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Letter from the Editor

Congratulations to the 2013 PAGE Awards Winners! If the success stories we've recently received from previous Winners are any indication, big things may be ahead for this talented class of screenwriters.

And for those of you who didn't take home a trophy, never fear. Few writers win with their first entry. Get a leg up on next year's competition with help from our [Script Services](#). PAGE Judges will provide concept evaluations, detailed feedback, marketing advice and more. It's an invaluable avenue for the serious screenwriter to pursue.

It has been a strong year for the **LOGLINE** eZine and 2013's final issue is no exception. First, 2011 Bronze Prize winner Steven Peterson explains how to complete a writing assignment in such a way that everyone feels good about it. PAGE Judge Victoria Lucas talks "voice" and how to develop yours on the page. Genre expert John Truby analyzes *The Walking Dead* and how it makes horror work on TV. Format wizard Dave Trotter demonstrates the proper formatting of montage sequences. Industry insider Marvin V. Acuna examines seven secrets of NBA legend Kobe Bryant and how they apply to screenwriting. The issue concludes with three of the latest leads from InkTip, where producers tell writers what kind of scripts they're looking for.

Happy reading,



Latest News from the PAGE Awards

- ◇ Laurie Weltz's 2010 PAGE Award-winning coming-of-age drama *Scout* is now filming in Los Angeles and New York, directed by Laurie herself, and featuring India Ennenga, Nikki Reed, Danny Glover and Ellen Burstyn in the starring roles. This is the second 2010 PAGE Award-winning script to go into production over the past few weeks! John Scott's 2010 Gold Prize-winning horror film *Maggie* is currently filming in New Orleans, featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Abigail Breslin in the starring roles.
- ◇ A phenomenal outcome to the story written by 2012 PAGE Gold Prize winner Graham Norris in our last issue of **LOGLINE**! Graham wrote his column the night before his first big network pitch meeting, over the next ten days pitched his project to five networks, and his new series is now set up at Fox. Inspired by the Victor Hugo classic *Les Miserables*, the series will be produced by Warner Bros. TV and Rob Thomas (*Veronica Mars*). Graham is represented by UTA and PAGE Judge Joe Riley of Velocity Entertainment.
- ◇ 2011 PAGE Award Winner Joe Webb sold his series pitch *Take Down* to Fox TV, with Deb Spera and Maria Grasso of One-Two Punch Productions (*Criminal Minds*, *Army Wives*) attached to produce. In addition, Joe has optioned his Silver Prize-winning drama pilot *Icon* to Sony TV. He is represented by The Gersh Agency and Brett Etre Management.
- ◇ 2012 PAGE Award Winner Rebecca Handley has been hired by Scott Rudolph of Great American Cinema to co-write an as-yet-untitled sci-fi thriller. Plus, Rebecca tells us that she has now optioned her Gold Prize-winning script *Collider* to an Australian production company. "It's very exciting, isn't it? Still early days of course, but it's all happening on the back of my PAGE win! Thank you!"

Our 2014 contest will begin accepting entries on December 1st!

What You Need to Know About Writing Assignments

by Steven Palmer Peterson

Everybody loves their own ideas best.

Including you and me.

This is why we writers are so frustrated by all the obstacles we face trying to get our spec scripts made.

Steve Peterson won the 2011 PAGE Bronze Prize for his sci-fi feature *Feedback Limit*. He has written four scripts on assignment for Lifetime and is currently working on his fifth. Steve has also written a feature for Mar Vista Entertainment and done rewrite work for various producers.

We look at all the trash that gets produced and wonder, “why don’t they just use our ideas!”

The problem is that everyone in every aspect of the entertainment business is thinking the exact same thing and wondering why it’s not THEIR ideas that are getting turned into movies. And that is the

core of writing screenplays on assignment.

As I write this article, I’m in the first week of writing the first draft of a small TV movie slated to begin shooting in a little under four months. It will likely air within four months of picture wrap.

Compressed schedules make this sort of indie filmmaking more hectic, but it also means there’s less interminable waiting and less chance that what you write will end up rotting on a hard drive. Because the budgets are tight (typically \$400 to \$600 thousand total, depending on the company), there’s also less chance that the writer gets replaced. THEIR lack of funds provides YOUR job security!

I’ve been the sole writer on five of these projects and I’ve worked with independent producers on a few rewrites, as well as several projects that never got past the planning stages. For the assignments that come to fruition, the typical process has me team up with the company’s producers and creative execs to come up with a list of about ten loglines. Then they run these ideas past their buyers (foreign and domestic distributors, sales agents) and trim the list down to maybe two or three ideas that the buyers like. We then turn those ideas into one- to two-page synopses. The producers submit these synopses to the buyers, who pick one and add some comments and suggestions.

At this point the writer takes over in a bigger way. I’ll write a six- to ten-page treatment of the movie. Sometimes these treatments take a more narrative format where I write in full paragraphs. Sometimes we go with more of a “beat sheet” — a kind of outline that chronicles the scenes of the story with abbreviated descriptions.

The treatment then goes through a few rounds of notes as I work out the details with the producers and the buyers. This stage is where those involved have the biggest debate and the writer has to make the biggest changes. The treatment is where you’re figuring out the

story. Once you get to the first-draft stage, the story is already settled, so if you’ve done a solid job most of the notes you receive will focus on scene and character details.

This is also what is meant by collaboration. Throughout this process you will receive notes from a variety of people and you need to reconcile them with each other, while also implementing the notes in a way you feel comfortable with. It’s easy to get frustrated or defensive here because, again:

Everybody loves their own ideas best.

Including you and me.

And once you take that lesson to heart, the people who hire you will love you!

They have the ability to get a movie made, and they have an idea that they want made into a movie. They may already have a script, or they may already have a short synopsis, or they might just have a notion. But whatever they have doesn’t yet look like a movie. So they come to you and if you turn their idea into a good movie, they will love you for it. Which means that as a writer you have to balance two things:

You want to write something that will do well and appeal to the audience of TV viewers or movie watchers. But you’re not actually writing for THEM. You’re writing to make the financier/producer confident enough to make the film.

There is some overlap, but it’s not perfect. On many of my projects we went in knowing that the movie would end up on Lifetime and needed to appeal to that audience. Those movies were pretty straightforward. Everyone knows what they’re trying to achieve and we have a pattern to follow.

But the true indie films are a lot more interesting. For example, a small film I worked on called *Zombie Hamlet* was funded by people who had some money and wanted to make a movie. Normally when you think of independent film you think of serious art-house stuff like *Take Shelter* or quirky indie comedies like *Safety Not Guaranteed*.

On *Zombie Hamlet*, the producers had a clear idea of the tone they wanted. They wanted a fun, light comedy that they could watch with both their kids and grandparents. That’s not a good recipe for film distribution. But remember that the producers of *Zombie Hamlet* were making it for the art, too. They had a vision of the kind of film they felt was lacking in the Hollywood mainstream, just like Shane Carruth had a vision for *Upstream Color*.

So on this project my goal was to write something that would make us all happy and hopefully find some kind of audience. Ultimately, that’s my goal on every project.

If you can make them happy with the way you implemented their idea, and make yourself happy with the way you took their idea and turned it into something that would entertain you, then there’s a much better chance that you’ll end up with a movie that will entertain audiences, as well — whether that’s moms and daughters turning on Lifetime at the end of a long day, or the eclectic array of people who watch *Zombie Hamlet* and wonder how the hell Jason Mewes and June Lockhart ended up in the same movie.

Developing a Standout Style

by Victoria Lucas

The choices you make when writing the action, description and character introductions in your script – often called your narrative voice – can showcase your personal style and help make your screenplay stand out. The problem is

Victoria Lucas has almost 20 years of experience as a development and production executive at both major studios and independent film companies. She began her career at Imagine Entertainment, later going on to develop feature films with companies such as Signature Entertainment, April Productions and Capella-Connexion Films. She currently works as an independent producer and screenplay consultant.

what you've heard over and over from film school professors, screenwriting books and story analysts: a script is a blueprint for a movie, not a piece of literature. Scene descriptions and action must be sharp, clear and concise. No long paragraphs. Leave plenty of white space.

Great advice. But crisp and succinct doesn't have to mean bland or boring.

I've read thousands of scripts: first as a reader, then as a development executive and now as a producer. I can tell a great deal about you as a writer from

your first page. Your screenplay may or may not be what I'm looking for right now, but if your style impresses me as a writer, I'll remember you. Even if I don't call you in for a meeting, at the very least I'll eagerly look forward to your next spec script. Believe me, all of us who read for a living remember the good ones.

Do you have an original style? Does your narrative voice match the genre? If you're writing a comedy, for example, your description can take a lighter tone. If your script's a thriller you might use terse, staccato words for the action sequences. Are your character descriptions specific or generic? Every choice impacts how the script is read.

The goal is to tell your story so cinematically that when we get to FADE OUT we feel we've actually "seen" the movie. But given the constraints of script formatting and the need to write transparently, how can a writer develop a distinctive style? How does an emerging writer know what to include in descriptions and what to leave out?

For starters, read, read, read – and then read some more. As many scripts as you can. Classic films as well as newer, popular ones and as many genres as possible. Even reading bad scripts can help, by illustrating what DOESN'T work.

The goal, of course, is not to copy anyone's style but to find your own individual narrative voice. I see too many scripts with pale imitations of Apatow dialogue or Wachowski action. But reading how other screenwriters handle description can give you ideas – and inspiration.

OPENING IMAGE

If you want to see how a specific style can establish the tone in a film, look how Walter Hill and David Giler brilliantly set the stage in the suspenseful opening sequence of *Alien*. No complete sentences. No long descriptions. The mysterious tone of the open mirrors what the characters encounter when they awaken.

In just a few words we're pulled headlong into the story, intrigued and waiting for what happens next:

INT. ENGINE ROOM

Empty, cavernous.

INT. ENGINE CUBICLE

Circular, jammed with instruments.

All of them idle.

Console chairs for two.

Empty.

INT. OILY CORRIDOR - "C" LEVEL

Long, dark.

Empty.

Turbos throbbing.

No other movement.

BUILDING SUSPENSE

There are many ways to build suspense and tension in a script through your writing style. Check out William Goldman's description of the sequence in *Misery* when the crippled Paul fights desperately to get back into bed before Annie enters the house. Goldman repeats the word "and" to show how the action overlaps, verbally creating tension in the rhythm of the scene as the visuals build to a climax. I'll put it in paragraph form but, of course, in the script it is written as separate action beats:

PAUL, straightened out now, forcing the wheelchair to move, and now we're into a race, a crazed life-and-death race -- and ANNIE closes the door of the car -- and PAUL is suddenly stuck, there's no traction on the rug -- now ANNIE, purchases in hand, starts away from the car for the house -- and now PAUL is finally moving toward the bedroom -- and ANNIE is moving swiftly toward the front door.

CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Some writers prefer to introduce lead characters with a minimum of description – age, maybe one detail – and let the reader learn about the character as the story unfolds.

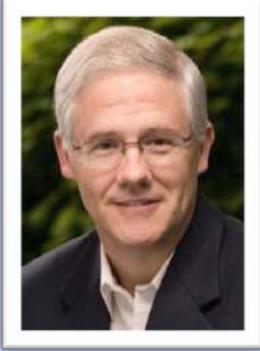
I've always liked Ron Shelton's intro of Crash Davis (Kevin Costner) in *Bull Durham* because it goes beyond physical description to the heart of the character:

CRASH DAVIS, 30, older than the other players. And different. More than just opinions, he actually has a point of view. A career minor leaguer, hanging on wherever he can get a job. Unlike Ebby -- Crash knows a lot about the world without baseball. Also unlike Ebby -- he loves baseball desperately.

Create and refine your personal writing style. A vivid narrative voice won't take the place of a brilliant premise, clever plotting and compelling characters, but it's another piece of the puzzle that makes up an irresistible script.

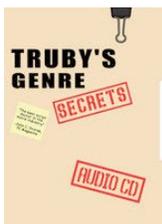
Writing the TV Drama: *The Walking Dead*

by John Truby



John Truby is regarded as the serious writer's story coach and has taught his 22-Step Great Screenwriting and Genre courses to sold-out audiences in Los Angeles, New York, London, Paris, Sydney, Rome, Toronto and other far-flung locales. Over the past 20 years, more than 30,000 students have taken Truby's 22-Step class and rave about the insights and direction it has given them. He is also the author of *The Anatomy of Story*. *Booklist* declares, "Truby's tome is invaluable to any writer looking to put an idea to paper." To learn more about John Truby's classes, screenwriting software, and story consultation services, please visit www.truby.com today.

John Truby's "TV Drama Course" Audio CD



The one-hour drama is a very lucrative and creative medium. This course is designed to make you a professional TV writer, able to work on the staff of any drama. Truby teaches you how to break down a show so you can write a great spec script. In each lesson, you will first study the material and then complete the appropriate writing exercise. You also learn different story beats for the various genres, when to break the "rules" and more.

[Click here](#) to learn all about it!

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To understand how a show works, and how to write for it, you have to start by identifying the story challenges embedded in its premise and genre. *The Walking Dead* is about a small band of survivors in a zombie apocalypse. It has the same fundamental concept as *Lifeboat*, *Survivor* and *Lost*. People are suddenly thrust into a state of nature to see if they can not only survive but remain human and moral while doing so.

The story challenges the writers face here come from the show's primary genre, horror. Horror has the lowest possible desire line in a story – to survive – which makes the heroes reactive. Thus, building the drama is difficult. As zombie attacks repeat the same beat ad infinitum, this is tough to sustain for an entire movie, let alone a multi-season show.

The solution is to transcend the genre and combine it with other forms. This show isn't horror in a haunted house.

This is horror on an epic scale, which brings in the war story, the Western and the family drama. The decisions and arguments depicted here are of a platoon at war, and in microcosm the show explores various ways of creating and governing a society in the harsh wilderness. A transcendent horror story has a number of specialized beats (story events). But the essential strategy is to flip the horror from the monsters to the human beings. As deadly as the zombies are, the real danger comes from the people who descend to animalism as they battle each other to survive. This allows the show to explore various questions of morality and leadership.

These strategies give the writers the key to creating and building plot over the course of one or more seasons. Like *Breaking Bad* and *The Good Wife*, *Walking Dead* works by sequencing the moral decisions the characters must face. The world of *Walking Dead* has more extreme circumstances than in these other shows, so the moral sequence of episodes is different and harder to build. But the ability of the writers to find some moral complexity in this absolute, live-or-die world is what has made this show so successful.

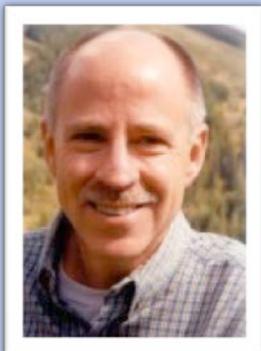
Season 1, which was only six episodes long, sets up the character web and the basic situation of the show. The hero, Rick Grimes, presumed dead, meets up with his wife Lori and son Carl, his best friend, Shane, and the others in their group. Like the old show *Combat*, this band is really a platoon at war, always on the move while fending off attacks. Story comes primarily from two sources. First, Lori slept with Shane when she thought Rick had died. Second, Rick and Shane argue about the best way to lead the platoon and how far to go in defending themselves against the zombies.

Season 2 begins when young Carl is accidentally shot by a man from a nearby farm. This sets up the entire season, whose overriding theme is "The Sanctuary." The farm provides the platoon with a temporary respite from constant attack and becomes more like a home as the season progresses. Hope seems possible within this nightmare, and even love blooms. But the writers gradually let out clues that this sanctuary is false. It is subject to constant attacks from outside. It hides a terrible secret (the owner is harboring zombies in the barn). And it builds mid-season to a horrifying revelation.

The final shot at the end of Season 2, The Sanctuary, is a prison. Notice the sequence from one season to the next: if the fundamental method of survival in season 2 was to find a sanctuary, the fundamental method of Season 3 is to wall yourself inside a prison. Continuing the transcendent horror sequence, we'll see how much worse the human opponents are than the zombies when the platoon runs up against the tyrannical Governor.

With Season 3, the writers move the question of governance from the level of platoon to a town. Unfortunately, this possibility is largely unrealized, because it is so obvious that the Governor is just a ruthless killer. But the biggest reason the plot suffers in Season 3 is that the endpoint of the season, a showdown between Rick and the Governor, is apparent from the beginning. Plot is based on surprises, and while there are some good ones along the way, they can't make up for an obvious conclusion.





Dave Trottier has sold screenplays and developed projects for The Walt Disney Company, Jim Henson Pictures, York Entertainment, On the Bus Productions, Hill Fields and New Century Pictures. As a script consultant, he has helped dozens of clients sell their work and win awards. [The Screenwriter's Bible](#), Dave's primer for both aspiring and professional scribes, is perhaps the most comprehensive industry guide on the market. To learn more about Dave Trottier's books, classes and mentoring services, visit: www.keepwriting.com

To Montage or Not to Montage

by Dave Trottier

READER'S QUESTION:

I'm at the point in my romantic comedy script where the two characters get together and fall in love. I want to show the audience that two months go by in the characters' lives and chronicle the things they do: go on a picnic, hang out at the beach, attend parties, etc.

Usually, in produced movies, there is music during this kind of section. How do I format the sequence so that the producer/director knows what sort of effect I am after?

DAVE'S ANSWER:

You are referring to the montage device. Use the specific shots of your montage to illustrate the "passage of time," "falling in love," or any other concept.

Here's an example:

MONTAGE - JIM & SUZY FALL IN LOVE

-- At a picnic in the park, Jim and Suzy wolf down an entire chicken in record time. Their affectionate countenances are smeared with chicken fat.

-- Jim (now with two-months' growth of beard) and Suzy jog along the beach until they come upon a beached whale. Together, they push the huge mammal back into the ocean.

The whale waves its tail in grateful thanks.

Jim and Suzy wave back.

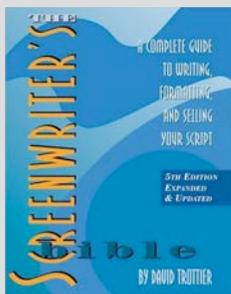
And so on. You did say this was a comedy, right? ☺

In order to show the passage of time, I used a beard in the above example, but you will not need to be so obvious. Normally, a script can show the passage of time with how the characters' relationship grows or deteriorates.

For a classic example of a montage that indicates the passage of time, watch or read the breakfast montage in the film *Citizen Kane*. Obviously, time is passing in the course of this sequence. In both *A Man for All Seasons* and *A Beautiful Mind*, there are short montages of the seasons changing.

Incidentally, you should not indicate music in your montage. The director, composer, or producer will see an opportunity to insert a hit song. Your job is to keep writing.

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Write the Kobe Bryant Way

by Marvin V. Acuna



Marvin V. Acuna is an accomplished film and television producer. He is currently in post-production on the features *Chez Upshaw*, starring Kevin Pollak and Illeana Douglas, and *Lovelace*, with Amanda Seyfried, Peter Saarsgard and James Franco.

Previously, he executive produced *The Great Buck Howard* (starring John Malkovich) and *Two Days* (Paul Rudd, Donal Logue), among other films.

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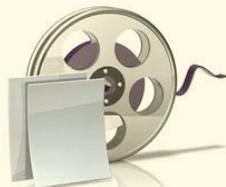
If you are an ambitious writer and would like a rare opportunity to get some ongoing mentoring from Marvin, as well as advice from some of the most successful writers, agents, managers, producers and executives in Hollywood, click here:

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Even if you don't follow NBA basketball, I'm sure you've heard of Kobe Bryant. As the polarizing, superstar shooting guard for the Los Angeles Lakers, Kobe's work ethic in the NBA is legendary.

This is a guy who was born with all the natural ability in the world, and yet he trains his body and mind to the limits every day. At 34 years old (an age when most NBA players contemplate retirement) Kobe was still outplaying young bucks a decade his junior. Don't bet against him in his comeback from a torn Achilles.

Here are some eye-opening examples of his work ethic.

1. Kobe showed up at 5 a.m. and left practice at 7 p.m... in high school!

At a time when most teenagers are just trying to deal with acne, Kobe was already showing the type of discipline that would define his career. As a screenwriter, are you disciplined enough to write every day?

2. He goes through super-intense workouts... on game days.

On game days, most athletes take it easy, take naps, maybe study some game footage. Kobe trains even HARDER on game days. As a screenwriter, how strictly do you adhere to your writing regimen? Do you write even on busy days, holidays and days you just don't feel like writing?

3. He had Nike shave a few millimeters off the bottom of his shoes in 2008 to get a hundredth of a second better reaction time.

Kobe knows that basketball is a game won by inches and seconds. So he regularly finds ways to make himself faster, stronger and more efficient. As a screenwriter, are you constantly finding ways to improve your craft and your business acumen, no matter how miniscule?

4. He ices his knees for 20 minutes, three times a day, and does acupuncture on them for maintenance and injury prevention.

In a league where youth dominates, Kobe performs the difficult, daily routines that allow him to compete at a high level, year after year. As a screenwriter, are you taking care of your health? This is more important than you may think for a long and fruitful career.

5. He watches film of himself during halftime.

Kobe knows that he needs constant, real-time feedback in order to get better. As a screenwriter, are you constantly asking for feedback on your writing and your pitches (from credible sources)? And are you making adjustments from the feedback that you get?

6. This quote from an NBA scout in 2008: "Allen Iverson loves to play when the lights come on. Kobe loves doing the sh*t before the lights come on."

Do you realize that screenwriting is 95% solitary hard work and 5% fame and glory? If not, you better get used to it, because that's the truth. Thing is, when the spotlight is on you –when you're in a room with Hollywood professionals, a pitch fest, at a live screenwriting event– you better be able to perform!

7. This quote about how he wants to be remembered: "To think of me as a person that's overachieved would mean a lot to me. That means I put a lot of work in and squeezed every ounce of juice out of this orange that I could."

So what are the results of this insane work ethic? Kobe Bryant is a 5-time NBA champion. He is also known as the best "closer" in the league (the guy who gets the ball when your team is down by 1 point with 5 seconds left in the game). Here is a guy who was blessed with all the talent in the world, but wasn't satisfied with just his natural, physical gifts. Instead, he took it upon himself to drill and discipline his mind and body until he was a "conditioned winner."

Are you a conditioned winner when it comes to your own craft? Taking cues from Kobe is a great start.



Sell Your Script

Hot Leads from [InkTip.com](http://www.inktip.com)

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER!

Please submit your work only if it seems like a **perfect fit** for these companies' needs. If you aren't sure your script meets their criteria, please check with jerrol@inktip.com before submitting it. **Do not contact the production company directly.** Thanks!

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR SCRIPT:

1. Go to <http://www.inktippro.com/leads/>
2. Enter your email address
3. Copy/paste the corresponding code

AML Pictures

[code: vknjemfq59]

We are looking for completed, four-episode miniseries in the fantasy (werewolves, vampires, etc.) or adventure genres that are geared toward YA audiences, i.e. scripts in the vein of *Being Human* or the British series *Misfits*. Note also that we prefer material that is either set in Russia or that includes at least one Russian character.

Budget yet to be determined. WGA or non-WGA okay.

Our credits include *Destinea*, *Our Island* and the Russian hit *Shpion (Spy)*.

Please submit your work only if it fits the above description exactly. If you aren't sure, email jerrol@inktip.com. Thanks!

Starrunner LLC

[code: qftq03s78z]

We are looking for completed, feature-length found footage scripts.

Budget yet to be determined. WGA or non-WGA okay.

Our credits include *The Legends of Nethiah* (Indican Pictures), and *Children of the Night* (Columbia Tri-Star).

Please submit your work only if it fits the above description exactly. If you aren't sure, email jerrol@inktip.com. Thanks!

Ardor Pictures

[code: 7tn1nk1et6]

We are looking for completed, feature-length stoner buddy comedy scripts, i.e. material in the vein of *Pineapple Express*, *Friday*, *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle*, *Half Baked*, etc.

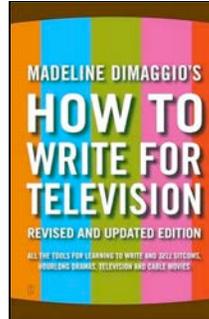
Budget will not exceed \$1 million. WGA or non-WGA okay.

Our credits include *Sharkproof* among others.

Please submit your work only if it fits the above description exactly. If you aren't sure, email jerrol@inktip.com. Thanks!



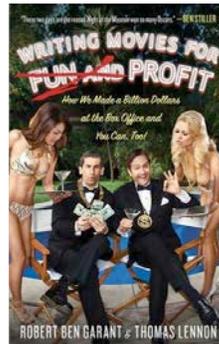
HOW TO WRITE FOR TELEVISION



In this guide for every student of the small screen and every scriptwriter dreaming of breaking into the business, writer-producer Madeline DiMaggio hands you the tools of the trade. With dozens of examples from today's hit shows, as well as perennial classics, DiMaggio walks readers through the scriptwriting process, from learning how to watch TV like a writer to developing your script, pitching it, and eventually sealing the deal. DiMaggio answers the questions on every aspiring television writer's mind!

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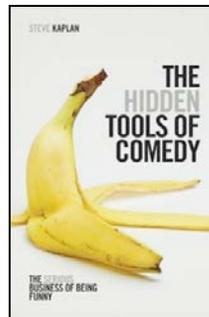


Robert Ben Garant and Thomas Lennon's movies have made over a billion dollars at the box office and now they show you how to do it yourself!

This book is full of insider information about how to conquer the Hollywood studio system: how to write, pitch, structure, and get drunk with the best of them. Well... maybe not the best of them, but certainly the most successful of them. If you want to win an Oscar, this is not the book for you, but if you can type a little and can read and speak English, then you too can start turning your words into STACKS OF MONEY!

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