

THE POWER OF D.J. MANNING

DENNIS "D.J." MANNING – SCREENWRITER | PLAYWRIGHT | LYRICIST

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🧠 ABOUT ME

D.J. Manning is a screenwriter known for crafting **bold, cinematic neo-noir narratives** where love is **dangerous**, power is **seductive**, and fate is **inescapable**. His work seamlessly blends **the grit of crime thrillers with the haunting depth of doomed romance**, redefining **LGBTQ+ storytelling for the modern era**.

🔥 FEATURED SCREENWRITING PROJECTS

🎬 **More Going Down** (*LGBTQ+ Crime Thriller | In Development*)

A neon-lit, high-stakes noir set in Miami's nightlife, where love, betrayal, and murder collide. **Inspired by *Body Heat***—a story of shifting alliances, femme fatales, and an electrifying climax where deception wins the day.

🎬 **One Less Egg to Fry** (*1970s Boston Noir | Crime Drama*)

A hard-boiled Irish American fixer, caught between his ruthless wife and his reckless lover, plans **one last heist**. But when betrayal comes from every side, he's left with an impossible choice: **save himself, or save the only two people he's ever loved**.
Inspired by *The Departed* meets *Carol*.

🎬 **The Woman on the Bench** (*Drama | Psychological | Magical Realism*)

A deeply moving ensemble drama blending present-day reality with fragmented memory. Follows **Margaret**, a woman slipping into dementia, as her past and present collide on a park bench. A meditation on **love, time, and the stories we tell ourselves to survive**.

🎬 **Bedlam** (*Modern Film Noir | Psychological Thriller*)

A dark, gritty noir set in Dallas, TX, following a **tough, closeted detective drawn into a world of temptation, corruption, and self-destruction**.

Inspired by the haunting song *Bedlam*—suspense, seduction, and danger woven into a gripping, psychological web.


🎬 **The Substitute Wife** (*1950s Hollywood Noir | Psychological Drama*)

A **cat-and-mouse psychological thriller** where a secretary **murders her boss's wife** to

take her place. **Inspired by the great femme fatales of classic film noir**, this story explores obsession, ambition, and deception in **Golden Age Hollywood**.


 **The Shaft** (*Dark Satire | Thriller*)

A biting corporate thriller set in 1953 New York, where power, greed, and moral corruption collide. **Twisted humor meets psychological warfare** as characters navigate an ever-deepening descent into high-stakes executive chaos.

 **Undertow** (*LGBTQ+ Romantic Drame*)

A **whimsical rom-com** where a man struggles between **marrying his picture-perfect fiancée or surrendering to a love that changes everything**. Guided by an **outrageous Fairy Godfather**, this film blends **classic rom-com energy with LGBTQ+ themes of identity and self-acceptance**.

 **THEATRE & MUSICALS**

 **Hometown** (*Musical – In Development*)

An original musical about **love, time, and second chances**, following the relationships of **Tom and Celia—best friends, former lovers, now at a crossroads in their 40s**. Themes of **nostalgia, missed opportunities, and the haunting question: *Did we miss our chance at happiness?***






 **Now & Then** (*International Hit | Musical*)

#2 Best Off-West End Musical in London – A **timeless, intimate story** of love, longing, and the moments that define us.

 **A Shonda, the Musical** (*Composer/Lyricist*)

 **One More Yesterday** (*Composer/Lyricist*)

 **KEY SKILLS & EXPERTISE**

-  **Screenwriting:** Feature Films, Musicals, and Plays
 -  **Genre Mastery:** Neo-Noir, Thriller, LGBTQ+, Magical Realism
 -  **Dialogue-Driven, High-Stakes Character Development**
 -  **Industry-Ready Script Formatting & Final Draft Expertise**
 -  **Songwriting & Lyricism for Musicals**
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AWARDS & INDUSTRY RECOGNITION

 **Screenwriting Awards & Festival Selections:** (50+ Awards & Accolades in 2024-2025)



- ◆ **More Going Down** (*Stage 32 – Double Recommend, Best Screenplay, Finalist, Semifinalist, etc.*)
- ◆ **One Less Egg to Fry** (*Greenlight Recommendation, Industry Circulation 2025*)
- ◆ **The Woman on the Bench** (*Official Selection, Winner, Finalist, etc.*)
- ◆ **The Shaft** (*Best Screenplay, Honorable Mention, Quarterfinalist, etc.*)
- ◆ **The Substitute Wife** (*Best Screenplay, Finalist, Semifinalist, etc.*)

 **Theater & Musical Recognitions:**

- ◆ **Hometown** (*Best Original Musical, Best Book/Lyrics, etc.*)
- ◆ **Undertow** (*Staged Reading, Official Selection, Work-in-Progress Showcase, etc.*)
- ◆ **Now & Then** (*#2 Best Off-West End Musical in London – 2019*)

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

 **Education:**

-  **B.A. English | B.S. Marketing** – King’s College, Wilkes-Barre, PA (1985)
-  **M.S. Training & Development** – Lesley University, Cambridge, MA (2001)

 **Industry Memberships:**

- ◆ **Member, Dramatists Guild of America**
- ◆ **President, Plays of Wilton (Non-Profit Organization)** → www.playsowilton.com

 **CONTACT FOR COLLABORATIONS, REPRESENTATION, OR SCRIPT INQUIRIES:**

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