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Greetings!

2008 marks the fifth anniversary of the PAGE International Screenwriting Awards competition, and it has been a record-breaking event! We received 3,865 scripts this year, submitted by writers from all across the United States and 50 foreign countries. Film is truly a global medium, bringing the world together, and it's extremely exciting and gratifying to be part of this international exchange of ideas.

If you'd like to see where all of our contestants come from, we've created a special Google map pinpointing the countries represented in this year's contest. Take a look: [2008 PAGE Map of Contestants](#)

To all of you who entered this year's competition, thank you very much for allowing us to review your work! Our judges are now in the process of reading and evaluating your scripts, and we will be posting the list of our 2008 Semi-Finalists on August 1st. Finalists will be posted on September 1st. And this year's Winners will be announced on October 1st. Best of luck to each and every one of you!

Meanwhile, as we await the contest results, I hope you'll enjoy reading this premiere issue of *LOGLINE: The Screenwriter's eZine*. We've spent the last several months developing our new publication: creating the format, pulling together first-rate columns and articles, gathering valuable news and information – all designed to help you write and sell your screenplay.

Why "LOGLINE"? One of the most important skills every screenwriter must master is how to write a great logline. How to cobble together those few words that will compel industry execs to read your script. And we're going to help you learn to do exactly that in our featured "How to" articles. In addition, in each issue you'll find insights from our judges and past winners, advice from top screenwriting professionals, and current opportunities to sell your script and build your career.

Happy reading,
Jennifer Berg

How to Craft a Great Logline

by Anne Reilly

Screenwriters often hate writing loglines. You have to figure out how to tell us what your entire movie is about in just a few short words. You have to distill your complex tale down to its bare bones. That can be a real challenge. But if you want to sell your script, your logline is a vitally important tool. It is that critical first impression which will get you and your script through the door – or not.

What makes a great logline?

First and foremost, your logline needs to convey the following information: Who is the lead character of your story? What is his or her problem and/or nemesis? And how does he or she attempt to overcome that problem or defeat that nemesis? This is the central conflict or "spine" of your story – the essence of your movie.

Also, since your logline is your introductory sales pitch, it has to be dynamic and intriguing. It has to stand out in a crowd. It has to be phrased in such a way that it immediately grabs the attention of agents and creative execs and makes them want to read your entire script. It's a tall order, even for the pros.

To illustrate, we're now going to turn the tables and let you be the judge.

Imagine... You're a busy Hollywood creative exec. You hear hundreds of pitches every year. Each day your office is flooded with query letters from unknown screenwriters who want you to read their material. But your time is limited. You can't read them all. You have to select the best of the best. How do you choose?

We asked five of our judges to write a logline – all for the same well-known movie. These loglines each have different strengths, but which one grabs your attention? Why? If you received these five loglines in your inbox, which script would you want to read?

Here's your chance! Judge the judges. And if you think you can top them, we'll give you the opportunity to write a better logline. [Vote now!](#)

The results will be posted in our next issue .

The Writer's Perspective: On Patience

by Drina Connors Kay

My writing journey, a long journey, has taught me patience. A script that a producer likes but passes on can still lead to something good; though it may take weeks, months, or in my case a couple of years.

Drina Connors Kay won the 2005 PAGE Bronze Prize for her family film script *THE COLONY*. Since then she has been hired to complete a writing assignment for Point Zero Pictures, and Point Zero has also optioned her spec script *KEEPSAKE*. Drina, a former theatre teacher, house-sits all over the U.S. and Canada, and resides in Cape Vincent, New York, when she is not on assignment.

Over two years ago, Miklos Philips of Point Zero read one of my scripts posted on InkTip. He expressed interest in it, which led to reading other scripts and eventually a writing assignment. He has now optioned my spec *KEEPSAKE*, a script he had read two years ago.

My sense of the film industry is that there are a lot of independent filmmakers searching for material, and thousands of screenwriters busy marketing scripts, but it takes time to find the perfect fit. For a writer and a filmmaker to come to terms with the

same vision is a rare and wonderful event. Writing can be everything from exhilarating to exhausting, and after you have finished "The Script" the work isn't over. Now it's time to market "The Script," and that can be overwhelming because it can consume your writing time. It is also disheartening when a producer does not respond even after several follow-up communications.

In the end, I've learned patience. I still maintain a sense of anticipation. The producers with professional ethics diligently communicate with writers. They often avoid the word "pass" and simply say that they enjoyed the read but it isn't right for them. This is not rejection; the script simply doesn't fit their interests or needs. A designer dress can't fit everyone who tries it on.

Rejection can kill a good writer; so cultivate patience and believe in your work. And most importantly, keep writing.

The Judge's P.O.V.: On Story Logic

by David Chambers

One common problem with many scripts I read is story logic. As the writer, you know where you want your story to go and what plot points are important. But if you don't hit those plot points in plausible and believable ways – if your screenplay is full of logical leaps and glitches – the reader steps out of the flow of your words and thinks, "Wait a minute, that doesn't make sense." You then lose the reader, as well as any chance you might have of selling your script. Before you send out your work, it is critically important to think through your screenplay from moment to moment and make sure everything tracks logically. Ask yourself these questions:

Do my characters behave like believable human beings?

Too often, writers have their characters do things which normal human beings wouldn't do. If your teenage protagonist arrives at a new school in his dad's embarrassing old car, don't write that EVERY kid in school is watching his arrival and laughing at him. That doesn't mean the boy can't be humiliated on his first day; it just means you, the writer, must devise a way that makes logical sense. A handful of kids might notice his arrival, but certainly not the whole school.

Is each character's behavior true to the person I've created?

Another common problem is that a character is initially described as having certain personal attributes (she's hard-working, he's idealistic, he's cheap, she's vain). Yet when the character gets into a difficult situation, she behaves in defiance of how she was established. If you need your straight arrow protagonist to get into trouble with the law, don't have her suddenly decide to shoplift when everything you've revealed about her indicates she's not a thief.

Am I relying too much on convenience in my story's plotting?

While coincidences may occur in life (and in some movies), an over-reliance on coincidence makes for poor storytelling. If a character is looking for an important document, it shouldn't be in the first drawer she opens. If your protagonist needs to learn something important about his antagonist, he shouldn't happen to run into someone on the street who tells him exactly what he needs to know.

Am I paying attention to that precious commodity: screen time?

Every moment on screen must be accounted for. Too often, inexperienced writers write novelistic descriptions. For instance, the stage direction "John walks downstairs and makes a sandwich." is fine in a novel or short story. But how long do those actions take on screen? Unless the sandwich-making is peppered with great dialogue, no one wants to see this action. Film is a visual medium and you need to think visually. Every second counts.

If you ask yourself these questions as you're writing and re-writing, you'll avoid common errors in story logic which undercut the efforts of so many novice screenwriters. Yes, many movies are full of logic problems. That's irrelevant to you and your spec script. The intense demands of production, multiple re-writes, and addressing notes from the studio can all lead to illogical storytelling in a final product. But when a reader is picking up a spec script to cover it for his boss, that reader looks carefully at the logic of the story. The truth is, you have to write better to get into the business than you do if you're actually in production.

David Chambers has enjoyed a long career as a Hollywood writer and producer. He and Tom Hanks both broke into the business on the TV sitcom "Bosom Buddies" and David subsequently went on to write and produce the Emmy-winning series "The Wonder Years" and "Frank's Place." Together with his wife, he wrote an episode of "The Simpsons" which was nominated for a Writers Guild Award, and they are currently working with Mel Brooks on an animated series based on the movie *SPACEBALLS*. They teach screenwriting at UCLA.



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What's Your Genre? Fantasy Films

by John Truby

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix is the fifth book in the most popular fiction series in our history. It shouldn't surprise anyone that this phenomenal success has come in the fantasy genre. A good fantasy has tremendous worldwide appeal to people of all ages.

To understand fantasy, you have to look at it structurally. Fantasy is all about the story world, which is the second of the 22 building blocks of every great story (discussed in great detail in the [Great Screenwriting Class](#)). Fantasy takes the story world element and blows it up a hundred fold. Everything depends on how you create and detail this world, and then how you sequence it. Going in, writers think that fantasy is a light, airy story form. In fact it is the most geometric of the forms. Your hero starts in a mundane world, goes to the fantastical world, and returns to the mundane world enlightened.

Over the course of three decades, John Truby has taught more than 30,000 students the art of screenwriting. Using the knowledge and expertise he has applied as a consultant on over 1,000 movie scripts, he offers an approach to storytelling that has earned worldwide acclaim for his instructional courses and screenwriting software. He is also the author of [The Anatomy of Story](#). *Booklist* raves, "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, visit www.truby.com

The Harry Potter books have an exquisitely detailed story world. From the various school codes and hierarchy to the fantastical creatures to the technology of magic, author J. K. Rowling has examined and expressed an entire and unique world. She has included an opposition of moral values. Setting the story in a school allows her to bring this value opposition forward without being preachy. Rowling also makes sure that Harry solves his problem at the end of each story by adhering to certain values, in spite of temptation. This way the theme is grounded in the plot.

The school of course is the key to the whole thing. The sequence of the fantasy – mundane, fantastical, back to mundane – attached to the school year brings out the best in the fantasy form. Fantasy teaches the audience how to live, and each year becomes a cycle of new growth for Harry. Also, high school is now the universal passage to adulthood. So everyone in the audience sees their own school experience in light of Harry. For the kids, Harry is the student they would all like to be. For the adults, he is the student they would all like to have been.

The obvious lesson of the Potter success is that you should consider writing a script or story in this form. Fantasy, along with horror and science fiction, is known as speculative fiction. That requires certain strengths as a writer. Here's the simplest way to determine if fantasy is for you: if you like to create story worlds, this is your form.



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Spec Writing Tips

by Dave Trotter

SANDY'S QUESTION:

I'm not exactly sure when and how to use parentheticals. Is this example formatted correctly?

DAVE'S ANSWER:

Parentheticals are usually used to suggest the subtext or attitude of the character, and should be used with moderation. Action should be written as action, unless that action can be described in just a few words (tipping his hat). Also, do not end a dialogue block with a parenthetical; end it with dialogue.

In addition, the dialogue in the example above is stiff; let's make it more natural. At the same time, we'll try to give the scene a little more movement. Spec writing is lean writing. Here is my revision.

```
JACK
  (grabs Jill by the hand)
  Could sure use some water, my dear.
  (a beat; starts up the hill)
```

```
JILL
  (snatches the bucket out of his hand)
  Sounds like a good idea, Jack.
  (swings bucket around and around as they near the well)
```

```
JACK
  Water?
```

```
JILL
  Race ya.
```

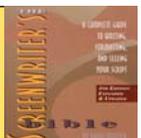
```
She swings the bucket around as they gallop to the well.
```

Dave Trotter 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. His book [The Screenwriter's Bible](#), now in its fourth edition, is perhaps the most comprehensive industry guide on the market. To learn more about Dave Trotter's books, classes and mentoring services, visit www.keepwriting.com

The Screenwriter's Bible, 4th edition

A wealth of information in one indispensable guide, *The Screenwriter's Bible* provides you with crystal clear explanations of script formatting and screenwriting fundamentals, including dozens of useful worksheets, checklists, marketing advice, sample query letters, and the latest on the new spec style. The one book every aspiring screenwriter must own.

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NOTE: Please only submit your work if it fits what these leads are looking for exactly. If you aren't sure whether your script fits, please check with jerrol@inktip.com first.

Leo Films

We are looking for completed feature-length scripts that take place in a rural setting. Submissions can be in any genre, as long as the story takes place on a farm, in the boondocks, small town or any other non-big city environment. We are specifically looking for something that could be shot in Iowa. Please do not submit something we've already reviewed.

WGA and non-WGA writers may submit. Budget will not exceed \$1 million. For further reference please feel free to look us up on IMDb under Leo Films.

To submit to this lead:

1. Go to <http://www.inktippro.com/leads/>
2. Enter your email address
3. Copy/Paste in this code: 5e4u8h8wp0

American World Pictures

We are looking for completed feature-length dark comedy or dramatic comedy scripts. We prefer material that has ranked in a high-profile screenwriting contest, or received good coverage, so please provide the name and year of the contest in the personal message space, and include any coverage in the resume area when submitting.

Budget has yet to be determined. WGA and non-WGA writers may submit. Our credits include distribution on the recent feature BONE DRY.

To submit to this lead:

1. Go to <http://www.inktippro.com/leads/>
2. Enter your email address
3. Copy/Paste in this code: 1ubt4r84k9

Cine Chachi

We are looking for completed feature-length story-driven action/thriller scripts that are set in a Southeast Asian jungle environment (Burma, Vietnam, etc.). Submissions should contain heavy Kung Fu and/or combat action scenes, but should still be built around a strong story and plot.

WGA and non-WGA writers may submit. Budget has yet to be determined. Our credits include TIT FOR TAT.

To submit to this lead:

1. Go to <http://www.inktippro.com/leads/>
2. Enter your email address
3. Copy/Paste in this code: x3wmn41h0d

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Carpe Diem! Start a New Life

by Jennifer Berg

So many aspiring writers find themselves stuck in dull, dead-end jobs they hate, working long hours just trying to make ends meet. It's a terrible waste of time and talent. And there are better ways to live. Let me tell you about my friend Susan...

Susan Van Allen was a staff writer on "Everybody Loves Raymond;" she has worked with the likes of James Brooks; and she is currently developing a brand new TV series. Pretty impressive, right?

Yes, but as we all know, the entertainment industry is like a rollercoaster – one day feast, next day famine – and even when you're fairly successful, you can't always count on the biz for a steady income. So my friend Susan, resourceful woman that she is, did something genius. She turned her rather costly hobby into a lucrative second career.

You see, Susan loves to travel. She'll happily hop on a plane at the drop of a hat. In particular, she has a passion for all things Italian, and she escapes to Italy whenever she can. About six years ago, she



Susan in Venice

started writing about her travels. As an experienced screenwriter, she instinctively knew how to describe people, places and events in the kind of bright, visceral language that immediately transports the reader to distant lands. Her first article was so colorful and compelling that a little online travel site quickly picked it up. She then sold an item to a small newspaper. They didn't pay her much money at first, but it was a start. She parlayed those first clips into a couple of writing assignments, and flew off to Italy for another "working vacation." After a few months, she was getting articles published in major newspapers and travel magazines. She even appeared on National Public Radio.

Then something magical happened. Tourist Boards and vacation destinations started calling her, offering her complimentary hotel rooms, meals, and even free plane tickets to come review their locations. I was the lucky beneficiary of one such offer when Susan was asked to review a brand new spa resort in San Diego – and of course she was invited to bring a friend! During that long relaxing weekend we were treated to gorgeous accommodations, wine and dining, and pampered with a whole array of spa services. Susan then wrote about the resort for a travel magazine – and got paid for that, as well. Nice work if you can get it, eh?

The good news is, you can. In fact, your skills as a screenwriter make you uniquely qualified to write travel articles. And you don't have to figure out how to do it all alone, like Susan did. There's a wonderful organization called American Writers and Artists that offers a terrific [Travel Writing Program](#) – a practical, inexpensive series of online classes that will quickly teach you how to become a paid travel writer. You'll learn exactly what buyers are looking for, how to land plum assignments, how to get your articles published, and how to travel on somebody else's dime. It's everything you need to know, taught by seasoned professionals.

Travel writing can become full-time work, or it can be something you do on the side. But at the very least, after taking this excellent online course, you'll never have to pay for another vacation again.

My friend Susan is still working here in L.A., but two or three times a year she flies off to Italy to explore new sites and gather new material. It's a wonderful life! What's your fantasy destination? Go ahead, pick anywhere in the world. Then learn how you can [become a Travel Writer](#) and take that voyage. And when you get there, be sure to send me a postcard!