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INCLUDING
BEST PICTURE
BEST ACTOR
HUGH JACKMAN
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
ANNE HATHAWAY
PRODUCERS GUILD OF AMERICA AWARD
BEST DIRECTOR
TOM HOOPER
DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA AWARD
NOMINEE
SCREEN ACTORS GUILD AWARDS
BEST ENSEMBLE CAST
BEST ACTOR
HUGH JACKMAN
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
ANNE HATHAWAY
BAFTA AWARD
BEST FILM
BEST PICTURE OF THE YEAR
LES MISÉRABLES
“LES MISÉRABLES DREAMS A DREAM OF EPIC AMBITION AND FULLY REALIZES ITS PLACE IN THE GRAND AND GLORIOUS TRADITION OF GREAT AMERICAN FILM MUSICALS.”
THE MUSICAL PHENOMENON

Michael De Luca
“It’s got to be the best version of itself.”

In this issue:
2013 Producers Guild Awards
Looking back at Cleopatra
When PGA met AAP

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There is nothing wrong with being scared Norman, so long as you don’t let it change who you are.
A few years ago, we coined the term “PGA 2.0” as a shorthand for describing the next stage of the Producers Guild’s evolution. Some people thought that the designation was tongue-in-cheek. It wasn’t.

Over the final weeks of 2012, we brought PGA 2.0 to life literally, overhauling and redesigning our home page for the first time in years. If you haven’t checked out producersguild.org lately, please do it now. You’ll find a sleek new interface, with a bold slideshow display and more featured content than ever, including coverage of PGA events, on-the-ground reporting from film and television festivals, feature articles written exclusively for the site as well as links to outside content about producing that we hope you’ll consider smart or noteworthy.

Even better, the new site will begin to make use of the PGA’s considerable — and largely untapped — video content archive. As we move further into 2013, you can expect weekly featured videos to find their way to the site. This is exclusive content you can’t find anywhere else. You’ll see everything from excerpts of sessions at the Produced By Conference, to highlights of screening Q&As with notable producers, to content from PGA seminars, to behind-the-scenes sneak peeks at projects in production, to our own red carpet reporting from festivals and events. And if you miss a featured video that all your fellow members are buzzing about, don’t worry — all of our content will be housed on the Producers Guild channel on YouTube.

And of course, all of the other functions you rely on the PGA website for — access to the PGA Job Board, the online events calendar and news feed, registration for the Produced By Conference and application for the Producers’ Mark — are fully enabled and even streamlined. You’ll also find front page links to several of the Guild’s popular committees and initiatives, like its Power of Diversity Producing Workshop and PGA Green.

The point is, our Guild never stops evolving. Never once in the 12 years I’ve held this job has our National Board or Officers or Committee Chairs or volunteers been content to rest on their laurels and say that the job is done. And when we’ve finally and fully arrived at PGA 2.0, you can bet that PGA 3.0 will be peeking over the horizon.

I can’t wait.
It’s awards season, and among the Producers Guild members and staff, the annual discussion always rears its head: How do you evaluate the “best” producer? Is it the producer who made the biggest movie? The highest-grossing movie? The producer who squeezed the most production value out of a modest budget? The one who spotted the bestseller-to-be while it was still in galleys? Or the one who expertly marshaled an army of crew, technicians and effects artists while overseeing a $100 million budget?

Here’s another way of looking at it: Who sees the movie where no one else does?

A couple of cases in point: A bunch of college kids sue each other over who created Facebook. A baseball executive re-orients his perspective around advanced statistical analysis. Either of those premises sound like the makings of a great movie to anyone? It takes a true producer — a gifted one, at that — to see The Social Network in that first logline, and Moneyball in the second.

But Michael De Luca saw them. He would be (and has been) the first to offer praise for collaborators like Scott Rudin, Aaron Sorkin, Steven Zaillian, Brad Pitt, Amy Pascal and David Fincher. But the fact remains: De Luca saw the stories where others didn’t, and brought the creative teams for those films together around his vision of what those stories could be.

It’s ironic, given De Luca’s apprenticeship in the high-concept trenches of New Line Entertainment, where he shepherded franchises like Austin Powers and Rush Hour to the screen, and championed such skillful and stylish (though no less concept-driven) pictures as Pleasantville and Seven. After rising through the ranks at New Line — from intern to President/COO, no less — he joined DreamWorks as head of production for several years before founding Michael De Luca Productions and setting up shop on the Sony lot. He’s been there since 2004, producing films like The Sitter, Fright Night and the Ghost Rider franchise, in addition to his Oscar-nominated one-two punch. Currently, he’s in post on Captain Phillips, a gripping fast-paced drama pitting Tom Hanks against a horde of Somali pirates.

This is the 59th in Produced by’s ongoing series of Case Studies of successful producers and their work. Editor Chris Green joined Michael De Luca at his Sony offices just before the winter holidays, enjoying a friendly chat that bounced from the thrill of seeing Star Wars as a kid, to the long development journey of Moneyball, to his excitement over the Producers Guild Awards, which De Luca produces this January.
I’m going to be a writer and director. And then my student films were terrible. [laughs] But when New Line turned into more of a studio I realized, mostly by default, “Oh, I’ll be an executive. You don’t really have to do anything creative. You just have to sit in judgment of other people’s creativity. I can do that.” [laughs] Then after New Line, I did three years at DreamWorks as an executive. It was during the later years at New Line and my years at DreamWorks when I started to think seriously about producing. Because I had come to really understand what a good producer does — they saved my ass plenty of times as an executive at both New Line and DreamWorks. By the time my tenure at DreamWorks ended, I knew it was what I wanted to do. I had known Amy Pascal for a long time, and when she knew that I was leaving DreamWorks, she said, “Why don’t you come over here [to Sony Pictures] and be a producer?” I thought Sony would be a great studio at which to start my producing career. She’s one of the finest human beings I’ve ever met and the chance to work around her was one of the luckiest things that ever happened to me. After I got there, she, Matt Tolmach and Doug Belgrad treated me like family and it’s been a second home for me ever since.

In terms of making the transition from the aspirational idealism of film school to the real world of development and production, was there any sort of rude awakening, in terms of seeing how the sausage was made?

So, where did it start for you? How did you find your way into the industry?

It started for me at the movie theater. I was an obsessive moviegoer from the earliest age I can remember. My dad used to take me to Disney re-releases at Radio City Music Hall. This was pre-home video, so the only way you could see those classics was through the actual theatrical re-releases. Seeing those films in these regal Manhattan movie palaces proved transportational for me. Later I had a similar experience with the 42nd Street grindhouses for a different kind of cinema. I got the movie bug very early in my childhood development.

What are some of the screenings that you can particularly remember having an impact on you?

Pinocchio. I think everyone remembers the first time they saw the sequence where everyone turns into donkeys. That terrified me. And then I was 12 when Star Wars came out. I had already been a comic book geek and a major fan of fantasy films. I would see classics in those genre on late-night TV, WPIX and WOR in New York ... I remember seeing Forbidden Planet, The Day the Earth Stood Still, When Worlds Collide and all these great George Pal movies from the ’50s. Conquest of Space was and is a favorite of mine. Phil Foster, Laverne’s dad from Laverne and Shirley, played an astronaut from Brooklyn in it! A full-on Brooklyn accent in space! I loved it! Couldn’t get enough of sci-fi.

So when Star Wars came out, I sat there awestruck, like everybody else of my generation. It was like watching all the comics I had been reading come suddenly to life. It was pure sorcery on screen. It blew me away, and when those filmmakers — Spielberg, Lucas, Milius, and Coppola — started giving interviews in StarLog, Fangoria and Cinefantastique, I learned about film school from those interviews. There were two film schools in New York, Columbia and NYU. I didn’t have the grades for the Ivy League so I ended up at NYU. After that, I got an internship at New Line, which at the time was a tiny company in New York. They had an index card up on the intern board at NYU, and I applied because I’d seen Nightmare on Elm Street, which they had distributed, and loved it.

So that internship turned into my first job and that turned into the first half of my career. New Line moved me out here and then I was off to the races.
The scenes themselves, the performances, everything has to be perfect. You need the reviews. You need the materials that will announce that it’s that rare thing, the movie you should see because it’s just that good. You know?

to make sleeper hits. Our movies had to work based on their concept and stories, because we weren’t trafficking in the top five movie stars. So we really had to bear down in development and I had a front-row seat for all that.

So who were the folks that you found yourself learning from in those days? Who taught you what you came to know?

Bob Shaye and Sara Risher. They were great, old-school, independent filmmaking personalities. They were making these $3 million–$5 million movies and the Nightmare on Elm Street franchise that kept the company afloat until the company expanded after Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles took off. By the time of my first year as head of production, we greenlit The Mask and Dumb and Dumber, and then I think we followed that the next year with Seven.

Bob and Sara made all of that early success possible because they were great teachers. I had kind of piggybacked on their skill sets and saw the tenacity it takes to put low-budget movies together. It’s difficult, because you’re missing the bells and whistles that make big studio projects look compelling on paper. It’s always a leap of faith. So seeing how they operated on that level, piloting a small company just by force of will through the minefields of independent production to someplace where it could expand and be successful, it was a great early education.

So in developing those kinds of concept-based projects that aren’t dependent on A-list talent for their success, did you have a particular formula or approach?

Usually I looked for originality, the lack of a derivative nature. While the big studios were making comedies like Father’s Day with Robin Williams and Billy Crystal, we would be making Austin Powers with Mike Myers. We would try to find the sections of the marketplace that weren’t being served. And we thought that younger moviegoers, who at the time were gradually overtaking baby boomers as the dominant movie-going demo, required less in the way of established movie stars. They wanted to create their own stars.

And they did.

And they did.

In terms of coming over here to Sony and hanging out your own shingle, were you starting from zero? Obviously you’d been in the industry for many years and had some familiarity with the way things work. But in terms of creating a slate for your company, what were your priorities? Did you have a checklist? Were you looking for genres? Were you looking for stars?

I think I leaned on my track record a little bit. I said to agents in response to the question of what I was looking
for, “You all know the films I’ve been associated with in my career. It’s been a pretty eclectic spread from Boogie Nights to Austin Powers to Rush Hour to Wag the Dog. I like pop culture and I like socially relevant, provocative art films, but I also like horror films. I like escapist entertainment. I like story-driven stuff. I like stuff that really rises and falls based on the idea.” It’s in my DNA to try to find movies that can showcase fresh writers, directors and actors. It’s either what I know so it makes me feel comfortable, or it turns me on, or both. But I continue to still try to find that kind of material.

What surprised you or may have caught you off guard as you moved into producing? What didn’t you see coming?

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producer, living or dead. That collaboration between the two of them on the script for that movie probably couldn’t have been done with any other producer, because Scott just breaks the back of a story and works a story and works with writers better than anyone I’ve ever seen. And he’s also very savvy when it comes to shepherding a movie through marketing and distribution. Scott’s been an amazing partner for me, and teacher, on that film, Moneyball and Captain Phillips. On The Social Network, both Dana Brunetti and I were overjoyed to get that incoming call from Amy Pascal about Scott Rudin and Aaron Sorkin wanting to do that project with us. And I was lucky to have a friend like Dana bring me the book in the first place. These kind of friendships and alliances make the work fun, less lonely and more apt to result in a greenlit film. Dana has an incredible eye for material, as well.

Was there ever any concern about the cinematic quality of the story, when so much of the action takes place sitting in front of computer monitors and taking legal depositions? You know, I think all those questions are swept away when you read an Aaron Sorkin script. Because we read that first draft and none of those questions occurred to us. We recognized that this movie was about spectacular language and as a result would be about spectacular performance. We just needed a director who appreciated that fact about the screenplay. And David was that director and he directed the shit out of it. So once you have something that you’re passionate about and where other collaborators can tap into that same passion, what’s your role as a producer in terms of keeping the train on the track and making sure that vision is protected?

You try to give people what they need. You give them cover if they need cover. You try to be the best liaison between the production and the studio that you can be. When it’s all working, you just try to stay out of the way and keep it on track. When it’s not working, you try to be constructive and supply fixes as the need may occur. But you’re part baby sitter, you’re part shepherd, you’re part cheerleader, you’re part parent. It’s all those skills. And you can never get depressed or demoralized. You have to be the person that’s always saying, “We can do it,” and be relentless in the push to get it done.

Is that something that comes naturally to you or do you have to psych yourself up to be the cheerleader?

Oh, no. I think it comes naturally to every producer who enjoys producing. Moneyball is probably the other title that people might look at as a signature film for you. Given how cleanly The Social Network came together, Moneyball seems like it’s on the opposite end of the development spectrum. Moneyball was more of a challenge because the book that it’s based on is almost a textbook. It’s a great piece of reportage, but it’s not the narrative that the movie ended up being. So step one was deciding what from the book should form the basis of a narrative. And that was actually done before me. Rachael Horovitz, who was the original producer, developed the script that I read when I came over to Columbia; they offered me that movie to team up with Rachael on. We all agreed that the Billy Beane angle was the best shot at a narrative film. And then it was about getting the best screenplay possible, the best partners to make the movie. That movie had a whole bunch of, no pun intended, strikes against it, in that it’s a drama, it’s about baseball, which means...

...It doesn’t travel.

Right. International is going to be soft. But there was something in it I think that touched everyone who came in contact with it for different reasons. There was a belief from me, from Amy Pascal, Rachael Horovitz, eventually Brad Pitt, Steve Zaillian, Aaron Sorkin, Scott Rudin,....
Jonah Hill ... There was something about Beane's quest to build a better mousetrap and the aspirational quality of maybe not getting a baseball victory at the end, but a life victory. There were universal things going on in that story that I think touched all of us. And we were all looking for a way, despite the negatives, to make that movie, even though those negatives were readily apparent. So a lot of the eight years in development was just finding a way around those potholes and around those booby traps for that movie.

Right. So how did you and Rachael guide the script development, especially as it came under the auspices of a couple of different directors, first Steven Soderbergh, and eventually Bennett Miller?

In the beginning, you’re trying to please yourself and the studio, to get a unified script where you and the studio both feel “Okay. We’re onto something. Let’s take it out to directors.” So that was the first part of the process. Then it was about who can cast the movie. This thing was going to need an ambassador to get made, because it’s tough material. Eventually, that led to Brad Pitt. Pitt led kind of simultaneously to Zaillian, because we knew, again, for the movie to work, it couldn’t just be a drama or a dramedy. It had to be executed by the level of talent that gets those movies done and done perfectly. Once it was Zaillian and Pitt collaborating, we were kind of on safe ground, because suddenly the chances of getting the movie into production went up exponentially, because of the track record of both gentlemen. But with Soderbergh, it just got to a point where he was exploring an aesthetic for that movie, including first-person, on-camera testimonials and this docudrama approach, that probably at the end of the day wasn’t in perfect synch with what it would cost to make and market. And that made us pivot back to the original Zaillian structure. Steve, I think at the time, was unavailable, and we had just worked with Aaron and Scott on Social Network and Scott and Aaron loved the story. And then they came on, got us to the next stage, which was going back out to directors and finding Bennett Miller. Based on Bennett’s pitch and the script we had in hand, we had a pretty good sense that we had a movie that we thought could work.

I wonder if you could talk a little bit about working with Bennett? He’d only made two prior films — both highly acclaimed, but still. He’s obviously a selective filmmaker; how did you know that he was the guy for this story?

He and Brad knew each other, and this was something Brad was obviously interested in. But Bennett’s pitch on it was very profound. It was basically the movie that you saw. To him, it was a quest for wisdom, almost like The Wizard of Oz, of going on the journey where a man is trying to look over the pieces of his past and figure out what he’s trying to say in his life and how he’s going to be happy. It was a profound pitch and it moved us; it just felt right.

So once this movie is done, the marketing angle on it is not immediately obvious, unless you’re a baseball geek.

So how do you approach that kind of challenge, to make people who are not baseball fans or don’t know jack about sabermetrics come out to see this picture?

This is going to sound simple, but ... it has to be a good movie. Because to have a TV spot or a trailer work for that kind of low-concept movie, the scenes themselves, the performances,
everything has to be perfect. You need the reviews. You need the materials that will announce that it’s that rare thing, the movie you should see because it’s just that good. You know?

On the other end, there is the more concept-driven material that you initially cut your teeth on, and that’s lately found an expression in films like The Sitter and Fright Night … Do you have a different kind of personal equation when you’re trying to work more of a concept-driven film as opposed to a boutique “cut gem” like Moneyball?

No. And, you know, it’s funny, the more I do this, the more I realize it’s the same criteria, or should be the same criteria. It’s got to be the best version of itself. All you can do is bear down on the script, bear down on the casting, the choice of director, try to baby-sit the production as best you can and hope for the best. And sometimes lightning strikes and it all works out, and sometimes you shit the bed and you don’t know why. It just happens magically.

Just keep moving forward and get through it as cleanly and as competently as possible.

That is the case. When you have a set that’s not as “sum- mer-campy,” that has a level of tension to it, what’s your approach as a producer? Obviously, every set is going to have its unique issues, but speaking generally?

Keep it moving. Just keep it moving. And if you’ve got problems, don’t let them become two-day problems or three-day problems. Rip it in the bud on the day of, if you can. Just keep moving forward and get through it as clearly and as competently as possible.

Without necessarily mentioning names, are there times you can think of where you encountered these sorts of problems and wish you’d handled or resolved them differently?

One of the biggest failures fell in my executive career. Town & Country, the Warren Beatty movie, was a failure on my part to understand a few basic things. At the time when I was at New Line, I thought that the audience for that movie, like the audience for The First Wives Club, was being underserved by the studios. But because I was a young bachelor and had no conception of marriage, I just didn’t clue in that there’s a major difference between the wish fulfillment of jilted first wives getting revenge, and a philandering husband fucking around on his wife with three other women. I just thought, “Oh, it’s all ribaldry.” Turns out, only the French think that’s funny. So conceptually, Town & Country probably was always doomed on a mass-market level. But the production ran away from me. I literally couldn’t control the constant rewriting and the search for an ending. There were opportunities to pull the plug and not throw good money after bad. But I did. I chased it and I chased it, and I got what I deserved from it. That was a hard lesson. Don’t chase it. It’s okay to pull the plug sometimes. But then on the other hand, had Amy pulled the plug on Moneyball, we never would’ve had that wonderful movie. So all I know how to do is play it consistently. Sometimes I’ll be right and sometimes I’ll be horribly wrong. But in looking over my own career, a lot of my mistakes happened when I had a gut instinct that this was not going to end well, and I ignored that gut instinct and let things go forward in a belief that it’d work out. As a producer now, on the ground floor of a movie, I know things don’t just work out. It requires hands-on management, and fighting every day to make it work out. It doesn’t just happen magically.

Red Dawn, just recently. Yeah, who knows? Maybe there was vampire fatigue post Twilight, post True Blood, post Vampire Diaries and all that stuff. It may have been too subtle, it may have been almost quaint, in a way. Always, when you blend horror and comedy, you’re asking for trouble. I think Zombieland is one of the few exceptions that got the balance right.

You mention the Fright Night set as being an especially friendly one. But of course, that’s not always the case. When you have a set that’s not as “summer-campy,” that has a level of tension to it, what’s your approach as a producer? Obviously, every set is going to have its unique issues, but speaking generally?

Keep it moving. Just keep it moving. And if you’ve got problems, don’t let them become two-day problems or three-day problems. Rip it in the bud on the day of, if you can. Just keep moving forward and get through it as clearly and as competently as possible.
Other than home video declining or evaporating, what are the big changes now that producers are dealing with in the industry that they weren't dealing with 10 or 15 years ago?

Well, for one, competition from all these other platforms. Competition for people's attention. That's probably the biggest thing that we're conscious of, aside from the financials. Everything has to be an event now. Even independent films or art films, they have to be a theatrical worthy event in a way. I think it's a good thing; the bar is higher for quality. When home video was booming, you could get away with flooding the market with movies that you hoped would work out, or that were the umpteenth version of the same formula. And you just can't do that anymore. It's a higher bar for quality because you're competing for the audience's attention in a much more crowded marketplace.

When you say "the bar is higher," is that a bar that the studios or financiers are setting?

"The bar is higher," is that a bar that you're setting? Is that a bar that the studios or financiers are setting? I think the public sets it. They're saying, "Don't bring me the broke-ass shit anymore." They've got other things to do with their time. And they'll vote with their dollars for the stuff that's ... you know, the Glengarry leads, not the broke-ass shit.

Right. So given that we're in this new, multi-platform world, even while your passion for cinema is really evident, do you look at these other platforms and see them as possibilities? A place to expand? Or do you still feel your role is more to be the exemplar of what's still our most historic and prestigious platform?

You know ... both, if that's a valid answer. I think taking advantage of what's going on in terms of transmedia is wonderful and I would love to be doing it. I think it's a great ambition to do both. Movie-going is always going to be, in some form or another, a social experience. I want to leave my house and sit in a room with 300 other people and laugh at the same joke or cry at the same tragedy. That's something as a species we're always going to gravitate toward. It's a therapeutic experience, and I think there's something hardwired in our DNA that's always going to make us want to experience things collectively. I don't think that ever goes away.

I'm glad you think so. I've heard other producers speculate, anecdotally, that the opposite is true, that the younger audience would rather watch in more isolation, on personal screens ... that teenagers today find sitting in a big room full of people to be awkward, essentially.

You never know. That might be true of teenagers. Maybe when they hit their 20s after college, they'll want to know they're not alone in the universe. [laughs] It certainly happened to me. But what I think is exciting about our times is that there's room for everything. And if you are a producer who's well-versed in all worlds, there's an incredible opportunity for you to have content everywhere. Whereas before if you didn't make it as a producer with the top seven studios, or a producer in the independent world, you were cooked. Now you can reinvent yourself or invent yourself in a varied kind of field. So I think that's exciting.

Another exciting thing: You're in the hot seat for producing our Producers Guild Awards this year! Just on a personal level, what does that distinction mean to you?

Producing the Awards this year meant a chance for me to give something back to the Guild, an organization I believe in from the bottom of my heart, and that does such important work for the dignity and integrity of producers everywhere. I was lucky enough to be honored with nominations the last two years and really wanted to return the favor.

There were opportunities to pull the plug and not throw good money after bad. But I did, I chased it and I chased it, and I got what I deserved from it. That was a hard lesson: Don't chase it. It's okay to pull the plug sometimes.

You're not a live-event producer by trade; as a producer, where are you focusing your energies for the show?

My creative priorities for the show right now include lining up honorees and presenters that reflect the diversity of our community while capturing the immediacy and relevance of the "right now." I want it to be a brisk, warm and funny night. But producing a live show means changes and improvisations right up to the last minute, the opposite of a movie shoot where things are usually set in stone months before. You have to be ready for anything, and it's fun that way.

Of course, a lot of the readers of this magazine are emerging producers who are working to breakthrough and get their projects off the ground. From your vantage, what would you say to someone who's getting their producing career started, trying to get their first features financed? What should their priorities be at the start of their career?

Finding material. Getting bold of that new writer out of USC, or wherever. Or trolling the Internet for short films. Because filmmaking tools have never been more accessible. There are filmmakers coming from all over the place. And, yeah, it's no more of a needle-in-a-haystack job, but as a young or beginning producer, if you can hook up with great material, however you get your hands on it, something may click. It sounds simple, but it all goes back to material and your ability to find it, and advocate for it, and push it through.
“This picture was conceived in a state of emergency, shot in confusion, and wound up in a blind panic.” Thus did the witty writer/director Joseph L. Mankiewicz describe the five-year saga behind the making of his 1963 Cleopatra. He was not so amused during production.

Cleopatra is commonly described as the film that nearly bankrupted Twentieth Century-Fox in the years before the studio’s resounding resurgence with 1965’s The Sound of Music. But the truth is far more complicated. No one film could bring a studio to the edge of ruin unless the conditions at that studio were ripe for brinksmanship.

Far more accurate was the assessment of Darryl F. Zanuck, the brilliant production head of Fox who left the studio in 1956 and returned in 1962 as president: he wrote Cleopatra producer Walter Wanger that the film’s production “consistently violated every fundamental or ‘kindergarten’ production rule.”

Two violations were outstanding. First, for nearly three years, Wanger had not been able to develop from various writers a shootable script on which to base budgets, operations, and controls. Second, harried Fox executives, trying to fill Zanuck’s shoes, insisted that principal photography commence without that completed script and without the proper production organization in place to control costs. Incredibly, Fox did this twice — once in England and again in Italy.

The overall result was chaos and overblown expense: by the time Cleopatra premiered in Manhattan in June 1963, the film had racked up a negative cost of more than $31 million, the most expensive movie made in Hollywood to that time. With marketing costs added in, Fox’s investment came to $44 million.

For anyone interested in the work of film producers, the most fascinating aspect of this story — the Elizabeth Taylor-Richard Burton scandal aside — is that Wanger and the Fox executives held dramatically different views of how a film producer should wield authority. Fox, following the Zanuck model, argued for absolute leadership and control over operations and talent. Wanger believed in cajoling and tact. These different producing philosophies could be seen in action during Cleopatra’s overlong production, and were articulated in depositions for the lawsuits between the warring parties that followed the film’s premiere.

When Fox executives denounced Wanger for the entire fiasco, they were half right. The film’s very concept was his. A former Academy president and veteran quality producer who had a weakness for making exotic romances set in North Africa (from 1938’s Algiers all the way back to Rudolph Valentino in 1921’s The Sheik), Wanger was hired by Fox after his comeback success with the 1958 hard-hitting, anti-capital punishment biopic I Want to Live!, which netted star Susan Hayward a Best Actress Academy Award. Inspired by a recent biography, Wanger saw Cleopatra as a brilliant, beautiful, scheming character. His conception of the film seemed to be a big-budget version of I, Claudius; his first choice director was Alfred Hitchcock, who turned him down.

Fox at this time experienced an atypically difficult period in its history. Studio heads Buddy Adler and Spyros Skouras (the legendary executive who persuaded Hollywood studios and theater owners to adopt CinemaScope in 1953) were running the company in Zanuck’s shadow. Adler and his team saw Cleopatra as a $3 million film (maximum) with a contract star in the title role (Joan Collins or Joanne Woodward). Wanger, however, persuaded them to make a Technicolor, Todd-AO widescreen epic with no expense spared on sets, costumes, special acts and star Elizabeth Taylor, whom the studio agreed to pay the unprecedented sum of $1 million.

With Taylor signed, Fox executives made a series of bad decisions without consulting Wanger. They eventually settled on Pinewood Studios for shooting the film, but that facility’s space was inadequate for the exteriors. They also chose to hire the headstrong veteran director Rouben Mamoulian. Shooting commenced in fall 1960 before sets and even a script were finished, in spite of Wanger’s work with a number of writers. The one bright spot was the leading cast: Peter Finch was to play Caesar and Stephen Boyd, who had played Masala in Ben-Hur (1959) would portray Antony.

Yet the British climate (low temperature and high humidity) disagreed with Elizabeth Taylor. Mamoulian shot a series of screen tests around her in Technicolor and Todd-AO that only demonstrated that the facility was absurdly wrong for a

Photos from the collections of the Margaret Herrick Library
North African setting: In the director’s words, “The great white columns of that beautiful set were wreathed in light mists; while every time anyone spoke, there were clouds of steam from his mouth. It had a marvelous quality, quite beautiful, but not exactly Alexandria.” Production shut down and Fox reset the budget at $9 million. Script problems continued. (Paddy Chayevsky estimated they would take six months to fix.) In January 1961, Skouras accepted Mamoulian’s fourth offer of resignation. After two years and $7 million—$1.5 million more than the costs of South Pacific—Fox had 10 minutes of test footage.

Enter Joseph L. Mankiewicz, who had just directed Taylor to an Academy Award nomination for 1959’s Suddenly Last Summer. Mankiewicz reconceived the story as showing Mark Antony’s inferiority complex relative to Caesar—an idea that would require months to write. While Mankiewicz worked on it in spring 1961, Taylor contracted a nearly fatal case of pneumonia and spent April recovering in the London Clinic. Fox at this point shut down the Pinewood production. Taylor returned to Hollywood with husband Eddie Fisher and accepted an Academy Award for her performance in Butterfield 8. Meanwhile, Wanger and Mankiewicz secured Rex Harrison and Richard Burton (bought out of his Broadway Camelot contract for the purpose) to co-star with Taylor and an all-star team of production and costume designers (John DeCuir and Irene Sharaff) and cinematographer Leon Shamroy, all of whom had worked on Fox’s stunning 1956 adaptation of The King and I.

The overall result was chaos and overblown expense: by the time Cleopatra premiered in Manhattan in June 1963, the film had racked up a negative cost of more than $31 million.
Skouras promised the Board that both current productions would rectify all of Fox’s problems. “Skouras had pulled the studio out with CinemaScope,” Roddy McDowall recalled. “That one thing had stemmed the tide of the studio’s decline. Now with Cleopatra, he was going to do it again. But when you enter into this situation where you depend on ‘this one thing’ then you are in trouble.” For this reason as much as any other, Skouras and new head of production Peter Levathes repeated the major mistake committed during the Pinewood phase of the film: they insisted that shooting commence in Italy on September 25, 1961. Thus most of the major problems that beset the second phase in the production of Cleopatra were set in motion by Fox’s corporate politics. It didn’t make much sense. As Wanger later observed, “Talking to the people at Fox is like a Kafka play in which you call a number, and no one’s at the other end of the phone ... You try to reason but discover no one is listening.”

In mid-July, the studio sent a small group to Italy to prepare for principal photography: the director, art director, unit manager Johnny Johnston, and a staff, as Sid Rogell, Fox’s head of European production put it, “without the backing of top-level management, internal controls, legal aides, etc.” This, in Rogell’s view, was “suicidal.” Fox had no one in place to look after the multitude of details to be coordinated. Nor was anyone authorized to oversee expenditures. Comptrollers paid bills from Italian contractors before they could be examined and adjusted. The Italian unit manager overcharged Fox for car, truck, and property rentals and for insurance. As Rogell described it, accountants and production managers were “always three weeks behind [on their estimates], and then they suddenly remember some $300,000 item they forgot to include.” Costs rose to more than $135,000 per day. “I don’t know where the money had gone, but they have thrown away $5 million ... sets too large and costly, everyone including actors here on salary and living allowances for weeks and months before they were needed.” Sets, costumes and wigs were not ready for the start of shooting. (Wanger himself only arrived three weeks prior.) By contrast, MGM spent a year, not two months, in Rome on pre-production for Ben-Hur.
Most of the major problems that beset the second phase in the production of Cleopatra were set in motion by Fox's corporate politics. It didn't make much sense. As Wanger later observed, "Talking to the people at Fox is like a Kafka play in which you call a number, and no one’s at the other end of the phone ... You try to reason but discover no one is listening."

Even if Cleopatra had been adequately staffed for preparations, the production team was working from a script outline, rather than the script itself. By late September, Mankiewicz had completed 132 pages of script, the equivalent of a 100-minute film and a remarkable accomplishment in six months’ time, given his attention to details of production and casting and hiring technicians. But another 195 pages remained to be written when shooting began. Mankiewicz shot scenes by day and wrote the script in longhand every night. The strain on the writer-director was considerable; he had to use injections and pills for the strength and energy to direct and write. In effect, part two of Cleopatra was shot from a script written hastily and under extreme duress.

For both these reasons, Mankiewicz had the most authority of all. Had Cleopatra’s script been completed well in advance, Fox could have enjoyed production planning and accurate budget estimates. One of their executives, or Wanger, could have controlled costs; Fox gave Rogell the authority to control and examine expenses weeks after principal photography began. As a result, Mankiewicz was in complete charge. As Zanuck wrote in 1962, “You were not the official producer, yet in the history of motion pictures no one man has ever been given such authority. The records show that you made every single decision and that your word was law ... On this point, I do blame [studio] “administration” for giving any one man such unlimited authority.”

By November, Fox was looking at an estimated $22.5 million loss for the year, increasing the pressure on the new production head, Peter Levathes, and Skouras. The Taylor-Burton affair, which began quietly in December 1961, did not help. It was a full-blown scandal by February 1962, covered by newspapers and magazines all over the world and threatening to jeopardize the studio's investment as Taylor was denounced as a confirmed home wrecker. Taylor continued to come to the set late or not at all. Fox was paying her $50,000 plus $3,000 in expenses weekly. Here was another aspect of the production that was completely out of anyone’s control.

By March 1962, the Fox Board knew the studio faced a half-million-dollar first-quarter loss and a negative cost for Cleopatra estimated at $27 million. In response, the Board tried to impose authority on the production from afar: it insisted that Taylor be closed out by June 9 regardless of where shooting was (Mankiewicz still had a number of battle scenes to film); that all funds for production be cut off by June 30 and that Wanger be fired. Production actually ended in late July.

While the Cleopatra group struggled to complete the picture, Skouras lost the battle with his Wall Street critics. Three days after Taylor closed on Cleopatra, he resigned from the company. Various studio releases (1961's The Inn of the Sixth Happiness, and in 1962, Tender Is the Night, Satan Never Sleeps and State Fair) had lost money; but Cleopatra, Wanger, Mankiewicz, and Taylor were obvious and convenient scapegoats. Enter (or make that re-enter) Barry Zaneck, having put his Longest Day behind him. His new version of the Allied invasion at Normandy put the Cleopatra operation to shame, for he had completed his epic in 10 months with an elaborate, all-star cast for $8 million, and he had it ready for release in the fall of January – February 2013
he bluntly expressed shock after screening Mankiewicz’s $2 million reduced payrolls by one-third and started reviewing Richard Zanuck as head of production, shut down the studio, quickly and vigorously: He replaced Peter Levathes with his son the company by a portion of the Board. As president, he moved constituted the largest private stockholder in Fox, was asked to lead 1962 while Mankiewicz worked on his rough cut.

It has to be done with sympathy, understanding, diplomacy arbitrarily throw your power around or become a hatchet man. Yet Wanger’s defense of his actions also made sense: during Fighting him in the open would get us nothing. In Wanger’s view, he was “entirely responsible for having organized and seen through [the production] ... I was the responsible producer from start to finish, although the company did everything that they could to make my work impossible.” In retaliation for being left out of the post-production process, the pre-premiere publicity, and the character-ization of him as an extravagant producer, Wanger, with plenty of time on his hands, did something unthinkable in 1963. He co-authored and published My Life With Cleopatra, to promote the film and especially Elizabeth Taylor, to defend his reputation against charges of extravagance and ineffectiveness, and to expose the “hanging interference” of “desperate, nervous men” at Fox who preceded Zanuck. Wanger told co-author, journalist Joe Hyams, “This is not a black-and-white situation. This is a situation full of shades and full of truths — untruths and deviations — and I would like to make all of that clear...” But as Vincent Canby noted in his perceptive review of the book for Variety, “It’s an almost affectionate hatchet job on Skouras.” Skouras certainly saw the book’s intent: “This man violated every decent ethic of the amusement world.”

The depositions taken for the lawsuits that ensued revealed how elusive a firm definition of a producer’s function in Hollywood was and how ambiguous Wanger’s performance of those duties were. Fox’s attorneys tried to show that Wanger had acted irresponsibly in supervising the film. In reply, Wanger’s attorneys referred to the phrase “industry custom” in Wanger’s contract to describe the standard by which Wanger’s conduct on Cleopatra could be judged, aiming to prove that Fox granted Wanger responsibility without authority because their executives constantly interfered with his work.

What neither side recognized was that there was precious little agreement on what that “custom” for a producer was, beyond developing a script and finding funds. Skouras and Wanger agreed the producer was “responsible” for everything in a film’s production, but once the questions became more specific, they had no consensus. Since the 1920s, there had been a tremendous flexibility in how producers defined their functions in production. Thus, Wanger did not fit the style of a personal producer enshrined by Fox executives, producers, and writers. To them, Wanger’s conduct was incomprehensible, even willfully negligent. “I can never understand Wanger,” Fox’s screenwriter-producer and sometime director, Nunnally Johnson, wrote Robert Goldstein in November 1961. “Whenever I talk to him about Cleopatra, he talks as if it were somebody else’s production. Once I said to him is (Taylor) due to work yet? He replied, ‘I hear she’s overdue.’ What the
hell does that mean?" "In all sincerity," Skouras wrote Wanger in May 1962, "I do not believe you have ever felt the responsibility of this venture as I have." The uncertainty surrounding the supervisory, managerial position of the movie producer was a perennial feature of the studio hierarchy; it simply had never proven quite so costly before.

In October 1965, Wanger and Fox reached a $100,000 settlement, and Wanger issued a generous retraction, stating "… I hold Mr. Skouras in the highest regard both personally and professionally. I regret that anything I have written has cast a cloud over his outstanding reputation as one of the acknowledged leaders and pioneer executives of the motion picture industry."

Cleopatra demonstrates some of the ambiguities that attend defining a producer's job and how that function is fulfilled. It was indeed a legendary catastrophe in filmmaking, a vivid lesson in how not to produce a major film as the classic studio system continued its decline and fall, and just years before a new youthful sensibility emerged (exemplified by 1967’s The Graduate and Bonnie & Clyde). Ironically, even in the midst of the studio system's deterioration, Skouras' brilliant distribution plan for Cleopatra ensured that the film paid off handsomely. By early 1964, it ranked ninth in Variety's all-time, top-grossing films, earning $500,000 more than The Longest Day. One year after its premiere, Cleopatra had recovered nearly half its cost. Finally, with its $5 million sale to ABC for two prime-time showings in September 1966, the film broke even. Thanks partially to its theatrical gross, the Fox company was solvent again, reporting a profit in 1963 of $9 million and of $11.5 million in 1964. By 1966, thanks to the nearly $100 million theatrical gross of Wise's The Sound of Music, Fox was in healthy condition.

Wanger never produced another film.

Matthew H. Bernstein is the author of Walter Wanger, Hollywood Independent (2000) and chairs the Film and Media Studies Department at Emory University in Atlanta.
WE PROUDLY SALUTE J.J. ABRAMS ON RECEIVING THE 2013 NORMAN LEAR ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN TELEVISION
FX Proudly Congratulates Our Producers Guild Award Nominees

The David L. Wolper Award for Outstanding Producer of Long-Form Television
“American Horror Story”
Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk, Dante Di Loreto, Brad Buecker, Alexis Martin Woodall, Chip Vucelich

The Danny Thomas Award for Outstanding Producer of Episodic Television, Comedy
“Louie”
Louis C.K., M. Blair Breard, Dave Becky

PARAMOUNT PICTURES CONGRATULATES J.J. ABRAMS ON RECEIVING THE PGA’s 2013 NORMAN LEAR AWARD FOR TELEVISION
It is the first Producers Guild Awards event to be held in the era of the Producers’ Mark, and it couldn’t come soon enough. Mere months after the Producers Guild publicly announced that several companies — including 20th Century Fox, Universal, Columbia Pictures and Screen Gems — had signed an agreement to include and honor the Producers’ Mark on films they developed and released, the industry will gather to recognize that achievement, and celebrate the finest producing work of the year.

And as the following pages detail, 2012 was indeed a remarkable year for film, television and new media, thanks in no small part to the PGA’s distinguished group of honorees. The Guild’s most prestigious honor, the Milestone Award, will be presented to Bob and Harvey Weinstein, whose work with Miramax, Dimension Films and The Weinstein Company has all but defined contemporary independent film. Wunderkind storyteller J.J. Abrams receives the Norman Lear Achievement Award in Television, in recognition of the new storytelling vistas he’s opened up with such series as *Lost, Alias, Fringe* and *Revolution*. The Working Title Films team of Tim Bevan and Eric Fellner are recognized with the David O. Selznick Achievement Award in Theatrical Motion Pictures, on the strength of their beautifully executed filmography and forward-thinking creative collaborations on both sides of the Atlantic. Hip-hop impresario Russell Simmons will accept the Visionary Award, for his pivotal role in providing a platform for young artists to find their voices as well as his indomitable support of philanthropic causes. Finally, the Stanley Kramer Award goes to *Bully*, the controversial documentary that has altered the national conversation about bullying, with consequences that have stretched from the family dinner table to our school boards’ town meetings and policy discussions.

With new event Chair (and cover subject) Michael De Luca taking the reins of the event, members and nominees alike are looking forward to an exciting and dynamic evening that will set the agenda for this year’s unpredictable awards season.
As has become expected in the 10-nominees era, the Guild’s nominating ballot for the Zanuck Award turned up an engaging and diverse—if not always surprising—collection of films. Fittingly enough, several of the entries beg comparison with one another. In Zero Dark Thirty and Django Unchained, we find wildly divergent approaches to the drive for (and price of) revenge—one seen as if through a documentarian’s lens, the other through a funhouse mirror. Lincoln and Les Misérables each dare to tread on different types of hallowed ground with epic sweep and startling intimacy. In Silver Linings Playbook, true love is sprawling, messy and glorious; in Moonrise Kingdom, it’s delicate, precise ... and just as glorious. Argo and Life of Pi each embrace the power of storytelling to resolve, respectively, geopolitical and existential dilemmas.

Which leaves us with Skyfall and Beasts of the Southern Wild as the remaining dancing partners. We’re not sure how to pair them, other than to observe that never once during the making of the James Bond stunt spectacular did the producers imagine they’d be sharing this category with a virtually handmade quasi-mythic bayou fable, and vice versa.

Who takes it? We all but threw up our hands last year when we posed this question, and we’re on the verge of doing so again. But if the last two years (winners: The Artist, The King’s Speech) are any indication, the PGA membership is in the mood for broadly appealing, technically refined films that go down easy with unabashedly happy endings. So based on those sketchy criteria (plus the imprimatur of the Golden Globes), we’ll go ahead and cautiously predict good news for Argo.
This year, Disney has a three-in-five chance of coming out ahead in the Guild’s animated feature category, boasting a trio of strong nominees in Brave, Frankenweenie and Wreck-It Ralph. But you can expect both Rise of the Guardians or ParaNorman to give the Mouse a run for its money.

Four of the five tales harness the supernatural to their ends, from the witch, er ... wood-carver who transforms a queen into a bear in Brave, to Frankenweenie’s paraphrase of Frankenstein in telling the story of a boy who can’t bear to let his beloved dog go. Rise of the Guardians puts its supernatural beings front and center, recasting Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, Jack Frost and the Tooth Fairy into a world-saving super-team, while ParaNorman uses unearthly powers as the pivot point in a surprisingly powerful story that’s as much about tolerance as it is about defeating a sinister curse. Only Wreck-It Ralph eschewed the mystical planes, relying on its own kind of wizardry to bring the world (and affectionate history) of classic video games to vivid, bustling life.

Full disclosure: We’re video gamers at Produced by, and so we have to confess that Wreck-It Ralph hit the sweet spot for us like few other films this year. That said, the smart money is best laid on PIXAR. With Brave, the team hit on a story with near-universal appeal, and executed it with the flawless precision we’ve come to expect. That sounds like a winning recipe to us.
The theme for the 2013 Documentary Motion Picture category seems to be the "year of the under-dog."

The Other Dream Team is a documentary about how the under-dog country of Lithuania solidified its freedom and national identity from Russia with the help of its Olympic Bronze medal basketball team. Searching for Sugar Man tells the unbelievable true story about an enigmatic musician who disappeared into obscurity in the '70s, while his fame and notoriety boomed in apartheid South Africa, unbeknownst to him or the rest of the world. The Island President explores the politics of international climate change through the eyes of the Maldivian president who reversed the oppression of the nation's previous regime, only to face the biggest problem of the country’s history — submersion by the rising seas.

The Gatekeepers exposes the activities and organizational secrets of six former members of Shin Bet, the Israeli security agency, who give shockingly candid assessments of current Israeli policy, expressing grave doubts over its handling of anti-terrorist operations. A People Uncounted tells a culturally rich history of the Roma people, including the devastation the culture suffered in the Holocaust, and how the centuries of oppression, vilification and romanticism have shaped the context in which the rest of the world views the Romani.

Year after year, the PGA selects five outstanding films for this category, each of which deserves wider recognition. But if we had to guess as to this year’s outcome, we’d go with Searching for Sugar Man, which combines all the elements of a great mystery with a one-of-a-kind story of cultural adoption and transformation.
We confess, we’re curious about this one. For 10 solid years, HBO held a hammerlock on this category, winning time and again. That streak was broken last year by *Downton Abbey*. But with *Downton’s* larger episode run pushing it into the drama series category this year, will HBO be able to bounce back? If so, it’ll do so on the (considerable) strength of *Game Change*, the latest in its series of original films about recent political events.

*Game Change*, however, represents HBO’s only nominee in the fight; most years, the pay-cable champ has two or three horses in the running. This year, its stiffest competition may come from Ryan Murphy’s *American Horror Story*, which has pulled a reverse-*Downton*, moving from consideration in the drama series category to long-form. The category is rounded out by an even more diverse group than usual: History’s first-ever PGA nominee, *Hatfields & McCoys*, holding up the great tradition of the American historical miniseries; Ken Burns’ latest epic non-fiction event, *The Dust Bowl*; and Steven Moffat’s dazzlingly smart contemporary reboot of one of literature’s most beloved characters, *Sherlock*.

As we’ve observed in years past, it’s hard to bet against HBO. But we think *American Horror Story*’s bold reinvention as an anthology series (not to mention its memorably creepy marketing campaign) will be enough to prevail over *Game Change*, whose political currency was somewhat swept aside by our most recent election.

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<th>The David L. Wolper Award for Outstanding Producer of Long-Form Television</th>
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**Hatfields & McCoys** (History)
- Barry Berg
- Kevin Costner
- Darrell Fetty
- Leslie Greif
- Herb Nanas

**Sherlock** (PBS)
- Mark Gatiss
- Steven Moffat
- Beryl Vertue
- Sue Vertue
THE DANNY THOMAS AWARD
FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF
EPISODIC TELEVISION, COMEDY

I

f this group of nominees feels a little familiar to you — you’re not dream-
ing. 30 Rock, Curb Your Enthusiasm and current champ Modern Family
have won seven of the last nine Thomas Awards between them. It’s a tes-
tament to these shows’ staying power that they garner nominations and
wins, year after year. Wherever the PGA’s collective sweet spot for comedy lies,
these series know how to find it and hit it.

The same could be said of The Big Bang Theory, which posts its second
straight nomination in this category. This year’s Thomas Award nominees
boast only one newcomer, but it’s one well worth celebrating. FX’s Louie has
gotten bolder with each passing year, mining new comic territory with dis-
comfiting honesty and rough-around-the-edges authenticity. The PGA voters’
choice to include it alongside smoother major network fare suggests a lively
eclecticism in our membership’s comic tastes.

For the most part, winning series in this category enjoy distinctive runs.
Sex and the City dominated it in the early 2000s, and 30 Rock pulled off a three-peat
from 2008 to 2010. We’re betting that Modern Family equals that feat this year
and takes home its third straight Thomas Award.
Well, here’s something you don’t see every day. This year’s slate of Felton Award nominees includes two of the series that received nominations last year … but not last year’s winner. For whatever reason, the PGA’s romance with HBO’s *Boardwalk Empire* proved to be short-lived, as voters left it out of the charmed circle entirely in 2013. Also forsaken this year was Showtime’s *Dexter*, which had enjoyed a run of five straight Felton nominations.

The days when *Mad Men* was the new kid on the block are long gone; it returns this year as the dean of this category, a three-time winner, and a nominee in each of its five years of eligibility. Its fellow series on AMC, *Breaking Bad*, returns with a third nomination. And if the membership’s affections waned for *Boardwalk Empire*, they’ve stayed strong for HBO’s other prestige entry, *Game of Thrones*, which continued to rewrite the rules of genre storytelling in its second season.

But the series to watch are the newcomers. *Downton Abbey* won the Guild’s Wolper Award for Long-Form Television last year, but checks in against some heavier hitters having graduated to the series category. And Showtime’s *Homeland* comes in with the strongest head of steam, having pulled off a surprise Emmy win in the fall and just now in the middle of a fascinating second season.

We’re big fans of all these shows, but there’s no denying the momentum that *Homeland* has built up; we see it taking this category over *Downton Abbey* and *Breaking Bad* with room to spare.

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**THE NORMAN FELTON AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF EPISODIC TELEVISION, DRAMA**

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**Breaking Bad** (AMC)
- Melissa Bernstein
- Sam Catlin
- Bryan Cranston
- Vince Gilligan
- Peter Gould
- Mark Johnson
- Stewart Lyons
- Michelle MacLaren
- George Mastras
- Diane Mercer
- Thomas Schnauz
- Moira Walley-Beckett

**Downton Abbey** (PBS)
- Julian Fellowes
- Gareth Neame
- Liz Trubridge

**Game of Thrones** (HBO)
- David Benioff
- Bernadette Caulfield
- Frank Doelger
- Carolyn Strauss
- D.B. Weiss

**Mad Men** (AMC)
- Jon Hamm
- Scott Hornbacher
- Andre Jacquemetton
- Maria Jacquemetton
- Victor Levin
- Blake McCormick
- Matthew Weiner

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**jj, CONGRATULATIONS ON RECEIVING THE NORMAN LEAR ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN TELEVISION**

Fondly,

David Lonner

**OASIS MEDIA GROUP**
Like many of this year’s competitive categories, the Non-Fiction Television race features three contenders who matched up last year: the Travel Channel’s sole nominee Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations, Discovery Channel’s stalwart contender Deadliest Catch, and last year’s surprise winner, the PBS anthology series American Masters.

In an interesting development, PGA voters filled out the category with a pair of stage-bound shows — about as far as one can get from the location-driven globetrotting of Deadliest Catch and No Reservations. Inside the Actors Studio makes a return to the nominees’ circle for the first time since 2005; as far as we can tell, this is the longest gap between Producers Guild Award nominations ever seen by any show. Shark Tank makes its first appearance in the PGA’s non-fiction category, standing as the only entry from one of the major broadcast networks.

We didn’t see the American Masters win coming last year, and given the iffy track record that anthology series typically post in awards competition, we still can’t quite believe it happened. While Deadliest Catch still feels like the safe choice here, we’ll go out on a limb for a different kind of fishing expedition. The spectacle of entrepreneurs vying for venture capital is something we’ve never quite seen on TV before, and combined with the demographic reach of ABC, that novelty is enough for us to propose that Shark Tank will take the prize on its first time out.

THE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF NON-FICTION TELEVISION

American Masters (PBS)
Prudence Glass
Susan Lacy
Julie Sacks

Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations (Travel Channel)
Anthony Bourdain
Christopher Collins
Lydia Tenaglia
Sandy Zweig

Deadliest Catch (Discovery Channel)
Thom Beers
Jeff Conroy
Sean Dash
John Gray
Sheila McCormack
Bill Pruitt
Decker Watson

Inside the Actors Studio (Bravo)
James Lipton
Shawn Tesser
Jeff Wurtz

Shark Tank (ABC)
Rhett Bachner
Becky Blitz
Mark Burnett
Bill Gaudsmith
Yun Lingner
Brien Meagher
Clay Newbill
Jim Roush
Laura Skowlund
Paul Sutera
Patrick Wood

Produced by
RUSSELL SIMMONS
TRUE VISIONARY

Thank you for so many years of inspiration and collaboration.

STAN LATHAN

IN FASHION, ONE DAY YOU’RE IN THE NEXT DAY YOU’RE OUT

YOU MAKE THE CUT EVERY TIME.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE JUDGES, DESIGNERS, PRODUCERS, & CREW ON 11 OUTSTANDING SEASONS

JANE CHA CUTLER & DESIREE CRUBER
FULL EPISODE
THE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AND TALK TELEVISION

The category may change, but the result never seems to. There’s no other way to put it: Our Guild loves Stephen Colbert.

It doesn’t ever seem to matter who goes up against The Colbert Report; for the last five years, the result has been the same. In fact, our records show that Colbert’s five-year run is historic — no series ever has won more Producers Guild Awards ... an achievement made all the more remarkable by the fact that the Guild only has been honoring non-fiction television for 11 years.

Those facts can’t be much comfort to its competition — returning nominees Real Time With Bill Maher and Saturday Night Live, and newcomers Jimmy Kimmel Live and Late Night With Jimmy Fallon. Perhaps the presence of three other late-night desk jockeys on the ballot will be enough to blunt Colbert’s momentum, but what can we say other than that the track record speaks for itself? We bet Colbert makes it six-for-six, our safest call of the night.

Congratulations

to my good friends

Harvey and Bob Weinstein

on this well deserved honor.

Ron Burkle
The Producers Guild Awards premiered its Competition Television category last year, with all nominated series relieved, at the very least, to be competing against shows in the same genre. Prior to that, it was a bit of a tossup as to which category these programs were likely to be recognized in, so we don’t have quite the same body of prognostication-worthy data that other categories offer.

That doesn’t mean there isn’t a favorite— that being The Amazing Race. A winner in its category both last year and back in 2005, The Amazing Race this year racked up its incredible 10th Producers Guild Award nomination — a fitting distinction for a program which, on a sheer production level, seems to attempt the impossible every season. Three of its fellow nominees are series The Amazing Race bested last year: Dancing With the Stars, Top Chef and Project Runway. Only NBC’s The Voice joins the field as a first-time nominee, replacing American Idol (which might tell you something right there).

Maybe there’s enough excitement surrounding The Voice to dethrone The Amazing Race. We have a hard time seeing it. As they did last year, the four creative/performance-based competition shows pose a real threat to split their audience’s votes. But there’s nothing threatening to split Race’s already strong support.

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BOSS
BURN NOTICE
CALIFORNICATION
DALLAS
DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES
DEXTER
DOWNTON ABBEY
ELEMENTARY
FAILING SKIES
FRENCH
GAME OF THRONES
GIRLS
THE GLADES
GRIMM
HOUSE OF LIES
HOMELAND
LAB 8 & ORDER: SVU
MADE MEN
MADE CITY
MODERN FAMILY
NOS
NEW GIRL
THE NEWSROOM
NIXTA
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PERSON OF INTEREST
REVERSE
SHERLOCK
SINGLE LADIES
SMASH
SONS OF ANARCHY
TEEN WOLF
UP ALL NIGHT
WHITE COLLAR
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The Fight Game With Jim Lampley (HBO)
On Freddie Roach (HBO)
Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel (HBO)

The Award for Outstanding Children's Program:
Good Luck Charlie (Disney Channel)
iCarly (Nickelodeon)
Phineas and Ferb (Disney Channel)
The Weight of the Nation for Kids: The Great Cafeteria Takeover (HBO)

The Award for Outstanding Digital Series:
30 Rock: The Webisodes (www.nbc.com)
Bravo's Top Chef: Last Chance Kitchen (www.bravotv.com)
Dexter Early Cuts: All in the Family (www.aol.com)
The Guild (www.watchtheguild.com)
H+ The Digital Series (www.youtube.com/user/HplusDigitalSeries)
Red vs. Blue (www.roosterteeth.com)

ANNOUNCED CATEGORIES

The field of “announced categories” shrinks from four last year to three this year; lack of member and institutional support for the Television News category guided the decision. But the trio of remaining categories is standing strong. Recall that the Guild doesn’t yet have the resources to vet individual producing credits in these genres, hence their status as “announced” categories. But just because we can’t vet credits doesn’t mean we can’t recognize outstanding work. HBO dominates the Sports Program category, snagging four of the five nominee slots. We’ll take those odds, and suspect that Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel will be named the eventual winner. The Children’s Program category boasts three returning nominees from last year, including eventual winner Sesame Street. We suspect that Sesame Street has enough credibility to take the prize again, though what we wouldn’t give to see Phineas and Ferb pull off an upset ... For digital series, the field contains much-loved pioneers such as The Guild and Red vs. Blue, though we have a feeling that, considering the PGA voters’ inclination, one of the series directly affiliated with a TV show might grab more attention. Seeing as how the membership went for NBC’s Jack Donaghy, Executive Superhero last year, we could be forgiven, perhaps, for leaning toward 30 Rock: The Webisodes.

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Does Sarah Lawrence graduate so many entertainment industry luminaries – J.J. Abrams, Brian De Palma, Jon Avnet, Katherine Pope, Jill Clayburgh, Blair Kohan, Donna Gigliotti, Julianna Margulies, and scores more – because our faculty is rated #1 in the US in Princeton Review's Best 377 Colleges ... or because we attract students of enormous talent?

Answer:
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Happy Together
Revisiting the Historic AAP/PGA Merger

by Scott Bengston

An outsider (or even an insider) viewing today’s Producers Guild of America may find it difficult to comprehend how far the organization has developed in the past dozen years. Around the time that all those Y2K preparations were taking place, the PGA merged with the American Association of Producers (AAP). And thanks to the timely and steadfast work of many members, this combined organization of the PGA now exists as a community for all producers and producing team members in film, television and new media.

Terminal Gate

LES NORDHAUSER
Then: AAP Chair; post-merger, PGA Vice President of Motion Pictures
Today: PGA International Committee member; Managing Director, Greenlight Films (Thailand); CEO, IMWC Limited

“The AAP will always hold a special place in my heart. Once someone joined, it was a level playing field. Everyone was accessible. It created an industry support system for all its members, and I met many of my friends in that organization. The AAP was based on education, information-sharing, and networking, and what you got out of the AAP was directly related to what you put into it.”

GEORGE SUNGA
Then: AAP founding member and Chair
Today: Chair Emeritus, PGA Diversity Committee

“I have always believed that this merger constitutes the single most important event in the PGA history since the Screen Producers Guild allowed television producers to join the Guild in 1963!”

At the time of this merger, the PGA and the AAP were two distinctly different organizations with a combined total membership of less than 1,000. While the PGA represented numerous “old guard” producers, particularly specializing in feature film, the AAP consisted of many young producers from television, a diverse group including associate producers, production coordinators, executives at production entities and all categories in between. The group was very grass-roots, forward-looking and active — they had a website, a newsletter and the famed “Who’s Where?” list, which shared current member employment information throughout the organization and the industry. The organization provided a forum for discussing salaries, working conditions, PH&W benefits, employment, seminars and networking among members and others.

The AAP had emerged in response to actions taken by the DGA’s AD/SM/PA Council, which mandated that the creation of budgets or schedules on videotape shows be performed by DGA members. Traditionally, of course, the role of creating budgets or schedules was performed by producers, production coordinators, executives at production entities and all categories in between. The group was very grass-roots, forward-looking and active — they had a website, a newsletter and the famed “Who’s Where?” list, which shared current member employment information throughout the organization and the industry. The organization provided a forum for discussing salaries, working conditions, PH&W benefits, employment, seminars and networking among members and others.

Sure, you could take The Midnight Train to Georgia, or you may just want to hop on one of the 26 flights per day from LAX to Atlanta.
Although they were separate groups, both saw individual and collective benefits that could arise from their merger. The PGA would be invigorated with youth, vitality, a stronger member-service network, and social and educational opportunities. The AAP desired progress toward medical and pension benefits and the opportunity to mix professionally with some of the top professionals in the field. Jointly, the organizations would raise their collective public profile to help protect producing credits, then combining the vitality of the AAP members with the industry leverage of the PGA.

Despite the potential for success, there was significant apprehension on both sides. Grumblings came from some PGA members who were anxious about allowing below-the-line producing team members into their organization. The AAP wanted to ensure equal representation for its members and make certain that their collective voice wouldn’t be drowned out by their more prominent new colleagues.

After two long years of negotiations, both organizations came together and finally reached an agreement to merge; the announcement was made at the 2001 Golden Laurel Awards. But the memberships of both organizations had approved the merger only after the Merger Committee evaluated and resolved the remaining sticking points. For instance, the Committee determined that full AAP membership would translate to full PGA membership, with no assessment of new initiation fees.

During its first year as the new PGA, the two Boards merged to create one 60-person Board. The large number initially made it difficult to arrive at accords or decisions, but after such a major change, the new Guild was all too ready to take things slowly. The Board did help to ensure fair representation by embracing the new Guild constitution that created two of the membership councils we know today, the AP Council and the Producers Council. (The new PGA added its third council, the

**BRENDA McADAMS**
Then: AAP Chair, Treasurer and Secretary
Today: President, Beachwood Services

“I think the AAP has made a big difference to my career because of the contacts I made way back then. And I know so many other people that have achieved so much since our first acquaintance 20+ years ago … I do miss the smaller size of the AAP — meetings seemed to be ‘cozier’ back then — but it could be that back then I knew everyone.”

**STEPHEN GROSSMAN**
Then: AAP Chair and Co-chair (with Tim Gibbons)
Today: PGA mentor; “Produced by,” numerous television series

“For me, the merger of the AAP and the PGA created an organization that would best represent a unified voice and professional home for the producer and the entire producing team in the ever-changing world of the television and filmed entertainment industry. It was an opportunity for us to define what we do and who we are as producers and producing team members.”

realm of the producer. This change prompted 32 APs to form the American Association of Producers to fight for their employment rights. But while the group was initially created to thwart the encroachment from the DGA, they discovered that many of their collective professional issues could be communally addressed and resolved.

The PGA, on the other hand, had initially been created as the Screen Producers Guild, becoming the Producers Guild of America in 1963 after admitting television-based members by merging with the Television Producers Guild. Despite that first merger, the organization remained oriented largely toward studio features, and possessed a membership whose median age was well above the AAP’s, giving it an ominous outlook for recruiting new members. Among the active members within the pre-merger PGA, there was a consistent recognition that the organization needed new blood and a departure from the status quo.

1995 marked the first discussions of an alliance between the two organizations. While the timing of those initial discussions proved to be premature, PGA President Thom Mount resumed the discussion in 1998. On July 20 of that year, Stephen Grossman and George Sunga (himself one of the few individuals with active memberships in both organizations) from the AAP met with Mount and PGA Executive Director Charles FitzSimons to further discuss the necessary steps to move toward a merger.
Continuing television series is a special opportunity to develop relationships with cast, crew, writers and directors that may continue beyond the final day of a production. And those relationships also include our key equipment suppliers. I’ve been working with the team at Clairmont; from sales support to equipment support, their exceptional service and devotion to innovation and excellence has allowed all of us to stay focused on getting the best possible show on the screen.

Stewart Lyons, PGA, DGA
Line Producer/UPM
www.clairmont.com

TIM GIBBONS
Then: AAP Chair and Co-chair; post-merger, PGA Co-president (with Kathleen Kennedy)
Today: PGA National Board member; Executive Producer: Curb Your Enthusiasm and Real Husbands of Hollywood

“The AAP was a fantastic, all-volunteer operation of about 500 really active members. We had no office, just borrowed spaces for meetings, a P.O. box and a telephone line. The PGA was an outfit full of mostly big-name feature producers, and we in AAP were quite worried about being swallowed up. One thing that was extremely important to me (and others, of course) was to make sure that every member, from production coordinator to executive producer (TV) or producer (features) had an equal voice in the new organization.”

BRUCE KERNER
Then: AAP Board member
Today: Winegrower and attorney

“The PGA had a membership of many A-list film producers, while the AAP was at the forefront of the emerging new cable TV market and in what was then known as new media. Those of us involved in the merger worked to achieve a balanced voice for our respective memberships and now, more than 10 years after the merger, I think that the work of our two committees and associations has clearly resulted in a PGA greater than the sum of the two original entities.”

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

As part of the redrafted Constitution, all former PGA Presidents and AAP Chairs received lifetime designations as Honorary Board members. We are proud to salute the Honorary Board members of today’s PGA:

- Tim Gibbons*
- Stephen C. Grossman
- Marshall Herskovitz**
- Kathleen Kennedy
- Gayle Maffeo
- Brenda McAdams
- Les Nordhauser
- Stanley C. Rubin
- Brenda McAdams
- Brenda McAdams
- Brenda McAdams
- Brenda McAdams
- Brenda McAdams
- Brenda McAdams

*Currently serving as active National Board member
** Currently serving as President Emeritus
Hard Work Pays Off in the PGA’s Second Annual Weekend Shorts Contest

by Andrew Mahlmann

It is fitting that the home to such uniquely creative contemporary narratives as Showtime’s Dexter and HBO’s Newsroom, Gower Studios, would play host to the second annual PGA Weekend Shorts Contest ceremony last November. Advancements in technology may make it increasingly easy to produce video content, but the hard work and talent it takes to craft and engineer a true expression of creativity and quality storytelling separates the likes of the Weekend Shorts contestants from amateurs.
Organized by Carole Beams, the Weekend Shorts Contest benefits the Debra Hill Fellowship via the Producers Guild of America Foundation. Initiated by Gale Anne Hurd after the passing of pioneering producer Debra Hill in 2005, the Debra Hill Fellowship is a grant awarded annually to a select student graduating from an accredited program in producing. The Fellowship is awarded to a candidate who reflects the legacy and work of Debra Hill. An icon for producers, Hill championed causes including diversity, green initiatives, and the importance of nurturing new creative talent. It is this spirit that animates the Weekend Shorts Contest.

True to its name, contestants were on stand-by as their assignment was given out on a Friday night, with a final product to be uploaded 48 hours later on Sunday evening. Putting together concept direction, production, and post-production on such a short schedule is not for the faint of heart. Droves of up-and-coming filmmakers entered the contest, honorably representing the next generation of entertainment’s finest, but the night of November 16, 2012, at Gower Studios belonged to the 10 finalists.

While meeting a demanding set of story criteria reflecting Hill’s 1991 classic *The Fisher King*, all finalists explored a vast range of styles and approaches en route to completing their task. From the hilarious peculiarities of *A Grail of Two Idiots* to the somber, transcendent redemption of *The Mending*, the finalists for the Weekend Shorts Contest all exemplified creative perspectives that are both refreshingly vital and richly informed. Each finalist amply demonstrated the elusive mastery of orchestrating narrative with visual impact and performance. For all the commendation, however, the maestros were ultimately whittled down to one.

Coming in at third place, earning a PGA Mentorship and more than $10,000 worth of prizes was *Finding Dee Dee*. Produced out of San Francisco by Jan Ralston, Kaley Davis, Dani Leone, Ray Halliday and Elise Canon, *Finding Dee Dee* somehow invests moral ambiguity with the spirit of youthful imagination.

Second place, *VooDoo the Right Thing*, earned a PGA Mentorship and a $35,000 value prize package for their efforts. Produced by Christin Mizzelle and Bryan Nest, *VooDoo the Right Thing* expertly connects the audience with an everyman and
his quest for love in a short that sprinkles plenty of humor into a seductively dark tale.

Claiming the top prize was Soyoung Jung, who traveled all the way from England to attend the event. With her work, *Bad Wolf*, Jung was awarded a PGA Mentorship and a $75,000 value prize package from Panavision and Universal Studios. Utilizing excellent production design and cinematography, *Bad Wolf* weaves a brooding tale that twists a familiar story with powerful imagery and a cleverly reflexive plot device.

As much as the event paid tribute to Debra Hill and all of the contestants, the real reward may very well have been a sense of deepening appreciation for the quantity and quality of emerging talent in an evolving and oft times difficult entertainment landscape. You can find the three prize winners' work posted on the Producers Guild website, with the entire playlist of 10 finalist shorts available via the Guild's YouTube channel. Much credit for the event is due to Committee members, including not only Chair Carole Beans, but also PGA members Salvy Maleki, Erin O’Malley, Carla Patterson, Pixie Wespi and Steven J. Wolfe. Similar kudos are due to the discerning eyes of special guest judges Gale Anne Hurd, Bruce Cohen, Paul Reubens, Stacey Sher and Cathleen Summers. A special thank-you and deep appreciation to Diane Salerno for aiding in securing sponsorships and ‘sealing the deal,’ and to the entire PGA staff, in particular PGA Executive Director Vance Van Petten.

The contest looks to have a successful repeat in 2013, so stay tuned to the PGA Web feeds for information on all upcoming events throughout the year.

The Fellowship is awarded to a candidate who reflects the legacy and work of Debra Hill. An icon for producers, Hill championed causes including diversity, green initiatives, and the importance of nurturing new creative talent. It is this spirit that embodies the Weekend Shorts Contest.
As a PGA member, you’re now eligible to see what Studio System can do for you, as all members receive a free six-month subscription to the service. Give it a try, and we think you’ll be as amazed as we are by the smooth interface, robust search capability and the incredible depth of information that’s at your fingertips.

Not everyone who reads Produced by is a PGA member. And we’re okay with that. But for that reason, we won’t print the discount promo codes in this magazine, but encourage you to contact the company at (310) 482-3444 or cs@studiosystem.com to take advantage of this offer. (Remember, only PGA members are eligible for this benefit ... and the Studio System staff will be ready to confirm your membership.)

STUDIO SYSTEM DEAL FOR PGA MEMBERS

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Member Benefits

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- 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

Assistant/Associate Professor and Director of Production Design

Chapman University and the Dodge College of Film and Media Arts seek applications for a full-time tenure-track faculty position of Director of Production Design in its nationally recognized Dodge College of Film and Media Arts beginning August 2013.

The successful candidate will have deep industry experience and credentials in the field of production design, having held that key creative position on multiple film projects. Desirable skills include exceptional art and aesthetic credentials, experience of creating and supervising art departments, an understanding and reasonable facility with emerging technologies and tools related to production design and strong communication skills. It is preferred but not required that the successful candidate have a university degree and some teaching experience. The successful candidate will be committed to teaching first as well as to continuing his or her own professional work.

Interested parties should submit a letter of interest, Curriculum Vitae, and three letters of recommendation to the Production Design search committee at FTVsearch@chapman.edu. Letters of recommendation can be attached or forwarded by the candidate or sent to this email address directly from the candidate’s reference. Review of applications will begin January 1, 2013, and continue until the position is filled. Finalists will be asked to submit a creative portfolio.

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Chapman University and the Dodge College of Film and Media Arts seek applications for a full-time tenure-track faculty position of Director of Production Design in its nationally recognized Dodge College of Film and Media Arts beginning August 2013.

The successful candidate will have deep industry experience and credentials in the field of production design, having held that key creative position on multiple film projects. Desirable skills include exceptional art and aesthetic credentials, experience of creating and supervising art departments, an understanding and reasonable facility with emerging technologies and tools related to production design and strong communication skills. It is preferred but not required that the successful candidate have a university degree and some teaching experience. The successful candidate will be committed to teaching first as well as to continuing his or her own professional work.

Interested parties should submit a letter of interest, Curriculum Vitae, and three letters of recommendation to the Production Design search committee at FTVsearch@chapman.edu. Letters of recommendation can be attached or forwarded by the candidate or sent to this email address directly from the candidate’s reference. Review of applications will begin January 1, 2013, and continue until the position is filled. Finalists will be asked to submit a creative portfolio.

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EARLIER THIS YEAR, in our summer issue, we saluted the first two features to be released carrying the Producers’ Mark, The Magic of Belle Isle (produced by Lori McCreary, Alan Greisman and Rob Reiner) and Lawless (produced by Lucy Fisher and Douglas Wick). Today, we’re gratified to salute two more releases carrying the Mark, our own Producers Guild Award nominees Silver Linings Playbook (produced by Donna Gigliotti, Bruce Cohen and Jonathan Gordon) and Rise of the Guardians (produced by Christina Steinberg and Nancy Bernstein).

On behalf of Produced by, we would like to offer our congratulations to the producers and our profound thanks to the companies who chose to honor the Mark and the producers who receive them: The Weinstein Company and DreamWorks Animation.

You’ll be seeing more of the Producers’ Mark in the coming months. Thanks to the Guild’s agreement with Columbia, Screen Gems, Universal and 20th Century Fox, all films developed within and released by those studios will carry the Mark. Meanwhile, warmest congratulations to this issue’s “marked men” and “marked women.”

Want your next credit to carry the Producers’ Mark?

See producersmark.com for details.