

5th Annual
Playhouse West-Philadelphia
40 DAYS / 40 NIGHTS FILM CHALLENGE



COMPETITION GOAL:
Based On or Inspired By a True Story

February 2, 2024 – March 12, 2024

INITIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRODUCTION TEAMS

PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS THOROUGHLY.

This year we are challenging filmmakers to dramatize a story that is based on or inspired by a true event, or events that really happened to someone.

The true event(s) can be based on or inspired by any source, i.e. directly from the filmmaker's life, or events they know from their human experience, or it can come from the news or other media source such as an article, a post, etc..

Though we want the film to be inspired by or based on a true event(s), there may be other story elements, such as characters, locations or other events that are changed or fictionalized for the purpose of dramatizing the story.

The more personal the story is to the filmmaker, the better. We will ask the filmmakers to let us know what the source of their story is based on.

There will also be several added elements/requirements in the Final Instructions, revealed on the first day of challenge.

STEPS TO PARTICIPATE:

1. REGISTER PRODUCTION TEAMS ONLINE: By February 1, 2024

Complete the Registration Form on our website. <https://www.playhousewest.com/40-days-40-nights-film-festival>. You will need the following information:

- **Production Team Name**
- **Working Title of the Film**
- **One Sentence Synopsis**

Don't state the whole story or everything that happens, just give a sort of TV Guide synopsis. Here are some examples:

- After the sudden death of her husband in Iraq, a soldier's widow and mother of three tries to put her life back together in her small, southern town.
 - Two friendly rivals living in the same apartment complex compete for the affections of a beautiful new tenant.
 - A popular high school teacher fights to save his reputation after he's accused of corrupting a minor.
- **Genre**

- **Main Producer / Playhouse West Affiliation / Contact Information**

REQUIRED: A Playhouse West student, current or former, must be the main producer.
Additionally, the lead actor must be a current or former Playhouse West member.

- Non-PW members may be used to complete the cast, direct the film, help write, or serve on the production crew, if you wish.

2. SHORT FILM REQUIREMENTS

Filmmakers have full artistic control over the films and their content. However, on Friday, February 2nd, each production team will be given FINAL INSTRUCTIONS, detailing specific elements which must be incorporated into the film. We usually have one performance/character element, a story element and a cinematic element, all which must be organically and intrinsically incorporated into the action of the story.

- **REQUIRED RUNNING TIME:** a minimum of two (2:00) minutes to a maximum of thirty minutes (30:00) in total running time, including all credits.
- The final end credit title for all completed films must state the following:

**This film was originally made as part of the
Playhouse West-Philadelphia
40 Days / 40 Nights Film Challenge
2024**

- **Accepted Genres:** Comedy, Romantic Comedy, Drama, Romance Drama, Suspense/Thriller, Horror
- **Genres not Accepted:** Sci-Fiction, Mockumentary/Pseudo-Documentary, Animation

3. ADDITIONAL TIPS

- The best stories are usually very *personal* to the story-teller, so for us, the more personal the story is, the better. Additionally, we are looking for stories with a solid, clear theme or premise, meaning that there is a clear point being dramatized by the action of the story. A personal story with a solid theme can be expressed in many ways and through different genres.
- The best stories are a cause and effect series, or chain of events, thematically wedded together, where the end is inevitable from the beginning. The action and moments should lead us, shot-by-shot and scene-by-scene, through the cause and effect events to a final climax and resolution. Therefore, we encourage you to do a detailed outline of the story before beginning to write the script. A solid, clear and well-written outline will help you better see and achieve a true cause and effect story.
- Remember that movies are visual, and that an ounce of behavior is worth a pound of words. If you can show it, you don't need to say it.
- Avoid on-the-nose dialogue. Dialogue is best when it's subtextual.
- The more you prepare in pre-production, the better production will be. Part of pre-production is also preparing for post-production.

- We encourage everyone to create contracts for the production, for each cast member, member of the production team and tech crew. A contract can help define roles and duties, obligations and expectations for each person involved, including who is entitled to what credit, what order of credit, etc.. Contracts may help you avoid conflicts down the road.

4. TURNING IN THE COMPLETED FILM

- Each Production Team must submit an MP4 file of the completed film to the below Dropbox link by **11:59 p.m., PST, on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.**

DROPBOX LINK:

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/WPIrtR58WITPNdkQyOUO>

- Projects should be **exported as H.264, 1920x1080 aspect ratio, with the highest quality image and audio codec settings.** *Please adhere to this!*
- Please preview your exported film entry for errors in it's entirety before submitting it.

5. **There will not be a public screening of these films.**

- Award: One film will receive an automatic selection and screening at the 11th Annual Playhouse West Film Festival-Philadelphia, August 16-18, 2024, and have the admission fee waived.
- All other entries are encouraged to submit their films to the PWFF-Philly.
- Furthermore, all productions completed, or not completed, will then have more time to re-shoot, re-edit, alter or enhance their films before the 2024 PWFF-Philly submission deadline on May 15.

Start putting together your production teams now! Registration is now open!