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Is your pitch perfect?

Writers, producers present their ideas to industry's top guns in hope of a deal

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Think you've got a good idea for a television show or film? Before you say yes, try summing it up in a sentence.

Tomorrow and Saturday, more than 20 top guns in television and film, as well as a few book publishers, will gather to hear pitches from hundreds of aspiring writers and producers.

The event is called i CAN Pitch. It's in its second year and is being held at Studio City, at 1 Pardee Ave. in Toronto's Liberty Village.

It's not a contest, more a chance to schmooze with people who can transform your plot into reality. Like Emmerson Denney of Emmerson Denney Films. At last year's event, Denney "accepted" two writers for representation and optioned two scripts. He also booked one writer for a commission.

"Our pitch preference is a clear, concise story with a beginning, middle and end – as though you were telling us about a film you watched last night," said Denney.

The film company has offices in Halifax, Moncton, Vancouver, Los Angeles and Toronto. The company produced the film *The Straightjacket Lottery*, shown on CBC, as well as *Troll Concerto*, which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival and was accepted for the Cannes Film Festival.

Registered participants, who pay a fee of \$100 each, will get tips on refining pitches and navigating the film and television industry. The

deadline to register is 7 p.m. tomorrow at www.icanpitch.ca. On Saturday afternoon, five minutes per pitch is the allotment.

Denney is looking for "high-concept stories or old stories with twists and turns."

But keep the details light, said Denney. "A good pitch is like the smell of barbecue – it whets your appetite to read the script."

We contacted six people planning to prove they can pitch. We sent them one line Denney used to sum up a film his company is working on: *A Spanish Hustle and Flow Shakes Hands with the Devil*.

Could they do better?