



Hollywood: Her Story March 2020 ENewsletter *Thelma & Louise*

The movie *Thelma & Louise* won its writer and co-producer **Callie Khouri** the 1992 Oscar for Best Writing, Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen. It also garnered five other Oscar nominations: Best Actress in a Leading Role, **Geena Davis**; Best Actress in a Leading Role, **Susan Sarandon**; Best Director, Ridley Scott; Best Cinematography, Adrian Biddle; and Best Film Editing, Thom Noble. The plot line involves two women who go on a road trip with many unforeseen circumstances and consequences. At the time of its release, it generated some controversy but has since become a classic and is considered a landmark in feminist film. In addition, it has been selected for preservation by the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress. *Thelma & Louise* is the most recent movie in which two actors were nominated in the Best Actor or Best Actress category.



When discussing people's reaction to the movie, Khouri said, "I think that people should not just look at my film but also at the way that it has been criticized to gauge the prevailing attitudes towards women in film at the moment. *Thelma & Louise* is not about feminists, it's about outlaws. We see plenty of movies of the genre with men. I don't see why it shakes everybody up to see it with women."

Critical and audience reaction was mostly favorable. *The New York Times* said "It reimagines the buddy film with such freshness and vigor that the genre seems positively new." Rotten Tomatoes consensus opinion is: "Simultaneously funny, heartbreaking, and peppered with action, Ridley Scott's *Thelma & Louise* is a potent, well-acted road movie that transcends the feminist message at its core." The Writer's Guild of America includes the screenplay of *Thelma & Louise* among its 101 best screenplays.



Of her motivation for writing movies like *Thelma & Louise*, Khouri said, "It is such a rare thing to go to a movie and think, God, that was a really interesting female character. I feel that the roles generally available to women in Hollywood films are incredibly stereotypical: the girlfriend, the wife, the moll, the prostitute, the rape victim, the woman dying of cancer. I wanted to do something outside these terms." She also said that adult women "are a market that I feel is underserved in the entertainment population at large. I don't see the kind of women represented that I know or that I'm attracted to. I really want to try to write more nuanced, less simplistic kind of stuff, and it's hard to find a place to do that."

The movie also included Brad Pitt's breakout role.

Women in front of and behind the camera make the movies that we all welcome into our hearts and homes. Women across all the areas of moviemaking from actress to animator, editor to stuntwoman, costume designer to screenwriter, producer to director have contributed to the success of the movie industry since its founding in the 1890s. Help us celebrate these women who are written into movie history in *Hollywood: Her Story*.

Jill S. Tietjen and Barbara Bridges

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