SCREENCRAFT
Presents

AN INTRODUCTION TO SCREENWRITING

Basic Elements of Writing and Formatting a Screenplay

Edited by: Ken Miyamoto

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Introduction *by Ken Miyamoto*

We've been telling stories since the dawn of man. It started as grunts and evolved into language as tribes told tales of the hunt over an open fire. We began to develop poetry, manuscripts, historical documents, newspapers, novels, stage plays, film, radio, television, and now the Internet.

Storytelling is in our DNA.

But with each medium or platform of storytelling comes a different set of rules, guidelines, and expectations.

An Introduction to Screenwriting offers you the basic understanding of how you translate your stories into cinematic form. These are the most basic tools of knowledge that every screenwriter must start with. You'll learn about the necessary format and terminology, as well as the aesthetics of a screenplay and how you can make the best possible presentation of your cinematic stories to Hollywood.

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Chapter 1: The Basics of Feature Screenplay Format

Screenwriting is obviously an art, but it is also a developed science. Strict formatting guidelines should be adhered to if you want your masterpiece to be palatable to anyone in the industry. We'll start this e-book by outlining the **basics of script formatting**, the building blocks of a great screenplay.

Start With the Software

The key to following and maintaining proper formatting while screenwriting is to use the right software for the job. Microsoft Word is great for reports but it won't work when writing for the screen (whether big or small). Instead, opt for software specifically designed for writing screenplays — this allows you to spend less time worrying about complicated page layouts and more time focusing on your killer story idea.

1. **WriterDuet** — Free for the Basic online version and affordable for a subscription or lifetime version with Pro features, WriterDuet is the most powerful screenwriting software. It preserves pagination and formatting and also works well with Final Draft and other software. Its main feature is that two or more screenwriters can log in to WriterDuet, for free, and edit the same exact script on the screen, in real time, as each single character is typed by each of the writers. Beyond that, it's a great tool for solo writers as well.

2. **Final Draft** — Debuting in 1991, this screenwriting software grew to become very popular during the screenwriting boom of the 1990s and early 2000s. It was the first and dominant screenwriting software in the industry until lower-cost options have came to market in recent years.

3. **Celtx** — A cheap option now available as a download for your PC, Mac, or tablet.

4. **Movie Magic Screenwriter** — Another cheaper version of screenwriting software comparable to Final Draft.

Story is Key

Remember, screenwriting is storytelling. You need to have a coherent beginning, middle, and end. You need to have characters that the masses will care about and want

to watch struggle, fight, win, lose, and grow for approximately one and a half to two hours. Your screenplay should have a definite story and follow a basic arc. Rising action, climax, and conclusion.

Simplify, Simplify, Simplify!

One of the keys to great screenwriting — and also the number one mistake made by writers new to the craft — is simplifying. It's best to write only what you can see onscreen. While some definitely diverge from this advice, it's best to stick with writing that is visual.

Screenplays are blueprints for film and television shows, which above all else, are COLLABORATIVE art forms. Vibrant imagery and cathartic emotions are the purview of the director, director of photography and actors. The screenwriter's job is to create believable, natural dialogue and memorable characters, and to set a basic stage for the action to take place. From there, it falls to the rest of the crew to fill in the blanks and create the narrative experience.

Just the Facts

There are a few additional, basic tenets to keep in mind when writing a screenplay:

1. ALWAYS write in present tense. (i.e. "He sees her," "She walks to them")
2. The first time you introduce a character, their name appears in ALL-CAPS
3. ONLY write what you can physically see and hear

```
Scene Heading ──────────  INT. OFFICE - DAY

Action ──────────────     RUFUS sits at a desk, fingers furiously tap dancing on a
                          keyboard. He pauses for briefing and looks at the clock on
                          the wall. The digital display reads "5:34"

                          A TIRE SCREETCH

                          Rufus looks out the office window to see JOHN storming into
Character Name ───────    the office complex.
                                            RUFUS (V.O.)
                                          (sarcastically)
                                     Here comes the sexiest man in the
                                     universe.

                          John bursts in through the front door.

Parenthetical ──────────────             JOHN
                                       (breathing heavily)
                                     Hell's Bells Rufus, the traffic is
                                     insane. Is it ready?

Dialogue ───────────────              RUFUS
                                     Is what ready?

                                          JOHN
                                       (repeating himself)
                                     Is it ready?

                                          RUFUS
                                     You said you wanted uncompressed
                                     video. It's going to take an hour
                                     to transfer... at least.

Transition ──────────────────────────────────────────  FADE OUT

                          INT. OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

                          Rufus is again typing away at his desk when John burst in.
                                          JOHN
                                     Is it ready?

                                          RUFUS
                                     No... these files are huge...
```

Scene Format

The master scene format has six main elements:

1. Scene Heading

2. Action

3. Character Name

4. Parentheticals

5. Dialogue

6. Transitions

The first formatting element is the **scene heading** — also dubbed the **slug line**.

Screenplays written in the master scene format are broken into scenes, not cuts. The scene headings are written in all-caps, as well as INT. or EXT. for Interior or exterior. This is followed by the name of the location and a designation of day or night.

The next element is **action**. This should describe action that can be seen or heard. Sound effects that are important to the story but are heard off-screen need to be in ALL-CAPS.

Next we have **Character name**. This has its own line in ALL-CAPS. A character who is off-screen or speaking in voiceover should be designated by O.S. or V.O.

Parentheticals provide context or instruction for the dialogue delivery. These should be used sparingly so as not to reduce the readability of the script.

Next, **dialogue** blocks are offset from everything else and centered on the page. Parallel dialogue (overlapping dialogue) is written in side-by-side blocks.

The final element is the scene **transition**. Scene transitions should be used sparingly as well. Readability is key!

Why such strict rules for formatting a screenplay?

A screenplay is a document to sell a story to potential collaborators — including a director, producer, financier, actor etc. One of the easiest ways to tell an amateur screenwriter is nonstandard formatting right off the bat. So take the time to make sure your screenplay is in the correct format!

How Long Should the Screenplay Be?

Generally speaking, screenplays should be 90-115 pages long. The old adage is that one page equals one minute of screen time, thus a 90-page screenplay will likely end up being a film that is an hour and a half long. It's a good gauge but can't *always* be the deciding factor because action within a scene takes longer to *describe in print* than it would take to *appear onscreen*.

That said, when you're approaching 120 pages and beyond, it's getting too long. Don't get yourself stuck in that trap. A well structured screenplay that *isn't* overwritten (see Chapter 3) will fall between that 90-110 page mark and if you go a few pages over that, you're still in the clear.

Don't be confused by the produced screenplays that you can find online. Yes, many of them exceed the 120-page mark and beyond, however, most of them are shooting drafts, which also contain camera directions and other technical elements that shouldn't be in a novice screenwriter's script. Other such examples are written by established writers and directors that don't need to adhere to the general guidelines and expectations that novice screenwriters face.

The most general structure to follow that will help you keep that page count down is a

simple three-act layout we call the *30-30-30 rule*. 30 pages for the first act (beginning), 30 pages for the second act (middle), and 30 pages for the third act (end). Story structure is more complicated than that, however, this rule will guide you to write a script that is within the expected confines of 90-115 pages.

Chapter 2: Screenwriting Terms You Need to Know

Action

The scene description, character movement, and sounds as described in a screenplay.

Beat

Can be used in the parenthetical or action to indicate a pause in the character's dialogue or movement.

Character

ALL-CAPS the first time you meet them in the Action. A person on the screen at any moment.

CLOSE ON: (see also **INSERT:)**

When you want to draw a reader's eyes or imagination to a particular object on the screen like a text message, a sled named rosebud, or a scar.

CONTINUOUS

Sometimes, instead of DAY or NIGHT at the end of a SLUG LINE/Location Description, you'll see CONTINUOUS. "Continuous" refers to action that moves from one location to another without any interruptions in time – like a high-speed chase through a mall with different stores.

CUT TO:

Ends some scenes to provoke a reaction – you can cut to a joke, or to the opposite of what a character recently stated. Overall though, this shouldn't be used within screenplays anymore, unless they are shooting drafts.

Dialogue

What a character says in the script. "Thank you sir, may I have another?"

DISSOLVE TO:

A transition mostly used in older films. Stylistically shows one image dissolving into another.

ESTABLISHING SHOT:

A shot from a distance telling us where we are – New York City? The Dust Bowl? The Congo?

EXT.

Exterior. This scene takes place outdoors. Location designations are essential to producers, line producers, assistant directors, unit production managers and location managers in setting a budget and planning a production.

FADE TO:

One of the more common transitions. You FADE IN: on the left and FADE OUT: on the right of the page. You can also FADE TO: on the left – usually used for scenes that transition in longer lengths of time. This is primarily only used in shooting drafts.

INT.

Interior. Again, interior and exterior location designations are essential to conceiving and securing the physical environments that will be required to realize the story on the page.

Intercutting or INTERCUT BETWEEN:

Used to show different scenes happening at the same time. Like a boy eavesdropping on his parents, a phone call in two different places, or the murder of all the mob bosses in town during a baptism.

INTO FRAME: (see also **INTO VIEW:)**

When a character enters during a scene and you want to highlight that entrance. This should only be present in shooting drafts.

JUMP CUT TO:

A cut in film editing in which two sequential shots of the same subject are taken from camera positions that vary only slightly. This type of edit gives the effect of jumping forward in time.

MATCH CUT TO:

A transition between scenes where one thing becomes another like jumping into a pool that matches to the same character diving into bed.

Montage:

A numbered sequence in a story that shows one or several characters completing a series of actions. Like Rocky's training sequences.

O.S. or O.C.

Off-screen or Off-camera. It describes anything not taking place on the screen, but present within the context of the story. One character could be on camera in a living room while the other may be talking off-screen from the kitchen.

Parenthetical (see also Wryly)

An emotion or action put before the dialogue and under the character's name to let the actor know how they should say the line.

POV

Point of view. This became popular with found footage movies but generally refers to the first person advantage as seen in movies like *Halloween*.

Scene

After a slug line, a scene describes what happens in a particular place at a particular time.

Shooting Script

This is the truly final draft used on set by the production personnel, actors, and director to make the movie from the screenplay.

Slug Line

Denotes a new scene in the screenplay.

SMASH CUT TO:

An especially sharp transition. This style of cut is usually used to convey destruction or quick emotional changes.

Spec Script/Screenplay

A screenplay not commissioned by a studio or producer. It is the idea of the writer only.

SUPER: (see also: SUPER TITLE or TITLE)

Refers to words on the screen like the scroll in *Star Wars* or the little titles telling you in what city or time period the script takes place.

TIGHT ON:

A close-up of a person or thing. Basically, like the space has been squeezed out of the area between camera and subject.

Transition

Descriptive term for how one scene 'transitions' to another scene. Used appropriately, these can be used to convey shifts in character development and emotion.

V.O.

Voiceover. Like in *The Shawshank Redemption* – it denotes dialogue only the audience can hear.

Chapter 3: How to Write Your Cinematic Story

Film is a visual medium. Stories are told in pictures, accompanied by dialogue and musical score. This is vastly different from the literary world of novels and short stories where readers expect colorful and articulate description to set the stage. With film, costume designers, cinematographers, set designers, and directors will do that for the eventual audience. It's a collaborative effort, as opposed to the one-on-one relationship of the author and reader in the literary platform where the reader can expect days, weeks, and sometimes months of reading a single story.

In respect to screenplays, those details aren't needed, nor are they wanted. The reader of your screenplay — agents, managers, executives, producers, studio script readers, and talent — needs to be able to see that cinematic story unfold within their own mind's eye as quickly as possible. There's nothing worse than reading an overly descriptive, overly articulate, and overly wordy description. It kills the read. It halts any momentum of the story. And finally, it's frustrating because that's just not what screenplays are meant to be.

Less is more is the best mantra that screenwriters can embrace because it serves their script so much better than overwriting, which sets too much atmosphere, too much direction, and above all, too much information for the reader's mind to process while they're trying to visualize what is meant to be a film.

The true testament of an excellent screenwriter is to be able to convey style, atmosphere, and substance with as *little* description needed. The same can be said for dialogue as well.

To embrace the *less is more* mantra here, we'll get right to three examples. Below are three excerpts of scenes from three different scripts — one of which was signed to a deal with a major studio while another garnered multiple meetings at studios and representation. We present the overwritten version of the scene first, followed by the correct version that embraces the *less is more* mantra.

Overwritten Version

```
INT. PRISON CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

The dark hallway, made entirely of stone, stret
black void.  The dripping of water is heard as
escapes from in between the stones and into mud
the wet floor.

The only light source comes from the cell block
beams of the moon sneaking in between the rusty
keep prisoners from their dreams of freedom.
```

Correct Version

```
FADE IN:


INT. PRISON CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

Dark.  Wet.  Shadows overcome any source of lig
```

The overwritten version of this scene is a perfect example of what a majority of screenwriters mistakenly write. They try to create atmosphere and visual style, but it hinders the read and gives too much information to process quickly. In the end, all that the reader needs to know is that it's a dark and wet cell block.

Overwritten Version

```
EXT. DESERT - DAY

The village of Hisarak, Afghanistan lies shatte
blaring hot desert sun.  The village has seen k
but since the dawn of the American military pre
remains only echoes what it once was.

It is April 3rd, 2008.
```

Correct Version

```
EXT. DESERT - DAY

Afghanistan.  Present.

A shattered village is seen off in the distance
```

There are a few elements to discuss with this example.

Specifics. When are specific locations and dates really needed? All too often in scripts you can find specific locations (buildings, parks, etc.) and specific dates (day, month, year) that just aren't needed. Unless Hisarak, Afghanistan and April 3rd, 2008 are specifically integral to the location and time of the story — in this script they were not — there's no need to mention them.

Less is more applies to this case because with the correct version the reader doesn't have to remember a date nor struggle to visualize a specific location. Obviously, in the case of **Saving Private Ryan**, the date and location is necessary and serves a purpose due to the historical significance. In this script, and so many others, they are not.

It may sound trivial and nitpicky, but you would be very surprised how often specific locations and dates are used for no particular reason. It's a waste of space.

In short, only offer specifics if they are integral to the story.

Furthermore, the overwritten version of this scene just articulates too much. It's unnecessary filler. There is a place for that from time to time but in the end, all the reader needs to know is that they're in present time Afghanistan with a shattered village in the distance. Four words — Afghanistan, present, shattered village — say so much more and immediately imprint an image for the reader's mind to comprehend quickly.

Sure, it's only a sentence or two extra, but when you're overwriting throughout your whole script, not only does it add up to too much and slow the read of your script down drastically, but it also forces you to have more pages than you really need in the end.

Overwritten Version

INT. COMMANDING OFFICER'S WARDROOM

The room is quiet, not a soul in sight. Chairs
empty, some pushed in properly as they should b
remain askew.

Reese slowly walks in. He scans the room, noti
chairs with the shake of his head. His eyes th
the coffee maker longingly. He pours a cup and
down at the table near the back of the room.

Unbeknownst to him, a figure sits in the shadow

Reese reacts to the heat from his coffee, grima
cools it off with a soft blow from his lips. A
he takes a sip.

                    FIGURE
          You know, the Navy always gets
          blasted for not being as tough as
          marines or infantry. Looking at
          you blowing on your coffee, now I
          know why.

Reese is startled and searches the room for the
eyes fall on the figure sitting in the shadows.

He sees LT. JASON STRIKER, third in command of
He's 46 years old and wise beyond his years. B
is accompanied by a free spirit set in his ways

                    REESE
          You know, we've been serving on
          this sub together for two years and
          in all that time I don't think I've
          ever seen you sleep.

Striker laughs and leans forward. His glaring
back at Reese with a stone cold gaze. This is
be messed with.

                    STRIKER
          I've served my whole adult life in
          the military. I was a Navy Seal.
          The elite. The best of the best.

Correct Version

```
I've been in conflicts that most
people have long forgotten about.
I've been to war.  And I've never
known a soldier or officer that
could manage to truly fall asleep

INT. COMMANDING OFFICER'S WARDROOM

The room is empty.

Reese walks in, pours another cup of coffee, an
the table.

In the corner a FIGURE sits, hidden within the
doesn't notice.

He blows on the surface of his coffee before ta

                    FIGURE
          And who said the Navy wasn't tough?

Reese jumps back and notices LT. JASON STRIKER,
command.

His receding hairline, graying hair, and sunken
don't overshadow the power in his voice, or the
strength in his eyes.

                    REESE
                 (chuckling)
          Don't you ever sleep?

Striker smirks a bit and sighs.

                    STRIKER
          Nobody sleeps during war.  They
          just close their eyes and try to
          forget.
```

Here we have an example of not only overwritten scene description, but also dialogue.

First off, the overwritten version of this scene opens with unnecessary filler in the scene description. We don't need to know the positions of chairs and we don't need to be told that there's not a soul in sight. All we need to know is: *the room is empty*.

Set decorators and assistant directors will take care of the layout of the chairs. Before production, the script reader can obviously picture what an empty submarine wardroom would look like. Don't give the reader's mind even a moment to linger with unnecessary description. Unless those chairs being askew is integral to the story, we don't need to know such details.

Furthermore, actors and directors will dictate the particular movements of the actor in the shot. In the overwritten version, we really don't need to know that he grimaces and what not. In the correct version, him blowing on the hot coffee, followed by the line of dialogue, stipulates the moment of the image of an otherwise tough submarine commander blowing on his coffee because it's too hot. That's all we need. **It's short, sweet, and to the point, which is what screenwriters always need to grasp when writing scene description, dialogue, and scenes themselves**.

Dialogue-wise, you can easily see that there is a major difference between the two versions of this scene. The overwritten version is very representative of the screenplays that newcomers write. So much of it is too on-the-nose and so much of it is *just not needed*.

And Here's a Little Secret

Readers — which include studio readers, interns, assistants, managers, agents, development executives, producers, etc. — have a lot of scripts to read. There's no getting past this truth and there's no sense complaining about it. They have a lot to read. So a majority of the time, they will be skimming.

But this isn't the type of skimming where they are skipping multiple pages (unless the script is really bad). Skimming is a form of reading that *all* script readers master. It's more so about speed than it is about skipping past information. Most quality readers can read fast this way and pick up most of the details of the script — and note that this is primarily used for scene description rather than dialogue.

So if we know that this is a truth, and we know that there's nothing that can be done about it, then wouldn't it be beneficial to all screenwriters to embrace and master the mantra of *less is more*?

The above correct versions of the script excerpts are perfect examples of this mantra. The details in the scene description in particular are short, sweet, and to the point. Readers can then read the script fast — and even more important, they can see the film through their mind's eye at a much quicker pace without losing details and momentum because the scene visuals are so accessible due to scene description that is short, sweet, and to the point.

How to Master the Mantra of Less Is More

As you are writing and rewriting, ask yourself:

- What can I delete that doesn't affect the point of the scene?
- Does this *need* to be here?
- Can I communicate this visual with one or two words instead of one or two

sentences?

- What is the literal way to describe this vs. the articulate way?
- Does the character *need* to say this?

Continue to pick away at your script, deleting lines of scene description and lines of dialogue.

You can take it further by questioning each and every *scene* in your script as well. Great screenwriting is about cutting away the fat and presenting the meat of each and every element within the script. It serves the script so much better to whoever is reading it. It's more accessible. Your concepts and characters are more evident than ever before because they are front and center, void of being clouded by overwriting. That is why less *is* more.

Chapter 4: Four Keys to Writing a Page-Turner

There are great scripts with amazing stories and characters and then there are *page-turners* — the coveted type of script that every Hollywood executive, producer, manager, or agent yearns to get their hands on day in and day out.

What Is a Page-Turner?

Page-turners don't simply apply to how fast the read is; rather, it's really about the experience of the read itself as a whole. It encompasses the concept, the delivery of that concept, and the aesthetics of the script at hand.

Below are four keys to creating a page-turner, thus engaging a script reader from beginning, through the middle, and right to the end.

1. Have a Great Concept

Either something original or a new take on something familiar, which is what studios and major producers love because they know an audience already exists. Choosing your concept is *everything*. It's the first element that is introduced in your script and it's usually the first element that is seen even before that reader opens the script — the logline.

While small, quirky character studies in comedy or drama are great, they aren't compelling concepts overall. They won't set that tone for the reader from the get-go that says, "I want to see how this script delivers on that amazing concept." *That* is what screenwriters need to offer in spec scripts. Engage, entice, and outright tease that reader with a great concept. A high-concept script is far more valuable than a brilliantly written low-concept character piece — and a *brilliantly written* high-concept script is gold.

2. Focus on the Aesthetics of the Script

The aesthetics of the script are perhaps the most overlooked aspect of screenwriting, as screenwriters usually have full focus solely on the story, characters, etc.

Reading a script should be an experience. It's not just about reading words and

processing them. It's about creating an experience. And for script readers, there's no worse experience than reading an overwritten script.

Scene descriptions should be short, sweet, and to the point. The broad strokes. For each block of description, strive to keep it to no more than two lines. If you have more, break it up by spacing the blocks out into different and shorter blocks.

That's often advice most screenwriters have read about since day one of their journey, but let's delve deeper and understand why that is so important.

Think of it this way — each block of scene description is a visual you are trying to convey. And you need to convey it as quickly as possible for the reader to be able to see it through their mind's eye.

Each block of scene description is you throwing out visuals to them:

This is what I want you to see.

Now you see this.

Now this happens.

There's a beat to it. When you have long paragraphs of scene description, the reader's brain registers it differently despite it saying the same thing. Now let's take the same information from above and put it together into one block:

This is what I want you to see. Now you see this. Now this happens.

That registers different — especially when it's actually lines and lines of scene description being written.

Think of it in musical context, beat-wise. That first example where those three lines are spaced apart creates a rhythm:

Boom Bada.

Boom Bada.

Boom.

There's a beat to it. This second example doesn't read like that:

Boombadaboombadaboom.

You see the difference? Your mind just read that second example as more of a garbled sentence than a series of flowing beats. Your mind was forced to slow down, if not for a brief moment, to make sure that it was processing the letters correctly. Now imagine the same problem with lines and lines of scene description. That is how you lose script readers early on.

So, in short, make your scripts have a beat to them. Something a script reader can "tap their feet to."

And remember to keep everything short, sweet, and to the point — for every element of the script, including dialogue and even scenes themselves.

3. Keep Engaging the Reader Every Few Pages

Do not spend the first act introducing your characters. Let the reader discover your characters as they are catapulted into the concept.

Let the reader learn their motivations and arcs as they are bombarded by the conflict that you are hopefully throwing them into from the get-go. Let there be a mystery to it. Why show your whole hand when you can keep a reader invested and engaged by slowly peeling away the layers of the character as they deal with the conflict and overall concept?

Throw the reader and your characters into the script's concept early from those first few pages. They'll discover who those characters are along the way.

Then, you need to continue to build and build and build, whether if it's with the laughs, the drama, the screams, the mystery, the thrills, the action, etc.

Offer as many twists and turns as you can. Lead that reader towards something, only to pull the rug out from underneath them just when they feel that they know where you're going with it.

4. Write With the Mindset of a Film Editor

Now, this is much different than writing like a director, which is what you *don't* want to do — as far as including every major camera angle, camera direction, etc. Those types of script are reserved for auteurs like Quentin Tarantino and Paul Thomas Anderson. They direct their own scripts so they'll write in their own camera angles and technical jargon, most of which represent a shooting script in the end. Screenwriters writing on spec, or even on assignment, need to avoid that at all costs.

Film editors take what the director has shot and create an experience. One edit of a film can be drastically different than another edit, depending upon the tone, atmosphere, and style applied.

Screenwriters need to embrace that train of thought. Screenwriters should read whatever book on film editing that they can get their hands on if they want to learn how to write a page-turner, because that's really what it's all about. Writing like a film editor edits.

Just like scene description has a certain beat to it, so does each and every scene and sequence within a script.

If you have a key sequence of scenes that is necessary to showcase at any given time,

think like an editor and figure out how you can break up those scenes in the best of ways, jumping from location to location, from this character to that, etc. Intercut scenes. Go from one to the other, back and forth, rather than just offering a bland collection of scenes built up on top of each other. That's not how most great films feel when we're in the theater. Why? Because they've been edited to convey a certain energy, flow, and style.

Write like an editor edits. Your scripts will be injected with an energy like no other.

The delivery is key. The read of your script, and thus the look and feel of it, will decide who reads the script and who doesn't.

If you think you can say, "Forget it, my story and characters will stand out no matter what and it's their loss if they can't read it thoroughly…" Well, you won't have a career in screenwriting. Plain and simple.

You need to write a *page-turner*. No matter what genre you're writing in. And your script needs to *look* the part as well because most script readers can simply take one look at a screenplay and the overall aesthetics of it, and know within less than a minute if it is going to be a terrible read or not. That's how good these script readers are because that is all they do for the most part. And they will be looking for any excuse to throw the script in the Pass file (Pass as in, "I Pass on it") and tackle the endless stack of unread scripts after it.

When a script reader reads a script, they need to be able to see that movie through their mind's eye as quickly as possible, with each turn of the page. That's what a page-turner does. It allows readers to basically watch the movie, rather than just reading a bunch of long scene descriptions, long dialogue exchanges, and long scenes.

Those are the secrets to writing a page-turner. Utilize all that you have learned here in this ebook to accomplish that.

Finally, remember that the first couple of screenplays that you write are *learning experiences*. You need to make mistakes and learn from them as you hone your skills. When you've finished that first screenplay, begin another after a short break. Avoid marketing your first script because in the big scheme of things, your first script is usually your worst.

Apply this information and these directives and you'll quickly begin to see your writing evolve into something cinematic, exciting, and worth marketing. Keep writing!

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