

In the room with writer Leonard Dick

Emily Claire Afan



The second annual [Toronto Screenwriting Conference](#) runs at Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management April 9th & 10th.

All this week, *Playback* will feature Q&As with some of the all-star cast of writers leading the Conference, including writer/producer/director Pen Densham (*Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*), animation writer Butch Hartman (*The Fairly Oddparents*), gaming scribe Kevin Shortt (*Avatar: The Game*), and comedy writer/executive producer Christine Zander (*Nurse Jackie*).

But, first up to the *Playback* podium is Leonard Dick (*The Good Wife*, *Lost*, *House*).

A Q&A with Leonard Dick

Toronto-born Leonard Dick is currently a co-executive producer and writer on *The Good Wife*. He has several groundbreaking network drama and comedy series credits, including *Lost* and *House*. He's the recipient of an Emmy for Outstanding Drama and two Writers Guild of America Awards, (Best Drama and Best Episodic Drama). Leonard will be leading a Marquee Session on Writing for the One-Hour Drama moderated by Gemini Award-winning scribe, David Barlow.

What was your first writing project for which you were both credited and paid?

My first official gig was a syndicated late-night sketch-comedy show called *The Newz*. It aired five nights a week, which meant the need for material was endless. You had an idea for a piece about a llama who collects magic markers or an actuary who dreams of being an anthropologist? It was in.

Did anyone give you words of advice when you started out?

A wise veteran once told this wet-behind-the-ears writer: “There are no bad gigs.” Even if it’s a low-rated show or a painful development experience, you get to write something new and different and you never know whom you’re going to meet. He has been proven right many times over

How has the writers’ room changed since you started working on your first series?

Stories and season arcs seem to be making what I’d call a ‘leftward migration.’ If you look at the white boards in writers’ rooms, you’ll see big twists and bombshells being pulled up instead of being saved for the season finale. Suddenly, main characters are being killed off in episode 17. It’s all in an effort to keep the show energized and the audience interested – and it’s coming from the writers, not the networks.

Do you have a favorite line you wrote?

While I would love to share a line that speaks to a deeper truth about the human condition, my favorite line is when Dr. House diagnoses a young firefighter with male menopause: “Similar to female menopause except without the vaginas and mah jongg tiles.”

Is there a screenwriter you admire? Who and why?

Lately I’ve had a big writer crush on Peter Morgan, and not just because he can take arcane subject matter like interviews between David Frost and Richard Nixon and turn them into a compelling and dramatic story. I love sports movies (no, you can’t watch *Hoosier* too many times), and Peter Morgan wrote what has become my new favorite: *The Damned United*, about infamous English soccer coach Brian Clough – a great character piece that doesn’t end with a big game sequence.

Read more: <http://playbackonline.ca/2011/04/04/in-the-room-with-writer-leonard-dick/#ixzz1IIBVSE5L>