



AAFL Screenplay Contest Guidelines – Fall 2005

Contest Overview

The Asian American Film Lab (AAFL) is producing short films to accomplish the dual purposes of providing valuable training for their members and to generate content for festival and media submissions. AAFL expects to begin preproduction on their first film in Fall 2005.

All films start with a script. AAFL has determined that to develop competitive films is to obtain the best scripts available. To that end, the AAFL is conducting a screenplay contest whereby the winning script will be produced by AAFL members.

Contest Guidelines

1. The Fall 2005 Deadline is: **September 7, 2005**. Bring your script into the workshop on this day. There is a submission fee of **\$15** per entry (one entry per person). The submission money will be added to the winning script's production budget. Scripts should be **no longer than ten pages**. Scripts must be formatted in **standard screenplay format**.
2. Writers may only have one winning script per season (annual).
3. Submitted scripts will be read by everyone in attendance at the workshop meeting. Writers will also be asked to present a 1 minute pitch for their script or sing a song of the president's choosing (the 1 minute pitch is highly recommended). The winner will be selected through a democratic peer election process. The writer of the selected script has the option to direct or to choose a director.
4. Keep the budget within the range of \$300 - \$700. The AAFL will provide some initial funding for the winning script. We don't expect you to know how to decipher production values for your script. However, some things to keep in mind are that period scripts, special effects laden scripts, and epic scripts (think Pearl Harbor, Titanic, Lord of the Rings or any later Spielberg film) represent high production values which means lots of money. Try to stay with New York-based locations and simple present-day stories with smaller casts.
5. Along the lines of budget considerations, please keep the production contained within one or two weekends.
6. Scripts should adhere to MPAA guidelines for PG-13 or below ratings (PG, G). We're not trying to enforce moral standards here. However, explicit sexual content may limit our talent choices when we're casting and explicit violence starts to affect budget – see Guideline 4. The MPAA Ratings guidelines can be found at the mpaa website: <http://www.mpa.org/movieratings/about/index.htm>
7. Absolutely no scripts requiring live firearms (or firearms in public), squibs, stunts, fire marshals, explosives and other potentially dangerous safety-intensive plot devices. The legal and safety requirements associated with firearms, stunts, explosions, etc. increases the budget beyond our range. Even if we somehow stayed within budget, we cannot afford the administrative overhead.
8. No scripts requiring children. Again, the legal requirements associated with children exceed our budgetary and administrative capabilities.
9. Stay clear of animal characters and the associated headaches.
10. No copyrighted intellectual property (film, newsreels, TV shows, music, soundtrack or lyrics). Exceptions granted to those screenwriters who have obtained at MINIMUM festival rights for the intellectual property. Evidence of your rights ownership **MUST BE SUBMITTED** with your script.
11. No exotic locations. Public safety offices (police and fire stations), penal facilities, transit infrastructure, landmarks and public parks are all exotic locations from the budgetary and administrative perspective. Given the security requirements of our terror-inflicted world, even "free" locations such as a subway station is much more difficult to get permission to film in. But if you have the location in your pocket, then by all means use it.
12. AAFL members will be given first priority for cast and crew. Once cast and crew are selected, they are expected to attend workshop meetings to update the AAFL about the progress of the film and most importantly, to share their experiences.