

Ep #36: Great TV Writing

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In this episode, we're talking all about writing great TV, yes, and we are going to be using the example of Department Q as great TV. So listen in.

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This is the Script Reader Pro podcast, hands on advice, insider hacks and deeper discussions for the screenwriters who are serious about breaking into the industry.

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Hey, everyone, this is the Script Reader Pro podcast. I am your host, Desiree, and I am not the host. No, I always want to try and say I'm the host, but you never let me. I'm the host, hostess with the mostest. No, that's from, like, what the 70s or 60s? Fine. I'm not the host. I'm just the guy who talks about screenwriting. You're really not the host. So why do you keep thinking when I started, everyone loves you more than me. I'm in that kind of, like, stabby mood today, sappy and stabby. Yeah, I am. That's you. I've already told you. I'm numerous amount of yes, I've had many, many compliments, compliments this morning. Why is your shirt so short? Get a shirt that fits you. It's pajamas. What else has it been like if you wanted me to, like, wash that like I offered to last night in the kitchen? Yeah, she comes into the kitchen. Could have washed it. And if there's one dish in the sink, no, no, yes, to not get ahead of yourself. Let's tell the listeners what they are actually here for, instead of listening to you being wrong.

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What are they here for? Desiree. What are they here for? Here to

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hear about screenwriting. So why don't we let our bicker mints go, and let's talk about what makes great TV. But first, what do we usually start off with, besides you making fun of me? But first we will be talking about what we have seen lately. Yeah, actually, we just started a show last night, and it is called untamed. It is on Netflix, and we watched the first couple episodes. What do you think so far? I thought it was quite intriguing. Yeah, I actually woke up this morning and I was thinking about it. Wow, thinking about how that younger person relates to the older person, and how that all comes together, and how did that happen, and, and, and, and, yeah, yeah, it was interesting, and we're going to talk about this as we dig into Department Q. If you haven't seen it, go watch it. Also called Depth Dept, Dept, Dept, Q. What about someone who doesn't know Department Q? The department is department D, E, P t is, yeah, we're in the in the titles of the show, it says the word Department Q, and then it changes it to D, E, P T. Why do they do that? I don't know to be different. I'm not sure. I didn't ask, all right, well, what did you think on the show that we started? Though, yeah, I thought it was interesting. It had a really broken character. And that's what we're seeing a lot lately, is leading characters who are just broken, damaged people. They're not the classic hero anymore, which is interesting, because that's

what life is. Not everyone is a hero or a villain. There's gray areas, right? So like with your gray shirt, that's too short, stop. Oh, this is gonna be a great podcast, I can tell. But yes, we watched it, and it was interesting, because when the credits came up, I saw it was written by Mark I Smith and I Smith, and it reminded me that Mark was talking at the awesome Film Festival about this new show that he had coming out called untamed, and he wrote it with his daughter, and like, like, four or five episodes in they still hadn't decided or didn't know who the actual killers were, which I thought was really interesting. Plural killer, I don't know, but I thought it was interesting to write something not even knowing who the villain is, which makes the writing really compelling, because everyone seems like a villain. So anyways, it's been good so far. I'm excited to see where it continues, yeah, really good show. So I thought it was really, like it really, it was nice that it had a variety of characters as well, not just the broken guy, right, yeah, but a lot of different angles. Yeah, they're gonna come intertwine. And even the jerk, Milch, the the second, you know, the secondary Ranger, he was just a real kind of jerk, right? But then there was this nice scene in the second episode where he's sitting down at the picnic table with this other rookie, and showing a bit of like, his humanity, you know, as he talks about the the tragedy of his boss. And then he ends it with, yeah, but he's still a dick to work with, like he's just, it's like a real person, you know, just how they talk. Anyways, it was, yeah, really Mark. Mark is a great writer. It's fantastic. Check that out. I'm not sure what is so you said Mark L What? Mark I Smith? Is his name? L, L, E, L Smith, okay, yeah, that's what I'm trying to figure out. So what's his middle name? L, E, L, L, E, no, it starts with the letter L because it's abbreviated L, what? Yeah, department, I, let, let's get this corrected. I'll send him an email. Speaking of great TV, we are going to dig into Department Q, if you haven't heard of it, just because, yeah, depth dept Q, if you haven't heard of it, it's just because you're obviously buried in a hole somewhere, so you're stupid all over that's funny. That reminds me of I just have to say. So this one mentor client of mine is, I'm gonna like this. No, it's good. Doesn't have to be with him being stupid. No, no. So he's we're working on his, like, his marketing package and stuff. So he's writing his query email with his headline and his headline. I read it and I laughed out loud. It's like some people say that looking back on your high school experience, it was the greatest time of your life. Those people are losers. And I was just like, great delivery, really good word choice. So how many of you this would be? I was like, I would open that that's funny. This guy's funny. This would be really good the whole per the whole point of the podcast, right? It'd be really cool to have it be live again, like we did before, yeah? Because then I could say how many of you would agree with that statement about high school? Yeah, you know, yeah, yeah. We'll put that on our list. We'll do some live podcast if, yeah, if you guys want live podcasts, why don't you send some? Yeah? Let us know. Send us an email. What's the email address again? hello@scriptreaderpro.com it's almost like you could sing that Hello at scriptreaderpro.com, no, it should be Hello at scriptreaderpro.com. I was doing the Lionel Richie, hello song. I was doing the other one. Okay, good. All right, let's go and jump into this episode before we have less listeners than last week. Okay, we're trying to, we're trying to Yes. We're trying to move our audience reach Yeah, and become better. Podcasts, you can be better. I am perfect. You're always perfect. You don't need any any work I do. But anyways, if you haven't heard about it, it's because you're just not paying attention. Is huge show mid huge splash. People were just begging for a second season before it was even over. So why is there a second season coming? Oh, there was only one plan. But again, obviously there's going to be more. We guarantee it No, but obviously, when something is

successful, they will have another a season of it, usually. So right, anyways, we'll wait for it. So we're going to break it all down. So there's going to be spoilers. That's what I was going to say. There will be spoilers. We're not going to talk about we're not going to blow it. We're not going to talk about the ending and how it all wraps up. I am but I'm gonna blow it way out of proportion too. But we will be talking about what happens over a number of episodes, right, little moments and stuff, and why they really worked, and why they were great. So it's like a masterclass in writing. The writer is unbelievable. The whole team was great. Who is the writer? His name is Scott Frank? Good name, good first name, solid Scotsman, yeah, must be from Irish Scottish. Frank is Irish. Scottish is Irish. Scott is an Irish name to you, or just a Scottish name, probably just a Scottish probably just a Scottish lane that sounded very British, the way I said it, Scottish, it did, yes, which is actually quite an interesting fluke of Italian, because this show takes place in Scotland. That's why I said it. And Matthew good is in it, and it's so I you know, when there's casting and you're like, This is the greatest cast. I can't even imagine another actor doing this role, because he was so perfect. But yes, he like in real life, I'd like to know if he's a grump. Well, he's British, and he seems like a really nice guy. British people are grumps. I didn't I'm just saying he's British. I said, I wonder. Usually they're nice people. The British people that are listening are all nice. So nice, it's all those other ones that you got to watch out for. That's right. But Department Q, great show. We're going to dig into all the reasons why. And all I have to say is, you know, it's a good show when Desiree not only remembers the title, but remembers the entire season, that's when you know it leaves an impact. Except Yes, Asterix, so you say it, asterisk, asterisk. Asterix, asterisk, there's an S there. Why can't I say Asterix, you can't go ahead. Was yesterday. I said to you, we were talking about shows we have not finished. And I said, we have to finish what I don't remember, Department Q, oh, yeah, that's right. You said, like we finished it, like a month or two ago, then you said we finished that. So going and remembering this and this and this happened, you're like a good ending. Remembers everything about it, but you remember the show. You do, yes, yes, you do. So this show is all about details. There was so much detail in every tiny little thing, and the reason that it works so well is because you don't know if that's ever going to come back as a detail you needed to know until like, four episodes later, they tie it back in. And they tie every single thing back into that show, every little character, every little piece, every little shot, there's a major piece of it that takes place on a ferry, and you're only on the ferry for, like, think 30 seconds in the pilot, that's how it ends. And there's so many little details that all get called back as they start doing this investigation in such a short little scene. It's just very smartly written. And it's this. This is based on a book and a series of books, so it wasn't on a block. No, it was, yeah, it wasn't an original spec script. And some other countries have had done some different television series or seasons about this case that is in from this specific novel and others, but, but it's so well written for the screen, just the atmosphere, the environment, just the detail of what Department Q is. So the if you haven't seen it, I'm not gonna ruin it for you, but in the initial episode, this main character, he's a detective, and his boss wants to kind of get rid of him, so she gives him this new department of cold cases and sticks him in the basement. In the basement office, Department Q is full of urinals and old showers and musty and gross. It's an old shower locker, bathroom place, and it's just filthy, but it fits so well because that's his. His whole personality is a dirty, filthy, yeah, he kind of looks like he doesn't shower. Yeah, they have it. That really set. Well, a side note, did you know that the person who first wrote it was in Denmark, and he was

Denmark's number one crime writer and a New York Times best selling author. I did not. And the name of the book is the keepers of lost causes, the first apartment Q novel. Hmm,

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good. Interesting detail. Anyway, so if you like reading books, read the books as well. But yeah, it just fit. It just it's, you see this character standing in that room when he first goes in it, and you're just like, that's the perfect place for him. He just, he's such a broken character. Major tragedies happen to him. He can't get past it. He's angry, you know, his life is just a mess. He can't figure it out. No one likes him. No one likes to work with him. No one wants them around, which is odd to see for the hero of a show, right? But it's really neat too, because, like, you just don't, you start by not really liking the guy a whole bunch, right? And then you see little glimmers of kindness, yes, the way that he is with his friend who is in the hospital, and how he comes to visit him, and that he's really invested in making sure that this guy survives and gets through his traumatic experience. But he doesn't do it in a soft way, but the fact that he still shows up consistently, yeah, yeah, shows up in his hospital room, cracks in a beer. And there's the one moment when he walks in and his friend isn't there, and he thinks he died, yeah, and he thinks he died, and he died. Spoiler, no, he didn't sorry, but yeah, just little, little moments, and then, like, you learn more. So, so obviously, if you've listened to this, you probably have seen it, but there's this shooting that this main character and his partner were in, and this the cop that was there also died, but he learns how his friend was shot, how he got shot, cause he was shot in the face. He has a scar like went through his jaw or whatever, but he's just so filled with trauma, and coming back to work and doing this job is the only thing he can think to do. And they're so clever in how smart they show he is. You think he's just being an ass to this new, you know, this younger person working with him, but every single thing he does there's a plan behind it, and you start to really get to know his brain and see how it works, and you're like, This is the only guy who could solve this. But what's even better is, if he didn't have the two specific characters working with him, he could never have solved it. No, but I think too, I honestly think that the lady who took over that department and kicked him into the basement, I don't think she had faith in him. No, no, not at all. She had no faith for him to solve it. And I think, in a way, he wanted to prove her wrong, not only for the department, for but for himself, that he was still a good cop, regardless of what he had gone through, right, that he could still do it, yeah, yeah. And it's funny, because you started to really dislike her, right? And he kept bringing stuff to her, like, this goes further than we think. And I think there's corruption. I think of this and this and this, and you could just tell every time she's like, What the hell kind of mistake did I make, putting him in charge of this department, right? And that'd be an easy thing, like, easy to just get the money that was needed for the department, and then just forget that he even was down there kind of thing, yeah. And then obviously he proves that, in the end, that he was the right guy. But, yeah, really smart, really well done. So all those details, and that's, that's what a great pilot does, not all, not, not just a whole series, but a great pilot has so many details that are setting up so many things, yep, for me, I found almost, and maybe the listeners out there agree or disagree with me. You need to agree, though, if you want to continue to listen to these podcasts, I found it was almost there's a happy medium there. And I felt like it was almost too many little details at times as it went on, as it got further in, because then my brain almost could not hold that many details to remember. And I found myself needing to pause the show and say to you, I don't understand

now. I don't understand where that what? What is that like? Yeah. Do you know? Mean, it was almost overloaded slightly, yeah, it was. And I think it was, like, episode three or four was, was when we felt that, and we're like, Okay, wait a minute, there's, there's, there's way too many things going on here. There's a happy medium, right? Like, and I felt, I felt like, yes, it was well done, but there could have been a little bit less, yeah. But I think it's also, it is, if you haven't watched it or you're gonna watch it again, it's the kind of show you have to watch back to back if you can't wait a week to watch the next episode, because you'll be absolutely lost. But did they come out? Did it come out on came out all at once? It's like an eight. I wasn't like in the you you know, UK, where they just released one a week. Or, you know, some shows do, but that one was instant. And, yeah, and that's the thing, right? If, if you wait a week, you go back, they they call back stuff from few episodes previous, and you're just like, Yeah, I don't Yeah. So do you understand what I'm saying? Totally, that was actually one of my notes All right, back to back, because there's so many setups and payoffs, so they're brilliant, and then the way they come together, you're just like, Oh my gosh. How did they not see that coming? Me, part of that is that the show was always, always like two steps ahead, right? Did some great reverse engineering where, obviously they knew right at the head of time. I mean, they got the book. But even if they didn't, they even, even if they changed things, they knew where they were ending. So every character we met, everyone that was supposedly important, they all came together in the end. So it was always leading to tying it all in, but yeah, it was you really, really had to pay attention. You know, you almost as an audience member, had to be two steps ahead. You had to be thinking, Okay, wait a minute. What does that connect to? I agree. And I think I even brought this up to you too that I said, Do you think that they wrote this show backwards. And I don't know how you would go about writing it backwards. I mean, I guess it comes down to being a good outline, right? And really, really thorough, but it almost felt like it could have been written backwards. Yeah, totally. Which is funny, because we were just talking about untamed and how the writers didn't even know who the bad people were. They didn't know who was the who done it character. You know, they obviously knew where they were going, how it was all going to close out. But, yeah, it's very, very intelligent writing, where you really need to be paying attention. It was thought out. Yeah, it's very articulately, articulately, yep, is that a word? Very articulately? That's when you articulate your words. But thought out, I was going to say very, very, very very smartly with an asterisk with an asterix. But what I loved about it the most was that every single character and every situation they were in was just messy. They were just messy, messy people. Everybody had something wrong in their lives. Everybody was dealing with something they needed to make a change on or get over or put aside and move on, like every single character in their own way. Do you think? Do you think when it comes to good writing, then when someone's writing, whether it's a pilot or TV or they're writing a movie, that's what it comes down to, is making your characters messy, yeah, because clean in some way, you know what I mean. Clean people are boring, right? Like, she only cares about clean, easy people who have no issues in their lives. You're like, give me the dirt here. I want the gossip. Like, tell me something, right? I over what is wrong with you. I need to know what's wrong with you. Yesterday, we went out to make my life better. That's true. That's why I watch smut now. No, we went out too. That's not, that's not a replacing word for porn. That's actually the smut she watches is just like love Island. Why is smut? Mean porn? Yes, like dirty, dirty things? No. I mean she calls there. She calls these, the reality shows, smut. Because Why are you just telling

me this? Now I don't know. I understood what that word may I've been telling people that I watch smart shows now. Thank you so much. Great people think I'm a porn addict who likes Converse shoes. Oh, that's awesome spot. Well, what am I supposed to say instead? Then I don't know. Like it's

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reality, reality shows.

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It's not stupid, though, this is really a pod. We'll do a podcast on this later. No, we won't do a podcast. Do a whole podcast on reality, yeah. Can you imagine we've been trying to remain like friendly here, family friendly, yes. So what were you saying before you got your dirty mind? All right, guys, moving right along, bringing it back. Yes, I have been watching smut, yes, reality shows, but that's not great TV. That's nonsense TV. It isn't. There's a lot of drama in it, and it's entertaining, but it's not great. It's not great TV. Where did we start with this? In the first place? We were talking about being messy, yeah, and that's what makes makes great writing. And then you're talking about all these messy characters in these reality shows you watch, yeah, but I was going somewhere. Okay. Well, anyways, all these characters are messy. All of them have issues and layers and layers. One of my favorite characters in it is Akram. He's this guy who comes along. He's not a cop. I love him. He's like an IT guy, and but back in Syria, he used to find missing people, and it you never understand exactly what he did. He never says who he worked for. Is he a good guy? Was he a bad guy? How he feels about it? You just hear him talk. When I was in Syria, I did this in Syria and but then little things happen along the way that you're just like, oh my gosh, this guy's dangerous. He's trying to get information, as everyone probably remembers from these like, junkies in this house, and they won't give him the right answer. So he grabs this guy's windpipe and is like, gonna crush the life, and he gets exactly what he needs in a second, and they're suddenly afraid of him. And he's not an imposing guy. He's just a regular looking guy. But that one moment, you were just like, snap, this guy's dangerous if he wants to be he and, you know, he obviously has a messy past so, and you know, the other girl who comes on and works with them, DC, Rose. Rose was her name. She had trauma in her past. She was was in a car chase and wrote, drove over a pedestrian. And we really tell them, I can't remember, but well, you're really like, I said, we're going to be having some spoilers. But even her like, she had this messy, tragic thing she had to overcome. And even the characters who aren't filled with bad things, they hint like they are. Like, you think the the boss, you think that the chief that she is, she's bad, she's bad. Yeah, she ends up, you know, not like we think, yeah, everyone is hinted at is, which is great, because that's life, right? Everyone carries something on their shoulders, so layers and layers and layers, and they just peel them back a little bit at a time. It's always hard, because in the show, there's a psychiatrist section. So the cop, because he's been dealt with, he's been shot, and he's going back to work, he has to go and see a psychiatrist. And there's this new psychiatrist that's in, and they have such a great rapport, and she tries so hard to have him open up and to just tell him, tell her everything about him. But then he but then he gets to that point of almost opening up, and then something happens, and then he's, like, back two steps, right? Yeah, because they Yeah, yeah, and, but that's the thing is you would expect, like the normal thing to do is to have those sessions as a

psychologist, have, you know, learn more about the character growth or so, you learn nothing about the character. They subvert all those expectations. You learn about the character as he opens himself up to his new partner and the other partner, but that's where he opens himself, what? So it's mainly just focused on the characters that those two people are, that the two people, but I think a lot of it too, that's interesting is that it's almost like she grows more than he grows. Yeah, she learns to look at people differently. I think was the thing, right? Yeah, yeah. This is just anyways, all those little layers that they show, they, you know, they they show depth. They keep digging deeper and deeper and showcasing the humanity in these people. Just so the listeners know we're not just talking about a show here. It's not just that's not the whole thing. The whole idea behind us talking about this today is to give you ideas in your own writing of what makes a great TV show or a great movie. Because, I mean, this can be whether you're writing a spec script or whatever you're working on, it's still going to be the same thing. And the main part to writing something phenomenal and over the top and amazing is character. It is. It's always character, and that's what it comes down to in this and that's why we're talking about it today. To give you some examples that if you are feeling like you have writer's block, or you don't know where to go next, something like a show like this, watching great TV like this might give you that spark to continue on your writing journey, exactly, and that, and that's the thing, a show like this blows up. And that's not what people immediately think. People don't immediately think, oh, it's probably because the characters are so good. Characters are so good. But like we said, there's so much detail here. The plot is so complex and so complicated, and you don't know who half the people are supposed to be. Yeah, we don't say it's not like you're focused so much, because these people care about you. You carry about the people, because they come across as being real. Yeah, they real. Like Akron. You're like, Come on, give him a chance, like he knows what he's talking about. You know? About. You gotta listen to him like you're rooting for these characters. We're not saying either. I'm just clarifying. We're not saying either that your writing has to be like this by any means. Like, I mean, a romance, I don't know how the heck you would make a romance with this many twists and turns. Would just be like, that's a that's a different kind of tone, right? Tone, right? But it's the character, words, the characters that we're talking about again, that I just want to, yeah, all the things. And if you play it back and listen again, which, hey, listen to our podcast numerous times if you want, that's everything that we're talking about, points back at the characters and why they make an impact on us, and why we're rooting for them, and why, why they're so engaging. And I think why as viewers, too, why we want to keep digging deeper and deeper to know more about them? Because they almost, in a way, like my crap reality TV, notice the change. Yes, like my reality TV, you want to know more, and you become invested and interested in these characters that you want to continue watching this journey. And because they are reality TV, they are characters, they are characters. So that's the whole thing, is we want to dig deeper. Yeah, and a great way to reveal character more sometimes, isn't about dialog, right? This show is a great example of a tool to put in your toolkit. Of Lee. Leaving EV leaving even some of the most important things unspoken. There's this beautiful scene. And when I think of the show, this is one of the scenes that stands out. And it's just a character scene, and Akram says to Carl, the leading character, something about, about his his, yeah, about his wife. And Carl's like, What do you mean? I don't know yet, a wife. And he's like, oh my, my wife has passed away. He's like, I didn't know you. What do you mean? What your wife is? Your wife's dead. Like, what the hell? What happened? And Akram doesn't

tell him anything about her. Doesn't tell him what happened. All he says is, but I did tell you. And Carl's like, No, you didn't. I remember everything. People tell me. He's like, I told you that I am responsible for both of my girls. And then Carl's like, and I'm just supposed to know that that meant your wife's dead. And he's like, Yeah. And it was that was it. That's all we get. But it was like Akram, that the subtext there is, like, you need to pay attention more. You need to see that I am, you know, you I have important things, even if I'm not saying the words, you pay attention, because you will be better with me. It was just a beautiful letter as a person, too. Yeah. Like, yeah, because he was trying to, because that's the thing, Akron kept trying to, like, open him up better, human being, better. Yeah, yeah. So I mean that, and that's the thing sometimes, especially as newer writers, dialog is so much fun. We just, we love it, so we want to just have the characters say all these amazing things, but, man, there's so much power in holding that back and not letting the characters just dump what they're thinking. Well, just like masterclass on the unspoken. Yeah, power exactly the unspoken as much as the spoken, right? Exactly. So, yeah. So, so that's a great example there, when you're when you're writing a show like this, any any kind of mystery or suspense, or who done it, thriller, whatever. It's always important to have twists and turns. Right and again, this is a perfect example of constant twists and turns. Just when we think we understand something, a new piece of evidence comes some people, someone sees something, someone says something, and suddenly it's a brand new direction that they're going in, but it's very again, like they knew where they were going. So they knew. We didn't necessarily know, but we stayed for the ride. That's a you're awesome at coming up with really cool lines, by the way. You know what you could write the next Fast and Furious movie, because that's like a perfect Fast and Furious line. What do you give that to Vin Diesel, right?

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We knew they knew what they were doing. We didn't know, but we stayed for the ride.

27:25

Oh, my God, he goes right, good line. Ben, diesel, if you're listening, give us a call, but first give us five stars and then give us a call. Then sometimes, if I like, if I go and I squint my eyes, my husband kind of can look like you just a little until she sees that his shirt is too small. Then I'm like, No. Vin would have worn that wife beater white shirt with the long chain and pulled it off. Not the short gray. Yeah. Do you know, anytime I say anytime I wear any piece of clothing that's white, what is it? What does our daughter say to me? Is that a really good choice, because you're gonna get that dirty. Yeah, sort of she says, Why are you wearing white? You're not Vin Diesel. You're gonna have a stain in about 30 seconds. Dad, Vin Diesel can jump out of a car and roll across a freeway and be completely clean, but you will get ketchup on your boob in about 30 seconds. It's also because you used your back of your pants as a napkin. Okay, so here we go. So, yeah, so surprising twists and turns in a show like this, you really got to think that you didn't expect that twist and turn. That was a great twist and turn, but the mystery is always building, right? And not just the plot. And that's the key. Don't like everyone thinks that the mystery is all about the plot and how the plots gonna go on. Oh, but the mystery is that is the revelations of character, right? Each character has to have something mysterious about them that keeps us we want to know. We're like, okay, no, but why? Why is Carl holding that

back? Like, I get it, there's, there's the he's always been shot. He feels bad for his partner. He doesn't believe what he you know, but why? Why is he holding that back? And then eventually they give it to us, so, you know, but they don't at the same time. And that's what was also really smart about this. Even if it was supposed to be a one and done season, they don't pay everything off. They don't wrap everything up at the end of it. We still don't even know, as far as I remember, about his shooting. You know, who the shooter was, who was, we don't. We don't get all that. Did we find out? No, they didn't wrap it all up. They just said, Oh, we found this piece, and now we're bringing some suspects in. But it was just like it was there to keep Carl having something to go back to and something to think about. And that's not solved. It's not solved. I don't know who shot me. Is it connected to this? Is it like it just it was really smartly put there. But the mystery was about the characters and what they were doing. Not does this all get put together? Can we just pause to for a moment and talk about merit? Because we haven't talked about how phenomenal merit was as a character. She was amazing, amazing. She was the girl locked away. She was the missing girl they were trying missing woman that they were trying to find, that everyone thought she was. Yeah, and there was. So many layers to her too. Like every episode, we learned a little bit more, a little bit more. And then we're like, Well, who is this and what did you do? And who, who could be holding her? I know, but it comes she was so good, it comes that to the fact that she was a broken character too, right? And she would, would, she's still not lead, lead, but she's up there. She's the stakes character, right? She's important, yeah. And not only did he change throughout the entire series, but she changed as well. And that's what I think has to happen, is it's not just your main character that has the change, right, but, and that's the thing too, that that's why this was so different, and I think that's why people responded to it so big and so well, is because merit, normally, your stakes character that it's written in a way that you're like, oh my gosh, this person, like, they don't deserve this. They're such a good person, we got to get them out because they have. She wasn't. She was broken. Yeah, she wasn't a good part. Like, they didn't make her look like a good person. No, like, even just the way she reacted to people. And this character, Sam, that was thought it's in her life, and she was just like, blanketly rude to him, and it was just like, wow, she's not very nice. Any of these people could have put her in there because she's done some pretty bad things or made a lot of enemies, and that was so different because, but yet we're still rooting for her, because no one deserved what what was happening. And then they kept making us think of maybe she isn't a bad character, like it was just again, there was so much mystery, and it was just so, just brilliant. It's absolutely brilliant. So what I could No, I like, I will never be able to write anything that good. No, what we're basically saying is TV is very, very easy to write. So easy, yeah, if you follow the same outline as Department Q and the same guidelines, yes, you'll, I mean, you'll be in the business for guaranteed easy. Just slap it, slap it on someone's desk. They will find it. They will pay you \$17 billion and you'll be set. It's so easy. No, it is hard. It's hard and it's but and again, as a new writer, you're really only writing your pilot of your episode. You're not writing the whole thing, right? Don't write the whole thing unless you're already in a writing room and you can hand it to your show runner and say, I wrote this, and it's yours, right? But like that pilot has to have all of those bits and pieces. But it all comes down to the most important thing of anything, is writing a character with layers that's broken, that has damage and trauma and skeletons and and they might not even be able to put one foot in front of the other in the morning, because it's just too difficult. Like, don't like, and I mean, really, in any genre, you

should be doing that a comedy, romance, family films like you look at any Pixar Disney movie, that leading character is broken, right? They are not living an easy life. They're not just a happy go lucky character. They're not singing about flowers and sunshine. Sometimes they're singing about killing people and drinking poison. And what was the dragon we just went to that dragon movie. Yes, that's a good example, too. Hiccup was broken. Yeah, right. No one believed in him. No one wanted him to do what he wanted to do. His dad didn't seem like he wanted him to. Right. Kind of the same thing as writing is, what it comes to right is, is, you know, you feel like you need to have someone in your corner rooting you on. At the end of the day, we are here to root you on and cheer you on and say, Listen, you can do this. Yeah? That's why we're here. Yeah. To you can put your mind to it, sit down, put that pen to the page and get writing, yeah? And if you struggle, reach out to someone, right, like, I mean services like us. We're there to read and give feedback over mentorships and stuff to kind of help you see if you're putting something complicated together and you're getting lost in it, you know, it's always, always great to have another person put ideas out there for because that's the biggest thing to remember. TV isn't written by one person in a room, and that's it. It's written by many, many people and many collaborators, and everyone's throwing ideas out there. So even just getting some friends together and talking out loud, hey, I'm writing this story, and it's going like this, what do you think of this? And what if this happened? And, oh, yeah, that's cool. What if you did this? And, oh, I thought that was gonna happen. It's a great just as a brainstorming session, to open your own mind up and understand that whole idea of taking other people's ideas, having it spark something, and make it your own, right? It's, uh, anyways, it's great. But anyway, speaking of our services, let's take a quick break as we tell you about one of our options here.

34:09

Feel like you've taken your script as far as you can on your own. We know how frustrating it can be sometimes to get the great ideas that are in your head properly on the page, but imagine having a professional screenwriter jump in and rewrite it for you to create a market ready script. Send us your script for a rewrite proposal, and the pro of your choice will write up a page or so of notes on exactly how they'd approach a rewrite head on over to www.scriptreaderpro.com/rewrite and use the code rewrite 15 during checkout for the rewrite proposal to get 15% off.

34:52

And we're back. Thank you so much for continuing to join us on our podcast. Yes, this section we go to Next is question. Questions and Answers. Yes, questions and answers. So that was Department Q. Watch it. If you haven't, we didn't spoil big things for you. But study it. Don't just watch it. Study it. Break it down. Take all that great talent that is in there and try and find ways to see something out of it that can make you stronger. It's the best thing you can do. So some questions. If someone does have questions or comments or want to tell us, you know, hey, I love that, or hey, oh, I didn't like when Desiree made fun of you. I feel really bad for you. Do you don't do that? Do you need a support? Where would they email us? Email hello@scriptreaderpro.com and we will get that. Okay, first question that we have from one of our listeners is, what is the perfect page count for TV stuff, pilot, look book, pitch, deck, Bible. First of all, go over really, in one brief second. Yes, tell the listeners what each thing is. I mean, a

pilot is, we know a pilot, but maybe quickly, okay, the first of all, pilot, that's obviously the initial episode of your, your series. If it's a half hour. Try and write it about 3035, pages. If it's an hour, about 6055, to 65 somewhere in there, right? Think of like that block of time that a television show. If it's something that you're trying to pitch to, like a network that has commercial breaks, then you'll want it to be shorter to allow time for those act breaks to fill commercials in. So that's about what you're looking at. Ballpark, lookbook. A look book. Really, look book is more just like a mood book, right? To say, oh, it's gonna feel like this movie. Here's pictures from seven here's pictures from Close Encounters of the Third Kind. We're gonna mix them together, and this is what it gonna feel like. That's, that's a look book, right? Which is mainly what like a director puts together more than a writer, a writer can if they want, put together a pitch deck. Pitch decks try and keep it under 10 pages, right? It's just a matter of, like, here's what the main stars could be, and here's a little bit more about the character, and here's the tone and the mood, and shows just like it that are super successful. Like, it's like a pamphlet for your script, so you want to keep it nice and short and concise, and then a Bible is mainly just like, here's the world of my show. If you love the pilot, this is how I see the world. This is the bigger this is where the stories are going. And, yeah, yeah, here's a breakdown of the backstory of the characters. Here's here's where all of the episodes are going to go. Here's where the first season is going to end. It's like, if they love your pilot and they want to see more in your brain of where you can see this go, and if they agree with it or want to work with that. They'll they might ask for a Bible. And how long should the Bible be? Again, like, as short as possible. What is that shortest? Like, 1015, pages. Like, hey, what about for the person, the director you said, does a look book? Yeah? Like, I've had directors do look books. They're, like, six pages long. Like, they're just mainly visuals, okay, visual stuff, yeah, but yeah, you want to keep things short. Because, I mean, I've see Bible sometimes I'm like, why is this Bible longer than the pilot? Right? And it's like prose. So it's like paragraph, paragraph, but like, it's not, it's a lot of reading, so you want to keep it short, concise. Again, you're proving with everything you put words on that you understand. You can do things in as few amount of words as possible, right? Bringing the most possible stuff in the fewest words. So that's a breakdown, all right. Number two, what is each of your favorite movie and favorite TV show of all time? Oh, I suck at title difference, though. I suck at titles. Really, I do, man, man, that's tough. I know, I know the TV show, but I can't think of the name of the TV What's it about the one that me and John are watched together? Firefly lane. Yeah, that's your favorite. Probably because it's like you and her. It's up it's up there with probably better ones that I've seen. Yeah, I like stuff like that that has that same kind of feel. But what was that one we watched with the doctor Everwood. Oh, that's such a good show too, though. That one was good. But also trying was trying is unbelievable. That one is up there for trying and shrinking. Those are have been our best recent favorite shows. But for me, I would say, oh. But then, you know, remember that one with the previous Sullivan's crossing? Right now? Yeah, Sullivan's crossing is amazing, but the priest fell in love with the girl The Thorn Birds way back. If I remembered that that's, that's old school, and I would say my favorite movie would have to be dirty dancing. Yeah, that's your go to. Yeah, yeah. For Desiree's 40th. She's only 36 right now, so this is in the future, but we, I rented out a theater, and we showed Dirty Dancing. We had a private showing and some people, and that was fun. Yeah, that was good. That was lots of fun. What about for you? Oh, man. Well, personally, my favorite movie of all time is Foster and Max, because it's or Goonies, and it's something I wrote that was produced, which is just wild to see

your brain come to life. But my favorite movie, I don't know Back to the Future, and it's really hard on the 80s now, but it's really hard for me to be like that is my favorite movie, I think, because when I think of what's my favorite movie all time, it's it to me. It's the movie that affected me the most, that left such an imprint on me in most. Emotionally Braveheart, Titanic with a slash between them. Yeah, that can't separate them. I those two. And this is sounds stupid, but obviously this was a while ago, and it was when they were both in theaters. But I went to the theater to see Titanic. Well, first I went. I saw Braveheart 19 times in the theater. I saw Titanic 24 times, no, 25 now, because I went back, whenever we went back with ASHA for the that's an oh my gosh, like, it's a movie that I can I never, I get immersed in those every single time they play. So, so that'll be my favorite movies. I'm better, man. I love the 80s. Love back to future Goonies. They're fun. But those two movies, to me, those are just, there's nothing can be better. K and then the show, and then my favorite TV show all time. Man, that's tough, too. But I would say the one that I just, I could never get enough of is Peaky Blinders. It is, I never watched that one with you. It's just, it's just so good. It's just so good. Anyways, Peaky Blinders, great world building, brilliant acting, writing. Yeah, so that that might be my favorite of all time. Okay, last question that we have here is, what does it mean when they say white space is important? Des, do you know white space is seeing a lot of white space on the page, which means that your characters speak like concise to the point, not a lot of rambling, right? And then, even when you're using description, your description is concise and quick and to the point, not a lot of added words just to add length to the page, right? That's exactly it. Yeah, when someone flips a page and they see more white space than text, they know that it is going to come alive in their brain. For them, you're not giving them all these details you don't need. It's not a book. It's designed to be shot, right and so that's what you want to go for. Is this more white, nice balance of white, white space and text, yeah, if you see complete paragraphs, that's a turn off, right there. Well, not complete paragraphs, but like 1112, line paragraphs than that. That's bad on the entire page. For pages on that I read a script once that had a paragraph, a paragraph run for 13 pages, one paragraph, oh, my God. Like it was just block, block text, block, text, block text. And I was just like, okay, so that 13 pages is about seven hours, right there. Like crazy, yeah. So anyways, that's it, that's, that's, that's, that's, yes, done. Okay, good. What would the main character of Department Q say? If he was finishing something, they'd have to bleep it out. They would Yeah. He would say, All right, I can do British accent very well. All right, I'm done. Beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, you guys, yeah. And he would leave, basically, that's how I feel. Yeah, do you remember the final shot of Department Q? Refresh my memory. Okay, if you haven't seen it, you don't want to know the final shot. You can stop here or pause it or mute it for for 10 seconds. But remember his buddy in the hospital's back and he's walking on, on, comes down the stairs because, because the first thing I said to you was, how is he gonna get down there with the stairs? Yeah, you go in the office at Department Q, and then there's like, seven stairs down. There's about nine. And this guy just is in a wheelchair still. He's walking with Kane now, and you're supporting Kane, and he comes through, and it's like a really short ceiling, and he ducks down sideways, and he's like, bleep, bleep. And that was it done. It was just, like, such a positive. Yeah, yeah. Anyways, guys, I hate to say goodbye, goodbye, see you soon. Yeah. What should they do, though, before they leave, if they ensure that you subscribe to our podcast, wherever you listen to podcasts, perfect. Give us a five star review. Yes, Desiree loves gold, so gold stars would be better share this podcast with friends and family and loved ones

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