

Program Information:

Title: Little Miss Sunshine: The Shooting Script

Location: San Francisco, CA, Codys Books

Date: Feb 15 2007

We have a very special treat for you guys tonight as you all know because you are here. We had all manner of prize winners and nominees but we were discussing we think this maybe the first ever academy award nominee that we have had at Cody. So we are very exciting very pleased to have Michael Arndt with us. In 2000, he had no agent he was not a Hollywood name and then he wrote a little screenplay called Little Miss Sunshine and has been ranking up the nominations and awards including best screenplay and best movie for this year's academy award. So without further due I will let you see the man who you have come here to see. Please welcome Michael Arndt.

Hi - thank you everybody for coming out. I really appreciate it. Its it's very flattering for me to people to come out and actually look at a screenwriter we're usually hidden from the rest of the world. I guess the first thing we will do is show the clip I mean that seems like something fun to do. I just just in order to setup the context of the clip they said, you know, if we are going to show something you know, you got to to choose it and so this scene you are about to see sort of the climax of the movie and its really the thing that I'm most proud of because as a writer I'm a big believer in endings. I think the ending of your story is when the meaning of your story is really revealed. But I also think that I just in terms of in setting up the story a good story for me at least always involves a character right before the climax making this taking at the size of action or making an important decision and usually you are going to make that decision is difficult as possible. So what I was trying to do here was to push Olive into this corner where she has to decide whether she is going to go on and and go on stage or not and at that moment she sort of she is weighing two sort of value systems. One is her dad who says there is no sense in entering a contest if you don't win or if you don't think you are going to win. And she is already overheard her dad go back and say you know, she there is no way she is going to win or you know, I don't want her going on and then on the other shoulder is her grandpa who said you know, we are going to have fun tomorrow, we can tell them all go to hell you know, and also a real loser is someone who doesn't win a real loser is someone who doesn't try. So its that its you know, just to be didactic about it you know, you are trying to have your character make a meaningful decision and really push them into the corner and I always thought when I started writing this the external stakes of the story which is whether Olive wins the contest or not is about as low as stakes as you can possibly get, you know, beauty pageant but I wanted to try as a comic strategy to jack up emotional stakes of the story and also the philosophical stakes of the story. So that they were absolutely as high as possible so that when she was sitting there and trying to make this decision as to what she was going to do that you were like a 100 percent if they said like this was you know, what this little girl decide to do next was going to be a really really important decision and that you really want to see how it turned out. So it seems to have worked but but in terms of just picking something I mean there is a lot of

funny stuff all the way through the movie but I really feel like in terms of writing this is kind of the scene that I'm most proud of. So it will go it won't go all the way to the end Thank you so I guess we will just open it up for a Q&A and if anyone has any questions?