

Back Alley Theatre is awarded \$3,500 playwriting grant

THEATER NEWS

Richard Stayton

For producing director Laura Zucker, "it was like the old 'Millionaire' television show" when her Back Alley Theatre was awarded a \$3,500 Rockefeller playwriting grant.

"We didn't even apply," she said, "so the award came right out of the blue. Suddenly a lot of New York agents, who never even heard of us before, were submitting scripts to the Back Alley."

Zucker and co-producing director Allan Miller this week chose New Yorker Richard Caliban as Back Alley's playwright-in-residence. Under the terms of the grant, \$2,500 goes to Caliban for his six-week residency, and the remaining \$1,000 is put toward production of his work.

Caliban's "Suburban Romance," described as a "hyper-real family play" by Zucker, will be developed during December with a premiere at the Back Alley in January.

"I don't even have his resume," Zucker said about Caliban. "All I know is he makes his living as a free-lance photographer. When I phoned Monday to tell him we'd chosen his play for the grant, Caliban just said he was going out to get drunk and celebrate."