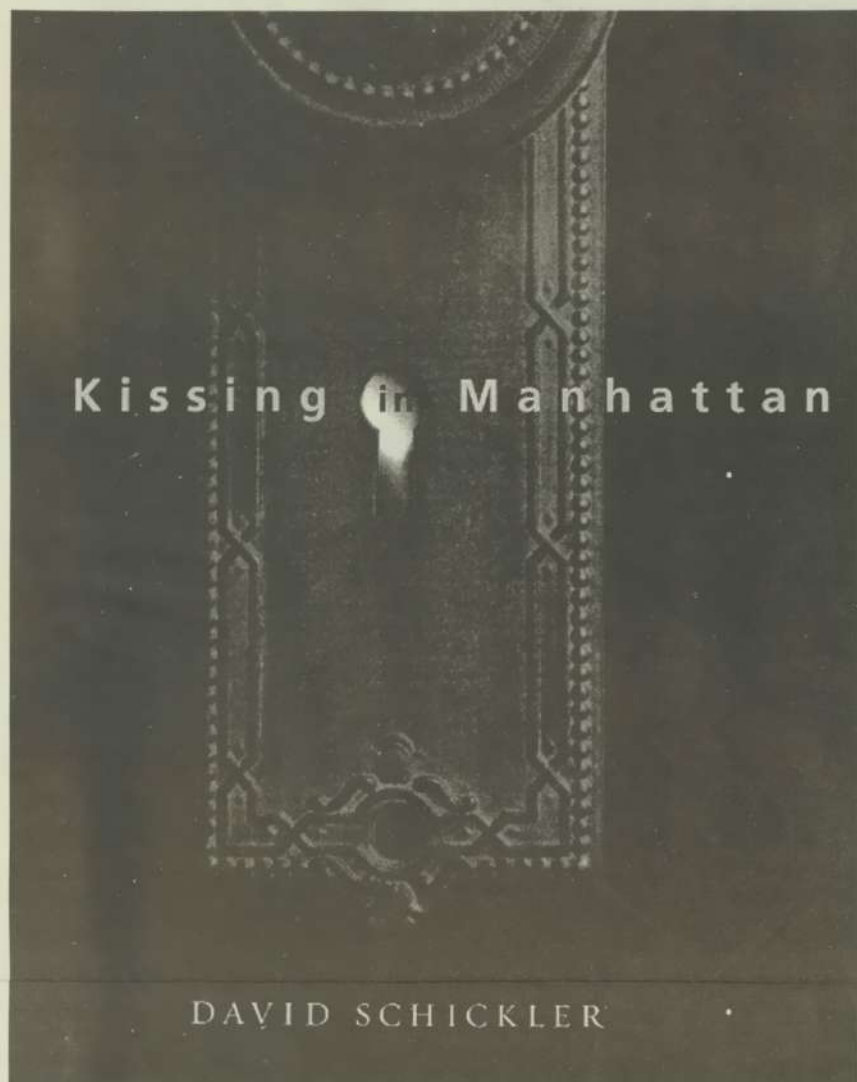


# "Kissing in Manhattan": dark and sexy



ERINN LERTEN  
Staff Writer

David Schickler's debut novel, "Kissing In Manhattan," offers what at first appears to be a slick, hilarious collection of romantic tales but soon reveals its true dark, sexy and deeply tender mood.

In a series of linked stories, Schickler follows a group of young Manhattanites in their sometimes-failed quests for love. The characters are diverse, yet they are all connected by the dark gothic apartment building, the Preemption, which readers first discovered in the short story "The Smoker" in *The New Yorker*. Various characters also appear in seemingly innocuous situations, the significances of which are revealed later.

Amongst his characters are a smart-talking bad boy, a misunderstood actor and an awkward schoolteacher whose teenage student proposes marriage to him. The characters are complex in their lives and loves, yet he writes them with a simple elegance that brings them close to the reader.

The writing is cool yet full of emotion: "Rally McWilliams was profoundly lonely," begins the title story. "She wanted to believe that she had a soul mate, a future spouse gestating somewhere in Nepal or the Australian Outback. But in Manhattan, where Rally lived, all she found were guys."

As Rally's story continues, she meets Patrick Riggs, who escapes the demons of his past by seducing and tying up beautiful women until they see their beauty as he does, while keeping a gun close to his heart and attending the services of an eerily

aware priest.

"How would you know the first thing about who I am, about what's choking me, about what I can or cannot endure?" While he is confrontational in voice, the reader's heart still goes out to Patrick, a man who can only endure his life by the comfort he receives from these things.

Although all the stories carry a dark undertone, some are more sharp-witted and sly in their tone, without the dark tension of the more intense stories but with the same intimacy. In "Checkers and Donna," Donna is a real estate agent who wears "a suit and important shoes" and agrees to go on a blind date with Checkers.

Donna is somewhat jaded in her outlook on love: "[She] felt mostly pity for men... Their biceps and laughter were ungodly strong, but, as far as Donna could see, men never used the full force of these strengths against women. This was cowardice, Donna felt. She wanted a man who would crush himself into her — psychically, sexually, utterly, daily — and never apologize."

Donna may have found such a man in Checkers, whose name has nothing to do with the game and who opens a door for Donna and shows her what love can be, and what it doesn't have to be.

Charged with a deadly sense of humor and wit, Schickler offers a daring new vision with "Kissing in Manhattan."

"With these wonderfully haunting, strange, and hilarious stories, David Schickler has established himself as a major new voice in American fiction." —Ron Hansen, author of "Mariette in Ecstasy" and "Hitler's Niece."

## Screenwriters share experiences with students and community at CCC

DAISY BAIN  
A&E Editor

"Screenwriting: The Art and The Agony" was the topic for Authors' Night last Wednesday in the Gregory Forum, featuring two acclaimed screenwriters, Gill Dennis and Ebbe Roe Smith.

The hour-and-a-half-long event packed the house with an estimated 70 plus people, kicking the night off with Dennis reading from his newly finished screenplay "Cash." Based on the early days of Johnny Cash, it was written for director James Mangold and Columbia Pictures. The audience laughed as Dennis read lines from when Cash proposed to his girlfriend, and she said no, over and over.

According to Dennis, six to seven days was spent in research talking to Cash himself. He would ask him questions such as, "What's the most terrifying moment that has ever happened to you? The saddest or proudest?" He also spent time with people who knew Cash personally and read many of his biographies.

An audience member asked Dennis if Cash has read the script, and the answer was no. "You could write (about) anything Cash has done; he was just worried about hurting others," said Dennis. He also expressed

his amazement with Cash as a person. "He would sing to you as other people would speak to you. It was really beautiful."

Dennis' work includes an adaptation of A.L. Kennedy's novel "So I Am Glad" for Ed Harris and Amy Madigan. He also wrote the screenplay for "Return to Oz," "Home Fries," and "On My Own" and adapted the Zane Gray novel "Riders of the Purple Sage."

Dennis founded the Squaw Valley Community of Writers along with author Tom Rickman and is currently a Filmmaker in Residence at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles. Among his film directing credits include "Without Evidence," a film about the Michael Francke murder case.

Ebbe Roe Smith followed Dennis by reading from his own comedy, "Spoiled Rotten." Again, the audience was greatly entertained by this nationally acclaimed actor, playwright and screenwriter. "Spoiled Rotten" is about a very rich girl who is kidnapped by a "rotten" and very dumb man. Smith used his acting skills to elabo-

rate the humor as he read a scene where the rotten man tries to feed the very snobby kidnappee.

Some of Smith's credits include "Sweet Smell of Success," "Power and Glory," "The Score," "U.S. Marshalls,"

"Nick of Time" and "Falling Down," (featuring Michael Douglas and Robert Duvall).

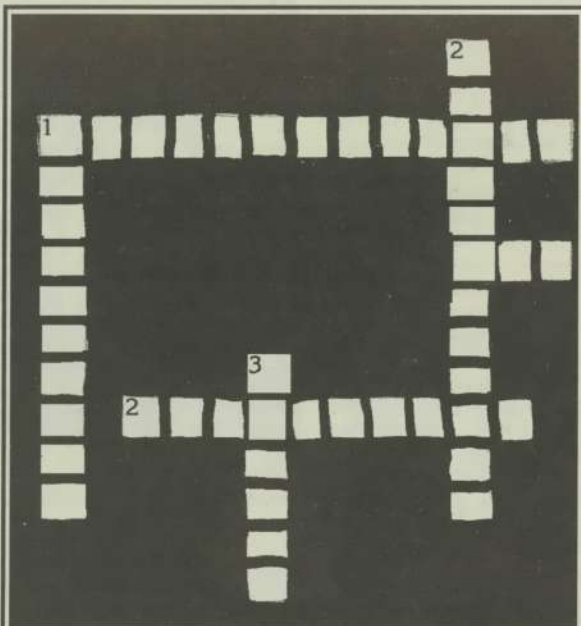
After both screenwriters read from their own scripts, they were bombarded with questions regarding how to get started in the business, how long a typical screenplay

should be (according to Smith, about 111 pages is typical), or how do you avoid long drawn out arguments while working with a partner. Smith provided a nutty answer to the latter question: Rather than hash out an argument, he would lay out his idea by saying this simple phrase, "I have a potato idea." He says this is to prevent too many apologies for ideas that are half-baked.

As the night dwindled down, Dennis summed up the evening by saying, "I have a feeling that the future writers of America are standing all around me."

"...the future  
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Gill Dennis  
Screenwriter



### Across:

1. Why will school be cancelled Feb. 28?
2. Last weeks holiday was \_\_\_\_\_ day?
3. July 23 - August 22.

### Down:

1. Featured animation.
2. Major problem in Oregon.
3. In the Southern region, which place is the women's basket ball team in?