JAMES SUTHERLAND

SCREENWRITER • FEATURE FILM & TELEVISION • TOKYO, JAPAN

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International Screenwriters Association Member

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Award-recognized screenwriter developing character-driven feature films and television projects across crime drama, psychological thriller, noir and historical thriller genres. Specializes in intimate noir thrillers with moral stakes and sociopolitical resonance, exploring morally complex characters, isolation, corruption and survival. Experienced in feature and television development, script analysis, screenplay evaluation and collaborative production. Show Manager of the Tokyo Cineverse International Screenplay Awards since 2024 and screenwriter working under agreement with Canadian production company Lake Tree Films.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- **Winner – Best Series/Pilot**, Stuttgart Film Festival (2026) – *FLY BY NIGHT*
- **Finalist**, Las Vegas International Film and Screenwriting Festival (2026) – *FLY BY NIGHT*
- **Semifinalist – Unique Voices Screenwriting Competition** (2026) – *FEATHERSTON*
- **Finalist**, Dubai International Screenplay Awards (2024)
- **Semifinalist**, Creative Screenwriting TV Pilot Competition (2025)
- **Semifinalist**, Creative Screenwriting Feature Screenplay Competition (2025)
- **Official Selection**, Tokyo Lift-Off Film Festival (2024)
- **Official Selection**, Dubai International Screenplay Awards (2024)
- Script requested by South Pacific Pictures for *FEATHERSTON* (2024)

SELECTED FEATURE SCREENPLAYS

FEATHERSTON | Historical / Psychological Thriller
A washed-up New Zealand journalist investigates suspicious deaths connected to a WWII prisoner-of-war massacre, uncovering a deadly historical cover-up protected by the town's elite.

HANA | Noir / Action Thriller
A bullied suburban housewife becomes entangled in a loan shark's murder and must navigate the criminal underworld and law enforcement to protect her family.

TAKAO | Psychological Crime Thriller
A demoted Tokyo detective haunted by her daughter's death investigates a series of murders that echo her own grief.

OUTLAW | Neo-Western / Crime Thriller
A former Green Beret is drawn into a violent criminal world where survival and morality collide.

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SCREENWRITER | SELECTED WORK & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

SELECTED TELEVISION PROJECTS

ASHES | One-Hour Crime Drama Pilot
In a dying Rust Belt town, a withdrawn funeral director investigates suspicious deaths connected to the opioid trade, uncovering a network of corruption and buried secrets.

FLY BY NIGHT | Crime Noir / Television Series
A disgraced former Tokyo police detective turned private investigator searches for a missing girl, uncovering a criminal network connected to Japan's political elite.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Show Manager – Tokyo Cineverse International Screenplay Awards | 2024–Present
Manage the international screenplay awards programme.

Screenwriter – Lake Tree Films, Canada | Current
Completed one screenplay and currently writing an additional screenplay for the Canadian production company under agreement. Project titles are confidential under NDA.

Script Reader – Nashville International Film Festival | 2021–Present
Evaluate and rank feature screenplays and television pilots, providing detailed development notes and scoring for competition rounds.

Development Intern – Shot of Tea Films, London | 2022–Present
Assist with film and television development, including screenplay coverage, creative feedback and project pitching.

Freelance Script Consultant | 2017–2020
Provided screenplay analysis and development notes for emerging screenwriters and film students, with an emphasis on structure, tone, character development and marketability.

Freelance Screenwriter – Tokyo | 2016–Present
Develop and write original feature screenplays and television projects, collaborating with creative professionals and production companies internationally.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Master of Theatre Arts – Victoria University of Wellington / New Zealand Drama School (2003)

Bachelor of Theatre & Film Studies – Victoria University of Wellington (2000)

Professional Development – BFI Film Academy, Open University, University of East Anglia (2021–2023)

SKILLS & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Core Skills: Feature Screenwriting, Television Writing, Story Development, Script Analysis, Character Development, Dialogue, Screenplay Structure, Script Coverage, Pitching and Film Development.

Software: Final Draft, WriterDuet, Celtx, StudioBinder.

Languages: English (Native), Japanese (Basic).

Affiliations: International Screenwriters Association; International Dance Council (UNESCO); Jury Member at International Theatre Festivals.