

# THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

GETTING YOU TO THE NEXT STAGE.



Happy September, y'all!

It's Back to School month... which believe it or not, is one of my favorite months of the year. I know, summer is over, but on the flip side, so is the oppressive heat in the subway - I mean, have you waited 15 minutes on a platform in August?

Of course, I've been out of school for a number of years now, but I actually think that I study more now than I ever did when in school. There's something about high school and college (and even graduate school, for some) that feels like you MUST go. And when anyone is forcing you to do something, it's just not going to be as fun.

But now, I get to study and learn and spend my time how I want, and on the things I

want. And it's awesome.

So use this month to head back to school yourself. And this is a perfect time to reset those goals. Some like to think of September as the final furlong of you year long goals. But if you don't have goals, or you know you need a reset, think of your life like a school calendar... and September is when the new semester begins.

And go get 'em.



Ken

P.S. Speaking of continuing to learn, our Super Conference is less than 2 months away! Did you get your tickets yet? Best do so quickly, because with all the great content we have, we are expecting to sell out! Visit [www.TPPSuperConference.com](http://www.TPPSuperConference.com) for more!

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Office Hours

September 16th (8pm ET/5pm PT) *Please note the new time!*

### Pitch Night (Virtual)

September 25th, 7pm ET

**The 3rd Annual Producer's Perspective Super Conference is on Nov. 16th and 17th, 2019**

*Head on over to [www.TPPSuperConference.com](http://www.TPPSuperConference.com) to secure your seat, view the agenda, book your hotel, and more!*



**OFFICE HOURS:  
WHAT YOU MISSED  
LAST MONTH**

**KEN'S PRO TIP**

*When you're looking for collaborators, look for people who are looking to make a splash like you. You'll make a bigger splash.*

1. The first people you should get involved in your show are a director, a lawyer and a general manager. You need a team. You need key people to help you take your show forward.
2. The sweet spot for readings is 11 AM and 3 PM. That way people attending can do things before or after if needed and actors can get a break in between.
3. Money raising tip: Don't be furious at people you're trying to get money out of. It's easy to get upset if people you want to invest don't understand your project. They don't have the same creative outlook you have, so don't get angry with them.
4. If you do not need famous music for licensing, get an upcoming band to write new music for your project. They are looking for a break like you and they will promote it as well.
5. Shows aren't ever final. Submit, submit, submit. It's the only way something is going to happen.
6. Find an accountability buddy. Keep each other motivated and check in on one another.

**PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."*

*Alan Kay*

*Are you following Ken on Instagram? He posts a new inspirational quote on his whiteboard every morning! Follow him @kendavenportbway.*

**THIS MONTH'S QUICK WIN**

**Tips for engaging your online followers:**

1. Polls - Pose a question that might have your followers torn between answers. This way they can vote their thoughts and see how others compare to them!
2. Quotes - People love quotes! Pick something comical or meaningful that will entice your audience.
3. Caption this Image - Captioning pictures is fun for everyone and you can see what witty stuff other people come up with! If you want to make it even more engaging, make it a contest between your followers for funniest caption.
4. Make a meme! - Making a meme is especially fun for your followers especially if it relates to something you all love (like theater)! Memes get people's attention right away because they are not only an image but usually funny or topical.
5. Ask a question - Ask your followers a very open ended question that could be answered many different ways. This will allow your community to engage with each other and see how their opinions compare and contrast.
6. Create a contest - Create a contest for your followers. It can be simple or complex. Either way make a reward for the winner so they have something to work for. It can be small like a shout out on your page, or larger like money. There are no real rules, only you can determine this.

**FEATURED PRO ARTICLE**

**How to Prepare for a Staged Reading**

*by Associate Pro, Laurie Prose*

Staged readings are a fantastic tool for play development. They provide an opportunity for the playwright to hear the words on the written page and ask themselves if the dialogue and stage direction are telling the story as intended. Readings can gauge audience responses and reveal what revisions should be made. When the material

is considered *pitch worthy*, and you're ready to invite influential people, staged readings can help take the work to the next level. So how do you do it? What's involved?

First, a creative team is put together by recruiting a producer, stage manager and possibly, a director. A suitable



**WHAT KEN'S READING**

*Zero to one*  
*by Peter Thiel*

and *comfortable* performance space is found, and then of course, there is casting. You can ask colleagues, friends and family for recommendations, or hold auditions. When thinking about casting (and I can't emphasize this enough) find a good person to read stage direction, only reading what the audience needs to visualize action and movement. Actors typically sit or stand with scripts in hand or on music stands. If there isn't any blocking, actor placement on stage should lend itself to character relationships and or double casting.

A small budget (if there is one) allows for minimal use of props, costumes and tech. Visuals are limited because after all, it is a r-e-a-d-i-n-g, and the star of the show is the written word. Often, the reading is followed by a "talk back" with the playwright and creative team, giving the audience an opportunity to ask questions or provide feedback. Those are valuable moments for the playwright. Sometimes it's necessary for creators to step back from their work and gain an understanding of how it's received. Are there laughs in the appropriate spots? Are the

words an opportunity to ask questions or provide feedback. Those are valuable moments for the playwright. Sometimes it's necessary for creators to step back from their work and gain an understanding of how it's received. Are there laughs in the appropriate spots? Are the words affecting the audience in a predictable or surprising way? Is the play ready to be seen by theatre professionals? At the very least, a staged reading lets the playwright know if they're on the right track.

## FEATURED PRO MEMBER



**Name:**

Jo-Ann Dean

**Where You're From:**

Born in Georgia, raised in Baldwin on Long Island, NY. Reside in Los Angeles for 25+

years. Currently BiCoastal splitting time between NYC & LA.

**PROfession:** Producer & CEO SIGNmation Productions. My company produces Film, Entertainment Industry Panel Discussions and Theatrical Events to promote Deaf Talent & American Sign Language (ASL). I specialize in consulting and creating culturally accessible content for Arts, Theater, Film and Television with provision of ASL Interpretation, Captioning and Audience Development & Deaf Community Outreach. Please check out my website & shows! [www.signmation.com](http://www.signmation.com)

I'm CoFounder and Producer of ASL Cabaret in Los Angeles. Performances featuring HipHop to Broadway, Comedy, Music & ASL Storytelling. Everything ASL. The last five years we sold out performances at Rockwell Table & Stage, Catalina Jazz Club, The Sorting Room @ Wallis Annenberg Center for Performing Arts featuring Broadway's Deaf Talent & ASL Artists. Last week ASL Cabaret Hosted our First International Performance in Toronto @Voices of Today Festival funded by Toronto Arts Council. Canada & US share the same sign language!

Grant Writer: Awarded National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Challenge

American Grant to create an Inclusive Performing Arts Festival "Boundaries Bash Fest," LA Cultural Affairs Grant "Caption This!" cable series, Hollywood Radio Grant & Broadcasting Grant for ASL Multi-Media Event, CA Dept. of Education Implementation Grant & Federal Funding for ASL Media Studio for Deaf Youth.

**What projects are you working on?**

Producing ASL Cabaret in New York City in a Cabaret setting and transfer our success to Off-Broadway. To provide a monthly platform, stage and audience in NYC so ASL & Deaf Talent can thrive in the Performing Arts. ASL Cabaret arose from a punk rock bar in Los Angeles to dinner theatre at Rockwell to The Wallis Annenberg & Fountain Theatre. I also have an original play in development with historical basis of Punk Rock Music in a Deaf Club. Deaf Rock. Literally.

One summer goal checked off included being invited to CoProduce Off-Broadway on a Joe Iconis (*Be More Chill*) Production. *Broadway Bounty Hunter @ Greenwich House Theatre*. It was an amazing learning experience to be involved with a team led by powerhouse Producer Jennifer Tepper. I got to witness true collaboration with Joe Iconis & Family. Kismet.

**Why did you join PRO?**

I joined Ken Davenport's Producer's Perspective Pro after having met him following Tony Nomination of Deaf West's Best Broadway Revival of *Spring Awakening*. Ken had served as Executive Producer on the production and I was

fortunate to witness brilliant marketing strategies on DWT's path from Regional Theatre to Broadway and beyond set forth by Davenport Theatrical and the Producing partners. I wanted to be coached and mentored by someone who recognized and worked with Deaf Talent an untapped cultural community. Ken's Producer's Perspective Pro was the natural progression for me to join and immerse myself in "a Producers College of Knowledge."

**What do you look for in a collaborator, and how do you seek out creative partners?**

In producing I love to collaborate with individuals who share the creative process and can think outside the box. I work often with two languages one visual-spatial ASL and auditory spoken English. Communication is key for me.

**What have you found to be the most valuable part of being a PRO member?**

Mentorship is key and Pro offered me all opportunities in on group: Producer Pitch Night, The Super Conference, Pro Resources, Mastermind. Each one I attended had a take away with a goal setting and timeline for accountability. I needed to surround myself with people who are experienced in producing. Seeing people achieving their goals in my Mastermind Group also has a domino effect in success breeds success. Look for what works. Accentuate the positive thru action. I highly recommend it if you want to kick start your goals!

## OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

Is Bombshell finally headed for Broadway?

Is Gypsy returning to the Broadway stage?

Will West End's Everybodys Talking About Jamie transfer to Broadway?

## PRO UPDATES & CLASSIFIEDS

• Eric Christopher Jones' one act play *Lessons from Einstein* will be presented at The Shine Play Festival: Black Men Illuminated Sept 26-29 and October 4-6.

• Richard Grasso is excited to announce a new workshop series he is launching in Westchester, NY at Chappaqua Performing Arts Center through his new company Two Worlds Entertainment. The first workshop is on 9/14 with some stellar NYC/Broadway talent. If anyone knows any high school student performers that would benefit from this workshop please feel free to spread the word!

**Tuesdays in September**  
**CASTILLO ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S**  
**PLAY READING SERIES**

**9/17 *Give Me a Gun:***  
*I Didn't Come Here to Find a Lover*  
 by Leona Marsh

**9/10 *The People Before the Park***  
 by Keith Josef Adkins

**9/24 *Soul Force***  
 by Margaret Hambrick & Christy Stanlake

The Castillo Theatre  
 543 W42nd Street  
 NYC  
 (212) 941-1234

## ON THE BLOG | Top read articles last month:

- Why I'm Producing Harmony with Barry Manilow
- A List I Dreamed About Being On, But Never Thought It Would Happen
- Six Says "Suck It" to Traditional Development Path, Which is Sick! (In a Good Way)

## CONNECT WITH KEN

- [www.facebook.com/kendavenport](http://www.facebook.com/kendavenport)
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## PRO ANNIVERSARIES

### See who's celebrating in September

#### 3 Years:

Kent Brisby, Jarlath Jacobs

#### 2 Years:

Lynn Byrne, Keith Ferguson, Hiram Taylor

#### 1 Year:

Andrew Lum, Kevin Jeffers, Julian Batchelor, Jennifer Grasso, Brenna Ross, Diana Mucci, Elizabeth Appell

#### 6 Months:

Benny Lumpkins, Alexander Bordokas, David Carlson, Cindi Maciolek, Tim Heitman, Malcolm March, Mark Levine, William Robertson, Lorna Brown, Mark Chung, Ofem Ajah

#### 3 Months:

Marcello Rollando, Michelle Risse, Bill Diggins, Laura Goodenow, Hal Houston, Krista Eyster, Tony Castrigno, Gregor Gibson