



NEWS RELEASE

Leonard Schrader Named Head of Screenwriting Program at AFI Conservatory

LOS ANGELES, CA, August 21, 2003—American Film Institute (AFI) announced today that distinguished filmmaker Leonard Schrader (*KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN*, *THE MAN WHO STOLE THE SUN*) has been named head of the graduate Screenwriting program at the AFI Conservatory.

Schrader's new post as Senior Filmmaker-in-Residence: Screenwriting will include overseeing all Screenwriting faculty at the AFI Conservatory and teaching both First Year and Second Year Fellows.

Sam Grogg, Dean of the AFI Conservatory, commented, "We are thrilled to have such an outstanding member of the filmmaking and higher-education community as a member of the Conservatory's core faculty. Len is a master of his art form and Screenwriting Fellows will learn much under his tutelage."

Schrader's professional career spans four decades. Born in Michigan to a Dutch Calvinist family where all forms of pop culture were strictly forbidden, Schrader escaped his strict upbringing through writing, and earned his MFA at the University of Iowa's Writers Workshop, studying under the likes of author Kurt Vonnegut. In 1969, he moved to Japan where he taught English Literature at Kyoto and Doshisha Universities and his experiences in the Orient molded Schrader into the world's only writer of both English-language and Japanese-language films.

Many of Schrader's first films were collaborations with his younger brother and AFI alumnus, writer/director Paul Schrader (screenwriter for *TAXI DRIVER*, *AMERICAN GIGOLO*, *RAGING BULL*, *AFFLICTION*). In 1975, the brothers wrote *THE YAKUZA* (starring Robert Mitchum, directed by Sydney Pollack). Leonard and Paul also co-wrote 1978's *BLUE COLLAR* (starring Richard Pryor and Harvey Keitel) and 1979's *OLD BOYFRIENDS* (starring John Belushi).

After writing several outstanding Japanese films—including *THE MAN WHO STOLE THE SUN* (Japan's Best Film of the Year, 1980)—Schrader began working on *KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN*, an adaptation of the Manuel Puig novel, which earned him an Academy Award nomination in 1986. The film was also an official selection at the Cannes Film Festival, where *KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN* competed against *MISHIMA* (which Leonard co-wrote with his brother), making him the first American ever to compete against himself in the festival.

Schrader made his directorial debut in 1991 with *NAKED TANGO*, which he also wrote. From 1996 to 1999, Schrader taught the Screenwriting Master's Thesis class

at USC and from 1999 to 2003 Schrader was an Associate Professor of Film at Chapman University.

About AFI:

AFI is the preeminent organization dedicated to advancing and preserving the art of film, television and other forms of the moving image. AFI trains the next generation of filmmakers at its world-renowned Conservatory, provides film preservation leadership and explores new digital technologies in moviemaking. AFI's New Media Ventures programs bring together the creative and digital communities, as the department seeks to develop a literacy program for the 21st century, helping young people learn to read and write screens of all sizes—cinema, television, computer and the Internet. With AFI ON SCREEN, the institute is the largest nonprofit exhibitor in the US, with programs at the AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival (AFI FEST); the AFI National Film Theater at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC; and the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in Silver Spring, Maryland. A 49,000 square foot complex with three theatres—one historic, two new state-of-the-art stadium-style theatres—the AFI Silver exhibits film and video generally unavailable elsewhere in the region. AFI's annual almanac for the 21st century, AFI AWARDS, honors the most outstanding motion pictures and television programs of the year. AFI's 100 Years . . . 100 Movies, 100 Stars, 100 Laughs, 100 Thrills, 100 Passions and 100 Heroes & Villains have ignited extraordinary public interest in classic American movies. During the past 31 years, AFI's Life Achievement Award has become the highest honor for a career in film. More information about AFI can be found by visiting its Web site, located at www.AFI.com.

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