

WRITING FOR THE A-LIST & THE OSCAR

List of recent ORIGINAL Screenplays that won Oscars and attracted A-List Talent:

1. Juno/Diablo Cody <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqyQqE9Rff4>
2. Little Miss Sunshine/Michael Arndt <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4scM-ZhSbE>
3. Crash/Paul Haggis & Bobby Moresco <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dG92xwn2aAc/>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpVagt_oGRo
4. Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind/Charlie Kaufman
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uy14g1tW9M> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkqfJKvf36k>
5. Lost in Translation/Sofia Coppola <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6s8JZmPS4EM/>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdlyBsYnVos>
6. Gosford Park/Julian Fellowes <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RSYT2gQFIQ/>
7. Almost Famous/Cameron Crowe <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EoFoOTej2dc>
8. American Beauty/Alan Ball <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Joihw-AQFk/>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRIXL4_ulNo
9. Shakespeare In Love/Marc Norman & Tom Stoppard
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJMzp47-ijg/> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBMNIZi7Vpw>
10. Good Will Hunting/Ben Affleck & Matt Damon <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISXk8-33VR4>
11. Fargo/Ethan Coen & Joel Coen http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPHlau7ez_I/
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sK1P7Oi_Pag
12. The Usual Suspects/Christopher McQuarrie (Valkyrie Writer as well:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDm0JQglAr8>)
13. Pulp Fiction/Quentin Tarantino & Roger Avery <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rspQYDvBYak/>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOymB-xYtzE/> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGCd1jSJvzA/>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIViN-G37L8>

Choose three that you are familiar with:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Common Elements:

Protagonist: (What common elements do the protagonists of these stories share?)

Theme/Message: (Does each film carry a strong message/ what is the message/ does it resonate?)

Unique Perspective: (What is unique about these stories? Is the writer's unique style displayed?)

Actor's View: (Reading your script from an actor's view- what elements do you think made these scripts attractive to A-List Actors)

*When I read the script, I didn't know who Aileen was. I didn't know it was based on a real person. So when I read the story, it was really just reading a script as a story for the sake of a story, and I just thought that the writing was extremely brave. I read so many scripts, and after a while you start to see the formula. It's so obvious -- Act One, Act Two, you know exactly how you feel about everybody. Then there's a nice bookend, and there you go. This was the first time, I think, in my entire career, when by the second-to-last page, I still didn't know how I felt about the character. I also thought it was interesting because I don't think it's really a common thing for writers to write conflicted female characters. The guys always get to play those great gray characters, and somehow women always tend to be black and white. So I knew this was also something very unusual and might never come my way again. – **Charlize Theron (Monster)***

*"People read a script and they don't see what's there," Linney says. "They don't understand how dimensional it is. They don't see the humor. Most investors -- God bless them, we couldn't do anything without them -- but they're not trained to look at a script the way that actors are. Sometimes scripts get caught in that situation, and there are a lot of times when investors or executives don't understand that a script has to be changed to be executed. But what has happened recently -- and this is just the reality of the business -- is that a lot of scripts are not written to be acted, they're written to be green lit or they're written to be financed." – **Laura Linney (The Savages)***

*I saw her incredibly clearly when I read the script, and even more so when I read the book. I think she's a brilliantly drawn character. Not particularly nice when you first meet her at the start of the film, but I thought there was incredible humanity to her, and multiple layers to her. / I read the script, and it just made me sob and sob. For some reason, I had just technically fallen in love with Cecilia. We went out to lunch, and I pitched her Cecilia. And he pitched me Briony. And we were obviously so good, that we managed to convince each other! But the end of the lunch, he wanted me to play Cecilia and I wanted to play Briony. It got very confusing, so it took another two lunches to sort out what I was going to play! I'm glad it was Cecilia. **Keira Knightley (Atonement)***

*It is a funny thing, and I am going to sound like such a pretentious actor and please excuse me, but from the second I read the script, it is like Kym and I were locked together and I just knew who she was and how she felt. I didn't have to torture myself to feel a certain way. It wasn't about me, it was never about me, it was always about her and she made sense to me. I think, the hardest thing is sometimes when the script tells you to cry and you don't feel like the character or feel a certain way and you don't feel like the character's earned it. **Anne Hathaway – (Rachel Getting Married)***

*Well, when that script came out and people read it, everybody in Hollywood was banging on the door to get at those roles. They knew it was a wonderful script, and as soon as I read it, I was just blown away by the storytelling and the wit and the nuance of the writing. It was the best movie script I'd ever read that had been sent to me. I had only been in California for four or five years, so by that time I had worked a lot but I hadn't done any role of that size and of that centrality. **Bob Gunton (The Shawshank Redemption)***

*And then I fell in love with the script called *The Good Shepherd*, and everyone went, 'Look, this is a tiny, little bull's eye you're aiming at here,' and you look at it and you go, it's a very tense, cerebral, historical epic about the birth of the Intelligence Service in America. It's not *Spider-Man 3*. But I didn't hesitate because I loved all the scripts and they were movies that I desperately wanted to do, and I knew that I had *The Bourne Ultimatum* off in the middle distance, and that there was going to be an audience that was built in for that. So it really just allowed me creative freedom to make all these movies, which each individually, I'm just so happy – I'm proud of each of those movies, they all did very well, some of them did incredibly well, and they were all reviewed really well, so they all just made a big impact on my career. **Matt Damon – (The Good Shepherd/ The Departed/ Syriana)***

Bad Query Letter Samples: <http://queryletters.blogspot.com/>