

## **From InkTip.com: Interview with Writer Melissa Pilgrim: *How Using InkTip led to (Unexpectedly) Connecting with My Agent at Black Apple Talent***

Interview conducted on October 6, 2018 by Daniel Tabuena-Frolli (for use in an InkTip newsletter announcement).

### **1) How has your experience with InkTip been so far?**

I found InkTip online about nine years ago when I was living in Los Angeles and thought it was an inventive, wonderful way for people in the industry to connect (even before most people were doing so over the internet). Back then I was a judge in screenwriting contests, and InkTip featured one of my articles, *12 Simple Tips for Entering Screenplay Contests*, in one of their newsletters after I started using their site. Since then I have moved back to my home state of New Hampshire and I have continued to use InkTip on and off throughout the years, always feeling it connected me to the industry no matter where I lived.

### **2) Is this the first option/hire/signing of your screenwriting career? If not, please tell me a little more about your options/credits/writing resume.**

No. My first script, a romantic comedy called *The Right One*, placed as a quarter-finalist in both the *Nicholl's Fellowships* and the *Writer's Network Screenwriting Competition* as well as a semi-finalist in the *Illinois/Chicago Screenwriting Competition*. This led to me being signed by Marc Wax of Wax Entertainment (who I still work with as a manager). The script was then optioned twice. Since then I have had two other screenplays optioned, one TV show optioned, and I have worked as a writer-for-hire writing scripts, treatments, and series book bibles for a number of producers and production companies.

### **3) What is the genre of your script?**

I had submitted *Dance Hall Girls*, a female-driven western drama, to Black Apple Talent's lead request on InkTip. However, this is my only project in the western genre. I mainly write in other genres including dramedy, comedy, romantic comedy, drama, horror, and thriller.

### **4) How did you and Black Apple Talent connect—InkTip's site, newsletter, or magazine?**

I connected with Sarah Yapelli from Black Apple Talent when a member of her development team (Sienna Eve Benton) read a pilot for a television series I submitted to one of InkTip's leads (from the *Preferred Newsletter*) and liked the writing enough to pass it on to Sarah as a writing sample for possible representation. Along with the pilot Sarah also reviewed my website, [YourWritingMuse.com](http://YourWritingMuse.com), and saw my extensive background as a writer in all mediums (film, TV, theatre, and publishing). This enticed her to request more writing samples of my work in both film and TV, which ultimately led to us talking and realizing we had a lot of the same goals for the type of material we wanted to see made in the industry. So we decided to work together to help see those projects realized.

**What was it about your project and/or you that stood out to them? (For example you had experience in a specific area or your writing style was what they were looking for.)**

Black Apple Talent has a mission to find and promote quality projects that represent unique archetypes and icons of humanity within their storylines. What I had submitted to the InkTip lead was a female-driven western TV series featuring five strong, independent female lead characters with very diverse backgrounds and each trying to make it as female homesteaders in Nebraska during the beginning of the Homestead Act in 1863 in a typically hostile, male-dominated environment. Everyone at Black Apple Talent liked that it felt authentic due to its natural locations, time era, and had actual, racially-inspired historical situations included within each character's storyline. They also felt it translated to modern day concerns of gender equality—something we are still dealing with today—and allowed for an ethnically diverse cast—which appeals to a modern day, worldwide audience.

Once Sarah had seen my website and read my other submitted scripts she saw that I had a number of equally interesting projects focusing on either strong female lead characters or engaging stories with an intent to do what her company's mission was—so we knew we were a great agent/client fit!

**5) Is there any story from this whole process that you'd like to share? Something that was unexpected or exciting about this process?**

Yes—the fact that I found a great new agent and company to work with as a writer when I wasn't even expecting to! I submitted to a lead looking for a TV series and though my show wasn't quite what the producer was looking for, they thought my writing was amazing and so I ended up with a new agent thanks to a reader in development who passed my work along. Though that was truly unexpected, it does not really surprise me because I have worked in this industry for a long time and have had similar things happen behind the scenes before. I do a lot of coaching to new writers and I always tell them you never know who is going to see your work or what will happen when they do, so just keep submitting it whenever possible. In Hollywood anything can happen and often does, which is what makes this industry so exciting!