

Richard M. Lewis

c/o Department of Radio-TV-Film
University of Texas
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(he/him/his)

BIO

Richard Lewis has worked as a writer, producer, director, and/or editor for companies including National Geographic Television, Channel 4 (UK), A&E, PBS, Endgame Entertainment, Broken Road Productions, Sierra Club Productions, and Devillier-Donagan Enterprises. Richard's screenplay, ***Bleeding Hearts***, won the award for Best Pilot Script at the 2022 Conference of the University Film and Video Association. His feature script, ***Valley of Bones***, was commissioned and produced by North Dakota-based Zephyr Productions on a \$2.2 million budget. The film opened on 300+ screens in September 2017. A feature script, ***Acceleration***, is presently under a third option to Endgame Entertainment, and another, ***Shrank***, was recently under option to LA-based Shrink Wrap Productions. Richard also wrote the treatment for and worked as a creative consultant on ***The Living Weapon***, an episode of American Experience for PBS which won an Emmy for research. ***Chimp Rescue***, one of his documentaries for National Geographic Television, won a Genesis Award as the year's Best US Cable Documentary. Richard's editing credits include Nick Broomfield's ***Aileen Wuornos: The Selling of a Serial Killer***, which premiered at Sundance. Additional experience includes two years as a story analyst in Los Angeles and three years as a management consultant with Andersen Consulting (now Accenture) in Atlanta and London. He is originally from Fayetteville, North Carolina.

EDUCATION

- The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas
MFA in Film and Television Production, 1994
- The University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana
BBA in Finance, 1985

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Professor, Department of Radio-Television-Film, University of Texas (2021 – present)

- Associate Professor, Department of Radio-Television-Film, University of Texas (2002 – 2021)
- Assistant Professor, Department of Radio-Television-Film, University of Texas (1998 – 2002)
- Lecturer, Department of Radio-Television-Film, University of Texas (1995 – 1998)

CREATIVE / PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Writer Only

- **BLEEDING HEARTS (2022)**. An hour long pilot for a limited television series. a period drama/romance set against the backdrop of the prison reform movement and subsequent US Supreme Court rulings. The story is based on actual people and events in Texas in the late '60s/early '70s and features a white 60 year-old crusading attorney who falls in love with and eventually marries her imprisoned 30 year-old Mexican-American client as they pursue multiple prison reform lawsuits, including all the way to the Supreme Court. **Bleeding Hearts** won the award for Best Pilot Script at the 2022 Conference of the University Film and Videomakers Association.
- **DOG PERSON (2020-22)**. A feature film dramedy. Newly-divorced and left with his ex-husband's six cats, a buttoned-up real estate appraiser embarks on a journey to reappraise his own life. When a gorgeous young guy pulls him from his stagnant comfort zone and into the land of the living, our appraiser sees possibilities never before imagined. But in matters of the heart, as in matters of property valuation, things that are too good to be true often are. **Dog Person** was accepted into the 2020 University Film and Video Association Annual Conference.
- **ACCELERATION (2015-22)**. A feature film script currently under option to Los Angeles-based Endgame Entertainment (*Looper, Snowden, Side Effects, Hotel Rwanda*). Previously optioned by producer Alan Barnette (*Hitchcock, Faith of My Fathers,*). Finalist for a Sundance Sloan Grant. Set in 1981 and based on actual events, **Acceleration** chronicles the comedy of errors that brought down America's largest manufacturer of electric cars – Austin-based Acceleration Automotive – when the federal government allowed a convicted con man in witness protection to take the reins as company CEO.
- **SHRANK (2018)**. A family comedy feature film script co-written with Chad Keller. Optioned by ShrinkWrap Productions for Netflix, with a second option in July, 2018. Previously optioned by Stefanie Epstein Productions, then optioned again by Broken Road Productions (*The Zookeeper, Knight & Day,*

The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Paul Blart: Mall Cop), in tandem with Stefanie Epstein Productions.

- **VALLEY OF BONES (2017)**. A feature film script commissioned by North Dakota-based Zephyr Productions and produced on a \$2.2 million budget. Opened on 300+ screens across the country on September 1, 2017. The script won 2nd prize at the University Film & Video Association annual conference. **Valley of Bones** is a modern film noir set against the backdrop of the Badlands and follows a disgraced paleontologist whose discovery in a remote corner of North Dakota brings out all sorts of shady elements interested in a T-rex specimen potentially worth millions. Her struggles to excavate the massive, 67 million year-old dinosaur are mirrored by an excavation of her own heart.
- **MARY'S WOODS (2012)**. A 30 minute non-fiction script on the natural history of Chesapeake Bay region. Commissioned by producer Dru Hunter and Wild Mustang Productions for Maryland PBS. The film premiered on PBS stations in June, 2012, and rolled out to play on PBS stations throughout the country. It won the John Muir Award at the Yosemite International Film Festival in 2012.
- **SPIRITED (2011)**. A pilot script for a television dramedy series co-written with Chad Keller for producer/director Renny Harlin and LA-based Midnight Sun Entertainment.
- **INSECURITY (2010)**. A treatment for a television drama series co-written with Chad Keller for producer Marc Rosen and LA-based Georgeville Entertainment.
- **A WHOLE OTHER COUNTRY (2009)**. A television series proposal for producer Stefanie Epstein. Co-written with Chad Keller.
- **UNTITLED SEMESTER AT SEA PROJECT (2009)**. A treatment for a feature film for producer Stefanie Epstein. Co-written with Chad Keller.
- **CHECKERED (2008)**. A treatment for a feature film comedy. Written for Johnny Knoxville's Dickhouse Entertainment.
- **THE LIVING WEAPON (2007)**. A 50 page treatment for PBS' American Experience on America's history with biological warfare and weapons. The show aired in February, 2007, and won the 29th Annual News & Documentary Emmy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research in 2008.
- **MAKING HISTORY (2004)** Commissioned to write a treatment for a documentary series, **MAKING HISTORY** for the Science Channel and producer John Rubin. In each episode of **MAKING HISTORY**, an invention

(such as the first human-powered submarine) is brought to life via modern-day recreation while the initial mystery of how such an invention came to be and how it impacted human history is revealed.

- **THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS (2003)** Commissioned to write the treatment for a documentary series, **THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS** by Rubin-Tarrant Productions in Boston. **THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS** is a 4x60 science series that reveals how an unlikely spectrum of researchers—psychologists, neuro-chemists, and economists—is finally getting a grasp on something vital at the very core of our lives. Understanding happiness gives crucial insight into not only the behavior of individuals but into the actions of cultures and nations as well.
- **OUT OF THE BLUE (2003)**. A supernatural-western feature script. Finalist (top 15 out of 7,000 entries) in the Chesterfield Screenwriting Competition which was sponsored by Paramount Studios.
- **PHYSICS (2002)**. A feature drama. **Physics** reached the finals of both the Sundance Screenwriters Lab and the One in Ten Screenplay Competition.
- **INVADERS (2002)**. A 10 page proposal and 50 page treatment for a two hour special on the global impact of invasive species. Originally commissioned by Devillier-Donagan Enterprises, later developed by Rubin Tarrant Productions and Sierra Club Productions. The documentary tells the stories of plants and animals brazen enough to live and even thrive in humanity's wake. From killer bees to kudzu, accidentally and intentionally, man has transported these aggressive opportunists from their native habitats to new sites all over the world.
- **CLONE (2002)**. A treatment for a 60 minute special on cloning for National Geographic Television commissioned by Rubin-Tarrant Productions (Boston) and National Geographic Television. Premier broadcast was July, 2002. Awards: Science in Society Award from the National Association of Science Writers, Columbus International Film & Video Festival, Edgar Dale Award for best informational screenwriting, CINE Golden Eagle Award.
- **CACHE RIVER (2002)**. A script for a 15 minute film on the Cache River Basin (IL) area for the Cache River Wetlands Center. Commissioned by Monadnock Media (Boston) and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.
- **GENDER BENDERS (2001)**. A 25 page documentary treatment commissioned by Sierra Club Productions. ***Gender Benders*** reveals how science is now starting to realize how the pervasive use of pesticides and herbicides is having a devastating effect on reproductive health in both humans and animals.

- **THIS LITTLE PIGGY (2001)**. A 12 page documentary treatment for Devillier-Donagan Enterprises and Rubin Tarrant Productions. ***This Little Piggy*** was envisioned as a companion piece for Mark Lewis' ***Natural History of the Chicken*** and tells the tale of humanity's on-going relationship with its porcine pals.
- **EYES AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD (2001)**. A sci-fi/suspense feature screenplay. Semi-finalist in the Chesterfield Screenwriting Competition.
- **GOOD CHEMISTRY (2000)**. A 35 page documentary series treatment on the chemistry of sexual attraction for Devillier-Donagan Enterprises (Washington, DC) and Rubin-Tarrant Productions.
- **FIRST LOOK (1999)**. A 60 page documentary series treatment detailing the histories of man's first interactions with rare and mystical creatures. Commissioned by Animal Planet.
- **RETURN OF THE CHIMP (1999)**. A 20 page documentary treatment and proposal on returning American-born chimps to their native habitats in west Africa. Commissioned by National Geographic Television.
- **MENDELSSOHN IS ON THE ROOF (1994)**. A feature screenplay commissioned by Channel 4 Television (U.K.) and based on the novel of the same name by Jiri Weil. Co-written with Nick Broomfield.

Writer/Producer/Director/Editor

HORTON FOOTE TRIBUTE (1999). A film commissioned by the Texas Book Festival honoring Oscar, Emmy, and Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Horton Foote. Broadcast on PBS stations throughout Texas.

CHIMP RESCUE (1998, 30 minutes). A documentary commissioned by National Geographic Television and broadcast in the United States as part of National Geographic's *Explorer* series. Distributed nationally and internationally by National Geographic Television.

Awards & Screenings (selected)

- Received a Genesis Award in March of 1999 for Best US Cable Documentary/1998. Traveled to Los Angeles to accept the award at a ceremony which was televised nationally on Animal Planet.
- Finalist (one of three) at the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival in the category of Best Investigative Film for the two year period, 1997-1998.
- Finalist (one of five) in the "People and Animals" category at the Wildscreen International Film Festival in Bristol, England for the two year

period, 1998-1999. (Jackson Hole and Wildscreen are the two premier festivals for science and nature programming.)

- South By Southwest Film Festival
- Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival
- USA Film Festival
- Austin Film Society's Documentary Tour

THE SNOW MONKEYS OF TEXAS (1997, 30 minutes). A documentary commissioned by National Geographic Television and broadcast in the United States as part of National Geographic's *Explorer* series. Distributed nationally and internationally by National Geographic Television.

Awards & Screenings (selected)

- Winner of the Chris Award (top prize) in the Nature and Science Category at the 45th Annual Columbus International Film & Video Festival. Also placed second in the overall film festival for most creative.
- Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival
- South By Southwest Film Festival
- Film Arts Festival (San Francisco)
- The California State Fair
- Austin Film Society's Documentary Tour

BORN WILD: THE EXOTIC ANIMAL PET TRADE (1992, 57 minutes). A documentary broadcast in the United States as part of National Geographic's *Explorer* series and distributed in eighteen additional foreign territories by Devillier-Donagan Enterprises.

Awards & Screenings (selected)

- Best in Category at the International Wildlife Film Festival
- Gold Award at the Chicago International Film Festival
- Genesis Awards Commendation
- International Documentary Association David L. Wolper Certificate
- Silver Apple at the National Educational Film Festival
- Audience award for documentary films at the Breckenridge Festival of Film.

THE AUTHORITIES (1990, 10 minutes). A short 16 mm black comedy named Honorable Mention or Finalist in the following competitions: Chicago International, Houston International, North Carolina International, Movies On A Shoestring, Suffolk County (NY).

Producer/Director Only

READING ROCKETS (2002). Researched, produced and directed Seattle, Denver, Chicago, Washington, Raleigh, Mississippi and Texas segments of a five-part documentary series for WETA (PBS/Washington) and the Department of Education. **READING ROCKETS** presents new theories and methods of teaching children how to read, with a particular focus on schools that regularly achieve measurable success despite being located in non-affluent areas (i.e., schools that do more with less). **READING ROCKETS** premiered on PBS in September, 2002, and was also distributed nationally to schools, teachers, and parents.

DESTINATION SPACE (2000), Produced and directed multiple segments for a two hour special on space exploration for Rubin-Tarrant Productions and National Geographic Television. Awards: Columbus International Film & Video Festival - Bronze Plaque, Science & Technology.

Editor Only

- **500 NATIONS (8 x 60 minutes, 1994)**. (Asst. Editor) An eight-hour documentary series for CBS on the history of the North American Indian peoples. Executive Producers -- Kevin Costner & Jim Wilson, Director/Producer -- Jack Leustig, Supervising Editor -- Susan Crutcher.
- **SNAKE TALES (1998, 90 minutes)**. A feature-length comedy. Director/Producer -- Francesca Talenti. "Additional editor" credit only.
- **AILEEN WUORNOS: THE SELLING OF A SERIAL KILLER (1993, 90 minutes)**. A feature documentary for Britain's Channel 4. The film premiered at the London Film Festival and was broadcast on Channel 4 in the UK. The United States premiere was at the Sundance Film Festival and was followed by a theatrical release in select cities. Director/Producer -- Nick Broomfield.
- **COMBAT AT SEA: "CARRIER VICTORY" (1992, 60 minutes)**. An episode in a documentary series for the Arts & Entertainment Channel, U.S. News & World Report Television and Brazos Productions. Director/Producer -- Stephen Purvis.
- **COMBAT AT SEA: "BATTLESHIPS" (1992, 60 minutes)**. An episode in a documentary series for the Arts & Entertainment Channel, U.S. News & World Report Television and Brazos Productions. Director/Producer -- Stephen Purvis.

Additional Professional Experience

- **STORY ANALYST** for:
 - Trimark Pictures (now part of Lionsgate, Los Angeles, CA)
 - Guadalupe Entertainment & Producer Ross Milloy (Austin, TX).
- **MANAGEMENT INFORMATION CONSULTANT** for Arthur Andersen's Consulting Division (now Accenture) in Atlanta, Georgia, and London, England. Representative assignments included technical writer/editor, systems analyst, project controller, and training of personnel. Assignments were to clients from banking, health care, telecommunications, and manufacturing industries.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Teaching Areas and Courses Taught:

- Screenwriting Introduction (84 undergraduate students)
Introduction for graduate production students (12)
Introduction for graduate writing students (12)
Advanced (14 undergraduate students)
Collaborative (14 graduate and undergraduate students)
2nd Year Workshop for graduate writing students (12)
- Production Graduate 1st year (12 students)
Graduate 2nd year (12 students)
Graduate 3rd year (12 students)
Undergraduate thesis (24 students)
- Producing Producing Film & Television (60 – 75 graduate and undergraduate students)
- Editing Introduction (14 undergraduate students)
Graduate 2nd year post (12 students)

Department and College Leadership:

- **Graduate advisor** for MFA programs in production and screenwriting, August 2014 to present.
- **Academic Coordinator** for the Moody College of Communication's UT-Los Angeles Program, January 2016 to present. Primary responsibilities include...
 - curriculum planning and review
 - individual course planning and review, including consulting with instructors
 - interviewing and hiring adjuncts
 - serving as a liaison between UTLA and Moody College of Communication units, especially the Department of Radio-TV-Film
- **Interim Department Chair** for the Fall, 2018 semester. **Associate Department Chair** for the Spring and Summer, 2019 semesters.
- Elected or appointed to the department's governing Executive Committee every year, 2001 – 2017, except for 2003, 2004, and 2008. In 2017, the department moved to a different government structure, ending elections.

- **Area head for screenwriting, 2012 – 2014 and 2003 – 07.** Primary screenwriting area head responsibilities include...
 - overseeing curriculum and course offerings
 - interviewing and hiring adjuncts
 - chairing screenwriting MFA admissions and managing all recruitment activities, including serving as the primary contact for writing MFA applicants and later, the admits
 - chairing the various writing awards committees and the selection process for the Todd Milam Schulze Award, the Longhorn Showcase script awards, and the WGAE awards.
 - setting up story meetings for the winners of the Longhorn Showcase script awards
 - primary contact for the Austin Film Festival / RTF partnership. Negotiation of contract (along with the chair), distribution of festival passes, setting up the pitch panels and serving as the primary contact for panelists

- **Area head for production, 2005 – 08.** Primary production area head responsibilities include...
 - chairing all production area meetings
 - facilities and equipment planning
 - overseeing curriculum and course offerings (40+ courses per semester)
 - coordinating with the chair on budget issues
 - interviewing and hiring adjuncts
 - overseeing the teaching evaluation process for new faculty, including adjuncts
 - chairing production admissions and managing all recruitment activities, including serving as the primary contact for production MFA applicants and later, the admits
 - serving as the point person for outside solicitations of our students
 - coordinating all end of semester screenings and chairing the jury deciding our showcase (“best of”) films
 - voting membership on the department’s governing Executive Committee

- **MFA Degree Committee Chair, 1997 – 2000, and 2003 - 05.** The committee worked to address issues related to the graduate production curriculum and adjudicated student petitions regarding requested approval of deviations from the prescribed plan of study.

- **Chaired or served for 13 consecutive years on the planning committee for the RTF Department’s annual Hollywood Showcase of UT Student Work (1997 – 2009).** This was a “Best of” showcase at the Directors Guild of America Theater and featured juried student work from the previous year; selected student filmmakers were flown to LA to be in attendance. Traveled

to Los Angeles for the Showcase each of those years and exceed the program six times.

- Chair of numerous faculty search committees

Curriculum and Course Development:

- As chair of the Screenwriting MFA Committee, developed the curriculum for a new MFA degree in screenwriting, researched similar programs at peer institutions, and successfully made the case for approval of the new degree program at department, college, and university levels. We have now offered an MFA in screenwriting for twelve years and accept seven new screenwriters every fall.
- Developed and proposed a complete overhaul of the curriculum for our MFA degree in film production. The plan was later approved by the full faculty, and the program of study is still largely in place two decades later.
- As MFA Committee Chair, developed and drafted the rules and regulations of the MFA production program, which were voted on and accepted by the full faculty. That handbook is still in use today.
- Worked with the College of Communication's Director of Career Services, Matt Berndt, and Professor Tom Schatz on a plan to initiate a University of Texas "Semester in Los Angeles" program. Wrote or co-wrote (with Tom Schatz) the course descriptions of the courses to be offered by UT in Los Angeles. This "semester abroad" program has now been available to University of Texas students for twelve years and has become so successful that it regularly has to turn away applicants due to space limitations.
- Worked with Professor Tom Schatz to develop the University of Texas Film Institute (UTFI), the College's and Department's feature film initiative, especially with regard to the integration and implementation of the institute's academic component. Spent time in Los Angeles meeting with agents and managers and soliciting scripts for Burnt Orange, UTFI's production arm. Taught the inaugural 396 classes at UTFI in 2004 and 2005. Burnt Orange developed dozens of student projects, ultimately produced five feature films, and gave students truly unique opportunities to work for and with film professionals.
- Reworked RTF 368s ("Undergraduate Thesis – Production") to better reflect "real world" entertainment industry practices where creative work results from directors and producers teaming together, with such pairings resulting in more accomplished productions.

- Reworked RTF 333 (“Introduction to Screenwriting”) into a course that emphasizes content over format and gives students experience doing script analysis (“coverage”) of a variety of screenplays, a skill that can be used to secure employment in the entertainment industry. Additionally, doing script coverage gives the students a structure and method for analyzing and improving their own work as well as the work of the other students in the class. Students have both coverage and creative assignments due every week. Under this new format, student ratings of the course have improved dramatically while enrollment has gone from 25 - 30 students per semester to 84 every semester.
- Reworked RTF 367K/388T (“Producing Film and Television,” formerly “Production Management”) into a course that introduces students to both Hollywood and indie filmmaking environments and then takes students through the life cycle of a film from the producer’s perspective: development, financing, pre-production, production, post-production, and marketing & distribution. The previous focus on production management is now just a small, though significant, portion of the course. Final assignments in the class are entirely realistic business plans for film or television projects, and a number of students have executed these business plans after graduation. Enrollment has increased from 25 – 30 students per semester to 120 students per semester.

Additional Teaching Experience

- RTP (Radio and Television Portugal)
Taught a two week Collaborative Screenwriting course for RTP, Portugal’s public broadcasting service, in Porto, Portugal during the summer of 2012.
<http://www.utaustinportugal.org/>
- Universidade Nova de Lisboa
Taught two and three week courses in Collaborative Screenwriting at Universidade Nova de Lisboa in Lisbon, Portugal, as part of the University of Texas / Portugal International Collaboratory for Emerging Technologies during the summers of 2008, 2009, and 2011.
<http://www.utaustinportugal.org/>
- Monstra International Festival of Animation
Taught an abbreviated version of my Collaborative Screenwriting Course at this Lisbon-based festival in March, 2011.

- McCombs School of Business, University of Texas

Coordinated and led the “Business of Entertainment” Academy of the McCombs School of Business’ MBA Plus Program at the University of Texas during two week periods in the falls of 2002 (inaugural) and 2003. This was an industry-specific immersion for MBA students interested in pursuing a career in entertainment. Presented multiple lectures to these students and brought in and moderated additional entertainment industry speakers from Los Angeles, Washington and New York. (Done concurrently with regular RTF teaching responsibilities.)