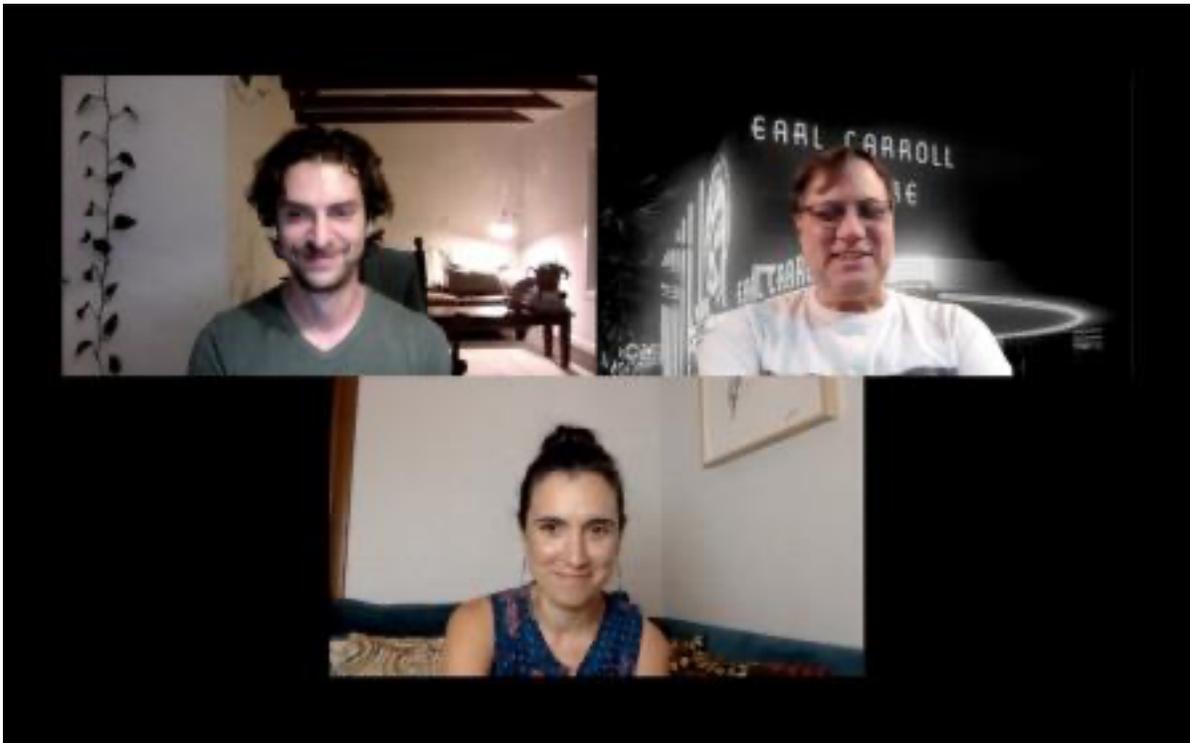


August 11, 2021

***Can playwrights successfully make the
transition to film and television?***



**Special Guest Speakers: Josh Breslow and
Annika Marks**

Moderator: Julius Galacki



Above: some of the 27 attendees as not all wanted to be on camera

I had a free-ranging conversation with these two hyper-articulate, multi-hyphenates about the differences and similarities between playwriting, screenwriting and telewriting, a definition of story, structure, producing, pitching, dealing with notes, etc.

Josh is a graduate of Columbia University (Creative Writing) and has projects in development with film and TV producers, but is most known as a film, TV and theatre actor. Likewise Annika is known for her lauded acting work on stage and screen. Her feature film ***Killing Eleanor*** which she wrote, produced and co-starred in will be released this



fall.

As to the best way in to the "Industry"? Their answer: short films. First of all, the stakes are low, so there's the opportunity to learn without much financial or professional risk. Secondly, the rewards can be great in terms of making contacts and finding future collaborators.

I noted that Annika acted in a play with Jenny O'Hara in 2008 and now O'Hara is the titular "Eleanor" in Annika's movie. To which Annika emphasized: "...Talent rises in groups.... It is a team sport."

But you can't wait for someone to come to you and do your script. Both Josh and Annika served as producers for their respective short films they made. Annika noted: "For me what I learned as a producer... the thing that stands between you and getting our stuff made is not talent. It's the willingness to do it."

Other practical advice: listen to John August and Craig Mazin's free podcast ***Scriptnotes*** on i-Tunes, though you can also pay to have access to over 400 back episodes via their website. As an example of this podcast, there's a good episode uploaded onto YouTube called [How to Write a Move.](#)

Josh didn't find the methodology of the *Save the Cat* books helpful, but praised the script analysis of various movies in those books. My recommendation was a book by a very good teacher I had: Billy Mernit whose book is *Writing the Romantic Comedy* (but note that the general principles apply to all genres). Finally, Herb Issacs made a comment praising UCLA professor Richard Walter's book *Essentials of Screenwriting*.

On the inspirational side, Annika passionately exclaimed, "*Underneath it, story is everything. Truth is everything. You know I've always said this about theatre. I don't care if it's a farce. I don't care what I'm watching. If it's a truth, I'm in. You know, it's lying ... it's lying I think that takes me out of something and so that is fundamentally true no matter what medium you're writing for... but you have to be a lot more sparse in film and TV....*"



But we also had time for unstructured chit-chat between 7:30 and 8 with a few early attendees and more structured but still "get to know you" kind of talk between 8 and 8:30 where we discussed our personal favorite screenplays.