SAE Perth Film Lecturer’s screenplay triumphs in US film festival

SAE Institute Perth Senior Film Lecturer Burleigh Smith has won the Screenplay Competition at the 12th Annual Garden State Film Festival in New Jersey, USA. The script will be read live on stage with three-time Academy Award Nominee Diane Ladd directing the reading on Saturday 5 April at the Chelsea Hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

The screenplay has also been recognised by the Beverly Hills Film Festival (finalist), the Canada International Film Festival (Award of Excellence) and the Sacramento International Film Festival.

Burleigh was inspired to write his own feature film, You Can’t Play The Game If You Don’t Know The Rules, after watching the 2013 Sydney Film Festival line up.

"The screenplay only took two months to write. Once I’m started, I write very quickly and never rewrite,“ Burleigh said.

"The rather long title is from a self-help book written by Dr Irene Alexander. It looks at managing relationships. I took chapter headings and inserted them into the narrative of my original screenplay. The script is a romantic comedy that tells the story of Anders and Andrea, who are perfect for each other but may never meet. The two separate storylines play out, other characters overlap,” he said.

The film is set to be produced later this year with a release at the end of 2014. Burleigh also employed former SAE Institute Perth Film Student Troy Wyatt to be the film’s producer.

"Casting is also an important part of the filmmaking process and I’ve been very fortunate to have secured some popular Australian actors,” Burleigh said.

Zoe Ventoura (Packed to the Rafters) will play the leading lady, John Waters (Offspring) is an antagonist, Tiriel Mora (The Castle) is a dodgy private investigator and Bruce Spence (Stork) plays a comedic maintenance man.

SAE Perth Campus Manager Dean Pearson said the college was very proud of Burleigh’s accomplishments and the win shows how education is the foundation to achieving any career goals.

"Burleigh’s success in the Garden State Film Festival is a testament to the calibre of teaching staff at the campus,” Mr Pearson said.

"At SAE we pride ourselves on having staff that can demonstrate and maximise their skills in and outside of the classroom,” he said.

Burleigh is a West Australian screenwriter, film director and actor. His short films have been accepted into more than 200 festivals around the world. He is a two-time Finalist at Tropfest, the world’s largest short film festival, and won Best Director of Western Australia
in 2011. He has a Masters in Film and has also studied under leading Australian film critic David Stratton.

The Garden State Film Festival Screenplay Competition was instituted to recognise the importance of the writer as the foundation for a really great film. Coordinated by the New Jersey Screenwriter’s Network, their goal is to shine a spotlight on this year’s winning screenplay, host a live stage reading by professional actors, and create an atmosphere conducive to industry professionals and investors attending and supporting this great script.

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About SAE
SAE Australia offers Higher Education and VET education opportunities to more than 2,500 students, including certificate, diploma and degrees across the following major fields of study; audio production, film production, games design, games programming, animation, web and graphic design. SAE is also one of the world’s leading media technology training institutes, with 53 campuses in 27 countries. SAE is a part of the Navitas group. Further information about SAE is available at www.sae.edu.au.

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