

Frank J. Avella BIO

frankjavella@gmail.com

973-715-2356

Frank J. Avella is an award-winning screenwriter and playwright and the recipient of a 2019 International Writers Retreat Residency at Arte Studio Ginestrelle in Assisi, Italy and a 2018 Bogliasco Foundation Fellowship, a 2016 Helene Wurlitzer Residency Grant, the 2016 Chesley/Bumbalo Playwright and a 2015 NJ State Arts Council Fellowship Award (both for his play, CONSENT).

Frank's screenplays have received 21 major awards at Film Festivals throughout the world (16 countries) and have been selected/winners/finalists in over 130 Fests/Comps to date.

He recently wrote and directed his first short film, FIG JAM, which is an Official Selection for the 2021 International Shorts Film Festival in Melbourne, Australia and had its World Premiere at the 2021 Lonely Wolf: London International Film Festival where it was nominated for 7 Awards including Best Picture, Best Film (Medium Length), Outstanding Directorial Debut, Best Original Screenplay, Best Comedy, Best Pandemic Film and Outstanding Achievement in Costume Design as well as being a finalist for Best Romantic Drama.

VATICAN FALLS, a play set against the backdrop of the Catholic sex abuse scandal, is a 2021 Semi-Finalist for the O'Neill National Playwrights Festival. The play was selected for the 2017 Planet Connections Festivity and Frank was nominated for Outstanding Playwriting. VAT was a Semi-Finalist for the 2014 Newborn Festival and has had numerous staged readings and workshops in New York, Cincinnati and Rome, Italy. IL VATICANO CADE, the Italian translation, was scheduled to world premiere in Rome on May 10, 2011 at Teatro Vascello but was cancelled the night before opening amidst great controversy and claims of death threats. The play has now had 7 world premiere cancellations in 3 different countries in the last decade.

LURED, his play about the Russia persecution of gays, was a Semi-Finalist for the 2018 O'Neill Playwrights Conference and had its world premiere production at Theater for the New City in November, 2018 where it played to full houses and garnered critical acclaim. The play was featured in the OnStage! American Theater Festival in Rome, Italy in January 2019. LURED was chosen for the 2020 Dublin International Gay Theatre Festival which was canceled but the Fest invited the team back for 2021.

Upon completion in 2016, LURED was chosen to play the Dream Up Festival at Theater for the New City (6 sold-out performances) as well as the 36th Annual William Inge Theater Festival in 2017. The play was a 2017 Cimientos IATI Theater Playwright Semi-Finalist. Frank was awarded a 2018 Arch and Bruce Brown Foundation Grant for LURED. Visit Luredtheplay.com.

His play, CONSENT, which examines bullying and homophobia, was a 2019 & 2012 Semi-Finalist for the O'Neill. The play was awarded a finalist for the 2015 New Works of Merit Playwriting Award, a semifinalist for the 2016 Road Theatre's Summer Playwrights Festival, a Semi-Finalist for the 2018 Hidden River Arts Playwriting Award and was workshopped at the Celebration Theatre in L.A., in October 2012. In 2013, CONSENT was selected for staged readings at the Identity Theater and Urban Stages in NYC. The play received honorable mention in the Stage Play category of the 85th Annual Writer's Digest Writing Competition (2016) and had staged readings at Abingdon Theatre Company and the Leslie-Lohman Museum (2016).

In January of 2017, CONSENT was chosen for the 27th Annual Fullerton College Playwrights Festival from over 500 submissions from all over the world. CONSENT was also given a staged reading in October of 2018 at SUNY New Paltz and a TNC Scratch Night in April 2019.

In 2020 CONSENT was selected as a Semi-Finalist for the UP Theatre's Renewal Reading Series.

The CONSENT screen adaptation won the Best Screenplay Award at the 2021 Madrid Art Film Festival (Spain), the Best Feature Screenplay Award at the 2021 Oz Indie Film Festival (Melbourne, Australia), the Best Feature Screenplay at the 18th Annual ReelHeART International Film and Screenplay Festival (2021), the Best Narrative at the 2021 San Francisco Film Festival, the 2021 Indo American International Festival of World Cinema (Mumbai) Screenplay Award, the Best Screenplay Award at the 2020 Austria International Film Festival, the Best LGBT Screenplay Award at the 2020 New Renaissance Film Festival in Amsterdam and the Best Drama Screenplay Award at the 2020 Los Angeles Motion Picture Festival. The script took 2nd place (Honorable Mention) at the 2020 Venice Film Awards (Venice, Italy) and was a finalist for the 2021 Catalina Film Festival, the 2021 Twister Alley Film Festival (OK), the 2020 Peachtree Village International Film Festival, the 2020 Page Turner Screenplay Genre Competition (Second Place), the 2020 Courage Film Festival (Berlin, Germany), the 2020 Beyond the Curve International Film Festival (Paris, France), the 2020 Best Script Award, the 2020 Flight Deck Film Festival (NYC) as well as a 2021 Nominee for Best Screenplay for the Independent Film Awards (London). CONSENT was a Semi-Finalist for the 2021 Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival, the 2021 Atlanta Film Festival Screenplay Competition, the 2021 Sedona International Film Festival Screenplay Competition, the 2020 Austin Revolution Film Festival, the 2020 Hollywood International Golden Age Festival and the 2020 Fade-In Awards (Drama category). The script was a Quarterfinalist for the 2019 Creative Screenwriting Screenplay Contest, the 2020 WriteMovies Fall Screenwriting Contest, the 2021 London International Screenwriting Competition, the 2021 Page Turner Screenplay Competition, the 2021 Inroads Screenwriting Fellowship, the 2021 Filmmatic Drama Screenplay Awards and the 2021 Screencraft Film Fund Competition.

The screenplay received Honorable Mention in the Movie Script category for the 88th Annual Writer's Digest Writing Competition (2019) and was nominated for Best Feature Script in the 8th Edition of the Paris Play Film Festival (2020) and nominated for the 2021 Love Wins Film Festival. CONSENT was an Official Selection for the 2021 Lonely Wolf: London International Film Festival, the 2021 Cannes Film Awards, the 2021 Marina Del Rey Film Festival, the 2021 Macoproject Film Festival (Brooklyn), the 2021 Orlando International Film Festival, the Golden State Film Festival (Los Angeles), the 2021 Catharsis International Film Festival (Belgium), the 2021 North Europe International Film Festival - London Edition, the 2021 Depth of Field International Film Festival, the 2021 Northeast Mountain Film Festival, the 2021 Queer Global Arts Fest, the 2020 Rome Independent Prisma Awards and the 2020 Long Story Shorts International Film Festival (Romania). CONSENT received Honorable Mention in the 2021 Independent Film Association of Philadelphia Awards.

The LURED screen adaptation won the Best Screenplay Award in the 2021 CORE International Film Festival, the Best LGBTQ Feature Screenplay Award in the 2020 Silicon Beach Film Festival, the Best Queer Feature Screenplay at the 2020 Bridge Fest and the Best Script (Gold Scriptwriting Award) at the 2021 LGBTQ Unbordered International Film Festival, the 2021 Indo American International Festival of World Cinema (Mumbai) Screenplay Award and the 2020 Depth of Field International Film Festival. The screenplay is a finalist for the Best LGBT Screenplay Award at the 2021 New Renaissance Film Festival in Amsterdam and was a finalist (and Special Mention) for the 2020 London International Screenwriting Competition, the 2020 Lonely Wolf: London International Film Festival, the 2020 QueerWrites Competition and the 2020 Beyond the Curve International Film Festival (Paris, France) as

well as a Semi-Finalist for the 2020 Fade-In Awards (Thriller category) and the 2020 Cyrus International Monthly Festival of Toronto. The script was a quarter-finalist for the 2021 Page Turner Screenplay Drama Competition, a nominee for the kalakari film festival and an official selection for the 2021 British Independent Film Festival, the 2021 Colorado International Activism Film Festival, the 2020 LA LIVE Film Festival, the 2020 Rome Independent Prisma Awards, the 2020 Amsterdam World International Film Festival, the 2020 Hollywood International Golden Age Festival, the 2020 Golden Jury Film Festival, the 2021 Malta Film Festival, the 2021 Rome Film Awards, the 2021 Chicago Indie Film Awards, the 2021 Queer Global Arts Fest and the 2021 White Nights Film Festival (Russia).

His screenplay, *SCREW THE COW*, won the Best Comedy Screenplay Award at the 2020 Los Angeles Motion Picture and was a 2020 Best Screenplay Finalist/Nominee in the Best Dark Comedy Screenplay category for the Houston Comedy Film Festival, the Austin Comedy Film Festival, the Portland Comedy Film Festival, the 2021 Austin After Dark Film Festival and a Finalist for the 2021 Plot Point International Screenwriting Awards, the 2021 Chicago Comedy Film Festival and the 2020 European Cinematography Awards (ECA). The script was also a nominee (one of three) for Best Comedy Screenplay for the 2020 Georgia Shorts Film Festival as well as a Semi-Finalist for the 2020 Page Turner Screenplay Genre Competition (top 15 scripts) and a Quarterfinalist for the 2020 Hollywood International Golden Age Festival. The script was also selected for the 2021 Sacramento International Film Festival, the 2021 Lit Laughs International Comedy Festival (England), the 2020 SoCal Film Awards and the 2020 Atlanta Comedy Festival.

Frank was commissioned to write an original audio play for the inaugural launch of “Fabler Files,” a collection of original short-form audio plays by Italian and American playwrights. His piece, *FIG JAM* was recorded in both Italian and English. It has since been adapted into a stage play as well as a short screenplay. The screenplay version of *FIG JAM* won the Best Romantic Comedy Short Screenplay Award at the 2021 Austin Comedy Film Festival, the Best Short Script Award at the 2021 Lake Travis Film Festival, the Best Script Award at the 2020 Marino Short Film Festival (Italy) and was a finalist for the 2021 Houston Film Festival, the 2021 Portland Comedy Film Festival, the 2021 Sedona International Film Festival Screenplay Competition (2nd place), the 2020 Madras Independent Film Festival, the 2020 Venice Film Awards, the 2020 Hollywood Gold Awards, the 2020 Rome Independent Prisma Awards, the 2020 Lit Laughs International Comedy Festival (England) and the 2020 New York Movie Awards. *FIG JAM* was also a Nominee/Finalist for the 2021 Festigious Los Angeles Film Competition and a semi-finalist for the 2020 Filmmatic Short Screenplay Awards in Los Angeles, the 2020 Phoenix International Short Film Festival, the 2020 Hollywood Just4Shorts Film and Screenplay Competition and the 2020 Red Flight Pictures Screenplay Awards as well as a Quarterfinalist for the 2021 Inroads Screenwriting Fellowship, the 2021 ScriptWrite Short Script Contest, the 2021 Creative World Awards, the 2020 Page Turner Screenplay Genre Competition. The screenplay was also an Official Selection for the 2021 Sydney Indie Short Festival (Australia), the 2021 Phoenix International Genre Film Festival, the 2021 Oregon Short Film Festival and the 2020 Cyrus Monthly Short Festival of Toronto. *FIG JAM* was a Semi-Finalist for the 2021 Emerging Screenwriters Shoot Your Short Screenplay Competition and received Honorable Mention in the 90th Annual Writer’s Digest Writing Competition (Script Category, 2021).

FIG DUDE, the queer version of his short script *FIG JAM*, is a finalist for the 2021 New Wave International Short Festival (Munich, Germany), a quarter-finalist for the 2021 BLASTOFF Festival (LA) and was an official selection for the 2021 Voices Rising Film Festival, the 2021 Paris International Short Festival and the 2020 Beyond the Curve International Film Festival (Paris, France).

Frank's screenplay short, MULTITASKING, won the Best Unreleased Script Award for the 2021 Festival de Largos y Cortos de Santiago and was a Best Dark Drama Screenplay Finalist for the 2021 Oregon Short Film Festival, a Semi-Finalist for the 2020 Nevada City Film Festival and an Official Selection for the 2021 Santa Monica Shorts Festival.

Frank's latest play, LOCKDOWN 2021, was given a live virtual presentation on the Theater for the New City Facebook Page in October of 2020 and can be seen on the TNC YouTube page. The play was an Official Selection for the 2021 Queer Global Arts Fest.

Frank's short play, CATAMITUS, about a film director accused of sexual misconduct, was accepted into the Emerging Artists Theatre New Works Series in October of 2018 and was staged at the Five and Dime Drama Collective in Eureka Springs, Arkansas in November of 2019 where it won 4 awards including Best Play.

An expanded version of CATAMITUS, titled GANYMEDE REVISITED which features three plays about sexual power including the newly finished, GANYMEDE, was to receive a workshop residency at The Tank in NYC in June 2020. Because of the pandemic, it has been postponed but an ambitious iteration of the piece was presented as part of CyberTank and included 3 separate incarnations of the 3 plays plus Coda with a total of 18 actors. This can all be seen on The Tank YouTube page.

A Virtual Performance of his play, GODFORSAKEN, specifically tailored for Zoom premiered at CyberTank in June of 2020. This can also be seen on The Tank YouTube page.

The stage version of FIG DUDE made the 2021 British Theatre Challenge Long List.

THE DEAD BOY, a one-character play about suicide, was chosen for the Taboo! Festival at Actors Workout Studio in North Hollywood, California, in January 2020. A virtual version was done for TNC and can be seen on the Theater for the New City Facebook page.

Frank's play, FOR MAMMA was chosen for a Scratch Night at TNC in 2017 and was featured in 2017 Healing Voices Onstage: Caregivers Stories presented by Writers Theater of NJ.

Frank has written 19 full-length plays; 10 have been produced (seven in NYC). ORVILLE STATION, was one of three finalists for the 2014 NJ Playwrights Contest, a finalist for the 2015 12 Years Theater New Play Podcast Series (Pittsburgh) and a finalist (final round) for the 2014 Kitchen Dog Theatre New Works Festival (Dallas) and has been presented in Los Angeles at the Echo Theater and in NYC at the Dramatists Guild via the Friday Night Footlights Series. ORVILLE STATION was given a live virtual presentation for the inaugural TNC Live On Air Reading Series via the Theater for the New City Facebook Page in April of 2020 and can be seen on the TNC YouTube page.

ORVILLE STATION has been published in the United Kingdom by Lazy Bee Scripts: <http://www.lazybeescripts.co.uk/Scripts/script.aspx?iSS=2503>

Frank has also written NEMESIS, MAD (B Street Theatre New Comedies Festival Semi-Finalist, 2019), LESS THAN 2 DEGREES, SCREW THE COW as well as many one-acts & monologues.

Frank wrote the book for BLUEBIRDS IN MY BELFRY, a musical about Hollywood star Betty Hutton, that bowed in Sanford, NC in January 2008 and sold out every performance.

Produced stage work include: GREENER, THE BUBBLE, IRIS, ABOUT CHRISTINE, LEXY, MICHAEL'S #1 FAN, 3 CAINS and UNHINGING.

Upon reviewing IRIS in 2005, the Cincinnati Post wrote: "Avella's plays tend to send earthquakes through his audience's comfort zones." Cincinnati Newswire: "IRIS is a powerful look at what we call a family, and what ethics govern what is considered acceptable in a private sexual relationship." IRIS was updated in 2018 and received a staged reading at the Dramatists Guild.

Frank proudly served on the Advisory Board and Festival Committee for In Scena! Italian Theater Festival, produced by Kairos Italy Theater, in NYC in 2013 and 2014 and 2017.

He is a Certified Rotten Tomatoes Critic who writes for Edge Media Network and Awards Daily and is the East Coast Rep/Studio Liaison and Voting Member of GALECA—The Society of LGBTQ Entertainment Critics (Home of the DORIAN AWARDS for excellence in Film and Television)

Frank did his grad work at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. He is a current member of the Playground Experiment and is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild.

<https://newplayexchange.org/users/5582/frank-j-avella>

<https://filmfreeway.com/FrankAvella>

<https://blcklst.com/profile/frank-j-avella>