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## Letter from the Editor

If you entered the 2014 PAGE Awards contest, the suspense must be killing you! Well, the wait is almost over. Our list of Quarter-Finalists will be posted on July 15. This has been a very strong year for submissions, so congratulations in advance to the fortunate few whose scripts move forward!

And if you don't make the cut, don't despair – our off-season [Script Services](#) are already up and running. Order Judge's Feedback on your script to find out what its strengths and weaknesses are, then make adjustments accordingly. Or, if you're ready to get your work out there, order a Marketing Package so that your queries to industry professionals will be as compelling as possible.

In this summer issue of LOGLINE, we've got some great beach reading for screenwriters. 2011 PAGE Silver Prize winner Sue Morris offers an inside look at the making of a feature film she wrote. PAGE Judge Lauren Waldron explains the differences between a spec and a shooting script (there are many). Genre guru John Truby goes gaga for *Godzilla* as an example of effective "Epic Horror." Our formatting ace Dave Trottier fields questions from his mailbag. Industry insider Marvin V. Acuna shares 7 Secrets to Dealing with Rejection. And finally we show you the latest, hottest leads from InkTip!

Happy reading,



## Latest News from the PAGE Awards

- ◇ The new thriller *Abduct*, by 2005 PAGE Bronze Prize winner Philip Daay, is now filming in the U.K. Produced by Sunset Studios and Malta Digital Media, the movie is being directed by VFX wizard Ilyas Kaduji and stars Sienna Guillory (*Love Actually*), Mhairi Calvey (*Braveheart*), William B. Davis (*The X-Files*) and Jack O'Halloran (*Superman 2*). Phil also has two other projects in the works with the same production team.
- ◇ The indie drama *Model Minority*, by 2009 Bronze Prize winner Lily Mariye, is now available on Amazon. Lily wrote and directed the film, which has been making the festival rounds for the past several months, garnering numerous awards. The movie stars Nichole Bloom (*Shameless*), Jessica Tuck (*Super 8*), Takayo Fischer (*Moneyball*) and Helen Slater (*The Secret of My Success*).
- ◇ The Christmas feature spec *Sandi Claus*, by 2010 Bronze Prize winner Lee Tidball, has now been optioned by Berenika Bailey of Magic Elevator Films (*Mobster Kids, Infected*). Berenika discovered Lee's script via our terrific co-sponsor InkTip.
- ◇ 2013 Grand Prize winner Brooke Eikmeier has landed a staff job on the upcoming CW series *The Flash* and 2008 Gold Prize winner Lee Arcuri and 2012 Gold Prize winner Graham Norris have both landed staff jobs on the CW series *iZombie*. Brooke is represented by WME and Circle of Confusion, and Lee and Graham are both repped by PAGE Judge Joe Riley at Velocity Entertainment.
- ◇ 2009 Silver Prize winner Alex Hollister has been hired to adapt Allan Topol's best-selling novel *Spy Dance* for the screen. The U.K.-based writer was signed by PAGE Judge Jeff Belkin of Zero Gravity Management shortly after his contest win and has been working steadily ever since.

2014 PAGE Awards Quarter-Finalists Announced: July 15<sup>th</sup>

## From Script to Screen on a Shoestring

by Sue Morris

When my script *Second Glance* advanced to the Finals of the 2011 PAGE Awards competition, I was so thrilled I emailed a number of people to tell them. Darren, a local filmmaker I've known for a few years, emailed me

Sue Morris won a PAGE Silver Prize in 2011 for her drama *Second Glance*. She lives in Lincoln, U.K. *The Drift* is her first produced feature. For more details about the film see [backyardproductions.co.uk](http://backyardproductions.co.uk).

back to say he was starting work on a new project that I might be interested in, a feature-length sci-fi/horror movie called *The Drift*.

Darren and his community film company Backyard Productions have been making fan films and

parodies for years, but he was keen to try something more ambitious. He had an idea for an entertaining B-movie that was "fun to watch, fun to make" as a community project. He had already worked out the story universe, backstory and a rough plotline. Darren had the use of the filming location until March and was already building the set but he still needed the script. That's where I came in.

Over the course of several weeks, between our day jobs, we met up to discuss ideas and develop the story. We worked out the overall shape and structure, with the key turning points and sequences. We created character profiles covering backstories, relationships and attitudes to each other. During one meeting we had a map of the different locations on the whiteboard. As we talked through the story we used Post-It notes for the individual characters, moving them around so we knew who was where at every point.

When we were happy with everything, Darren wrote out the story as a detailed narrative covering everything he wanted. I used this to create a spreadsheet scene breakdown. Each scene was on a separate row, with three columns: scene location, a one or two sentence summary, and notes (e.g. things to set up and pay off).

The scene breakdown became the basis for Darren's production plan, which included additional columns for his notes on set, wardrobe, props, makeup and special effects. Meanwhile, I concentrated on writing the key dramatic scenes first, so we could use them for auditions. Then I filled in the remaining scenes, ticking them off my scene breakdown as I went along.

Shooting was scheduled for 12 days, over several weekends. The biggest constraint was the set. Because of the physical space available, the set for the main *Drift* ship couldn't all be built at once, so it was designed in sections that could be moved and rebuilt in different combinations to create the different locations.

Before we began shooting, we had a full read-through of the script with the actors. Instead of sitting around a table, we did it as a walk-through with chairs laid out to represent the set. This gave us a sense of the full movie, given that we would be shooting it out of sequence.

The script evolved during filming. I rewrote a couple of

pivotal scenes to take the set layout into account. Some great moments were suggested by the actors. On one occasion, just before shooting a particular scene, Darren decided he needed another 20 seconds of dialogue. There's nothing like the thrill of handing new lines to the actors, watching them immediately read them in character, and thinking, "Hell yes, that works!"

The shooting schedule was a challenge, to say the least. I had the job of script supervisor. Sometimes we were doing two scenes at once at opposite ends of the room, or were filming while the set was being dismantled just out of frame.

Another complication was that Darren intended to include a sequence that would involve green screens but just in case it didn't work, he wanted to film an alternative sequence as a backup. So now we had additional scenes and two slightly different versions of several other scenes. The poor actors didn't know if they were coming or going.

Then, partway through filming, I broke my foot. While I was laid-up at home recuperating, I took on the job of logging all the video clips (over 4,500) in preparation for editing. It's a mundane task, but interesting to appreciate the different camera angles and performances from the actors. It's fascinating how the selection and combination of shots can reinforce or undermine the story you're telling.

Even in the earliest, roughest edits it was clear that *The Drift* had more ambition than most amateur films. The audience reaction from an early test screening was overwhelmingly positive and helpful. For example, we learned that they hadn't picked up the subtle significance of the ending, so now we've tweaked the last scene using ADR to make it clearer.

The film is still in post-production, mainly because of the visual effects sequences. There's a limit to how quickly you can achieve things when you're not paying people. Everyone involved in *The Drift* is a volunteer doing it for nothing – at the current count, that's more than 120 people from across the world. The budget of £5,000 (roughly \$8,500) was spent on unavoidable costs like insurance, food, and set-building materials. And like previous Backyard Productions films, any proceeds from its release will be going to charity.

Some aspects of *The Drift* don't work as well as we were hoping they would, but others have exceeded our original expectations. Was it fun to make? Yes and no. Some parts of the process were a real slog. Will it be fun to watch? I hope so, but we'll see when the film is finished. Regardless, we've got more out of it than just the film itself. People who met and became friends working on it have gone on to work together on their own projects. Right now I'm working with Darren on the script for another story set in the same universe, and it's getting some industry attention.

As aspiring screenwriters, we naturally focus on the words on the page, but the script is only the starting point. You don't need Hollywood's permission to make a film. Find collaborators. Try things out. Make mistakes so you can learn from them. Be someone that people like working with. Who knows where it might lead!

## Spec Scripts vs. Shooting Scripts

by Lauren Waldron

Script readers love movies. Why else would we spend countless hours reading and analyzing hundreds and hundreds of screenplays? We're all eager to find great stories that will make great films. But when a script is littered with camera angles and editing instructions like "smash cut," "rack focus," "zoom in" and "intercut as needed," it hinders the read by interrupting the narrative flow and takes the reader out of the story. Terms like this do not belong in a spec script, only in a shooting script, and the confusion of the two is one of the most common mistakes made by aspiring writers.

Lauren Waldron studied film at the School of Visual Arts in New York and is a fellow of Film Independent's Screenwriters Lab in Los Angeles. She has worked in development at Propaganda Films and in production as a script supervisor and associate producer on films and commercials. Lauren has also served as a judge for the PAGE Awards contest since 2004.

### What's the difference between a spec script and a shooting script?

Technical terms are strictly reserved for shooting scripts, which are scripts that have been sold and green-lit for production. While it can be fun to envision your screenplay as a produced film, it's the director's job to determine camera and editing details. Until then, readers just want to get emotionally invested in a great story without any distractions. When a producer, manager or agent asks to read your screenplay or writing sample, they'll expect you to send a spec script (also called a writer's draft). Sending a shooting script at this stage of the game will be seen as an amateur move.

Specs actually read better than shooting scripts because they focus on the story instead of how the writer would like the story to be shot. When a spec is peppered with shooting references, reading it can be like watching the movie being shot because you're aware of the production taking place, rather than being emotionally invested in the characters and their circumstances. Reading "we see" and "we hear" in action lines reminds readers that they're not in the characters' shoes.

Trimming shoot references, soundtrack cues and casting notes will also shorten your script. While some stories can only be told in 120+ pages/minutes, these days most producers prefer scripts to be closer to 100 pages, so shorter is usually better. Action scenes in particular read much faster without references to the camera or editing choices (no one wants to read a slow-paced action scene).

### How do you create a strong spec script?

A strong spec starts with a clean title page that contains only the script's title, the name of the screenwriter and basic contact information. It doesn't need extra info like draft number, revision dates or registration numbers.

From there, delete scene numbers and remove any references to opening titles, end credits or superimposed graphics. You can always replace "super" by indicating any timestamp, date or location info in a slug line.

Next, delete most if not all editing cues between scenes, such as "CUT TO," "JUMP CUT," "MATCH CUT" and "FADE TO." The transition "CUT TO" isn't needed since each new slug line already indicates a cut. A series of jump cuts can be indicated with a series of brief secondary slug lines (such as "MOMENTS LATER"), while a "match cut" will be apparent when a scene's last image graphically matches the first image of the next scene. And instead of announcing "MONTAGE," just describe each scenario within the montage.

Remove camera cues such as moves/angles ("pan," "tilt," "angle on," etc.), specified shots ("POV shot," "establishing," "aerial," "tracking," etc.) and references to the screen and frame. Avoid action lines that read like script notes or production "one-liners," which just give basic information (like "John goes to work" or "Dan meets with Sara"). Aim for concise but cleverly worded prose so action lines convey emotion, personality and atmosphere.

While a spec script is devoid of shooting references, there are a few tricks that screenwriters can use to give readers a visceral cinematic experience. Sound cues can be written in ALL CAPS to make the sound jump out at the reader, and action lines can be crafted to focus the reader's eye by describing only what the camera sees in any given moment. For example, instead of specifying "close on" or "insert," simply describe the object or moment that's under scrutiny. A close-up can be implied with a stark description or phrase on a single action line, like in this action-sequence excerpt from *The Bourne Ultimatum*:

INT. PHARMACY BATHROOM - MOSCOW - NIGHT  
BOURNE finishing up - splashes water on his face - he seems a man on a mission. He looks up -  
A MIRROR.

Any short phrase on a single line will demand attention just like a close-up, with or without all caps. The same effect highlights an ominous RV window in *Prisoners*:

Eliza takes Joy's hand and the four of them continue on around the block...

The rear windshield of the RV. A shadow appears behind the filthy glass, watching them go...

To create an abrupt edit or quick cut to a new scene, some writers leave an unfinished sentence right before a new slug. Here's an example from *Michael Clayton*:

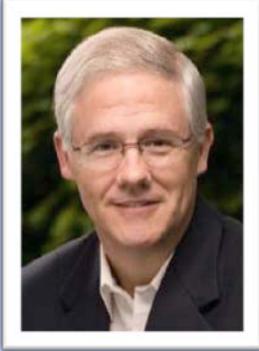
The basket with Michael's stuff. The pager starts vibrating. A moment later, the cell phone starts ringing and -

INT. CHINATOWN FREIGHT ELEVATOR - NIGHT  
Ascending. Michael leaving in a hurry.

A well-written spec will showcase your skills as a storyteller. So when it comes time to send your screenplay to a producer, representative or screenwriting contest, submit a strong spec script that sells your story above all.

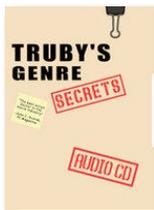
## Writing the Epic Horror Film: *Godzilla*

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](http://www.truby.com) today.

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It's easy to make fun of *Godzilla*. Laughable franchise. Dinosaur that looks like a chicken. Really big scales that make it impossible for him to sleep on his back. But making fun doesn't get us anywhere. This film has been huge at the box office and is a lot better than I thought it would be (which is a pretty low bar, I admit). But for mastering the craft of screenwriting, especially for summer blockbuster movies, the question to ask ourselves is: what would I do if I were given this assignment? More specifically, what were the story challenges in this film and what would I do to solve them?

The normal approach to a horror-disaster film is monster against humans. But that's a grossly unfair fight. Millions of humans are just foot fodder for the big guy. Even the strongest military on earth is helpless in the face of such power. Which means that, like virtually all disaster movies, the normal *Godzilla* movie has no plot. Talk about hitting the same beat. Nameless humans are trampled ad infinitum.

That brings up the challenge of character. Obviously, you won't be getting into the psychological and moral needs of *Godzilla*. And if you tell this story in the normal way, you won't be getting any character definition from the nameless humans he kills either. To see how the writers solved these challenges, and the process we might work through on a similar project, we begin by going back to the genres, or story forms, on which *Godzilla* is based. This is **epic horror**, technically a story in which the fate of the nation is determined by the actions of a single individual fighting a monster.

*Titanic* was the best disaster film ever made. The key technique James Cameron used to elevate it above one of the lowest of all genres was to begin with a love story. This allowed the audience to get to know two people extremely well, and to invest deeply in their love. Then when the disaster hit, it wasn't just mass destruction of a number of characters we never got to know. This disaster really hurt.

Here, writers Dave Callaham (story) and Max Borenstein (screenplay) establish a single human character, Ford Brody, who will be the fulcrum of the epic. Some have criticized the film for its slow start. But this time is crucial to show Ford's ghost and his intense emotional need to solve the problem no matter the cost. It also connects him and his family to the audience, so that the later mega-battles will mean more to the audience.

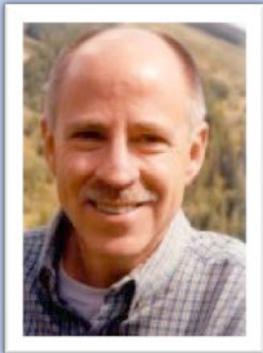
So how does the genre of epic horror help the writers set up the character opposition? They go back to the single most important technique in horror, first used in *Frankenstein*, and flip the human and inhuman. At some point in the story the monster becomes the hero. This technique was also used in *Terminator 2*, where the relentless monster of the first one becomes a good guy and a normal-looking human is an even-deadlier machine.

Of course, here the writers don't take this technique as far, but we get a nice plot beat and it sets up the real battle of the story. As humans are apparently impotent in the face of *Godzilla*'s power, why not create a second and third monster that can give *Godzilla* real trouble? This opposition may lack the emotional power of a fight between *Godzilla* and humans, but real emotion requires a fair fight, so that wasn't going to happen anyway. And since this is both a horror and an epic action story, the fight between mega-monsters is guaranteed to generate much better action set pieces.

The epic horror genre dictates a third major decision for the writers, having to do with the story structure. Adding epic to horror means the action story beats will track the plot. A good action story always converges to a single point known to the audience fairly early in the story: the **vortex point**. This allows the writers to begin the story on an epic, often worldwide, scale without paying a heavy price. The big danger to the epic action story is that the grand scale can destroy narrative drive as the story meanders from place to place. But by setting up a vortex point, the writers create a cyclone effect where all characters and action lines converge at progressively greater speed.

The vortex point here takes place in San Francisco. All monsters and humans, including our everyman hero, Brody, drive relentlessly to this point in space and time. The storyline speeds up and the battle they fight there is a whopper.

Most writers forget that horror is consistently the most popular story form in worldwide storytelling. But it's also a very narrow form. Combining it with a genre like action magnifies its power tremendously, especially in the film medium. The trick for writers is learning how to combine the forms so that you get the best of both.



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](http://www.keepwriting.com)

## Format Questions from Dave's Mailbag

by Dave Trottier

### HOW MUCH DETAIL?

#### READER'S QUESTION:

I know I shouldn't direct the director, so I try to keep the dialogue and description lean. But where do I draw the line between too little detail and too much detail?

For example, should I write:

Molly cries.

Or...

Molly cries. Her body shakes, hands tremble, face turns red.

#### DAVE'S ANSWER:

This is an important question because, as writers, we sometimes wonder where this fine line lies. Your second example adds drama and interest. If Molly is an important character, the reader will more readily identify with your second example. But don't go beyond that and describe how her tears refract the light streaming through the window, creating a prism of sad colors. The key is to provide details that move the story forward, add dimension to your characters, dramatize dramatic and emotional moments, and add atmosphere (be careful here).

It follows that you don't need to include every incidental action. For example, don't write "He lays the coffee cup on the edge of the table." No one cares where he lays the coffee cup unless he is going to spill it later, or it contains poison. Focus on story and character elements.

If your character enters a classroom, just describe it as an ordinary classroom. We do not need to know about the windows unless someone is going to come in or out through those windows (for example). We don't need to know what kinds of desks or chairs are in the room unless our student character cannot fit into his/her desk (for example). Again, story and character elements are what the industry reader is evaluating.

### AND THE MUSIC?

#### READER'S QUESTION:

Shouldn't I indicate in my script when the orchestra plays?

#### DAVE'S ANSWER:

No. Your great writing establishes the mood for each scene. This is where the music composer should get his/her cues for the score. As the writer, your emphasis should be on the quality of your writing, the characters (including their emotions) and of course the story.

### CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

#### READER'S QUESTION:

I want to be a screenwriter, but I cannot move to Los Angeles. What do I do?

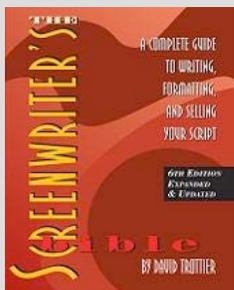
#### DAVE'S ANSWER:

You don't have to move to L.A. It helps, but it is not necessary.

Writers such as Diablo Cody (*Juno*) and Michael Arndt (*Little Miss Sunshine*) break in from outside of L.A. all the time. Just keep writing.

### Dave Trottier's

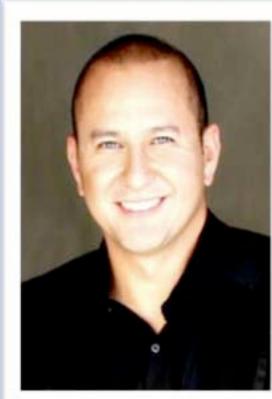
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Marvin V. Acuna is an accomplished film and television producer. He recently produced the features *Chez Upshaw*, starring Kevin Pollak and Ileana Douglas, and *Lovelace*, with Amanda Seyfried, Peter Saarsgard and James Franco.

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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## The 7 Secrets to Dealing with Rejection

by Marvin V. Acuna

Did you know I was severely shy as a youngster?

And I'm not talking about being "introverted," or having "social anxiety." I mean I was just painfully shy.

It was so bad that when I wanted to know what time it was, I'd run into a store to check the clock, rather than ask someone on the street.

Fortunately, as I got older, my door-to-door sales training at a direct sales company forced me overcome my shyness once and for all. But of course the memories of being horrifically shy will stick with me forever.

Which is why as I entered Hollywood, I realized very quickly who the introverted siblings of the entertainment business clan were.

### Writers.

The cool thing is, I could relate to them because of my own experiences.

The more important thing is, I got good at helping the more "wallflower" types of writers break out of their shells and become powerful pitchers and connectors.

As you know, these are vital skills to have in Hollywood. But the fear of rejection can be so paralyzing that some writers would rather forego their dreams than deal with constant "no's" and slamming doors.

But here's the truth.

Rejection is, and always will be, part of your journey as a screenwriter.

So here are **7 tips** to help you think through and ultimately overcome your fear of rejection.

1. As Zig Ziglar said, "Every 'no' that you receive is one step closer to a 'yes.'" And more importantly, one step closer to aligning you with the right executive, producer, agent, or manager.

2. You've said "no" to someone before. What were you thinking? Were you antagonistic, malicious, or angry? Probably not. And chances are, neither is the Hollywood professional who told you "no." They were simply looking for jeans while you were selling khakis.

3. Beware of how you speak to yourself after rejection. Avoid using "always" or "never" when talking to yourself. For example, "Agents always reject me!" Or, "I'll never sell my script!" That kind of thinking turns into a self-fulfilling prophecy. You never want to empower negative thoughts.

4. Remember that each experience can be a lesson... if you let it! You can (and are supposed to) learn from every "no" or perceived rejection. Be grateful that you're that much closer to success!

5. Don't take it personally. It's business. Solely business.

6. Avoid phoning everyone you know to bitch and moan. You'll only prolong your suffering and be known as a whiner. Shake it off and move on.

7. Instead of having a pity-party for one, opt instead to create a self-esteem ritual that makes you feel great. Whether it's getting a massage, taking a hot bath or treating yourself to a good meal, intentionally moving out of a negative space is always preferable to staying in a negative space.

So there you have it!

These tips changed my life, and I hope they'll help you, too.

By the way, Hollywood icon Sylvester Stallone had this to say about rejection:

"I take rejection as someone blowing a bugle in my ear to wake me up and get going, rather than retreat."



## 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](mailto: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

## Foresight Entertainment

[code: fgb03bfxph]

We are looking for completed feature-length scripts (80-100 pages) that fit into at least one of these three genres: action, psychological thriller or horror. It can combine all three of these genre elements. We're NOT open to scripts in other genres (no comedies, straight-up dramas, kids movies, etc.). The script should be both character-driven and story-driven.

Budget will not exceed \$5M. WGA or non-WGA okay.

Our credits include *Nocturne Six*, among others.

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

## Magic Elevator LLC

[code: p6jkzc5bww]

We are looking for completed feature-length family-friendly live-action scripts that will garner a G or PG rating and are targeted at kids and families. By way of example, the average Disney film is in the "family-friendly" genre.

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

Our credits include *Mobster Kids*, which we shot from a script we discovered on InkTip.

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

## NXTdream Films

[code: wrs1nqps1q]

We are looking for completed feature-length contained sci-fi scripts with 1-2 locations, 3-5 actors, little to no SFX/CGI and a focus of strong emotional character development (within the genre). Good examples of what we're looking for are films like *Cube*, *Exam*, *Triangle* and *Under the Skin*.

Budget will not exceed \$250K. WGA or non-WGA okay.

Our credits include *Dark Mind*, among others.

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

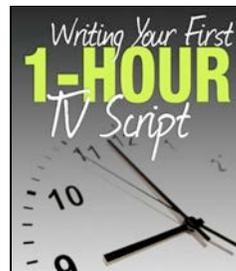


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