

Ep #37: Loglines

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On this episode, we're talking all about loglines, yes, and what you need to have in one to really get someone to pay

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attention. 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 everybody. This is Desiree. I am your host, and this is the Script Reader Pro Podcast. I'm here with my husband, scooch. Scooch sculpt,

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I guess scoot is my name. I am a screenwriter and one of the team here at Script Reader Pro here to hopefully inform you and teach you some things that you may have not heard taught in this way.

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Wow, Scott, you're really selling yourself there. You're selling yourself so short. Never mind. You already

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are very funny. This is the part of the show where desert makes fun of me. Insert laughter. Anyways, I'm here to talk about screenwriting, and Desert is here to entertain you. That's what you said all the time, which is a very but she also puts in so many good ideas, great lines. That's it. Like it says,

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kind of stressful, Scott, for you to be like she's here to entertain What if I'm not in the entertaining vibe,

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I can't even shut it off, like you can't shut that off. I could. No, that's just natural skill. I could. So today, yeah, we're going to talk about loglines. But how do we usually start the show?

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Hey everybody, this is Desiree. Oh. What do we probably start with? We always talk about a show that we've watched.

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And this last week, we went to the theater and we watched

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How to Train Your Dragon. Do you

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remember that by the title that one? I do. Yes. You know what

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was kind of crazy? This is our daughter's favorite show. I remember when she was really little, we would go on road trips, and she would put the CD or the DVD into the into the player in the van, and just watch it repeatedly, non stop, over and over again, anything to do with dragons. But even the series, like the series that came out after she just binge them over and over. Yeah, where are? Where is the series? Does she even sold, yeah, we have all the DVDs. Ah, yeah, little our little girl, yeah. How to Train Your Dragon is huge for for them. And by the way, me personally, how to trading your dragon. Two greatest animated movie ever made wrecks me every time. How to Train Your Dragon, too, yeah. The second one, yeah. Well, we went to the live we're talking about the first one, yes. But here's the thing that I got a little confused about, which I told you after was the fact that the live action was so, so close to the animation that you almost could not tell the difference. I was like, it seemed like I'd watched it already, but I'd watched the animated version, but animation has just gone like through the roof on animation.

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Yeah, right. And after the movie, because Ash is such a diehard fan, if there was something like, wrong with it, or they left out something awesome, she'd have been mad, but she's like, You see, that's what Disney needs to learn about. Turning animated into live action. You just do the original story, and you're making real. I remember, you don't need to change it. You don't need to alter this. You don't need to add new things. New things. Just make it like and I mean, it wasn't exactly the same, but it was pretty much the it was the movie. It was the same. It

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was pretty precise. We talked to about how the character selection that they made, the casting,

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was amazing. I don't even know how they did half of them. Like, how do you get someone who looks like that card?

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Because the thing is that people had to have been saying, Hey, you look like this person from how to train a dragon, yeah. And then there must have been a cast and call, and people came forward,

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obviously, even Toothless, like, I don't know how they found a dragon that looks exactly like the cartoon.

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Really? Scott, huh? We what? Dragons aren't real. Sorry, Scott, they aren't all neither are dinosaurs. Dinosaurs have not been on this earth for a long time. I'm a dinosaur. You are a dinosaur. Speaking of dinosaurs, we all, you and Asha also went to Jurassic.

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Yes, Jurassic Park rebirth, which I don't like to knock movies or talk negatively, but I said the title should have been Jurassic Park rebar, because it was just a regurgitation, and it was you really you didn't tell me. I told my my writing group. I'm like, Yep, I went to Jurassic Park rebar over the weekend. Yeah, it was just say whatever. They just laughed. And then, like, this one guy I do work for, he's like, I could have told you that the best sequel to Jurassic Park is just watching Jurassic Park again. I don't know why you would go to that, but I go to everything. But yeah, it was just like, I don't know. I was really unimpressed with some of the writing and just like, such blatant I'm gonna tell you my backstory now, and you need to care about my character. But it doesn't really make sense when it all comes out, it was just kind of like, okay, yeah, so Jake, the way the dinosaurs. And it was just like, I don't care.

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Was it the same? Was it the same writer of the first Yeah, that's my question.

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It was. It was writer of the very who adapted the book for the and I love his writing. How did that happen? It's not always the. Writer's fault. Things change. Actors like, No, I won't say that. I'm going to say this. Or the director's like, oh, no, we can change that now. And so you can't get a writer. But some of it was just like, Okay, I don't know how these actors are even sitting there doing this scene and not thinking, Okay, this is crap. This is a garbage moment

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for you to say that. Yeah. It

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was just like, hey, we need someone to care about this guy, so we're going to give him a dead child, then there's a child later, and he'll have to protect that child and sacrifice himself for the child, because that's him sacrifice. It was just like, really, like, it's so like, easy to spot and cliché. And it's like, can you not do something different for a character? Anyways, go and see it, though, support movies. Go to the theater, right? Just for the popcorn, but it's, I mean, there was

some it was still fun. It was entertaining. It was like, great new dinosaurs, really creepy ones. So, you know, it's still but anyways, yes,

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okay, hey, on this episode, we're talking all about long line. So if

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you had to do a logline for Jurassic Park the first one, what do you think that logline would be?

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Oh, my goodness, you know what a logline is? Yes, I do loglines. Basically the listener. A logline is basically a really quick overview of the story in like, one sentence. Correct is, can it be longer than it shouldn't be? One sentence should be enough. I didn't watch the movie, so I can't give you a logline, but it might be something like, no, the very first one. You've seen the original first one. Yeah, oh my goodness, I'm being put on the spot. It For Me, because I'm so bad at writing, and I'm not a writer, it would be like when dinosaurs escape from blah blah blah blah blah, then blah blah blah blah, must go and save the world from

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blah blah blah. That's a good one for me, probably something like, you're really good on when scientists recreate living dinosaurs and put them in a theme park, everything goes to hell as they start to eat the guests, something like that, right? Like Summing up, here's the concept, dinosaurs come back to life theme park, this happens, right? Something like that. And this is why I'm not a writer. But yes, so So loglines. We're gonna cover it now. loglines are hard, though, Scott, I know I have to say we're at the start. Don't like I'm not a I'm not a guru. I don't know more than anyone else. I think he dies me. I'm married to him. I'm talking about screenwriting everything else, yes, but it's, you know, I'm a, I'm a child of writing. I've been writing for like, 35 years now.

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It's also a child of the corn. Am I? I've never heard you say I'm a child of writing

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childhood movies. I'm a child of the 80s. What? I don't eat corn, yeah.

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But I isn't the movie called Child of the children. Oh, children. He's a children. I'm one

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of the Children of the Corn, I guess, yes. But I take in everything I can, and then I try and explain it in a way. I see it, right? He rebirths it and rebirths it? Yes, I do. It's the way I see it, to make it easy that I can pass on to people to help them understand it, maybe in a way they they haven't thought of. And if you don't, because I have a very simple mind, like really does simple ways, he

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has a very simple mind. And if you're not doing it this way, you're doing it wrong. Yes.

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But if you want a very, if a very complex, like intricate, deeply detailed explanation of loglines Google. Christopher Lockhart, logline, and there, there's a YouTube video of him. He wrote an essay. It's like 25 pages on the line. If someone can find it, let us know, and we'll post it in our show notes. But why you couldn't find it? No, I can't. I mean, I'm sure, I'm sure, if you ask chatgpt, they'd find it. But I try not to use that stuff. But yeah, so anyways, he talks about it, and he's like, he's the head of William Morris Endeavor. He's the development person who all scripts go through. He finds the projects. Pairs him with people. Anyways, he talks about what grabs his interest, what should be in them. So that's like the Bible, right? But I'm just gonna explain a little bit more about loglines, what mindset you want to put yourself in, what you want to be thinking about when you're crafting it, on how it's going to be received on the other side. Okay, so it's not as much about, oh, this is the perfectly worded logline. It's about, does it make someone stop whatever they're doing and think, ooh, I have got to see this. I have got to make this. I need to be a part of this. I need money so I can throw it at this writer. Yeah, okay, so that's my precursor. What I'm just that. That's how I'm going to be explaining it and talking about it. So first things first, as Desiree said, Everyone hates writing loglines. They're hard. Like people. People are like, Oh my gosh, how can I write a synopsis about how can I put my entire movie into one page. Yeah, exactly. How do you take your entire movie or TV show and put in one sentence? Right? Like, I don't know. It's literally impossible, and it's the hardest thing to do. So if you have trouble with them, don't feel bad. Everyone has trouble with them. But

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when I sometimes, when you're like, doing notes and you're typing your notes, it's like, the loglines just come out of you. And it's like, how the heck did you put that together?

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Yeah, so, I mean, like I said, I've watched everything forever, and so when I read a script I've I can easily kind of say, oh, you know, it's about a kid who, you know, goes back in time and breaks up his parents and has to get them back together or he dies in the future, right? Like, simple kind of breakdown of the concept, right? But, yeah, it. Not an easy thing to do, especially for your own work. First tip, best tip you'll ever have about writing loglines. Go into your whatever library you have of movies, whether you own DVDs or VHS or beta or LaserDisc or everything's just in iTunes, and just pick every movie or just like, look up movie titles and write a logline for movies you've seen. If you wrote that, how would you pitch that to someone? How would you tell that person, this is the movie you got to watch, right? Right? That's a great way to practice doing loglines. So do that? Do it? Do it? Do 100 do 200 do 500 that's going to be your best practice on loglines, because it allows you to then see, oh, yeah, that was the most important piece, and that's the character that has to be in there. Because, if that character is what sells the idea, right? You know, that kind of thing. So, so that's what you want to be. That's what you want to be. You know, a great, a great way to get your mind into logline creation. So a

few instant tips. Desiree, yes, you want to make sure that it is simple. It must be simple. Okay, for example, if you were writing a logline and it said in it, you know, when a man's father has a heart attack, he must stop his life and go, you know, help him, help his grieving family, or help him recover, something like that. You would not say, when a man's father has a mitochondrial infarction, and what's an infarction. That's the technical term for a heart attack. But would you put that in your logline when a man has a micro Myo? I think that's why you say it. I thought infarction was the worst word, because it makes you think,

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what's an infarction? It sounds like infraction.

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First time he said it, I think I heard on Grey's Anatomy or something like, did they mean to say in fracture? Right? Yeah. So you wouldn't say that in your logline, for example, right? So you want to make it simple. Don't use big words like Les like lascivious, that somebody reads and goes, Wait a minute, was this word? Right? You want to say smutty, right? Like you want to, you want to pick words that are trigger words that are instantly give images and make people pay attention, right? But you want to have it be simple. If you need three sentences to explain your story, then there's a probably a problem with your story, with your concept. And I'll get into this about genre stuff. Some genres are harder to write loglines for, obviously, but you want to make sure it is as simple as possible. Because if that's what a producer or manager or whatever, whoever you're pitching when they read your logline, that's what they're going to be thinking. Well, that's too complicated. I can't get investors in that. How am I going to explain that? Right? So must be simple. Okay, well, here's that's the first step, and four steps, four, four must

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be four steps. Okay? And here's an example, though, that I wanted to just share one that is actually really simple. It just lays it out. And I don't even know what the movie is, but maybe you know, because I could throw it at us, the lives of two mob hit men, a boxer, a gangster's wife and a pair of diner bandits intertwine in four tales of violence and redemption.

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Pulp Fiction is that? What it is, yeah, which is that's a pretty good logline for such a complicated so they made it simple, non linear, crazy story, right? This is simple, right? Yeah, yeah. That was, I mean, it made me understand what movie you were

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talking about. All right. So there you go. Yeah, simple. Next one, number two. Number two

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must make us see a poster. If I read your logline, I should see a poster. I should see, you know, like, I should see an image set right, something to be like, I can put that in a poster when someone walks in the lobby, or when they're scrolling Netflix and they see that they're gonna understand what kind of movie that is, right, right? So that's, you know, like, you look at the

Gremlins poster, right? It's this cute, fuzzy little guy on a white background with a creepy, crazy shadow above him. It's like, you know, if you're like, you know, when a, when a, when a young man's father gives him a gift that turns out to be a cute, cuddly character that mutates into violent killing machines? The world is, in fact, something, right, like, different, right? Like, then it makes you see a cute, little, cuddly character, maybe a monster of some sort, right? So you want to make sure that, however that's laid out that it makes us see a poster. Okay, that's number two,

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Kate. And seeing a poster going back to Jurassic, talking about Jurassic, because I'm looking at these while we're on the podcast, there is actually Jurassic logline. It has here, and this here makes you actually see the poster during a preview tour. A theme park suffers a major power breakdown that allows its cloned dinosaur exhibits to run amok, amok.

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There you go, right? Yeah. Is that on IMDb? Probably, screen craft, yeah. So look up sites that even like go to IMDb and look up any movie, and it'll tell you the logline is screen what is screen craft? It's just a website for for screenwriting stuff. Contest

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anyway, that's interesting. That makes you see it, right? You see it,

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yeah. So you want to make sure you have something that makes that image pop for you. So again, some are harder than others. So that's number two. Number three, it should, if it's effective, make us actually see the trailer in our heads when a bomb is planted on a bus that will explode if that. Bus drops below 50 miles an hour. A jaded cop must get on that bus without it stopping to save the people inside. Right, right, like, whatever off top my head, but that makes you see, okay, is there's a bomb, there's a bus, there's a cop trying to get on bus can't stop. What's right? Like, it makes you see action. It's like, that's an action movie, right? So you want to make sure that there's something in there to make it come alive for us, to really make us understand. You know, when a family takes a secluded post at Hotel and must survive the winter with no one around, the father starts to lose his mind and decides to kill his family, right? You're like, okay, I can see it. I can see secluded area. No one around. It's cold, it's winter, no one's there. If he starts killing them, there's no one to help, right? Like you want to have whatever that is come alive for someone in their head. So that's number three, okay, you want it should make us see some kind of trailer. And then number four, it should also make us see the stars. The stars should have star power. You should be able

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to picture. Are you talking about stars like celebrities or stars, movie,

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movie stars or TV stars, right? It should make you see, oh, man, I can totally see this guy in it. I can totally see when bad guys target a retired assassin and kill the dog that his wife is. Don't talk about the deceased wife left him. He goes back into the business and kills 1000 people, right? It's like, okay, so, man, I can see a bunch of people who could play that right. So you want to make sure that whatever it is you can see movie star power, even if it's like an understated, independent type of thing, you still want to be able to explain that character in a way that you can see someone in that situation. Because again, you have to sell this to people. You have to sell it just to get someone to read it. You have to sell that. But do you

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think sometimes, too, if you think of the star behind it, that actually would help you write the script better? Yes, I mean some, some writers or the or the logline, even just visualizing anything

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that can help you as a writer, visualize something, right? You don't want to write it tailored specifically to only one actor that can play. He's got giant bulging muscles, and he has an Austrian accent and a gap in his teeth, and he looks like a bodybuilder. Okay, so I guess John Cena could play that now, but that would have been Arnold Schwarzenegger, right? You want to make sure that whatever you're writing has that originality to it, but yeah, if it helps you, but yeah, I mean, not guaranteed gonna make you see movie stars on the poster every time, but you want to make sure that you can understand who might play that, right, especially, like, comedy, right? Just playing, oh, this actress does this and this, and it's like, oh, I can totally like, see Reverend Wilson in that part. Yeah, because it's marketing, it's, it's all a marketing, no matter how great your writing is, if no one reads the script, it doesn't matter. You have to be able to get them excited and drooling to be like, Okay, I'm gonna risk everything, because I don't know who you are. I'm gonna risk everything and ask you to send me your script. Is it has to do that, right? But

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is it sometimes? Does it sometimes work against you if you write a script visualizing someone to play the part, you know, and then have your hopes come crashing down when you send it off and it's like, well, you're, that's not going to be the person. Do you think that causes more?

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I mean, it depends on what you're I don't know if you base your whole thing on I'm only going to sell this movie and I'm

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only going to sell it. No, this person has to have it. This is, yeah, you can do for them. If you're, if you're

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in Hollywood and you're an A list plays the part. Don't put all your

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eggs in a basket thinking that's going to gonna be Yeah. But if

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you want, if you picture Tom Cruise in your movie, then write a picturing Tom Cruise in your movie, whatever makes you write it. The best is, yeah. I mean, I don't normally do that, but sometimes I'll be like, Oh man, I can totally see this. See this person playing this part. I love it. Oh, Rattle, rattle. Jennifer Coolidge, right? If you picture Jennifer Coolidge in a part that character's dialog would probably be tailored very well for Jennifer Coolidge, right, right, but maybe not for other people. So then not that it becomes a problem, but maybe it'll just make the light Well, it might hinder you too. Might you put something out there, someone you're not going to say, Oh, I'm sending my script. Keep in mind that this part is written for Jennifer Coolidge. Only see her in the part, you know, like you're not going to

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do that. Well, you better not, that's what I'm saying. That could actually but at the same

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time, you can be, like, perfect starring vehicle for Chris Hemsworth, okay? Or an actor, like, yeah, exactly. So yeah, but yeah, you know, that's not part, that's gonna be part of your long line, yeah. So those are the four things. Those are your four tips, right? Make it simple, make us see a poster, a trailer, and movie star power, right? Because that's what gets movies made these days. Yeah. So there we go. So let's talk about some of the things to keep in mind as well when you're actually putting the words together. Okay? So the first is that high concept is the easiest, right? It is the easiest to sell. It's the easiest to get someone here's a little story. I watched this video the other day about this movie called the hot seat. It's on Amazon. Think you can see it on Amazon, but it's called the hot seat. And this is how they came up with the idea, and this is probably how they pitched it, speed in a chair. That's the logline. It's more like a tagline, but that's the log on a chair, any chair. So when you hear speed in the chair, what do you. Think,

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I think, well, because I personally think of a wheelchair. So I think, so you're in a chair in a bus, and how are you going to get off the bus? That's what I think of.

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Okay, fair enough that I think of is someone sits in a chair and there's a bomb in the chair, and if they get up, it goes

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off. Well, if with someone in a wheelchair, that's easy, because they wouldn't be able to get off, well then

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that's not going to be a very good movie to

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write. I can say it because I'm in a wheelchair. No, but seriously, but

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if it clicks right when you stop, it initiates the bomb stop. What you know when you stop your joystick, and you stop in your chair, in your wheelchair, and then that triggers the bomb. And then if you move, the bomb goes off. That could be good, because then how do you get this person out? Can't get out of the chair, can't move the chair. What do we do? They're in a stadium with 1000 people, right? That kind of thing. Anyways, that's what, you know. So, so when you say that speed in a chair, people think, okay, speed is about a bomb. It'll go off if this happens,

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right, right? I think I like, I was like, too specific, thinking speed, oh, we're on a bus, yeah, sitting in a chair, yeah?

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But yeah. So, I mean, I'm sure the logline was more like, you know, when, you know, when blank sits in his chair at his at home workstation, it triggers a bomb, and he must connect the dots to figure out how to turn it off before, you know, in 48 minutes, whatever, right? Like, it's probably more detailed, but it's an easy way for people to go. Okay, I get that. Yeah, that's so there you go. Initials. It's what, it's fine. Is it a show? It's a movie I was and then, so then the story is, these writers, this writing team, were like, Let's try and think of something really cool that's contained, that would be cheap, that hasn't been done. And then they thought of that speed in a chair. So they wrote it, and then they pitched it on virtual pitch fest, which is really cool, great site. We don't get any money from them by saying that, but they pitched it on there. Someone liked the pitch, read the script, optioned the script, got Mel Gibson attached a year later, comes out. So based on a concept that's easy to see, a poster, a trailer, a star, right? You think of carry on, right? It's like it's a, you know, a troubled TSA agent is blackmailed into letting a bag with a bomb through, through customs or whatever, yeah, whatever. And when you find a way to stop it, right? But then the whole other piece, right? Lots of different pieces, but that's, that's the concept TSA agent has to let a bomb through,

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yeah? Because you don't ever think of TSA and a bomb, they're not

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gonna let a bomb through, no, right, but they're the only ones who could let a bomb through, right? So it's simple, right? It makes you see a poster, makes you see a trailer, makes you see a movie star who is the guy or girl playing that part, right? You know, again, those are high concept ideas. Those are easier to kind of, like, you know, pitch, right, especially if you're

blending something like speed in a chair or speed in a plane, right? Like, it's a lot easier to claim pitch stuff like that because of the concept. But yeah, so other genres are a lot harder, right? Romantic comedy can kind of be easy based on the concept, right, right? Like that Rebel Wilson movie, isn't it romantic? This girl hates real life romance, but loves romance movies and wishes she was in romance movies. She wakes up and everything is cheesy. Like a romance movie. Did I watch this one? Yeah, and like, the hot, perfect guy is, like, wanting her, and, like, all these, right? And then she has to realize, okay, I don't actually want this. This is fake, right? But something like, anyone but you, which was huge, right? It kind of like got romantic comedy going again. It was about a guy and a girl who had a date, you know, one night stand that that went bad, show up at the same wedding of their best friends and have to pretend they're dating. Well, that's been done. That's an reiteration of so many things have been done before. So it's like, it's not highly original, but it makes you understand the idea, right? You know?

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So, you know, it was Wedding Crashers. That was a new one too. Yeah? Wedding Crashers was a good one. That was original. Yep, you know, two guys who constantly crash weddings for the party suddenly find themselves found out. And what? No, I'm thinking of the one where I knew you

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were because you said, That's a new one. I'm like, That's old. Okay,

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so what is what I'm talking about? That was a simple idea, two guys, okay, but that's not part of that one. Which one are you talking

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about? The alligator wrestling the alligator? Cordially invited. Cordially invited. Yeah, that's when, yeah, when two weddings show up at the same ice venue, the family's the mother, that's what I was, mother in the groom, Father, I have to figure out how to work, right? So, yeah, it's about, you're like, what? Yeah, but it's about so, so different genres. I mean, drama is a lot harder, right? You're at drama, it's like, how do you convey why that is a dramatic movie in a sentence. It's really hard, right? So three things, these are the must be showcased things, okay? And this is just what I thought up and what I try to put in mind. Okay? It's really easy to remember because the 3c concept character cleverness, right? You want to make sure that your concept is easy to understand, that we know who the main character is, and that it's clever because we've never seen it before. It hasn't been done before, and it's crafty. Well, there's four C's. There we go. Crafty. Yeah, so, so, so those are things to just kind of like as there's always hates when I say this, but if you're writing log lens, put that posted on, put a post it on your screen with those 3c that have.

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Actually done a post it note that's not suggest.

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I just picture all of our listeners with like, 1000 post it notes problem. They can't even say

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it gives me anxiety. It just, it looks dirty.

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So that's those are. That's a great way to kind of, then you character cleverness, yes, and you won't get lost, right? Because you'll be like, Okay, well, I gotta think of the concept, okay, like, even, like, like, I'm just looking at posters in my in my theater, but they're all old. But like, even, like, heads of nah, okay, like, a drama. What's a drama? No, I'll

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just throw out one of you can tell me if you know what this is. With his wife's disappearance having become the focus of an intense media circus, a man sees the spotlight turned on him when it's suspected that he may not be innocent.

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It's a Scott Peterson story. I don't know what's it called. It doesn't tell me. It's just a logline, yeah, yeah. I mean, you can see it, right? That sounds like every Dateline episode you've ever watched. The character, yeah, we know who the character is. It's about the man. He's got someone to hide his wife. Yeah, we'll see her. And

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the cleverness, well, is that clever? Not necessarily, not necessarily, because, to me, that doesn't that's like any other Dateline, like you said, unless

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it's gone. Girl, all, all searches, so, but the cleverness is that halfway through they reveal, they reveal that it's all a plan, that the wife has a bigger plan. I think that's what it is, cheating, it's gone. Girl, there you go. See, I just did a search because I was thinking, like, what would make that clever? And I'm like that, because I've clever. My movie brain was like, what would be clever if you found out that she actually staged this missing thing so she could point the camera at her husband, because he's not a good guy, that would be clever, and that's why that was clever. But the logline necessarily should have that, right?

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Oh, it doesn't have that. So do you want to make sure that you do have cleverness in the log? Well,

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that's the thing is, you're you gotta, especially if you have a big twist, right? You want to make sure that you're not necessarily giving the whole movie away, but at the same time, you can put little words in there that make it seem like, right, like, like, as the you know, media points the

camera at him and unveils the Crafty monster beneath, or something, or, you know, or, you know, an orchestra. You know that there's an orchestration of some sort, like, again. I mean, that's a bit of a thriller, but difficult.

27:10

Okay, here's one. A detective investigates the death of a wealthy patriarch of an eccentric family.

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That's the whole logline. That's it, yeah, see, it doesn't make me understand what that's knives out. I was gonna say it's a, it's like an Agatha Christie who done it, right? Yeah, it's

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not enough information to me. No, like, it should be like,

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if you think of the story in that, right? I mean, that is the story, right? An investigator comes in and has to find out. Not

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clever, though, it doesn't tell me much about character, no. Whereas this one, a Chinese immigrant laundromat owner, is swept up in an adventure in which she alone can save the world by exploring other universes and connecting with the lives she could have led. See,

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that's clever. I mean, I know what movie there is definitely everything everywhere, all the ones, yeah, but yeah, it's like, laundromat owner small is different. Cleverness. It's that is there, right? That is, I mean, that movie won Best Picture, but yeah, that's, yeah, that's the concept character, and there's cleverness there. So that's a great

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it does state here too, that effective loglines often include a protagonist, really protagonist, not A, not an antagonist. You

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can, but should have the hero for sure, the hero and their goal,

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the stakes, yes, and the main conflict, yeah,

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like, those are all things that you should try to fit in. I don't think you always can right too much that well, because that's pretty simple. I mean, that one doesn't really have the stakes. It doesn't say, does it say in there about having to save the world?

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That one, there was something the Chinese entering which she alone can save the world. So there's exploring other universes and connecting with the lives she could have led. So a Chinese immigrant laundromat owner is sweating. There's the protagonist into an adventure. Yes, that's the story in which she alone can save the world stakes by exploring other universes and connecting the lives she could have led conflict.

29:05

So Right? Because then, is it a better life? Is it a worse life? And I think part of it is she just, if I remember, but I mean that logline also makes you think, well, maybe she's like, she's a she's a laundromat owner, so maybe she doesn't like her life. Maybe she's not happy with her life and all these other lives she sees, she starts to think, no, my life is better than I thought it was right. I think that's where it goes, but, but then sets all that up for sure, yes, and original, like

29:29

very Yeah. And it goes back to the whole cleverness piece, the character, yep, concept or cleverness, it's all there, right? A young African American man visits his white girlfriend's parents for the weekend, where his unease grows as he uncovers a dark secret.

29:44

See, I would want more than I would want more in that based on what it is. You know what it is? Yeah, yeah, get out, but it is, but at the same time it does. So, I mean, it says black, African American, and his white girlfriend, and he uncovers darker things. Like it doesn't know much, a lot, no, like. Yeah, it could be a lot of different, yeah. Like, uncovers that exciting, yeah, uncovers that he's only there because he's black, that even that small piece, you know, it tells you a lot more about the story, the cleverness of it, right? Like, you're not going to give it all away. And, like, you know, to find, you know, it finds out that they've only brought him there so they can put a white man's brain in his body, so the man can live on, right? Well, that kind of gives the whole story away, right? Like in the secret

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you want to have loglines for both TV and for movies, right? Yeah, and they're

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the same TV and movie loglines. There really is no difference, right? Think of a TV show,

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right? Yeah, there's some here. There's Stranger Things, or Game of Thrones or breakout Stranger

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Things, a group of group of kids in the 80s playing Dungeons and Dragons brings the brings the reality of Dungeon dragons into their life. You know, like, pretty, pretty easy to picture what that's about.

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You wanna know what it actually is? What's that in the 1980s a group of young friends witnessed the supernatural forces and secret government exploits when their friend goes missing? Yes,

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yeah, it gives more detail. But for me, when I think of, I mean, when I think of Stranger Things, you think of 11, you think of the psychic stuff. But I don't think of the government conspiracy. I think of these kids playing Dungeons and Dragons, and they bring demogorgons and all these things to the world. And there's an upside down. And how do you get traffic, right? It crosses the line of reality and fantasy. For me, that's what it's about. It's more about the friendships and the but not as much about the government conspiracy, but, yeah, so, but it's still, it has the concept, it has the characters, and it has the conflict, right? The cleverness, yeah, and the sorry, and the cleverness, yeah, conflict and the fourth, yeah. See, there should be five because then craftiness and conflict. So the five Cs, here we go. Reset. So there's 5c here, concept, character, cleverness, craftiness and conflict. There

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you go. Yeah, you got to have a pose on your loglines. If you have no conflict, it's boring.

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Well, yeah. And that's the thing, even Rome, even comedy, has conflict, right? You know, a guy wants to get out of prison, and so he he wants to be tougher when he goes to prison, so he hires who think he thinks is a gang member, a gang banger, to teach him how to be harder? Yeah, you know, it's like, I think a lot of conflict

32:04

is it has to say why it's new and why it's different. We want to see something that hasn't happened before, yeah, like, that first one I read that, we were like, huh, this could have happened. This could be anything, right? We want something that we haven't seen before. We want to read something we haven't seen before. Yeah, exactly. It

32:19

has to make us think, oh, yeah, okay, yeah, this hasn't been done. It's not done. It's not a retread of everything else, yeah, even though that's mainly what Hollywood does now, it's just retreads of everything but a TV not so much. So you have to understand the different genres need different focus. Like in a horror movie, you don't even talk about the characters in a horror movie, logline, no, you talk about the bad guys, right? Like, you know, a group of teenagers uncover blah, blah, blah, blah, or a single father does this and this and this, right? You're not digging deep into that. The concept like that. Usually the entity is what sells a horrors, yeah,

yeah, it's, this is the entity I see, franchise, yay. Let's read it, right? So, horrors, horror, you're focusing more on the horror of it, comedy you want. And this is the thing is, yeah, every genre is different, but, and this is where the talent comes in, of being a wordsmith, is being able to write that logline not just include all those things, but tell someone in that voice that's yours and the style of words that you're using, what genre it is, without even telling them the genre, right? You should know when you read a logline, this is funny, right? This Oh, this is a comedy. Oh, yeah, this is a romance. Or, God, that scares the hell out of me. That's

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and if you don't, you haven't done a good enough job with the logline, you'd say no, because there are still loglines that you're just like, I don't know what that is. What kind of movie that is, can't quite tell. Then it's not done well. Would you say, yeah.

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I mean, sometimes the subject matter tells you right, like the dresser park one you made you read off. It's like, okay, dinosaurs break out, power goes down. They're going to kill everyone. Okay, that's like an action adventure, yeah? You know, right away. So, but, but that's that, that's the thing, is, if you can get that comedy level in there, you know, then you're going to have a much easier job, you know, connecting with that person. I

33:57

think when it comes down to then, like, is to not settle on one particular logline, and don't just say, okay, yeah, this is the logline. This is how it is. I think it probably would be good to get feedback from others. Write down several log

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lines. Rule of a dozen. Rule, do at least a dozen things. At least a dozen changing

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a word, or like changing one or two words. Can change a logline.

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I do that with my mentor clients all the time, right? When they're getting ready to market the script, I'm like, hey, send me a dozen loglines. Do them different focus on different parts. Focus on different details, right? Don't just write the same thing in seven different ways of using the same words, right? So and then pitch them to people. I come to you all the time and be like, hey, which one of these stands out to you? Right? You have to have at least one person in your life. You can bounce those off of well,

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and you want to see what excites people too, what interests people, but yeah, if

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you're, if you can see it in their face, if they're bored, you're like, Okay, well, that's not, that's not working, that's not telling me their movie. No, yeah, so, and some are trickier than others, but if you can follow the 5c right concept, K. Character, cleverness, craftiness, conflict, right? So we're gonna mark, we're gonna trademark that the

35:04

five C's. Would you say, then, out of anything, when it comes to people learning, you know, the whole craft and learning what it means to market and sell yourself and pitch, pitch your work, right? Yep. Would you say loglines are the most

35:22

important single, most important thing? More loglines. That's the first thing more important than anything. And even if you've won the nickel fellowship contest, the biggest thing out there for new writers, even if you've won that and they teleproduce, yeah, my recent script, I won the nickel, what do you think their question is going to be, what's the logline, or what's the movie about? Yeah, you they want your logline. Yeah, they need to know if they can sell it. Just because a script wins a contest doesn't mean it makes a movie. People will go to right? But yes, your logline is everything. You'll lead off with it. And so it has to make them see all those things we talked about. So when you're doing it, just keep in mind that it should be so good, it doesn't need anything else explained to get someone to say, send me that script. I've got to read that if they have to say, Okay, wait a minute. But they're not gonna ask for it. They're not gonna even ask the question, yeah, you have to make them go, Oh my gosh, I see it. Send it to me right now, right? That's the goal. And if you tell people your logline and they're not reacting that way, you haven't done your job. So those are tips, tricks and things to keep in mind as you put your loglines together. So we're gonna take a quick pause here about one of our services, and we'll be right

36:32

back. 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.

37:15

We're back. This part of the podcast is always our question and answer section. Yeah, someone has a question. What should they do? We have asked the listeners out there to submit questions to hello@scriptreaderpro.com with the subject being podcast questions, or if you want to hear a specific topic or have any comments, we love to hear that as well. All right, what's the first question? Gus, so the first question that we have is, should I make a sizzle reel or proof of concept for my show or movie? First of all, what is a sizzle reel? That's a

37:47

that's a good because a lot of people think it's the same thing as a as like a teaser trailer or, I don't know what sizzle reel is like. Usually a director will make it, but a writer can just piecing together a bunch of scenes from a whole bunch of other movies to make people understand this is what my movie will look and feel like, right? I had a director, Darren Scott, attached to incision, and he put a scissor wheel together, pulled a bunch of stuff, and was like, okay, you know what? That's actually what the movie's about, and that's what it would look like. So that's, that's something that you can do. If someone's like, well, what kind of you know, what do you got going for it? Or, you know, how should you make one? Though, as a writer, takes you five minutes, probably like you can none of these are should you There's nothing that says you should do a scissor. Earl, you should do proof of concept if you want to. Proof of concept is, I'm going to shoot a two minute trailer for my movie, or I'm going to, you know, whatever. Here's the opening scene five minutes so you can send it to people if they've asked to read your script, or you pitch them and they don't want to read the script. Want to read the script, but hey, can you send me some, you know, media for it? So should you it's up to you. There's no right or wrong if you want to invest that time and all that kind of stuff, go ahead. It may not help them by your script, but you know, if you want to have in your back pocket to have it, go ahead. It's

38:56

your call. Okay. Question two, I hear it can be helpful to try to shoot my pilot. Is this true?

39:01

I mean, pilots, there's no such thing as independent television, right? Like there's web to web and stuff like that. I hear it can be helpful to try to shoot my pilot. How can you try to shoot your own pilot? Well, you can shoot your own pilot, anybody can, but it's not together. Well, that's the thing. Is, you can't get it on TV. Well, maybe you can, but you can then show it to people. And I think the reason, maybe I've asked this is because shits Creek did that, and obviously they did, well, they start, you got Eugene Levy and his son, and you're like, they obviously can do things. They wanted to sell this so that they so they just shot the pilot and then sold it. I have a mentor client who wrote a pilot, and he's just like, I wonder if I could make this. And so he actually went out and he got the investment, and he got a cast together, and he did it, and he just finished shooting his pilot. And so he's going to try and shop that around whatever. If you have the resources to do something and you want to invest in that way, then why not go ahead? Right? You just as a writer, you only have so many resources, right? Not when you're not in the business. You want to make sure you're putting them in places. That you believe will be worth that right

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question. Number three, if I think my idea may be a better book after I've written my script, should I write the book as well? Sometimes we get people asking about, you know, adapting a book to a

40:16

script, one that I've written, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. I mean, it's the opposite here, yeah. It depends what your intention is. I don't know this is to me, because you can self publish. You can self publish a book, right? You can go on Amazon, self publish, put up there. It's just like, it's just like writing a spec screenplay. They're only going to find it if you pitch it to people and it gets attention and they read it, right? You self publish a book on Amazon. Unless 1000s of people are downloading that book, it's not getting traction. So it depends why you want to do it. If you want to do it because you think that'll make it, that'll give you a better opportunity to sell your screenplay just because you wrote a book on it. That's not necessarily going to help you, unless that book ends up being a huge bestseller or gets traction on Wattpad or something. But if you're writing it, just because you love it. You want to do the story again. Go ahead, write the book. The amount of time it might take you to write that book, you might be able to write two or three other screenplays, right? Because it's like 10 times the amount of words. Typically, it really comes down to what you're excited about, yeah, and if you're excited about book writing, maybe it's book writing, but as a marketing tool, not necessarily going to help it unless, like I said, it becomes hugely popular book.

41:22

Okay, last question for today, yeah, I have a great idea for a new John Wick movie. Should I write it or just pitch the company who makes them? Ooh, this is a tough one. Yeah. This

41:33

one is neither, nope, nada. Do not do it. Okay? These. I mean, if you want to, okay, so a lot of people will write scripts based on stuff they love, because that's what fan fiction is, right? But the difference between fan fiction is for books or comics or whatever, and fan fiction for movie scripts is movie scripts are only written to be created as a movie or a TV show, right? That's why they are created. Books are created for people to read, right? Not turn into a movie, read and and so people write fanfiction, but you don't sell fanfiction. You write fanfiction and you put it out there for people to enjoy. That's fanfiction. You can't do that for movies, because no one reads scripts for fun. No? I mean, some people you do, but their intention is not to just be a literary piece of work, right? So the big issue comes with copywriting, because no one's going to no one's going to movies take money. You have to buy and own rights to whatever you're producing. No one can buy your John Wick sequel, and except for the people who own John Wick, exactly, they will never read your script. Because if they read even a page of your script and there's that detail that they've put in their next movie, they open themselves up to lawsuits, and why do they being sued? And why should they go with some untrusted, unknown writer when they can hire blank? Hey, Scott Frank, come on, write our next John Wick. You know, like so I would say don't even write it, unless you just want to do it for fun and never show it to anyone, unless you're married to John Wick, unless you are John Wick, then you can write your John Wick. If your name is John Wick and you're an assassin, then go ahead. But yeah, and you can't pitch it to the studio unless you're like, an A list screenwriter. So right, yeah, that's kind of a yeah, you spend your time on something original, crafty, clever, that kind of thing. Okay, awesome. Hey, that's the end of our podcast. Nice. Nice. Well, if you want to know more about us, check out our webpage, scriptreaderpro.com, it has pretty much anything you could ever

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