women-filmmakersinitiative/

Lydia and Deborah introduced the PGA Women's Impact Network at the November 2013 Sundance Institute/WIF Women and Finance Seminar, discussing the most frequently-cited barrier to women filmmakers. The Directors Guild of America released a report reviewing more than 3100 episodes produced in the 2012-2013 network television season from more than 200 scripted television series, and found that male directors outnumbered female directors 4 to 1.

The World Economic Forum’s current annual Global Gender Gap Report ranks the United States 23rd out of 136 countries in the status of women. The U.S. ranks particularly low by international standards in wage equality and in numbers of women in the legislative branch. Twister and other social media networks have become a key tool for activists raising social and political awareness. With women comprising the majority of social network users, these media have shone a brighter spotlight on gender inequity across many sectors of life.

In business, for example, while the percentage of female Board members at Fortune 500 finance and insurance companies has nearly doubled from 10% in 1995 to 19% in 2012, those Boards are still overwhelmingly male. Consultants at McKinsey & Company found that the international companies with more women on their corporate Boards far outperformed the average company in return on equity and other measures. In fact, at such companies, operating profit was 56% higher.

In terms of the entertainment industry, there is encouraging news ahead for female perspectives in storytelling. At the recent Sundance/WIF Women and Finance Seminar, multiple panelists stated that female audiences, more than male, are now driving the VOD business. Howard Cohen, president of Roadside Attractions, said, “Movies by and about women have a bigger marketplace now than ever before.” Stuart Ford of international sales company IM Global, echoed this, observing, “With the collapse of the male-driven DVD business, more buyers are looking for material that plays to female audiences on digital platforms.”

The PGA Women's Impact Network seeks to connect interested Guild members of both genders through an active social media network. Everyone is invited to join and help our Guild set the agenda for change. A landscape of broader diversity in our industry not only will create a healthier culture, but will make us more effective and successful as producers.

The PGA Women’s Impact Network’s leadership includes Co-Chairs Lydia Dean Pilcher and Deborah Calla, and Co-Chairs Laura Allen, Caitlin Burns, Martha Cotton, Lynn Hendee, Joyce Pierpoline and Rachel Watanabe-Batton.

Facebook: Producers Guild of America: Women’s Impact Network
Twitter: @PGAWomen

The full study can be found at: http://www.sundance.org/programs/women-filmmakersinitiative/
Attracting upcoming filmmakers and veterans who are looking for, well... a challenge, the Weekend Shorts Challenge is a competition and showcase for producers of every stripe. Even beyond the entertainment value of its finished products, witnessing such a quantity of talent and hard work crammed into a dauntingly condensed format represents its own reward. Forging fortitude and intent with passion and creativity, producers in the Weekend Shorts Challenge exemplify a professional caliber that does our Guild proud.

Organized by PGA member Carole Beams and the PGA Weekend Shorts Committee, the 2013 competition gave participants their assignment on the evening of September 6, with final videos to be uploaded a mere 48 hours later. The 2013 iteration honors producing icon Laura Ziskin, with strict creative parameters drawn from her films and celebrating her legacy. Featuring elements from throughout Ziskin’s body of work, this year’s Challenge genre was “romantic comedy,” with a primary setting in either a restaurant or car. Each film’s themes were required to reflect either “an unlikely couple” or “heroes or anti-heroes?” The films also had to include at least three of the following five elements, with at least one of the items having a central or important function in the story: a bouquet of flowers, a spider, a necktie, a credit card and an American flag. Producers were required to marshal all of their craft into a finished film running between three and five minutes.

Results proved to be as diverse as they were entertaining. Finalists included quirky and entertaining romps like Spun and A Hard Date’s Night; touching romances like Red Means Go, Driving Miss Taylor and A Perfect Pair, the adorable mini-saga of The Squeeze; and the layered family dynamics of Hot Shots. Each of the 10 finalists proved worthy of accolades but ultimately prizes were awarded to three distinguished works.

In third place, earning a PGA mentorship with producer Lydia Dean Pilcher and winning a little more than $30,000 worth in prizes from Smart Post Sound, Studio System, EVS and Movie Magic was The Jewel Heist. Produced by Christin Mizelle and Ethan Cushing, The Jewel Heist is a polished and tense romance that seduces the audience into pulling for its anti-heroic protagonist.

Second place, The List, earned a PGA mentorship with producer Bruce Cohen and $30,000 worth in prizes from Alternative Rentals Digital Cinema, Cinelease, EVS, Smart Post Sound, Movie Magic/Entertainment Partners, Studio System/Baseline Systems. Produced by Ben Simmons, Tyler Knowles and Derek Hildebrandt, The List playfully reconnects and reinvigorates an on-screen couple while playing off of a wealth of pop culture and industry references. Claiming the top prize were producers Jason Schulz, Melissa Ricci, Chris Dane Owens and Matt Berlowe for Les Bouffons; the honor comes with a PGA mentorship with producer Darla Anderson and just over $75,000 worth in prizes from Panavision, Universal Studios and Deluxe. Masterfully utilizing the shortened format, Les Bouffons captures the genesis of a relationship with a dramatic twist.

All of the finalists were honored at an awards presentation on Saturday, November 9, at the AT&T Center in San Antonio.

The Producers Guild would like to thank the gracious sponsors who provided prizes for the contest winners: Panavision, Universal Studios, Alternative Rentals Digital Cinema, Cinelease, EVS, Smart Post Sound, Movie Magic/Entertainment Partners, Studio System/Baseline Systems.
Health and Climate Change 411 for Hollywood Storytellers

So, you’re working on this super-cool storyline about hemorrhagic fever and you want to go a little deeper than Chandler From Friend’s comment, “So, the Ebola virus... That sucks.”

Or you’ve got a movie in which science teacher Ben Stein lectures a class of modern-day Ferris Buellers on carbon footprints. You need to get your facts right. But who you gonna call? Well, since Ghostbusters was once hard to come by. And its storylines. “We understand that entertainment works so slowly. We understand that government works at a glacial pace,” says Kate Folb, Program Director for HH&S. “We always say entertainment timeline and react quickly,” says Kate Folb, Program Director for HH&S. “We always say government works at a glacial pace,” she quips, “but the glaciers are melting so fast that we should probably revise that saying.”

With funding from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), partner organizations and private foundations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the service is available to anyone in the industry who picks up the phone or sends an email. The service is free! They offer one of the most innovative and entertaining ways to get health issues into entertainment. They offer one of the most innovative and entertaining ways to get health issues into entertainment. They offer one of the most innovative and entertaining ways to get health issues into entertainment. They offer one of the most innovative and entertaining ways to get health issues into entertainment.

Kevin Leman said, “It’s super-cool storyline about hemorrhagic fever and you want to go a little deeper than Chandler From Friend’s comment, “So, the Ebola virus... That sucks.”

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Kevin Leman said, “It’s a centralized resource for information and data that was once hard to come by. And its services are free!”

Folb spent many years in television production and management before joining the world of entertainment education. She sees Hollywood, Health & Society as a bridge between the two. “We have a good mix between the creative and the academic in our ranks,” she states. “We speak both languages.”

Between 2009–2012, Hollywood, Health & Society worked on over 565 aired storylines that spanned 91 TV series across 35 networks, including medical shows, procedurals, children’s programming, daytime dramas and reality shows, on networks such as ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, ABC Family, Disney, AMC, USA, Lifetime and many others. Included among these shows are Breaking Bad, Grey’s Anatomy, Mad Men, The Big C, Dexter, 24, Bones, General Hospital, Parenthood, The Good Wife and NCIS. All told, HH&S can claim, without exaggeration, they have helped bring important information to millions of viewers through entertainment.

Hollywood, Health & Society aims to encourage and inspire the entertainment community to include factually accurate health and climate change stories in their scripts, thereby educating the general public and calling them to action. That said, they never pitch storylines. “We understand that we can’t delve too deeply into most issues in 42 minutes of air time,” says Folb, “but we can help creatives distill the most important information for the audience to take away in regards to health and climate change.”

Of course, what Hollywood wants is relatable, interesting stories. Folb observes that climate change, though rarely woven into scripts, fits that bill perfectly. Already, it’s had a devastating effect on real people, like those in the Maldives who are being forced from their homes due to rising sea levels, or those work a bit of dialogue can have a powerful impact on a viewer’s knowledge, attitude or behavior. A co-executive producer of Law & Order: SVU adds, “its somewhat relatable for many people, yet it hits you right between the eyes. It’s a serious issue. Hollywood, Health & Society recognizes the profound impact that entertainment media can have on individual knowledge and behavior. Notes Rose, “We know from our research that people learn from what they see in entertainment. A simple action by a character or an insightful, accurate bit of dialogue can have a powerful impact on a viewer’s knowledge, attitude or behavior.” A co-executive producer of Law & Order: SVU adds, “its somewhat relatable for many people, yet it hits you right between the eyes. It’s a serious issue. Hollywood, Health & Society recognizes the profound impact that entertainment media can have on individual knowledge and behavior. Notes Rose, “We know from our research that people learn from what they see in entertainment. A simple action by a character or an insightful, accurate bit of dialogue can have a powerful impact on a viewer’s knowledge, attitude or behavior.” A co-executive producer of Law & Order: SVU adds, “its somewhat relatable for many people, yet it hits you right between the eyes. It’s a serious issue. Hollywood, Health & Society recognizes the profound impact that entertainment media can have on individual knowledge and behavior. Notes Rose, “We know from our research that people learn from what they see in entertainment. A simple action by a character or an insightful, accurate bit of dialogue can have a powerful impact on a viewer’s knowledge, attitude or behavior.” A co-executive producer of Law & Order: SVU adds, “its somewhat relatable for many people, yet it hits you right between the eyes. It’s a serious issue. Hollywood, Health & Society recognizes the profound impact that entertainment media can have on individual knowledge and behavior. Notes Rose, “We know from our research that people learn from what they see in entertainment. A simple action by a character or an insightful, accurate bit of dialogue can have a powerful impact on a viewer’s knowledge, attitude or behavior.” A co-executive producer of Law & Order: SVU adds, “its somewhat relatable for many people, yet it hits you right between the eyes. It’s a serious issue. Hollywood, Health & Society recognizes the profound impact that entertainment media can have on individual knowledge and behavior.
“Research shows that viewers get health information through our storylines, and that’s an awesome responsibility. Millions of people are watching our shows each week, so we have an obligation to be accurate with the health information we include.”

To gauge exactly what kind of effect these messages are having, Hollywood, Health & Society regularly conducts media impact studies. “We conducted research around an eight-episode arc on the CW’s 90210 about the breast cancer gene (BRCA),” says Folb. “Viewers learned about an important health matter through one of their favorite TV shows and were inspired to research their own family history or speak to their doctors. And good news for the producers — some participants who had never seen the show actually ended up watching future episodes.”

“To contact Hollywood, Health & Society or to sign up for their quarterly Real to Reel newsletter: hollywoodhealthandsociety.org hhs@usc.edu (800) 283-0676

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Olivia Munn and Don Cheadle, to name just a few. So, now you know who you’re gonna call the next time your production takes on HIV, post-traumatic stress disorder or CO2 emissions. And if that project takes you to Bollywood or Hollywood, Hollywood, Health & Society has gone global, launching joint projects in India and Nigeria.

“We are ready, willing and able to consult with producers, writers and researchers in the U.S. and across the globe about any health or climate change issue they may be interested in,” says Folb — stressing once again the need to be story-driven, rather than hitting people over the head with do-good lectures. “Just don’t call it ‘edutainment,’” Folb warns. “That bugs me.”

—MARIA GAVIN
### Your PGA Health Benefits

PGA members have a variety of healthcare options available to them. While none of them represents a “perfect plan,” many members will be able to improve their coverage or the cost of their coverage through their PGA membership. Members may take advantage of two options: Employer-paid coverage and self-pay coverage.

#### Qualifying for Employer-Paid Coverage Through the Motion Picture Industry Plan

**Am I eligible?**

To be eligible for the program, you must:
- Be credited as an executive producer, producer, associate producer or post-production supervisor;
- Work for a company that is an AMPTP signatory, or signatory to Motion Picture Industry Health Plan;
- Work on a theatrical motion picture or primetime network television program;
- Some primetime cable and syndicated series also qualify, as do productions for which an AMPTP member agrees to make contributions; and
- Work on a production that utilizes a West Coast IA Crew.

**How many hours do I have to work to qualify for coverage?**

To qualify for the Industry Health Plan, a producer must be credited with 600 hours (automatically computed at 60 hours per week) within a six-month qualifying period.* To maintain coverage, he or she must be credited with at least 400 hours for each subsequent six-month period. If a member becomes ineligible, his or her eligibility for benefits will be reviewed every month until he or she accumulates enough contribution hours within a six-month span to re-qualify for benefits.

**I’ve determined that I qualify; how do I get my coverage to start?**

Contributions are not automatic; they must be directly requested by the producer. Producers request contributions by signing and submitting a participation form within 60 days of starting eligible employment. If the producer does not submit a signed participation form, he or she will be deemed to have waived his or her right to contributions with respect to the job. Participation forms should be provided by the employer upon request. If you have difficulty obtaining a form, contact PGA National Executive Director Vance Van Petten at (310) 358-9020 x104.

**My company isn’t an AMPTP signatory. Am I out of luck?**

Not necessarily. If you are employed by a company that is a signatory to both the IATSE Basic Agreement and the Motion Picture Industry Health & Welfare and Pension Plans, you can request that they make voluntary contributions, even if they are not members of the AMPTP. This request has been granted many times, but can be difficult to secure. A good way to know if your production has signed on to the IATSE Basic Agreement is to check if the camera, grips, or sound providers are union.

**If I qualify, is my employer required to approve my coverage?**

Unfortunately, no. However, the cost to the employer is reasonable enough that many employers will approve the coverage.

Additionally, standard practice has dictated (though again, not required) that once a production begins making contributions to the Health Plan for one producer, it will make those same contributions for any eligible producer on the show, provided coverage is requested in a timely fashion.

*If the producer is also an owner of the signatory company, qualifying hours are computed at 56 hours per week.

#### Self-Pay Plans: Producers Health

In a perfect world, every PGA member would qualify for employer-paid coverage. For those who do not qualify, the PGA offers self-pay options which, because of our group status, are likely to offer better rates than what members can find on the open market.

The Producers Health Plans are available nationally. If you’re currently without health insurance, we encourage you to call immediately to see if you qualify for a plan that suits you. Even if you currently have coverage (particularly other self-pay coverage), it would be worth your while to investigate the options you may have through the PGA self-pay plans.

### Questions? Contact:

Scott Brandt (888) 700-7725
Member Benefits

- Vote on Producers Guild Awards and receive discount tickets to the event, as well as DVD screeners for awards consideration
- Discounted registration for Produced By Conference
- Access to PGA Job Board, online résumé search, employment tools and job forums
- Full access to PGA website including events, calendar, social networking tools
- Eligibility for individual, family and small business healthcare options through Producers Health Insurance Agency
- Participation in the Motion Picture Industry Health, Welfare & Pension Plan
- Eligibility for PGA Mentoring Program
- Listing of contact and credit information in searchable online roster
- Admission to special PGA pre-release screenings and Q&A events
- Free attendance at PGA seminars
- Arbitration of credit disputes
- Wide variety of discounts on events, merchandise, travel
- Complimentary subscription to Produced by

Photos courtesy of New Filmmakers LA
Multiple Peabody, Emmy and Grammy Award winner who was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom but never an Edward R. Murrow Award, Edward R. Murrow famously said, "We are in the same tent as the clowns and the freaks—that's show business." Why are you in show business?

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY—NO CHEATING!

☐ I was attracted to the job security.
☐ The hours are good.
☐ To meet celebrities (and later mock them).
☐ To meet celebrities (and later marry them).
☐ To meet celebrities (and later marry them, then divorce them and then mock them for either/or marrying you and/or divorcing you).
☐ Couldn’t pass the LSAT.
☐ I don’t know where lunch comes from.
☐ Because it’s well documented that women are treated very well and with total equity.
☐ I lost a bet.
☐ To win shiny awards.
☐ My otolaryngology practice was going nowhere.
☐ Why is anyone not in show business?

COMPLAINTS→ www.wendymiller.tv