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POP CULTURE NEWS

Hollywood's Secret List

The Black List for good scripts -- Hollywood insiders secretly vote on the best unsigned movie scripts

By [Hannah Tucker](#)

The Black List is back. But this time, screenwriters are fighting to get their names *on* it. Why? This version has nothing to do with anticommunist hysteria. It's actually a hush-hush report that ranks 2005's "most liked" screenplays, as voted on by more than 90 influential insiders at talent agencies, management companies, and film studios. Heavily circulated among the creative and business classes in Hollywood, the document has taken on a life of its own, catapulting careers and becoming something of an informal Tinseltown secret.

The author — a development executive at a powerful production company who agreed to speak to EW anonymously — hatched the idea last December. "A large part of my job is reading really bad scripts," he says. "I wanted to figure out how I could read as many *good* scripts as possible." Turning to his Rolodex, the Black Lister asked friends to nominate the 10 best unproduced screenplays they'd read that year. Then he pored over almost 300 titles, ordering the list according to popularity. (Only 13 received more than five votes.) The resulting document blazed a path through Hollywood, turning somewhat anonymous scribes into minor sensations. "The Black List was a great nod to *Juno*," says Sarah Self of the Gersh Agency, who signed the screenplay's stripper-turned-scribe Diablo Cody in August 2004. "We were thrilled."

"I've had managers calling — not knowing that I'm the person who did it — telling me, 'I've got these great clients, they were on the Black List this year!'" says the List author. "I hope at some point to be able to look back and say, 'The 2005 Black List, where are they now?' Maybe they've become Best Picture winners." Is there a hope in hell of that happening? EW reviewed not only the list but the three highest-rated screenplays. Our take on the winners, below.

TOP THREE SCRIPTS

1 *THINGS WE LOST IN THE FIRE*

Susanne Bier will direct this subtle family drama for DreamWorks. It's a fun read, but *Fire* may burn too slowly for the screen. **B-**

2 *JUNO*

Diablo Cody's smart and quirky tale about a teenage mother found a director in Brad Silberling, but success will depend on who is cast as the lead. **A-**

3 *LARS AND THE REAL GIRL*

Ryan Gosling will play a socially awkward man who finds love...with a sex doll. Director Craig Gillespie will bring this warm, kooky story to life. **B+**

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