

The Writers' Guild Weekly e-bulletin No. 359, Friday 20th February 2009

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Guild News

1. Google Books Settlement - Time to Stake Your Claim

An American court settlement between Google and the US Authors Guild and publishers' organisation could mean that money is waiting for you -- and it is now possible for you to take action.

As reported in the Guild bulletin before Christmas, Google was sued after scanning many thousands of books -- mostly out of print -- in certain US libraries, and making them available on the internet. The outcome of the "class action" case means that the author of each book scanned is being offered at least \$60 (it could be more) and a new agency will be set up to handle future additional payments.

Detailed information about the settlement is available at <http://www.googlebooksettlement.com>. By visiting this website you can register your name and details of your books, and if the settlement proceeds as expected, you will hear in due course whether you will be receiving any payment. The deadline for claims is 5 January 2010 -- it sounds a long way off, but it is better to deal with it now, otherwise you could easily forget about it until it is too late.

Action is more urgent if for any reason you wish to opt out of the settlement -- that has to be done before 5 May 2009.

We think you will find the Google website easy to use, but if you are a member of the Authors' Licensing & Collecting Society (ALCS) -- as most Full Members of the Guild are -- your name and the titles of all books you have registered with ALCS will in any case be checked against the Google database of digitised works. If you are not in ALCS, the Guild has arranged for you to access this process -- simply send an email to google@alcs.co.uk containing your writing name and the title(s) of the book to be checked.

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain -- along with other writers' organisations in the UK -- is interested in discussing with Google a parallel scheme to allow for the scanning of out-of-print books held by British libraries, but we expect to have to wait until the US settlement is confirmed and operational before we can make progress.

2. The Guild's Anti-Censorship Committee Needs You!

Just a reminder to members that the Guild has an Anti-Censorship Committee, poised to act as a rapid reaction force if any writers are subject to censorship of their work. We are ready to write letters, blog furiously and join the picket line in support of oppressed writers living and/or working in the UK. Therefore, we would urge members to get in touch if any issues of this kind arise so that we can contact the committee and react accordingly.

If you are a Guild member and you'd like to be considered for membership of the Anti-Censorship Committee, please contact the office on 020 7833 0777 or email erik@writersguild.org.uk.

3. Writers' Guild Awards 2009

The eligibility period for the Writers' Guild Awards 2009 will be **1 June 2008 - 31 May 2009**, so we would urge members to start thinking about those plays, programmes, films, books and videogames that they'd like to nominate this summer.

It is particularly difficult for our judging panels for Best Play and Best Play for Children and Young People to spot new plays performed in the regions, so we would ask our members across the country to keep their ears to the ground for noteworthy premieres. We don't want to miss any pieces of fantastic new writing, or be too London-centric, so please let us know if you see anything worthy of a Writers' Guild Award in your locality.

A call for nominations will be released in the e-bulletin in June 2009. Be ready!

Many thanks, from the Guild Awards Team.

Industry News

4. Equal Roles Survey

Research by the International Federation of Actors revealed that female performers earn less and have shorter careers than their male counterparts, and do not feel that TV or theatre represents them in a realistic way.

The Stage want to know what writers think and are now conducting their own questionnaire into how well women are represented in dramas, both on television and in the theatre.

Please follow the link below to complete the short survey, which will only take a minute or two:

<http://www.thestage.co.uk/equalroles/>

5. Save Kids' TV

The first month of 2009 has seen a number of reports affecting SKTV's campaign: Ofcom's Final Statement of Recommendations on Public Service Broadcasting; Lord Carter's Digital Britain interim report; the Children's Society's Good Childhood report; and the BBC Trust's Review of the BBC's children's services.

The Save Kids' TV Group, which the Writers' Guild supports, has contributed to each of these reports and in the coming weeks will keep up the pressure, meeting with Culture Secretary Andy Burnham, and Communications Minister Lord Carter, as well as Digital Britain members Robin Foster, Andrew Chitty and Tanya Byron. The group will also be meeting with the BBC Trust, and the Lib Dem spokesman for Culture, Media and Sport, Don Foster MP.

For further information about the group and what they do, see:

<http://www.savekidstv.org.uk/news>

6. A Night Less Ordinary: free theatre scheme launches

Arts Council England (ACE) last week announced the launch of its proposal to offer more than 600,000 free theatre tickets to young people across the country. The Donmar Warehouse was the scene for the high profile ceremony which saw the £2.5 million scheme launched under the title 'A Night Less Ordinary'.

Culture Secretary Andy Burnham described the initiative as "sowing the seeds of something equally significant in the performing arts" as free entry has been for museums and galleries. However, despite its backing by some of the UK's leading creative professionals, the giveaway has been met with hesitation from some industry

experts who fear that it may only succeed in generating a culture of free attendance, rather than a habit of theatre-going.

The Arts Council press release can be read [here](#)

For a list of participating venues, click [here](#)

For more information on A Night Less Ordinary, visit the website [here](#)

Guild Events

7. Touching A Nerve

Writers' Guild West Midlands Event

Touching A Nerve looks at theatre that tackles controversial community issues.

How is it handled? What is the potential, what are the pitfalls? Does the playwright divide or unite communities by his or her examination of sensitive issues within them?

Anyone interested in drama (or other writing) that explores complex community issues should find this a stimulating and possibly provocative evening.

Date: Tuesday 24th February 2009

Time: 7pm

Venue: Birmingham Rep Theatre (St Paul's Suite)

Free to Writers' Guild members. £5 non-members/guests (payable on the door)

Please let us know you are coming by emailing Jenny Stephens at: WMidWritersGuild@aol.com.

Events

8. The Story Engine (Darlington)

26th and 27th February 2009 at the Darlington Arts Centre

The Northern Screenwriters Conference returns for its third year with a new name - The Story Engine - and a simple goal: to help emerging writers gain a better understanding of the art, craft, and business of screenwriting.

The headlining guest this year is Oscar-nominated screenwriter Simon Beaufoy who will be discussing his career from *The Full Monty* to *Slumdog Millionaire*. He will be joined by producers, development executives, film funders and writers from the worlds of TV and film.

The Story Engine offers networking opportunities, case studies, practical workshops, and panel discussions for those who have already embarked on a career as a screenwriter, or just the plain curious.

David Edgar, the President of the Writers' Guild, will also be in attendance and to speak about his career, the activities of the Guild and offer advice to budding writers.

A two-day pass for the conference costs £60 and there are deals on hotels. Check out www.thestoryengine.com or call 01325 486 555 to book.

This event is supported by New Writing North, Northern Film & Media, and Darlington Borough Council.

Courses and Workshops

9. Plays and Screenplays MA Open Evening, City University London

Wednesday 25 February 2009 from 17:00 to 19:00 at City University London, College Building, 280 St John Street, London, EC1V 0HB.

Stimulating, challenging, and above all **practical**, this part-time two year course provides a supportive and thought-provoking environment for playwrights and screenwriters. The course is **taught by practising professional writers** who are also experienced educators. Its advisory board includes Julian Fellowes, Stephen Poliakoff, Kwame Kwei-Armah and Meera Syal.

The open evening is designed as a 'drop-in' session so feel free to come along at anytime between 5pm and 7pm. A range of academic and administrative staff from the university will be available to answer your questions and give you advice, guidance and information about the course and options available.

To book a place please go to:

http://www.city.ac.uk/opendays/postgraduate_open_evenings.html

For more information on the course please go to:

<http://www.city.ac.uk/study/courses/arts/creative-writing-plays-and-scripts-ma.html>

10. Write The Sitcom, Sell The Sitcom

With Guild member, Dave Cohen

28th February 2009, 9am-6pm at the Craven St Rehearsal Rooms, 10 Craven St
London WC2N 5PE

This is a one-day course that concentrates solely on writing sitcom, and finding the right producer to send your script to.

This is a great time to be writing sitcom, after a period in the doldrums the audience show is back in fashion thanks to Graham Linehan's 'IT Crowd' and 'Not Going Out' starring Lee Mack. And after years of neglecting comedy, ITV are back in the hunt for a hit show.

But it's a notoriously difficult form to master, and requires several different skills to be applied simultaneously.

This course begins with the two most important questions – what is your sitcom about (easy enough, it's about a hotel owner who hates his guests), but what is it

really about? (not so easy). We'll then start to build the elements that will create the show – character, plot and dialogue, performing practical exercises to show each of these. All the time maintaining a level of believability, and making us laugh. The one thing Dave says he can't teach is the ability to write jokes. You can either do that or you can't. But by the end of the course you should be writing funnier, more focused jokes that fit your own ideas to a greater extent.

Dave Cohen has been writing and performing comedy for a living for 25 years. He has written for dozens of radio and TV shows including 'News Quiz', 'Sunday Format', 'Dead Ringers' and 'Spitting Image'. He is a regular writer on 'Have I Got News For You', and the hit Radio 4 series '15 Minute Musicals'. He is currently writing for the third series of hit BBC1 sitcom 'Not Going Out', has written for 'My Family', and currently has sitcoms in development with BBC1, Radio 4 and Channel 4.

For further details check out

<http://www.raindance.co.uk/site/index.php?id=17,2610,0,0,1,0>

11. Writing for Radio: Movies in the Mind

Saturday 28th March 2009

10.30am to 5pm (registration 10.15am)

This course covers nearly every aspect of writing for radio: comedy gags, sketches and shows; radio sitcoms and series; short drama; full-length drama; radio ads - and beyond, to explore all the possibilities of work in the medium.

The Red Room

Walkabout

136 Shaftesbury Avenue

London W1D 5EZ

(on Cambridge Circus, two minutes walk from Leicester Square tube)

For more details, please contact Paul Bassett on 07884 027171 or by email at

paul.bassettdavies@euroscript.co.uk

Opportunities

12. Cottage In Ireland Available for Short or Long Let

Situated in Leenane, in Connemara, County Galway, the cottage is cosy and full of character, perfect as a base for holidaying or a quiet spot to finally finish that novel!

The cottage sits on two acres, less than 2 kilometres from the nearest village, Leenane (shops, pubs, restaurants) near Killary Fjord, the only fjord in Ireland. This area is renowned for its beauty and has strong literary associations with the Yeats family and Oliver St John Gogarty (the model for Buck Mulligan in Ulysses). It has also served as a location for several films, including John B Keane's *The Field* and was immortalised in Martin McDonagh's play, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*.

The cottage has oil fired central heating and an open fire (with a generous supply of turf in the adjoining shed). There is a double bed in each of the two bedrooms and an additional child's bed/cot can be arranged. The bathroom has a roll top bath and shower attachment (not the kind of pressure American visitors may be used to!). The living room, with a raised roof and wooden floors opens straight onto beautiful views in front of the cottage.

The kitchen is well equipped with a long table for cooking, eating or writing on! The kitchen has a gas cooker and a washer/dryer (no freezer). All the water comes directly from the stream at the back of the house.

The neighbours are friendly and welcoming (with the odd eccentric thrown in).

The nearby river Erriff offers some of the best salmon fishing in Europe, there are many local 'spots' for shore angling and boat hire is available from the village of Letterfrack. The towns of Westport (a 30-minute drive away) and Clifden (45 minutes) are convenient for shops, restaurants and other amenities such as swimming and the cinema.

Rates start at €400 to €600 per week. Reduced rates for longer stays can be negotiated.

Please contact Nicola Byrne at 00 353 87 23 66 340 or email nicola6@indigo.ie

13. The George Devine Award 2009

Recognised as one of the most prestigious for new writing, the George Devine Award was set up in 1966 as a memorial to the life and talent of George Devine, Artistic Director of the Royal Court 1956 - 65.

The award of £10,000 is open to any promising playwright for an original new stage play, which need not have been produced. (Television and radio plays will not be considered)

Applicants should submit two copies of the play to be considered (plus stamped S.A.E. for return of scripts) and an outline of their work to [date.to](#):

Harriet Devine, 9 Lower Mall, Hammersmith, LONDON, W6 9DL

The closing date for applications is 1st March 2009.

14. BAFTA Rocliffe NEW WRITING FORUM

Call For Scripts, Deadline 20 March 2009

Rocliffe are accepting scripts submissions for the next BAFTA ROCLIFFE NEW WRITING FORUM taking place at BAFTA in April.

The closing date for submissions is 20 March 2009 @ 17.00 GMT.

See the link below to find out more about the event.

If you would like your script to be considered, please send a HARD COPY of the following to

ALEX – ROCLIFFE SUBMISSIONS
BAFTA
195 Piccadilly
London W1J 9LN:

1. 10 minute Script extract (12 pages maximum) - each page must list your name, script title and page number. The script can be short film, feature, theatre or television – please note we are not accepting theatre or radio scripts on this occasion.
2. Long synopsis - min 350 to a max of 500 words.
3. Short synopsis - max 50 words.
4. Cast break down and outline of each character that appears in extract.
5. Introduction to provide context, outlining where the extract fits into the overall story and must clearly state whether the script is a feature, short, or television drama.
6. A short writing and industry relevant biography - 150 words max – please be specific with titles etc.
7. Only standard script formats will be accepted.
8. Please include your full contact details i.e. name, email and a contact telephone number on your biog page.

9. You should only submit work if you are able to attend on 29 April 2009.
10. There is a maximum of two submissions per writer.
11. All writers will be notified within three weeks of the closing date.
12. No email submissions will be accepted.
13. Please include a stamped addressed envelope if you wish to have your submission materials returned.

Recent industry guests and Patrons now include John Madden, Richard Eyre, David Parfitt, Alan Plater, Cameron McCracken, David Yates, Finola Dwyer, Michael Kuhn, Nik Powell, Duncan Kenworthy, Rebecca O'Brien, Simon Relph & Shirley Rubinstein. Media Patrons are Screen International.

15. Meyer-Whitworth Award

18th Meyer Whitworth Nominations Now Being Accepted Deadline for Entries: 31 March 2009

With a prize fund of £10,000, the Meyer-Whitworth Award is one of the largest annual monetary prizes for playwriting in the UK. It is intended to help further the careers of UK playwrights who are not yet established.

For information visit <http://www.playwrightsstudio.co.uk/Meyer-Whitworth.html>

To nominate a play please contact the Playwrights' Studio, Scotland at info@playwrightsstudio.co.uk or call +44 141 3324403 to request an application form. **Please note: Nominations must be made by directors of professional theatre companies.**

16. Writers wanted for new BBC Radio 7 sketch show called 7 on 7

7 on 7 is a new topical sketch show to be transmitted on [BBC Radio 7](#) in May 2009.

The show gets comic mileage from the news on each of the last seven days – political, cultural, sports, and trivia. They'll take one day at a time and examine what happened on that day. Or they might use the events on a particular day to talk about a related topic. If a story develops over the week then we can revisit it in the show.

They will have a regular host and a cast of performers who can recreate the names

who've made the news in the last week and play the ones that we invent.

The tone will be lively, satirical, and distinctly irreverent.

The show will be thirty minutes long and initially have a run of ten weeks. We want an array of writers who can extract the maximum comic potential out of what's happened in the news and put some satirical spin on events. They will use some established writers but we are particularly interested in introducing new writers to radio comedy.

If you'd like to send sketches in then email three sample sketches (at least two of them topical) to writersroom@bbc.co.uk with the subject marked 7 on 7.

Deadline: 10am, Friday 27 February 2009

Successful applicants will be invited to a masterclass with [David Mitchell](#) on Monday 9th March 2009.

If you want some hints and tips about writing comedy sketches for radio, read our interview with [writer Sanjeev Kohli and 7 on 7 producer Gareth Edwards](#).

17. The Script_1 Competition is back!

Each year the Cheltenham Screenwriters' Festival launches its 'Script_1' writing competition for South West based writers and this year is no different, but instead of giving you free rein, the competition entries are to be based on one of three themes...

'The Olympics 2012'
'A West Country Love Story'
'Reality Television'

The title can be yours but it must be about or contain elements of these three themes. If you'd like to enter, just send in your idea for a 10-minute film and, if it is accepted, you will be invited to attend a FREE workshop in Cheltenham where you will be shown how to turn it into a TV or film script. Following the workshop the best three scripts will win cash prizes of £300, £100 and £50 each. The prizes will be presented at the International Screenwriters' Festival in October 2009.

Deadline for entries: 5pm on 27th February 2009. Workshops will be in March and April.

Send entries either by email to cathi@screenwritersfestival.com, or by post to Screenwriters' Festival, Unit 24c, Daniels Ind. Estate, Bath Road , Stroud , GL5 3TJ .

For further information on how to apply and competition rules please go to the Festival website, www.screenwritersfestival.com

18. Satyajit Ray Foundation's Short Film Competition

This Competition is open to all film-makers either resident or studying in the UK. **The closing date**, after which no entries can be considered, is **1 March 2009**.

Film Content: The film, of no more than 30 minutes running time, should express and inform aspects of the experiences of South Asians (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) either within their own countries or the Diaspora.

All submissions must have been completed within two years prior to the closing date. Previous entries are ineligible.

Format: Whilst the films may be shot on any standard format (film, digital or video), entries for consideration should be submitted in VHS or DVD formats.

These entries, for consideration by the jury, should be forwarded to:

Julian Pye, British Council
10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN
email: julian.pye@britishcouncil.org

Award: The Satyajit Ray Foundation is pleased to announce that it will be presenting a cash prize for Best Film of £1,000. Please see www.satyajitray.org.uk for more information.

Presentation of Award: Extracts from a representative selection of entries will be screened at the Award Ceremony to be held in the David Lean Room of the British

Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA), Piccadilly, London, W1, on the afternoon of Sunday 26 April 2009, after which the winner will be announced and the winning film shown in its entirety. Selected entrants plus one guest will be invited. Film director Mike Leigh is Patron of the short film award.

What Members Are Getting Up To

PERRIE BALTHAZAR wrote the episode of *Hollyoaks* going out on C4 at 6:30pm on Friday 27th February.

RICHARD CURTIS wrote the episode of *The Vicar of Dibley* "The Arrival" going out on BBC1 at 9:30pm on Saturday 21st February.

RICHARD DAVIDSON wrote the episodes of *EastEnders* going out on BBC1 at 7:30pm on Thursday 26th and at 8:00pm on Friday 27th February.

ROBERT EVANS wrote the episode of *The Green Green Grass "One Man's Junk"* going out on BBC1 at 8:30pm on Thursday 26th February.

JOHN FINNEMORE wrote the episode of *Cabin Pressure "Abu Dhabi"* going out on Radio 4 at 6:30pm on Tuesday 24th February.

LOL FLETCHER wrote the episode of *Doctors "Click"* going out on BBC1 in two parts at 1:45pm on Tuesday 24th and Wednesday 25th February.

JEREMY FRONT'S dramatization of *"Scoop"* is going out on Radio 4 in two parts at 9:00pm on Saturday 21st at 3:00pm on Sunday 22nd February.

JAYNE HOLLINSON wrote the episode of *Coronation Street* going out on ITV1 at 7:30pm on Friday 27th February.

ALEX JONES' play about global flooding will be touring with Oxfordshire Touring Theatre Company March 5th - 24th April. Originally commissioned for Alan Ayckbourn's Theatre In Scarborough 2001, it has since been produced by the Swan Theatre, Worcester, had a critically acclaimed BBC Radio production and two sell-

out productions in Rome, where it is called *Effetto Serra*. Visit the OTTC website for tour details:

http://www.ottc.org.uk/current_season_03_about.html

TONY JORDAN wrote the first episode of the second series of *Moving Wallpaper* going out on ITV1 at 9:00pm on Friday 27th February.

JESSICA LEA wrote the episode of *Hollyoaks* going out on C4 at 6:30pm on Wednesday 25th February.

BILL LYONS wrote the episode of *Emmerdale* going out on ITV1 at 7:00pm on Monday 23rd February.

RICHARD MONKS'S radio play *Mole* is going out on Radio 4 at 2:15pm on Tuesday 24th February.

SUE MOONEY wrote the episode of *Emmerdale* going out on ITV1 at 7:00pm on Friday 27th February.

ROLAND MOORE wrote the episode of *Doctors "Mac's Women"* going out on BBC1 at 1:45pm on Monday 23rd February.

CHRISTOPHER REASON wrote the episode of *EastEnders* going out on BBC1 at 7:30pm on Tuesday 24th February. He also has a radio play *The Repulsive Woman* going out on Radio 4 at

GERT THOMAS wrote the episode of *EastEnders* going out on BBC1 at 8:00pm on Monday 23rd February.

CHRIS THOMPSON wrote the episode of *Emmerdale* going out on ITV1 at 7:00pm on Wednesday 25th February.

AMANDA WHITTINGTON'S radio play *The Nine Days Queen* is going out on Radio 4 at 2:15pm on Monday 23rd February.

STEPHEN WYATT wrote the episode of *The Yellowplush Papers* "Deuceace" going out on Radio 4 at 11:30pm on Monday 23rd February.

PHILIP QIZILBASH has written next weeks episodes of the BBC Asian Network's daily soap, Silver Street. It is broadcast Monday 23rd February to Friday 27th February at 1.30pm, with an omnibus edition on Sunday 29th February at 4.30pm.

Writers' Guild of Great Britain, 40 Rosebery Avenue, EC1R 4RX; erik@writersguild.org.uk; www.writersguild.org.uk; tel +44 (0) 20 7833 0777; fax +44 (0) 20 7833 4777. This email bulletin is a service to members and associates of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain. Comments, suggestions and requests to be removed from the distribution list should be sent to erik@writersguild.org.uk. Items are included from a variety of sources. The Guild does its best to check everything and make corrections when necessary but we will not accept responsibility for mistakes and omissions. You are advised to check terms and conditions before entering any commitments. Copyright Writers' Guild of Great Britain and suppliers of items 2008.