

USC School of Cinematic Arts

July - Sept 2025 Hot Sheet

Remy Abrams' '25 screenplay, *Madame Casanova*, was named a Second Rounder in the Austin Film Festival Script Competition Comedy Feature category.

Patty Ahn's '15 documentary *Forever We Are Young*, which premiered at the 2025 SXSW Film Festival, has been released worldwide.

Peter Britos MFA '93 PhD '01 published the Sci-Fi/Speculative Fiction novel *Valley of Spiraling Winds*, in a trilogy of *Spiral Jungle* novels in July 2025.

Meghna Chakraborty (SCA/Marshall) '19, MFA '23 and **Iris Kim (Marshall) '19** were selected as grant recipients of the NewFilmmakers Los Angeles. They will receive \$5,000 to help fund the duo's creative project, *Unfolding*.

Stephen Chbosky '92 is set to helm the upcoming Apple Original film based on the German dramedy *Weekend Rebels*. Mark Wahlberg, Vera Farmiga, and Indie DesRoches are also attached to star.

Jon M. Chu '03 and **Alice Brooks '01** are set to receive the fourth annual Variety Creative Collaborators Award at the Middleburg Film Festival running from October 16-19, 2025.

Justin Connolly '12 published his debut bilingual children's book *Picky Pumpkin/Calabaza Quisquillosa*, which is currently available on Kickstarter.

Christine Conradt '96 has been tapped to direct and produce three movies for the Lifetime Network. The first, titled *The Past is Never Buried*, is set to be released in February 2026.

Ryan Coogler '11 earned 10 nominations at the Fangoria Chainsaw Awards for *Sinners*.

Jennifer Frazin '17 MFA '19 was featured on the Women's List for her original horror pilot *In the Valley of Darkness*. The list also featured **Monica Lucas, MFA '19**, for her hour-long sci-fi pilot, *The Montana*.

Ezra Frech '28 premiered his documentary *Adaptive* on Peacock, which follows four Paralympic athletes from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics to the 2024 Paris Olympics.

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Richard Heredia-Arriaga's MFA '13 screenplay *South Natomas* advanced to the second round of consideration for the 2026 Sundance Film Film Program Development Track. Additionally, his script *Border Lawyer* was recently named a semifinalist in the Final Draft 2025 Big Break Screenwriting Contest.

Billy Higgins' '03 directorial feature film debut, *Three*, won the Best Thriller award at the Marina Del Rey Film Festival. Fellow alumnus **Blake Armstrong** '03 served on the project as a story co-writer.

Yang-Hua Hu '14 has been inducted into the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Rian Johnson '96 is set to receive the Bill Wittliff Award for Screenwriting at the 2025 Austin Film Festival.

Eric Karkheck '11 was recently recognized with both an LA Area Emmy and a Telly Award for his work in documentary storytelling. He received the Emmy for producing and editing a short documentary on Fernando Valenzuela's life and career with the LA Dodgers, which aired on *Beyond the Sport* on Spectrum News 1 SoCal. He also earned a Telly Award for directing a short film celebrating the 50th anniversary of The Groundlings.

Shawn Levy '94 is set to produce the upcoming *Night at the Museum* reboot at 20th Century Studios.

Doug Liman will direct the upcoming bitcoin thriller film titled *Killing Satoshi*, starring Pete Davidson and Casey Affleck.

V Marks '22 was chosen for the New Voices Fellowship, gaining mentorship, workshops, and a \$7,500 stipend to polish their script.

Taylor Martin '13 received the Humanitas' 2025 #TakeTheLead award.

Writer/Director/Editor **Destinee McCaster** '23 received a \$25,000 Horror Filmmaking Initiative award to create her surrealist horror proof of concept, *Dana Never Had A Brother*, under the mentorship of Eduardo Sanchez, Roman Coppola, and Jed Shephard through Decentralized Pictures. The film will be produced by **Carolyn Knapp** '22, **Maria Paula Quesada** '23, **Gabby Fiszman** '23, and **Giovanna Trujillo**.

Lemonade Blessing had its premiere at the 2025 Tribeca Film Festival and featured several SCA alumni on the project, including writer/director/producer **Chris Merola** '23, producer **Raza**

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Rizvi '23, editor **Abhineet Kumar '23**, editor **Edouard Fan '23**, and supervising sound editor **Shubhi Sahni '23**. It will be played at the Newport Beach Film Festival in October.

Blaine Morris '22, **Powell Robinson '14**, **Patrick Robert Young '14**, and **Samantha Gurash '14** premiered their upcoming horror film *The Red Mask* at Frightfest UK.

Lexie Newell '23 is starting her third season in post-production for *Jeopardy*.

Sev Ohanian '12 was recently inducted into the Armenian Film Society's Armenian Film Hall of Fame. To honor him, Proximity Media co-founder and frequent collaborator **Ryan Coogler '11** joined Sev for a special fireside chat ahead of the induction ceremony.

C. Craig Patterson '21 unveiled his newest animated short film *ChikaBOOM!* in collaboration with Asteria Film Co., Everyday Mischievous and The Monk Studios.

Jack Henry Robbins '11 is developing the comedy series *Nepo Baby* at Hulu in partnership with 20th Television.

Walter Salles will be honored at the fifth annual Academy Museum fundraising gala with the Luminary Award for his innovative contributions to expanding the boundaries of filmmaking. **Jon M. Chu '03** will also serve as co-chair of the event.

Mohanned Salman '25 received the David and Lynn Angell College Comedy Award.

Jac Schaeffer '04 has signed on to serve as showrunner for the upcoming Amazon MGM adaptation of Rebecca Yarros' novel *Fourth Wing*.

Minnie Schedeen '17 will adapt the novella *Saturation Point* for Universal Studios, with Michael Bay producing and Cynthia Erivo attached to star.

Alex Simon's '90 award-winning short story, *Ocean Pacific*, was published as a Kindle Single on Amazon this past August. The story is an autobiographical coming-of-age narrative set in 1980, and is now available for purchase and download on Amazon.

CB Smith-Dahl '96 completed the 2025 September Stowe Narrative Lab. This program received over 800 screenplays for just 60 spots. At Stowe, CB was able to pitch and refine her script, *We'Hood*, a dystopian sci-fi feature, set in Oakland, California.

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In recognition of **Steven Spielberg's** extraordinary impact on cinema, Universal dedicated its new state-of-the-art movie showcase to the visionary filmmaker, naming it The Steven Spielberg Theater.

Emmy St. Pierre '22 and **Liv Coron '22** served as staff writers on Season 1 of Amazon's *Off Campus*, which is currently in production and set to premiere in the spring of 2026.

Marisa Torelli-Pedevska '22 launched the Inevitable Foundation's first production studio, Inevitable Studios, alongside co-founder Richie Siegel.

Oscilloscope Laboratories has acquired the worldwide rights to **Joel Alfonso Vargas's** *Mad Bills to Pay*, which won the NEXT Special Jury Award for ensemble cast at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival.

John Wells '82 was recognized by Variety as one of the top 50 producers in 2025 for his work on HBO Max's *The Pitt*. Other SCA alumni who were recognized include **Hwang Dong-hyuk '04** for *Squid Game* season 3, **Rian Johnson '96** for *Poker Face* season 2, and **Eric Kripke '96** for *The Boys* season 4.

Amanda Rome West '20 released her newest pop anthem "Love You Still" on all streaming platforms. She will release her next single, "I Like Money," in late September.

Matthew Wilder '20 won a Los Angeles Area Emmy Award for his work on the PBS show *Artbound* as Director of Photography for the opening episode *The Cheech*.

Xindi Zhang '25 received a 2025 Student Academy Award for their alternative/experimental XA project *The Song of Drifters*. The gold, silver, and bronze placements will be announced at the annual Academy International Student Film Awards in NYC on October 6, 2025.

New Films in Release

28 Years Later: The Bone Temple

Alayna Glasthal '17 (Executive in Charge of Production)

Dora and the Search for Sol Dorado

Alberto Belli '12 (Director)

East of Wall

Alex Engemann '09 (Executive Producer)

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Eden

Ron Howard (Director/Writer/Producer)

Brian Grazer '74 (Producer)

The Fantastic Four: First Steps

Kevin Feige '95 (Producer)

Folktales

Nathan Punwar '07 (Editor)

Freakier Friday

Jordan Weiss '15 (Writer)

Andrew Dunn '94 (Producer)

GOAT

Michelle Raimo '95 (Writer)

Highest 2 Lowest

Jason Michael Berman '06 (Producer)

I Know What You Did Last Summer

Saira Haider '14 (Editor)

This Is Spinal Tap

Kim Secrist '77 (Editor)

Jurassic World: Rebirth

Steven Spielberg (Executive Producer)

Mercy

Austin Keeling '13 (Editor)

Mistress Dispeller

Jiuxin Zhu '27 (Assistant Editor)

Natchez

Bryan Fish '13 (Sound)

The Old Guard 2

David Ellison (Producer)

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Roofman

Jonathan Glickman (Executive Producer)

The Roses

Jay Roach '86 (Director)

Sarah's Oil

Cyrus Nowrasteh '77 (Director/Writer/Producer)

Soul on Fire

Marc Marcum '96 (Associate Producer)

Frank Merwald '77 (Post Production Producer)

Soulm8te

Alayna Glasthal '17 (Executive in Charge of Production)

Splitsville

Sara Shaw (Editor)

Superman

Skyler Gisondo (Cast)

The Thursday Murder Club

Jennifer Todd (Producer)

New TV in Release

America's Team: The Gambler and His Cowboys (Netflix)

David Ellison (Executive Producer)

Ken Rodgers '98 (Executive Producer)

David Bolen '13 (Director of Photography)

Ballard (Prime Video)

Sarah Boyd '95 (Director)

Gavin Kelly '04 (Director of Photography)

Sharidan Sotelo '91 (Editor)

*The Ba***ds of Bollywood* (Netflix)

Aryan Khan '20 (Writer/Director)

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Chad Powers (Hulu)

Jeffrey Waldron '03 (Director of Photography)

Countdown (Prime Video)

Avi Youabian '02 (Director)

Eyes of Wakanda (Disney+)

Kevin Feige '95 (Executive Producer)

Brad Winderbaum '05 (Executive Producer)

Ryan Coogler '11 (Executive Producer)

Sev Ohanian '12 (Executive Producer)

Family Feud Favorites (Fox)

Ryan Mekenian '21 (Associate Producer)

Katrina: Come Hell and High Water (Netflix)

David Ellison (Executive Producer)

David Bolen '13 (Director of Photography)

Outlander: Blood of My Blood (Starz)

Karen Campbell '05 (Consulting Producer)

The Sandman, Season 2 (Netflix)

David S. Goyer '88 (Writer)

Star Trek: Strange New Worlds, Season 3 (Paramount+)

Orly Sitowitz '86 (Casting Director)

Twisted Metal, Season 2 (Peacock)

Kirsten Jakob '15 (Writer)

Unknown Number (Netflix)

Skye Borgman '04 (Director/Executive Producer)

Ross M. Dinerstein '05 (Producer)

Untamed (Netflix)

John Wells '82 (Executive Producer)

Washington Black (Hulu)

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Jon Paré '78 (Co-Executive Producer)

Jeremy Bell '99 (Executive Producer)

Wednesday, Season 2 (Netflix)

Alfred Gough '94 (Writer/Executive Producer)

Miles Millar '94 (Writer/Executive Producer)

Jonathan Glickman (Executive Producer)

Joy Sunday '17 (Cast)