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## Letter from the Editor

Time is running out to enter the [2015 PAGE Awards!](#) Get in before our **May 15 Final Entry Deadline** for a shot at our \$25,000 Grand Prize. Beyond the boost that cash provides, the prestige of a Bronze, Silver or Gold Prize can have life-changing effects. Doing well in the contest is a great way to get on the industry radar. Even making the Semi-Finals provides a feather in your cap that can make a query more compelling to potential representatives!

As another sweltering summer begins, this issue of our **LOGLINE** eZine brings a cool and refreshing array of articles for the serious screenwriter. 2012 Silver Prize winner Jon James Miller tells us how to use our favorite films as a foundation for compelling new projects. PAGE Judge Beverly Neufeld offers a different perspective on the pitchfest. Genre ace John Truby explains the nine elements that many great screenplays have in common. Dave Trottier, a foremost authority on formatting, examines overlapping dialogue and another way of looking at acts. Industry insider Marvin V. Acuna prepares you for your first meeting with a Hollywood professional. And finally, peruse leads from InkTip.com, to find out what material prodcos are currently looking for.

Happy reading,



## Latest News from the PAGE Awards

- ◇ The 2010 PAGE Gold Prize-winning horror movie **Maggie**, by John Scott III, premiered on April 22 at the Tribeca Film Festival and will open in theaters and on demand on May 8. **Maggie** tells the story of a deadly zombie epidemic threatening humanity. The movie was directed by Henry Hobson and features Arnold Schwarzenegger, Abigail Breslin and Joely Richardson in the starring roles. John is represented by Sly Predator and CAA.
- ◇ The 2010 PAGE Bronze Prize-winning film **Scout**, written and directed by Laurie Weltz, premiered at the Newport Beach Film Festival on April 25. This coming-of-age drama is the story of a young girl who takes a road trip across Texas to track down her little sister, who's been taken by their estranged carnie father. The movie stars India Ennenga, James Frecheville, Nikki Reed, Ellen Burstyn and Danny Glover.
- ◇ After a heated bidding war, a pitch for the period action movie **The Real McCoy**, by 2008 Gold Prize winner Bill Dubuque (**The Judge**), was picked up by Universal Studios in a seven-figure deal. Chris Pratt will star as the famous bootlegger William McCoy. Bill Dubuque is represented by Zero Gravity Management and CAA.
- ◇ The April 27 episode of the hit A&E series **Bates Motel** was written by 2007 Silver Prize winner Bill Balas, who has been a staff writer on the show since its premiere in 2013. Bill is represented by Principato-Young and Paradigm.
- ◇ The 2014 Bronze Prize-winning TV Comedy Pilot **Above the Angelic**, by Paul Bissett, has been optioned by the U.K.-based production company Kindle Entertainment. Paul tells us: "We now have an actor attached and will be pitching to broadcasters this year. Exciting times! This whole process has been fantastic and something I'll never forget."

**2015 PAGE Awards Final Entry Deadline: Friday, May 15**

## Don't Have the Remake Rights? Reconceptualize

by Jon James Miller

I've always felt I had a big advantage as the youngest of a family of four siblings. My three brothers are all older by six, nine and 10 years, with very different

Jon James Miller has won numerous writing awards, including a 2012 PAGE Silver Prize for his feature script *Capitol Spies*. He is a frequent presenter on subjects ranging from fiction and screenwriting to works based on true stories and film adaptation, and his webinars can be found at The Writers Store and Writers Digest University online. Jon is represented by Jill Marr at Sandra Dijkstra Literary and Kevin Cleary of Pooka Entertainment. For more information, go to [www.jonjamesmiller.com](http://www.jonjamesmiller.com).

personalities. So, growing up I was exposed to a much wider variety of pop culture than I would have been. One brother loved comedy in the vein of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* and another was a devotee of Bugs Bunny's *Merry Melodies*. Yet another loved everything from science fiction to horror. And all of my family, including my mother, were voracious readers.

I didn't realize what a huge range of pop-culture knowledge I had until I attended film school. My favorite class was Film &

Literature. As a student I was fascinated to learn what a screenwriter decided to leave in (or often more importantly, leave out) when adapting a book, novel or short story for the screen. Most of the time I thought the book was better. The few exceptions were Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, adapted from Stephen King's novel; Steven Spielberg's *Jaws*, based on Peter Benchley's classic novel; and John Boorman's *Deliverance*, adapted from James Dickey's debut novel. All these 1970s classics I had seen before, but now I was seeing them with a more critical eye. I began to appreciate my brothers' fascination with these stories.

By the time I graduated and moved to Los Angeles to pursue my screenwriting career, I had my own ideas of what made a great genre movie. Those early memories of watching movies on cable with my brothers, combined with the movies I studied in film school, gave me a sort of cinematic shorthand, so when I started getting pitch meetings and doing story-breakout sessions, I found myself always referencing films from the 1970s and '80s to explain the visuals for my own stories. I'm sure that some of the time the execs on the other side of the desk had no idea what the hell I was talking about. But I've always believed that true film fanatics appreciate all eras and genres of movies, and when our story sensibilities clicked, it was magic.

Screenwriting is an incredibly hard business. I've found that, to be successful, my writing has to come from a place of passion and true conviction. I literally have to love what I am writing about and get into that zone where a writer bleeds onto the page to bring their characters and plots to life. And I've found that as I've gotten more confident in my writing and my particular

voice, I continue to find inspiration in those classics my brothers and I were brought up on. So much so that I find myself referencing them again and again when I'm beating out an outline, going to treatment, or writing yet another draft of a script.

I've even considered trying to secure the remake rights to some of these classics. But for an independent screenwriter with limited resources, securing remake rights is virtually impossible. The next best thing, I've discovered, is reconceptualization.

The easiest way I can define reconceptualization is that it is consciously writing more than an homage to a specific film but less than a remake. Even as I write that sentence I'm reminded of the Hollywood adage that there are no original stories, only your own unique twist on the same archetypes that all writers have always used in storytelling.

For me, reconceptualization is much more than mimicking the beloved movies I'll never get the remake rights to. It has more to do with mastering the language of cinema in order to create your own dialect or voice as a screenwriter. And there's no better way to learn a new language than by studying the old masters.

Take *Deliverance*, for instance. The first time I saw the 1972 classic was in film school, decades after it came out. Of course it scared the crap out of me, as it does virtually everyone who witnesses it. But upon repeated viewings of the movie over the years, I began to see that the interplay of themes that existed in the novel had not only survived the adaptation process, but become even stronger in the film version: Man vs. Nature, Man vs. His Own Nature and Man realizing his True Nature had all been preserved forever in the landmark film. *Deliverance* also had one of the earliest messages of conservation, just two years after the first Earth Day in 1970.

Flash forward to 2015, and the themes in *Deliverance* are as visceral and topical as ever. I knew in my screenwriter heart that a *Deliverance*-type story would resonate with audiences today as much as it did back in 1972, provided that I put a contemporary twist on the idea that a man is taken out of his element, thrust into the wild, and forced to fight for his life and the lives of others he's come to care for. And so I set about creating a story similar in theme to *Deliverance*, except that in my version a city-smart cop is pitted against backwoods mountain folk engaged in illegal activity on national forestland. My original thriller *The Ranger* was not only inspired by *Deliverance* but also by a sci-fi favorite of my siblings, *Planet of the Apes* (1968).

I'm happy to say that what started out as an exercise in trying to capture the magic of these beloved genre classics ended up getting me read and signed by Los Angeles-based manager/producer Kevin Cleary of Pooka Entertainment. Kevin and I are actively developing the property now, and it's great having a manager who not only believes in my work but also shares my story sensibilities. It's the best outcome I could ever have dreamed of back when I was still just a kid watching movies with my brothers.

## The Passion of the Pitch

by Beverly Neufeld

Six weeks after graduating college, I was working at a brand new job as an English teacher. At the age of 22, I was participating in a parent/teacher/kid/principal meeting and I felt like I too was brought in to be scolded.

Beverly Neufeld has been a reader and consultant for CAA, Fox, Slamdance Films and many others, and also served as a Development Executive at Blackbird Fly Films and Director of Development at Juntobox Films. As a screenwriter, she has been hired on several rewrite assignments and was recently tapped to pen a female sports movie. Beverly has an MFA from UCLA, where she won the Samuel Goldwyn Screenwriting Award.

I didn't feel I belonged on the teacher side – the side with the authority, looking across at the vulnerable child. I identified with the child.

I had a similar feeling when I first attended a writers' pitchfest as a development executive. I'd been a writer. I knew what it felt like to be on the other side of the desk, with all the vulnerability and the stress. Yet here I was in the big shot's chair. You know, the one with the free water bottle. But as before, I identified with the underdog.

As a writer attending a pitchfest, you might have various opinions of the experience:

Yes! It's so nice to have a way to directly speak to industry professionals even if I don't have representation.

Yeah, I have something special and I believe in myself.

Ack! I have to be exciting and engaging over and over again in five-minute increments. Why don't they have Tinder for this? (Excuse me while I go patent that.)

Argh... I'm a writer, not an agent. I don't like selling myself. That's why I have a copy of *Quiet, the Power of Introverts* in my car.

Blech. I wanted to pitch to ICM and I got Mr. Whiskers' House of Movie Productions. Plus, I bet this person they sent is an intern.

God, I'd love some free water.

And so on.

I feel you. I am you.

When I am sitting in that development executive seat, what goes through my mind?

"How will I be exciting and engaging over and over again in five-minute increments?"

I have a copy of *Quiet, the Power of Introverts* at home.

And: "Please, oh please oh please, let them be good! Let me be able to help them. I don't want to break hearts. I want to make someone's dream come true. I know what it feels like to have your heart crushed, so I'm going to make every person see what is special about them. I will make sure they leave my table feeling heard and happy. Believing this interaction was pleasurable. If I can't help them, I'll make sure they don't take it personally... And also, dear lord, please don't give me someone with a cape

and a boombox who jumps on top of my table in an effort to add excitement. The introvert book didn't prepare me for that."

The pitchfest went well. Each person brought energy and hope and creativity. Some of the pitches I loved – absolutely loved – but couldn't help, because my company did low-budget films and they had a big period piece. I love period pieces, but I had to tell one sweet guy right away that we couldn't buy his pitch. I explained that it wasn't him, it was me – or more accurately, my company. He still tried to convince me I should buy their pitch. That was odd.

You know what I liked?

I liked people who were passionate about their stories. When they let that loose, I too, if only for a moment, loved physics or a small town in New Mexico. They didn't have to cater to me; they just had to share what they loved. Not push, share. The former is desperate while the latter is vulnerable and powerful and authentic.

I loved happy people, smiling people, sweet people. I wanted to hear about them, and I wanted to be emotionally drawn in by their stories. I wanted my emotions affected. I wanted to laugh, worry, fear or cry.

Some writers would come with a manager, producer or someone like that. It didn't always help. When someone was excited and really championing the writer or story, I got excited. When they pushed the writer on me (especially if they didn't have any credits themselves), it felt pushy. It made me wonder, because while I loved that someone would take a stand for the writer, I wondered what big agent or manager would show up at a pitchfest on a Sunday? Their presence rarely added much.

I met someone who attended the same film school I did. Did that make a difference? Did I play favorites? No, but it was a jumping-off point. The woman had an infectious personality and a story that I thought was important to champion. So I took it to my boss. It's up to them now. But this woman, her energy, and her passion for her story, made me want to help in some way. And I often feel that way. I'll help if I can. I want to.

Yes, there were some development people who were just there to network with others, but I was there because storytelling is my passion. I love discovering new voices. If I can do something for you, excellent. If I can't, I will at least acknowledge your talent and try to help you keep going. I'll try to make this process a little less scary and a little more fun.

For writers, I know it feels like speed dating. But at these pitch sessions you can potentially sell your script, you can make a connection, or at the very least you can be proud you took action to advance your career that day.

Pitch sessions don't have to feel like sitting in front of the principal at school. The next time you pitch, just answer this one question:

"What are you passionate about? Share it with me."

# WHAT'S YOUR GENRE?

## Great Movies and Why They Work

by John Truby

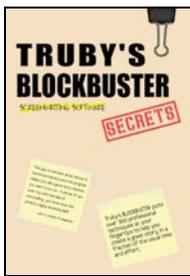
You don't need to go to film school to recognize the key elements of great movies. These same elements are present time and time again in the great movies, and they are worth highlighting:

1. These movies tend to have strong single line – with one overriding problem or goal for the hero – to give the story drive, momentum, and a sense of priorities, or in the extreme, a sense of the first cause.
2. These films occasionally digress from that strong line to allow the film to “breathe.” That is, they play with the structure to comment on what is happening, to cause the viewers to rethink their expectations, and to present actions or words that make an abstract, or thematic, point.
3. These films usually have heroes with a moral problem. The hero commits or fails to commit actions and other people are hurt. These are characters with moral flaws, and the stories drive toward the moment when the hero uncovers his or her moral blindness.
4. Perhaps the most crucial element of great films is that the audience believes what each side is fighting about. Even more important, these movies attach entire clusters of values and beliefs to the two adversaries. The great movies set up, around a single central opposition, an array of other oppositions that grow until they have national or even international implications, and present the essential predicaments of human life.
5. The great movies have powerful, condensed openings that present the crucial patterns of the story and then slowly bring these patterns to the surface and explore them in an explicit way. By the end the audience has a sense of the patterns of thought and values that cause problems, not just for these particular characters but for anyone, anywhere.
6. These movies make a moral argument. They show a hero and an opponent taking actions to reach their goals, and then justifying what they do with arguments that the audience can judge.
7. These movies don't just present a hero and an antagonist. They show a unique and detailed world. In this world, larger forces are at work, values and worldviews are made clear, and what happens in the stories affects other characters who, though minor, are full human beings.
8. The great movies show great ambition. They ask the key question: what makes a good life? They give various answers, some of which may not be valid, but they force the audience to see their own lives in this kind of grand way. And that is the only way that meaningful change is possible.
9. The great movies usually present a world that works relatively, no matter how hard we try to make it absolute. These films do not say that nothing exists, nothing is true, nothing is good, or nothing is right. But they explore in detail the way that meaning, truth, good, and right bend as human beings change and face new circumstances. In this life, these films say, a human being either creates value from what is available, or dies.



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 40,000 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.

### John Truby's Blockbuster 6.0 Software



This program puts hundreds of professional techniques at your fingertips to help you create a great story in a fraction of the usual time.

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- Guides you through the story development process from idea to final rewrite
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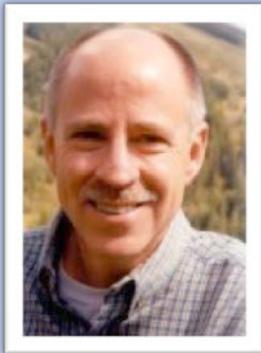
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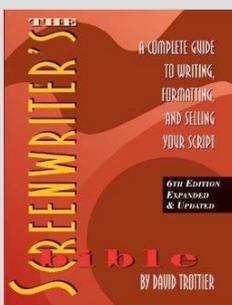


Dave Trottier has sold screenplays and developed projects for The Walt Disney Company, Jim Henson Pictures, York Entertainment, On the Bus Productions, Hill Fields and New Century Pictures. As a script consultant, he has helped dozens of clients sell their work and win awards. [The Screenwriter's Bible](#), 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). For \$20 off a script evaluation done by Dave, email him at [dave@keepwriting.com](mailto:dave@keepwriting.com).

## Dave Trottier's

**"The Screenwriter's Bible"**  
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- A screenwriting primer for both aspiring and professional scribes
- Offers a comprehensive overview of all facets of screenwriting
- Includes worksheets, samples and more

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## Simultaneous Dialogue and Additional Acts

by Dave Trottier

### DON'T TALK OVER ME

#### READER'S QUESTION:

How do you format two characters saying the same line at the same time?

#### DAVE'S ANSWER:

Here's the first of four ways to present two characters speaking at the same time:

SAM AND JO

Huh, what?

Or you can add a parenthetical to make it absolutely clear.

SAM AND JO

(simultaneously)

Huh, what?

Here's a third example that you can use when the two characters say the same thing at about the same time, or when they say DIFFERENT things at about the same time:

SAM

Huh, what?

JO

(overlapping)

Huh, what?

And finally, you can put their dialogue side by side...

SAM

JO

Huh, what?

Huh, what?

### THREE, FIVE, OR NINE ACTS?

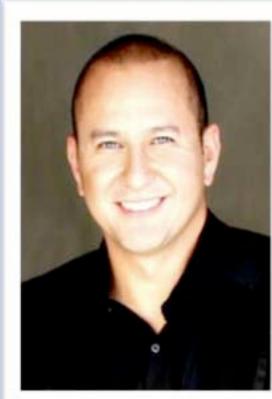
#### READER'S QUESTION:

What are your thoughts regarding nine acts versus three acts?

#### DAVE'S ANSWER:

Bottom line, a nine-act screenplay still has a beginning, a middle, and an end. So does a TV or cable movie, which may have seven or more acts. Some screenwriters like to think in terms of four acts – each about equal length – but there is still a beginning (Act 1), a middle (Acts 2 and 3), and an end (Act 4). Shakespeare wrote in five acts. Even when he was in love, there was a beginning, middle (Acts 2, 3, and 4), and end.

Be creative in how you use your chosen structure, and keep writing!



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 Four Golden Principles of Networking

by Marvin V. Acuna

We've been talking a lot about networking lately.

And rightly so.

Networking (or what I like to call "The Art of Connecting") is one of the most important, yet severely lacking, skills I've seen in aspiring screenwriters.

So let's open a new orbit in your brain today. In anticipation of this summer's upcoming screenwriting conferences, let's talk about networking at live events.

And away we go...

Experts say it takes only three seconds to make a first impression.

WTH?

Hark unto me. That means you have three seconds to dazzle a Hollywood professional with your wit, industry savvy, and polish.

Are you up to the task? The most successful screenwriters know how important it is to prepare for a first meeting with a Hollywood professional, and how crucial it is to break the ice correctly.

So they come well prepared.

The following four "golden rings" will help you become a master connector at your next live event:

- 1. Prepare** – Research the Hollywood professionals you will encounter, particularly the ones you really want to meet. The event program should give you the bios of the agents, managers, and producers in attendance, but you should dig even deeper than that. With just a little Internet research, you can uncover common interests, hobbies, and associations. This is invaluable intel when you're eyeball with industry tastemakers on whom you want to make a good impression.
- 2. Confidence** – The book *The Game*, by Neil Strauss, captures the author's transformation from shy geek to confident Casanova. I'd encourage you to read it. Why? Because the confidence you feel about yourself and your material could very well be the key ingredient that wins over a Hollywood professional. For clarity's sake, I'm talking about confidence, not arrogance. There's a difference!
- 3. Give** – You must know how you add value to other people's lives. Who's in your network? What do you bring to the table other than just a script? What skill sets can you volunteer? Have no less than three items off the top of your head, and use them liberally.
- 4. Listen** – At the last event I attended, a screenwriter approached me and a very well-known literary manager. The screenwriter was charming and easily engaged us in conversation. At some point, the conversation was directed to his screenplay and its concept. He was an effective icebreaker and pitcher, but a terrible listener. Both the literary manager and I agreed to take a look at his material. However, it seemed as if he never heard our request, and ultimately talked us out of our interest. So what's the lesson here? Listen!

Being a master connector can seem like a daunting task. But if you're genuinely committed to helping the people you meet, then it won't be too difficult.

Be sincere, respectful, and open-minded.

Take the time to understand the needs of the people you interact with, and they'll take the time to understand yours.

And remember...

**"You never get a second chance to make a first impression" – Anonymous**



## 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

## Birchmount Entertainment

[code: grwj3831g7]

We are looking for completed, unique, feature-length horror/thriller scripts with paranormal or occult story lines. By "unique," we mean not derivative – not in the vein of something we've seen before.

Our credits include *Separation*.

Budget has yet to be determined. Both WGA and non-WGA writers can submit.

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!

## Critical Hits

[code: ugn6dzh2j7]

We are looking for completed, feature-length genre scripts (horror, action, sci-fi, or fantasy) with a sense of fun. We are especially interested in horror scripts with a whimsical edge (i.e., scripts in the vein of *Gremlins* or *Slither*), and scripts that can be filmed in Puerto Rico.

Budget will be \$1-2 million. Both WGA and non-WGA writers may submit.

Our credits include *Midnight Chronicles* and the upcoming *Malevolent*, 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!

## Gravity Squared Entertainment

[code: 9ceh7eysnb]

We are looking for completed, feature-length Christmas comedy scripts with a father-and-son theme, or father-and-son-comedy scripts with a Christmas theme.

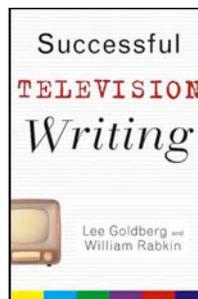
Budget has yet to be determined. WGA and non-WGA writers may submit.

We are a management and production company and our credits include the upcoming *Jubilee*, 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!



### SUCCESSFUL TELEVISION WRITING

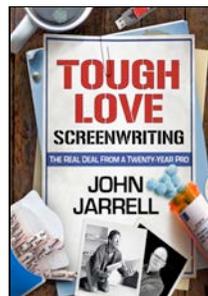


Do you dream of a job as a successful television writer on a hit show? Discover the "franchise" or structure of a television show in order to write an eye-catching spec script. Master four-act structure and learn the elements that go into telling a good story on TV.

After you've blown them away with your spec script, learn how to pitch your pilot confidently and concisely. You'll also find invaluable information on how to work with producers, execute writing assignments, tackle revisions and more!

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### TOUGH LOVE SCREENWRITING

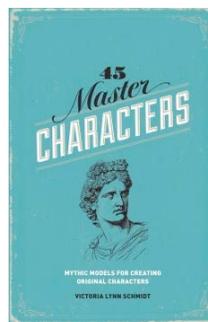


This is NOT another dreaded "how to write" book. It's something much more valuable – a brass knuckles, boots-on-the-ground guide to building a screenwriting career. These pages come from the direct, firsthand experience of a produced professional who's sold scripts, had a hit movie, been hired on numerous writing assignments, dealt with sadistic studio deadlines and handled crazy producers.

The book arms the reader with life-saving nuts-and-bolts tricks of the trade, from craft elements and pitch strategies to coping with notes, agents and self-doubt.

[Learn more...](#)

### 45 MASTER CHARACTERS



Every storyteller faces the challenge of creating original and exciting characters. **Archetypes** – those mythic, cross-cultural models from which all characters originate – provide a solid foundation upon which to fashion fascinating new characters to populate your stories with.

This book explores the most common archetypes, provides instructions for using them to create your own original characters, and gives examples of how other writers have brought such archetypes to life in novels, film and TV.

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