

ROADMAP  WRITERS

YEAR in REVIEW

A MESSAGE FROM CEO & CO-FOUNDER JOEY TUCCIO



From day one, our sole focus has been the success of our writers—and 2023 was our 7th year doing just that. This year, the world was reminded of the importance of standing your ground and demanding what you deserve. Roadmappers continued to saturate the industry with over 60 writers getting signed through our programs. Before and after the strike, Roadmappers also got staffed on their first series, set up projects, and saw their work on the screen. We spent a month overseas hosting retreats in Scotland and teaching classes in London. And we started a series of free Zoom roundtables for writers who were signed through our programs to network with more execs, hosting 20 in just a couple of months (and many more to come in 2024)! We also continued to run free initiatives to help diverse writers and support staffers get industry exposure. As I write this, I can't help but think how similar this note is to last year's (and the year before and the year before). That's because every year we are focused on the same thing: finding some kind of light at the end of the tunnel for as many writers as possible. - Joey

2023

BY THE NUMBERS

ROADMAP PROGRAMMING

25

Free programs offered
(including webinars)

2

Webinars per month

4

Average number of classes per month

5

Number of dogs fostered by clients & staff

120⁺

Daily emails sent to execs by Joey for our writers

350⁺

Free Uncle James pitch prep/strategy calls scheduled

119⁺

Writer home countries

30

Number of new classes

AVERAGE
NUMBER OF
PROGRAMS
PER
MONTH:

13



Director of
Education
Alex's Pick for
Best Class!

CREATING A
PRODUCTION
BUDGET



Most Popular
Class with
Clients!

FINDING A
MANAGER:
A TWO
PART
LECTURE
SERIES



SIGNING STATS

206

New Execs added
to our roster

37

COMPANIES
THAT SIGNED
OUR WRITERS

MONTH WITH
MOST
SIGNINGS

APR:
13

6

AVERAGE
NO. OF
MONTHLY
SIGNINGS

69

WRITERS SIGNED TO
REPRESENTATION

SIGNINGS BY MONTH

Jan: 2

Feb: 7

March: 9

April: 13

May: 4

June: 4

July: 3

August: 7

Sept: 5

Oct: 6

Nov: 4

Dec: 5



COMPANIES THAT SIGNED ROADMAPPERS IN 2023

3 Arts Entertainment
 42 Management & Production
 831 Entertainment
 AAO Entertainment
 Affirmative Entertainment
 Agile Entertainment
 Bellevue Productions
 Bohemia Group
 Chatrone
 Citizen Skull
 Color Creative
 Content House
 Creative Artists Agency (CAA)
 Echo Lake Entertainment
 Ensemble Entertainment
 Framework Entertainment
 GLRBND Media
 Gramercy Park Entertainment
 Grandview
 Heroes & Villains Entertainment
 Independent Artist Group (IAG) fka APA
 Industry Entertainment
 Lit Entertainment Group
 Luber Roklin Entertainment
 MetaMorphic Entertainment
 Navigation Media Group
 Range Media Partners
 REJ Entertainment
 Sandra Dijkstra Literary Agency
 Schemers Entertainment
 Sugar 23
 The Cartel
 The Gersh Agency
 The Shuman Company
 Trident Media Group
 Verve

INDUSTRY READ REQUESTS

14.73%

CONSULT WRITERS RATED
WITH MOSTLY (5 OUT OF 7)
EXCELLENT/VIRTUALLY
FLAWLESS

= **298 WRITERS**

7.95%

CONSULT WRITERS
RATED W/ ALL
EXCELLENT/VIRTUALLY
FLAWLESS

= **161 WRITERS**

AVERAGE # OF
SCRIPT REQUESTS
IN ONE MONTH

120

304

HIGHEST # OF
SCRIPT REQUESTS
IN ONE MONTH

~1800

TOTAL NUMBER OF SCRIPT
REQUESTS IN ONE YEAR

Writers Signed in 2023

Adam Best
Afshin Hatami
Alyson Richards
Amena Khestchin-Kamel
Andrea Shawcross
Ashleigh Nichols
Benjamin Hayes
Brandon Collins
Carley Whitt
Chris Isenegger
Christopher Cramer
Colin Moore
Collin Gossel
Courtney Amis
Courtney Kocak
Cristina Williams
Davis Kop
Ella Schaefer
Eric Camiolo
Eric Giancola
Erin Grogan
Foley Ibipado
Harrison Hamm
Ivy Johnson
Jaclyn Chan

Jason Goldberg
Jekeva Phillips
Jennifer Kim
Jenny Wise
Jessica Kantor
Joe Swafford
Joe Carroll
Kate Segal
Katharine McPhee
Kevin Ramlal
Kevin Luperchio
Khadijah Iman
Laura Kirk
Lauren Ferebee
Lisa Donner
Luisa Parnes
Mariem Omari
Marquese Clark
Matt DeFago
Matt Bailey
Melanie Fierstein
Michael Hubbard
Mika Frank
Mike McLaughlin
Nick Coffman
Nick Richey

Nick Gambino
Noa Aimee
Ora Yashar
Paloma Lamb
Pandora Tysdale
Paul Baiguerra
Rachel Music
Rachel Naples
Ryan Atimoyoo
Samantha Moody
Samantha Ferrand
Sanjeev Sirpal
Stacey Maltin
Suzanne Griffin
Tarik Woodbine
Tate Hanyok
Thomas Schrack
Winnie Kemp
Zacharia Smith
Zander Adell



Intern Shoutouts

Roadmap Writers partners with the University of Central Florida; University of Colorado, Denver; and others to allow exceptional college students to put their classroom skills to the test!

Interested in an internship?
Email alex@roadmapwriters.com

SPRING:

Cassidy Cobb
Megan Walsh
Scott Manzi
Lexie Moore
Angel Graham

FALL:

Nicolas Velasquez
Emmah Mack
Carlie Nussbaum

SUMMER:

Heidi Rivera
Santana Mell
Jordan Parchman
Sam Zammit
Zach Goldstein
Aidan Luce



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

As a screenwriting education and training platform for career writers looking for a guided path to professional success in writing for film & TV, Roadmap Writers is especially proud to champion voices of underrepresented communities. As we approached the 7th anniversary of our monthly Diversity Initiative, we were excited to widen the scope of our efforts to provide even more actionable industry knowledge to more applicants by expanding our monthly Diversity Initiative into the Coletta Preacely-Garcia Diversity Fellowship, in memory of a Roadmapper whose budding career was cut short when she passed suddenly shortly after Roadmap's launch.

Coletta was an extremely hardworking screenwriter who was always working to better her craft—tirelessly writing, rewriting, and taking advantage of every opportunity presented to her to gain skills, make connections, and polish her screenplays. Coletta embodied the tenacity required to have a successful screenwriting career. Through this fellowship, we highlight diverse writers who personify this same spirit. Always FREE to apply and now offered quarterly, we award ONE Winner the Grand Prize of a full scholarship for Steps 1-4 of our Career Writer Program (a \$1600 value)! Additionally, ONE Runner-Up is awarded Step 1: Pitch Prep Program.

Roadmap has helped over 380 writers sign with representation, while countless others have been staffed on TV shows and had their scripts optioned or sold. Through the Coletta Preacely-Garcia Diversity Fellowship, writers from underrepresented communities have the opportunity to participate in a suite of immersive and interactive programs that give writers a competitive edge in the marketplace while helping them build relationships with as many working industry professionals as possible from anywhere in the world.

We are proud of our continued commitment to championing the amazing voices of emerging diverse writers and cannot wait to see who gets signed next! – **Tiffany Yarde**, Director of Competitions

513

DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP
APPLICANTS

1.6%

DIVERSITY INITIATIVE
ACCEPTANCE RATE

Escribe Bien Applicants

14

Writers signed through our
various inclusion initiatives

27

NUMBER OF DIVERSITY
FELLOWSHIP WINNERS

8

3

WRITERS STAFFED ON
NETWORK TV SHOWS

DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP WINNERS 2023

JANUARY:
AMANDA EBERHARDT

JANUARY:
BERNADETT BELINDA
YORK

WINNER, MAY:
DENNIS GONZALEZ

RUNNER-UP, MAY:
A. P. DE LA CARIDAD

WINNER, AUGUST:
KAREEMA BEE

RUNNER-UP, AUGUST:
LEON MASTERS

WINNER, DECEMBER:
STEPHANIE BAST

RUNNER-UP, DECEMBER :
JEREMY LLOYD-STYLES



CONSULTS & COMPETITIONS

PERSISTENCE OF VISION

Anyone who knows our CEO Joey knows he's an undeniable tour de force when it comes to rescuing as many dogs as he can, a desire that demands a certain kind of discipline and determination to withstand every obstacle that comes his way. Thankfully for the rest of us, Joey not only brings this same persistence of vision to Roadmap, but he has nurtured this ethos amongst the staff.

That relentless pursuit to help writers achieve their dreams is demonstrated in every member of the RoadCrew. Whenever writers engage with us, from Pitch Prep through Top Tier, the passion of people who truly care about writers is a tsunami that continues to grow day after day with every new writer signed.

But it all started with a vision, one that has helped more than 380 writers find their path. And at the heart of it all, is a team. One Goal. One Purpose. One Vision.

– **James Moorer**, Director of Diversity Initiatives & Writer Outreach

NUMBER OF ROADMAP
ACCELERATOR APPLICANTS

590

14.75%

ROADMAP ACCELERATOR
RECOMMEND RATE

COMPETITION
WINNERS
2023

WINNERS,
SCRIVI BENE:

GIANLUCA PAOLISSO,
ARIANNA ORGANTINI, &
EMANUELE DI CARLO

WINNER,

ESCRIBE BIEN:
JORGE HERNANDO
AMAYA IBANEZ

GRAND PRIZE

WINNER, 2022/2023 TOP
TIER COMPETITION:
LAURA MANNINO

RUNNER-UP,

2022/2023 TOP TIER
COMPETITION:
TRISTAN YOUNG
MERCADO

WINNER, SHORTS
COMPETITION:

GERARDO MARAVILLA

565

NUMBER OF JUMPSTART
WRITING COMPETITION
SUBMISSIONS

3

NEW COMPETITIONS

TOTAL COMPETITIONS

7

NUMBER OF PAGE AWARDS
WRITERS SIGNED

2

678

ENTRIES INTO THE
SHORTS COMPETITION

OF EVENTS
ATTENDED BY
JOEY OR TRISTAN:

20

PEOPLE AND NUMBERS

NEW STAFF | SOCIAL MEDIA | FORMER EMPLOYEES | NUMBERS

NEW STAFF



TIFFANY YARDE, Director of Competitions:

At a point when Tiffany considered giving up on writing, she was selected for Creative Corridor, a transatlantic initiative for underrepresented voices between Roadmap Writers and IFT. After the initiative concluded, Tiffany remained a member of the Roadmap community, participating in the Career Writer Program. When the Director of Competitions role opened up, Tiffany jumped at it! Having personally experienced the investment Roadmap makes in emerging writers, Tiffany hopes to use her position to make a meaningful contribution, as well.

RAINA PRATTO, Director of Digital Marketing:

Raina (she/they) found Roadmap Writers after every writing group member touted it's Career Writer

Program. In it, Raina met many like-minded friends to encourage one another's paths, all while learning from and getting to know the legendary RoadCrew and their dedication to uplifting underrepresented voices in Hollywood. What started as an opportunity to moderate Roadmap's Discord community led to the chance to take on a bigger role in more areas of their interest as Director of Digital Marketing. Raina recently directed the KTLA comedy news talk show OFF THE CLOCK, for which they also wrote a joke a day. Raina's currently seeking representation. They're grateful to the entire RoadCrew for their teamwork of making dreams work, but especially Tristan J Shuler for their charismatic guidance and co-leadership of the SM Committee.

MEGAN LEE, Access Programs Coordinator

I was introduced to Roadmap Writers when I started as an intern during Summer 2021. I was still

new to screenwriting and learning this business. My head still spinning from the sheer level of expertise I'd experienced and the knowledge they'd imparted to me in just a short few months, I ended my summer with one clear takeaway: These people care SO much about what they do. I had watched them celebrating their wins even when no one was watching. So, after I graduated, I signed up for step one of the Career Writer Program. I knew it would be one of the most valuable things I could do for my career, but as soon as I started, I felt like a whole new world had opened up in front of me, a feeling that built upon itself through each step. Then they offered me this position, giving me the opportunity to help other writers like myself. The only real question was "How soon can I start??" If this reads like a sales pitch, that's because it is. Not from an employee trying to get you to buy a product, but from a writer who wants you to find the same unbelievable magic she did.

FORMER ROADCREW (WHERE ARE THEY NOW):

Christine Coronado works @ Hillman Grad.

Adquanita Curtis works @ FOX.

ABIGAIL BLOOM & LAURA HUIE:

Abigail and Laura were introduced to Roadmap Writers by starting out in their Career Writer Program. Now, they are members of Roadmap's SM Committee, creating content and managing their Instagram. (IG: @bloomandhuie)

JOSH ELLIOTT:

The SM Committee welcomed Josh with open arms in 2023 as a researcher who loves browsing the web to help curate content for Roadmap's growing community. Josh is also a screenwriter who specializes in writing funny things with serious themes. (Twitter: @TheGreatJoshby)

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE

In order to better connect with our community, 2023 brought a Roadmap Writers first: an entire Social Media Committee (also all writers) dedicated to cultivating community, sharing the best of Roadmap and news that matters to writers in Hollywood. Sometimes they even touch grass.

>>> Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) & [TikTok](#) at [@roadmapwriters](#), and on [Facebook](#) & [LinkedIn](#) as [Roadmap Writers](#).

BRI MORRIS:

Bri creates magic behind-the-scenes to keep the administrative end of the SM committee running smoothly.

GABRIEL THEIS:

Gabriel started in Roadmap Writer's Career Writer Program before being accepted into Top Tier. From there, he signed with Industry Ent. He then joined the SM Committee as the Head of Twitter. Gabriel writes comedy-forward genre features and pilots. (Twitter: @gabe_theis)

G.T. CRUZ:

In 2023 G. Trent Cruz finished his first mini-writer's room, then went on strike. Goal for 2024 is to find representation and keep the weight off he lost walking the picket line. He's the Head of TikTok (launched in 2024). (IG: @_gtcruz)

JAMES MOORER:

Our Director of Diversity, Uncle James, is also behind-the-scenes making Facebook and LinkedIn sing. (Catch his wisdom on Page 05.)

RAINA PRATTO:

Our Director of Digital Marketing serves as Head of Discord & co-leads the SM Committee (see intro above).

TRISTAN J SHULER:

Tristan, our Director of Brand Management & Partnerships, also co-leads the SM Committee with great inspiration.

14 Discord Events





EXECUTIVE INTERVIEWS



Justin Ross

**EP of Development & Production,
Bohemia Group Originals**

Justin is a frequent and favorite development exec on our Roadmap Writers Screenwriting Retreats.

WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT READING A SCRIPT?

To feel that passion and joy that sometimes leaps off the page as it

moves along. Regardless of genre or type of script, there is a rhythm and cadence and an "and then what happens?!" that drives a great read continuously forward. When I feel that and connect to the read that way... boy, that is special and exciting.

WHAT IS THE MOST RECURRING PIECE OF FEEDBACK YOU GIVE WRITERS?

Great question! Two things come to mind. First is some form of "be sure to craft each and every scene so it drives the action, the story forward as enticingly and engagingly as possible." Years ago, I heard great advice from an agent @ WME: "Every scene should ask a question." Second is some form of

encouragement for the writer to listen to their voice and inner guide and continue to follow (or sometimes rekindle) the spark that lit them up to write the script in the first place.

WHAT'S A STRENGTH YOU SEE IN A LOT OF ROADMAPPERS?

Solid craft. Out of the probably hundreds of Roadmap scripts I have had the privilege to read, I cannot think of any, really, that I have opened and thought, "Oh no, they really don't know how to write." Believe me, that is not the case in contests I have judged, outside submissions, etc... A Roadmapper, by and large, comes with a stamp of readability, which is a blessing.



Maddie Breeland

**Director of Development,
Anvil Pictures**

Maddie is also a favorite development exec that has joined us on past retreats as well.

WHAT IS THE MOST RECURRING PIECE OF FEEDBACK YOU GIVE WRITERS?

Check for typos!! LOL (mostly joking). I do tend to point out sections or scenes that might be overwritten. It can be easy to get so excited about a joke, piece of dialogue, or cool set piece that it's

hard to sacrifice those moments for necessary trims so the story will move along more smoothly. Sometimes you gotta kill your darlings.

WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT READING A SCRIPT?

I get most excited when the writing has me so immersed in the world and so invested in the characters that I have a physical reaction. Whether I laugh, cry, cringe, or start sweating from the suspense, it gets me very excited about the prospect of bringing that experience to an audience.

WHAT'S A STRENGTH YOU FEEL A LOT OF ROADMAPPERS HAVE?

A lot of Roadmappers have passion and a unique perspective. They care about bringing stories into the world that only they could tell in a certain way and therefore they take the work of crafting them very thoughtfully and intentionally.

TOTAL # OF CONSULTATIONS:

2,023 in 2023!

(16.73% increase from 2022)

TOP EXECS FOR CONSULTATIONS:

20. [Faisal Kanaan](#)
19. [Jennifer Ray](#)
18. [Kristina Cuello](#)
17. [Lyra Tan](#)
16. [Martin To](#)
15. [David Binns](#)
14. [Nicholas Bogner](#)
13. [Garrick Dion](#)
12. [Mark Saffian](#)
11. [Josh Roemer-Ingles](#)
10. [Michael Dwyer](#)
9. [Audrey Knox](#)
8. [Stephen Crawford](#)
7. [Brian Williamson](#)
6. [Justin Ross](#)
5. [Nathan DeRemer](#)
4. [Chris Deckard](#)
3. [Nathan Glovinsky](#)
2. [Mitchell Bendersky](#)

And the #1 Exec with the most consult sign-ups is:
[Andrew Kersey!](#)



WRITER INTERVIEWS

Bernadette Belinda York

**Diversity Fellowship Winner -
January 2023**

Bernadett Belinda York is a diverse storyteller specializing in complex female narratives, LGBTQ+ representation, and dysfunctional family dynamics. Her work is rooted in emotional honesty, allowing her to process unique life experiences while creating inclusive content across multiple genres and mediums to empower herself and others. Raised in Chicago, she now resides in Los Angeles and is an award-winning screenwriter, actor, producer, certified script reader, author, animal advocate, blissful bride, and ardent Stevie Nicks fan. A proud member of SAG-AFTRA, AEA, Film Independent, and Stowe Story Labs Narrative Lab, Bernadett is a recent ISA Development Slate Winner, Roadmap Writers Diversity Initiative Fellowship Winner, Austin Film Fest Finalist, and made Coverfly's 2023 "List of Lists."

WHY DID YOU BECOME A WRITER?

Writing has always been the best way to express myself. It's a safe place I've turned to since childhood to share how I feel about my life and the people in it. I wasn't always able to say precisely how I felt without consequence. So, I found myself journaling and creating poetry that transitioned to writing lyrics, songs, short stories, and eventually scripts. There's something empowering about realizing you have a voice; I want others to know that, too. I also found comfort and a much-needed escape in watching movies and TV, which led me to become an actor. In the last few years, I wanted to create stories and roles that were important to me, eventually leading to script writing and producing.

HOW DO YOU PUT YOUR VOICE AND POV INTO YOUR WORK?

There's an invisible string that connects every project in my portfolio, no matter the genre or medium. Each one carries an emotionally honest reflection of a character, dialogue, action, or situation that I've directly or

indirectly encountered. If it's true that "everything has already been done" and "every story has already been told," then adding parts of your unique self to everything you create is the only way to stay relevant. I also spend a lot of time in my head. Imagining, dreaming, thinking. I'm overly aware of myself, others, and our surroundings. So, my fascination with the psychology behind our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors is also visible in my work.

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING WRITERS?

Reframe any cognitive distortions or negative thoughts that are holding you back. If you find yourself thinking, "I'm never going to get what I want," try your best to shut that sh*t down and imagine instead, "What if I get everything I want?" As someone who struggles with self-esteem issues, nothing quells self-doubt more than showing up for yourself. Plant a seed, do one thing daily to honor your passion and purpose, and your dreams will come to fruition.

ANY TIPS FOR WRITERS APPLYING TO THE DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP?

Just do it! Submit a piece of material meaningful to you so you can pitch it for the next four months with heart and enthusiasm!

WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST VALUABLE PART OF ROADMAP?

As a fellowship winner, the Career Writer Program was absolutely incredible. Pitch Prep got me past irrational fears about speaking to industry "gatekeeper gods" (they're just human). Marketing Intensive provided necessary business tools. Portfolio Polishing helped my projects shine with ready-to-go one-sheets. Manager Track was during the writer's strike—horrible timing. But I'm still working toward getting signed. However, as valuable as the program was for my craft and career, the people at Roadmap were even more so. I had the privilege of meeting some of the most extraordinarily talented and hard-working humans that I can now consider lifelines for a lifetime: Uncle James (Moorer), Tristan J. Shuler, Alexandra Davies, Terra Joy, Dorian Connelley, and Joey Tuccio.



A.P. de la Caridad

**Diversity Fellowship Runner-Up -
May 2023**

WHY DID YOU BECOME A WRITER?

I started writing as a means to get myself on stage. One theatre professor recognized I was an offbeat fella with a voice and bluntly told me: "You can either be a good actor or a great writer." At first, that sparked denial and anger. So, through my mid-20s, I performed. Despite my best efforts to avoid writing, I was haunted by many a story. In an insomnia-induced stupor, I would scribble and squabble with myself, hoping the flow of ideas would soon end and quiet the storm clouds in my head. Eventually, I realized my professor was right. Writing was the medicine that made me whole.

HOW DO YOU PUT YOUR VOICE AND POV INTO YOUR WORK?

I know I've found the story when I MUST get it down because it just won't fucking leave me alone. My voice comes from being honest with myself about my own flaws, failures, and traumas—and channeling that into characters. When writing feels tedious or flat, I know I'm not doing that. If an outsider peered in on my best writing days, they'd be watching an emotionally unhinged drifter pacing while muttering to themselves until they're drained and collapse onto a couch. I'm happy for those who can write in a coffee shop; I'd be locked up.

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING WRITERS?

Chasing trends and hyper-fixating on your "masterpiece" will often lead to disappointment. Spend time figuring out who you are and what you want to say. A day in your PJs binge-watching is working. Bad writing days are important. Ruin your favorite stories by over-analyzing them until they look like a blueprint. When putting words to page: do not give into the urge to stop. Accept that not everyone will like your writing. Passion is contagious, so pour yourself into your stories. Confidence is magnetic: be humble and open to growth.



WRITER INTERVIEWS

Dennis Gonzalez

Diversity Fellowship Winner -
May 2023

WHY DID YOU BECOME A WRITER?

I wasn't the best student as a kid, but I did well on essays and writing assignments. Writing was always the most comfortable way to express myself. As I got older, I started having complicated feelings about myself, my childhood, and life in general, and movies helped me deal with these feelings. All these things collided in two instances. When I saw *GOOD WILL HUNTING*, it was the first script I ever read, and it was mesmerizing. The second time was when I saw *CALL ME BY YOUR NAME*. Seeing the beauty of those words on paper, the images on the screen and how it felt so personal—I knew there was nothing else I wanted to do. In the simplest sense, I became a writer to increase empathy.

HOW DO YOU PUT YOUR VOICE AND POV INTO YOUR WORK?

Something I'm continuing to work on is removing my internal censor. I think we all develop one as we age and are taught to act and speak a certain way, mainly for civility and politeness. I think it's important to shed some of that when we write. It takes work, but we must push to be our most honest selves when we put pen to paper. Sometimes, that means exploring unpopular opinions or writing scenes or ideas that someone might not expect from you. A certain bravery is required to follow the weird, silly, or dark thoughts that help tell a story that is uniquely you. When I have an uncommon idea or pervasive thought in the back of my head, I explore it and then I write it as fearlessly as possible.

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING WRITERS?

Trust you will see your way through. Don't listen to the voice in your head that says "I can't do this" or "This is irrational." Accept that you will get lost writing some scripts and have setbacks on the ones you finish. This is all part of the process and don't tie it to your self-worth. No one will believe in you if you don't believe in yourself. Don't be too hard on yourself, remain curious, and hold on

to the conviction that you are good enough to do this and your stories are worth telling. The most challenging part of this endeavor is usually in your head.

ANY TIPS FOR APPLICANTS TO THE DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP?

To stand out, you need to be personal and vulnerable. Think deeply about how your diversity has impacted you and developed your point of view. Pick a formative event or time in your life and create a logical tie to how it impacted you and your identity and contributed to the incredible and unique person you are today. Craft a personal statement that reads like a great short story, balancing out humor and tension and leaning on your skills. Ensure you have a strong sample!

WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST VALUABLE PART OF ROADMAP?

I think there are two things. First, Roadmap has a supportive and experienced staff that works with a clear goal. The Career Writer Program isn't easy, but what makes the process so rewarding and fun is that you have the support of truly kind, patient professionals dedicated to giving you the skills to pitch, market, and showcase your best self. I bombed my pitches so many times and received nothing but support and constructive instruction each time. If you do the work, you will grow tremendously. Second, the industry access. If you read a book or article about the industry, you could be reading dated information. At Roadmap, you are placed in front of industry professionals and executives who are actively working in the industry. As a result, you have a clear understanding of what the market is like today, which is essential to meeting goals like getting repped, staffed, and selling material. The best part is that you can have access from anywhere. There were people from Europe and Asia in some of my Zooms. It was amazing!

WHAT DID IT MEAN TO BE SELECTED FOR THE DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP?

It was a huge opportunity—I could develop my skills, leave my comfort zone and pitch myself and a script I love to people who make movies.



Rebecca Jordan Smith

Diversity Initiative Winner - May 2022

WHY DID YOU BECOME A WRITER?

When I was 3-4 years old, I pored over my big sisters' books, mesmerized by the words. I wanted to read them so bad, I would cry because I couldn't yet. I think I initially became a writer because I just always loved words—how they illuminate the world around us and awaken worlds within.

HOW DO YOU PUT YOUR VOICE AND POV INTO YOUR WORK?

I think my voice and point of view are reflected in the themes and characters I explore. In my work, I challenge stereotypes and write characters who push the boundaries of their world to become unlikely heroes.

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING WRITERS?

Live a full life. Experience love, pain, art, nature, food, travel, solitude, etc... Feeding your spirit feeds your work.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST VALUABLE PART OF ROADMAP?

The Career Writer Program is a unicorn experience. It's enlightening, challenging, genuinely supportive, and inspiring. I'm in awe at the level of care and commitment. I left with a confident pitch, a community of writers to root for, and tools that I'll always reference.

WHAT DID IT MEAN FOR YOU TO BE SELECTED FOR THE DIVERSITY INITIATIVE?

Being selected for the Diversity Fellowship was exciting and meaningful. It was encouragement I didn't realize I needed and it sparked momentum for me as a writer.

Editor's Note: After this interview, Rebecca shared this: "Just wanted to share some exciting news. My Roadmap Diversity Fellowship screenplay *KEESHA GOES TO CAMP* was just announced in *The Hollywood Reporter* as a finalist for the *Athena List*!" Congrats, Rebecca! :)

WRITER INTERVIEWS

Andrea Shawcross Roadmap Signed Writer #368 Top Tier Alum



YOU'VE SET UP SO MANY PROJECTS!

Yes! I sold and wrote 9 feature projects over the 4 years (without a manager!), and wrote one pilot that won the grand prize in 2 major contests and is currently in a shopping agreement with a director.

CAN YOU WALK US THROUGH YOUR WRITING PROCESS? DO YOU LIKE TO OUTLINE?

Yes. Always. For MOWs, the outline for an 8-9 act structure is required as part of your contract, and you have to write it in 2 weeks. I like to write long outlines (12-20 pages) that include sluglines, so that producers can see what their locations (and possibly times of day) are at a glance. Plus, once they're approved, they're super easy to input into a draft and start writing, basically filling it in with dialogue. Getting your outline down also helps you fly when it comes to the first draft because you don't get stuck trying to figure out logic.

Writing for one company that only wanted the outlines to be 4-5 pages often led to major rewriting later on. So as I've gained experience, I now tell producers I'd like to submit a detailed outline and get notes early, if that works for them.

HOW QUICKLY CAN YOU WRITE A DRAFT?

If the outline is well thought out and detailed, a feature draft only takes me about 3 weeks. I'm told that's insanely fast. But with MOWs, the contract usually only gives you 4 weeks for the first draft, and then 2 weeks for 2 more rewrites, so you're forced to drop everything and get to work. What I usually do is throw down

what I call a "pre-first draft" in about 3 weeks, and then I'll have a Zoom read-through with about 5 actors and my favorite writers from different writers groups I'm in to offer notes (and my mom who lives in Canada and loves to listen in to them like radio shows haha). I get notes I can turn around in another week, so the draft I submit to producers has been somewhat vetted.

WHAT IS SOME PITCHING ADVICE YOU LEARNED FROM ROADMAP THAT HAS PROVEN SUCCESSFUL IN GREENLIGHTING YOUR MOVIES?

Roadmap taught me everything you need for a comprehensive verbal pitch!!! When I signed up for the Pitch Prep Program 3 years ago, I'd never (verbally) pitched before and I was terrified. But it throws you into the deep end and getting notes, evaluations, and listening to others' pitches definitely calms the nerves and helps you learn fast about what works and what doesn't. Since then, I've done numerous Open Pitch Sessions and Top Tier Pitchfests where I've gotten a lot of requests and gained a ton of confidence.

Then, this summer, I got a call to pitch a whole new Lifetime movie in less than 48 hours based on a few details they sent. At the time, I was on deadline to write a different movie, right in the middle of that precious 4 weeks. So, while writing the first draft of one movie, I suddenly had to cough up an entirely new one! My brain was so full, I felt like it would explode. But I'm a huge believer in working in a place that makes you uncomfortable—often you come up with your best stuff when you don't have time!

I put my first draft aside for 2 days, went over my Roadmap written pitch materials, and put together the major elements (title, logline, remind them it's a thriller, WHY I'd be the perfect one to write it, then the shakedown of the main characters and story, with plot twists, ending, punching it all home with THEME). Then I called 3 friends asking to practice so I could iron out and gain confidence. The

first pitch to a friend was a shit show but he helped me iron it out. (HOT TIP: record your Zoom meetings. You can hear where you're confident and where you need work. And review your listener's notes and not worry about missing any). The pitch organically ended up being 15 minutes long for an MOW feature.

I didn't get that one. But the company loved me and the story—they had me pitch to network—so they circled back a month later and asked me to pitch the highest-budget movie I've written yet based on a new concept they gave me. Once again, I coughed up a movie in 48 hours, practiced, then pitched to the company, who brought me to the network—and I got it! I literally just submitted the first draft.

YOU FIRST MET YOUR NOW REP A WHILE BACK, BUT IT WAS THE SECOND TIME YOU MET HIM RECENTLY WITH A NEW PROJECT THAT HE SIGNED YOU. WHAT EXCITED YOU ABOUT THIS NEW PROJECT?

In 2022, I won the grand prize in both the Launch Pad and Screencraft pilot competitions (after vetting the script through Roadmap, btw—I wrote the first draft in an Incubator, then rewrote it myself, then again in a Month Mentorship, and then AGAIN in a Top Tier Rewrite). That script got me a lot of meetings, but it was YA, maybe too niche. So I wrote a moody crime piece with a college-aged female protagonist. It felt fresh, and the number of companies I could pitch it to expanded tenfold.

What advice would you give to somebody getting into the Career Writer Program?

Don't take notes personally. Call it "the script" instead of "my script"...writing is personal. But filmmaking is collaborative, so take your ego out of it. Make a list called WHY WRITING; with all the reasons you love to write. Put it up on your wall. When shit gets you down, go back to the list. YOU CAN'T FAIL IF YOU DON'T GIVE UP!!

WRITER INTERVIEWS



Jaime Kawamoto Roadmap Signed Writer #255

Jaime Kawamoto is a Career Writer Program alum signed to Affirmative Entertainment.

YOU HAVE SUCH A BOLD VOICE THAT PUSHES THE ENVELOPE. WHAT EXCITES YOU THE MOST ABOUT BENDING GENRES?

My work is a response to the things that make me angry in this world. I create subversive stories with a social message hidden in genre elements. It's much easier to get people to swallow when I add a heaping spoonful of laughter. Mashups also let me twist narratives in unexpected ways by making anything I can dream up creatively possible.

TALK MORE ABOUT YOUR BRAND.

I write feminist genre with a dark comedy underbelly to free the knife-wielding cheerleader that cartwheels through my brain. She wants to make films & TV that topple the patriarchal structure of society—and totally have fun doing it! My intention is always to provoke, but foremost to entertain. Someone recently read one of my features and said “What’s wrong with you?? Keep doing it.” That sums up my brand!

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE ON FOSTERING THE BEST WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR REP?

Establish at the outset how they like to work: frequency/method of contact, how they give notes, etc.—and stick to those parameters. DON'T wait to see what they can do for you: bring them opportunities and (well-researched) suggestions. Remember, they're your colleague, not your employee. Building a personal relationship can only help them help you put out your best work.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A WRITER WHO JUST GOT A WRITING ASSIGNMENT?

Come to the table with your own set of notes/research/suggestions on the project. The more excited and prepared you are, the more the people you work with will be excited about you. WATCH YOUR COLLEAGUES' WORK and ask what else they're currently working on. They're investing time in your work, so it's polite, but it also gives you a sense of their aesthetic. Bonus: you might find common interests and future projects you could work on together.

A FINAL THOUGHT... Be genuinely kind to people. Not for what it can do for your career but because we're all human beings working in what can be a soul-sucking business. It costs nothing to make someone's day a little brighter!

WHY DID YOU BECOME A WRITER?

A dream. That's how my screenwriting journey began. Oh, you've heard this before? Everyone dreams of becoming a screenwriter? Well, does everyone's writing career start off with dreaming a fully fleshed-out story from start to finish with an amazing character arc and a third act that left them weeping as they woke up? That's exactly what happened to me! My gut told me this story was life changing. I decided to adapt it into a screenplay—my first ever—and checked out some how-to-write-a-screenplay books from the library. Once my masterpiece was complete, I had the amazing luck of getting it to a producer who actually read it. Guess what! He HATED it. He said it was the worst thing he'd ever read! I realized my process needed finessing. So I took numerous screenwriting courses. All the biggies: Robert McKee, John Truby, Michael Hauge, etc. I learned about the 6-Act structure, raising the stakes, the Hero's Journey, killing my little darlings, etc. I also read and analyzed numerous screenplays, breaking them down using all the tools I learned. I made some strides in my process; after my revisions my “dream” script reached the Top 15% in the Nicholl Fellowship competition. My subsequent scripts also placed in numerous contests. From a dream, a screenwriter was born!

WHAT DID IT MEAN FOR YOU TO BE SELECTED FOR THE DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP?

Attending Pitch Prep gave me a new set of skills I needed in this business—pitching! I was terrified of it. I not only learned to enjoy verbal pitching but was chosen as one of the top 10 at a pitching conference! I'm finally seeing movement in my career. A game-changer for me.

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING WRITERS?

If you want to be a serious writer, then you need to create scripts every year and get feedback from others. Writing makes you a better writer!

ANY TIPS FOR WRITERS APPLYING TO THE DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP?

Treat the personal statement as another writing sample. Be vulnerable, authentic, tell a story and tie it into the genre you write. If it's comedy, make sure there are some laughs. If it's horror, talk about an incident in your past that drew you to the genre. The reader needs a sense of you as a writer.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST VALUABLE PART OF ROADMAP?

The community. I have made some lifelong friends and connections. These are people I contact for advice, to read my scripts/pitches, or to give high fives when one of us makes an achievement.



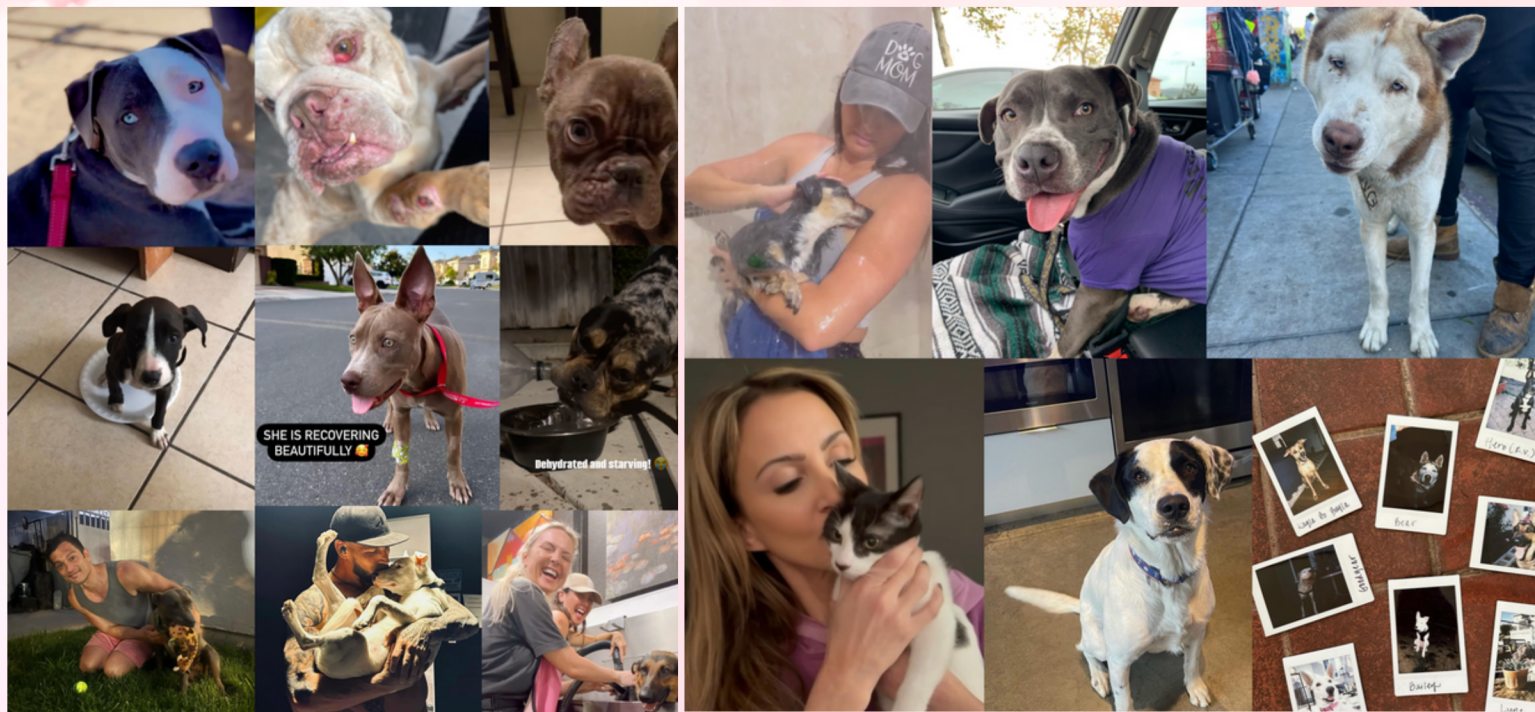
MeeMee Taylor Diversity Initiative Winner July 2022

HOW DO YOU PUT YOUR VOICE AND POV INTO YOUR WORK?

People tell me they can always tell my work because of my wicked sense of humor. Whether it's a comedy or a straight thriller, I infuse a touch of humor. Since I proudly grew up in Louisiana, I also add a dash of Southern flavor to my scripts. Another writer gave me a huge compliment when he called my work “southern fried crazy!”

DOGS RESCUED BY JOEY'S RESCUE GROUPS

THE ANIMAL RESCUE MISSION and STARTS WITH ONE TODAY



ROADMAP



WRITERS



**BE A
HUMAN
FIRST,
A WRITER
SECOND.**

-Joey Tuccio, CEO/Co-Founder

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