



Borough of Manhattan Community College
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Department of Media Arts and Technology

MES 153
**Scriptwriting
Handout Book**



16th Edition

Table of Contents

Fiction

Detective Work on Script/A Piece of Apple Pie	2
Short Film Analysis Worksheet	10
Character Worksheet	11
Important Elements of 3-Act Screenplay Structure	12
Definition of Antagonist	14
Three Act Structure	16
The Tortoise and the Hare	20
Plot vs. Story	22
The Seven Basic Plots	26
The Ten Commandments of Writing a Screenplay	28
Ten Rules for Writing a Successful Short Script	29
Pixar's 22 Rules of Storytelling	30
The Six Rules of Matt and Trey	33
What is a Treatment and Why Do I Need One?	34
The Key Elements of a Treatment	36
Sample Movie Treatment	40
Log Lines	45
PROJECT ONE: Treatment and Narrative Script Guidelines	48
Active Reading for Scripting	49
Screenplay Format Cheat Sheet	58
The Compleat Screenplay Format Guide	60
Screenplay: The Lunch Date by Adam Davidson	67
On Characters and First Drafts	75
Flick Chicks – A Guide to Women in the Movies	78
The Freaks and Geeks Series Bible	80
How to Write Good Dialogue	84
How to Write Great Dialogue	86
The Dos and Don'ts of Writing About the Disabled	88

Documentary

Project Two: Documentary Script Guidelines	91
Elements of Documentary	92
Documentary Practice	99
Documentary Script and Treatment Samples	112

Extras

The Ten Rules of Copyright for Screenwriters	121
Film/TV Careers	127
Pitching	129

NICK PROFERES

Source: Film Directing Fundamentals
Screenplay: APPLE PIE

CHAPTER I DETECTIVE WORK ON SCRIPT

Every film begins with a screenplay, ideally a good one. Still, even in very good screenplays, the director's investigation will uncover flaws as the screenplay is broken up into its smallest parts, even if the director is also the writer. A more intense focus, a more powerful lens, must be brought to the text now. The essence of every dramatic moment must be discovered and related to a dramatic whole. If we think of the screenplay as a forest and the dramatic moments as trees, we must be able to immerse ourselves in the forest, to see every tree in minute detail. At the same time we must be constantly aware of each tree's specific place in the forest—its job in the film. The first step in this journey of discovery begins with reading the screenplay.

READING YOUR SCREENPLAY

The film director Billy Wilder (*The Apartment*, 1960), on the subject: "It isn't necessarily helpful for a director to know how to write, but what is vitally important is that he know how to read." The stage director Harold Clurman, in *On Directing*:

The director reads the script. He reads it again and again and again. He need not read it in consecutive daily sessions. In fact, he would do well, if time permits, to set it aside for a while after each reading and check on what he remembers of it. He might even try to forget it. He should let it work on him before he works on it. First impressions—and he must regard the first two or three preliminary readings as first impressions—are often deceiving, that is conventional. To begin with, even experienced directors may see little more in a script than an intelligent theatergoer would. Like him, the director will be amused, laugh or cry, shudder or thrill. These reactions are not without value; they may even prove important. (Stanislavsky [Constantin Stanislavsky, artistic director of the Moscow Art Theatre, and author of *An Actor Prepares*] thought them *very* important.) But they do not suffice as guides to the directorial problem, which . . . is to translate the script's words into the language of the stage [film] where men and women of flesh and blood who move in three dimensions among real objects are to replace description.

To enable us to deal with an entire screenplay of a manageable length, I have enclosed a short screenplay, *The Piece of Apple Pie*. Read it now as if it were going to be your next directing project.

THE PIECE OF APPLE PIE

EXT. DINER-NIGHT
 An Edward Hopper atmosphere.

MAIN TITLE AND CREDITS

INT. DINER-NIGHT

Close on last piece of apple pie being taken from a pie tin and placed on a serving dish. Wider as COUNTERMAN sets the pie on the counter along with a napkin and fork. He looks towards the door as CUSTOMER enters.

CUSTOMER
 Good evening.

COUNTERMAN
 Hi.

Counterman looks at the wall clock: 11:55. Customer walks the length of the counter, past the dish of apple pie, and sits at a table in the empty restaurant, facing Counterman.

COUNTERMAN
 Need a menu?

CUSTOMER
 (inspecting tabletop)
 No.

Customer stands and moves to the next table, inspects it, finds it unsatisfactory, gets up and moves to a third table. He runs his hand over the surface. It seems to pass muster. He inspects the fork. It'll do. He looks up at Counterman.

CUSTOMER
 I'll have a piece of apple pie.

COUNTERMAN
 I'm out of apple pie.

CUSTOMER
 What's that on the counter?

COUNTERMAN
 I'm saving that piece.

CUSTOMER
 You're saving it?

8.

COUNTERMAN

There's a customer comes in around this time every night for apple pie-but I've got cherry, blueberry, lemon meringue, key lime-

CUSTOMER

I want the apple pie.

COUNTERMAN

I'm sorry. This customer would be very disappointed.

CUSTOMER

But you don't mind disappointing me.

COUNTERMAN

I'll tell you what. I'll give you a piece of any other pie you want, on the house.

CUSTOMER

No.

COUNTERMAN

I'll make it a la mode.

CUSTOMER

Listen-if you don't give me that piece of pie right now, I'll call the police.

COUNTERMAN

The Customer is a cop.

CUSTOMER

I don't care if he's the King of Siam.

Customer gets up and approaches the counter. Standing in front of the piece of apple pie, he takes out a gun.

COUNTERMAN

Hey, no guns allowed in here.

CUSTOMER

I want this pie!

COUNTERMAN

(looks towards door)

I can't

(grabs pie)

CUSTOMER

Don't make me shoot!

COUNTERMAN
For a piece of pie?

CUSTOMER
I'll count to five. One . . . two-

COUNTERMAN
It's stupid.

CUSTOMER
Getting shot when you don't have to is stupid.
Four!

COUNTERMAN
Okay! Okay! It's yours.

Counterman sets the pie back on the counter. Customer puts the gun away and sits on the stool. He pushes the napkin and fork away.

CUSTOMER
Could I have another fork and a fresh napkin, please?

Counterman places a new fork and napkin on the counter.

CUSTOMER
Thank you.

COUNTERMAN
Something to drink?

CUSTOMER
I'm fine.

Counterman walks away from Customer. He leans on the end of the counter, his head in his hands; a picture of utter defeat. After a beat, he steals a glance at Customer who is wiping the new fork vigorously—some might say compulsively. A ray of hope comes to Counterman just as the fork is about to cut into the pie.

COUNTERMAN
I never eat apple pie, myself.

Customer looks up at Counterman, quizzically.

COUNTERMAN

I like it, but I just don't eat it.

CUSTOMER

Why not?

COUNTERMAN

Why? Well... because of that stuff they spray on them.

CUSTOMER

What stuff?

COUNTERMAN

Something that causes cancer.

CUSTOMER

I know what you're trying to do. It's not going to work.

COUNTERMAN

Maybe I'm being too cautious. Nobody's gonna get out of this world alive, anyway. Apple pie is as good a way to go as any. Probably better than most.

CUSTOMER

Would you just shut up!

Counterman raises his hands in surrender. He begins busying himself with a wiping rag. The Customer stares at him.

CUSTOMER

It doesn't make any sense.

Counterman says nothing.

CUSTOMER

You got this cop coming in here eating apple pie, what-two, three times week?

COUNTERMAN

Sometimes five.

CUSTOMER

So why didn't you tell the cop about this spray?

COUNTERMAN

I did. But you know cops. They'll eat anything. Sure you don't want a cup of coffee to wash that down?

//.

CUSTOMER

I don't drink coffee.

COUNTERMAN

Oh, no, why not?

CUSTOMER

I heard it wasn't good for you.

COUNTERMAN

If I had to stop serving everything that wasn't good for you, I'd be out of business.

CUSTOMER

You have a responsibility to your customers.

COUNTERMAN

Hey, I'm not twisting anybody's arm.

Customer looks down at the piece of pie, hesitates, then places the fork on the counter.

CUSTOMER

What do I owe you?

COUNTERMAN

Forget it, it's on me.

Customer lays two dollars on the counter and stands.

COUNTERMAN

You sure you don't want to try the key lime?

Customer goes to the door, stops, and turns back to Counterman.

CUSTOMER

Sorry about the gun.

COUNTERMAN

Maybe you ought to get rid of it.

CUSTOMER

I just bought it today. It's not even loaded.

COUNTERMAN

No one knows that but you.

CUSTOMER

I'm tired of being pushed around.

12.

COUNTERMAN

That's no excuse.

Customer hesitates a beat, then takes out the gun and tosses it to Counterman.

CUSTOMER

Give it to the cop.

Before Counterman can answer, Customer turns and exits. Counterman looks at the clock: 12:00. He places the gun out of sight, goes to the piece of apple pie, replaces the napkin and fork, turns to the coffeepot and pours a cup of coffee.

As Counterman turns to set the cup next to the apple pie, a FEMALE COP sits down in front of it. It is obvious that she can take care of herself.

The Counterman smiles lovingly at the Female Cop. She picks up the fork and smiles lovingly at the piece of apple pie.

EXT. DINER NIGHT

It's quiet.

FADE OUT:

 WHOSE FILM IS IT?

Most successful films have a protagonist, and the first question in our detective work on the screenplay is: who is the protagonist in our film? Another way of asking the same question, one I believe is more helpful for the director, is: whose film is it? Which character do we go through the film with? Which character do we hope or fear for—hope that they will get what they want, fear that they will not?

In *The Piece of Apple Pie*, the Counterman is the protagonist. It is his film. He is the character in whom we place an emotional investment. He is the one we care most about. That is not to say that we are not interested in Customer, our antagonist. We hope that *all* our characters are interesting, even the ones we may not like.

I have not included as the primary criterion for a protagonist that they be the one who *drives the action* throughout the entire film. Not that that's a bad idea. Quite the contrary—it is one of the key tenets of most dramaturgy. However, there are just too many successful films where that is not the case: for example, Ingrid Bergman (Alicia) in Alfred Hitchcock's *Notorious* (1946). Also, there are many fine films where there is no protagonist at all, such as Robert Altman's *Nashville* (1975), Kenji Mizoguchi's *Street of Shame* (Japanese, 1956), or Woody Allen's *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986). But a warning for beginning directors: beware of leaving this ob-so-powerful dramatic device out of your screenplay!

 CIRCUMSTANCE

Circumstance is simply the situation the characters find themselves in. It can be objective or subjective—real or imagined, from the character's perspective. In a feature-length screenplay, the circumstances, especially for principal characters, are more often

than not made explicit in the screenplay. They are not up for grabs. But in short films the full circumstance of the character may not be contained in the text.

What are the circumstances for the three characters in *Apple Pie*? Let's start with the seemingly easiest one—Female Cop. She likes apple pie, right? Wrong! She *loves* apple pie! She *adores* apple pie! It is the *highlight of her day*. And she eats it on an exacting schedule at this particular diner that she has come to expect will deliver precisely what she wants. *She has yet to be disappointed!*

Just think for a moment what would happen to the conflict in our story if Counterman felt he had an out from the very beginning—that he could satisfy Female Cop with a piece of key-lime pie. To generalize this specific: never give your characters an easy way out! Difficulty! Difficulty! More difficulty!

Counterman's circumstance seems obvious on first reading. He is in love with Female Cop and does not want to disappoint her. And he knows absolutely what would disappoint her. No apple pie would disappoint her. And then, who knows, she might never come back. But is there anything more than that to Counterman's circumstance *this night*? And if there is, where can we find it?

A place where we often find *more* is in raising the stakes. What if Counterman had finally decided that tonight he was going to escalate the relationship—to metaphorically leap over the counter that separates customer from counterman, and ask his love-object for a date? Of course, it has taken him weeks—maybe months—to get his nerve up, so tonight he will allow nothing to get in his way! Counterman, then, is filled with expectation—one of the most powerful dramatic devices that we have in our storytelling arsenal.

Now, what about Customer's circumstance? I have found over the years that the tendency for most beginning directors is to not push relentlessly toward the most dramatic situation, but instead, to gravitate to the most obvious: for example, Customer comes in to eat a piece of apple pie and when he is told he can't have it he resorts to the threat of violence. Why? Because he's a bully. Or the other alternative is that he is simply crazy.

Is that the best we can imagine: someone who slinks into the diner in the throes of raging paranoia? How interesting can he be if he's that one-dimensional?

Suppose we imagine a man who is definitely not crazy, certainly not in the certifiable sense, but rather has been pushed around all his life—by his peers, by his wife, by his boss, maybe even his kid. Like Rodney Dangerfield, Customer gets no respect, and he has finally gotten sick of it! And *today*, with the nudging of his psychiatrist, he has come to a momentous decision. He is not going to take it any more! So he is actually in an expansive mood when he walks into the diner. He has come out on the town to celebrate the birth of a new man—the first day of the rest of his life. And what about the gun? Well, one of the people who pushed him around recently—literally—was a mugger. He bought the gun just to be absolutely sure that *nothing* will spoil this evening. And the compulsive cleanliness? It's in his character. (More about character later.)

SHORT FILM ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Name of Short Film: _____

1. Who is the protagonist?

2. How is this made clear?

3. What is the inciting incident/catalyst?

4. What is the protagonist's goal?

5. What are the obstacles to that goal?

6. What is the setting?

7. What is the genre?

SHORT FILM ANALYSIS WORKSHEET/2

8. What is the tone?

9. Does the protagonist succeed or fail in achieving their goal?

10. What is the resolution?

11. Can you identify a character arc?

CHARACTER WORKSHEET

(Make multiple copies)

FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW FOR YOUR PROTAGONIST, ANTAGONIST AND EACH CHARACTER WHO AFFECTS THEM IN YOUR STORY. BE AS SPECIFIC AND DETAILED AS POSSIBLE.

1. Name: _____

2. Age: _____

3. Outstanding physical characteristics:

4. Personality traits:

5. What is this character's long-term goal?

6. What is this character's short-term goal?

7. What is this character's biggest fear?

IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF 3-ACT SCREENPLAY STRUCTURE

A Summary of Theses and Terminology

The **Protagonist** is in search of a particular goal or objective and drives the actions of the plot. (Example: Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, who wants to go someplace outside her Kansas farmtown to find an environment where she can be valued as a person and to save her only friend, Toto, from being destroyed.)

The **Antagonist** is character or obstacle exerting equal and opposite force to obstruct the Protagonist from obtaining the stated objective. (Example: Miss Gulch/The Wicked Witch of the West)

The **Theme** is made up of the reasons why the Protagonist's objective is important to both the Protagonist and the audience and how the Protagonist's search for a way to obtain his or her objective relates to the audience's need to resolve similar objectives. (Example: Dorothy thinks she needs to go over the rainbow to obtain Toto's safety and to be appreciated by those around her, but finds that everyone around her actually has the same goals as she.)

I. SET UP

- A. **Exposition** shows the **status quo**, i.e., the world in which the Protagonist lives and identifies an **underlying need** felt by the Protagonist.

(Example: Dorothy leads a hard, unfulfilling life on a Kansas farm where the only being that seems to appreciate her is her dog, Toto.)

- B. Contains **inciting incident/catalyst** of plot, which focuses the Protagonist and reveals the theme; passive exposition ends and the purposeful actions of protagonist begin.

(Example: Miss Gulch presents a legal document forcing Dorothy to turn over Toto to her, but Toto escapes and runs to Dorothy.)

- C. **Protagonist declares a goal**, sets out to reach objective, leading directly to the engagement of the conflict.

(Example: Dorothy's longing for a new life is now not an option but a necessity; for Toto to survive, Dorothy must run away from the farm.)

II. CONFLICT

- A. **Escalating action** as the stakes are raised for the Protagonist, usually through opposition by the Antagonist.

(Example: Dorothy runs away, tornado takes her to Oz, receives ruby slippers, Witch vows revenge, journey to Emerald City, etc.)

- B. A **midpoint/point of no return** in which the main conflict either reverses direction or rises to a much higher level.

(Example: Dorothy gets to see the Wizard, but he's a fraud.)

- C. The conflict is solved when the Protagonist **succeeds or fails at reaching the objective.**

(Example: The Wizard is so touched by Dorothy's perseverance and longing for home that he proposes to take her back in a balloon.)

III. RESOLUTION

- A. Acts as a coda to the main action; **fully realizes the Theme** by directing us back to the **Protagonist's underlying need** as revealed in the Set-Up.

(Example: Glinda reveals that the ruby slippers will take Dorothy back to Kansas; once there, she finds that she was more valued than she realized.)

Definition of Antagonist

In literature, an **antagonist** is a character or a group of characters which stand in opposition to the protagonist or the main character. The term antagonist comes from Greek word 'antagonists' that means opponent, competitor or rival.

It is common to refer to an antagonist as a villain (the bad guy) against whom a hero (the good guy) fights in order to relieve himself or others. In some cases, an antagonist may exist within the Protagonist that causes an inner conflict or a moral conflict inside his mind. This inner conflict is a major theme of many literary works e.g. Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe, Hamlet by William Shakespeare, and A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce etc. Generally, an antagonist appears as a foil to the main character embodying qualities that are in contrast with the qualities of the main character.

Examples of Antagonists in Literature

Let us examine some examples of antagonist in literature.

1. A classical example of an antagonist is that of King Creon in Sophocles' tragedy "Antigone". Here, the function of the antagonist is to obstruct the main character's progress through evil plots and actions. Antigone, the protagonist, struggles against King Creon, the antagonist, in her effort to give her brother a respectable burial. Through his evil designs, Creon tries to hamper her in this attempt by announcing that her brother is a traitor and decreeing that "he must be left to the elements " This protagonist-antagonist conflict becomes the theme of this tragedy.
2. Another example of an antagonist is the character of "Iago" in Shakespeare's "Othello". Iago stands as the most notorious villain of all time who spends all his time in plotting against Othello, the protagonist, and his wife Desdemona. Through his evil schemes, he convinces Othello that his wife has been cheating him and even convinces him to kill his own wife despite her being faithful to him. The thing that separates Iago from other antagonists is that we do not really know why he wants to destroy Othello.
3. In his novel 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde', Robert Louis Stevenson explores the theme of doppelgangers, in which 'Hyde' is not only an evil double of the honorable Dr. Jekyll, but his antagonist. 'Jekyll' creates "Hyde" by a series of scientific experiments in order to prove his statement "Man is not truly one, but truly two." He means that human soul is a mixture of evil and good. In other words, every man's antagonist exists within himself. Hyde is the manifestation of the evil that existed in the

honorable Dr. Jekyll Well-known as a respectable Victorian gentleman, Jekyll could never have fulfilled his evil desires. Therefore, he separates his "evil-self" and gave him a separate identity and thus inventing his own antagonist who as a result brings his downfall.

4. Bob Ewell is a malicious antagonist of Harper Lee's 'To Kill a Mockingbird' Being convinced Mayella may have been guilty of doing the crime, Ewell is bent evilly on making sure that someone else gets the punishment Ewell keeps on following Atticus, Judge Taylor , and Helen Robinson even after the case is finished and goes to the extent that he almost kills the Finch kids. Heck Tate, defending Boo when he killed Bob Ewell, said: "To my way of thinki Mr Finch, taking the one man who's done you and this town a great favour an' draggin' him with his shy ways into the limelight- to me, that's a sin. It's a sin and I'm not about to have it on my head. If it was any other man, it'd be different But not this man, Mr Finch."

Function of Antagonist

Conflict is a basic element of any plot and without it, it is impossible to develop one Therefore the presence of an antagonist alongside a protagonist is vital for typical formula of a plot. The antagonist opposes the protagonist in his endeavors and thus the conflict ensues. The protagonist struggles against the antagonist who takes the plot to a climax and later the conflict is resolved with the defeat of the antagonist or, as in tragedies with the downfall of the protagonist.

Three-act Structure

Syd Field, author of *Screenplay* and *The Screen Writer's Workbook*, has outlined a paradigm that most screenplays follow. A paradigm is a conceptual scheme. This paradigm is the structure that holds screenplays together. According to Field, screenplays follow a three-act structure, meaning the standard screenplay can be divided into three parts: Setup, Confrontation, and Resolution.

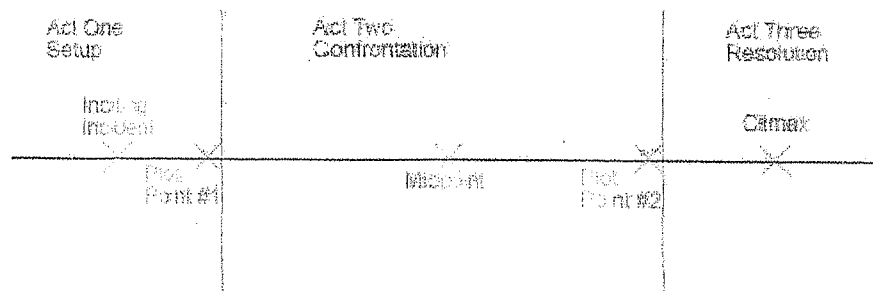
Act I comprises the first quarter of the screenplay. (For a two hour movie, Act I would last approximately 30 minutes.)

Act II comprises the next two quarters of the film. (For a two hour movie, Act II would last approximately 60 minutes.)

Act III comprises the final quarter of the film. (For a two hour movie, Act III would be the final 30 minutes.)

The "**Plot Point**"—According to Field, the three acts are separated by two plot points. A plot point, often called a reversal, is an event that thrusts the plot in a new direction, leading into a new act of the screenplay. Later screenplay gurus have built on Field's theory by stating that Plot Point #1, which leads into Act II, is the moment when the hero takes on the problem.

The Three-act Paradigm:



[Read a sample student paper on three-act structure analysis](#)

Act One

Act Two

Act Three

What Happens in Act I

Act I comprises the first quarter of the screenplay. (For a two hour movie, Act I would last approximately 30 minutes.)

What happens in Act I (Setup)?

Exposition—The part of a story that introduces the characters, shows some of their interrelationships, and places them within a time and place.

This part of the story introduces the main character, the dramatic premise, and the dramatic situation.

Main character—the person in the story who has a need/objective to fulfill and whose actions drive the story

Dramatic premise—what the story's about

Dramatic situation—the circumstances surrounding the action

Inciting incident—an event that sets the plot of the film in motion. It occurs approximately halfway through the first act.

The "**Plot Point**"—According to Field, the three acts are separated by two plot points. A plot point, often called a reversal, is an event that thrusts the plot in a new direction, leading into a new act of the screenplay. Later screenplay gurus have built on Field's theory by stating that Plot Point #1, which leads into Act II, is the moment when the hero takes on the problem.

4.

What Happens in Act II

Act II comprises the next two quarters of the film. (For a two hour movie, Act II would last approximately 60 minutes.)

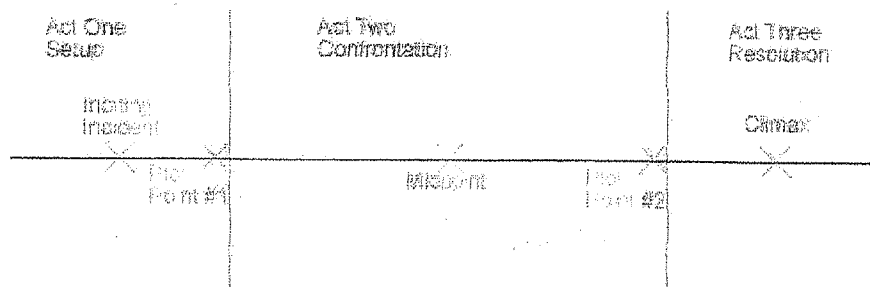
What happens in Act II (Confrontation)?

Obstacles—in the second act, the main character encounters obstacle after obstacle that prevent him from achieving his dramatic need.

First Culmination—a point just before the halfway point of the film where the main character seems close to achieving his or her goal/objective. Then, everything falls apart, leading to the midpoint.

Midpoint—a point approximately halfway through the film where the main character reaches his/her lowest point and seems farthest from fulfilling the dramatic need or objective.

The "**Plot Point**"—According to Field, the three acts are separated by two plot points. A plot point, often called a reversal, is an event that thrusts the plot in a new direction, leading into a new act of the screenplay.



[Return to Three-Act Structure page](#)

[Return to Act One](#)

[Go on to Act Three](#)

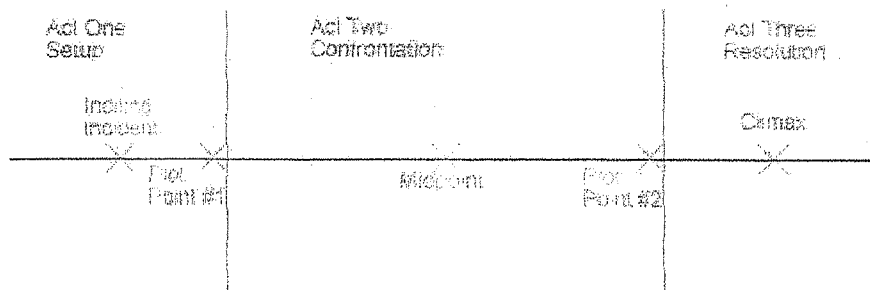
What Happens in Act III

Act III comprises the final quarter of the film. (For a two hour movie, Act III would be the final 30 minutes.)

What happens in Act III (Resolution)?

Climax (Second Culmination)—The point at which the plot reaches its maximum tension and the forces in opposition confront each other at a peak of physical or emotional action.

Denouement—The brief period of calm at the end of a film where a state of equilibrium returns.



[Return to Three-Act Structure page](#)

[Return to Act Two](#)

Source: Aesop's Fables, retold by S. Vernon-Jones (1912)

The Tortoise and the Hare

One of Aesop's Fables

Illustrated by Arthur Rackham



Once upon a time there was a hare who, boasting how he could run faster than anyone else, was forever teasing tortoise for its slowness. Then one day, the irate tortoise answered back: "Who do you think you are? There's no denying you're swift, but even you can be beaten!" The hare squealed with laughter.

"Beaten in a race? By whom? Not you, surely! I bet there's nobody in the world that can win against me, I'm so speedy. Now, why don't you try?"

Annoyed by such bragging, the tortoise accepted the challenge. A course was planned, and the next day at dawn they stood at the starting line. The hare yawned sleepily as the meek tortoise trudged slowly off. When the hare saw how painfully slow his rival was, he decided, half asleep on his feet, to have a quick nap. "Take your time!" he said. "I'll have forty winks and catch up with you in a minute."

The hare woke with a start from a fitful sleep and gazed round, looking for the tortoise. But the creature was only a short distance away, having barely covered a third of the course. Breathing a sigh of relief, the hare decided he might as well have breakfast too, and off he went to munch some cabbages he had noticed in a nearby field. But the heavy meal and the hot sun made his eyelids droop. With a

careless glance at the tortoise, now halfway along the course, he decided to have another snooze before flashing past the winning post. And smiling at the thought of the look on the tortoise's face when it saw the hare speed by, he fell fast asleep and was soon snoring happily. The sun started to sink, below the horizon, and the tortoise, who had been plodding towards the winning post since morning, was scarcely a yard from the finish. At that very point, the hare woke with a jolt. He could see the tortoise a speck in the distance and away he dashed. He leapt and bounded at a great rate, his tongue lolling, and gasping for breath. Just a little more and he'd be first at the finish. But the hare's last leap was just too late, for the tortoise had beaten him to the winning post. Poor hare! Tired and in disgrace, he slumped down beside the tortoise who was silently smiling at him.

"Slowly does it every time!" he said.

[List by Author](#) | [List by Illustrator](#)

[Home](#)

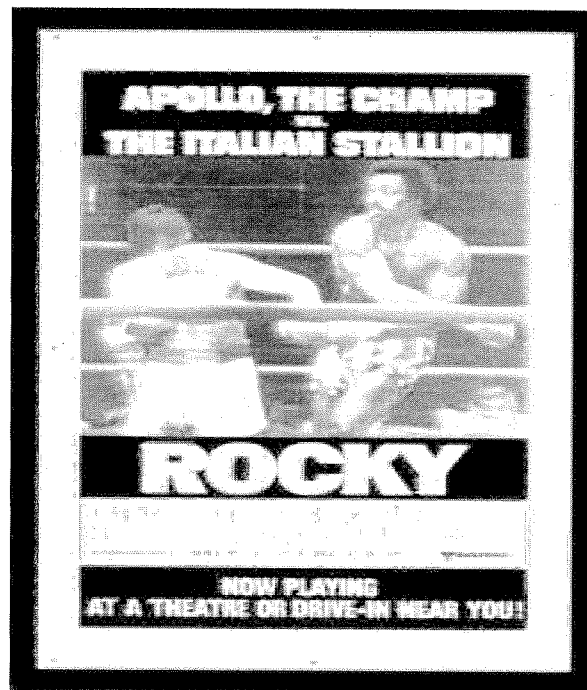
Plot vs. Story

One of the things that every writer needs to know is the difference between story and plot. It's very easy to confuse the two and many do.

As the British writer E.M. Forster (*A Room With a View*, *A Passage to India*) wrote in his *Aspects of the Novel*, a **plot** is a “narrative of events arranged in their time sequence” and “can have only one merit: that of making the audience want to know what happens next.” Thus, “the king died and then the queen died,” is a plot.

“A story,” Forster wrote, “is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality.” By this measure, “the king died and then the queen died of grief,” becomes a **story**. “The time sequence is preserved, but the sense of causality overshadows it.”

Simply put, then, **plot** is the **sequence of events that happen in a story**. The story is what the work is all about. Here are three examples:



Plot: The champ, Apollo Creed, suddenly needs a new opponent when his scheduled opponent is injured. Trying to capitalize on the promotional opportunities of the U.S. Bicentennial, Creed gives the title shot to a down on his luck club fighter named Rocky Balboa. Balboa shocks the world by going the distance with Creed in a surprisingly competitive fight.

Story: Rocky, the underdog, overcomes great odds to find self-worth and love through his struggle to be a worthy of his title shot.

Plot vs. Story/2



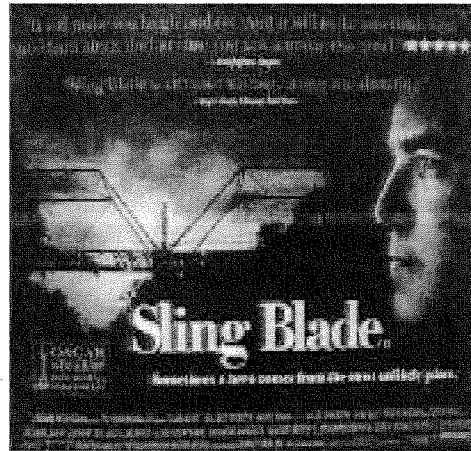
Plot: Michael, the youngest son of Mafia kingpin Don Vito Corleone, returns home from WWII, just as his father is beginning to prepare the oldest son, Sonny, to take over. When Don Corleone refuses to join the other five families in expanding into the heroin business, one of his rivals tries to assassinate Don Corleone and abducts his counsel and surrogate son, Tom Hagen, to try to force the Corleone family to change its mind.

Michael, who has been purposely kept out of the family business in order to help them go legit, volunteers to kill the man behind the heroin proposal and the corrupt cop aiding him. After Michael does just that, he is sent to Sicily for protection. Already distraught that his youngest son has been drawn into the mob war, Don Corleone surrenders on the drug issue after Sonny is gunned down at a toll booth, but insists that Michael be allowed to return to the family.

Michael promises his wife, Kay, that he'll legitimize the family business in five years. But his attempt to enter the casino business reveals a calculating ruthlessness starkly at odds with his earlier ideals, a coldness that will lead him to kill his brother-in-law as a warm up for an operatic revenge on the leaders of the other Four Families that will leave Michael the first among equals but require him to lie to those closest to him about pretty much everything.

Story: Michael's ability to coolly assess business situations and quickly formulate successful strategies served him well in war and could have done so in the legitimate business world. His loyalty to his family and "family," however, leads him to use his talents to lie, cheat, steal, blackmail or murder anyone who threatens his growing empire; i.e., to turn to the Dark Side.

(more)



Plot: Karl Childers, an apparently simple, bordering on retarded man, is released from psychiatric hospital where he was sent after murdering his mother and her lover. Returning to the town where he was raised, he befriends a young boy, Frank, and becomes a father figure to him. After renting a room from front Franks's mother Linda, he meets Linda's abusive boyfriend, Doyle. Realizing that Doyle's violence and anger will eventually ruin Frank's life, Karl kills Doyle, turns himself in, and is returned to the psychiatric hospital where he lived most of his life.

Story: Because he knows the horror of growing up amid violence, an otherwise peaceable man resorts to murder to protect a child's innocence and sense of possibility.

In each of these cases, the **plot** takes far longer to recount than the **story**, but it is the story that makes the plot meaningful. **Plot is nothing more than the logical progression of events used to tell the story, which is the part of the narrative that makes us care.** Outside of action movies, very rarely are the two the same.

Love Story and *Titanic*, *The Wrestler* and *Black Swan*, and *North by Northwest* and *Knight and Day* have the same story but radically different plots; the five film versions of *Hamlet* I have seen all have the same plot but very different stories (Olivier's is a tragedy of indecision; Richardson's a tragedy of conflicted masculinity; Zeffirelli's a tragedy of lack of faith; Branagh's a tragedy of transgression against the order of nature; Almereyda's a tragedy of society preferring power over justice).

Use the plot to tell your story, but always let the story drive the plot.

+++

11 December 2007 Review of

The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories

by Christopher Booker

This book has been defying my attempts to write a review it for the better part of a month and a half — but I think I've managed to emerge victorious at last. It's a longstanding cliché that there are only really a handful of basic plots in the entire canon of Western literature. The cliché is so cliché that it's somehow gone past cliché and come right out the other side in the form of a 700-plus-page analytical study by former Spectator columnist and Private Eye founder Christopher Booker. Booker suggests that storytelling serves to pass along moral lessons and models from the older generation to their children and successors, and as a result the basic lessons have coalesced over time into seven basic symbolic 'plots' that have formed the primary model for storytelling into the present day. These seven plots are as follows:

- (1) **Overcoming the Monster** — Stories like Beowulf, 'Little Red Riding Hood', Jaws, and many of the James Bond films where a hero must defeat a monster and restore order to a world that has been threatened by the monster's presence.
- (2) **Rags to Riches** — These stories feature modest, generally virtuous but downtrodden characters, who achieve a happy ending when their special talents or true beauty is revealed to the world at large. Includes any number of classics such as 'Cinderella', David Copperfield, and the Horatio Alger novels.
- (3) **The Quest** — A hero, often accompanied by sidekicks, travels in search of a priceless treasure and fights against evil and overpowering odds, and ends when he gets both the treasure and the girl. The Odyssey is a classic example of this kind of story.
- (4) **Voyage and Return** — Alice in Wonderland, Robinson Crusoe on his desert island, other stories of normal protagonists who are suddenly thrust into strange and alien worlds and must make their way back to normal life once more
- (5) **Comedy** — Not always synonymous with humour. Instead, the plot of a comedy involves some kind of confusion that must be resolved before the hero and heroine can be united in love. Think of Shakespeare's comedies, The Marriage of Figaro, the plays of Oscar Wilde and Gilbert and Sullivan, and even War and Peace.
- (6) **Tragedy** — As a rule the terrible consequences of human overreaching and egotism. The Picture of Dorian Gray, Julius Caesar, Anna Karenina. This category is usually self-evident.
- (7) **Rebirth** — The stories of Ebenezer Scrooge and Mary Lennox would fall into this past plot type, which focuses on a threatening shadow that seems nearly victorious until a

sequence of fortuitous (or even miraculous) events lead to redemption and rebirth, and the restoration of a happier world.

Within these basic plots are smaller 'metaplots' that outline the general structure of these stories.

Review of The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories /2

Booker further identifies 'dark' versions of these basic plots, ones in which the happy ending is never achieved even though the characters go through all of the stages in the underlying metaplot. There are also a handful of other, smaller plots that are often incorporated into these larger overarching plots, such as the 'Rebellion' plot or the 'Mystery' plot. Booker looks at both plots and characters, identifying heroes and heroines and the figures who both help them (e.g., the Wise Old Man, the Good Mother, the Companion) and hinder them (e.g., the Dark Rival or Alter-Ego, the Temptress, the Tyrant). If many of these character figures sound like basic story archetypes...well, Booker says, that's because they are. And he's dedicated the entire book to determining and explaining how these combinations of plots and characters come together to create some of most well-known (and dare I say, archetypical) stories in the literary canon.

I've read quite a few reviews of *The Seven Basic Plots*, and most of them seem to say some variation on the same theme: The first 300 pages or so are great, but the book goes rapidly downhill from there. These negative reviews touch on the primary trouble with *The Seven Basic Plots*. When a particular story does not seem to fit into the established patterns of Booker's Jungian worldview, his seven basic plots, he immediately declares that the story is irrevocably flawed, defective, or otherwise a perversion of how stories ought to be. As a result, a significant portion of the literature written since about 1800 falls into this flawed or defective category — including stories such as *Moby-Dick* (because we don't know whether the real Monster to be overcome in the story is the white whale or Captain Ahab) and Stendhal's *The Red and the Black* (because he regards the main character, Julien Sorel, as little more than a portrait of egotistical cruelty and selfish ambition for fame and glory). Not even *The Lord of the Rings*, one of the stories that Booker points to as the ultimate example of his basic plot archetypes, is free from imperfections: Frodo remains an incomplete character because he never finds the feminine half that he needs to become a whole character. In cruder terms, he doesn't 'get the girl', and therefore can never be complete, so he has to sail away as an incomplete and unresolved main character. Booker also has a disturbing predilection to blame the author's background for the flaws of his (or, on very rare occasions, her) stories — usually, in true Jungian fashion, by hinting at unresolved mother issues or sexual identity woes. Very rarely does he attempt to look at the story itself or attempt to understand why the author chose to break away from these archetypes. Without them, the author is flawed and the story is flawed, and as a result there is little room for debate.

It's really a shame that Booker's methodology falls apart through his sheer insistence on clinging to Jung. It would've been a far more fascinating study to explore why certain stories rebel against or subvert these archetypes, and how this deliberate rebellion or subversion makes these stories all the more powerful for the reader as a result. His writing style is an absolute model of clarity and careful word choice, making *The Seven Basic Plots* seem far less unwieldy for the general reader than its physical bulk might suggest. In the end, Booker's magnum opus is certainly worth exploring by those

who take an interest in the history of storytelling and in the underlying themes that define so many of our best-loved tales. I'm glad that I read it, in the end.

Source: <http://www.2normal.com/redirect.php?id=tobedwithatrollope.wordpress.com>

Scriptwriting / MES 153

Prof. Shari Mekonen

The TEN COMMANDMENTS of Writing a Screenplay

1. Show, Don't Tell (Write VISUALLY)
2. The Protagonist Drives the Action
3. Love Your Antagonist AS MUCH as Your Protagonist
4. Keep It In ACTION
5. Nothing is Incidental
6. The Oak is in the Acorn
7. Action is Character

8. Movies are Emotional Rather than Intellectual

9. Conflict and Drama Are the Same Thing

10. Movies are Linear

SCRIPTWRITING / MES 153

Source: www.FilmmakerIQ.com

TEN RULES FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL SHORT SCRIPT

by Linda Cowgill

1. Know who you're making your film for If it's for yourself, that's who you have to satisfy. If you're making it as an entry into the industry, your film needs to work dramatically as well as technically. Competition is stiff.
2. The longer the story, the better the film has to be Length comes down to_ what the story dictates. But if 2 film is over 15 minutes it really has to be great to keep people watching.
3. Write the script you can produce. Don't write a script with production values you can't effectively achieve.
4. The best ideas are simple. Focus on one main conflict, develop and explore in surprising ways.
5. Set your film up in the first 60 seconds If you're writing a ten minute (10 page) movie; you can't take the first 5 pages to introduce your characters before getting to your conflict Establish your conflict as soon as possible.
6. Make sure conflict escalates. Know what your character wants (the goal) and what's preventing him from getting it (the obstacle); and make sure your audience understands it, too.
7. Try to develop the conflict in one main incident as the set piece of your project. Many great short films develop the conflict in one incident to great effect, exploring character in ways feature films rarely fin because they rely more heavily on plot.
8. If your film is less than 5 minutes, one type of conflict might be sufficient to satisfy your audience. But if your film is over 5 minutes, you're going to need to various obstacles or complications for your hero to face.

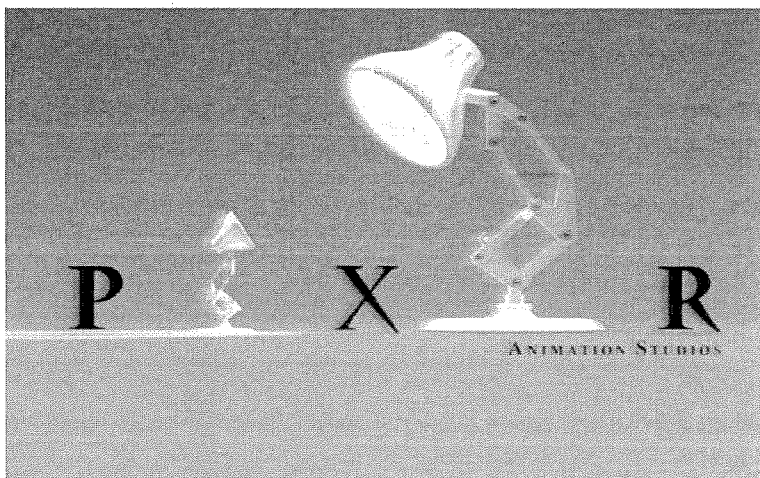
9. Just because your film is short doesn't mean you can't have an effective midpoint and reversal. Anything that keeps your audience from guessing your ending is an asset
10. Make sure your ending is the best thing about your great film. Your pay off is what you're leaving the audience with and it's how they're going to remember you.

About the Author: Linda Cowgill is a screen and television writer who teaches at Loyola Marymount University and the Los Angeles Film School Her feature film, "Opposing Force," was released by Orion Pictures in 1986 She has written for such shows as 'Quincy' 'The Young Riders' and "Life Goes On for which she won a Genesis Award Most recently she optioned her script "Honor Student" to World International Network She received her MFA from UCLA where she won a Jim Morrison Award for best short film. Ms Cowgill is the author of the popular film school textbook Writing Short Films: and Secrets of Screenplay Structure.

Pixar's 22 Rules of Storytelling

By Emma Coats, Storyboard Artist

Although not everyone strives to tell Pixar-y tales, the below can be used as a good bench-mark and/or checklist from which to gauge and/or influence your very own stories and storytelling process.



1. You admire a character for trying more than for their successes.
2. You gotta keep in mind what's interesting to you as an audience, not what's fun to do as a writer. They can be very different.
3. Trying for theme is important, but you won't see what the story is actually about until you're at the end of it. Now rewrite.
4. Once upon a time there was _____. Every day, _____. One day, _____. Because of that, _____. Because of that, _____. Until finally _____.
5. Simplify. Focus. Combine characters. Hop over detours. You'll feel like you're losing valuable stuff but it sets you free.
6. What is your character good at, comfortable with? Throw the polar opposite at them. Challenge them. How do they deal?
7. Come up with your ending before you figure out your middle. Seriously. Endings are hard, get yours working up front.

8. Finish your story, let go even if it's not perfect. In an ideal world you have both, but move on. Do better next time.

9. When you're stuck, make a list of what WOULDN'T happen next. Lots of times the material to get you unstuck will show up.

10. Pull apart the stories you like. What you like in them is a part of you; you've got to recognize it before you can use it.

11. Putting it on paper lets you start fixing it. If it stays in your head, a perfect idea, you'll never share it with anyone.

12. Discount the first thing that comes to mind. And the second, third, fourth, fifth – get the obvious out of the way. Surprise yourself.

13. Give your characters opinions. Passive/malleable might seem likable to you as you write, but it's poison to the audience.

14. Why must you tell THIS story? What's the belief burning within you that your story feeds off of? That's the heart of it.

15. If you were your character, in this situation, how would you feel? Honesty lends credibility to unbelievable situations.

16. What are the stakes? Give us reason to root for the character. What happens if they don't succeed? Stack the odds against.

17. No work is ever wasted. If it's not working, let go and move on – it'll come back around to be useful later.

18. You have to know yourself: the difference between doing your best and fussing. Story is testing, not refining.

19. Coincidences to get characters into trouble are great; coincidences to get them out of it are cheating.

20. Exercise: Take the building blocks of a movie you dislike. How do you rearrange them into what you DO like?

21. You gotta identify with your situation/characters, you can't just write "cool." What would make YOU act that way?

22. What's the essence of your story? Most economical telling of it? If you know that, you can build out from there.

THE SIX COMMANDMENTS OF MATT AND TREY

What *South Park*'s creators have learned in fifteen seasons of outrage and quiet episode-ending morals. BY MARGARET LYONS

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN sentient feces, Helen Keller musicals, and the tale of one Scrotie McBoogerballs, *South Park* went from culty cable series to one of the major forces in American comedy, and its creators, Trey Parker and Matt Stone, became masters of the epic puppet action film (*Team America: World Police*) as well as Broadway (*The Book of Mormon*). But one thing remains constant: The still crudely drawn grade-school stars always learn a valuable lesson at the end of every episode, even if that lesson is something subversive or gross or politically ambivalent or, ideally, all three. "That always ends up being the last thing we put in the show," says Parker of the moral. The lessons tend to just emerge as he and Stone write the episode, they say. Sure, they've taught us about gnomes who steal underpants, and the dangers of being an Apple fanboy, but Parker and Stone have learned a few things themselves along the way:

1 2 3 4 5 6

1 PLOT SHOULD REVEAL THE THEME, AND NOT VICE VERSA.

Parker explains: "That's when you feel the best: when you don't need someone to stand up on the soapbox at the end and say, 'You see...'" It's a lesson that inspired one of *The Book of Mormon*'s most judicious cuts: Elder Price, the Goody Two-shoes who experiences a major fall from grace over the course of the show, used to have a monologue explaining his journey of enlightenment (and back). They cut it to two sentences.

2 TRY NOT TO CARE SO MUCH...

"A lot of times we've erred on the side of" overexplaining, Stone says. "Now we don't care anymore." This has led to an increasingly liberated *South Park*, the creators' greater comfort with unusual or strange moments within an episode, what Stone calls "anti-messages." Parker says it changed "when we stopped being brooding twenty-somethings"—here he breaks into garbled gibberish in a high-pitched, whining voice. His point? as they grew up, they realized "we don't know what the fuck we're talking about." Which took the pressure off being precise.

3 ... BUT DON'T BE MAD AT YOUR AUDIENCE FOR CARING A LOT.

The second-season premiere, "Terrance and Phillip in Not Without My Anus," elicited an unexpected backlash from fans because it didn't explain the first season's cliffhanger. "We thought people would love it," Parker says. "We thought of it as almost a meta-television joke. And people hated it. They were like, 'But who is Cartman's dad?' And we were like, 'Who the fuck gives a shit? He's not real. It's whoever we say it is!' But it was a big lesson that the audience doesn't like a joke on them."

4 DON'T BE TOO STRAIGHTFORWARD.

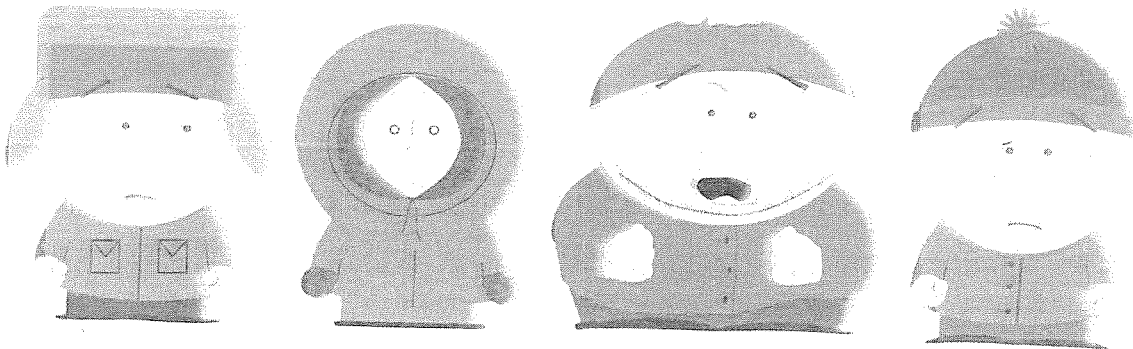
Parker describes himself as a huge fan of the Food Network (which sort of explains season fourteen's "Crème Fraîche" episode) and of simple, straightforward ingredients. He says their entire approach changed after a 2001 episode called "Scott Tenorman Must Die," in which Cartman seeks revenge on an older kid who makes fun of him, eventually torturing Scott Tenorman to the point where Cartman licks tears off his foe's face. "We used to have an A-story, a B-story, and sometimes a C-runner," Parker says of early seasons. But for "Tenorman," he says, "we just had this simple story, and as we were doing it, we were like, 'This is cool!'"

5 YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING AS LONG AS YOU DO IT WELL.

Mr. Hankey is not "talking poo just for the sake of talking poo," Parker insists. "It had a point. It's about Kyle feeling like an outcast, feeling like he can't relate to Christmas in the way other kids can, and it sucks."

6 DON'T BE AFRAID TO SURPRISE YOURSELF.

Last June's final episode—"You're Getting Old"—turned the world of *South Park* on its head by going after cynicism, with Stan discovering that his critical gaze was alienating him from everyone he cared about. It set off rumors that Parker and Stone were signaling they were done. "We're making fun of Kevin James and Adam Sandler... But we have to include ourselves in there, too," Stone says. "How long can you keep making those movies? Well, that's us, too," Parker says. "How long can you keep doing this?" Their contract goes for two more seasons.



What is a Treatment, and why do I need one?

By Micki Grover

Source: <http://www.writersstore.com/what-is-a-treatment-and-why-do-i-need-one/>

If you've ever asked those questions, you aren't alone. In the world of synopses, one-pagers, beat sheets, outlines and drafts, treatments can get lost in the shuffle. Writers often forego the treatment process altogether – which is a huge mistake! Treatments are a writer's secret weapon, because they benefit you in countless ways.

Perhaps the most common reason for skipping the treatment stage is simply that not everybody has a clear definition of what they are. The unfortunate fact is that many rules regarding treatments aren't cut and dry, and taking on a project without strict guidelines can seem daunting.

However, it's important to embrace rather than be intimidated by the flexible construct of writing the treatment. All we're talking about is a short document written in prose form and in the present tense that emphasizes, with vivid description, the major elements of a screenplay. Yes, treatments are actually written in prose! The essence of the story and the characters should be evoked through exhilarating language and imagery.

Treatments have a style of their own just as screenplays do, and they too take time to master. Writers who swear by using treatments find that it's a fun outlet to write with a voice that screenplays and synopses sometimes constrain. The ultimate goal is simply to tell your story in an engaging way, as if you were passionately telling your best friend about a new script over coffee.

So, why do you need a treatment?

First, writing the treatment is an excellent way to force yourself to get the intricacies of your story down on paper before you even think about writing FADE IN. Let's be honest, most of us are guilty of having jumped into a new draft when there were still gaping holes in the story, and that never ends well! The more work you put into your treatment, the less time you'll spend writing and rewriting... and rewriting... And when it's time to rewrite, the treatment is right there to help guide you. A strong treatment is practically guaranteed to make your script better, so why limit yourself?

Treatments are also one of the most effective marketing tools in the film industry. They are used as the middle step between the pitch and the full draft; if your pitch goes over well, you can leave your treatment behind as a next step. The bottom line is, Hollywood execs will not read a full draft unless they already know it's worth their time, and the only way they can be sure of that is to read a stellar treatment. Think of it as reading the back cover of a book before you invest in buying it. If you know how to nail a perfect treatment, you've already got one foot in the door.

A treatment is a great first step when assembling your cache of marketing tools. Because you've already put the development work into this document, it's relatively easy to boil it down to a one-page leave-behind, rather than starting with a one-pager that leaves something to be desired. Not to mention, if you find yourself at a pitch festival or meeting, you'll be glad you worked out all the kinks of your story in your treatment when potentially interested parties start asking their questions!

Additionally, if you were asked to adapt source material or rewrite another writer's story, the filmmakers would likely ask you for a treatment. It's a quick and accessible way to summarize the structural and character development choices you'll make as the new writer before moving on to the scriptwriting stage. It's a situation we'd all like to be in, but not if you're caught unaware of the intricacies of writing a treatment!

Even before you get to the marketing phase, treatments are a great way to get feedback from your peers. While not everybody has time to read a full draft of your latest script, it's hard to turn down a few exciting, well-written pages. Feedback is the key to developing your story, and passing out a treatment is generally more readily accepted than passing out 100+ pages is. Not to mention, friends who aren't familiar with screenplay format and style will have no trouble reading the prose of a treatment, so you can get even more feedback, faster.

Perhaps you woke up with a great idea, but you're not sure you want to commit just yet to weeks or months of writing the first draft. Instead, write the treatment – it's a surefire way to help you decide if the story you have in mind is worth pursuing. Of course, if you don't feel like putting weeks' worth of writing in to flesh out a full draft just yet, you still have one more pitch-able idea in the vault if necessary. And you never know when you might need it.

The bottom line is that treatments exercise your writing muscles, they make your story better, and they are one of the most accepted forms of marketing tools. Whether you're a budding writer or a working writer, if you don't yet know how to pen the perfect treatment – it's time to learn!

Meet the Author: Micki Grover

Micki Grover is a Story Specialist for The Writers Store and has worked as a reader and analyst for Red Hour Films, Truby's Writers Studio, various writing contests, and of course, deadbeat friends. Having been trained in every genre and most mediums, Micki strives to help passionate writers achieve their dreams with each project because she believes that camaraderie and a dash of optimism are essential to survival in Hollywood. She has been published by the St. Petersburg Times, McSweeney's, The Devastator, and countless online outlets. She holds a degree in screenwriting from Chapman University.

KENNETH ARCHITTY
HENRY HOLT & COMPANY LLC
2003

8 / WRITING TREATMENTS THAT SELL

When community education courses advertise "Sell your ideas to TV," they instead inexperienced writers who don't understand that the word *idea* is being used loosely. The inexperienced writer doesn't sell an idea. Instead, he must write his idea at least into a treatment and try to get it into the hands of an active filmmaker. Second only to writing an entire screenplay or teleplay "on spec" (the industry term for "speculative work done without a contract"), your treatment may be the best tool for getting a foot in the door of moviemaking.

But the treatment is a strange animal, quite unlike any other kind of writing. If a screenplay focuses the story for a film, the treatment does the same thing for a screenplay. Yet there are as many kinds of treatments as there are writers. None of this confusion helps the new writer trying to break into the business, but for the outsider's purposes, what distinguishes one treatment from another is simply its effectiveness in making the sale, and/or laying out the story.

With the proliferation of cable programming, the expansion of video rentals, and the industry's acutely competitive need for films and programs to fill home and theatrical screens, the function of the treatment in today's motion picture and television industries has expanded. The usefulness of the treatment is behind the scenes, in developing a story; and/or in pitching it efficiently to filmmakers who might be sold on making the writer's story into a film.

A script is a selling tool; it's not a blueprint for a movie, in spite of what they tell you. Screenplays ought to be sold as prose. It's entirely about storytelling, explaining that story to the reader.

—Ken Winkler

Treatments can help the writer acquire an overview of his story, presenting the profile of the words in contrast to the varied texture of the trees. By the same token, for a story editor or

THE NATURE AND ROLE OF THE TREATMENT / 9

development executive the treatment is a useful diagnostic tool for getting the story straight. By reading a short treatment, the author obtains a perspective that may be lost when reading a fully script.

Nothing can take the place of a live pitch, where the writer dramatizes his story for an attentive audience. But a written pitch is still needed to assist in the next stage of the filmmaking process, where the story is "repitched" to the next person higher up along the chain of production. When an oral pitch is impossible, a written pitch can do the job. (The treatment is a written pitch.) Everything we say in this book is intended to assist you, the writer, in understanding and creating the treatment to serve one or the other, or both, of these two crucial purposes.

For our purposes then, a treatment is a relatively brief, loosely narrative written pitch of a story intended for production as a film for theatrical exhibition or television broadcast. Written in user-friendly dramatic, but straightforward and highly visual prose, in the present tense, the treatment highlights in broad strokes your story's hook, primary characters, acts and action line, setting, point of view, and most dramatic scenes and turning points.

The Key Elements of a Treatment

Let's take a closer look at the key elements that make a good treatment:

"relatively brief": A treatment's brevity or length is relative to the writer's purpose at hand. A top network executive, such as the Vice President of Motion Pictures for Television, may request a one-page treatment; his boss, the Senior Vice President of Motion Pictures for Television, may need only one paragraph. The writer may have started with a twenty-page treatment, which he used to clarify the story elements as he was thinking them through.

action line, the impact of its setting on its development, and the attitude toward its subject matter. The treatment generally indicates, implicitly or overtly, the act breaks for a feature film (three acts) or movie for television (seven acts).

"most dramatic scenes?"; Skip the transitions and skim over the background scenes or "back story." Just give us the obligatory scenes required to imagine the overall shape of the story.

"turning points": Turning points or "twists" are moments in the story when the characters move into some kind of jeopardy under the impulse of previous events and their character makeup. A twist is an unexpected turning point that surprises the audience. Turning points include *cliffhangers*, used to propel the audience from one act to another.

"intended for production": Never forget that the intention of the treatment is to initiate the process of filmmaking. In filmmaking, as screenwriter William Goldman (*Breach Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *Marathon Man*) put it, "Nobody knows anything." This means that there are no true rights or wrongs in creating effective treatments. The best treatments are great because their writers are expert dramatists.

"theater or television": A treatment for each medium should follow rules prescribed by that medium. A film treatment, with its three acts, may perplex television executives worried about TV's traditional seven-act structure. A television treatment will trouble theatrical developers until it has been restructured for their audience.

A treatment generally varies in length from one to twenty-five or more pages, depending on the kind of treatment it is and its purpose. The treatment of the motion picture *One-Night Stand* with Wesley Snipes and Nastassia Kinski that garnered writer Joe Eszterhas (*Basic Instinct*) \$2.5 million from New Line Cinema (with another \$1.5 million to be paid on production) was four and a half pages long. AEI (with Zide Films) sold Steve Allen's *Meg* to Walt Disney Pictures for \$700,000 based on

TREATMENTS AS CLIFFHANGERS

Treatments should feel like pictures rushing together to form a story, in which you can see the characters and hear them speak. A treatment should never read like a synopsis, like dull beads of a plot moving forward, nudging toward a predictable outcome. When you're reading the pages, however simple, the thrill of the story must be captured. And how do you do that? You forget that you're writing a treatment and tell the story like a classic around-the-campfire cliffhanger—as if every event happened before your very eyes and you can't wait to share it.

The structure should reveal itself like the design of the master architect crossed with a clever composer. The beginning immediately captivates. Why? Because you know exactly where to start the story because you have thought about it very carefully. And you know exactly whose face has just appeared on the screen. The character's journey should feel random and spontaneous, as if rolling down a hill, not a step-by-step contrivance of events.

The energy of the beginning should carry us into the middle—and now you're in trouble. The subplot has to subtly kick in here, and its momentum carries us through to the end.

An architect's blueprint or a sheet of music is dull only to those who do not have the passion to appreciate its execution. These "treatments" of a breathtaking building or a moving symphony should be just as exciting as seeing the Pantheon or hearing the Ninth Symphony for the first time. And this is your job. When you tell your story, you'll be like the projectionist alone in the dark booth, until the lights come back on again and then everyone understands—finally—exactly what you wanted to say.

—Victoria Wisdom, agent and partner,
Recey-Wisdom-Kaledjian

We start, in chapter 1, by examining exactly what a treatment is and how it's used in the industry to make a sale and/or to lay out a story. Here we also differentiate the treatment from its cousins the synopsis, the outline, the beat sheet, and the

Treatment iv. Coverage

Coverage is the industry term used to describe the diagnostic document provided by the story department readers for executives making acquisition decisions in theatrical film and television. The typical coverage document consists of:

- identifying information (name of story, name of writer, name of person doing the coverage, type of story etc.);
- a synopsis, as previously defined;
- a set of comments giving the reader's opinion of the cinematic worthiness of the piece covered;
- a rating chart, allowing the reader to rate the piece on characterization, dialogue, action, setting, and commercial appeal.

A script may be covered by:

- a talent agency for casting purposes;
- a talent agency, for *packaging* (the term for attaching talent—an actor, actress, or director);
- a director, actor, or actress's company to assess its suitability for involvement;
- a production company, to assess a film's viability;
- an agent or manager, to help determine whether the writer should be represented on the work produced.

The coverage's purpose is to report the strong and weak points of a story as objectively and comprehensively as possible. But a treatment, drawing its energy from its writer's personal enthusiasm, is *not* objective.

The Beat Sheet

A beat sheet is a writing tool used to identify the sequence of events, turning points, and action in your story. It's an abbreviated way (no longer than three pages, please) to break down

She wants the coins. He tosses them to her, and she promptly pulls the trigger.

• Alone, with five of her onetime best friends now dead, Julie turns the saltpot back to shore.

• In the distance a storm is coming, and the seas are choppy. Lightning illuminates the entire sky, revealing ominous thunderheads. The little saltpot rises and falls on the massive swells, standing little chance against nature's fury—and the curse of the coins.

THE END

Treatment v. Outline

The words *outline* or *reblocking* are used to describe a list of the scenes in a cinematic story much like the beat sheet. Outlines of this kind are especially useful in the development process, because they reveal the flow of the scenes, without elaboration, at a glance. An outline can be thought of as a skeletal treatment. Where a treatment may contain dialogue to dramatize a particular moment, the outline will not. Its purpose is strictly diagnostic, to allow the executive, the director, and the producers to chart the direction of a story and to make course corrections before the writer is fully committed to writing or rewriting.

The following example is a partial outline for our Disney film, *Meg*:

1. Seventy million years ago, T-Rex attacked and destroyed by *Megalodon*.
2. Professor Jonas Baxter finishes lecture on Meg. Terry Tenaka tries to get his attention.
3. Jonas attends media awards party. Learns his wife is cheating on him, walks out. Terry Tenaka is waiting for him.

In the next chapter we will discuss how to write an original treatment for motion pictures, while at the same time examining the basic elements of fiction and drama.

relief quickly turns to shock as they discover the car trunk is soaked with blood.

D.A. CARL APPEGATE begins the investigation. Comments from Benjamin's mother indicate Rebecca was obsessed with her son for years. Although there is still no body, the evidence against Rebecca is so strong Angela suggests that Rebecca hire the sensational criminal lawyer TREVOR KEEGAN.

At a tense first meeting, Keegan confronts Rebecca with the cold truth: Given the evidence, it will be easier for him to defend her if she agrees to plead guilty than if he tries to convince a jury of her innocence. Angry, Rebecca proclaims her innocence. D.A. Carl Applegate indicts her for murder. Even in death Benjamin Knapp still has a hold on her.

Act IV

At the trial, Benjamin's mother takes the stand, recalling the assault trial and the fact that the charges against her son were dropped. Rebecca cringes as she remembers all of the notes she received from Knapp, urging Rebecca and Benjamin to "patch things up." Rebecca thinks that Knapp is truly insane for believing she and Benjamin ever had a relationship.

Much to Rebecca's dismay, her attorney chooses not to cross-examine Mrs. Knapp. Later he reveals to Rebecca that doing so would have made him appear callous.

Ever present at the trial, Canuso is taking more than simply a professional interest in Rebecca; he feels responsible for her being brought up on charges, but most of all his gut tells him something is wrong.

Keegan calls Angela Casarini to the stand. She is the attorney who has been working with Rebecca for the past fifteen years, trying to stop Benjamin's constant harassment. Angela's testimony recalls the terror that Benjamin brought to Rebecca. As the evidence showing an obvious motive builds up against her, Rebecca wonders if this whole trial, the murder, and her arrest are not another form of Benjamin's harassment.

Just before Philip is to testify, D.A. Applegate asks that the court allow the introduction of new evidence. An expert testifies that Benjamin Knapp had his blood DNA-typed in order to prove his innocence in a paternity suit. His DNA type matches the blood found in both Benjamin's apartment and in Rebecca's car.

This information convinces Philip that Rebecca is guilty. He breaks off their engagement and refuses to testify. Rebecca collapses in Keegan's arms.

Act V

Keegan, well aware that Philip's reaction was inevitable, serves him with a subpoena that he filed at the start of the trial. Rebecca is crushed. She realizes that her relationship with Philip was a mistake fueled by Benjamin's harassments. Knowing this will only make Rebecca appear guilty, Keegan again insists that she change her plea to guilty. She refuses.

Keegan is ruthless when Philip takes the stand. Philip had access to both Rebecca's car and her apartment. Given the threat to his impending marriage that Benjamin provided in the telegram, he had every reason to want Benjamin dead. Now that Philip is in jeopardy, it is all too easy for him to accuse Rebecca.

After closing arguments in which Keegan hopes the jury will think that Philip may have been the murderer, Rebecca waits alone at home. Unable to rest, she prepares a hot bath to ease the tension. Standing before her mirrored closet doors in her slip, she is suddenly knocked to the ground by a man's arm. As she struggles, she feels the prick of a needle sliding into her flesh. She falls into a pit of blackness.

Rebecca awakens to the uneven rhythm of a moving vehicle. Bound and gagged, she can make out the driver, now hidden beneath a sandy beard and mustache; it is Benjamin! The vehicle stops. She feels unconsciousness as the van door squeaks open. Another needle slips into her arm.

Something is bothering Canuso. Even though he heard Rebecca say she wanted Benjamin dead, the case is too neat. His years of experience tell him that murder cases are never this black and white. He starts to go over the case.

Benjamin allows Rebecca the use of a bathroom at a roadside stop. He gives her ten minutes. Desperately, Rebecca tries to find something to leave a note on. Her frantic search uncovers the morning paper. As she reads the headlines, she learns the horrible truth: the jury has convicted her of murder.

What Is a Treatment?

By Marilyn Horowitz

Source: <http://www.movieoutline.com/articles/how-to-write-a-treatment.html>

There is controversy about the length a treatment can be. Some say up to 60 pages, but the point of the treatment is to communicate your story as quickly as possible, so brevity without sacrificing juice is the key here.

There seem to be three opinions about what a treatment is.

One opinion is that it is a one page written pitch. The second, which I agree with, is that it is a two to five page document that tells the whole story focusing on the highlights. The third opinion is that a treatment is a lengthy document that is a scene by scene breakdown of a script. I consider this an outline, and a waste of time as a marketing document, though it can be an important step in the creation process in my experience, the two to five page version works best, and an example is included in this article.

How To Write a Treatment

This two to five page document should read like a short story and be written in the present tense. It should present the entire story including the ending, and use some key scenes and dialogue from the screenplay it is based on.

What Should Be in the Treatment?

Title page:

- A Working title
- The writer's name and contact information
- WGA Registration number

Treatment:

- A short logline
- Introduction to key characters
- Who, what, when, why and where.
- Act 1 in one to three paragraphs. Set the scene, dramatize the main conflicts.
- Act 2 in two to six paragraphs. Should dramatize how the conflicts introduced in Act 1 lead to a crisis.
- Act 3 in one to three paragraphs. Dramatize the final conflict and resolution.

Sample Movie Treatment:

Lilly

By Marilyn Horowitz

Its 2006. The political climate in China is very unstable. When ANNA, the young pregnant wife of an outspoken journalist is left widowed after a vicious assassination, friends whisk her out of the country to sympathetic expatriates in Queens, New York.

In Queens she's given a grim room in the local syndicate head quarters. Anna is lethargic, lost in pain. JON VAN, the charming head of the syndicate comes to see how she's doing, and expresses romantic interest in her. Anna's lack of enthusiasm angers him, but he writes it off to her recent experiences.

Lost in shock and grief, Anna, is placed with JUNE, another widow, who has adjusted to the new life. They share a run-down apartment in a maze of tenement buildings, serviced by a few small markets in a bad part of town. June runs the local daycare center for the working mothers in this closed Vietnamese community.

Anna, now seven Months pregnant, is speechless and depressed until early labor forces a bone chilling howl of pain from her parched lips. The baby is born, Lily, a perfect little girl, but Anna is too deeply distressed to bond.

It's June who holds the tiny girl, and cuddles her.

As the weeks pass; Anna slowly recovers. She starts to ask questions about the new world she's entered. Anna sees the mothers drop off and pick up their children, tension and fear in their faces. When Anna asks why there is so much stress, June explains that everyone owes the syndicate, the local arm of the people who helped Anna escape. Jon Van is the boss.

June reveals her hatred of the syndicate, telling Anna of their exploitation of their own kind. "That's why I make so little money, Anna, half of it goes back to them. That's why everyone's afraid, they use threats of deportation or death to keep us in line," Anna denies this, insisting that since the syndicate saved her life and the life of her daughter, June must be exaggerating.

June helps Anna improve her English, warning her to keep it a secret. Their nightly practice bonds them together like sisters. But as time passes, June becomes more and more depressed and decides to run away. Anna feels for June, but warns her that it's wrong to flee. Late one night, June tries to escape. She's caught and is beaten to death.

Horrified at the death of her only friend, Anna's emotional agony returns and she takes refuge in her relationship with Lily. When Lily wants to know about her father, Anna makes up a wild story. She tells Lily her daddy was a famous patriot, who died to save her and many others from the oppression in their country. When Lily asks if he's really dead, Anna hasn't the heart to confirm the truth. She pretends that there's a big secret. She tells Lily that Daddy really escaped and came to America, where he is searching for them everywhere.

This fantasy helps Anna to resolve her trauma over the death of her beloved husband and she begins to mend. Jon Van visits, and puts her to work. She takes over June's former duties and runs the local daycare center.

Jon Van lays down the rules: traditional food, dress and language. No English in the home, no western clothes, no contact with TV. Jon Van makes his usual pass, but Anna only looks at him with scorn.

Five years later,

Anna's daughter, Lily, is ready to go to school. On her first day, she's made fun of and returns home in tears. She begs her mother to teach her English and buy her regular American clothes. Lily's daily humiliation at school upsets Anna. She goes to Jon Van and asks that her daughter be allowed to wear American clothes and learn English.

Jon Van warns her to stop this revolt, reminding her of her illegal status. When she argues, he reminds her about what happened to June. He then offers to help Lily if Anna will respond to his advances.

Defeated and repelled, Anna returns home, realizing that June had told her the truth. The months pass, and Lily continues to attend school. Every day, she comes home crying. Lily becomes a faint shadow of her former cheerful self.

Anna can only attempt to comfort her. The only cure is a new story about Dad. Anna's helplessness turns to anger and depression, and she neglects her work and this causes her to lose her day care center,

Jon Van appears with his usual request, but Anna resists. She pleads with him to give her more time to respond to him, and to give her a job.

Meanwhile, after a rash of local thefts, the regular collector, another woman, is attacked and robbed,

Jon Van asks Anna to collect the deposits from the local stores and put them in the bank. She does this gratefully, and without question.

After a few months of doing this work, it's Lily's birthday. Anna steals the daily deposit and buys Lily American clothes and a gold necklace.

Meanwhile the thefts continue throughout the neighborhood.

When Jon Van confronts Anna about the missing money, she pretends the thief has attacked her.

Jon Van believes her, offers her safety in exchange for sexual favors. Again, Anna rebuffs him. She realizes that Jon Van was hoping this would happen, and it makes her even more determined not to give in to him.

DANIEL, the thief, burgles one more store, and is caught by the enforcers of the syndicate. They drag him to an alley and try to beat him to death. Ankle broken, severely wounded, he manages to escape into the maze of tenements.

Daniel breaks into Anna's apartment and hides. Anna is out collecting, and Lily is in school. He finds the necklace and pockets it.

Lily returns from school. She finds Daniel, and assumes he's her long lost father, just returned from a new adventure. Daniel's touched by her innocent acceptance and cannot hurt her. Anna returns. She's appalled to find Daniel in her house, alone with her daughter. She's about to turn him into the syndicate, when Lily joyously announces how happy she is to have found her father at last.

He's so badly beaten that he's not even a threat, and so, Anna doesn't have the heart to destroy Lily's joy. They have a little party, and Daniel and Anna pretend that the necklace is from her "father."

Anna is overwhelmed to see her lithe girl finally happy.

They continue to enact this uncomfortable charade until Lily leaves for school the next day. Finally alone with him, Anna tells Daniel to get out. He refuses. She threatens to call the syndicate. He threatens to tell Lily he's not her father. Anna realizes that she will be accused of harboring a suspect. She asks Daniel what he wants. Daniel tells her that all he wants is a chance to recover and get the hell away from there. Anna says she will let him stay if he will maintain the lie. Daniel agrees,

That night the charade continues. Daniel teaches Lily some cool English words and how to fight back. There is as much tenderness between them as though he were her real father. Anna is upset at the situation, but Lily goes to sleep, happy in the lie.

As the days pass, Lily and Daniel grow closer and closer. Lily changes and becomes more secure and outgoing.

After Lily leaves for school, Anna and Daniel talk. As the time passes, the conversation becomes more personal. Anna realizes they have a lot in common. She softens and takes care of him.

Daniel wants to know who beat him so badly. Anna tells him about the syndicate. Anna goes to the stores to collect the deposits. Friends warn her that the syndicate has found out that she bought the necklace.

She runs home and asks Daniel for help. He sees the poverty she lives in and demands to know where she got the money for Lily's gift. She tells him, commenting that they're both thieves.

Daniel realizes the danger Anna has placed Lily in, and tells her they must get Lily from school. They arrive in time to see Lily kidnapped on the way home by the syndicate. They pursue, but cannot follow inside the syndicate headquarters.

Daniel takes Anna to stay with his friends. He agrees to help her find Lily. They decide to turn the tables on the syndicate and break them up. The question is how? He and his friends are former soldiers, now fallen on hard times. They plan an elaborate scheme to break in and rescue Lily.

Anna must go in to the head quarters alone and face Jon Van. She pretends to be ready to give in to his advances in exchange for Lily, and they go to bed.

Daniel breaks in with his team. A firefight ensues.

Daniel rescues Lily, but is shot down. As he dies, he tells Anna he was happy his life added up to something after all,

Now Anna must save her own daughter, and kill Jon Van.

She meets the challenge, leaving the syndicate shattered behind her.

With new resolve and confidence, Anna takes over the syndicate, but brings prosperity and a new modern tradition into the community. She never tells Lily that Daniel, the thief, wasn't her father.

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Marilyn Horowitz is an award-winning New York University professor, author, producer, and Manhattan-based writing consultant, who works with successful novelists, produced screenwriters, and award-winning filmmakers. She has a passion for helping novices get started. Since 1998 she has taught thousands of aspiring screenwriters to complete a feature length screenplay using her method. She is also a judge for the Fulbright Scholarship Program for film and media students, in 2004 she received the coveted *New York University Award for Teaching Excellence*.

Log lines

Log lines are tools for the development process. A log line translates 120 pages of action into one simple idea. This is so that a busy development executive will have a reasonably accurate reference point for each script.

A log-line is also what helps you determine whether your story is structurally sound. The great Broadway playwright and producer David Belasco: "If you can't write your idea on the back of my calling card, you don't have a clear idea. "

It's a difficult question because there is never a single, authoritative log line for a script. Each script will have as many different log lines as there are readers.

It's not necessary for your log line to mention character names. A strong character trait will do - with a dramatic teaser about the story.

All log lines go back to that ancient storyteller's formula, "What would happen if a character like x ended up in a situation like y." Next add a specific catch word that quickly tell the reader what the story is about. Is it about love, greed, obsession murder, family turmoil?

Once you're set on one or two words you can push out from there adding a few more economical adjectives and verbs to make up your long line.

This is the story about _____ who _____.

Some key words: hero; flaw; lifechanging event; opponent; ally and; battle.

A high concept log line makes a story out of one of the most universal -

- human emotions : fear, love, hate, envy, etc .
- deadly sins : anger, greed, lust, etc .
- plot motivators : betrayal , vengeance, discovery, rebirth, survival , etc .
- virtues ; loyalty, faith, responsibility, etc .

And don't forget, Documentaries have loglines too:

Since the topsy-turvy election of 2000, many Americans have puzzled over the question : If George W. Bush is as dumb as he sometimes appears to be, how did he ever become President?

LOG LINES/2

More Log line EXAMPLES:

AMERICAN BEAUTY: "The arrival of a troubled family in a small New Jersey suburb collides with their new neighbor's midlife crisis; the result leads to murder, a frame-up, and two innocents going to prison."

The official DreamWorks SKG log line:

"Stuck in a dull life and a loveless marriage, a man stakes out a new direction that ends up costing him his life."

E.T.: "A meek and alienated little boy finds a stranded extraterrestrial and has find the courage to defy authorities to help the alien return to its home planet."

GONE WITH THE WIND: "Against the backdrop of the great Civil War, a narcissistic Southern beauty, obsessed with idyllic love, struggles to reconstruct her life and finds her true love is closer than she thinks."

HERO / FLAW /BATTLE structure:

ROCKY: A boxer (hero) with a loser mentality (flaw) is offered a chance by the world champ (opponent) to fight for the title (lifechanging event) but, with the help of his lover (ally) must learn to see himself as a winner before he can step into the ring (battle).

STEEL MAGNOLIAS: An overprotective (flaw) mother (hero) must overcome her own fears in order to allow her diabetic daughter (opponent and ally) to risk death to give birth (lifechanging event), then must fight to make sense of her daughter's losing battle against death (battle).

CASABLANCA: A jaded (flaw) WWII casino owner (hero) in Nazi-occupied Morocco sees his former lover (opponent) arrive (lifechanging event), accompanied by her husband (ally) whose heroism forces the hero to choose between his cynicism, his feeling for his ex-lover, and his once-strong feelings of patriotism (battle).

Themes:

- *A woman or family in jeopardy?*

CAPE FEAR: A lawyer's family is stalked by a man he once helped put in jail.

- *An ordinary woman in extraordinary circumstances?*

ERIN BROCKOVICH: An unemployed single mother becomes a legal assistant and almost single-handedly brings down a California power company accused of polluting a city's water supply.

- *Men or women on a mission?*

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN: US soldiers try to save their comrade who's stationed behind enemy lines.

LOG LINES/3

AMERICAN PIE: Four teenage boys make a pact to lose their virginity by prom night.

- *A man or woman against nature?*

CASTAWAY: A FedEx executive must transform himself physically and emotionally to survive after a crash landing on a deserted island.

CLIFFHANGER: A retired mountain climber must conquer an unclimbable peak to save the survivors of a plane crash from certain death.

- *A man or woman against nature? the system?*

PEOPLE VS. LARRY FLYNT: A pornography publisher becomes the unlikely defender of free speech.

CLASS ACTION: A female attorney finds that her nemesis is her own father, and must choose between her corporate client and justice."

- *A woman escaping from something or someone she loves.*

ENOUGH: On the run from an abusive husband, a young mother begins to train herself to fight back.

PROJECT ONE: TREATMENT AND NARRATIVE SCRIPT

PURPOSE: The student will learn the basics of three-act structure; writing a treatment for the screen; and writing a narrative single column script.

PROCESS: This assignment requires TWO documents:

- 1) A 1-page log line and treatment that:
 - must have a log line at the top
 - must not be more than one page must be 12 point type, double-spaced
 - may use the font COURIER or COURIER NEW
 - must tell a fictional story from beginning through middle and end. To help achieve this, break into Acts 1, 2, & 3 Must have a clear protagonist and an "arc" Must follow general rules and guidelines of writing a treatment¹.
- 2) A 4 (minimum)-to-40 (maximum) page screenplay/teleplay (single column) format² script based on treatment above, must tell a fictional story from beginning through middle and end. Must have a clear protagonist, goal, conflict/obstacle(s), and an “arc.”

Students will schedule their time slots for IN-CLASS workshop/critique

Students will make enough copies of script only for everyone to read (#of students in class divided by two — 2 people can share 1 script)

PAYOFF: The student will master the fundamentals of 3-act structure, treatments, and single column script. Students will also gain insight into their writing by hearing their work read aloud and receiving feedback from the class.

¹ See handout/lecture notes: for example, use strong visual language; do not say what a character thinks, rather, show what they do: SHOW, DON'T TELL; etc.

² See handout/lecture notes: proper scene headers like INT. CLASSROOM - DAY; dialogue is indented from body text and flush left; dialogue headers are capitalized; etc.

ACTIVE READING FOR SCRIPTING

What to Look for When Adapting Text into Screenplay/Teleplay Format

When scripting from a text, it's important to remember the two functions of a script:

- 1) to **tell the story**
- 2) to **be a blueprint** for production

A good script will satisfy both functions and do so without making one or the other of them too prominent.

Let's look at a passage from a "treatment" of *Romeo and Juliet* by E. Nesbit:

Presently amid the dancers Romeo saw a lady so beautiful and so lovable that from that moment he never again gave one thought to that Rosaline whom he had thought he loved. And he looked at this other fair lady, as she moved in the dance in her white satin and pearls, and all the world seemed vain and worthless to him compared with her. And he was saying this, or something like it, when Tybalt, Lady Capulet's nephew, hearing his voice, knew him to be Romeo.

If called upon to adapt the passage, the first questions that need to be asked are basic:

- 1) Where are we?
- 2) Who needs to be seen onscreen?
- 3) What actions do they take?

1) WHERE ARE WE?

This one's easy: The answer is in the first words of the passage: "Presently amid the dancers..." So we're obviously at some kind of dance hall or a mansion big enough to have a big dance floor. We know it must be big because there are a lot of dancers and we know there are a lot of dancers because the fair lady Romeo spies is surrounded by enough people to be "amid" them.

So our location, which always introduces a scene in Screenplay/Teleplay format, is the following:

INT. CAPULET BALLROOM - NIGHT

It's ALL CAPS because it's blueprint function is to be the "Location Slug," which will eventually be broken out and organized into, among other things, a production schedule.

It's an INT. [interior] because even though it could be a courtyard and thus outside (an EXT. [exterior]) – Old Capulet would probably consider guests dancing in the courtyard of his mansion to be "under his own roof" – it's easier to plan a big scene like this without having to take weather into account, so let's take Old Capulet at his word for now.

It's NIGHT even though it could be a DAY because 1) that's when most dances take place and 2) it's more romantic that way, no? [This is another reason to make it an INT . : It's easier to pretend it's NIGHT while inside than having to block out the sun at a courtyard dance.]

2) WHO NEEDS TO BE SEEN ONSCREEN?

This question is a bit harder to answer specifically as it takes many dancers to fill a ballroom, so there are clearly a lot of people there. But the passage only contains four names – Romeo, Rosalind, Lady Capulet, and Tybalt – and two of them, Rosalind and Lady Capulet, aren't *necessarily* present. Two others definitely *are* there but not named: “a lady so beautiful and so lovable” and whomever Romeo is “was saying this, or something like it” to when Tybalt recognizes his voice.

So let's make a list of the people who *HAVE* to be in the script because the actions they take are the basis of the passage; i.e., in order to fully dramatize the passage, they *MUST APPEAR*. Who's on our Must Appear list?

- 1) DANCERS
- 2) ROMEO
- 3) “a lady so beautiful...”
- 4) the “lady so beautiful's” dance partner
- 5) Romeo's conversation partner
- 6) TYBALT

Is there anyone else who *HAS* to be there?

No – we're done.

CAN there be other people there?

Of course – but we'll let the dynamics of the action dictate that.

3) WHAT ACTIONS DO THEY TAKE?

Now that we have the LOCATION and are armed with our list of Must Appear Characters, we can get down to business: What happens? As always, let's ask ourselves two questions:

- 1) What is everyone doing?
- 2) How much of it do we need to specify?

The last on our Must Appear list – the DANCERS – are the first to appear and the easiest to deal with: They're EXTRAS a/k/a ATMOSPHERE – i.e., human set decoration – and we don't need to concern ourselves with them except to mention their presence in ALL CAPS, so that we'll remember to include them in the One-line Breakdown [an organizational tool we'll work with later in the semester] for the scene:

INT. CAPULET BALLROOM - NIGHT

The dance floor of the grandly appointed room is filled with beautifully dressed DANCERS, who form a variety of patterns while executing an energetic series of steps.

Do we need to specify more than that? No, that's enough of a general picture that we can see the setting. It's also a perfect ESTABLISHING SHOT, i.e., the opening of a sequence that shows us the big picture at the location before moving in to the particular events that occur.

Why start with this? Because that's how such scenes are generally shot: starting with the widest angle and working toward the narrowest. So for blueprint reasons, it's not a bad idea to write it that way. Remember, a screenplay/teleplay is essentially a word-based presentation of the pictures and sound we'll be seeing and hearing. Unless we're going for something disjunctive and/or avant-garde, following the usual order of presentation is no different than beginning a joke with "Knock-knock!" rather than "Who's there?"

Also note that the passage is the Third Person, Present Tense – "is" not "was"; "executing" not "executed." This is because the storytelling aspect of screenwriting means that we need to present our material as an unbroken stream of "now," just as it will be experienced by the eventual viewer.

So what's our next "now"? ROMEO, of course – but what is he doing? :

Romeo saw a lady so beautiful and so lovable that from that moment he never again gave one thought to that Rosaline whom he had thought he loved. And he looked at this other fair lady, as she moved in the dance in her white satin and pearls, and all the world seemed vain and worthless to him compared with her.

Looking and thinking. Is that something we can see? Not really. So let's begin with what we CAN see: the "lady so beautiful..." dancing.

Do we know who she is? Not yet – it's her first appearance in the text, which brings us to another way in which screenplay/teleplay writing differs from pure storytelling: Because we're dealing entirely with visuals, we can't finesse the apparent.

The "lady so beautiful..." is JULIET and HAS to be designated as such because she'll be played by an actor³ and we can't get around seeing that particular actor when we shoot the scene. If we know the story, we'll suspect who we're seeing is JULIET, both from the context and the opening credits, but if we don't, she'll appear to the audience as ROMEO sees her: The most striking young woman on the dance floor.

So we can also see ROMEO looking at JULIET, but the focus of this part of the passage is what he's thinking, which we can't see.

³ I'm not suggesting Elizabethan-era casting of boys as women; in recent years, it's become standard to use "actor" to refer to all actors, male or female.

Or can we? Let's try something:

INT. CAPULET BALLROOM - NIGHT

The dance floor of the grandly appointed room is filled with beautifully dressed DANCERS who form a variety of patterns while executing an energetic series of steps.

ROMEO (20s, handsome, a bit spoiled)⁴ appears at the top of the stairs leading into the Ballroom. He wears Harlequin garb, with a black and white painted face. Nervously looking down at the Dancers, he relaxes as he sees no one who might know him,⁵ when something catches his eye.

ROMEO'S POV: JULIET AND PARIS ON THE DANCE FLOOR

A vision in white satin and pearls, JULIET (19, conventionally beautiful, sheltered) LAUGHS as her dance partner, PARIS (late 20s, obvious ladykiller) reverses a move and throws the whole group out of step.

ROMEO IS STRUCK DUMB [ALL CAPS here indicate a return to the master shot]

He can hardly believe his eyes: Juliet is the most beautiful girl he has ever seen.

Juliet continues to LAUGH as she, Paris and the other Dancers awkwardly, then gracefully resume their pattern.

BENVOGLIO (20s, rich but tough) arrives next to Romeo; he, too, has a painted face and wears a jester costume. Seeing Romeo's rapt expression, he waves a hand in front of Romeo's face.

BENVOGLIO

Still on Earth? Or has the sight of
Rosaline transported you?

ROMEO

⁴ Technically, this "ID slug/Cast Breakdown line" would have occurred when ROMEO was first introduced.

⁵ Remember, as a Montague, he's literally in enemy territory.

(still rapt)
Who's Rosaline?

Does that cover all the material so far?

It does: Romeo sees Juliet and falls in love at first sight and we SEE his thoughts.

How? Through the cinematic technique called MONTAGE, which is the juxtaposing of images to create associations. We see something catch Romeo's eye, THEN see what it presumably is [Juliet], then see Romeo's reaction:

1 (beautiful girl) + 1 (mesmerized boy) = 3 (boy mesmerized by beautiful girl)

We then underline that reaction with a third party seeing Romeo's reaction and commenting on it. The flow of images tells us the story; the bit of dialogue just makes the meaning unmistakable.

There are other techniques at work helping us create this impression. Because it's considered amateurish to "direct on the page," that is, to tell the eventual director his business by indicating the desired shot size, good scripters use implication and specificity to get their points across.

The easiest way to imply a new shot is to make a new paragraph, the easiest way to imply shot size is by noting exactly what is being seen.

Notice how paragraphing and specificity in the script above helps make the images clear:

- Paragraph 1) The ballroom and the dancers, by implication an ESTABLISHING SHOT
- Paragraph 2) Romeo at the top of the stairs, by implication a MEDIUM SHOT (MS)
- Paragraph 3) Juliet from Romeo's point of view, by implication a MEDIUM WIDE SHOT (MWS) ⁶ that shows Juliet and Paris and a Juliet CLOSEUP (CU)
- Paragraphs 4-5) Romeo's reaction, by implication a CLOSEUP (CU)
- Paragraph 6) Juliet oblivious to Romeo, by implication a CLOSEUP (CU) and a WIDER SHOT that shows the Dancers resuming
- Paragraph 7) Romeo so smitten he gets teased, by implication a TWO-SHOT (2S) of Romeo and Benvoglio

Those implications will be helpful when it's time to create a storyboard from the screenplay. For now, they're primarily ways that the script can be almost entirely visual without lapsing into technical jargon; that is, a way for a non-producer/director/crew member to be able read for story and not get put off by the blueprint.

⁶ The ALL CAPS LOCATION-style CHARACTER'S POV slug is an accepted convention for when we're to see something from a character's perspective.

But wait, you ask: Who's Benvoglio? He wasn't in the passage.

Nor was Paris. They are, respectively, Must Appear Characters #4) the "lady so beautiful's" dance partner, and #5) Romeo's conversation partner.

Why shoehorn them into this scene?

Logic and convenience.

Paris is Juliet's main suitor, so why NOT have him be her dance partner?

Benvoglio is the one who told Romeo about the ball and, as importantly, ISN'T Mercutio, who will meet Romeo *after* the ball but doesn't know Romeo's ditched the idea of Rosaline.

By including them here, we have not only made logical choices for our heretofore anonymous characters, we've also made two minor characters that much more recognizable AND saved on adding two more personnel to the payroll.

So what do we have left?

This:

And [Romeo] was saying this, or something like it, when Tybalt, Lady Capulet's nephew, hearing his voice, knew him to be Romeo.

Let's see what we can do with it:

INT. CAPULET BALLROOM - NIGHT

The dance floor of the grandly appointed room is filled with beautifully dressed DANCERS who form a variety of patterns while executing an energetic series of steps.

ROMEO (20s, handsome, a bit spoiled) arrives at the top of the stairs leading into the Ballroom, with a black and white painted face, wearing Harlequin garb. Nervously looking down at the Dancers, he relaxes as he sees no one who might know him, when something catches his eye.

ROMEO'S POV: JULIET AND PARIS ON THE DANCE FLOOR

A vision in white satin and pearls, JULIET (19, beautiful, sheltered) LAUGHS as her dance partner, PARIS (late 20s, obvious ladykiller) reverses a move and throws the whole group out of step.

ROMEO IS STRUCK

He can hardly believe his eyes: Juliet is the most beautiful girl he has ever seen.

Juliet continues to LAUGH as she, Paris and the other Dancers awkwardly, then gracefully resume their pattern.

BENVOGLIO (20s, rich but tough) arrives next to Romeo; he, too, has a painted face and wears a jester costume. Seeing Romeo's rapt expression, he waves a hand in front of Romeo's face.

BENVOGLIO

Still on Earth? Or has the sight of
Rosaline transported you?

ROMEO

(still rapt)
Who's Rosaline?

BENVOGLIO

Forget Rosaline - who's dancing with that fop
Paris?

ROMEO

I don't know but I'm going to find out.

A few steps below, TYBALT (20s, ex-fat-kid turned jockish bullyboy), cocks an ear - I know that voice.

ROMEO (CONTINUED)

I've never seen such a goddess.
(grabs Benvoglio)
You know everyone! Who is she? Who IS she?

Tybalt is now staring at Romeo and Benvoglio with suspicion: Something about those guys is wrong.

BENVOGLIO

If she's with Paris, she's as rich as she is
beautiful. Maybe a cousin on Lady Capulet's
side?

ROMEO

She's a jewel! A pearl!

Tybalt puts it together – not just crashers, Montagues! – and sizes them up. He'll need backup.

BENVOGLIO

Oh my God! She's the daughter!

ROMEO

Whose daughter? Tell me!

Tybalt, a murderous look on his face, roughly pushes past them.

TYBALT

Your host's!

Romeo tries to follow Tybalt to get more information but Benvoglio stops him, bodily.

ROMEO

What's her name? I love her!

BENVOGLIO

Idiot! We need to go. Now!

Does that feel conclusive?

It does – everybody except Juliet and Paris, who aren't paying attention, is not only ready to move on, they're on their way or about to be.

But it is also the essential value we, as scripters, have added. The passage ends with:

Tybalt, Lady Capulet's nephew, hearing his voice, knew him to be Romeo.

So, technically, we've covered all the bases when he see Tybalt realizes that Romeo and Benvoglio – who was his opponent in the opening sword fight – are Montagues.

But by going beyond this and engineering valid reasons for all of these characters to want to exit the location – Tybalt to get backup; Benvoglio and Romeo to get away from Tybalt, despite the draw of the now-identified Juliet – we have provided the sense of an ending, which will serve both us and the overall script well as we move from scene to scene.

How did we accomplish this?

First, via active reading, which is to say taking in what's written, and then thinking through, 1) what has brought the characters to this location [beginning], 2) what they are dealing with by being there [middle] and 3) what, if any, actions they will take and what they will mean [end].

Second, we've found character-based rationales for the actions specified in the treatment, and used them to imply or state what will happen next:

I don't know but I'm going to find out;
Whose daughter?
Tell me!

Third, we've written a "button" or exit line⁷ – We need to go. Now! – that either implies or states that the action the audience should care about going on in this location is over.

A three-step analysis to find a three-step solution, a process we will repeat for each sequence or segment in the treatment until we have adapted it entirely. [At that point, another set of analytical tools will be put into action.]

And it's not an option. Without clear beginnings, middles, and ends, we won't have added the value of clarity, which is the primary reason we're scripting instead of blueprinting. And if we don't have that clarity, it's hard to pinpoint what is or isn't having its desired effect. Believe me, it's a lot easier to hear a client say that you've got to change "I'm the king of the ship!" to "I'm the king of the world!" than to hear that the script isn't working because, well,...hmm, um, *it just doesn't work, okay?* – which is what not having clear beginnings, middles and ends tends to get you.

Finally, a last word about last lines, the composition of which can be one of the great joys of screenwriting. Think of "Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy night," from *All About Eve*, "I love the smell of napalm in the morning. It smells like...victory," from *Apocalypse Now*, and "I'll have what she's having," from *When Harry Met Sally*: They're all quick, evocative, and both conclusive and promising of more to come.

So while you can't always go out of a given scene as powerfully as when Don Corleone says, "I'm gonna make him an offer he can't refuse" in *The Godfather*, you can always make it clear that it's time to go. Do that consistently and no client in the world can complain about your craft.

///

⁷ Something Shakespeare frequently indicated with a rhyming couplet, such as Romeo's "*I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,/But to rejoice in splendor of mine own,*" which ends the scene in which he finds out about the Capulet feast.

[SCREENPLAY FORMAT CHEAT SHEET] ^[0.5 inch top margin] [page number]> 1

1.5- inch margin > FADE IN: <[Transition, ALL CAPS always] [0.75-inch margin>

one-line space> v [locations are either INT or EXT] [It's DAY or NIGHT, v DAWN or DUSK ONLY!]

Location slug> INT. SCREENPLAY/TELEPLAY FORMAT CENTER - DAY <[ONE LINE ONLY!]

one-line space>

Screen directions that say what the location looks like in brief but telling detail.

one-line space> v [Use a new paragraph to introduce a new character]

SCRIPTA (20s, attractive, dressed like a pirate) stands in the location, doing something that the screen directions describe. Scripta suddenly stands at attention:

one-line space>

indent 2.5 inches> SCRIPTA <[ALL CAPS here, always]

1-inch L/R indent> I love to speak dialogue!

indent 1.5 inches> (feels parenthetical) <[ONE LINE ONLY!]

But only after I've been introduced in the screen directions by name in ALL CAPS, followed by a brief description in parentheses!

one-line space>

WRITOR (30s, rugged, long-haired in a flight suit) runs into the room. He stands in front of Scripta and salutes her in the British military style as a SOUND EFFECT is added and noted in ALL CAPS because it's a cue for the sound department.

one-line space>

indent 2.5 inches> WRITOR <[ALL CAPS here, always]

1-inch L/R indent> I also love to speak dialogue and be introduced in ALL CAPS! But I prefer being referred to afterwards with an initial capital!

indent 1.5 inches> (conspiratorially) <[ONE LINE ONLY!]

Not only that, but I love to indent my parenthetical instructions of no more than one line!

one-line space>

indent to 2.5 inches> SCRIPTA <[ALL CAPS here, always]

1-inch L/R indent> I love that, too! But, like everything else in the screenplay, it must be in Courier New 12! And nothing in bold ever!

one-line space>

Scripta and Writor embrace and kiss passionately. Amid their feverish making out, they speak.

one-line space>

indent to 2.5 inches> WRITOR <[ALL CAPS here, always]

1-inch L/R indent> Will we ever be in an exterior or
EXT., my love?

one-line space>

Scripta turns Writor's head toward the wall.

v [0.75-inch bottom margin]

^[0.5 inch top margin]

[page number]> 2

one-line space> v [Use new paragraph to suggest a change in shot size or POV shot]

A CLOCK ON THE WALL<[needs to be seen clearly and so in ALL CAPS] shows it
is noon.

one-line space>

indent 2.5 inches>

SCRIPTA <[ALL CAPS here, always]

1-inch L/R indent>

Yes, but only in the DAY, NIGHT, DAWN
or DUSK! Our creators may only show
or have someone say a specific time
of day!

one-line space>

indent 2.5 inches>

WRITOR <[ALL CAPS here, always]

1-inch L/R indent>

Oh, Scripta! This is the first time
the audience knows your name! Until
now they've just known you as a woman
dressed like a pirate!

one-line space>

Scripta pulls out a JEWELLED SCIMITAR <[which is an unusual prop and so in
ALL CAPS] and holds it to Writor's throat.

one-line space>

indent 2.5 inches>

SCRIPTA <[ALL CAPS here, always]

1-inch L/R indent>

Did I TELL you to say my name? If
so, it would be in ALL CAPS which is
the only way to empha-size something
in a screenplay!.

one-line space>

indent 2.5 inches>

WRITOR <[ALL CAPS here, always]

indent 1.5 inches>

(struggling)<[ONE LINE ONLY!]

1-inch L/R indent>

Whoa! Why? Did I center some-thing?

one-line space>

[Use ALL CAPS for non-verbal character actions] v

Scripta holds the blade closer to Writor's throat and GROWLS.

one-line space>

DISSOLVE TO:<[Transition, ALL CAPS always]

one-line space> v [locations are either INT or EXT] v [It's DAY or NIGHT, DAWN or DUSK ONLY!]

Location slug> EXT. COUNTRY GRAVEYARD - NIGHT <[ALL CAPS here, always]

one-line space>

As the WIND HOWLS, Scripta, wearing a sexy evening gown, dabs
her eyes in the moonlight, looking at something near her feet.

one-line space> v [Use new paragraph to suggest a change in shot size or POV shot]

In front of her is a HEADSTONE that reads "WRITOR MAUVAISE."

one-line space>

indent 2.5 inches> SCRIPTA <[ALL CAPS here, always]

1-inch L/R indent> Oh, Writor! Why did you center that
dialogue? Why? Why?

one-line space>

[Use ALL CAPS for non-verbal character actions] v

Scripta throws herself on the grave and WAILS.

one-line space>

END CREDITS <[Transition, ALL CAPS always]

v [0.75-inch bottom margin]

MES 153/Scriptwriting

Prof. M. George Stevenson

THE COMPLEAT SCREENPLAY FORMAT GUIDE

Screenplay formatting isn't rocket surgery. If you follow some simple rules, which are laid out here. Final Draft and Celtx do a lot of this automatically, but it should still look like this:

1. Typeface: Use COURIER NEW 12. Why? The 1-page = 1 minute formula is based on this typeface and margin settings. NO BOLDING or ITALICS EVER! Use underlining for emphasis.
2. Margins: Left = 1.5 in. (to make room for hole punches for when it's bound) Right = 0.75 in. Top = 0.5 in. with a header of one line and formatted page number in top right; Bottom = 0.75 in.
3. Spacing: Single spacing, ALWAYS. Some elements, such as location slugs, paragraphs (aka ¶s), etc. are followed by an extra line-space.
4. Location slugs: ALL CAPS, full margins, flush left. [For our purposes, we won't use scene numbers; don't worry about them.]

Example:

{1.5" Margin}EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY

{line-space}

An imposing Victorian mansion with a mansard roof, surrounded
by well tended grounds.

{line-space}

A carriage drawn by two horses pulls into the porte-cochere
and stops.

5. Screen directions (abbreviated as "S.D."): Full margins, normal capitalization.

6. Character name before dialogue: ALL CAPS at Left margin + 2.5 in. (equivalent to 5 default tabs to right, basically the middle of the margin)—CENTERING IS WRONG AND HAZARDOUS TO YOUR GRADE!

Example:

{1.5" L Mar}He faces the fireplace and looks into the dying embers.

{line-space}

MAJOR AMBERSON

It must be ... the sun. The sun was
here before everything and we came
after the sun...

{line-space}

George looks at his grandfather from the entryway [...]

(more)

THE COMPLEAT SCREENPLAY FORMAT GUIDE

7. For Offscreen Dialogue Or Voiceover Cues add (O.S.) or (V.O.) to the name.

Example:

{1.5" L Mar} Major Amberson faces the fireplace and looks deeply into the
dying embers.

{line-space}

NARRATOR (V.O.)

As he recognized that he was
finally, truly an old man, the fire
went out of the Major's manner.

8. Parenthetical before dialogue [e.g. (sarcastically) or (to Cinderella)]: Lower case except for first letter of proper nouns at Left margin + 1.5 in. and should not pass Right dialogue margin. If so, break out as an S.D.

Example 1:

{1.5" L Mar} Major Amberson faces the fireplace and looks deeply into the
dying embers.

{line-space}

MAJOR AMBERSON

(to no one in particular)

It must be ... the sun. The sun was
here before everything and we came
after the sun...

Example 2:

{{1.5" L Mar} Major Amberson faces the fireplace and looks deeply into the
dying embers.

{line-space}

MAJOR AMBERSON

(as if speaking to someone)

It must be ... the sun. The sun
was here before everything ...
isn't that so?

{line-space}

He looks to the painting of his father for a reply.

{line-space}

MAJOR AMBERSON (CONTINUED)

And we came after the sun...

THE COMPLEAT SCREENPLAY FORMAT GUIDE

9. Dialogue: Increase margins on both sides by + 1.0 in. (aka a L/R indent) See examples above.
10. CAPITALIZATION: ALL CAPS is used to indicate anything that needs to be called out for the producer/designer/actor, etc. including:
 - a. FIRST APPEARANCE BY A CHARACTER (this is usually accompanied by a short description) or of a group of EXTRAS.

Example 1:

{1.5" Margin}EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY

{line-space}

An imposing Victorian mansion with a mansard roof, surrounded by well tended grounds.

{line-space}

GEORGE AMBERSON MINAFER (a young 21, athletic and handsome), dressed in the height of 1892 male fashion, paces the entryway nervously.

Example 2:

{1.5" Margin}EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY

{line-space}

An imposing Victorian mansion with a mansard roof, surrounded by well tended grounds.

{line-space}

A CREW OF GARDENERS attends to the lawn and hedges as we are just able to make out ISOBEL AMBERSON (40s, still-glamorous heiress) in a dressing down looking out of a second floor window.

- b. SOUND EFX (SFX, i.e., sound cues that will have to be recorded separately from the sync sound).

Example:

{1.5" Margin}EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY

{line-space}

An imposing Victorian mansion with a mansard roof, surrounded by well tended grounds. The SHARP CRACK OF A PISTOL SHOT is heard, followed by a WOMAN'S SCREAM.

- c. UNUSUAL PROPS OR DECOR, i.e., not something that you'll find in any prop shop or interior design outlet that the production designer will have to fabricate or research.

THE COMPLEAT SCREENPLAY FORMAT GUIDE

Example:

{1.5" Margin}EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY

{line-space}

An imposing Victorian mansion with a mansard roof, surrounded by well tended grounds. Rising from the lower roof between the two cupolas is a LARGER THAN USUAL WEATHERVANE IN THE SHAPE OF A RECLINING NUDE.

d. INSERTS, GRFX (GRAPHIC) OR TITLE CARDS

Example 1:

{1.5" Margin}EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY

{line-space}

An imposing Victorian mansion with a mansard roof, surrounded by well tended grounds..

{line-space}

INSERT: GOLD SIGNET ON FRONT DOOR:

ONE

AMBERSON AVENUE

{line-space}

A carriage drawn by two horses pulls into the porte-cochere and stops.

Example 2:

{1.5" Margin}EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY

{line-space}

An imposing Victorian mansion with a mansard roof, surrounded by well tended grounds..

{line-space}

GRFX: MEDIAN INCOME IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1892, which shows the Amberson Family in the top 1%.

{line-space}

A carriage drawn by two horses pulls into the porte-cochere and stops.

Example 3:

{1.5" Margin}EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY

{line-space}

THE COMPLEAT SCREENPLAY FORMAT GUIDE

An imposing Victorian mansion with a mansard roof, surrounded by well tended grounds..

{line-space}

TITLE (LOWER THIRD): FROM THE NOVEL BY BOOTH TARKINGTON

{line-space}

A carriage drawn by two horses pulls into the porte-cochere and stops.

- e. Transitions and EFX (EFFECTS): We no longer add lines for "CUT TO:" or place them near the right margin (though Celtx and Final Draft sometimes do). The various types of DISSOLVE TO:, SPLIT SCREEN: or other EFX are done in ALL CAPS either as separate lines or as callouts in the text:

Example 1:

{1.5" Margin} EXT. MONTAGUE VILLA, FLORENCE - DAY

{line-space}

An imposing white stucco mansion with with a terracotta roof, surrounded by lush palmy grounds.

{line-space}

LONG DISSOLVE TO: {or INTERCUT WITH:, etc.}

{line-space}

EXT. CAPULET PALAZZO, VENICE - DAY

{line-space}

A grand marble palace on the Grand Canal; a GONDOLA is moored by the ornate entryway.

Example 2:

{1.5" Margin} EXT. MONTAGUE VILLA, FLORENCE - DAY

{line-space}

An imposing white stucco mansion with with a terracotta roof, surrounded by lush palmy grounds. A HORSE-DRAWN COACH waits outside.

{line-space}

SPLIT SCREEN TO INCLUDE:

{line-space}

EXT. CAPULET PALAZZO, VENICE - DAY

{line-space}

A grand marble palace on the Grand Canal; a GONDOLA is moored by the ornate entryway.

{line-space}

At both residences, SERVANTS are loading the conveyances with wicker hampers and cases [...]

THE COMPLETE SCREENPLAY FORMAT GUIDE

11. Title Page: There should always be a title page (even one that says “UNTITLED”) and it should contain the following fields:
 - a. TITLE in ALL CAPS; [double space], “by” in lowercase;[double space], and Author's Name in Initial Caps, all centered and starting about 2.5 in. from the top margin. If the work is an adaptation, start higher and add “based on a/the [type of work: novel, short story, original story, video game, etc.];and[double space], “by” in lowercase;[double space], and that Author's Name in Initial Caps, also all centered.
 - b. Draft number, date, and registration number (if any), single space, flush left, beginning about 9.5 inches from the top of the page;
 - c. on the opposite side, the last entry on the same line as the lowest line on the left: CONTACT: Contact's name, address, phone and e-mail, single space.

To show how this looks, on the following pages, I've formatted a Title Page and Adam Davidson's script from his Academy Award-winning short film, *The Lunch Date*:

THE LUNCH DATE

by

Adam Davidson

{the following is not true; just an example of the format}

Based on an original story

by

Joseph L. Mankiewicz

and

Billy Wilder

CONTACT:

Sellfer Peanuts
Creative Writers Agency
1234 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90210

Third Draft

January 19, 1991

WGA Registration #91-1234567

310-555-1234

slippery1@cwa.com

FADE IN:

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - TICKET COUNTER AREA - DAY

A middle-aged WOMAN wearing a fur coat walks across the station. She looks elegant and self-assured, and carries several shopping bags, including one from Bloomingdales.

The Woman looks up at the schedule board. She fumbles in her pocket book and takes out her ticket. She hurries past a HOMELESS MAN who is panhandling in the station.

She collides with a WELL DRESSED BLACK MAN. The pocketbook flies open.

Her lipstick, pill bottle, and other stuff roll onto the station floor.

WOMAN

Oh my Lord!

She kneels down to pick up her stuff.

The Well Dressed Black Man kneels down beside her. He is affable enough, but his bulk and dark sunglasses make her recoil slightly.

WELL DRESSED BLACK MAN

I'm sorry. Let me get you that.

He begins picking up some items.

WOMAN

No. NO!

She picks up the remaining items in a hurry.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

No, don't! You're making me miss my train.

The Woman grabs her stuff and runs off toward the platforms.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

A train rolls down the tracks as the Woman rushes toward the tracks.

She's missed it! She is breathless, agitated.

She looks into her bag: her wallet is gone!

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - MAIN HALL - DAY

The Woman returns to the main hall of the station. She looks up at:

THE SCHEDULE BOARD as it updates the departures.

The Woman is clearly shaken and has tears in her eyes. She dries them off with her handkerchief.

She looks ahead of her, a lost look in her eyes.

The HARMONICA MAN, a homeless black man, walks by her playing a harmonica to an invisible audience. He talks to no one in particular.

HARMONICA MAN

Lord have mercy! Ha! Ha! He know it, he know it! How you doing? You know who it is this morning! I know you are.... Hot Dog! You know who you are! Happy New Year's. God bless ya!

The Woman looks at him in disbelief and walks away.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL - DINER - DAY

The Woman walks into the station diner. It is a bit old fashioned, with refrigerated glass cases containing prepared food, a small kitchen behind a tall counter, and neat rows of booths with gleaming brass frames.

She takes a salad out of a glass case.

A COOK stands behind the counter. He is wearing a white paper hat, an apron, and a smile.

WOMAN

How much is this salad?

COOK

Two dollars.

She puts the salad on the counter. She rustles through her pocket book.

WOMAN

Well, I am not sure I have that much.

She puts a dollar and some change on the counter.

WOMAN

One dollar. Here's some.

The Cook counts the money with his finger.

COOK

A dollar fifty... two dollars. Here ya go, lady.

She grabs her salad and her bags.

WOMAN

Napkin.

The Cook hands her a napkin. She walks toward the booths.

INT. DINER - BOOTH AREA - DAY

The Woman walks down the aisle looking for a booth.

She puts down her salad plate on a table and puts her bags on the seat. She sits down next to her shopping bags, but almost immediately stands up.

She is still holding her napkin.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL - DINER - DAY

The Woman walks back toward the front of the diner. She grabs a fork from the cutlery bin.

She looks at her fork critically. She wipes it vigorously with her napkin.

As she makes her way back to her booth, she stops and stares.

INT. DINER- BOOTH AREA - DAY

A HOMELESS MAN (40s, black) is sitting there, eating a salad. He is dressed in a heavy wool coat. He is wearing a wool hat with the price tag is still attached and clearly visible.

The Homeless Man looks up at her.

The Woman sits across from him.

WOMAN

That's my salad!

HOMELESS MAN

Get out of here!

WOMAN

That's my salad.

She reaches for the plate.

He yanks it back.

HOMELESS MAN

Hey!

The Homeless Man returns his attention to his salad.

The Woman watches him as he enjoys every bite.

Time passes.

The Woman picks up her fork and tentatively reaches into the plate. She quickly grabs a leaf of lettuce and starts eating it.

The Homeless Man pays her no attention and keeps eating.

She takes another bite, then another.

He lets her share the salad. He stands up and walks off, letting her eat the rest of the food.

He returns, carrying two cups of coffee.

He delicately puts the cups on the table and sits.

He offers her sugar.

WOMAN

No. Thank you.

He offers her a packet of Sweet and Low from his coat.

She takes it.

WOMAN

Thank you.

They share a moment together. She seems to notice the man for the first time.

She checks her watch. She stands up, takes her purse, and leaves.

He watches her leave, a sad look on his face.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL - MAIN HALL - DAY

The Woman quickly crosses the great hall toward the platforms.

Suddenly she stops: her shopping bags! She left them in the diner.

She runs back.

INT. DINER -BOOTH AREA - DAY

The Woman arrives at her booth. The empty salad plate and the two cups and their saucers are still there, but the man is gone, and so are her bags.

She starts pacing.

Suddenly, in the next booth, she sees her shopping bags, and the salad she bought, uneaten.

She understands what happened: she ate the man's salad! She starts CHUCKLING.

She gets up, grabs her bags, and runs out of the diner, still LAUGHING.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - MAIN HALL - DAY

The Woman is running through the CROWD. She passes a HOMELESS
MAN ON CRUTCHES.

HOMELESS MAN ON CRUTCHES

Spare some change, Please Ma'am. I'm
starving.

She hurries toward the platform.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

The Woman runs down the platform to the waiting commuter
train.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL TRAIN TUNNEL - DAY

The train: starts off into the tunnel.

END CREDITS

This is about writing prose fiction, but the strategies are just as valuable for screenwriters:

On Characters and First Drafts

(from *The Fiction Writer's Handbook* by Shelly Lowenkopf)

Mr. Lowenkopf taught creative writing for over thirty years at the University of Southern California, and has been a yearly fixture at the Santa Barbara Writers Conference since the seventies. *The Fiction Writer's Handbook* is a distillation from his teaching, offering the definitive volume to explain the words and phrases writers use when they talk about their work.

Characters:

The individuals in dramatic narratives about whom the story revolves; persons who, by their actions and responses to events, drive the story beyond its **point of engagement** [aka **inciting incident**], toward a **resolution** [aka **denouement**].

Front-rank characters are **protagonists**, who cause things to happen, and **antagonists**, whose agendas collide with and oppose the protagonists.

Messenger characters are those who bring information on stage, anything from “The red coats are coming...” to “Guess who the high school hunk has a crush on?”

Pivotal characters are present as backup and support for the protagonists and antagonists, possibly switching sides during the course of the story.

Exemplary characters appear to have things happen to them that serve as warnings or examples to the protagonists and antagonists. In a teen-aged romance, an exemplary character becomes pregnant and serves as a warning to the protagonist. In a mystery novel, perhaps an individual from the same organization as a front-rank character is found murdered—perhaps making the front-rank character fear now for his life.

Characters at all levels come on stage with some degree of expectation, which will affect the agenda, and vocabulary—words the writer uses in dealing with the character, the way the character speaks and behaves. Even the lowest-level walk-on has some agenda, even if it is just to get home from work or from Oz. All characters come on stage fresh from where they were previously, imparting a history of behavior and, thus, a greater reality to the reader and to the other characters.

Shadow characters are those whom the writer needs merely to open a door, clean a room, deliver a pizza, or get a signature for a package. The shadow character may be on stage for a matter of seconds, but may come to visible life with, for example, the difference in a verb. Did the shadow character walk in the scene, or run into it; the speed of her entrance can help determine or underpin the pace of a scene.

All characters have some features, the front-rank characters having the biggest tool kit of all. **Important hint: giving any character too many details, whether descriptive or motivational, signals the reader to expect a greater role from that character.** Thus the details for each character should be thought out, then managed with care.

One argument for developing characters of all levels has its origin in television. With so many dramatic television shows being presented, the emphasis on type becomes more prevalent, thus some notable clichés — *Soccer Mom*, *Battle Axe Nurse*, *Dumb Blonde*, *Catholic School Girl*, *Hero*, *Hired Gun*, *The Nerd*, *Fall Guy*, *The Insensitive Spouse*. Characters, even seemingly peripheral ones, who are on the trail of some tangible goal, are less likely to fall into the slough of archetype or cliché.

Another safeguard for producing characters who emerge from the shadows: hit them with a combination punch of internal and external conflicts.

Character arcs:

The developmental path a character follows in pursuit of a story-related goal. In long form narrative, all front-rank characters undergo change, depending on how well or ill their agendas fare. This developmental arc reaches exemplary texture and subtlety as seen in the quirky resolve of Ava Bigtree, the thirteen-year-old principal narrator of Karen Russell's *Swamplandia* [a singularly bad example; this is one of the most ham-handed books I have ever read and this character makes no sense whatsoever].

In her own way, Samantha Hughes, fifteen-year-old narrator of Bobbie Ann Mason's first novel, *In Country*, takes character arc to yet another plateau. Samantha's father, whom she scarcely remembers, died in the Vietnam War. Her attempts to get a better understanding of him through his letters and diaries puts her on the same thematic path as Huckleberry Finn, who was effectively tasked with defining the state of race relationships at the time of the Civil War. Sam's attempt to understand the U.S. involvement in Vietnam produces a character arc worth study for its thematic potential.

Tony Webster, the narrator of Julian Barnes's 2011 Man Booker Prize-winner, *The Sense of an Ending*, demonstrates an imaginative way to present character arc from the point of view of a middle-aged man, forced to examine events of his youth, only to be told, "You still don't get it."

Characters in the short story [the closest thing to a short film] are not on stage long enough to undergo the upward evolution of Frank Money in Toni Morrison's *Home*, or the downward plummet of Dick Diver in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*, but their shorter arc can well represent a change of attitude, as Pam Houston's characters in *Cowboys Are My Weakness* do.

See also **narrative**, **naïve narrator**, and **unreliable narrator** for additional implications of how character arc may be bent back on itself or otherwise manipulated to create such effects as ambiguity, naiveté, and theme [not defined in this handout but in the book available [here](#)].

First-draft strategy:

A working gambit for securing a manuscript of a project that seems at first blush to be complete; the result of saying what you have to say about a dramatic situation before undertaking revision; a deliberate experiment in rendering a narrative through the filter of a particular point of view; the exhaustion of the conceptual energy that brings a story or story concept to mind in the first place.

The primary strategy for the first draft is to realize that other drafts will be necessary, each being powered by its own energy (which is likely to differ from any previous energy). The systematized process of revision may well begin with a decision about the point of view, followed with investigation of beginning and ending points. After chronology is decided, the middle point may provide occasion for choice, followed by a review of the characters, their goals, movements, what they say, and to whom.

Writers at all stages of development may find themselves at a momentary brick wall, unable to continue work even though there is available time in the writing schedule. At such a point, if forty-five minutes elapse with no clue emerging, move on to the next scene, leaving a simple Post-It note to identify the intent of the unwritten segment: Sex scene goes here; Bill confronts Fred about missing bank statements; Phyllis confronts Fred about getting a job. Subsequent drafts may reveal that the missing scene would not appear for the writer because it was not necessary in the first place.

This is the best first draft approach is for *Discoverers*, writers who set forth to discover the arc of the story as they work or who have a particular ending in mind toward which they choose to build.

For *Outliners*, writer who works from outline, the ideal first-draft strategy is a list of scenes or a set of index cards with a key phrase for each scene, arranged in what appears to be the most fruitful order.

There is a middle ground between the Discoverer writer and the Outliner: Move forward as quickly as possible, without stopping to think. When you hit a brick wall or pause point, think out a new complication, obstacle, reversal, or news of some off-stage event that will have effect on the story. Compose until that point before stopping or make sufficient notes to carry you to that point.

Most writers will agree that a writing session ends best when the text has reached a need for a choice, decision, challenge, or review of options. Ending at such a point will keep the writing part of the mind working on the next session through and during sleep, daytime job, and personal to-do lists.

One of the many great myths surrounding writing has it that really gifted writers such as Louise Erdrich, William Trevor, Annie Proulx, and T.C. Boyle are presented with the fully developed idea every time they sit down to write, no assembly required. Only one draft necessary. Read their interviews. Take note of the number of drafts they discuss.

Update: *The Fiction Writer's Handbook* by Shelly Lowenkopf was published in November in print and as an eBook. Amazon is selling the print version for 34% off.

FLICK CHICKS

A guide to women in the movies.

BY MINDY KALING

A few years ago, I sat down for a meeting with some executives at a movie studio that I will call Thinkscope Visioncloud. Thinkscope Visioncloud had put out several of my favorite movies, and they wanted to see if I had any feature ideas. I was very excited. I have a great job writing for "The Office," but, really, all television writers do is dream of one day writing movies. I'll put it this way: At the Oscars the most famous person in the room is, like, Angelina Jolie. At the Emmys the huge exciting celebrity is Bethenny Frankel. You get what I mean. It's snobby and grossly aspirational, but it's true.

The junior executives' office at Thinkscope Visioncloud was nicer than any room within a fifty-mile radius of the "Office" studio. After I finished pitching one of my ideas for a low-budget romantic comedy, I was met with silence. One of the execs sheepishly looked at the other execs. He finally said, "Yeah, but we're really trying to focus on movies about board games. People really seem to respond to those."

For the rest of the meeting, we talked about whether there was any potential in a movie called "Yahtzee!" I made some polite suggestions and left.

I am always surprised at what movie studios think people will want to see. I'm even more surprised at how often they are correct. Based on what I've learned from my time in Hollywood, the following titles are my best guess as to what may soon be coming to a theatre near you:

"Bananagrams 3D"

"Apples to Apples 4D" (The audience is pummelled with apples at the end of the movie.)

"Crest Whitestrips"

"Sharks vs. Volcanoes"

"King Tut vs. King Kong"

"Streptococcus vs. Candidiasis" (Strep Throat vs. Yeast Infection)

"The Do-Over"

"The Switcheroo"

"Street Smart"

"Street Stupid" ("Street Smart" sequel)

"Fat Astronaut"

"The Untitled Liam Neeson Vendetta Project"

"Human Quilt" (horror movie)

"The Cute Bear from Those Toilet-Paper Ads Movie"

Those movies all sound great to me, and, incidentally, I am prepared to write any of them, if there is interest. But what I'd really like to



write is a romantic comedy. This is my favorite kind of movie. I feel almost embarrassed revealing this, because the genre has been so degraded in the past twenty years that saying you like romantic comedies is essentially an admission of mild stupidity. But that has not stopped me from enjoying them.

I like watching people fall in love on-screen so much that I can suspend my disbelief in the contrived situations that occur only in the heightened world of romantic comedies. I have come to enjoy the moment when the male lead, say, slips and falls right on top of the expen-

sive wedding cake. I actually feel robbed when the female lead's dress doesn't get torn open at a baseball game while the JumboTron camera is on her. I regard romantic comedies as a subgenre of sci-fi, in which the world operates according to different rules than my regular human world. For me, there is no difference between Ripley from "Alien" and any Katherine Heigl character. They are equally implausible. They're all participating in a similar level of fakey razzle-dazzle, and I enjoy every second of it.

It makes sense, then, that in the romantic-comedy world there are many specimens of women who—like Vulcans or Mothra—do not exist in real life. Here are some examples:

The Klutz

When a beautiful actress is cast in a movie, executives rack their brains to find some kind of flaw in the character she plays that will still allow her to be palatable. She can't be overweight or not perfect-looking, because who would pay to see that? A female who is not one hundred per cent perfect-looking in every way? You might as well film a dead squid decaying on a beach somewhere for two hours.

So they make her a Klutz.

The hundred-per-cent-perfect-looking female is perfect in every way except that she constantly bonks her head on things. She trips and falls and spills soup on her affable date (Josh Lucas. Is that his name? I know it's two first names. Josh George? Brad Mike? Fred Tom? Yes, it's Fred Tom). The Klutz clangs into stop signs while riding her bike and knocks over giant displays of fine china in department stores. Despite being five feet nine and weighing a hundred and ten pounds, she is basically like a drunk buffalo who has never been a part of human society. But Fred Tom loves her anyway.

The Ethereal Weirdo

The smart and funny writer Nathan Rabin coined the term Manic Pixie Dream Girl to describe this archetype after seeing Kirsten Dunst in the movie "Elizabethown." This girl can't be pinned down and may or may not show up when you make concrete plans with her. She wears gauzy blouses and braids. She likes to dance in the rain and she weeps uncon-

trollably if she sees a sign for a missing dog or cat. She might spin a globe, place her finger on a random spot, and decide to move there. The Ethereal Weirdo appears a lot in movies, but nowhere else. If she were from real life, people would think she was a homeless woman and would cross the street to avoid her. But she is essential to the male fantasy that even if a guy is boring he deserves a woman who will find him fascinating and perk up his dreary life by forcing him to go skinny-dipping in a stranger's pool.

The Woman Who Is Obsessed with Her Career and Is No Fun at All

I regularly work sixteen hours a day. Yet, like most people I know who are similarly busy, I'm a pleasant, pretty normal person. But that's not how working women are depicted in movies. I'm not always barking orders into my hands-free phone device and yelling, "I have no time for this!" Often, a script calls for this uptight career woman to "relearn" how to seduce a man, and she has to do all sorts of crazy degrading crap, like eat a hot dog in a sexy way or something. And since when does holding a job necessitate that a woman pull her hair back in a severe, tight bun? Do screenwriters think that loose hair makes it hard to concentrate?

The Forty-two-Year-Old Mother of the Thirty-Year-Old Male Lead

If you think about the backstory of a typical mother character in a romantic comedy, you realize this: when "Mom" was an adolescent, the very week she started to menstruate she was impregnated with a baby who would grow up to be the movie's likable brown-haired leading man. I am fascinated by Mom's sordid early life. I would rather see this movie than the one I bought a ticket for.

I am so brainwashed by the young-mom phenomenon that when I saw the poster for "The Proposal" I wondered for a second if the proposal in the movie was Ryan Reynolds' suggesting that he send his mother, Sandra Bullock, to an old-age home.

The Sassy Best Friend

You know that really hilarious and horny best friend who is always asking about your relationship and has nothing really going on in her own life? She al-

ways wants to meet you in coffee shops or wants to go to Bloomingdale's to sample perfumes? She runs a chic dildo store in the West Village? Nope? O.K., that's this person.

The Skinny Woman Who Is Beautiful and Toned but Also Gluttonous and Disgusting

Again, I am more than willing to suspend my disbelief for good set decoration alone. One pristine kitchen from a Nancy Meyers movie like "It's Complicated" compensates for five scenes of Diane Keaton being caught half naked in a topiary. But I can't suspend disbelief enough, for instance, if the gorgeous and skinny heroine is also a ravenous pig when it comes to food. And everyone in the movie—her parents, her friends, her boss—are all complicit in this huge lie. They constantly tell her to stop eating. And this actress, this poor skinny actress who obviously lost weight to play the likable lead character, has to say things like "Shut up, you guys! I love cheesecake! If I want to eat an entire cheesecake, I will!" If you look closely, you can see this woman's ribs through the dress she's wearing—that's how skinny she is, this cheesecake-loving cow.

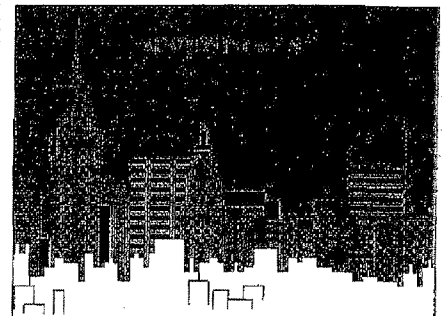
The Woman Who Works in an Art Gallery

How many freakin' art galleries are out there? Are people buying visual art on a daily basis? This posh/smart/classy profession is a favorite in movies. It's in the same realm as kindergarten teacher or children's-book illustrator in terms of accessibility: guys don't really get it, but it is likable and nonthreatening.

Art Gallery Woman: "Dust off the Warhol. You know, that Campbell's Soup one in the crazy color! We have an important buyer coming into town, and this is a really big deal for my career. I have no time for this!"

The Gallery Worker character is the rare female movie archetype that has a male counterpart. Whenever you meet a handsome, charming, successful man in a romantic comedy, the heroine's friend always says the same thing: "He's really successful. He's"—say it with me—"an architect!"

There are, like, nine people in the entire world who are architects, and one of them is my dad. None of them look like Patrick Dempsey. ♦



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The *Freaks and Geeks* Series Bible

Paul Feig's 1999 blueprint for the show.

Excerpted from *Poking a Dead Frog: Conversations With Today's Top Comedy Writers* by Mike Sacks, out June 24 from Penguin Books.

The bible for *Freaks and Geeks* was for the executives, of course, but I mostly wrote it for me. When you're thinking of something for so long and you have a million thoughts in your head and you keep taking notes—and especially when a show is based on truth, something you actually went through—a series bible is almost this stream of consciousness way to dump all that stuff out and then organize it.

— Paul Feig, 2014

General Notes About the Series

This show must be *real*. The teens in this series will talk like real teens. They will never be too clever or grown-up sounding. We don't want a bunch of teenage Neil Simons spouting off wittily. These kids generally engage in teenage put-downs, they overextend their language ("Oh, yeah? Well, you're a ... uh ... big idiot, that's what you are") and never talk in that writers' "Now that I'm in my 30s, I know what I'd say in that high school situation, so I'll give this kid a snappy comeback" style of writing. These kids have to deal with each other with whatever is in the lexicon of a teenager and nothing more (and despite the fact that most of us think "if I knew then what I know now, I'd really be cool and in control," the sad truth is that if we knew what we know now when we were in high school, we'd probably get beaten up on a regular basis because teenage bullies don't respond well to clever put-downs at their expense).

What They Listen To

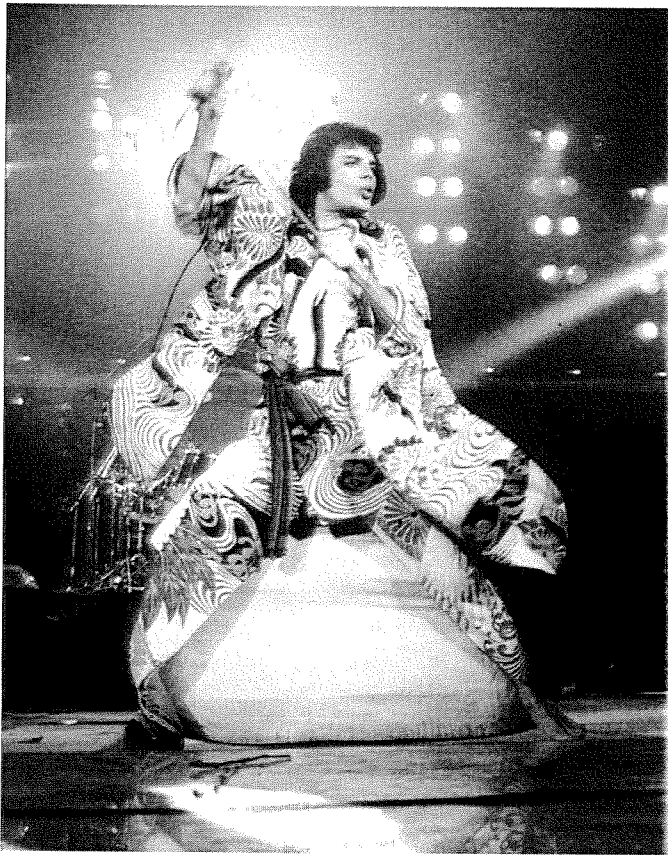
Here are some of the bands that the freaks and geeks would be listening to in the Midwest in 1980 (the great thing is that, even though the groups divide pretty cleanly on what they listen to, there's lots of spillover in what they like, partly because of their siblings and parents and partly just because they're kids who are easily persuaded):

The Cars—geeks
Chicago—geeks
Asia—geeks, some freaks
Bee Gees—geeks
Black Sabbath—freaks



Freaks and Geeks cast members: (l-r) top row – Jason Segel; 2nd row: James Franco, Seth Rogan, Martin Starr; 3rd row: Linda Cardellini, John Francis Daley, Samm Levine

Blue Oyster Cult—freaks
Blood, Sweat & Tears—geeks
Eric Clapton—freaks, some geeks
Alice Cooper—freaks and geeks
Cheap Trick—freaks and geeks
Doobie Brothers—freaks and geeks
John Denver—geeks
Eagles—geeks, some freaks
ELO —geeks
Fleetwood Mac—geeks, freak girls
Foghat—freaks
Peter Dinklage—freaks and geeks
Foreigner—freaks and geeks
Genesis—freaks
Jimi Hendrix—freaks
Iron Maiden—freaks
Elton John—geeks
Journey—freaks and geeks
Judas Priest—freaks
Kiss—geeks
John Lennon—freaks and geeks
Lynyrd Skynyrd—freaks and farmers
Marshall Tucker Band—freaks and farmers, some geeks
Meat Loaf—geeks
The Steve Miller Band—freaks and geeks
Van Morrison—nobody
Moody Blues—geeks
Tom Petty—geeks, some freaks
Prince (early)—nobody



Freddie Mercury of Queen – loved by both freaks and geeks

Rolling Stones—freaks for early stuff, geeks for Some Girls
 Rush—freaks
 Roxy Music—nobody who'd admit it

Santana—freaks and geeks
 Carly Simon—teachers
 Simon & Garfunkel—teachers
 Patti Smith—Creem-reading freaks
 Bruce Springsteen—not very big in Midwest, some cooler geeks
 The Police—freaks, a few geeks
 Supertramp—geeks, some freaks
 Jethro Tull—freaks and geeks
 Queen—freaks and geeks
 James Taylor—geeks, some freak girls
 Jackson Brown—geeks, freaks who smoke lots of pot
 Van Halen—freaks
 Paul McCartney and Wings—geeks, some freaks
 Yes—freaks, some geeks
 ZZ Top—freaks, some geeks
 Frank Zappa—only the coolest of freaks
 Billy Joel—geeks
 Bob Seger—geeks, some freaks
 J. Geils Band—freaks for early stuff, geeks for "Centerfold" era
 Led Zeppelin—freaks
 April Wine—freaks, some geeks, lots of Canadians
 Jeff Beck—cool freaks
 Robin Trower—freaks
 Three Dog Night—geeks
 B-52s—nobody
 Devo—very cool geeks
 Elvis Costello—moody geeks, some freaks

Talking Heads—some geeks, some freaks, mostly no one
 The Romantics—geeks, a few freaks
 Sex Pistols—no one knows about them
 The Ramones—them either

What They Wear

Overall note is that all the students will have about four or five outfits they will wear all the time. Pants can stay the same a lot of the time, shirts change daily (except for some poorer kids). Even cool kids and rich kids shouldn't have a lot of different changes. Bottom line, all these kids are blue collar or lower-end white collar.

The Geeks

In general, the geeks try to dress well but just don't quite pull it off. Maybe if they were better looking or cooler guys, their clothes would make them attractive. But on them, no matter what they wear, it somehow doesn't work.

Sam

Overall look: Sam looks like a kid who cares about how he looks but only up to a point. He dresses more for comfort and his fashion sense is limited to knowing what other kids are wearing and then trying to approximate their look. He thinks he looks better than he does in his clothes.



John Francis Daley as Sam

(Everything looks fine to him from head-on in the mirror, but he doesn't see that what he can't see doesn't really hang well.) He's not so much rumped as the victim of poorly made clothes.

Shirts: Pullover velour V-neck shirts with collar (a little baggy and ill-fitting), short-sleeved knit pullover with zipper V-neck and collar (white stripe on edge of collar and sleeves), terrycloth pullover with two- or three-button V-neck and collar (shoulder pieces are darker color than rest of shirt, with a stripe on each upper arm), not usually tucked in.

Pants: Brown, green, burgundy jeans, never denim blue jeans (until second season), occasionally polyester slacks.

Shoes: Tan suede earth shoe hybrids with rimped soles (remember those things? The soles were shaped like two W's and the whole shoe looked kinda pumped up like a loaf of bread—see Paul Feig for details), dark suede tennis shoes (occasionally).

Coat: Parka, faux–Members Only jacket (maybe), windbreaker with stripe or father’s sporting goods store logo embossed on back (cheap, low-end looking).

Accessories: Always a belt, sometimes with a large copper novelty belt buckle (like a train or Model T car or a tennis racket).

Bill

Overall look: Bill’s pretty much a mess. But not a sloppy guy. His family isn’t very well off, but his mother tries to dress him nice. The result is a lot of clothes from the irregulars bin. He looks like a guy who leaves the house neat but immediately becomes unkempt. Bill is so unaware of his clothes that you get the feeling he doesn’t care what he wears.



Martin Starr as Bill

Shirts: Plaid cowboy shirts, sweater vests (Bill tries to take his fashion cues off of Neal, but it’s always off a bit), brightly printed button-up shirts, pullover shirts that no one else would buy (different color swatches sewn together, weird patterns patchworked into solid colors, stuff from the irregular bin).

Pants: Off-brand jeans, rumpled khakis, occasionally vertically striped pants.

Shoes: Orthopedic black dress shoes (not jokey looking—just sensible-looking shoes), suede gym shoes (Tom Wolf brand—see Paul Feig for explanation).

Coat: A beat-up, hand-me-down football/baseball jacket with the name of the school on it.

The Freaks

Lindsay

Overall look: Lindsay is trying very hard to look like a freak. She pulls it off very effectively, but there’s always something a little studied about her



Linda Cardellini as Lindsay

look. She dresses down, but her clothes are always pretty clean. She tries to be sloppy but can’t help primping and neatening herself. A lot of her clothes come from her father’s sporting goods store, so they’re rather new looking. You’d have to look close to see that she’s not truly a freak, but it shows.

Shirts: T-shirts (flower-embroidered, band logo iron-ons), thermal underwear shirts, solid color sweaters (occasionally cowl neck), button-up plaid shirts (tucked in).

Pants: Bell-bottom jeans, old painter’s pants, overalls.

Shoes: Black suede rubber-soled shoes, clogs, old running shoes.

Coat: Old plaid hunting jacket, army field jacket, old worn parka, long wool coat.

Accessories: Worn knapsack for books.

Daniel

Overall look: Daniel has the original grunge look, before it had a corporate name.

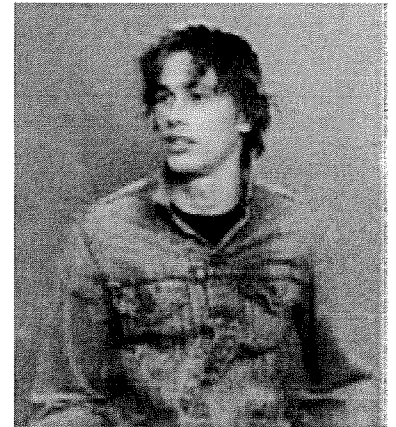
Shirts: Plaid flannel shirts with T-shirts underneath (usually black T-shirts).

Pants: Bell-bottom jeans.

Shoes: Work boots, old sneakers, snowmobile boots in the winter.

Coat: An old army field jacket, an old sweatshirt under his coat if it’s very cold out.

Accessories: Scarf, snowmobile gloves, never wears a hat (it would mess up his afro), a large afro pick is always in his back pocket (although we never see him use it).



James Franco as Daniel

Things in the Background

In all the hallway scenes, there will be things happening in the background that typify high school. (However, we won’t have too much stuff going on in the hallway—we don’t want it to look like all those period movies that take place in medieval England where every street in town is filled with people doing activities typical of the era—you know, how every street in *Moll Flanders* and *Shakespeare in Love* looked like a Renaissance Faire was taking place—do we really think that every street in merry olde England had jugglers performing and bear-baiting contests? But I digress).

Here’s some of the stuff we’ll see in the background:

- Two guys having a punching contest (punching each other on the arm seeing who'll get hurt first)
- Band kids selling candy bars
- Drama kids selling suckers
- Drama kids walking around in costume to promote the play they're currently putting up
- Freak couples making out
- Kids harassing the janitors
- Janitors sweeping the halls with red sawdust
- Kids trying to step on other kids' new shoes to get them dirty
- Students carrying wooden planters and cutting boards they made in woodshop
- Students trying to navigate the hallway carrying large sheets of poster board
- Student government kids hanging long painted paper signs advertising dances and school activities
- Freaks tearing the signs down
- Other freaks writing on the signs
- Students making fun of the pictures of former graduating classes hanging on the hallway walls
- Band kids carrying tubas and large cumbersome cases down the hall
- Hearing the school band rehearsing with the door open
- Freaks with large radios (but not boomboxes—just big cassette players or large transistor radios—all low quality)
- Hall monitors (usually women in their 50s who are constantly knitting)
- Science students carrying large science fair exhibitions to and from class
- Kids getting clean-outs from other kids (when you run up behind somebody and knock their books and papers out from under their arm and all over the floor)
- Jocks taking up too much of the hallway and kids trying to get by, not daring to ask them to move
- Guys checking out girls
- Girls checking out guys
- Kids getting wedgies (when you grab the waistband of someone's underwear and pull it up as hard as you can, aka "snuggies")
- Tough freak girls harassing younger kids
- Girls laughing at anybody and everybody
- Teachers yelling at students in front of their lockers
- Freaks flipping teachers off behind their backs
- Kids tapping their friends on the opposite shoulder behind their backs to get them to turn around the wrong way
- Students in band uniforms
- Farmer kids tripping smaller kids
- Guys high-fiving each other
- A/V guys pushing projector carts down the hall
- Yearbook kids taking pictures of other students (the students pose by doing kick-lines, putting their arms around each other, standing and smiling stiffly, putting up finger horns behind their friends' heads, punching each other, or simply looking like they really don't want their pictures taken)
- Groups of freaks breaking up when a teacher approaches
- Guys delivering love notes to girls for their friends
- Girls coming up to a group of guys and telling one of the guys that some girl likes them
- Students imitating teachers after they've passed by
- Students giving other students "flat tires" (when you walk up behind someone and catch the back of their shoe with your foot, making their heel pop out of their shoe)
- Geeks carrying huge piles of books
- Students rushing to the nurse's office with a cut or a bloody nose
- Students from Commercial Foods class walking around wearing industrial aprons and paper food service hats
- Auto shop students wearing dirty coveralls
- Greasy-haired, dirty "stinky" guys (usually some form of geek—although often a farmer or a freak or just some kid who's a real outsider)
- Scary crazy kids that no one talks to
- Quiet mousy girls with no friends walking quickly down the hallway, clutching their books
- Drafting students carrying blueprint rolls down the hall
- Fights, fights, fights!
- Students on payphones
- Students who are dressed very nice (disco-style clothes)
- Students who are dressed terrible (ratty T-shirts, knit watch caps, old worn parkas, dirty jeans)
- Jocks wearing their school jerseys (usually on game day)
- Girls wearing rabbit-skin jackets (short jackets with a patchwork of different colored squares of rabbit pelts)
- Students eating junk food (Hostess fruit pies, Nutty Buddy pre packaged ice cream cones, Twinkies, cans of soda pop)
- Other students knocking the food out of the other kids' hands
- Kids burning other kids with the "If your hand is bigger than your face, you'll die when you're 30" gag (the other kid puts his hand up to his face to check and you hit the back of his hand, causing him to get a bloody nose—funny!!!)

[Note: Original version contains nearly 21,000 additional words.]

How To Write Good Dialogue: Ten Tips

In the first of our four part 'Teach Yourself To Write' series, Irving Weinman, a published writer and creative writing tutor, explains how to write great dialogue.

1. Show, Don't Tell

Remember that dialogue is part of the action of fiction, Dialogue doesn't tell the readers about the characters, it shows who characters are. Four key qualities of good dialogue are that it: 1) keeps the story or novel going; 2) reveals the characters; 3) is believable; 4) interests the readers.

2. Listen To Yourself

The first and best source of the dialogue you write is your own speech. You've been practicing dialogue all your life. You speak in a range of emotions anger, fear, love, loathing, joy and revulsion. You speak in a variety of speech levels formal and informal, standard and slang, curses and expletives you have in English deleted. Your speech also includes a mix of jargons reflecting your work and interests - baking, banking, bowling, gardening, garage bands, plumbing and physics.

3. Listen To Others

Use the dialogue of other people. Become more aware of how other people speak, how they emphasize certain words and swallow others, Listen to the sound of their voices. Are they deep or high and piping? Are they rough or syrupy? Are they questioning even when they're not asking a question? or do they chuckle though they're not saying anything funny? Listen!

4. Read

Use the dialogue written by others. No, this doesn't mean you copy out their dialogue. It means take a close look to find out what it is that you particularly love about the dialogue in favorite books. Try to achieve that with the speech of your own characters. The same goes for dialogue in plays, films and TV that catches your ear.

5. Read Out Loud

After writing a scene of dialogue, put it away for a while. Then go back and don't just re-read it, read it out loud! That's right: read it out at the speed and with the emotional tone you would use as if you were the character speaking it. Reading your dialogue out loud helps you to hear if it works.

6. Supportive Narrative

How much supporting narrative should you write for your dialogue? Enough. In other words, you can't decide before you actually write it. Supporting narrative is used for identifying the

speaker, indicating speech tone, describing the speaker or listener's facial or bodily expression or action, stating unspoken thoughts or expressing the narrator's reflections or observations. Some dialogue may have no supporting narrative, some may have more narrative than there is dialogue.

7. Vary Forms

Dialogue can be used in other forms than in scenes and narration to enliven fiction. It can be used in monologues, that is, a character's very long speech not first-person narration, in which part of it can be shorter bits of dialogue. Dialogue can occur in thoughts, as when a character remembers or imagines conversation. And it can be presented in letter, in diaries, as telephone conversations, voice messages, even as emails or text (she ski u r a fool bt u dift fool me).

8 - Indirect Speech

Use indirect speech, for example - She said that I was a fool - as a good way to shift smoothly from narrative to dialogue or from dialogue back into narrative.

9 - Foreign Dialogue

When you present a foreigner speaking English, remember that a little bit of accent, or odd grammar, or lack of idiomatic speech goes a long way. As for presenting foreign dialogue, either be direct: She said in Estonian, 'You are a fool,' or write it in Estonian and have a character translate it. You can also use character reaction and comment to give your reader a good idea of its general meaning.

10 - Beware Of Slang

Remember that nothing dates as fast as slang. So if you're writing a scene in which two fourteen year olds are talking to each other and there's nobody around of that age, do a little research. The slang you used when you were fourteen in the 1980's or 90s is pretty much a dead language!

Write Great Dialogue is published on 30 November, by Hodder & Stoughton.

How to Write Great Dialogue

Whenever we think of great films, what we remember most is not the scenery nor the structure, but the dialogue.

Dialogue is the "music" of movies. From "Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn" to "Go ahead, make my day." From "Fasten your seatbelts. It's going to be a bumpy night" to "At my signal, unleash hell," great dialogue will make your script sing. And while story structure is more important to writing a successful screenplay, juicy dialogue can help attract a star TO your script. Powerful diatomic will also give your script that extra bit of 'zing" that can make the sale.

Writing movie dialogue is like dancing: Some people are born with a knack for it, and others do it as awkwardly as your physics teacher attempting the funky chicken at the high school dance. But just like dancing, writing dialogue is a skill that can be learned. Here are my 10 best tips for creating memorable dialogue:

CONTEXT AND CHARACTER ARE EVERYTHING, As you'll notice from the famous examples given above. the Pest dialogue won't make any sense to anyone who hasn't seen the movie. Make sure your dialogue fits the character who is speaking it, and that it springs directly from story context instead of feeling "grafted on." Even in comedies if a line isn't true to the character and situation, it won't work

NO ONE SHOULD TALK LIKE ANYONE ELSE, As in life, each character in your script should have his own distinctive speaking style. To test for this in your script, cover up the character names and see if you can still guess which character is speaking at any given moment. if your characters talk too much alike, fix this problem right away.

NO "SMALL" ROLES, Actors like to say. "There are no small roles. Only small actors. When I read and evaluate a script, I worry when I see characters with generic names like "Thug #1" or "Waitress #2." Too often, that naming convention results in equally generic dialogue. Each character to your script should have a name (or at least a persona, such as, "Nervous Bank Teller"), and a distinctive personality—reflected in his dialogue.

ARGUING IS GOOD, Arguing probably isn't a good approach to life. But conflict is great for your story. Make sure that every character in your script gives your hero a hard time. I don't care if all your hero wants is directions to the nearest gas station. Nobody should cooperate with him—at least not without a lot of persuasion,

EVIL IS AS EVIL DOES. Amateur writers create heroes whose dialogue drips with the milk of human kindness, and villains whose every syllable drips venom and evil intentions. But what do the pros do? They write heroes who may talk cynically, but behave in the opposite way and demonstrate compassion or idealism. Their villains are often elaborately polite. but

evil in their behavior. This technique adds depth to your script—when dialogue doesn't always directly reflect a character's true inner being.

Always remember your character's actions—not necessarily what he says—determine whether he is good or evil. (For reference, see the quintessential cynical hero, Humphrey Bogart's Rick in *Casablanca*; and for a classic, polite villain, see Calvera, played by the great Eli Wallach, in *The Magnificent Seven*.)

DON'T TELL US THINGS WE ALREADY KNOW. In some of the scripts I analyze for writers, we get story information in one scene, and then in the very next scene one character tells another the same "news." Never tell us things we (me, the film audience) already know. How to avoid this mistake? Stage the next scene later, after the "news" has already been transmitted—or cut it off earlier. For example, if a character dies in one scene and the hero must transmit the sad news to the deceased's next of kin, all we need to see in the follow-up scene is what happens right before the relative is told—or what happens right, after, in fact, that "aftermath" scene probably won't need any dialogue at all. All the hero needs to do is walk in the actor and make eye contact with the person he must tell. Cut! Also, never write a line of dialogue that begins with: "As you already know, ..." information is being transmitted solely for the audience's benefit, it doesn't belong in your script.

AVOID "ON THE NOSE" DIALOGUE. When I was in film school, they warned us never to write dialogue that was too "on the nose." By this they meant that characters should never simply state exactly what's on their minds, without nuance or subtext, nor appear to be giving "exposition." That's tantamount to being boring, a cardinal sin. In real life, people rarely say directly what's on their minds, in movies they shouldn't either.

LESS IS MORE. If you can "say" the same thing with a visual image, action, behavior, or sound effect instead of through dialogue, omit the dialogue.

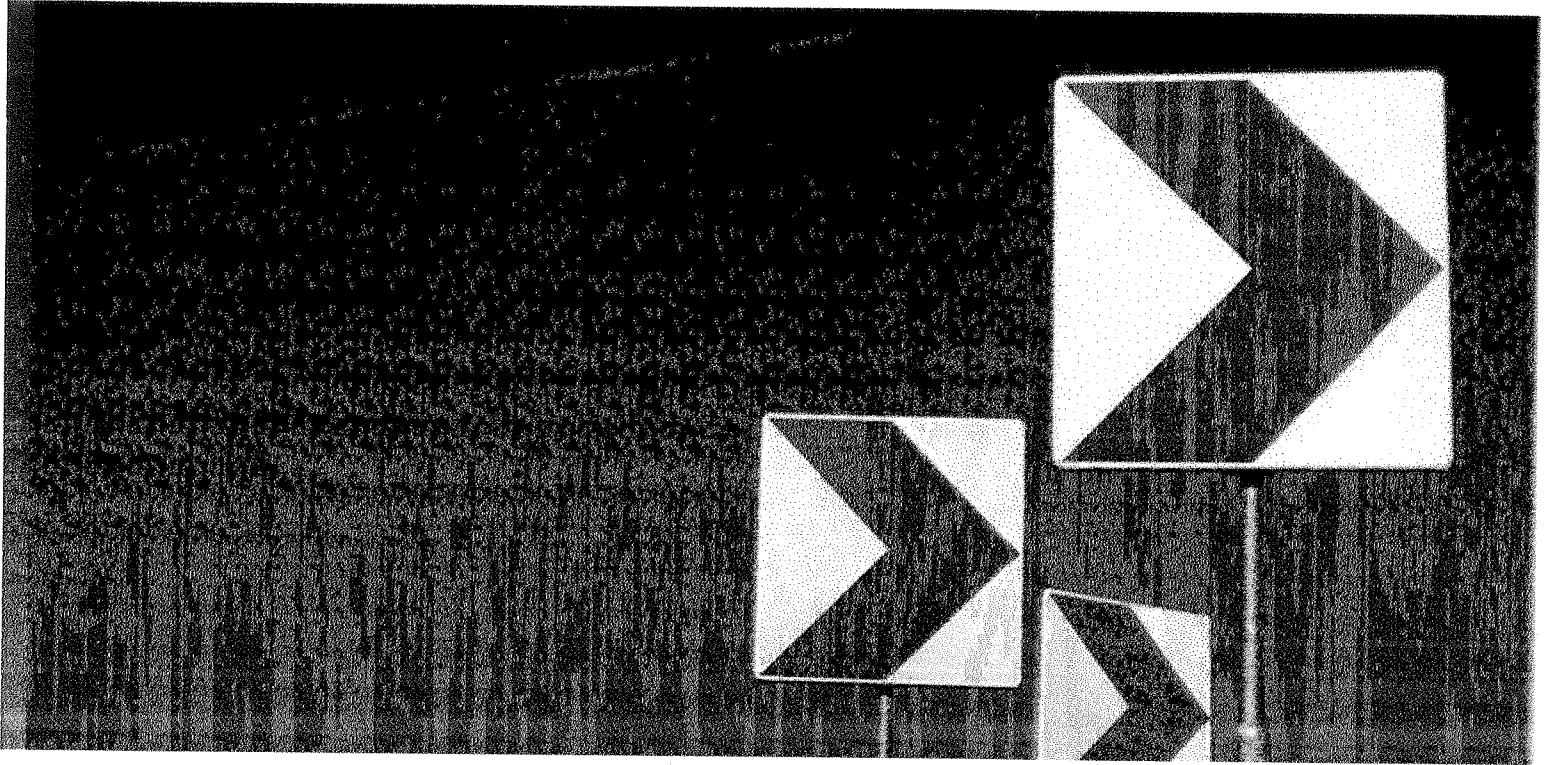
AVOID "VOICE-OVER VERBATIMS" Voice-over narration should never merely repeat what we're seeing in action unfolding on the screen. It should act as a counterpoint to the action rather than echoing it.

GIVE ACTORS SOMETHING TO ACT. When writing a star (and even if you are writing a spec script, you should have a star in mind), your dialogue should give him something to sink his teeth into to "chew the scenery!" If, to quote Gordon Gekko, "Greed is good," for movie dialogue, "Over-the-top is good." The star of your movie should have at least one "big speech." Give him all the best lines, and make sure that your protagonist is introduced very early in your script—preferably on page one,

BONUS TIP: Write characters that are quirky and unpredictable in what they say and do. Whatever someone would normally say in the situation at hand, have your character say something totally unexpected instead. Become a better writer of dialogue. Go ahead. Make my day.

BIO Staton Rabin is a screenplay marketing consultant, script analyst, and "pitch coach" for screenwriters at all levels of experience. She is also a Senior Writer and story analyst for Script, has been a reader for Warner Bros. Pictures and New Line Cinema, and is a frequent guest lecturer at NYU. Staton's novel *Betsy and the Emperor* is in development as

THE DOS AND DON'TS OF WRITING ABOUT THE DISABLED



NICOLA GRIFFITH ON THE NEED TO GO BEYOND EMPATHY

August 23, 2016 By Nicola Griffith

Recently I have read several articles about disabled people by non-disabled writers. The authors have clearly projected their own fears and prejudices onto the subject of their piece, and spoken for them from that place. If I could say one thing to those authors it would be this: *Do not assume that empathy equals experience.* You might *think* you know what it's like, but you don't.

For example, if you think that using a wheelchair would make you feel trapped, isolated, broken, and shunned, you might assume a wheelchair user regards themselves as trapped, isolated, broken, and shunned. But they might not. For some of us, a wheelchair represents freedom, the ability to get out and about autonomously; it is a device that makes more possible a life full of friends and work and opportunity—on our own terms.

In other words, one's empathy can be unreliable. I offer these guidelines to help you find your way beyond it. They are general guidelines for non-disabled writers who may have occasion to write about a disabled person or people. They are (mostly) formulated to apply to all genres and categories of writer, for example, journalists, novelists, bloggers, critics, poets, essayists, academics, and dramatists. No one can speak for a group unless they have been

explicitly elected to do so. I do not pretend to speak for all disabled writers; do not assume all disabled people feel and think the same on this subject. I've discussed this with others, of course[1], but in the end these guidelines represent one writer's opinion—and just a beginning, at that. They are far from complete. Please add suggestions and comments below. I've divided the guidelines into two parts, proscriptions and prescriptions. To some degree they mirror each other but you may find it easier to hear one set than another. Read them both. And then go read the Storify of the first #CripLit Twitter chat.

Never (First, Do No Harm)[2]

Never equate physical, psychological, or intellectual impairment with loss of personhood. People are people. Period.

Never speak for a disabled person unless you have explicit permission to do so—and then only use direct quotes. Never assume you know what a disabled person thinks, feels, or wants. Empathy is not experience. There is no substitute for listening.

Never project your experience—your fear, discomfort, or unhappiness—onto us. Your experience is not ours. We

might not be angry, uncomfortable, or unhappy.

Never present your assumptions, projections, or guesses as fact.

Never use disability as “narrative prosthesis.” That is, don’t use a cripple as a prop, or an impairment as a signifier of or metaphor for anything (especially evil, degeneracy, or corruption). Do not magically eliminate or fix the disabled person for narrative convenience. (For more on this see Disability Art, Scholarship, and Activism.)

Never assume that one disabled person acts, feels, thinks, or wants the same as another disabled person. We are as various as non-disabled people.

Never express astonishment when a disabled person performs what would for a non-disabled person be an ordinary, everyday act. It’s not polite to be too surprised.

Always (Nothing About Us Without Us)[3]

Always, before you publish, ask the opinion of readers with the disability you portray. Listen to what they say; believe their experience.

Always, if you are writing fiction (or lyric, or drama), be clear in your bio that you are not disabled; that you are writing from a center you imagine, not one you experience.

Always, if you are writing non-fiction, write from the perspective of a non-disabled person. Make sure you are clear that the piece is about *you* and *your*

feelings/experience/opinion as a non-disabled person. A serious profile of, say, a disabled artist might be better being written by a disabled writer.[4]

Always, if you draw an analogy between some aspect of your experience as a non-disabled person and the experience of a disabled person, make it clear you are *guessing*. Bear in mind you could be mistaken.

Always, if you are told by a disabled person that what you’ve written is wrong—even if you don’t understand what the problem is, exactly; even if you meant well and feel hurt by the response—be prepared to accept their criticism. Be prepared to apologize. Learn from your mistake.

Always remember that disabled people are human beings with full lives; we are *people*, not medical or clinical conditions.

Always remember that *words matter* (see my post, “Lame is so gay.”) Be very careful with the words you choose and how you use them.[5]

[1] Many thanks to Alice Wong, Kate Macdonald, and Sean Mahoney. After I’d written this piece I read an article co-authored by Wong, “The Inspiration Porn Resolution,” which I recommend.

[2] There are those that argue that *Primum non nocere* is nonsense. (See, for example, the Harvard Health Blog.) I think it’s a reasonable way in to thinking about things—and it’s easy to remember.

[3] There are two books with that title, both written in 1998. Wikipedia will give you an overview.

[4] I’m aware that this is a provocative statement. But these guidelines are designed to help writers to think first and then proceed with care.

[5] This is particularly true of the word *disabled* itself. I prefer to call myself a *cripple*; others loathe that term. I don’t much care for ‘people first’ language—I prefer *disabled person* to *person with a disability*. I actively dislike *handicapped*. In ten years I might feel and think differently about all of the above. If in doubt, ask. Just don’t expect the same answer from different people.



Nicola Griffith

Nicola Griffith is the award-winning author of six novels—*Ammonite* (1993), *Slow River* (1995), *The Blue Place* (1998), *Stay* (2002), *Always* (2007) and *Hild* (2013)—and is the co-editor of the BENDING THE LANDSCAPE series of original short fiction. Her multi-media memoir, *And Now We Are Going to Have a Party: Liner Notes to a Writer’s Early Life*, is a limited collector’s edition. Her essays and short fiction have appeared in an assortment of academic texts and a variety of journals, including *Nature*, *New Scientist*, *Los Angeles Review of Books* and *Out*.

a movie with Al Pacino attached to star. Staton Rabin is available for reading/analysis and consultations and can be reached at statonrabin.com

MES 153 - Scriptwriting

Prof. M. George Stevenson

~~PROJECT ONE:~~
PROJECT ^{Two}

DOCUMENTARY SCRIPT

PURPOSE: The student will learn how to: Apply three-act structure to a documentary or news magazine narrative; learn how to create a two-column script; and learn the principles of documentary from concept and research to treatment, script and the screen.

PROCESS: For this project, students should first find a **NON-FICTION** (i.e. reported and based on verifiable facts/testimony) article from a well known newspaper, magazine, Web site, etc.⁸ The next step is to research this subject in greater detail and find the central storyline. Build it into a proposed half-hour program for TV or film.

This project requires **THREE** documents:

1) A **1-PAGE TREATMENT** that **MUST**:

- begins with a **logline** (1 sentence) and a short **synopsis** of the program (1 paragraph)
- includes a **treatment** that tells a non-fiction story with a beginning, middle and end, giving a blow-by-blow account of what we see and hear
- have a clear “arc”
- reflect significant research into the subject (mostly done by article’s author)
- identify (in synopsis or treatment): **objective, theme, style, POV, audience**

2) A **TWO-COLUMN SCRIPT** based on the treatment above (1-page minimum). It **MUST**:

- use proper two-column format (video - left/audio - right)⁹
- be typed or printed and use 12 point Times Roman or Courier New type
- tell a story from the **beginning**, through the **middle**, to the **end**

⁸ Great sources include the The New Yorker, New York, New York Times, Harpers, Rolling Stone, Sports Illustrated, Slate, etc. Mainstream publications that tell non-fiction stories in depth.

⁹ See A/V script formats in handouts and Handout Book

- Use imagination! What kinds of b-roll can you support interviews with?
- 3) The ORIGINAL ARTICLE on which your project is based

PAYOFF: The student will learn the principles of documentary and news magazine forms.

CHAPTER 3

ELEMENTS OF THE DOCUMENTARY

This chapter covers

- * Film language and the audience's experience of it compared with literature
- * The raw ingredients of a documentary
- * Modalities and categories of documentary
- * Documentary as a genre that has work to do in the world

ON THE LANGUAGE OF FILM

All art, including film art, exists so we can vicariously experience realities other than our own and connect emotionally with lives, situations, and issues otherwise inaccessible. Reacting within a new context, we open up to other people and their conditions, and experience other ways of seeing what once seemed familiar.

Because the film arrived so recently compared with the other arts, the potential of its language and effect is not completely understood, the more so because it is still in vivid evolution. At a cellular level, two film shots placed together form a suggestive juxtaposition that changes when their order is reversed, so we can be sure that relativity and comparison are the heart and soul of film language. To complicate matters, the factual content of a few documentary shots cut together communicates a lot more than what the material "is." Reacting to the order and juxtapositions chosen by the film's makers, we make further associations and interpretations, which are affected not only by our individual interests and experience but also by the cultural perspective of our place and time. This is the crucial difference between what a film passage *denotes* (is) and what it *connotes* (suggests by cultural association) to us.

50.

Film language functions differently from the language we know best, that of speech and literature. Film is a medium of immediacy, while literature is one of distance and contemplation. Reading is pensive and lets the reader move at his or her own pace while creating the story in his or her head. Literature easily places the reader in the past or in the future, but film holds the spectator in a constantly advancing present tense. Even a flashback quickly turns into another ongoing present.

We can say, therefore, that watching film is a dynamic experience in which the spectator infers cause and effect even as the events appear to happen. Like music, film's nearest relative according to Ingmar Bergman, the screen grasps the spectator's heart and mind with existential insistency. Usually the audience never stops, slows, or repeats any part of the show and thus is unlikely to grasp the extent of its emotional subjugation or question the legitimacy of the means by which it was persuaded. Watching film is more like living or dreaming than is the meditative experience of reading. Many aspects of the viewing experience never rise into the viewer's consciousness at all unless he or she happens to be analytical and takes time to ponder what he or she saw afterward.

Film's ability to put an audience into something like a dream state is attractive, but it holds responsibilities for its makers, particularly in documentary. Though the fiction film is always and evidently a show, the realism of documentary lulls the audience into passively watching "events" as though real and unmediated by any authorship. Critical analysis, particularly of older documentaries, shows how much the genre contains of its makers and how little of the objectivity that people associate with the genre. No less than the fiction films they resemble, *documentaries are authored constructs*.

Today, with the movement toward films having a more obvious authorial "voice," films can directly consider the ambiguities and contradictions inseparable from any full account of human life. Digital equipment helps this evolution because filmmakers can easily filter, freeze, slow motion, superimpose, or interleave texts at will. By imposing a more subjective and impressionistic treatment on live action footage, these techniques unshackle the screen from the tyranny of real time and its byproduct, realism. They help the filmmaker comment, not merely reproduce.

Your job as a filmmaker is to refresh film language by journeying inward, recognizing your own emotional and psychic experience and finding its equivalency to use on the screen. Only in this way will you deeply impress us with other realities—those of your subjects, and those of yourself and your associates.

SIZING UP THE INGREDIENTS

Though embracing definitions of documentary are in short supply, there are a number of generalities we can look at, beginning with techniques and construction methods central to a documentary's aesthetic contours. Consider first how few are the ingredients from which all documentaries are made.

PC

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People

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•

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Re-creation

•

•

•

Library for

other film

Graphics

•

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•

•

Blank area

heightened

SOUND

Voice-over

•

•

•

•

Narration

•

•

•

•

Synchronous

Sound effect

Music

PICTURE

Action footage

- People or creatures doing things, carrying on their everyday activities, such as work, play, and so on
- Shots of landscapes and inanimate things

People talking

- To each other with camera presence unobtrusive, perhaps even hidden
- To each other, consciously contributing to the camera's portrait of themselves
- In interviews—one or more people answering formal, structured questions (interviewer may be off camera and questions edited out)

Re-enactments, factually accurate, of situations

- Already past
- That cannot be filmed for valid reasons
- That are suppositional or hypothetical and are indicated as such

Library footage—can be uncut archive material or material recycled from other films

Graphics, such as

- Still photos, often shot by a camera that moves toward, away from, or across the still photo to enliven it
- Documents, titles, headlines
- Line art, cartoons, or other graphics

Blank screen—causes us to reflect on what we have already seen or gives heightened attention to existing sound

SOUND

Voice-over, which can be

- Audio-only interview
- Constructed from the track of a picture-and-sound interview with occasional segments of sync picture at salient points

Narration, which can be

- A narrator
- The voice of the author, for example, Michael Moore in *Bowling for Columbine* (2002)
- The voice of one of the participants

Synchronous sound, that is, diegetic accompanying sound shot while filming

Sound effects—can be spot (sync) sound effects or atmospheres

Music

52

Silence—the temporary absence of sound can create a powerful change of mood or cause us to look with a heightened awareness at the picture

All documentaries are permutations of these ingredients, and it is the associations and traditions they call on, their structure, and the point of view imposed on them that summon shape and purpose.

DOCUMENTARY MODALITIES

Michael Renov in *Theorizing Documentary* (New York & London: Routledge, 1993) divides the documentary into four fundamental modalities. They are to:

1. Record, reveal, or preserve
2. Persuade or promote
3. Analyze or interrogate
4. Express

As he points out, these categories are not exclusive; any film sequence can use more than one. A film in its entirety can use the full range while favoring perhaps two such modalities. Let's try assigning the commonest to a list of nonfiction genres that is by no means exhaustive.

<i>Nonfiction film genres</i>	<i>Records, reveals, preserves</i>	<i>Persuades, promotes</i>	<i>Analyzes, interrogates</i>	<i>Expresses</i>
1 Analytical (essay)			•	•
2 Anthropological	•			
3 Art (films on)	•		•	•
4 Biographical	•		•	
5 Cinéma vérité (documentary catalyzed by makers)	•		•	
6 City symphony	•			•
7 Combat (war)	•			
8 Committed (political or social activist)		•	•	
9 Compilation (interprets archive material)		•	•	
10 Cross-section (sociological survey)	•		•	
11 Current affairs		•	•	
12 Diary	•			•
13 Direct cinema (observational, non-interventional documentary)	•			
14 Docudrama		•		•
15 Educational		•		
16 Ethnographic	•		•	

53.

Nonfiction film genres	Records, reveals, preserves	Persuades, promotes	Analyzes, interrogates	Expresses
17 Experimental (avant garde)	*			
18 Historical	*			*
19 Incentive		*	*	
20 Minority voice (feminist, gay or lesbian documentary)		*	*	*
21 Mockumentary (fake documentary)		*		*
22 Nature	*			*
23 Persuasive (exposé or thesis)		*	*	*
24 Political (agitprop)	*	*	*	*
25 Process	*		*	*
26 Propaganda		*	*	*
27 Romantic tradition		*	*	*
28 Science		*	*	*
29 Sociological	*		*	*
30 Training	*		*	*
31 Travel and exploration	*		*	*
32 War (effects of)	*	*	*	*

Whether or not you are familiar with all these genres, it's plain that trying to typify and categorize them is highly arguable. You could, for instance, make a case for all films belonging in the second column because all nonfiction films seek to persuade. And merely by their selecting something for our attention, you could say that all films seek to express (fourth column). To further confuse matters, most genres make use of multiple modalities according to how they fulfill their self-imposed task. With such permeable boundaries the usefulness of any method of deconstruction is limited, but in production and before it, it helps to know what modality you are currently using so you can deploy it more consciously and successfully.

Bill Nichols in his valuable *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001) divides documentary into six categories. For each I have chosen just a single well-known example. His list evolves chronologically from (as he asserts) documentary's roots in Hollywood fiction, and for each category he lists a commonly perceived deficiency:

- *Poetic documentary* (1920s). Poetically assembles fragments of the world but lacks specificity and is too abstract. Example: Joris Ivens' *Rain* (Netherlands, 1926), which evokes all the aspects of a passing shower in Amsterdam (Figure 3-1).
- *Expository documentary* (1920s). Directly addresses issues in the historical world (that is, the world we all share and experience as "real"). Once sound became established, it adopted the classic "voice of God" commentary. Expository documentary suffers from being too didactic. Example: Frank Capra and Anatole Litvak's *Why We Fight* series made for the U.S. War Department (USA, 1942-1945).

54.

DIRECT CINEMA AND *CINÉMA VÉRITÉ*

On either side of the Atlantic this mobility evoked opposite philosophies about the relationship between the camera and its subjects. In North America, the Maysles brothers, Fred Wiseman, Allan King, and others favored what they called *direct cinema*, an observational approach that kept their intrusion on participants down to a minimum. This, they felt, allowed them to capture the spontaneity and uninhibited flow of live events. They shot under available light and without evident preparations, like ethnographers waiting for significant events to take shape.

They claimed a certain purity for the method, but unless the camera is actually hidden—an ethically dubious practice—participants are usually aware of its presence and cannot help but modify their behavior. The integrity of observational cinema is thus more illusory than actual, because its onscreen appearance is sustained by eliminating any material where the illusion is broken, such as when participants glance at, or adapt to, the camera. Certainly it leaves the spectator feeling like a privileged observer, but seldom are we seeing life unmediated as such films lead us to suppose. The fact is that observational cinema (as *direct cinema* is now called) is at its most truthful when events claim most of the participants' attention. Authenticity declines as the camera becomes more prominent than those being filmed and they become conscious actors in their own story. Though this situation has a truth of its own, it is no longer life caught unaware.

The other approach, called *cinéma vérité*, takes account of the central problem by actively involving participants in the process. It originated in France with the ethnographer Jean Rouch. Documenting ways of life in Africa taught him that making any record always provokes an important relationship with participants. Like Flaherty with *Nanook*, Rouch thought that authorship could usefully and legitimately be something shared. Permitting and even encouraging interaction between the subject and director, his *cinéma vérité* ("cinema truth," a translation of Vertov's *kino-pravda*) legitimized the camera's presence and let the crew become catalysts for what took place on the screen. Most importantly, *cinéma vérité* authorized the director to initiate characteristic events and to probe for what Rouch called *privileged moments* rather than passively await them.

Eric Barnouw, in his excellent *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), sums up the differences as follows:

The direct cinema documentarist took his camera to a situation of tension and waited hopefully for a crisis; the Rouch version of *cinéma vérité* tried to precipitate one. The direct cinema artist aspired to invisibility; the Rouch *cinéma vérité* artist was often an avowed participant. The direct cinema artist played the role of uninvolved bystander; the *cinéma vérité* artist espoused that of provocateur.

Notice that Barnouw thinks documentarians are artists, not social scientists. This acknowledges that subjective judgments are involved whenever the screen reveals documentary truths. Direct cinema found its truth in events observable by the camera, while *cinéma vérité* (now more often called *participatory cinema*) was committed to a paradox: that it may take artifice to expose truth. Flaherty

acknowledged this when he said that "one often has to distort a thing to catch its true spirit."

Both approaches capitalized on the spontaneous, and their most striking moments were often completely unpredictable. Since neither could be scripted, documentary was freed from the tyranny of the script. Editors, faced with the prospect of reducing great masses of footage, set about inventing film language that, using freer and more intuitive forms, counterpointed voice and effects tracks, and flexuous, impressionistic cutting to abridge time and space. The fiction feature film was quick to adopt these poetic advances, as you can see in Nicholas Roeg's thriller *Don't Look Now* (1973).

Participatory cinema acts willingly on what is being filmed, and observational cinema does so unwillingly. Both have much in common. Their competing claims of fidelity to the actual are equally questionable because editing routinely abridges what was originally separated by time and space. Despite any appearance of objectivity and verisimilitude, the documentary, like the fiction film, is always being channeled through human points of view—of those in front of the camera as well as those behind it.

In the end, all documentaries must invoke, as best they can, the spirit rather than the letter of truth—and they are exciting because of this. A documentary's authenticity ultimately lies in its organizing vision rather than any mechanical fidelity to life.

When should one use participatory cinema, when observational? Most films allow each sequence's subject matter to determine the approach. Some kinds of actuality-related truth reveal themselves unaided, while others are best elicited by inquiry or reconstruction. This seems so natural on the screen because this is how we proceed through the world: sometimes we are an interested observer, and sometimes we actively probe for the truths we need to discover. To help you in your work, this book will propose that documentary is really a screen version of human consciousness doing its living work.

TRUTH CLAIMS

How can we assess a documentary's implicit claim to fairness and truth? Always supposing the film is authentic to fact, you can only determine the truth of a film's more esoteric claims by comparing them with your knowledge of life. You reach subjective decisions through your emotional and experiential judgment, and there is no other, independent arbiter.

Art exists to encourage us to do this work, to spur us into becoming mentally and emotionally active. Working at its highest levels, documentary art probes the roots of human life and human values, and treats its audience as equal partners in the quest.

IMPROVISATION IN DRAMA

In the United States of the late 1950s, the actor John Cassavetes used the new portable 16mm equipment to shoot his first film, a fiction piece that capitalized on the power of Method dramatic improvisation. *Shadows* (1959) is grittily shot

they empathize, and whose version of events squares most with their own experience of life?

The summing up stage places all that has happened in relation to these questions in context for the jury to consider. Films differ from this last, adversarial stage of a trial because they are dramatic epiphanies rather than decision-making ones. An edited film usually has the texture of many voices and multiple POVs, with the most embracing being that of the storytelling itself, which is the underlying "voice" of the director and crew.

Another good film where you can see this analogy at work, one also having a murder trial at its heart, is *Brother's Keeper* (1992) by Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky. In it, Delbert Ward, who is one of four aged and semi-literate farming brothers, is accused of murdering, or mercy killing, his sick brother William. But the town, alienated by big-city police tactics, rallies to the defense of the formerly outcast family. The Wards are shown in all their reclusive squalor, but gradually you realize that Berlinger and Sinofsky are on their side, but to get there the film takes us through multiple other viewpoints.

Shortly we shall look more in depth at the notion of POV in filmmaking, but first we must look at the options the filmmaker exercises when using the camera to collect evidence.

DOCUMENTARY PRACTICE

COLLECTING EVIDENCE: OBSERVATIONAL OR PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Every camera setup involves collecting evidence, and how you do it will convey different kinds of meaning to your audience, or jury. You must first choose between two major approaches outlined in the last chapter. One we said is strictly observational; the other is participatory and allows the crew to intercede. To quietly observe the aggression between children playing in a school yard is more telling than interrupting their spontaneous activities to ask them to play a competitive game and hoping they do it aggressively.

Whether you shoot observationally or you catalyze the action onscreen is thus something you decide both philosophically and pragmatically. Fred Wiseman, a former lawyer, uses no lighting, no directing, and no questioning, and only ever uses the camera observationally. He shoots a massive amount of footage and makes his distinguished films from the results. If you have a similar conviction about the worth of observational documentary or you are an ethnographer, you will want to capture only events that are uncompromised by you and your camera. However, if you film an interview, it means that merely by asking questions and leading the conversation, you participate in making the record—even if all the questions are edited out.

Using the camera to elicit documentary truth arose, as we discussed earlier, in Russia with Dziga Vertov's *kino-pravda*, or "cinema truth." In France the revival of this approach by Jean Rouch in the 1960s was given the equivalent name in French, *cinéma vérité*. However, because English speakers corrupted the

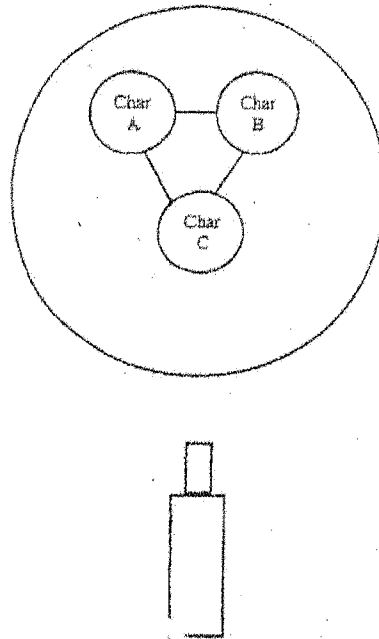


FIGURE 4-1

Diagram representing direct or observational cinema, in which the camera records life and intercedes as little as possible.

term to connote spontaneous shooting, we now say that a documentary using these intercessional methods is *participatory*.

Whether to use intercessional or non-intercessional shooting is often a commonsense decision dictated not by dogma but by the situation in hand. Where 15 fire engines are hard at work putting out a fire, you won't need to exert any pressures by interceding. But if a naked man has chained himself to the Ministry of Agriculture's railing, you may want to question him if the filming is to go beyond a single enigmatic image.

Figure 4-1 represents symbolically how in observational cinema the camera and crew do their utmost to remain outside onlookers, minimizing their own effect on the proceedings. Figure 4-2 represents participatory cinema, in which camera and crew are avowedly present and inquiring, ready to catalyze, if necessary, an interaction between participants or between participants and themselves.

POINT OF VIEW

Although a *POV shot* will be a literal, physical viewpoint, the phrase *point of view* in its own usually denotes the impression one gets reading a story or watch-

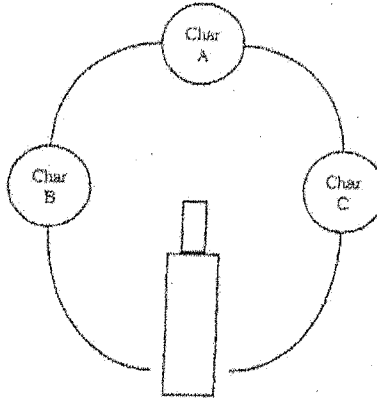


FIGURE 4-2

Diagram representing *cinéma vérité* or participatory cinema, in which the camera and crew may alternately be discreet onlookers or catalyze responses and situations.

ing a film, of the emotional and psychological point of view through which the story is being experienced. Sometimes, depending on context, it will refer to something like a Marxist or Freudian outlook being used as a tool of social or psychological analysis.

A documentary is a story whose "voice" and impact emerge, as in literature, from getting us to experience other people's realities and other POVs. How this works almost defies explanation, and plenty of filmmakers, if they understand it at all, do so more viscerally than conceptually. What is inescapable is that you will need to convey POVs other than your own in your films. It is hard to ever feel you are controlling them while you shoot, and it is hard to locate them in a finished film except in an intuitive way. Luckily, POVs seem to emerge on their own whenever the maker

- Has a clear purpose for telling the tale
- Relates emotionally to the story and each of its characters, and knows why
- Knows at every point how he or she wants to move the audience

POVs, your own as well as those of your participants, evolve and clarify during the marvelous voyage of discovery called the *artistic process*. From ideation (generating and developing the central idea) to creation (researching, writing, shooting, and editing), the film's POVs will develop and strengthen as your sense of the film's identity and purpose develops. This is especially so during editing.

Let me repeat, the clearer your attitudes to your subject and to the reason for making the film, the better. This is why this book insists on self-exploration as the foundation of creative identity and creative identity as the springboard to effective filmmaking. Following are categories of POV with film examples.

I have provided an explanatory diagram for each type of POV, but you will quickly realize from viewing any of the film examples that such a diagram is a simplified view of a subtle and complex range of realities. In practice most POVs incorporate other minor POVs, and the uniqueness and force of the major viewpoint depend on the contrast with minor ones.

The camera outline in the diagrams symbolizes a recording eye and ear, but to this you must add the human hearts and intelligences guiding their attention. The lines connecting the camera, director, and participants represent their awareness of, and relationship to, each other.

Single Point of View (Character in the Film) As you can see from Figure 4-3, the film is being channeled through, or perhaps even narrated by, a main character. This person may be a bystander or major protagonist, and he or she may be observing, recounting, or enacting events. This kind of film may be a biography or, if talking in the first person, an autobiography.

The seminal work is Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922), which takes as its central figure an Eskimo hunter struggling to survive in the ultimate of hostile environments. Though shot silent and usually seen only with a musical accompaniment, it nevertheless creates a strong sense of intimacy with the hunter-gatherer Eskimo and his family. Many scenes were re-enacted for the camera, so we might classify the film as re-enacted observational cinema, if that isn't too

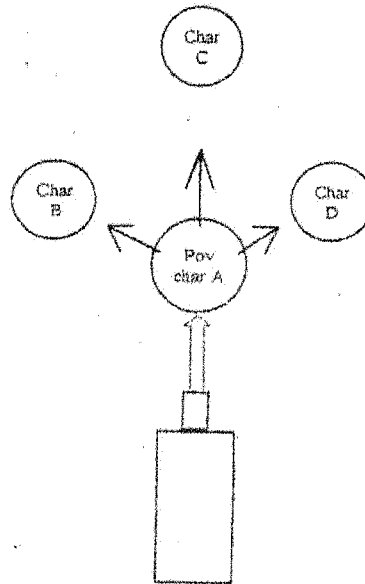


FIGURE 4-3

Diagram representing a single point of view (seeing through a character in the film).

contradictory. Yet the movie seems so true to life and made in such good faith that complaining about artifice seems ungrateful. In his later work, particularly *Louisiana Story* (1948), the passion in Flaherty's storytelling has become sentimentality and his dramatizing manipulative.

Werner Herzog's *Land of Silence and Darkness* (1971) has such a strange and fascinating subject that it can use non-intercession most of the time. It follows Fini Straubinger, a deaf-blind woman who lay in an institution for 30 years until she was taught the deaf-blind tactile language. She is on a journey to locate others as isolated and despairing as she once was herself. As the film progresses, her eerie, prophetic simplicity stresses how elemental is the need for human contact and how devastating is its absence or loss. She emerges as a gauche angel who personifies the love and nobility latent in the human spirit (Figure 4-4). Because the film includes interviews, it also uses participatory elements.

Taking a single character's POV limits a film's scope to what that person can legitimately know, understand, and represent. By making one person stand for a nation, as Nanook does, you may place too much thematic freight on a single representative. Flaherty's Nanook is an Eskimo archetype, and by using him to show man against nature, Nanook carries the burden of portraying his race as an endangered species. Having a strong historical sense of his people, Nanook



FIGURE 4-4

Through its character-within-the-film point of view, Werner Herzog's *Land of Silence and Darkness* (1971) shows that for the deaf-blind, contact with the rest of the world is by touch alone. (New Yorker Films.)

surely collaborated in this. It was an equality of authorship that declined in Flaherty's later work.

The focus on a central character produces a hero, or sometimes an antihero. Too much emphasis on individualism can imply that destiny can be challenged and thwarted individually, and its corollary is that society victimizes the dissenting individual. Flaherty's romantic idealizations, uncomfortably visible in *Man of Aran* (1934), come under sympathetic examination in George Stoney and Jim Brown's *How the Myth Was Made* (1978). This documentary is included with a DVD version of *Man of Aran*.

A partisan viewpoint mainly routed through a central character does not have to lead to the distortions of idealizing. Just be careful to include broader insights. These will make for a stronger film.

Multiple Characters Within the Film. The viewpoint represented in Figure 4-5 is of multiple characters, in which none tends to predominate. The combination of camera and editing may look *at* the other characters or *through* one person after another's consciousness of the others. Through what the seer sees, we empathically construct what he or she is feeling.

When each character represents a different constituency within the social tapestry, you build a texture of different, often counterbalancing, viewpoints like a Buckminster Fuller dome. This approach to POV is excellent for demonstrating a social process, its actors, and its outcome. This POV can be observational

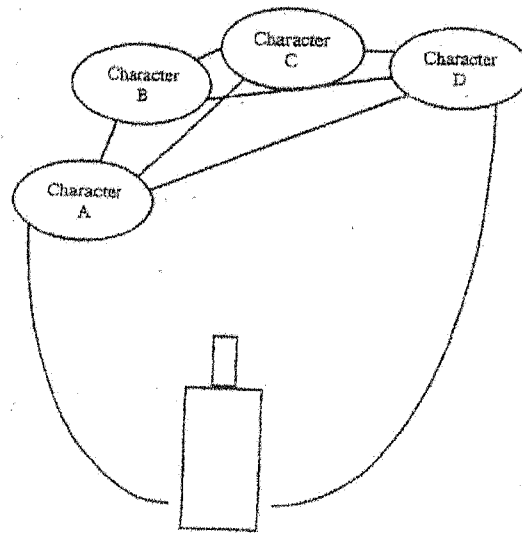


FIGURE 4-5

Diagram representing the multiple point of view. We may "see" anyone by way of anyone else's perspective.

or participatory, and is well suited to a "cross-section" film revealing cause and effect within a collective such as a family, team, business, or class of society.

Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County, USA* (1976) covers a strike by impoverished Kentucky coal miners (Figure 4-6). There are prominent characters but no ruling POV, because the central issue is exploitation and class conflict between workers and big business. Ironic protest songs carry some of the narrative forward, and these create such a powerful aura of folk tale and folk ballad that the film lives on afterward in one's memory. Shot mostly as observational cinema, there are moments—most memorably when the crew were shot at—when the filmmakers become participants in the events.

Michael Apted's *28 Up* (1986) introduces a sampling of British children across the class system and monitors how each person's view of him or herself develops over 21 years. Beginning with 7-year-olds, Apted returns thereafter every 7 years to press many of the same issues. The cool, empathic, incisive interviewing challenges even his wariest subjects to a touching scrutiny of their life's meanings. It is poignant indeed to see young people struggling with their beliefs and their demons, each wanting to believe they freely chose their destiny, yet many facing uncomfortable evidence of a path determined by their class origins. A *35 Up* and a *42 Up* followed, but in trying to cover ever more ground these films end up being less embracing. If you watch the later films and you *must* know what befalls the characters, it probably means you have come to love the characters like friends from your own youth. What more could you ask of a film?



FIGURE 4-6

Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County, USA* (1976). Music as an expression of suffering and protest adds to the many facets of the intimate characters' point of view. (Kronos International Corporation)

Omniscient. The limitations of diagramming (Figure 4-7) suggest that omniscience is mostly free camera movement. Certainly the camera is no longer limited by what one character can see or know, and the eye of the omniscient story does indeed move freely in time and space. But omniscience carries with it an unfettered, all-knowing consciousness on the part of the storyteller, like the eye of God, who is said (reliably so far as I know) to see and know all. Here the all-knowing intelligence is that of the storyteller, who takes us to any place and time in pursuit of the story. This POV is by no means an impersonal mirror, for at its best it has an outlook and moral purpose for telling the tale.

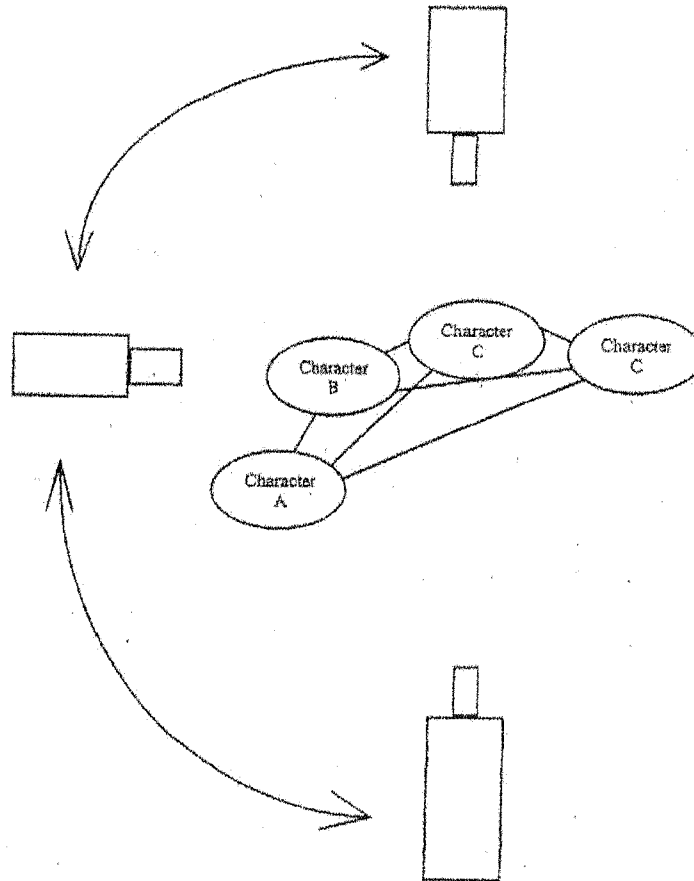


FIGURE 4-7

Diagram representing the omniscient point of view, in which the camera can move freely in time and space. The point of view isn't vested in any particular character and isn't fettered by any character's limitations or insight.

Typically narrated in the third person, the omniscient documentary will express a collective rather than a personal vision. The central organizing vision may be an institutional or corporate view or that of the filmmaker who as storyteller need make no apology or explanation onscreen.

My feeling is that documentary inherited the omniscient viewpoint from the first genre of nonfiction, the travelogue, which in turn came from the 19th-century gentleman's slide lecture. To be modest, he presented his material non-egotistically, either as science or as ethnography, and avoided all references to the first person. Most older films take this position, though not always with humility in mind. Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1937) and *Olympiad* (1938) use omniscience to camouflage an intensely partisan view of Hitler and his Germany. Riefenstahl's masterly use of narrationless documentary seems to ascribe power and inevitability to her subject, but this should be taken as a warning of what "art for art's sake" can mask. All film seeks to persuade, but films that suppress their subjectivity and gloss over the paradoxes and conflicts in the world they reflect intend to condition more than enlighten.

Pare Lorentz's *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936) and *The River* (1937) use poetic narrations that turn each film into a long, elegiac ballad, a folk form that legitimizes the films' omniscient eye and seemingly egoless atmospheres. Their powerfully aestheticized imagery (Figure 4-8) and ironic montage set up a

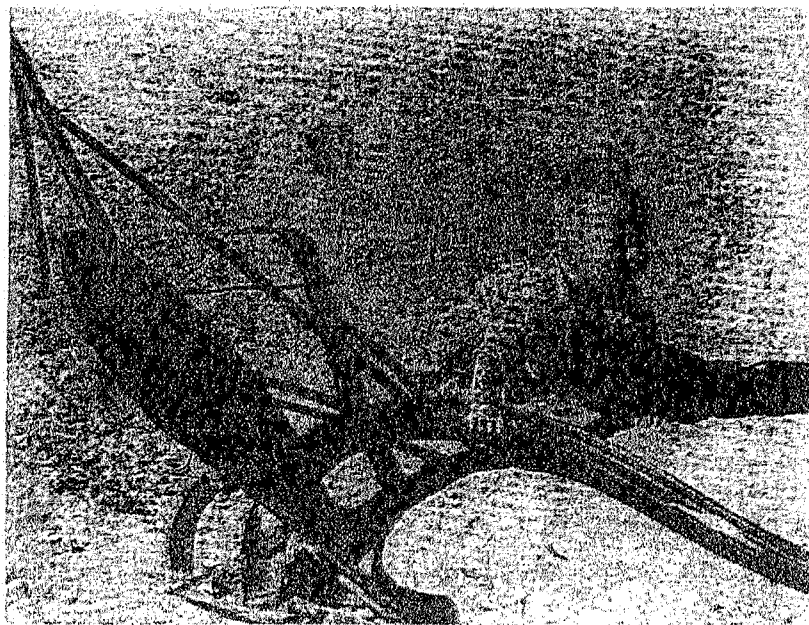


FIGURE 4-8

Pare Lorentz's *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, 1936. Stark imagery and ironic montage are used to set up a haunting vision with an omniscient point of view. (Museum of Modern Art)

unforgettable vision of a land plundered through ignorance and political opportunism. This is propaganda at its best, though my late friend and mentor Robert Edmonds, author of *Anthropology on Film* (Dayton, OH: Pflaum, 1974), would contend that all documentaries are propaganda because all seek to persuade. He liked to be provocative: all documentaries set forth an *argument*, but one that simplifies the evidence to make its conclusions unavoidable is seeking to persuade by conditioning, not argument. This is undoubtedly propaganda.

Few documentaries are set in the future, but Peter Watkins' *The War Game* (1966) appropriates a news program style to posit the nuclear bombing of London. The omniscient POV is sometimes used by an author who does not want to stand between the viewer and the film's subject. With grim impartiality, *The War Game* uses the facts of firebombing in World War II Germany to construct an infernal, incontestable vision of nuclear war and holds us mesmerized by its air of veracity. Passionately it seeks to persuade, but shunning heroics it avoids the personalizing found so often in screen treatments of disaster and forces us to include ourselves and our loved ones among the doomed. As a new parent when I first saw it, I found it nearly unbearable.

Omniscience can seem natural when a subject is complex and far reaching, such as war or race relations, where injecting an individualized storytelling POV would seem parochial or egocentric. Omniscient films put the viewer on guard whenever the film hides its credentials. This was not the case with *The War Game*, which cited all the sources for all its terrifying projections. The omniscient, all-knowing narrator who guides us through history is more worrisome, especially during those television history series that race over vast thematic and factual territory.

Powered from the resources of large corporations and using an army of production workers, the history series gravitates toward omniscience as naturally as royalty to saying "we." Thames Television's *The World at War* in the 1970s, WGBH's *Vietnam: A Television History* in the 1980s, and even Ken Burns' *The Civil War* (1990), which counterpoints contemporary accounts and photographs, all echo the textbook emphasis on facts rather than questions and issues. The ambitiousness, authorial impersonality, and apparent finality of such ventures make them suspect. Who is speaking to whom, for whom, and representing whom? Why do they suffocate historical curiosity when they should awaken it?

Not all ambitious screen history fails. *Eyes on the Prize* (1990), a PBS series from Blackside, Inc., chronicled the development of civil rights in America and managed to tread a fine line between omniscience and personal stories that spoke of passionate commitment. An openly critical film like Peter Davis' *Hearts and Minds* (1974) argues that the American obsession with sports lay behind the tragically mistaken U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. Here the viewer is on a clearer footing and can engage with the film's propositions rather than go numb under a deluge of suspiciously uninflected information.

Personal. Here the POV is unashamedly and subjectively that of the director, who may also narrate the film. A director's surrogate may still be in front of the camera as a "reporter" or catalyst, or the film may present its views in the form of a first-person or third-person essay. There are no hearts to the personal POV beyond what the author/storyteller can demonstrably see and know. In

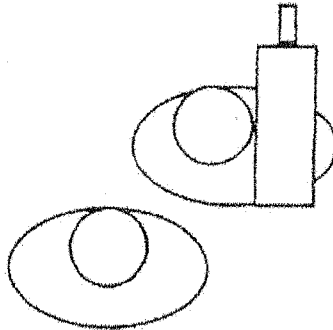


FIGURE 4-9

Diagram representing the personal point of view, in which the author/storyteller is the point of view character.

Figure 4-9 the director is behind the camera, but he or she can step forward into the visible world of the film.

Like his *Roger and Me* (1989), Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) is a personal essay in which he again plays the rumpled, naïve Everyman just trying to get a few answers. In *Columbine* he sets out to comprehend American gun culture. His questions take him to gun stores, a bank that offers a rifle as an incentive for starting an account, and Charlton Heston (the president of the National Rifle Association). Along the way he compares shooting deaths in the United States to the far lower number in Canada, which has the same ratio of guns per capita, and ponders what cultural differences could possibly explain why Americans kill each other more often. By asking deceptively simple, provocative questions, Moore sparks a series of surreal, often hilarious encounters that leave you thinking afterward about all the paradoxes.

Barbara Sonneborn's *Regret to Inform* (1998) is a personal journey to the place in Vietnam where her first husband was killed when they were young. Undertaken as an exorcism, the 10-year journey to make the film put her in touch with both American and Vietnamese war widows, and the result is a searing examination of what war does to those left behind.

Reflexive. Reflexive documentaries are those acknowledging and even investigating the effect of the documentary process on its product. The anthropologist Jay Ruby, who uses anthropological insights to assess photographs, film, and television, says that

To be reflexive is to structure a product in such a way that the audience assumes that the producer, the process of making, and the product are a coherent whole. Not only is the audience made aware of these relationships, but it is made to realize the necessity of that knowledge.¹ By sabotaging the traditional illusion

¹ Jay Ruby, "The Image Mirrored: Reflexivity and the Documentary Film," in *New Challenges for Documentary*, ed. Alan Rosenthal, 65 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988).

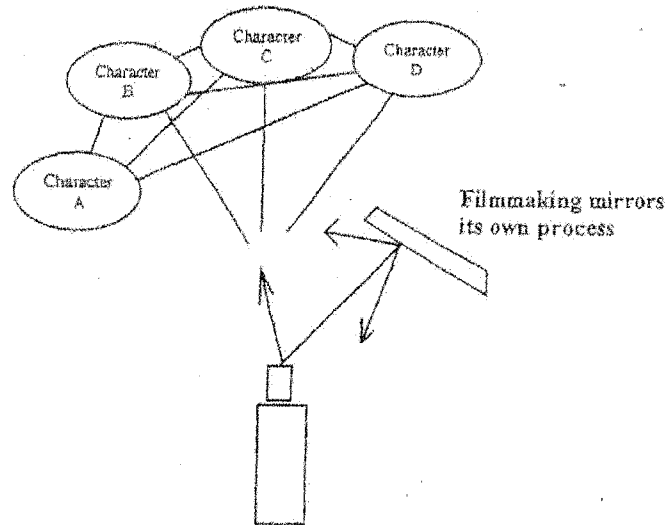


FIGURE 4-10

Diagram representing the reflexive point of view, one able to share salient aspects of the filmmaking process with the audience.

that we are watching unmediated life, reflexivity signals that films are "created, structured articulations of the filmmaker and not authentic, truthful, objective records."²

The first radical investigation of documentary language is credited to Dziga Vertov, a poet and film editor in Russia of the 1920s. By seeking to show "life as it is" in *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929), his Kino-Eye method laid the ground for *cinéma vérité* in France 40 years later. *The Man with the Movie Camera* portrays Moscow as a teeming spectacle of dialectical opposites. The exuberant camera, seemingly independent of human agency, alternately embraces the constants and contradictions of human life. Sometimes we see the camera and cameraman, sometimes we see them literally in a mirror, as in Figure 4-10. Vertov thought that the dynamics of camera and montage transcended human agency, and though we often see shots of the cameraman at work, he seems—like the dancer in *The Red Shoes*—more the camera's puppet than its master. For ideological reasons, Vertov denied personal authorship by claiming that film truth was vested in the apparatus itself—an ebullient mystification that he doesn't quite pull off. This is still a powerful belief in beginning film students, who assume that professional film equipment will make a professional-level film.

Figure 4-10 shows that the filming process includes the complex relationships between our friends, A, B, C, and D, and also lets directing, shooting, and editing acknowledge incidents in the filmmaking process itself. This I have symbolized, not too confusingly, I hope, by a mirror.

² Ibid., 74-75.

When a film exposes or analyzes the paradoxes of its own exploration, it draws the audience into the fact that major questions usually hang over every documentary. For instance, how often are we seeing not spontaneous life captured by the camera but something instigated by or for filmmaking itself?

The ethnographer Jean Rouch in his seminal *Chronicle of a Summer* (1961), made with Edgar Morin, first looked into this aspect of filmmaking when he posed the people of Paris with a fundamental question, "Are you happy?" By showing participants their own footage, he initiated a moving self-examination in his participants and a desire to go deeper. The results show Rouch's radical curiosity, his sympathy with the ordinary person's need to find meaning in life, and his willingness not only to question the medium but his own authority to use it.

Reflexivity allows the filmmaker to open doors and windows on filmmaking and to share thoughts about whatever ethical or other ambiguities have entered the process. Ethnographic filmmaking, in which the culture under study is supposed to be uncontaminated by the filmmaker's own cultural assumptions, is a prime candidate for such scrutiny. Explaining one culture for the benefit of another is inherently hazardous (if not ultimately impossible) and is fraught with lessons for all documentary makers about one person's right to represent another.

Aside from distortions, subjectivity, or misinformation there are other fascinating issues concerning the medium's boundaries. How, when, and why do we as an audience suspend disbelief? What deceptions does the medium practice on its makers? What may or may not be ethical? And so on. Plainly documentary is more of an emerging and imperfectly understood medium rather than a finished vehicle of information or advocacy for a "subject."

Self-Reflexive. The ultimate in reflexivity is self-reflexivity, in which a film can become a snake eating its own tail. Self-reflexive films reflect not only on their own process but incorporate their authors' thoughts, perceptions, and self-examination as well (Figure 4-11). For the filmmaker seeking self-administered therapy, this form can do what the pool did for Narcissus. It is a treacherous and difficult genre to pull off, but wonderfully rich when successful.

Michael Rubbo's *Sad Song of Yellow Skin* (1970) is an Australian/Canadian filmmaker's search to define Vietnam amid the flux of that country's paradoxes. By confining his attention mostly to city street kids and the young American dissidents working with them, Rubbo exposes us to the seamy side of a peasant civilization torn apart by a wealthy and technocratic occupying savior. Rubbo's ironic view of himself and the world saves his films from sentimentality.

Alan Berliner in *Nobody's Business* (1996) uses documentary to explore family history and dynamics (Figure 4-12). Approaching his crabby father to get a better understanding of his life, he is roundly repulsed—hence the film's title. Berliner senior insists adamantly that he is an ordinary man with nothing to say. Such visceral resistance drives his son to examine family film, photographs, and letters in search of the father he hardly knows. The film elaborates the strategies he uses to unravel his father's story as the son of an immigrant Jew. Along the way, the topics broaden out to include ethnicity, ethnic identity, and America as

VAT 151: Documentary Script & Treatment Examples

Candor in Comedy: Shattering the Glass Curtain
Written by Natalie Abruzzo

Synopsis: The imbalance of male vs. female in the comedy circles is staggering. In 2009, males are still dominating the comedy culture. Aside from the fact that there are indeed female legends of comedy, both past and present, there still exists a floating concept that women are not as funny as men, or are not funny at all. This documentary will explore the male dominance of the comedy circuit while expounding on the many talented women who have broken through the proverbial glass curtain to rise as stars in their fields. The perception that women are not funny seems to elude the female superstars of comedy. These women have forged ahead carving a place in history for themselves and paving the way for newer generations of women to grab their piece of the comedy pie. Comedienne's from writers, to stand ups, to sketch comedy actresses will examine their own struggles to break-down barriers, discuss how the stereotypes of female comics are morphing, and tell the audience why they continue to play the game. This documentary is a celebration of women and comedy.

Treatment: **Candor in Comedy: Shattering the Glass Curtain** opens by leading the audience to the west coast and treated to a car ride down during dusk down the PCH through Santa Monica, and across Sunset Boulevard where we see video images of the ocean, palm trees, The Beverly Hotel, RCA Records building, The Hollywood Sign, Billboards, and comedy institutions - The Groundlings Theatre, The Laugh Factory, The Comedy Store, Hollywood Improv. The LA images are seen through a car window as the car moves past the institutions ala Taxi Driver the movie. The audio has now morphed into I Love LA performed by Randy Newman. The audio track is low and there are graphics on the screen as The Second City flashes by and the audience is given the name of the institution and the year it was established. The audio track of I Love LA is brought down and the next series of clips are of The Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson. The clips come up as we see him introducing Joan Rivers, Ellen DeGeneres, Phyllis Diller, then Rita Rudner, Roseanne Barr, Lily Tomlin, Rosie O'Donnell, Paula Poundstone, Elaine Bosler. The audio of the applauding live studio audience is captured and expanded as the Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson fades.

We are then whisked away to another great city for comedy greats - Chicago and we are exposed to video images of the Chicago skyline and the comedy institution that is The Second City. The Second City image is seen through a car window as the car moves past the institution ala Taxi Driver the movie. The audio has now morphed into My Kind of Town (Chicago Is) performed by Frank Sinatra. The audio track is low and there are graphics on the

screen as The Second City flashes by and the audience is given the name of the institution and the year it was established.

The film has made it all the way to the east coast and takes the audience through the bustling streets of the comedy capital, New York City. We hear the sounds of the city - honking vehicle horns, vehicles whizzing by - and video images of taxis', busy streets, tourists, traffic lights, pedestrian crossing signs -we are then directed to images of signage outside of some of the great comedy institutions of New York City - Saturday Night Live, Late Night with David Letterman, Upright Citizen's Brigade, Caroline's on Broadway, Stand-Up New York, Gotham, The Laugh Factory - The video images are as seen through a car window as the car moves past each institution ala Taxi Driver the movie. The video images of the institutions are set to an audio track of New York, New York performed by Frank Sinatra. The audio track is low and there are graphics on the screen as each institution flashes by and the audience is given the name of the institution and the year it was established.

As the audio is brought down we are taken into the world of Saturday Night Live and there is a montage of clips of Tina Fey portraying Sarah Palin. More clips from SNL of the Weekend News Update starring Tina Fey and Amy Poehler. Images continue to showcase film scenes of Mean Girls, and Baby Mama - both films starring Tina Fey and Amy Poehler. As the clip images are brought down, the audience finds themselves sitting with Tina Fey and Amy Poehler on the set Saturday Night Live. The two are commenting on their performances and their longtime friendship and comedy collaborations. The topics of discussion with Tina Fey and Amy Poehler at this time range from their comedy influences, when they knew they were funny, what barriers have they come up against in their careers, and when they knew they had made it.

The serious topic of shattering the glass curtain arises and Tina is reminded that she has conquered a male dominated field. The clips of the big Emmy Awards wins for Tina Fey and the 30 Rock team are interspersed throughout this section giving the audience a sense of Tina's accomplishment alongside Tina as she reflects on this success. As Tina and Amy share their stories of rising with the ranks we see clips of their fellow female comedienne influences. Tina and Amy are asked what made these particular women so influential and ahead of their time, and how these women made the job of comedy look so easy.

The audience is treated to clips of the likes of Phyllis Diller, Totie Fields, Gracie Allen, Carol Burnett, Lily Tomlin, Joan Rivers, Elaine Bosler, Rita Rudner, Paula Poundstone, Whoopi Goldberg, Roseanne Barr, Janeane Garofalo, Rosie O'Donnell, etc.

60.

We move from Tina and Amy to delve into the world's of these comedy giants. Phyllis Diller, Joan Rivers, and Carol Burnett reflect on their beginnings, their peers, and the struggles with the glass curtain. The lovely ladies of laughter bring the audience into the many facets of comedy - discussing writing, stand-up, variety shows, sketch comedy, television sit-coms, the casting couch, the shift in stereotypes of female comedians, and whether they could have made a success of their acts in today's comedy circles.

The audio is brought up and an MTV-like music video-esque clip is run and the images are of the new generation of comediennees - these young, hot, ball-busting, chicks as we see video clips of their stage presence and performances. The audio track is blaring - Bootylicious by Destiny's Child - The likes of Sandra Bernhard, Chelsea Handler, Sarah Silverman, Leslie Mann, Maya Rudolph, and Kristen Wiig have arrived and they're not your mom's comedienne of 20 years ago. These ladies are toned, tanned, and tousled. They are ready for anything. We sit with each of them and they chat about their experiences, influences, reason for getting in the game of comedy, and how the game has changed from their perspective.

Maya Rudolph and Kristen Wiig, both Saturday Night Live cast members speak briefly about Tina Fey and Amy Poehler's successes and what they hope to learn from all of the great women that have graced the SNL stage. This is a lead-in to clips of the television shows 30 Rock, and Parks and Recreation. Clips are shown and we are given a briefing of how the television shows came to be and how they are feeling about their careers, families, and futures.

As **Candor in Comedy: Shattering the Glass Curtain** winds down, we close out the images with Carol Burnett's famous tug on her ear, and then Gracie Allen takes us out with a silly "Good night, Gracie." The clip fades out, the audio fades-up and it is New York, New York performed by Frank Sinatra once again. The song is at the end and the lyric is c'mon, come through, New York, New York. We fade to black. The End

61.

Candor in Comedy: Shattering the Glass Curtain
 Written by Natalie Abruzzo

Video	Audio
Black	Fade up Music: Randy Newman -
Fade up Car ride POV car window Pacific Coastal Highway ocean view	I Love LA
Lower Third: Candor in Comedy: Shattering the Glass Curtain A Film by Natalie Abruzzo	Music: Randy Newman - I Love LA
Cut to Car ride POV car window Santa Monica	Music: Randy Newman - I Love LA
Cut to Car ride POV car window Sunset Blvd., Billboards	Music: Randy Newman - I Love LA
Cut to series of shots Car ride POV car window billboards	Music: Randy Newman - I Love LA
Cut to Car ride POV car window Palm Trees	Music: Randy Newman - I Love LA
Cut to Car ride POV car window The Beverly Hotel	Music: Randy Newman - I Love LA
Cut to aerial views of the RCA building, Hollywood Sign	Music: Randy Newman - I Love LA
Cut to Car ride POV car window The Groundlings	Music: Randy Newman - I Love LA

62

window Gotham Comedy Club	New York, New York
<u>Lower Third:</u> Gotham Comedy Club Established 1996 <u>Fade out</u>	Music: Frank Sinatra New York, New York <u>Fade out music</u>
<u>Fade up</u> Saturday Night Live clip - Tina Fey as Sarah Palin	TINA FEY as Sarah Palin
<u>Cut to</u> Saturday Night Live clip - Tina Fey and Amy Poehler Weekend Update	TINA FEY and AMY POEHLER anchoring Weekend Update
<u>Cut to</u> Mean Girls the movie - clip of Tina Fey and Amy Poehler	TINA FEY and AMY POEHLER Mean Girls the movie
<u>Cut to</u> Baby Mama the movie - clip of Tina Fey and Amy Poehler	TINA FEY and AMY POEHLER Baby Mama the movie
<u>Cut to</u> Tina Fey and Amy Poehler	TINA FEY and AMY POEHLER: "answer questions and comment on their performances, long- time friendship, and comedy collaborations"
Tina Fey and Amy Poehler	TINA FEY and AMY POEHLER: "comedy influences, when they knew they were funny, barriers to their success,

03.

	when they knew they made it"
Tina Fey and Amy Poehler	TINA FEY and AMY POEHLER: "how they have shattered the glass curtain"
<u>Cut to</u> Emmy Awards Show clips for 30 Rock team wins highlights	30 Rock Emmy Award Show Emmy wins acceptance highlights
<u>Cut to</u> Tina Fey	TINA FEY: "comfort level with her success"
Tina Fey and Amy Poehler	TINA FEY and AMY POEHLER: "answering questions about their fellow female comediennes like what makes them so incredible and ahead of their time"
<u>Cut to</u> Montage of Performances by Phyllis Diller, Totie Fields, Gracie Allen, Carol Burnett, Lily Tomlin, Joan Rivers, Elaine Boosler, Rita Rudner, Paula Poundstone, Whoopi Goldberg, Roseanne Barr, Janeane Garofalo, and Rosie O'Donnell at different stages of their	Music: Helen Reddy - I am Woman PHYLLIS DILLER, TOTIE FIELDS, GRACIE ALLEN, CAROL BURNETT, LILY TOMLIN, JOAN RIVERS, ELAINE BOOSLER, RITA RUDNER, PAULA POUNDSTONE, WHOOPIE GOLDBERG, ROSEANNE BARR, JANEANE GAROFALO, ROSIE O'DONNELL montage of

64.

BLUE WATER HUNTERS TREATMENT

Safari. We open with a fade up onto the grasslands and savannahs of the Serengeti and experience a soul-stirring feeling of space. A jeep tears across the countryside chasing game, the hunters are standing and urging the drivers to push the vehicle to its limits. The jeep cuts through a stream, water splashes over the camera and a 30-foot fishing boat picks up where it left off, bounding over waves. The hunters stand at the bow urging the ship's captain to push the vehicle past its limit. A boat named the "Thrill Savvy" is pulling away from shore, the coastline shrinks & disappears. The boat far from land is alone on the water. ^{spell}

MONTAGE - A group of men begin suiting up for a dive. We see wetsuits, SCUBA tanks and their weapons 67in spear-guns being loaded and foot-long diving knives being slid into ankle sheaths. Each diver is given four second Picture Credit introduction and we meet Chad Mayweather, Francisco Ferreras, Manny Puig, Jeff Wyatt, "Jewfish" Joe Felicione, Al Schnepershoff, Tom Hanson, and Terry Maas.

ed objective
stonee During this segment we learn about the basics, the origins of and the attraction to the sport from the divers. ^{POV} In near unison the divers enter the water. ^{we} Interview with Chad Mayweather, ^{who} is a diver seated on the boat's portside rail. Francisco Ferreras & Manny Puig take deep breaths and dive. Montage of Manny Puig in action while a picture in picture interview plays.

From the boat's aft, the dive shop and the pier, we learn about the risks of Blue Water Hunting. A series of quick clips showing spear hits and misses. ^{we followed by} Assorted video clips and photos of injuries. Jeff Wyatt shows off his battle scar.

VIDEO	AUDIO
Establishing shot and Title card of California's Catalina island.	
A boat pulling away from shore, the coastline shrinks & disappears. The boat far from land is alone on the water.	The boat engine drones on as water rhythmically splashes under its bow.
MONTAGE - A group of men begin suiting up for a dive. We see wetsuits, SCUBA tanks &...	JK: My wife is going to kill me, I promised her we'd go to Europe. Laughter.
Their weapons 67in spearguns being loaded and foot-long diving knives being slid into ankle sheaths.	Natural sound the weapons clinking & clanking and the ocean sounds grow louder.
In near unison the divers enter the water.	^{VO} NARRATOR: From the instant you leave the safety of the boat & slip beneath the waves...
Chad Mayweather is a diver seated on the boats portside rail. <i>do we see a lower-third with his name?</i>	NARRATOR: Why risk life & limb just to catch a fish? CM: If you have to ask, you've never tried it.
Game fish of varying types are going back & forth.	NARRATOR: Even more extreme is Free diving. Diving sans tanks, with only as much air as you can suck in.
Francisco Ferreras & Manny Puig take deep breath's and dive.	NARRATOR: Skilled divers can hold their breath up to 90 secs. FF and MP have been under for 4 plus minutes.
Montage of Manny Puig.	NARRATOR: Called "Tarzan of the Sea" Puig wrestles his big fish. Perched on a boats aft, he will jump on the back of a passing shark or alligator.
A series of quick clips showing spear hits and misses.	NARRATOR: Aim is even more Critical.
Assorted video clips and photos of injuries.	NARRATOR: Instant kill or "Stone shots" are rare. Bad shots can leave big fish with enough "go juice" to swim for hours. Large tuna have cooked themselves as result of this exertion. <i>nasty</i>
Jeff Wyatt shows off his battle scar.	NARRATOR: Spearguns fire shafts that pierce a car door. JW: My spear missed by 2ft, the marlin whipped its head, severed my line and carved a huge chunk from my leg
A closer look at the Snorkels.	NARRATOR: Snorkels have double tubes, purge valves and collection areas.
A closer look at Masks.	NARRATOR: Low-volume masks greatly reduce the amount of air lost to mask-pressure equalization.
A closer look at Wet suits.	NARRATOR: The padded chest looks ridiculous, but it lets reload the speargun without cracking a rib.
A closer look at Fins.	NARRATOR: Carbon fiber & lightweight materials help divers gain "down time". The boost helps when

Diners: America's Roadside Attractions

December 20, 2001 - Produced & written by Fred Lacey

Video

Audio

FADE UP EXT DINER (Maggie's diner)	MUSIC UP (Buddy Holly "Peggy Sue")
INT DINER CU PIES under glass counter - tilt up to MS Waitress delivering milkshake	MUSIC PLAYS along with NAT SOUND
CU CUSTOMER #1 in Booth eating dinner - looks up	
TWO SHOT FRIENDS in booth chatting with Customer #1	
MS DOLLY DOWN AISLE (camera passes customers in booths)	MUSIC & NAT SOUND UNDER NARRATOR VO: Maggie's diner, just off the New York turnpike has been serving up burgers and shakes since 1930
TRACKING SHOT MS WAITRESS with tray	Maggie's Diner hasn't changed much in the 70 years it's been in open. Customers can still get friendly service,
CAMERA FOLLOWS TRAY as she sets it down in front of a customer.	good food, and an atmosphere that takes us back to a time of innocence and youth.
MS WAITRESS scooping ice cream	CHUCK HAINES VO: "I remember when I was 8 years old, having my first milkshake.
CU MILKSHAKE MACHINE	
CU CHUCK HAINES	I was sitting right over at that counter. I took one taste and I thought I'd died and gone to heaven."
FADE to BLACK	
FADE UP MS SMILING WOMAN in passenger seat (B&W 1940s Ford commercial)	MUSIC UP (1940s "Two Lovebirds")
MS MAN DRIVING (from same commercial)	NARRATOR VO: Early in the 20 th century, America began a love affair that still burns today.
TRACKING SHOT CAR with couple	America fell in love with the automobile.

The 10 Rules Of Copyright for Screenwriters

By Elliot Grove From his book: *WRITE AND SELL THE HOT SCRIPT*

I am not a lawyer. Nothing in this chapter should be construed as legal advice and is presented for educational purposes only. Please see a lawyer.

Copyright law around the world is based on a simple premise – surrounding the planet earth there is a cloud of spirituality, of ideas. Any two people at the same time can pull down the same idea. And ideas are free.



What is copyrightable is the expression of the idea, be it as a poem, sculpture, libretto, novel or script. Sometimes, the difference between what is an expression of an idea and what is an idea can become complicated. Lawyers love the billings they make for cases such as this.

Basically, two screenwriters can come up with the same

storyline for a movie. They write two very different screenplays, but the storyline idea (which cannot be copyright protected) cannot be disputed.

I have taught enough screenwriters in enough countries to know that if you are reading this, you are getting pretty paranoid by now. Please force yourself to finish reading this chapter, so you can develop a positive mental attitude towards copyright.

Many writers and artists labour under the misconception that they must fill out an official form, and write the letter '©' in order to assert their claim for ownership of the copyright. In fact, all countries recognize that the artist owns copyright from the moment it is created.

The difficulty arises in proving that ownership is a court of law.

Protecting Your Screenplay

1. Protecting the idea

You cannot protect an idea. This is the whole point of copyright law. Your first task after coming up with a great idea for a movie is to write as detailed an account of your

idea as possible. Generally, a page or two is not sufficient. A judge may be unable to distinguish your ideas from your competitors. Three pages are better, but I recommend ten. After all, you have an idea for a movie that will end up being 90 to 120 pages long. Surely you can outline the key points in ten pages.

2. Ownership

You own the copyright of your script or treatment the moment it is created. Suppose you are in your ivory tower, typing your 100-page screenplay. You are on a complete roll, when suddenly, near the bottom of page 99 you hear the two most dreaded words a screenwriter will ever hear bouncing up the walls of your ivory tower – 'Honey! Dinner!' You race down for dinner, storm through your food, and race back to your typewriter only to discover that an erstwhile copyright thief has taken the 99- page manuscript from you, and typed a new page hundred and is now claiming ownership of the script. The question of ownership would be defeated in court in this example. You created the screenplay (minus page 100) and you own the copyright. The only way that you lose the copyright is by assigning the title of the screenplay to someone else, presumably for a wad of cash. The difficulty is in proving that you own the copyright.

3. Creating the birth certificate

Screenwriters can apply to have their script registered upon completion, in a similar way that parents apply for a birth certificate for their newborns. It is called Certificate of Registration, and is available from the Writers Guild of America at www.wga.org

At the time of writing, the fee is a modest \$20.00. Send a copy of the final version of the screenplay. For you money, you will receive a letter with the date your script was received long with a serial number (to assist in file retrieval). Keep this number confidential.

Other writers register their scripts with the United States Copyright Office. You can check the current fees from www.loc.gov/copyright or call (202) 707 3000.

Other art organizations in the UK, the trade union BECTU and Raindance (<http://www.raindance.co.uk/>) provide the service free to its members.

Now you can promote and market your script to your hearts content knowing that you are able to prove the date of creation.

4. Proving ownership

However, there is an additional piece of administrative detail, which you must attend to in order to back up the birth certificate. Should you ever go to court in a copyright dispute with another writer, or with a producer who you suspect of using your script with permission, you need to prove that you are the one who registered the screenplay. In property transaction, this is called “chain of title,” where your solicitor will look at the deeds of the house you are buying and trace all the previous owners back in time to make sure that the title has no unpaid mortgages, liens for city taxes and so on. Screenplays are classed as intellectual property, and the laws governing the trading of intellectual property are similar to those governing real estate transaction.

Screenwriters also need to prove chain of title, although it is less formal than in property dealing. You have to keep a formal record of everyone you speak to about your screenplay.

For more details on how to manage and maintain chain of title, see **Appendix I**.

5. Ten thousand monkeys

American scientists proved the theory of ‘Isn’t it amazing about the common currency of ideas in circulation’ with an experiment in the South Pacific. There they found six islands, on which lived a unique species of monkey, totaling about 10,000. One fifth of the island grew sweet potatoes; a very good food for monkeys – but none of the monkeys ate sweet potatoes. Approximately six hundred monkeys lived on the sixth island – the one without sweet potatoes. The scientists introduced sweet potatoes, trained few monkeys to dig up the potatoes, take them to the ocean and wash them, and then eat them. A very strange thing happened when approximately a hundred of the six hundred monkeys were digging up the sweet potatoes, taking them to the ocean and washing them and eating them. Suddenly, the monkeys on the other islands started to dig up sweet potatoes, take them to the ocean to wash them and eat them.

Isn’t it amazing about the common currency of ideas in circulation?

When I moved to London from Toronto in 1986, I was used to being a Lone Ranger. In Toronto, if I had an idea for literally anything, I would be isolated by all my acquaintances (I didn’t really have ‘friends’) because they thought me, with my crazy ideas, quite weird. But when I moved to London, not fully appreciating the difference in size, and the broad depth of this cosmopolitan and multi-cultural city, I suddenly felt at one with a huge number of unseen friends. And whenever I have an idea I would read about it in the newspaper the very next day – pretty scary for a writer.

Remember that whatever your idea for a movie is, I can guarantee you that at least a dozen other people in the world right now have exactly the same idea. The only difference is that you are reading this book and attempting to better way to get it out onto paper. Remember that all ideas are basically sound. What makes an ordinary idea exciting is the way you bend, reshape and state the idea. The expression of the idea is yours, and yours alone. The bolder and fresher you can be, the more valuable your idea will be in the market place.

6. Misfortune

What if you have a great idea for a movie, register it for copyright, and voilà – someone else is making the movie? What would you do? Sue? Commit suicide? Give up writing?

Misfortune is a weird and dangerous thing. Consider this true story of a writing friend of mine in London. She came up with a concept for a television show based on the true-life experiences of people living alone, but sharing accommodation. In order to secure stories, she placed ads in London’s famous Time Out magazine advertising for people to write in with their stories. She prepared a questionnaire for potential participants, which she returned to each person who responded to the ad. This process took place over an extensive period of time. Just as she was approaching her goal of getting the right mix of people for her series of shows, she was summoned to New York on an urgent family matter. While there she picked up a *Village Voice*, where to her amazement saw an ad that was worded identically to hers. She responded and received a questionnaire exactly like the one she had prepared in London, some eighteen months earlier. Back in London, she conferred with an entertainment attorney, another good friend of mine. He told her that she had a case for copyright infringement, which he was willing to pursue for nothing, as a favour. Hard costs would be \$5,000 to \$10,000. As she didn’t happen to have that much cash lying around for a speculative enterprise as this, he advised her to pass. Even if she won her case she would still have to prove that she had suffered financial damages. As it was difficult to see how a classified ad in New York

could possibly infringe on a television show destined for the United Kingdom, she decided to let go. A few months later, the trades announced the production start of a movie I cannot name for legal reasons, but roughly the story of single Caucasian females.

My friend had a great attitude to this misfortune. She shrugged her shoulders and simply said that it proved that her ideas were commercially viable, and she moved on.

7. Waiver letters and submission release

Sometimes when you submit a script to a production company, they will send your script back with a letter that they want you to sign. The letter basically states that they want you to cast aside your legal right to sue then for copyright infringement if they ever make a film resembling in any way your screenplay.

My advice is simple. If you don't feel comfortable with the letter don't sign it. The film company will not read your script. Go find someone else. Of course, I believe that astute writers understand that these waivers are designed by film companies, not to make it easier to plunder screenplays, but to defend them from dishonest screenwriters. Either way you look at it, don't do anything until you feel comfortable.

For how to draft a submission release, see **Appendix II**.

8. Non-disclosure agreements

Pitching ideas blind to a film company can be considered a form of an open invitation to thieve your ideas. A non-disclosure agreement is a binding contract where each party agrees not to discuss their ideas with anyone else unless certain pre-agreed conditions are met.

To get tooled up on non-disclosure agreements, see **Appendix III**.

9. Acquiring right to a true life story

Writers will often become aware if a true-life story based on a newspaper account or television news piece. In order to acquire the screenplay rights to a person's true-life story, you need to approach the individual directly and secure their written permission to base a screenplay on their life.

Probably the easiest way to contact this person is through the journalist who originally created the story. Through this contact, approach the individual directly, and see if you can persuade them to allow you to write the story of their life.

There are certain laws governing the stories of criminals. Most countries will not allow a criminal to profit from any

story about their crime, through the American 'Son of Sam' laws or similar. If you are contacting a criminal, make sure you engage the service of an entertainment attorney who can offer expert advice.

Here is a sample letter you can use when contacting someone:

Letter:

Person
Company
dd/mm/yy

Re: [Title of your project(s) of scenenplay(s)]

Dear Sir or Madam:

I write to inquire whether the theatrical and film rights to your story are available.

I was able to get your contact details from {name of reporter of journalist}.

Your powerful and unique story touched me greatly and feels deeply that your story should be shared with others.

I would appreciate it if you could contact me at your earliest convenience at [telephone number]. Please feel free to reverse the charges.

Yours sincerely,
[Your name]

10: Urban Myths

Putting your script into a self-addressed registered mail envelop to yourself simply doesn't cut it. You need to give your script to a registered third party.

Fade Out

Take your time to understand the structure of copyright.

Never tell anyone an idea until you have written it down as completely as possible and registered it.

Be professional. Keep track, by letter, of everyone you have discussed your screenplay with.

Make absolutely certain that you have necessary permission before you start writing.

About Elliot Grove

Elliot Grove founded Raindance Film Festival in 1993, the British Independent Film Awards in 1998, and Raindance.TV in 2007.



He has produced over 150 short films, and 5 feature films. He has written eight scripts, one of which is currently in pre-production. His first feature film, TABLE 5 was shot on 35mm and completed for a total of £278.38. He teaches writers and producers in the UK, Europe, Japan and America.

He has written three books which have become industry standards: RAINDANCE WRITERS LAB 2nd Edition (Focal Press 2008), RAINDANCE PRODUCERS LAB (Focal Press 2004) and 130 PROJECTS TO GET YOU INTO FILMMAKING (Barrons 2009). His first novel THE BANDIT QUEEN is scheduled for publication next year.

Appendix I – Chain of Title

Each time you meet someone and discuss your screenplay, make sure you obtain their business card or contact details and send them the following letter:

Letter:

To: Elliot Grove
Raindance
81 Berwick Street
London W1F 8TW

Dd/mm/yy

Dear Elliot,

It was a pleasure meeting you at the cinema last night, and I enjoyed discussing with you my forthcoming screenplay 'Top Title.'

I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]

Mail a copy to the person you met. That person will probably toss your letter into the bin whilst muttering 'Nutbar...I never agreed to work with that writer!'

But what you have established is the start of written contact with that person. By their silence, they have given tacit approval to your letter, and the start of a written contact is born. Later, if you discover that this person is making a movie without you, then you can get you attorney or solicitor to write them a letter stating in effect:

Letter:

To: Elliot Grove
Raindance
81 Berwick Street
London W1F 8TW

Dd/mm/yy

Dear Elliot,

After my client spoke to you on dd/mm/yy. I am surprised to hear that you are making a film based on their idea without them.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[Your attorney's name]

A producer or director faced with a letter like this will have to immediately deal with you claim to ownership or risk losing their investors with the threat of expensive litigation.

Sometimes, in situations like this, you will get a response like 'Isn't it amazing about the common currency of ideas in circulation? Our idea is similar, but not identical to yours. Please go away.' Or 'Pass!'

Now you are going totally paranoid. I know it! Persons know you have somehow stolen your idea and are ripping you off before they have seen your screenplay.

Writers must be prepared for this, and it is not as outlandish as it seems. The film executive who tells you this has probably heard a thousand pitches. Even if he or she can't quite remember whether they have heard your pitch before, they will pass even if they think it sounds like another idea they have heard. They do this because they are very concerted about litigious writers pressing a claim for ownership. Life is too short to contemplate litigation.

As I mentioned above, the entire world's copyright laws are based on the concept that ideas are free and can be accessed by anyone. Indeed, copyright law contemplates the likelihood that more than one person can have the same idea at the same time.

Remember, it is the expression of the idea that is copyrightable.

Appendix II – Submission Release

A submission release looks like this:

Letter:

Person
Company
Town
Code

Re: [Title of material submitted], Number of pages

Dear Sir or Madam

Enclosed I am submitting to you literacy works/screenplay [insert title] for your consideration

under the following express understanding and conditions.

1. I hereby confirm that I am submitting the enclosed material voluntarily. I hereby agree that you are under no obligation to me regarding this material unless you and I have signed a written agreement that will then become the only contact between us.
2. I hereby confirm that any discussions, whether oral or written, between us regarding the enclosed material shall not be construed to form an agreement regarding the purchase of said material.
3. I hereby confirm that should the enclosed material not be new or original, or if you have already received material similar to [insert title] from others, or from you employees, then I agree that you will in no way be liable to me for use of this material and I do not expect to be paid for such.
4. I hereby confirm that if you product or distribute a television show(s) or movie(s) based on the same general themes, ideas, situations, geographical setting, period of history or characters as those presented to you today then I agree that you will in no way be liable to me for use of this material and I do not expect to be paid for such.

I hereby confirm that but for my agreement to the above terms and conditions, you would not agree to accept and consider the material [insert title] submitted to you today.

Yours faithfully,
[insert name and signature of writer, date, address and contact telephone]

Appendix III – Nondisclosure Agreements

When you go to a pitch meeting with a film company, you may be asked to pitch ideas to them. Of course, ideas are free and cannot be copyrighted. Some writers know this beforehand, and only reveal ideas they have already written down and have registered. Other writers fee constrained by this, and like to 'pitch from the hip' – firing off idea that pops into their head. In order to protect yourself, it is wise to ask the executives to read and sign a simple letter acknowledging that A. you were present at their office on a specific date; B. that you pitched them

several ideas; C. if they use any of the ideas you expect to be paid; and D. all parties agree to enter into a formal agreement at a mutually agreed time in the near future.

This letter, when signed, affords the writer some protection against a shrewd, but a sly film producer, trying to wheedle an idea for the next *Blair Witch Project* out of you for nothing, unless you have a really hot script. Then, every producer you speak to will sign your agreement.

Letter:

Re: [Title of your project(s) of screenplay(s)]

Dear Sir or Madam:

This letter confirms that I am presenting to you ideas today, and delivering to you certain manuscripts, storyboards and documents for your consideration under the following terms and conditions:

1. Authorized use: The Prospective Purchaser may review the enclosed documents and the project to determine the suitability and desirability of entering into an agreement with [you name] and [company name]. Before Prospective Purchaser, an employee or any representative of the Prospective Purchaser shall view the Documents the Prospective Purchaser shall require each individual who will review the documents to read this agreement and sign an agreement identical to this.
2. The Prospective Purchaser agrees that no one shall receive copies of the documents, or shall be verbally told of the documents unless that person too signs this agreement.
3. Time limits: If the Prospective Purchaser decides not to enter into an agreement by [insert date], then the Prospective Purchaser agrees to return the enclosed documents and all copies made by registered express delivery to: [insert your name and address] within 24 hours.
4. Damages: Since the concepts, characters and documents relating to the project are valuable to [insert you name and company] if the Prospective Purchaser discloses breaches this agreement then the Prospective Purchaser shall pay to [insert you name and company] the amount of [insert the value of your project].
5. Should the Prospective Purchaser agree to proceed with a deal based on the Documents, and then both parties agree to sign a long form contract at a time mutually convenient.

[Signature/Date/Witnessed by/Date]

About.com Film / TV Careers

Five Tips to Help You Sell Your Film or TV Pitch

Don't Let Your Pitch Kill Your Project!

From Phil Breman, for About.com

Five Tips to Help You Sell Your Film or TV Pitch

Don't Let Your Pitch Kill Your Project!

Film and television writers sell their ideas to the studios through the process of "pitching." A pitch is roughly a ten to twenty minute period in which a writer will express the concept or world of their idea, the characters that inhabit it, and the basic storyline of the movie or pilot episode.

It's a nervewracking process because you simply don't know what type of reaction you're going to get until you've laid your idea (as well as your heart and soul) on the table for all to see.

That said, coming up with an idea that will make an executive jump out of their chairs is hard enough. The last thing you want to do is kill a great idea because you blew the pitching process.

Having been both a writer and a development executive, I've been lucky enough to have seen both sides of the table. There are a number of common mistakes that will kill your project, or at least hurt its chances for success. So, here are five tips that will help you dramatically improve your next pitch meeting:

Be Prepared

It amazes me the number of writers who come in to a pitch meeting who are totally unprepared to pitch their own idea. They try to "wing it" by making stuff up in the meeting rather than having their idea fully fleshed out before entering the room.

Take the time to fully understand your concept. Know the world you intend to create as well as the characters you plan to have inhabit that world. Be clear on why you chose these particular people. What makes them interesting? Why would an audience want to watch them? These are questions you should already know the answers to well before going in.

Additionally, no one will judge you if you need to have a set of notes at your side when you're pitching. They can come in quite handy to make sure you're hitting all of your key points as well as not leaving out anything pertinent.

Know Your Audience

Where you're pitching is just as important as what you're pitching. Know the past projects of the places you're pitching to. If the company you're meeting with is mainly known for its horror movies, chances are they're not going to be all that receptive to your idea for a romantic comedy.

If you're pitching to a network (broadcast or cable), know what else they have on air. You should familiarize yourself with their line up so you can have a better idea of the "tone" of their shows as well as the demographic they are targeting.

Don't Oversell

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Depending on your idea, your pitch should be reasonably short and sweet. Keep it under fifteen minutes if possible saving the rest of the time to go over a few other details about your concept as well as to answer any questions that the potential buyers might have.

Hit your target points: concept, characters, story. That's it. Anything more than that and you're likely overselling your idea and boring your audience.

Realize as well that more is not always better. If the executives like your idea, they'll make the deal no matter how much swag you leave them.

Be Respectful

Few things annoy executives more than writers who are disrespectful (and obviously, vice versa -- but that's for another article). This can include anything from showing up late, being arrogant about the concept you're pitching, or ignoring, or worse, mocking projects they have developed in the past. Keep your opinions to yourself -- or at least until you're in the parking lot.

Practice Your Pitch

This technically falls under Be Prepared, but it deserves its own heading because there are so few writers who take the advice. Practice your pitch. Yes, this means create your pitch and then run it by a few friends, co-workers, relatives, the family pet, whomever. It's essential that you have a structured speech that will allow you to get out everything about your idea that you need to in a reasonable amount of time.

By practicing, you'll also be able to identify those areas where your pitch drags, gets confusing, or simply fails to sufficiently sell your concept. Find a group of friends that might be willing to give you some constructive criticism. Realize that if they can't follow your pitch, it's highly unlikely an executive will either.

Selling your ideas in Hollywood is no easy task. But if you follow the tips outlined above, your chances for success will greatly improve.

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Pitching Tips

PITCHING TIPS
by Aaron Mendelsohn

(The following article is about pitching film ideas, but the principles involved can be applied to pitching fiction and non-fiction.)



- Conference Home Page
- Welcome
- Intro
- Prices
- On-line Registration
- Conference Program
- Advertising
- 2009 Agent, Editor, Film Bios
- 2009 Speaker Bios
- Daily Schedule
- Workshops
- Links
- Events
 - Thursday Night
 - Friday Night
 - Saturday Night
- Submissions
 - Advanced Critique
 - Actors Lab
- Pitching
 - Pre-Conference Pitching Workshop
 - Pitching Tips
 - Pitching With the Pros
 - Pitch Practice
- Silent Auction
- Scholarships
- Success Stories
- Sponsors
- Conference Committee
- FAQ
- Hotel and Travel Info
- WW Home Page

THE QUICK PITCH

You get that elusive agent on the phone, or you find yourself in an elevator with Steven Spielberg, and you have exactly thirty seconds to convince them to read your script. Will you be ready?

Keys to a successful Quick Pitch

Mention the genre. Is it a drama? Action film? Screwball romantic comedy?

Set up your main character(s), his or her world, goal and flaw. Example: "Tough but thick-headed New York cop arrives in Los Angeles thinking he's going to reconcile with his estranged wife, who's turned into a yuppie working for a powerful L.A. firm..."

Hit them with the hook of your movie, and leave them wanting more. To finish the example: "...When the cop arrives at the office building where his wife works, he finds that it's been taken over by a ruthless bunch of high-tech thieves, and his wife and her co-workers have been taken hostage. It's up to the hero to use his gritty New York cop instincts to single-handedly take out the bad guys and rescue the woman he loves." (Can you guess the movie?)

As an exclamation point, it doesn't hurt to do the ol' "it's something-meets-something" trick. It's the Sixth Sense meets American Beauty. Or it's Gladiator set on Mars. Just don't reference movies that were flops. Saying your movie is Alamo meets Battlefield Earth probably won't get you too many hits.

It's critical that you're able to summarize your film in a couple of sentences. If you can't, you might have an over-complicated script on your hands (which is different from a complex script).

THE FIVE MINUTE PITCH

You're at a Pitch-Your-Script seminar, or you get a meeting with a producer, and he wants to hear your three best ideas. Your goal is to get them to read your script. You have a little more room to breathe, but you don't want to bore them with too many details. What do you do?

Imagine you're telling a friend about a really great movie you saw. That's the Five Minute Pitch. It's like you're pitching the trailer to your script.

Keys to a successful Five Minute Pitch

Mention the genre.

Take some time to set up your main character(s), his or her world, goal and flaw. "A baby is accidentally brought back to the North Pole by Santa Claus, where he's raised by elves..." Go into more detail. Mention some of the supporting characters and maybe a subplot

Deliver the hook. "The man, who only knows how to be an elf, decides to leave the North Pole and go to New York City to seek out his real father and his destiny."

Touch upon some of the key plot points and set pieces. Don't go into too much detail. If it's a comedy, highlight the funny stuff (and try to get them to laugh). If it's an action movie, mention some of the action sequences.

Be vague about the ending or leave them hanging. Make it so they have to read your script to find out what happens.

Practice beforehand.

THE BIG PITCH

A producer liked the writing in one of your scripts and wants to meet with you to hear other ideas. You have a killer idea for the next American Pie. If he likes your pitch, he'll take you into the studio, and maybe you'll sell the damn thing and get paid to write the script. It happens every day in Hollywood. It can happen to you.

A typical Big Pitch runs fifteen to twenty minutes. Here you really have room to spread your wings, but also to put the guy asleep. An effective Big Pitch has just the right amount of details and is delivered in a smooth, entertaining way.

Keys to a successful Big Pitch

Chit chat for a few minutes before you start. Let the person you're meeting with get to know you. Ask questions and engage them. When you feel sufficiently relaxed, start the pitch.

Mention the genre.

Spend a fair amount of time setting up your main character(s), his or her world, goal and flaw. Go into more detail. Feel free to discuss supporting characters and set up subplots, but don't overcomplicate the pitch.

Deliver the hook.

Go through the major plot points and set pieces of the second act. Who is the antagonist? What are the challenges your protagonist faces? Is there a love story? You can go into more detail, but don't get bogged down. Don't worry about mentioning every beat of the story. If you sense their eyes are glazing over, pick up the pace (without sounding like you're rushing).

Mention emotional and physical stakes as you go. What is your hero learning? How is the story escalating?

It's hard to jump back and forth between your main plot and subplots. If you feel you need to pitch a subplot, consider taking a moment to pitch it straight through from beginning to end. Get it out of the way, and get back to pitching the main plot.

Build to the climax and deliver your ending. Make it dynamic without getting too detailed.

Practice your pitch and rehearse it in front of a friend or representative. Write the pitch out if you have to (I often do).

Bring a beat sheet to the meeting, or even the written-out pitch. Just make sure you don't bury your face in your pages. Deliver the pitch in an animated, dynamic fashion, without going too fast. And don't mumble.

Relax and have fun.

Good luck!

ABOUT AARON MENDELSON

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Aaron Mendelsohn is the writer of Air Bud, which to date has sired four sequels. He also wrote the Lifetime movie Change of Heart and recently directed the comedy Chapter Zero from his own script. Currently he has the comedy Action Abramowitz with Tim Allen attached to star and the romantic comedy Twice in a Lifetime with James Cameron producing.

Aaron has written screenplays and teleplays for Disney, Fox, Paramount, Miramax/Dimension and Showtime, and for producers Arnold Kopelson, Wendy Finerman, Charles Gordon, and Craig Zadan & Neal Meron.

Aaron devotes much of his free time to teaching. He has taught classes and workshops at the Santa Fe Screenwriting Conference, the Las Vegas Screenwriting Conference, the University of Miami, the Ft. Lauderdale Film Festival, the Marco Island Film Festival, Entertainment Night at UCLA, and the Actors Network.

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