



“QUEERING THE SCRIPT”
Feature Documentary

Run time: 93 minutes

Queering the Script is produced by Shaftesbury with the participation of Hollywood Suite, the Canada Media Fund, the Frameline Completion Fund, and with the assistance of The Canadian Film or Video Tax Credit and The Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit.

Written and Directed by Gabrielle Zilkha
Produced by Steph Ouaknine



**Canada
Media Fund**



FACT SHEET

Logline:

Giving queer fandom a voice in the conversation about LGBTQ+ representation from *Xena* to *The L Word* to *Pose*, ***Queering the Script*** examines the rising power of the fans and audience shaping representation on TV, the relationship between fandom and activism, and what lies ahead for visibility and inclusiveness.

Synopsis:

Queerness on television has moved from subtext, in series such as *Xena: Warrior Princess*, to all-out multi season relationships between women, as seen on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Lost Girl*, and *Carmilla*. But things still aren't perfect. In 2016, a record number of queer women died on fictional shows, which broke the hearts of queer fans and launched a successful fight for better, more diverse LGBTQ2S+ representation. Stars such as Ilene Chaiken, Stephanie Beatriz, Lucy Lawless and Angelica Ross join with the voices of numerous kickass fangirls in this fast-paced history of queer women's representation of contemporary television.

Queering the Script not only charts the evolution of queerness, but also demonstrates the extraordinary impact of activism on its many diverse fans, ensuring that they see themselves accurately portrayed on screen.

Featuring Interviews With:

Lucy Lawless (Actor / *Xena: Warrior Princess*)
Ilene Chaiken (Producer/Director/Writer / *The L Word*, *The Handmaid's Tale*)
Princess Weekes (Journalist / *The Mary Sue*)
Gloria Calderón Kellett (Producer/Writer / *One Day at a Time*)
Angelica Ross (Actor / FX's *POSE*)
Stephanie Beatriz (Actor / *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*)
Tanya Saracho (Producer/Writer / *Vida*)
Dominique Provost-Chalkley (Actor / *Wynonna Earp*, *The Carmilla Movie*)
Alexis Sanchez (LatinX Geeks co-founder)
Flourish Klink (Chief Research Officer, Chaotic Good Studios)
Dana Piccoli (Pop culture critic and Managing Editor, Bella Media Channel)
Riese Bernard (Co-founder/Editor in Chief, *Autostraddle*)
Penny Cavanaugh (Xenite Retreat Founder)

Executive Producers:

Christina Jennings
Scott Garvie
Jay Bennett

Producers:

Steph Ouaknine
Alex House

Directed by:

Gabrielle Zilkha

Written by: Gabrielle Zilkha

Editor: Shelley Therrien

Director of Photography: Marianna Margaret
Andria Chamberlin

Queering The Script Hashtag: #QueeringTheScript

FESTIVALS

OFFICIAL SELECTION - **InsideOut** 2019, Toronto

OFFICIAL SELECTION - **Outfest** 2019, Los Angeles
Winner of the Special Programming Award for Freedom

OFFICIAL SELECTION - **Frameline43** 2019, San Francisco
Recipient of the Frameline Completion Fund

OFFICIAL SELECTION - **AGLIFF 2019**, Austin

OFFICIAL SELECTION – **Raindance Film Festival 2019, London**

OFFICIAL SELECTION – **Women Texas International Film Festival, 2019**

OFFICIAL SELECTION – **Oslo/Fusion Film Festival 2019, Norway**

Additional Festivals: Tampa Bay LGBT Film Festival, Desperado Film Festival, Melbourne Queer Film Festival, FreaqWeek, CinemaQ Denver Film Festival, Indianapolis LGBT Film Festival, Out on Film Atlanta, Way Out West

CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

GABRIELLE ZILKHA

WRITER & DIRECTOR

Gabrielle Zilkha is an award-winning director and producer with experience in documentary, scripted and interactive content. Her work has been screened around the world and covered by the Globe and Mail, Indiewire, CBC Radio, The Huffington Post and the Canadian Jewish News.

Most recently, Gabrielle directed the CBCArts web-series *Queer (Self) Portraits* (2017), documentary series celebrating queer and trans artists. She also produced the short documentary *Badassery* (2017) that tells the breakout stories of Canada's top female hip hop DJs. In 2016, she completed her first feature documentary *Doing Jewish: A Story From Ghana* (2016) about a small tribe in Ghana on a journey of self-discovery after recently discovering their Jewish roots.

The film was broadcast on Vision TV and screened at festivals around the world. Prior to that she wrote, directed and produced her award-winning short comedy *Stop Calling Me Honey Bunny* (2013) which was shortlisted for the Iris Prize - the world's most prestigious LGBT film award.

Passionate about equity and promoting diversity in the media industry, Gabrielle also works as Producer and Director of Programming for POV 3rd Street, an organization dedicated to helping marginalized and under-represented youth break into the media industry through education, training, mentorship and job placement.

Website:

www.gabriellezilkha.com

CHRISTINA JENNINGS

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

A visionary producer with a track record for delivering award-winning scripted content for audiences around the world, Christina Jennings is founder, chairman and CEO of [Shaftesbury](#), a content company known for innovative storytelling and building successful brands. Spanning the production of TV, feature film and digital content, Shaftesbury titles are sold in 120 countries worldwide and include acclaimed international hits *Murdoch Mysteries*, *Carmilla*, *Regenesis*, and *Life with Derek*.

As world-class brand builders, Shaftesbury is an industry leader in engaging and sustaining audiences by creating brand extensions including original content created for digital and social media platforms, mobile apps, and VR experiences. Taking the company's expertise in scripted storytelling to the advertising industry, Shaftesbury launched an in-house agency in 2014 dedicated to growing the company's roster with brand funded content targeted at the coveted 18-34 demo. The company's [KindaTV](#), home to U by Kotex®-funded drama series [Carmilla](#) and other Shaftesbury web series, is the largest scripted YouTube channel for millennials in Canada, reaching nearly 100 million views since its launch in 2014.

Jennings is a graduate of the Canadian Film Centre and currently serves as Chair of the Centre's Board of Directors. Named to *Maclean's* Power List of Canada's 50 Most Powerful People, Jennings' recent awards and honours include the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2017 Content

Innovation Awards, *Playback*'s Producer of the Decade, the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television's prestigious Academy Achievement Award, the PROFIT Award for Excellence in Entrepreneurship at RBC's Canadian Woman Entrepreneur Awards, and the Innovative Producer Award at the Banff World Television Festival.

SCOTT GARVIE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

As Shaftesbury's SVP of Business & Legal Affairs, Scott Garvie has overseen negotiation and implementation of all development, financing, sales and recoupment arrangements since 1994. Garvie serves as executive producer on all of Shaftesbury's productions and, as a result of his strategic relationships with key broadcast and financing partners, has been integral to the growth of the company into one of Canada's leading creators of original content for multiple platforms.

As world-class brand builders, Shaftesbury is an industry leader in engaging and sustaining audiences by creating brand extensions including original content created for digital and social media platforms, mobile apps, and VR experiences. Taking the company's expertise in scripted storytelling to the advertising industry, Shaftesbury's branded entertainment division is dedicated to growing the company's roster with brand funded content targeted at the coveted 18-34 demo.

Scott Garvie serves as Chair of the Canadian Media Producers Association's (CMPA) Board of Directors, and has served on the Board for over 15 years. A recipient of the Douglas James Dales Industry Builder Award, he also sits on the FilmOntario Board, is a former Chair of the Ontario Producer's Panel and served on the board of the Canadian Television Fund for four years.

JAY BENNETT

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

As SVP, Creative & Innovation, Bennett is responsible for the creative direction and innovation of the company, focusing on technology and multi-screen content including feature films, original digital and branded entertainment, in partnership with Shaftesbury's branded entertainment division. He also oversees marketing, research, audience engagement and merchandising and licensing strategies across all divisions.

Under Bennett's creative direction, Shaftesbury's landmarks have included the creation of the first digital short-form scripted series in Canada to migrate to prime-time television, *Backpackers*, for top-five U.S. network The CW, and launching the world's first scripted mobile App series, *Totally Amp'd*.

Bennett is an Emmy award-winning leader in the global digital landscape whose unique creative vision has been appearing on screens of all sizes for almost a decade. Bennett has created and produced numerous productions and applications, with a distinct focus on blending storytelling with innovative technologies and social strategies, bringing a 360-degree approach to mainstream audience engagement.

Prior to joining Shaftesbury, Bennett served as Creative Director at Xenophile Media, where he wrote and directed the International Emmy-nominated and Rose D'or-winning *M.I. High: Whack the Mole!* for the BBC; creative produced the International Emmy-nominated eight-million-strong player

universe *Total Drama Island – Totally Interactive!* for TELETOON; and wrote and directed the *Fallen: Alternate Reality Game*, which was filmed on location around the world and won the first Prime Time Emmy award for Interactive Television in 2007.

Bennett holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Victoria. He has worked in India, the UK, the Netherlands and Canada and has had further media training with the National Film Board of Canada and the Canadian Media Production Association (CMPA).

STEPH OUAKNINE

PRODUCER

One of Playback's "To Watch" class of 2018, Steph Ouaknine is an award-winning producer specializing in niche-driven series and fan engagement. She has a proven track record of creating evocative series that have garnered passionate fans, critical acclaim, and forged innovative new revenue models. She creates content that finds an audience.

Steph has co-created and produced CARMILLA, the award-winning multi-platform series that ran for 108 episodes and spawned a global and engaged community that call themselves "The Creampuffs." Financed by U by Kotex, the series topped 100 million views, earning Steph and the team accolades from Cannes Lion, Rocky Awards, multiple Canadian Screen Awards, Webby and Streamy Awards, and in 2018, took home MIPTV's "Brand Content of the Year" and "Best Digital Fiction" Awards.

As the lead on the project since 2014, Steph has successfully led Carmilla in all of its iterations: three seasons for YouTube, a theatrical feature, a book deal, live events and now the primetime TV series in development. For the past six and a half years, she has been a digital-turned-TV producer and development executive for leading production company Shaftesbury, overseeing series developed at AMC, Corus, CBC and more.

Steph's entrepreneurial spirit and passion for the future of television has landed her a spot in the Canadian Media Producers' Association "Next Generation of Producers" feature in Winter 2018.

She's also a recipient of Netflix's 2018 Diversity of Voices fellowship at the Banff World Media Festival, a finalist in the National Screen Institute's Totally TV Program, and has been selected for the Trans-Atlantic Partners' co-production training program along with 25 fellow producers from around the world.

She has spoken at UCLA, SXSW, BFI Flare, TIFF Next Wave, VIFF, WIF-T amongst others. Her films and digital series have screened worldwide, from the British Film Institute to Outfest LA, Shanghai Queer Film Fest and the upcoming Frameline Film Festival in San Francisco.

Steph is passionate about the future of television and diverse voices, eager to propel the Phoebe-Waller Bridges' of Canada to the international market.

ABOUT SHAFTESBURY

Shaftesbury is an award-winning creator and producer of original content for television, film, and digital. Shaftesbury's current slate includes 13 seasons of *Murdoch Mysteries* for CBC and UKTV, three seasons of detective drama *Frankie Drake Mysteries* for CBC and UKTV, three seasons of critically acclaimed horror series *Slasher* for Netflix, and several new primetime series including *Hudson & Rex* for Citytv/Rogers Media, *Departure* for Global/Corus Entertainment and NBC Universal, *Dead Still* for RTE, Acorn TV, and Citytv/Rogers, and *The Sounds* for CBC. Shaftesbury's branded division produces original entertainment projects for brands including the global phenomenon *Carmilla* for U by Kotex/Kimberly-Clark and *Turning the Tables* for göt2b®/Henkel. Shaftesbury's technology division works with leading healthcare institutions and researchers to explore and develop clinical applications for immersive media experiences including augmented and virtual reality. www.shaftesbury.ca