

# 10<sub>2</sub>

## WATCH PLAYBACK

BY EMILY CLAIRE AFAN,  
WITH FILES FROM BRENDAN CHRISTIE

At the heart of the film and TV business is the talent – the creatives who conceive, execute and bring life to the shows, movies and interactive content audiences want to see. Each year, *Playback's* editorial staff selects 10 individuals from across these disciplines as the hottest up-and-comers to keep an eye on.

Coming up with that list is a long process. This summer, *Playback* opened its site to suggestions from the industry and received about 250 submissions. Those were narrowed down to a short-list of about 10 before the editorial board made its final picks based on individual merit and credits.

In the end, these are the eleven names – we've included a writing duo this year as a single selection – whom we think will be making a big splash in the industry in the near future.



Adam Barken, writer

Age: 36

Residence: Whitby, Ontario

Agency: The Alpern Group (Toronto)

Buzz: Snagged a Canadian Screenwriting award for his work on season one of *Flashpoint* then landed writing gigs on *Shattered* and the red-hot *Rookie Blue*

You could say Adam Barken has a flair for the dramatic – certainly if you were describing his professional work.

His love for TV drama writing has led to a career that's been accelerating in the last two years. Initially drawn to film, Barken, a screenwriter, penned a play that was optioned by the folks who have since formed Montreal prodco Seville Pictures. *TV* (2006), however, "received fairly scathing reviews," Barken recounts good-naturedly. Shortly after, he realized that world feature field was few and far between.

So he turned to the small screen and while working at the CFC, where he says he got his "big break," he met Gemini writer and producer-in-residence Barbara Samuels (*North of 60*). They immediately clicked. She introduced him to producer Marie La Traverse, who brought him on board to write for a new series called *Sniper*, which later became *Flashpoint*.

Barken first came on as a story editor, then returned for season two as a senior story editor. "It was really gratifying to see that Canadians embraced it. It really defied a lot of conventions, like 'Canadians don't watch Canadian shows,' or 'Canadians need another cop procedural,'" he says. "We were able to say, 'That's pretty much all bullshit,' and we can make a show that's fun and exciting to watch that will appeal to a broad range of people."

After *Flashpoint* – and after snagging the honours for episodic hour-long at the WGC Screenwriting Awards in 2009 – Barken followed fellow writer and executive producer Tassie Cameron to *Rookie Blue*, where he co-wrote the season finale, and now Barken has also been tapped as a showrunner for a yet-to-be-named pilot.

He's feeling confident in his career right now and in the projects he's choosing, noting that dramas sell well internationally. "A good procedural can make a company."

"We're in a time when every single major Canadian network has a hit hour-long and I can't remember the last time it was said that the hour-long was dead and that no one wanted pilots, and now it's a marketplace where everyone's doing pilots and hour-longs are where it's at."



# Cole Bastedo & Matt Huether, writers

Age: 28

Residence: Toronto

Agent: Meridian Artists (Toronto)

Age: 30

Residence: Toronto

Agent: The Characters Agency (Toronto)

**Buzz:** This writing duo collectively spent years on *Degrassi*, along with other youth-oriented Canuck series, and are now in development with a number of prodcos and other industry folks for their own original projects

As assistants at The Characters Agency, Cole Bastedo and Matt Huether would observe writer clients coming in and making their pitches. "Some things were amazing, some things were half-baked and that's just the nature of what it is," says Huether. "And we were like, 'Well, we can do something half-baked.'"

Reflecting on that time six years ago, they admit their initial concept of a celebrity dad who's haunting his own mansion – but doesn't know he's a ghost – was a half-baked idea. (Though after recalling the memory, Bastedo said, "I kind of want to go back to that.")

The pair has come a long way from the days of sitting next to each other at the agency, cracking jokes and writing them down. They decided to take their love of storytelling to the next level and both jumped into story coordinating in 2008 – Bastedo on *Little Mosque on the Prairie* and Huether on *Degrassi: The Next Generation*. Bastedo also came on board *Degrassi* as a story editor and the two then found themselves writing web shorts for *Hot Wheels*, which led them to the animated series based on Mattel's popular toy cars, *Hot Wheels: Battle Force 5*, *Overruled!* and *How to Be Indie*.

But it was at *Degrassi* where the two spent much of their time, with

Huether on board for four seasons. Bastedo left to work on *Women's Survival Guide*, then came back and they were once again back together working on a 48-ep order.

"The biggest challenge is trying to tell new stories," notes Huether of the series that's just entered its tenth season. "It's supposed to be about firsts and first experiences. Now, we have to pick stories that are new and fresh. Last year (for example), I did an episode on sexting, which didn't exist 10 years ago."

He adds that bringing in new characters is another way to keep things fresh. The past four seasons, we brought in a bunch of new characters to help rejuvenate the series," he says. "So the audience can fall in love with new people and that's how we've managed to keep it going."

Right now, though, they're occupied with their own projects, including adult sitcom *Stay at Home Dad*, currently in development with Shaftesbury, as well as projects with Temple Street. Though they've dabbled in a range of genres, Bastedo and Huether say they naturally gravitate to comedy and adult sitcoms. They're also embarking on their first feature, a teen comedy for APB Pictures.

## Julian Clarke, Editor

Age: 30

Residence: Vancouver

Agency: Vanguard Artists Management (Toronto), Paradigm (L.A.)

**Buzz:** Garnered his first Academy Award nomination for editing *District 9*. Currently in post-production on *The Whistleblower* (named as a TIFF Special Presentation), and waiting for upcoming partnership with *D9* writer/director Neill Blomkamp

Julian Clarke was thrust onto the world stage after earning an Oscar nod for Best Achievement in Editing on alien flick *District 9*.

"[Editing] is one of the only parts of the film process when you feel in control of what's happening," he states. "A lot of the production process is chaos and I like steering the chaos."

On *D9*, Clarke was faced with the enormous task of cutting more than 200 hours of tape. Aside from a few assistant editors and other effects folk, it was pretty much a one-man show, but one that he enjoyed. "You're a single person telling a story, making something work and there are only a few jobs in film where you can do that as one person."

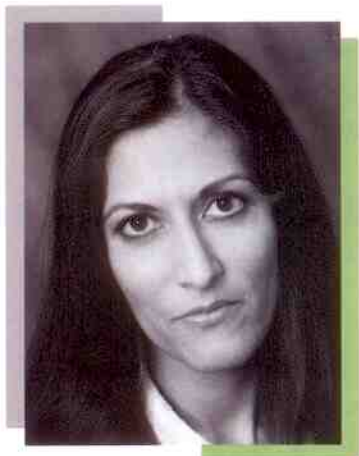
Serendipity played a role in Clarke's involvement with the film. Much of the key position recruiting was done in Vancouver, which was also home base for the film's writer and director Neill Blomkamp. Clarke had previously worked with *D9* composer, Clinton Shorter, who made the connection to Blomkamp.

"[Blomkamp] brought a lot of young blood into that movie: the composer, the director of photography, and many of the effects were done by Vancouver studios," says Clarke. "A whole bunch of people went along for the ride with Neill and those kind of movies don't come along too often, where it's small enough that kind of up and comers could be hired, but came out to be so big."

His hard work didn't go unrecognized. Clarke was bestowed with an Oscar nomination from the Academy, along with nods from BAFTA, American Cinema Editors (U.S.), Satellite and the Online Film Critics Society.

He's spent the last decade cutting film on a wide variety of projects, armed with his B.A. from University of British Columbia's film program. Starting off with friends and colleagues' short films, he eventually found himself in the Telefilm feature circuit, then eased his way to documentary TV. His long list of credits range from Carl Bessai's drama *Unnatural and Accidental* (2006) – for which he snagged a Leo – to *Barbie: Fairytopia*.

Visualizing the big picture before it hits the big screen can be overwhelming, but Clarke relishes the challenge. "Any job which is a creative, exciting job... if it was easy, everyone would do it," he says. "You have to want it to achieve good work. Certainly you have your moments saying, 'Hmm, is this worth it?' Then you end up with something great at the end and yes, it was."



## Ravida Din, producer

Age: 45

Residence: Montreal

Representation: NFB employee

**Buzz:** Though a long-time employee of the National Film Board, Din has been delving more into the production side of the film world recently, with two m projects already under her belt

Little did Ravida Din know that her quest for social change would lead her to the National Film Board.

After almost two decades at the NFB, she's only recently begun her foray into the production side of the film world, at appointed executive producer three years ago. Already, notable credits include 2007's *Up the Yangtze* from EyeSteel Film year's *Reel Injun*, directed by Neil Diamond.

She had her producer's hat on almost immediately when she stepped into this most recent position, and right away, s working on *Pink Inc* (working title) after being inspired by a feminist critique about breast cancer treatments and philanthropy. "If we've raised billions of dollars, why are we not seeing any improvement?" she asks. "Why is everything around treatment and prevention? I basically pitched the idea to my boss and he was very supportive."

Just a year ago, she was equally inspired after reading Margaret Atwood's 2008 book *Payback: Debt and the Shadow of Wealth* on the nature of debt. "That moved really quickly," recalls Din. "I had contacted Atwood, and she wrote back right had six months of negotiations with her agent, then Jennifer Baichwal (*Manufactured Landscapes*, *Act of God*) was appointed and she was immediately interested. The momentum surprised me, but it has felt right every step of the way."

As someone who always thought her life's work would centre on helping others, Din's eyes were opened when she had to fall into a gig at the NFB in Ottawa via a mat leave contract. "I couldn't believe I was getting paid to show documentaries to women's organizations," she recalls. "Finding interesting ways to connect to social change organizations, educators and documentary films as a tool for social change. That had always been my work. And to actually be doing it in the context funded by a public producer and working within the communities was pretty amazing."

That six-month mat leave led to the next 17 years at the NFB, making her way through a number of positions in marketing, working with Tom Perlmutter as the assistant director general for English programs for four years before eventually heading production realm.

# CELEBRATING CANADIAN CINEMA SUPPORTING CANADIAN TALENT

Telefilm Canada, proud partner of:

Montreal World Film Festival • Aug. 26 – Sept. 6, 2010

Toronto International Film Festival® • Sept. 9-19, 2010

Atlantic Film Festival • Sept. 16-25, 2010

Vancouver International Film Festival • Sept. 30 – Oct. 15, 2010



# 10<sub>2</sub> WATCH PLAYBACK



**Age:** 22  
**Residence:** Toronto  
**Agency:** Characters Talent Agency (Toronto)  
**Buzz:** Discovered on CBC's *Triple Sensation*, Mac has landed guest spots on *Flashpoint* and *Unnatural History* as well as snagging a cast spot on Shaftesbury's *Baxter*

Listing off the roles he's landed since moving to Toronto only two and a half years ago, Kyle Mac chuckles as he realizes how many of them fall on the more villainous side. "People say I have untrusting eyes," he says with a laugh. "I find it very bizarre, because when I was in theatre growing up, I only played romantic leads, no matter what, until I went to film and TV. But I haven't found that proper lead role in film yet where people will understand!" he jokes.

To his credit, the Edmonton-born actor is well on his way. He first turned some heads appearing on season one of CBC's reality talent show *Triple Sensation* in late 2007. It wasn't long after when he was wooed by agents in Toronto, and made the move in 2008.

Shortly after getting settled, he landed a guest spot on *Flashpoint* last year as a bully involved in a Columbine-esque school shooting episode, a drastic turn from his classical theatre and Shakespeare training. But stepping into villainous characters doesn't faze him in the least, which is good, considering how many he's already played.

Mac snagged another dark casting as lead vampire Leonardo in eight episodes of MTV's supernatural mini-series *Valemont* last year. He recently wrapped up Shaftesbury's new tween series *Baxter*, where Mac feels a little more in his skin as the pretentious Marcus, out to sabotage his fellow students at the performing arts school — appropriate, since Mac had attended the Canadian College of Performing Arts in Victoria. "I'm really the only menacing character on that show, so you've got to love to hate Marcus, which I personally relish in."

He's crossing his fingers that *Baxter* gets the greenlight for a second season on Family Channel, but in the meantime, Mac's been finding ways to fill out his filmography, having also recently done a guest spot on new kids actioner *Unnatural History* as, you guessed it, another villain.

Kyle Mac, actor



**Age:** 30  
**Residence:** Regina  
**Agency:** CTM International (Vancouver)  
**Buzz:** Just wrapped a stage run of one-woman play *The Syringa Tree*, earned Canadian Comedy Award with her troupe General and currently in development on her series *inSAYSHABLE* co-created with Minds Eye Entertainment for Citytv

Splitting time between Regina and L.A. seems to be a bit of an unusual divide, but it Matysio just fine, as she's attracted just as many opportunities for herself as in any other

In fact, she's even surprised folks in the U.S. when she's auditioning south of the border. "They look at my resume and say, 'Where did you do all this?'" she says with a laugh, noting their constant surprise when she tells them of the multitudinous opportunities on home turf.

That includes performances not limited to just the film and TV world. In the past summer, she wrapped her stage run of *The Syringa Tree*, a one-woman play in which she spoke 16 regional African dialects and took on 16 different characters.

She's also been an ensemble member of her comedy troupe General Fools Improvisational Theatre for the past 13 years, which earned her a Canadian Comedy Award this year.

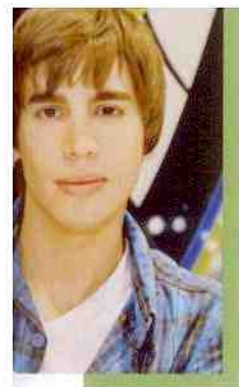
This year in particular has been a busy one for the still-budding actress, with some guest spots on *Corner Gas* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, feature credits (*Just Friends* starring Ryan Reynolds and Amy Smart) and *Unsaid* with Andy Garcia). Matysio is all but occupied with her latest half-hour comedy series *inSAYSHABLE*.

She teamed up with indie prodco Minds Eye Entertainment in Regina to develop and coproduce a web series, which began as a short that she developed with her fellow comedy ensemble member Tatiana Maslany. "I was itching to flesh out the Saysha character more fully. 'She's part of me and in me and ready to come out,'" she says. "She's the *Your Enthusiasm* Larry character and we never leave her in the shadows, not autobiographical, but I wanted to bring in things that I know."

It would seem that everything was falling into place for Matysio — the opening weekend of *Syringa*, she found herself flying to Toronto to film Citytv's *inSAYSHABLE*, now in development for a TV series.

Amy Matysio, actor





Representation: Toronto

Agency: The Characters Agency (Toronto), One Talent Management (L.A.)

Buzz: Recently snagged the leading role in *Unnatural History*, auditioned for the new Spider-Man film, *The Social Network*, and the new Taylor Lautner film *Abduction*



Representation: Toronto

Representation: **Vanguard Artists Management (Toronto)**  
Buzz: Writing professionally for two years, Higgs has snagged gigs with Marvel Comics, animated series and *Republic of Doyle*. Now he's working on a slew of new film and TV projects

an Gavaris flew to L.A. for a studio test of Warner Bros./Cartoon Network kids *Unnatural History*, he packed enough clothes for a two-day trip — and ended up in a month. He made a quick stop at the nearest Abercrombie & Fitch to pick up "random bits of clothing" so he wouldn't have to wear the same three outfits for the next few weeks. As it turned out, he landed one of three lead roles in the action-adventure series, though he's yet to determine whether his self-proclaimed "terrible fashion sense" may have helped just a bit.

The demands of a special-effects-heavy action-adventure series saw him and his castmates working 14-hour days. "It was a terrifying, exciting grind and it was incredible," he says of production. "It's not a *Wizards of Waverly Place*, not a *Vampire Diaries*, but somewhere between. It doesn't cater to the lazy child, but the smart kid who can get wrapped up in mystery with us each week."

Timing is everything and this young actor is well-aware of that. After a few commercial stints, having only been acting for a few months, he was thrust into his first major project as the top-billed actor in *45 R.P.M.* in 2008. The film, from writer/director Dave Schultz and executive producer Don Carmody, saw him acting alongside the likes of Michael Madsen (*Reservoir Dogs*; *Kill Bill*) and Amanda Plummer (*Pulp Fiction*, *My Life Without Me*).

Though he'd dabbled in and out of theatre in his high school days, the Brampton-born Gavaris didn't always want to be an actor — in fact, his initial industry interest began as a director. After experimenting with an acting class, an instructor convinced him to pursue an acting career instead.

It wasn't long before making this decision that he landed his first TV gig last year, appearing in a duo of eps of *Degrassi: The Next Generation*.

As for *Unnatural History*, the show has already bowed on Cartoon Network in the U.S., which had recently added live-action programming to its line-up. He's been asked about his thoughts on the net's shift away from animation, to which the industry-savvy Gavaris states, "All networks at some point will evolve and TV will evolve. History and Discovery evolved to stay alive and I think right now, in the entertainment industry, that's key. Everyone's new and it makes it a lot less scary for me because we're all on a level playing field and we can make mistakes together and laugh about them later."

Not everyone can say their first professional writing gig was with comics kingpin Marvel, but Adam Higgs can.

Still in university and attempting to be "practical and go into science," he soon realized he'd much rather wield a pen than a scalpel. He heard about an open call from Marvel Comics, so he fired off a script. "They said, 'We can't do this; but do you want to write Spider-Man and X-Men for us?' And that was my kick in the door for writing."

Higgs switched gears and headed to UBC to take up creative writing. It wasn't long after exploring options as a playwright and a novelist that he decided film and TV was his true calling. The Burnaby, B.C.-born upstart dabbled in a range of short films and other small projects while completing his masters in screenwriting, then made the move to Toronto to attend the CFC's TV program in 2009.

The last two years have seen many doors open for Higgs, as he started to pick up freelance animation scripts, such as *Hot Wheels: Battle Force 5*. "Coming from comic books, you learn quickly how to become a visual writer and that really transitions well into boys animation," he says. "With the more action-oriented boy stuff, you think, 'How best can I blow up this mountain?'"

He also landed a gig with the CBC writing for *Republic of Doyle*. But that's not all — Higgs has a development project in the hopper with the Ceeb called *100 Things Every Man Should Know*, originally a half-hour drama series that the pubcaster felt was more suited to an hour-long. The story follows a recently retired NHL player who befriends a 14-year-old boy.

As if that weren't enough, he's also working with director Kelly Makin (*Kids in the Hall*, *Mickey Blue Eyes*) on a yet-to-be-named project, and is also in development with some film projects with George Stroumboulopoulos and Bob Mackowycz (both of *The Hour* fame), including a *Ben 10*-esque tween boy-targeted action series.

Not bad for being in the TV writing scene for only two years. When asked about his writing specialty, Adam Higgs says he has a natural lean for the light, one-hour drama, though he adds, "I was getting a lot of animated cat shows, like *Kid vs. Kat* and *The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!* so I'm just waiting for Garfield to call."

Adam Higgs, writer

tiff | **PLAYBACK**

9

## LIVE, EPISODIC AND COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION

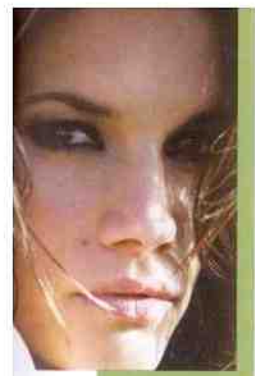
**BCCS Inc.**  
BROADCAST CAPTIONING  
&  
CONSULTING SERVICES INC.

[www.closedcaptioning.com](http://www.closedcaptioning.com)

CLOSED CAPTIONING • On-Line (Real Time) • Off-Line (Post Edit / Pop-On) • Live Display (Roll-Up) • Timed Roll-Up • FTP Capabilities

PROVIDES OUR CLIENTS WITH • Fast Turnaround • Highest Quality in Captioning Accuracy • Competitive Pricing • Highly Trained Professional Captionists





Representation: The Gersh Agency (Beverly Hills)  
 Buzz: Leading lady in Global's ratings hit *Rookie Blue*

There was a moment while playing *Rookie Blue* character Andy McNally when Missy Peregrin had to ask herself, "Why am I saying her lines in real life?"

The Montreal-born, Vancouver-raised actress sees several parallels between herself and her cop character that she never discovered

until she was right in the middle of a scene. "When I see something with potential, I really like to build it up and make it the best it can be — and I feel Andy is like that."

But that's not all she's feeling. Peregrin talks about feeling lucky and blessed about her role as leading lady in the new Global cop procedural that's become quite the Canadian success story. She's recently been on ABC's *Reaper* and did a few eps of *Heroes*, but this is her first lead role in which she gets under the skin of a character and explore her backstory — which also included four months of intensive training. "It's exciting to go to work and read another script and say, 'What else am I learning about Andy?'"

When Peregrin met the team behind *Rookie Blue*, she immediately took to them. "In TV, there are a lot of people who have an opinion and a vision for the show and they get lost because they're not on the same page. This time," she says, "People were finishing each other's sentences, they knew where they wanted the series to go. I was sold and it's all I wanted to do so badly."

But that wasn't always the case for Peregrin, who didn't start her acting career until just after high school. Having dabbled in modeling, her agency at the time had launched an acting division and she was encouraged to try out for commercials. "I remember auditioning and I couldn't stop laughing or take myself seriously," she recalls. "I said, 'I'm sorry, I'm wasting your time,' and just walked out. My mom was so mad at me!"

Even now, she says she's only starting to feel comfortable with her chosen career path, as she realizes how much her interest in human behavior and decision-making has helped her with acting. "It makes it so easy to dissect a character, but I didn't realize it was a skill," she says. "I thought it was just something I did naturally. The more I get to know myself, the more I see why I enjoy what I do."



Agency: Creative Drive Artists (Toronto), Untitled Entertainment (L.A.)

Buzz: One of the lead characters on *Rookie Blue*, greenlit for a second season just weeks after its debut, she's also up for her turn as Marilyn Monroe in History Channel's *The Kennedys*

Charlotte Sullivan has come a long way from her first gig as an extra in a Liza Minelli music video way back when. The days of being "paid in pizza and coffee" are no longer now that this up-and-comer is working side-by-side with some of the biggest names in Hollywood.

As if it's not enough to be one of the main characters in *Rookie Blue* — which has been greenlit for a second season after just three weeks into its run — Sullivan has also been cast as blond bombshell Marilyn Monroe in History Channel's upcoming mini-series *The Kennedys*, reportedly starring Greg Kinnear and Katie Holmes.

"I don't even know how to fully express how much I'm in love with [Monroe]," says the Toronto-based actress. "At the same time, I have to play a police officer, so it's a totally complete opposite, even in terms of physicality."

She adds that this duo of opposite roles proved to be an interesting challenge for her in a physical sense. "For my cop character, you have to be able to run and not look out of breath. So I don't know what to do — I think it'd be strange if I was playing Marilyn and she was incredibly fit and solid, it'd feel really off. I'm trying not to work out too, too much!"

But the thrill of stepping into the role of the iconic actress is also intimidating, as Sullivan is well-aware of the high expectations for her portrayal. She's combating that with extensive research — poring over her entire filmography. And, at press time, she'd just finished reading her eighth Marilyn book. "I think there have been a lot of caricatures of her, so I'm not putting on a voice with her. I'm not making her soft."

Still, Sullivan hopes to convey her sweetness and draws on a behind-the-scenes moment from the never-completed Monroe flick *Something's Got to Give* (1962) for inspiration. "The director kept the camera rolling and just had it on her as a close-up. And the kids are getting the lines wrong and the director was getting angry. And there was this look on her face as she was encouraging the kids, saying 'You can do it.' It's the sweetest thing, it made me tear up."

"When I was on set, I would bring that video with me and keep replaying that part."

Charlotte Sullivan, actor

tiff | PLAYBACK

11

**PROUDLY Supporting Independent Film**

**Post City Sound inc.**

Professional post-production services

• Quality • Experience • Value