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Screenwriting Software Leader Final Draft Bought by Cast and Crew



Cast & Crew
ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES

FEBRUARY 2, 2016 | 09:24AM PT

COURTESY OF CAST & CREW

Dave McNary

Film Reporter

@Variety_DMcNary

Production management specialist Cast & [Crew](#) Entertainment Services has bought screenwriting software leader [Final Draft](#) Inc. for an undisclosed price.

Cast & Crew said the deal, announced Tuesday, continues to accelerate its investment in technology, supported by its majority shareholder Silver Lake Partners. Cast & Crew, which provides payroll and residuals processing, accounting systems and software, and production incentive consulting, was acquired by Silver Lake Partners in mid 2015.

"With a clear strategic vision, and the active input of our clients, we are leveraging technology to create compelling end-to-end solutions," said Eric Belcher, president and CEO of Cast & Crew. "We are delighted to partner with the best screenwriting software company in the business. We see powerful links between this exceptional product family and the digital payroll and production solutions we are providing. It all starts with the script."

Marc Madnick, CEO and chairman of Final Draft, said the deal will lead to better software and customer experience for screenwriters and filmmakers. "Together, we will accelerate our development process and further solidify our industry leadership for many years to come," he said.

Madnick co-founded Final Draft 25 years ago. Belcher said Final Draft will continue to operate under its current name and with its current senior team led by Madnick and Scott McMenamin, the company's president.

Burbank-based Cast & Crew was advised by Kirkland & Ellis LLP. Final Draft was represented by investment bank MediaBridge Capital Advisors.

FILED UNDER: Cast and Crew, Final Draft

Screenwriting Software Company Final Draft Gets New Owner

by Paul Bond

2/2/2016 1:21pm PST

Cast & Crew Entertainment Services acquired the company on Tuesday.

Cast & Crew Entertainment Services, one of Hollywood's premier payroll-services companies, has acquired screenwriting software company Final Draft for an undisclosed amount of money, the companies said Tuesday.

Final Draft was founded 25 years ago and has become one of the dominant software products used by screenwriters, while 40-year-old Cast & Crew was **acquired** for \$700 million last year by Silver Lake, a private equity firm with investments in Alibaba, WME/IMG and Go Daddy.

Final Draft will continue to operate under its own name out of its headquarters in Calabasas and none of the 40 or so employees are expected to lose their jobs due to the acquisition. The management team, including CEO Mark Madnick and president Scott McMenamin, will remain in their positions.

"We see powerful links between this exceptional product family and the digital payroll and production solutions we are providing. It all starts with the script," said Eric Belcher, CEO of Cast & Crew, which operates out of Burbank and employs 350 people.

"This is a great time to be a Final Draft customer as we focus on collaborating with Cast & Crew to deliver innovative solutions for every part of the screenwriting process and beyond," Madnick said.

Email: Paul.Bond@THR.com



'Ex Machina,' 'The Martian' Top Final Draft Award Winners



Matt Donnelly

The Wrap

February 11, 2016

It was good night for sci-fi and fantasy at Thursday's 11th Annual Final Draft Awards, honoring the year's best screenwriting in film and television.

[Alex Garland's](#) "Ex Machina," about a seductive robot played by [Alicia Vikander](#), edged out "Bridge of Spies" and "Inside Out" for Best Original Screenplay.

[Drew Goddard's](#) big screen take on Andy Weir's "The Martian" survived as Best Adapted Screenplay over "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" and "The Big Short."

Also Read: [Alejandro Inarritu Wins for 'The Revenant' at Directors Guild Awards](#)

In television categories, Best Drama went to HBO's "Game of Thrones." Best Comedy was claimed by CBS' "The Big Bang Theory."

[Paul Schrader](#), screenwriter of "Taxi Driver" and "Raging Bull," was inducted into the Final Draft Hall of Fame.

The awards are presented by ubiquitous scriptwriting software Final Draft, Inc., an offshoot of Cast & Crew Entertainment. Prizes were handed out on the Paramount Lot in Hollywood, California, and the event was hosted for a second consecutive year by [Thomas Lennon](#) and Robert Ben Garant.

Read the complete list of nominees below, with the winners in bold.

Best Original Screenplay

“Bridge of Spies,” [Matt Charman](#), The Coen Brothers

“**Ex Machina**,” [Alex Garland](#) *WINNER

“Inside Out,” [Pete Docter](#), Meg LaFauve, Josh Cooley

Best Adapted Screenplay

“The Big Short,” [Adam McKay](#), Charles Randolph (book by [Michael Lewis](#))

“**The Martian**,” [Drew Goddard](#) (book by Andy Weir) *WINNER

“Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” [Lawrence Kasdan](#) & [J.J. Abrams](#) and [Michael Arndt](#) (characters by [George Lucas](#))

Best Television Drama

“Downton Abbey,” [Julian Fellowes](#)

“ Fargo,” Steve Blackman, Robert De Laurentiis, [Noah Hawley](#)

“**Game of Thrones**,” [D.B. Weiss](#) and [David Benioff](#) *WINNER

Best Television Comedy

"The Big Bang Theory" – Chuck Lorre, Bill Prady *WINNER

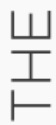
"Modern Family" – Steven Levitan, Christopher Lloyd

"Orange is the New Black" – Jenji Kohan

Hall of Fame Inductee

Paul Schrader ("Taxi Driver," "Raging Bull")

<https://www.yahoo.com/movies/ex-machina-martian-top-final-draft-award-winners-040032909.html>



WRAP

Covering Hollywood

AWARDS | By **Matt Donnelly** on February 11, 2016 @ 8:00 pm

'Ex Machina,' 'The Martian' Top Final Draft Award Winners

Screenwriters Choice honors also go to "Game of Thrones," "The Big Bang Theory"

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Hall of Fame Inductee

Paul Schrader ("Taxi Driver," "Raging Bull")

Final Draft Awards Winners, Paul Schrader Joins Hall of Fame



By **Anne Thompson** | Thompson on Hollywood

February 12, 2016 at 2:45PM

Schrader's next project, 'Dog Eat Dog,' with two of his go-to stars, Nicolas Cage and Willem Dafoe, debuts for distributors this week at the European Film Market in Berlin.



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Final Draft Hall of Fame Inductee Paul Schrader

At the Final Draft Awards at Paramount Studios Thursday night, 40-year film veteran Paul Schrader was inducted into the Final Draft Hall of Fame. His presenter Larry Karaszewski ("The People vs. O.J. Simpson") couldn't believe he had been inducted before Schrader, who was a 26-year-old film critic when he wrote "Taxi Driver." "Paul is a giant shining beacon," said Karaszewski, "on how a screenwriter can be an artist and be independent year after year."

"Everything we've learned in the last 100 years in filmmaking is useless," said Schrader. "We don't know what we do, what a movie is, where we see it... The notion of the writer is up for grabs. They created this art form. Now there are no rules... There's one left," he concluded on a hopeful note. "Storytelling works."

Schrader's next directorial effort is the crime thriller "Dog Eat Dog," co-written with Matt Wilder from Eddie Bunker's novel and starring Nicolas Cage and Willem Dafoe. The film, which follows a trio of ex-cons on the run after a botched abduction, is currently in post-production, and ArcLight Films is premiering footage to distributors for the first time at the European Film Market in Berlin. "Dog Eat Dog" was produced by Mark Earl Burman of Pure Dopamine. Executive producers are Gary Hamilton, Don Rivers, Tim Peternel, David Hillary, Shaun Redick, and Ray Mansfield. Deals have already been locked up for several territories, including France, Germany, Spain, and the U.K.

Among the award winners, voted on by folks who own the Final Draft screenwriting software, Drew Goddard admitted that he had a "Taxi Driver" poster on his wall growing up as he accepted Best Adapted Screenplay for "The Martian." Best Original Screenplay went to "Ex Machina" writer-director Alex Garland, who's back in the UK.

Best TV Drama went to David Benioff and D.B. Weiss of "Game Of Thrones." TV Comedy winner was "The Big Bang Theory."

The Big Break winners, culled from 7000 entries by tiers of professional readers, were Eric Buchman's TV drama pilot "45 Wall" and feature drama "Breedlove," by G.W.Freund & Daniel Bonjour.

After 25 years Final Draft has been acquired by Cast & Crew. The co-founders started out renting one side of a one-room office.

Read the full list of Final Draft winners below.

The Add-On Deal Roundup: Feb. 2

February 02, 2016

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Cast & Crew Entertainment Services LLC , a Silver Lake-backed provider of payroll and production management services to the entertainment industry, acquired screenwriting software provider Final Draft Inc . Calabasas, Calif.-based Final Draft offers a screenwriting application that automatically formats a screenwriter's script to Hollywood's industry standards. Its flagship product, which has more than 100 templates that format and paginate screenplays, teleplays and stage plays, is used by movie studios and production companies. Cast & Crew said Final Draft will continue to operate under its current name and with its current senior team led by Marc Madnick , chief executive, chairman and co-founder of Final Draft, and Scott McMenamin, its president.

Technology-focused firm Silver Lake acquired Cast & Crew in 2015. Silver Lake, of Menlo Park, Calif., acquired the Burbank, Calif., company in a deal that valued Cast & Crew at \$700 million including debt, The Wall Street Journal previously reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

February 8 - 14, 2016

MEDIA &
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Screenwriting software leader **Final Draft Inc.** was bought by Burbank production management firm **Cast and Crew Entertainment Services** last week in a deal that broadens Cast & Crew's participation across the full entertainment production lifecycle, from script to screen. The two companies will continue to operate under their respective names. Their first project together will be the Final Draft Awards, a ceremony celebrating the best in screenwriting, to be held Feb. 11 on the lot of **Paramount Pictures Corp.**

Cast & Crew Buys Final Draft

By MARK MADLER

Tuesday, February 2, 2016

Screenwriting software developer Final Draft Inc. has been acquired by Cast & Crew Entertainment Services Inc., the companies announced Tuesday.

Terms of the deal between Cast & Crew, in Burbank, and Final Draft, in Calabasas, were not disclosed.

Final Draft will continue to operate under its own name and with its senior management, led by Chief Executive Marc Madnick.

The acquisition allows for Cast & Crew, which provides payroll and production-management services to the entertainment industry, to broaden its participation across the production lifecycle, said Chief Executive Eric Belcher.

"We see powerful links between this exceptional product family and the digital payroll and production solutions we are providing," Belcher said in a prepared statement. "It all starts with the script."

Final Draft, founded in 1991 by Madnick and business partner Ben Cahan, has become the preferred screenwriting software by automatically formatting scripts to industry standards. The company hosts its Big Break contest to find new talent and the annual Screenwriters Choice Awards.

"This is a great time to be a Final Draft customer as we focus on collaborating with Cast & Crew to deliver innovative solutions for every part of the screenwriting process and beyond," Madnick said in a prepared statement.

Cast & Crew is owned by technology investment firm Silver Lake Partners in New York.



FINAL DRAFT TURNS 25: Q&A with Founder & CEO Marc Madnick

By: Denny Schnulo | February 9, 2016

A silver anniversary is a big deal anywhere it happens. In the fast evolving, forever changing, what-have-you-done-lately film world it's a true milestone. Maintaining the position of industry standard for twenty five years, [Final Draft](#) currently holds an estimated 95% market share, is truly something worth talking about.

Recently I had a spirited conversation with Final Draft's enthusiastic founder and CEO, [Marc Madnick](#), to discuss Final Draft's success, the future and the surprise sale of the company to [Cast & Crew Entertainment Services](#):

Script: Congratulations on twenty five years.

Marc Madnick: Thank you, it's been a great ride.

Script: I'm sure your schedule is packed with events so why don't we get straight to talking about the product.

Madnick: Absolutely, go ahead.

Script: What percentage of [Final Draft](#) features does the typical writer use?

Madnick: I don't have a statistic, but it's true, we have a lot, a lot of features that don't get used by everybody. If you're script is not in production, you're not utilizing a lot of the professional production features we have. Everyone uses the same fifty or so features when writing a script, but there are a hundred or more other features that don't get utilized if you don't go into production.



Marc Madnick

Script: A lot of major software packages suffer from some sort of work-around that spreads across the user base even when the software is capable of the task. Is there a common work around out there that doesn't need to be worked around?

Madnick: The reason to use Final Draft is to eliminate the need for workarounds. If they don't use Final Draft then they will use some inferior tool to try and make the script look right. I know Microsoft Word would be very difficult to write a script in, always was. That's why we built Final Draft so they don't have to do any work arounds.

Script: Any features that may be faded out?

Madnick: There may be a few features that are no longer unique to Final Draft, like the names database where you could look up names by genre, religion, by background so you could [come up with a cute name](#). You can do that on the Internet now so you really don't need us to do that. But we still have it in there because it's free.

Script: Are there any new features in development you'd like to talk about?

Madnick: The biggest requested feature we are putting in version 10 are a lot more pre-writing activities. There's a lot of outlining and organization features that will soon be a part of version 10, really expanding on our navigator tool.

Obviously we are getting requests all the time from our customers, and we listen to every one of them, and most of the time they are good ideas. So we analyze them to find which ones will be used the most. As developers you take the most requested stuff that's going to be utilized most often. A lot of people ask if we ever thought about doing this, that, or the other thing and a lot of times we eventually engineer for it.

Script: Who do you consider as your main competitors?

Madnick: It changes every five or ten years, it really does. We don't really have competitors in the professional market. We really believe we have about 95% of all television shows and movies in English speaking countries. I like to say we are concerned about our competition, but we are not consumed by it. We don't wake up every day worrying about it.

We believe, and I believe, if we pay attention to our customers, and we engineer the product for what they want, and we give the service we have always given, then nobody is going to overtake Final Draft. That's why we have been number one, because we've had a commitment to those things. The only competitor we really have is ourselves, only we could do something wrong to us. That's our motto around here, and that's why we have been the leader for twenty five years.

Script: What's the best way for a new user to engage with Final Draft?

Madnick: We have online videos, we have a complete manual online, and you can ask us questions. There's a dozen How-To videos we produced. It's a pretty intuitive software so you really don't have to worry, but we have all those tools available [on our website](#). They come to our website and they go into the support section.

Script: Is there anything you'd like to say in closing about the past twenty five years and the future?

Madnick: Well, we just sold the company so that's the biggest news. We are now part of the Cast & Crew family and they have plans, our visions and their visions are the same. What they want to do is create all the tools necessary for all filmmakers. Of course it all [starts with the script](#) and that's why we were their first acquisition. Together we are going to build everything for the whole process and it's going to be quite exciting, I'm really looking forward to it.

They are really, really smart, they're really, really good people and they've been around for forty years and they give great service, so it's a perfect marriage. They're known for their service, and they're going to expand into this digital world, and we're going to be very much a part of it, so we are looking forward to it.



Cast & Crew Entertainment buys Final Draft

The Calabasas-based developer of Hollywood's premier screenwriting software has been acquired by Cast & Crew, which **provides technological solutions**. Terms weren't disclosed. Silver Lake Partners is the majority owner of Cast & Crew. (SoCal Tech)

Final Draft Acquired By Cast & Crew Entertainment



Calabasas-based software developer [Final Draft](#), which develops screenwriting software, has been acquired by Burbank-based [Cast & Crew Entertainment Services](#). Financial terms of the acquisition were not announced. Cast & Crew said the buy will help expand its suite of technology

solutions. The acquisition was supported by private equity investor Silver Lake Partners, which is the majority owner of Cast & Crew. Final Draft was founded by Marc Madnick and Ben Cahan in 1986, after Madnick--at the time, an aspiring screenwriter--found the process cumbersome and difficult. Cast & Crew was advised by Kirkland & Ellis LLP in the deal; Final Draft was represented by MediaBridge Capital Advisors.



SCRIPTNOTES

Episode: 236

Franchises and Final Draft

February 9, 2016



John and Craig examine why almost all of the top-grossing movies are part of a franchise — and the chicken-or-egg question at the heart of it. You don't get Minions without Despicable Me.

We also look at the sale of Final Draft to an accounting software company and speculate wildly about the fate of the company and the state of screenwriting apps.

Plus: follow-up on Zola, sleep paralysis and dead scripts.

In the premium feed at Scriptnotes.net, you'll find audio from John's live panel with the WGA nominees, including Matt Charman, Drew Goddard, Jonathan Herman and Andrea Berloff, John McNamara, Phyllis Nagy, Charles Randolph and Adam McKay, Josh Singer & Tom McCarthy, and Aaron Sorkin.

Final Draft Sold To Cast & Crew Entertainment Services

February 2, 2016 By [Jeremiah Hall](#) [Leave a Comment](#)



By Jeremiah Hall (doddleNEWS)

Final Draft Inc., maker of **Final Draft** screenwriting software, has been sold to Cast & Crew Entertainment Services.

In an email to Final Draft users, Final Draft CEO, Chairman, and Co-Founder of Final Draft Inc., Marc Madnick said:

"Today is an important day in Final Draft history. As we enter our 25th year and remember all the accomplishments that bring us to this momentous point, we find we have even more occasion to celebrate. I am excited to announce that Final Draft, Inc. has been acquired by Cast & Crew Entertainment Services, a Burbank, CA based company that has been providing payroll and production accounting solutions to the entertainment industry for nearly four decades.

"We at Final Draft are thrilled to be playing a major role in the expansion of Cast & Crew's already extensive suite of production management services for the film, television and digital media industries. We are now part of a company who shares our vision and our passion for building the best possible tool to serve the needs of screenwriters and the filmmaking community."

Madnick went on to say writers "will still get the same dedicated customer support you have always received. The same team will be in place to guide our product into the future. But under the umbrella of Cast & Crew, and the support of global technology investment leader Silver Lake Partners, which owns Cast & Crew, we will now have the resources, support, and infrastructure to better leverage today's technology and move even faster toward our long term vision."

Madnick thanked current Final Draft users.

Madnick said, "These past 25 years have been an incredible journey. We're looking forward to the next 25 years of Final Draft serving the screenwriting industry. But before we move forward, I would like to pause and personally extend a thank you to the customers who have helped us get to this point. I have immense gratitude for the screenwriters, showrunners, directors, script supervisors, crew, filmmakers, studios and networks who have helped write our story. We invite them to join us as we build a new and even brighter future with Cast & Crew."

Final Draft is known for their screenwriting software for **Mac** and **Windows**, as well as the **Writer App** and Reader App for iOS devices. They also are known for the Big Break Screenwriting Contest. For [doddleNEWS'](#) review of the Final Draft 9, click [here](#) and [Writer here](#).