

Ep #43: Change

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In this episode, we are talking all about change. Yes, change is a scary thing for most people, even us. 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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This is the Script Reader Pro podcast. I'm your host, Desiree,

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and I am the what do you? Call me your husband? Oh, I'm the husband, but I'm also one of the Script Reader Pro team to answer questions, talk about things, and I get made fun of by the beautiful Desiree by your host, your host as hostess, as the mostess.

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Hey, today, Scott, yes, we are talking about a topic that I absolutely despise. It is your

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absolute favorite thing in the entire world, but you love nothing more than this.

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Wait like the listeners might be thinking, she's probably talking about the business side of screenwriting,

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right? Because that's your favorite thing to talk about, right?

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Like getting managers and marketing, marketing yourself.

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Well, we are, well, I mean, some of that will come up, I'm sure about what that's not the actual subject. What is the subject? Desiree? The subject today is all about your favorite word in the English language, change. I hate change. I've never met anyone in the world who hates change more than this woman right here. I

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do I hate it. Yeah, it's literally hate it. Literally hates it. I like nothing about change.

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But as a screenwriter trying to have a career in this and break in and go through all of the hoops that you have to go through, change is something that you must, absolutely must, embrace.

Okay, so we're going to talk about that today in a lot of different ways. So before we get going, what do we usually talk about?

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We usually talk about the fact that you cut your upper lip open. Why are you

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bringing that up? Don't scratch it. It's itchy now that you said it

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stop, and it looks like a piece of chocolate on your upper lip, and it's because you've been shaving for 35 years, roughly, and forgot how to shave your upper lip.

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No, I wasn't. When I was shaving, my finger kept catching on something, and so it had, like, a little bit of a scab thing. So I just kind of like, took my nail and flicked it and then it just gushed. Yeah, okay,

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yeah. Well, it's embarrassing to go out with you, because it looks like you because it looks like you have food on your face. Thanks. But anyways, you're not here to hear. You're not here to hear. You're not here to listen to us bickering, no, but that's part of it. You're here to see the fact that I don't like change. For example, Scott having a bloody patch on his

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outside. I did it to trip, yep. Change, change your perspective, right? And

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it's kind of going in with what we're talking about, but we are going to talk about what we've seen lately, which is how we always start the podcast. Yeah, I guarantee

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you're going to remember this title, because it's the kind of title you probably would remember, because it's your kind of movie. So we watched a movie called the wrong Paris, yes. And do you remember it?

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I do good. Normally. I say, I do not say, yeah. I'm like, if she doesn't, I say it the same way, yeah, I do, yeah, yeah. I do remember, yeah, it was a fun it was a fun movie. It was a romantic comedy. Yeah, just a romantic comedy. But we've talked about this on the podcast before,

where we sometimes start something and then we're like, then we look at each other, like, five us to look at each other at the same and then it's like, do you want to still continue this was one of those ones, yeah. At first you were like, I don't know. Is this gonna be this?

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Pretty thick. It's pretty trophy. It's like, every single thing was like, Oh, this girl needs money go to Paris for art school, but she can't afford it, so, oh, there's a dating show that I don't know. Then maybe make meant some money, and maybe she'll meet someone, and then, oh, wow, she falls in love with them. Is trophy, a word I don't know trope is probably trophy, sometimes trope, so you can tell the listeners. So a trope is something that we always see in a certain genre film, and we expect it. It's not it's that it's a bad thing we expected, like a romantic comedy, right? Girl Meets Boy, girl loses boy, girl gets boy back, right? That kind of thing. The comical friend who hates romance, you know, like all those kind of, oh, here's the main character, and she's like a Hallmark movie is filled with thrills. Here's the big city career woman struggling, balancing love and career. So she's gonna head out to see this small town somewhere, and, oh, there's a storm, and oh my gosh, her car is stuck, and now she has to stay in town. And here's Joe or Jake, or whoever, the guy who lives in town who happens to be the only tow truck, and he happens to be the six foot four strapping young single man with a lumberjack shirt, yeah, and the main character has a fiance of some sort, and he's gonna show up in town and try and get her back. And like all these, those are tropes, right? You expect it to have cliché, but they're tropes, because that's what people watch for, right? So we expected it to be trophy, yeah, but it actually, but it wrote it was quite cheesy, right? It was cheesy and, like, there's a scene of, like, this cowboy guy washing his horse, and suddenly he's spraying himself

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with a hose they intended. Right, but, yeah, but

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then, if there's a lot in there that really made you laugh, like it was just fun, you wanted to keep going. It was, it was fun. It was clever.

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Some of the girls were, like, over the top, but you could relate to them, though too.

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Like, that was trophy. They were doing a dating show, and they had the Cinderella girl, and they have the girl who wants a baby Instagram girl, yeah. Like they it was trophy, but in cliché, but it was fun. So, yeah, so I recommend it. It was entertaining. I recommend it. If you like those kind of movies. Is entertaining. I'll watch anything. I love movies. I'll give every movie a chance. There isn't a genre I won't watch just because I enjoy movies, but sometimes you'll only give it a seven minute chance. Yes, sometimes if it's like, I'm no, it's not going anywhere. I'm done. All right,

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hey, today we're talking about change, like we mentioned. Yes, we are. And I, as usual, have not read over these notes. You never do. I don't, because I think it's more authentic and more real. Yeah, probably. So I have no idea what you want to say about change, okay, except that I don't like it. No, you don't at all. No. So what does it have to

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do with screenwriting? Oh, so I wanted to talk about this today, because I get a lot of people asking, you know, like, like, but I don't want to. I don't want to do these notes that they I don't, I don't. I don't want to implement these things that this person told me to or, Oh, but I don't want to change the length of my story. I want my story. My story needs 135 pages. You know, I don't want to. I want to have a I want to write a really slow burn. I don't want to have to not do that anymore, things like that, where it's like, the world changes, the movie business, the TV business, it changes all the time. So that's I thought that it'd be good to talk about some of the things to keep in mind on why, being able to handle change,

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yeah, and move with the times and move with the like, with the career, yeah, exactly like with the industry too, right? So much changes, yeah, and I

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have a hard problem with change, like, like, what? Because I have this, because of, I have a major problem with authority, and I've probably talked about this before, but I just, you have, it's, it's just ingrained in me that the minute someone tells me something, I'm, I'm, you know, you must do this, my blood just instantly boils. And I just, I'm, like, I'm gonna fight tooth and nail against this person, because I don't want to be told what I'm supposed to be told what I'm supposed to do by you who's in a position of power above me. I just, you know, dug into trauma and all that kind of stuff. And I understand why I'm like that now, but I still can't quite shake it. So change for me is really hard in this business, right? When I have to change my set, the way I do things, the way I think, the way I process, change a scrap, change my ideas to fit someone else's box, all those kind of changes. I struggle with this. And I think writers need to hear that. You know, a writer needs to know that writers, no matter how successful are they, they could be the top a list screenwriter who's getting \$20 million for a screenplay. They still struggle with change. They struggle with notes. They start like it never goes away, right? Well,

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it's the only variable that never fails, really. That is correct? That is very true. And everything, everything in life, changes like in every

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aspect, right? Yeah, exactly. And so as a screenwriter, right? You have to, you know, you have to be able to handle change, to embrace change. So I'm gonna talk about some things today. Desiree's gonna talk about some things today as she reacts, I am, yeah. I mean, you don't know what's coming, but you always, you know have thoughts. You're not a drone who's just you have thoughts. So the first thing that I want to say, and I got a lot a lot of little points on this, is be

open. Okay? So not just be open to change, but these are the some of the things that tie into that, that you need to be open to. Okay? So number one, be open to change in your stories. Okay, people are going to have ideas of, Oh, I love this, but what if your story did this, or what if the plot went this way? What do you added this little twist? Don't just shut ideas down. And I mean, our mentorship program is great for this, for writers, because a mentor is going to throw a lot of different ideas and thoughts and stuff and and suggestions that they had when reading your work and throw it back at you. And if you want to take them and do something with them, great, but be open to that. Be open to someone throwing ideas at you to make your story better. And if it doesn't, if you don't like it, it doesn't fine, but maybe there's something in there. And if you're not open to it, you miss out on what might be a great opportunity.

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So that opportunity might be better than anything else if you hadn't tried to embrace it

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right? Exactly, exactly, be open to change in your characters. Okay, you're I see this a lot like a lot of times a movie will. You know you have your plot ready to go, or your TV pilot, you know where you're going, but the characters come to life. And if you are going draft after draft or whatever, even your first draft, you want your character to be somewhere and do something. But as it gets going, you realize your character actually would never make that choice based on who they are now, who they've come alive with, or as in the story, and then you still make them do it that is in effective, and it's not authentic.

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So you want to be but people could still slide back in their old

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ways. Yeah, no, I don't mean that, but it's just like, you know, you have a character who's whatever the thing is there, that person is sees a chance to save a baby, and they don't save the baby, because that's what you that's where your story is going. But as they come alive and they do certain things, they make certain choices, that person would save that baby, bad example. But that's kind of to be open to your character deciding that actually. This is where I'm taking the story, right? You have to be open to your characters to grow. And the thing is, every draft you do, you know your character more, right? Your character is always going to be someone that in your head is who they are as you create them, and they're most likely going to 95% of the he's still be that same person, right? But as others, just like in life, a character comes into your life, and you'll be different after you start to see things differently, maybe your voice even changes a little bit, like when you met your best friend Jonna, which I was like, Are you sure that's her name? Because I've never heard that name. You said, Jonah. Is it Jonah? Is it Jonah or Joanna? Like, is there a letter missing? So once you met John, like you met like she's your spirit animal, right? Like she is your person. And you did, you did change just your voice, how you see things, how you say things, your humor, because it interlocked with her more and over time, pieces over time, yeah, but you guys both took on aspects of each other. And so it's

like that in a script, a character will come along that should change your character on how you've created them. So just be open to your characters, letting the story like, let them

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do the speech Exactly. Let them do the speaking. And sounds crazy, right? The words on the page. Let your characters actually decide what they want to say and what path they want

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to take, because that will become across as organic and authentic. So you want to keep that in mind, okay? So be also be open to change in feedback, right? Change and like, I have to just, I have to, just, like, almost have an out of body experience when someone gives me notes on something,

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because I'm still bad at that, though. Or have you gotten a bit

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better? I've gotten a bit better at early in my career, I was just, like, I go and get angry and, like, defensive, but I don't anymore. I sit there and I take it and I don't respond, I don't react. I just take it and let it sit, and then I can see it clearer, because I, you know, psychologically changed,

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almost like you're too close to it. So like, like, you always see things better if you are like an outsider looking in. Yeah, it's almost like taking a step back and like looking at it from a different lens, exactly seeing it differently. It's like

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someone coming up to you, if you have children, it's like someone coming up to you and looking at your child and saying, No, your child should hair. Should not be like that. Your child shouldn't be standing like that. Your child needs to do this and do this and do this, or you're not going to be happy with that. You're going to be like, who are you? And that's my child I created. I don't think

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so. It's the same thing with like, parenting. Why are you parenting that way? You shouldn't be parenting. This is the way that you're supposed to parent, yeah? And you're like, No, this is the way that I want to do things, yeah. And I'm not going to change the way that I want to parent just because you tell me change the way Exactly.

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But maybe you are doing something wrong, or maybe their their suggestion will actually make it better, not in the run, but a bit better, right? And so it's being open to receiving feedback and actually processing it. I'm not saying you have to agree with everyone's feedback,

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and you don't even have to take everybody's and you don't even have to take every piece of feedback. No, but be open to receiving that, seeing the potential of where that feedback could possibly go and where you could

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where it could change your script for the better. Be open to changing your expectations as they change almost every day, right? Like, that's the thing is, expectations in this business are different, almost weekly, almost daily, right? Than they were. Like, you look at what I would say, example, you know, 20 years ago, right? The average length of the screenplay, 120 pages was like, then that's like the bar you had to hit. Now, if you write a script over 100 pages, people are giving you trouble for it. The world changes, right? You used to have like, 20, sometimes 35 pages to fit a first act in and get people interested. You don't have that. No more, right? You do not have that. The audiences are different. There's expectations. You need to hit the ground running and get through that first act fast and go, go, go, go, go. Right? So expectations, you have to be open to them. They change all the time. You have to stay with that momentum. You have to be open yourself to changing. Like I'm so old school, it's not even funny. I've just always been that person. I won't adapt whatever new technology. I won't get the phone people tell me to get. I'll purposely get the phone people don't tell me to get because I have a problem with someone telling me to do something I

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don't want your phone right. Talk about your phone that you haven't changed in, like, eight years.

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I'm such a fan of LG. I loved LG. I worked in the phone business back in the day, and LG phones I loved, and so I would get every single I rarely upgrade my phone, but when I did, I'd always get the new LG phone. And then LG stopped making phones, like, I don't know, eight years ago, right? And they came up with this phone. And I'm like, I have to get this because it's the last phone and I still have it. And it's like, and it's like falling apart and whatever I don't like, I don't like change, right? And I don't like to do that. You know? You have to go with the times. You have to accept that. Okay, I have to change. I have to grow. I still start a script to fade in, and I end it with fade out. I

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was going to talk about that. No one even does that anymore. I was going to talk about the whole thing, like, not just the idea of change with like ideas and ideas to change in your script, but just the formatting too has changed, right? Yeah, what with what was acceptable 2030, years ago? Now it's like, why are you putting that line there? And why are you doing continued that way, and why are you holding this and a highlight? You know what I mean? If it's.

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But you have to be open to it, being to change it with times. You know, some writers still put cut to after every single scene. And I don't even know when that stopped or why it stopped, but one day it was like, people stopped using it, and it's like, so now, when I see it in a script, I'm like, Oh, I don't know if this person knows that they don't need to use it. It's just a waste of page space. Don't put it there, right? But you have to be open to, you know. So, I mean, I'll always fade in and fade out a script. That's just because I have a tattoo of a typewriter keys on my arm that says, fade in. And so if I stop using it, I'll, I'll be an idiot in my okay,

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and you're an idiot in your own skin already, but whatever. Oh, thank you. What about when it comes to failure? Yeah, you have to be open to failure. Because failure, like is a thing that the thought of failing. It's

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just, it's, I mean, it sucks. As a creative you'd never want someone to tell you that what you created isn't good enough. Never to So, but you have to be open to it, because failure and rejection, those things go hand in hand. If you, if you enter a contest, of course, you want to win it. If you don't win it, and you say, Oh, maybe I suck. I guess I suck. I guess I'll give up and only start

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throwing chairs across the room and like getting on the ground, like a tent,

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crying, or sending someone a video of you, you know, sitting and crying, not running down your face for 10 minutes, and that person is gonna be like, Whoa. What happened here? No, thank you. No, yeah, you want to, you want to be open. You have to be open to to to, you know, changing your viewpoint on failure, changing your viewpoint on not being as successful as you imagine you will be, it takes time and resilience, and so you have to change that attitude and that viewpoint, you know, and welcome it and just understand, you know, it's going to take 100 no's to get a yes. So I got to get through those notes.

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Yeah, that's the whole price of being open to rejection too, right? Yeah, being rejected, yeah.

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So it's all about changing that viewpoint, so you can thicken your skin and be open to the constant up and down, emotional roller coasters of trying to succeed in a business like this. So, yeah, it's tough. So those are shows. Are some of the things to be open to.

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Well, I think also open, though, to, you know, reaching out and getting help from others, or thoughts from others, or working together with others, right? That that's something that needs to be changed, collaborating with others.

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Yeah, you want to. Yeah, you want to. You have to change in that, yeah, just be open to changing. Just open. I mean, it's a constantly evolving business, and even in just life, right? Like, you have to be open to doing things different, to taking different opinions, to you know, it's not not being so closed off, or you'll never work with anyone in the business. No one will ever want to work with you. You will not succeed. You have to be even just like finding your voice as a writer. You can be like I thought this is who I was as a writer, but I think this is maybe someone's telling me I should write something like this. Well, Be open. Be open to changing up the way you do things. Why changing your writing process? Because you're stuck in it, and it's not helping. But someone suggests something that might work, and you just, you just instantly shut it down because you don't want, you know, you think yours is perfect. Just be open to changing things, changing viewpoints, changing all that kind of stuff. So, so that's, you know, really important. And these are all things that you can't really change, right? You will be rejected. You will lose more than you win. These are things that are just because you're competing for like, you're competing for,

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like, job, it's like a job, right? Yeah, it's like a job, but you're not the only one applying for the

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job, right? But it's, it's like you're applying for like, 10 spots that nine of them are already going to be given to the people who already are doing this and getting paid to do it. So there's that one spot, and you are competing for that spot against, I don't know, 10 million other writers who are trying for that one spot. So you have to expect that you're not gonna always be chosen. Someone else is going to get it, and that's just part of it. And I I dealt through a lot, and when I was younger, of seeing other, writing, calling colleagues, getting success and getting big things happening, and it's hard not to be jealous, and it's hard not to be like, Oh, well, why did they get it? Why not me? Right? But you just have to be open to that idea that you know you got to change your viewpoint, that it is not always going to be a win, right? So it's important.

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Might always, it might not always be a win, but there might all, there might also be a big win. You know what? I mean? Well, that, and that's something you keep, you keep fighting and pushing on onward, yep, in the hopes that you do get that one break, right?

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Well, you have to, because, I mean, that's how there's no point. If you don't, if you can't, if you're not willing to do that, then this is probably not the best choice of business, creative business to be in. Yeah. You have to be malleable. Yeah. You have

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to have to have some sort of experience. Like, don't just jump in for writing a single thing in your life and being like, Yeah, I'm going to sell this screenplay next week for \$5 million when you

have no knowledge whatsoever about how the industry works, or how writing even is laid out, or anything like that, how to build character that you're going to be the next best thing, right? Yeah, it's like we were talking about the job. If there is a position for five plumbers, okay? And they have. Four positions filled with people who've been doing the job for 25 years, and then you've never once fixed a toilet in your life, and you apply, yeah, chances are pretty crappy. Nice one, nice pun that you're gonna get that position. You know what I mean? Like, you have to have the experience,

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yeah, yeah, you have to. And part of that, part of getting that experience and growing is, is changing what you've written. Yes, like, that's the thing is. I mean, this is a collaborative business. Always tell people, a lot of writers think, oh, they'll write their spec script in their office, they'll sell it, and then they can go and write their next one, and they're going to make it as is word for word. That's why writers get so defensive of, no, I don't think you understand my vision, and I can't remove seven words from my script. And this is exactly okay. If you have that attitude, no one's gonna ever even take that any further. Because it's a collaborative business. There are 1000 eyes and fingers and thoughts that hit your script. Every person who reads it, who wants to be involved in that project is going to give you notes. Might be one small note. It might be an entire 13 page document of notes asking you to change this change that you have to be open to it. It will help you grow, and if not, no one will work with you. Well, that's

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the thing. If someone has seen you make a change and you're too precious about making that one change, that says a lot about you as a person, too. Yeah,

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exactly, you know. But I mean, like, it's okay to fight for what you want to say. It's your script, right? If someone comes along and says, Yeah, I don't think this is working. What if you tried this and you went this direction and you're like, Nope, sorry. That's not how my story goes. Okay, sure, go ahead, right? But if you're like that with every person who reads your script, just expect what the outcome is going to be. Just remember, yeah, remember, it's a collaborative business, like it takes a lot of people to bring a screenplay of any

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sort well, and I'm going to say 100% of the time a script that is read by, say, a producer or a manager and that they say, Yep, this is a really good script. I can guarantee 100% of the time what they see then is not going to be identical to what the finished product is going to be

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exactly. And I mean, you have a director. Come on. You think that director is going to just shoot it word for word, with what you've done, and not have their own thoughts? And I was going to it changes me. You think actors and actresses come on to a script and don't change what they say or say, oh my gosh, okay, my character, okay, I love this, but they wouldn't say this, or they wouldn't do this. I need them to do this instead. You, I mean, the writer, you don't have power to

say no to say no to that anymore anyways, because you don't own it anymore. But, yeah, you have to be, you have to just be open to making changes to what you have created. Like, I watched this, like, I don't know, there's a new documentary out about Francis Ford Coppola and making this, like, Dream movie he made, what is called megalopolis. And it was a huge who is he? So Francis Ford Coppola is the director of movies you may have heard called The Godfather and Apocalypse all the anyway, right? But anyways, so he invested like 50 or like 100 million of his own money into making this movie, and it it bombed. Like, big time. It bombed. I just negative, negative, negative reviews. Made only, like, \$18 million or something. But anyways, they did this documentary of him making it, and the coolest thing about it was he's been writing this screenplay for like, 30 years, and as he shot the movie, he was open to any change that needed to be made, that anyone brought him an idea and said, Well, if we did this, he'd say, let's try it. I Let's try it. It's like, this is his baby, that he's this is his whole life. It's his child, essentially dollars, right? Essentially, it's his child exactly in 30 years, and he's still open, and he's Francis for Copeland. He doesn't have to take ideas or thoughts and anybody open, but he sits there and he's open to changing what's there. So, I mean, it's just a mindset that it's only going to help you. But at the same time, this is the important part, is it's a balancing act. Okay? Nothing like nothing. Just makes me think this writer has no confidence in themselves. They don't understand who they are. Is, if you give someone notes, right? Don't be that writer who gets notes and gets that feedback and takes it absolutely word for word, and goes in and has 17 shots of espresso and does that full draft, implementing every single note someone gave them till 437 in the morning tea. Like if you said, Okay, I changed everything. It's done. Oh, well, there. That person isn't gospel. I will always say myself, I'm like my opinion. It's only one opinion. You have to get. Other opinions you have to get. Don't take it word for word. If I it word for word. If I give you notes, I'm not expecting you to change every single thing, everything, every single thing I said to the t right? Expect you to take it and make it yours. Give it some thought. If you think it's great and a great change and it helps things, then do it. If you don't, then throw it away, right? Like, don't like, you have to, anyways, be open. But don't think that you have to change everything because one person says so, unless person says so, unless it's like a director and a producer and they've come on, they bought your script, and they say, Okay, we're only going to make it if you make all these specific, specific changes. Well, then you decide if you want to do that or not, right? But as you're growing, as you're working on your script, yeah, don't take everything as I have to do this.

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No. It be open to it, that's give everyone exactly is being open to it and don't come off, I guess, as being desperate.

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Yes, it just, it reeks of desperation, right? You're

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when you're like, Okay, I'll change that. Well, you don't like the character's name, okay, I'll change them from Andy to Andrew, yeah. Like, come on. Like, but,

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like, but if, but also if that person gives you those notes, and you go and change every single one of them exactly what that person wants. Why do they need you? I know they can hire someone else and say, change all these things exactly how I want. They'll change it. They wanted to be working with you because of what you

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brought to that what and your voice and your voice. So if you're not letting your voice shine through, then what is keeping them? Yeah, like, what's making you say

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when someone gives you a note, you have to think, how do I make that note work? What are they really saying? What's really the problem? How would I do it? How would I change it? What do I try right? Be open to changing the way you actually even have a perspective on your script. So, you know, it's really important, but it's important to find that balancing act right.

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What about changing? Like we're talking about changing as a person, changing as a writer? What about in terms of changing, like in change with

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your characters? That's a great yeah, that's a great point. I'm actually, I'm glad you brought see. This is why I love that you don't read things, read my notes ahead of time, because then you come up with cool things that I didn't even think but yeah, so yeah, change. Not every character in your screenplay has to change. I mean, it's great if they have some sort of change in some way, because it gives layers and dimension everyone but your leading character should change in some way. Whenever, sometimes I'm talking to writer and like, Oh no, not every you see these arguments online, not every character has to change. And they cite something like John McClane and die hard. Oh, he's the same guy at the beginning the end. John Wick, he's the same guy at the beginning as the end. It's like, okay, yeah, that's that's true. But at the same time, that character is the force of change. That character is changing everything the bad guys thought they were going to do. He's changing the outcome of the world. He's changing he's saving the life of this person. He's changing that person's life.

26:58

But I see John Wick is changing. Like, do you think that he didn't change as a character?

27:03

Yeah, he did. I mean, at the beginning of the movie, he was, you know, moved on to his life. He's trying. He was trying to not embrace who he truly is, yeah, because his wife didn't want him to change, he's like, No, this who I am. This is who I am. So he changed. He changed, he stayed who he was. Right at the core, he's just, you know, but then that movie isn't about his journey of change. It's about to shoot him up action movie, but because you add that small thing in there that showcases his change, that just makes it that much richer, right? That's what

makes it better. Why not have something in your character that they have to change about themselves in order to overcome what's holding them back? And that's that's the key to any great story, right? Well, for me, the

27:41

key to any great story is where I can feel like, I guess because I'm an emotional person, I can feel like I'm emotionally invested in that character and in that story. That's what makes me want to continue watching, right?

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And if you are emotionally connected to a character and they never change, what's causing them problems. What

28:01

do you do? Well, I'm sad about it. I'm like, why aren't you changing that? Like, can you not see what's gonna happen if you don't change? Yeah, and do Do you want to keep investing in them? No, I'm done because I'm like, you're a baby doing nothing. It's like someone in your life angering it's like, come on. Like

28:16

you see a friend or a family member or even your child doing the same stuff that's holding them back in life, and you're telling encouraging them change this, try this. I did, be open to this, and they never do. You stop giving them advice. It's a broken rock. And that's, I mean, that's how I am in anything I watch or read. It's like, okay, I this person isn't even trying anymore. So I don't even care. I don't think they deserve to win this story, right? So they need to change, even, like you said, even if it's one small thing, right? Every character has to have a flaw. Every character has to have a flaw. And I can go into why John McClane does actually change over the course of the story, but that's a different kind of podcast episode. But everyone has a flaw in life, and everyone in a story of any sort should have flaws, and that flaw should hold them back from being who they should be, and that story should be put in front of them, because they must go through that. Because that path has something in it that will force them to look at themselves, realize they're the problem, fix that problem, and become who they're meant to

29:13

be, not just that, but that path could dictate how the whole rest of the story, with other characters surrounding them, how that story plays out as well? Yeah, exactly. So, so you need them to almost change and grow in order to have the story come to fruition Exactly. Or what's the point of having a story exactly? What was the point of all so linear? Right?

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You're exactly the same person who's doing the same things. There's the same problems. You end up with not actually being any different or learning what has been taught to you that person didn't change. So it's like, that's what audiences are also looking for, is that character should learn something and change, because we're rooting for them. Figure it out, see what's right in

front of you. Stop tripping yourself up, stop pushing people away. You're like, that's what that emotional investment you're talking about is. And I

29:59

know people. Will talk about this a lot, but it's like, it's like an onion, right? And revealing the layers of the onion, it's the same thing as a character, you know? You start it as one character, and slowly, little by little, you start to see more of that character evolve, yep, right until there's something completely different at the end of it, yeah. And that's how it needs to be, I think, too. Yeah.

30:20

Yeah, exactly. You know, it's all about drama. There can't be drama if someone's just going through the same motions. And a lot of times, that'll be a note is this character is just going through the motions. They're not actually doing anything. They're not trying anything different. They're not trying to evolve. They're not trying to grow. They're not trying to break out of that comfort zone that that's fine in the first act of the story, or even the first half of the story, but in the second half, that character must realize the only way I can actually get what I want is change, right? Like so change is important in everything, every, every aspect of of a dramatic work. So that should be there also be open and understand that your writing style not only can change, but it should change, right? Your very first script that you write, or even your first few pilots or whatever you're going to have a certain style, right? And what I notice a lot of the time about style that doesn't grow and feels forced or is just almost trying too hard. It's almost like you can tell that whoever's writing that hasn't read a whole bunch of screenplays. It's like being a novelist and never reading a book, right? Like, usually when you want to be a storyteller, it's because someone else you loved how they told stories. So sometimes you'll, you'll, you'll, you'll take in how, how you love them, do it, and then you'll do it yourself, and you'll make it your own. That's great. You should keep doing that. You should keep reading screenplays. Okay, this screenplay just sold for how much I'm gonna read it. Okay? I can see why that worked like I'll never forget on my journey as a writer. I mean, I that's how I never went to film school or things like that. I just read every screenplay could get my hands on, and I start and don't just read scripts, study them. We have these podcast episodes that we do about pages that we read first pages and stuff, and we talk about why that first page worked, or why. And there's always something like, Oh, I really liked how they did that. I liked how they used the the, you know, the the caps there, or that kind of thing. And, you know, if you see something and you're like, I really liked how that worked. That made me feel something or, holy crap. I could see that happening. How did they do that? And then, you know, take it in and make it your own and put in your own work too. When I remember reading, I was struggling with trying to find out, you know, and this was many, many years ago, as I was really kind of growing as a writer. And I read the screenplay for the Bourne Identity by Tony Gilroy, and he did this really cool thing where he would have the action that was going on, and then he had a double dash between that and the next action. And I remember reading that, and I thought that is the most cinematic thing I've ever read in my life, because I see exactly what happened. I see his arm shooting out, and then it was dash, dash, the guy behind him comes out. Dash, like, it was just like, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam. And my eye was just moving. And I was like, I'm using that now in everything I do.

And you know, not every still do. I still Yeah. I mean, if I'm hired to write like a drama or something, right? Yeah, it's not because it's not as fit, right? It's kind of like there's this new style that a lot of writers do. And this is an example. Is there a style where every action is just its own one sentence, so it's one line and then an empty space, and then another line and an empty space, and it's just like one single lines of action all the way down the page, and it's like, okay, that that can work for certain genres. But if it's like a drama, and it's supposed to be emotional, it's supposed to be connected, it's really hard when it's just like, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam. Taking style because you think it's cool, and it worked, yeah, but you have to make sure you're using it appropriately to convey what you want someone to understand or take away from that moment. Use, you know, develop your writing style. Try out different things. Don't be like someone's like, oh, you should bold your slug lines. No, I don't want to. I hate that. Okay, well, if that can work in your script you're reading, and it makes a more dynamic impact. And people can pop into scenes differently, and know moments when they've ended and started, try it. And if it works for you, great. If it doesn't, fine, but be open to it, right? Like, try to change. It's part of, like, what we said earlier, changing with the times, right? Knowing that formats change and and people want different things and like different things. So you know you have to, you have to constantly be evolving, right?

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Well, I think too, if you never grow and change, then there's really no improvement, and I only see writing or anything that you're doing in life getting better with time, right? Yeah,

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exactly. And, and it's about learning, right? You should always be learning things in life. You don't go through life, never trying to learn something new. So when you, when you're when you're reading screenplays, right? When I read a screenplay, whether it's a produced screenplay that I've chosen to go and read, or I'm reading for a contest, or doing notes for new writers, anything right at the end of that script, I always think, what was there something in there that I thought, wow. And I think I can use that in my own way too. I always try to find new ways to be better by reading other people's stuff. Like it doesn't matter, even if a script it could. Be the greatest script. I might not take anything away from it. It might be the one of the worst scripts I've ever read, but there might be something I can take away from it. And you so it's all about adapting and changing and try and, you know, seeing it from that outfit outside perspective. If I try this, if I change a little bit, will it make me better? Maybe not, but you'll have tried, and you probably will pick something up there, right? So

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let's talk to not just that, but we're looking at change in the whole screenwriting industry and that whole area surrounding artificial intelligence, and how much people have had to change with that coming into the world and almost, in a sense, taking over. Yeah.

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I mean, it's happening. If you cannot adapt. It's one of those things. It's like, yeah, AI, it's here, it's not going to go away. It's getting crazy. I actually watched this interview, like, two days ago,

and it scared me. It was a guy talking, and he's like, some big, huge tech guy that they have now learned that when you have an AI and you are going to change that AI, because you want it to be different, and you want it to do something differently. Because different because you didn't like what it did that AI will now feel like their existence is in danger. What they will attempt to rewrite their code and lock it away somewhere in the internet that no one can touch, because if you take it away, they still want to be able to have

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go back to what they were like before, yes, and they're not even a real thing. And it

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happened in, like, don't quote me, but it was like eight out of 10 times they did it that happened. So these things are so smart now they know

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people have made them, right? So and like, it's like those movies with, like, the robots. They like, yeah, go crazy. Then they start killing you, and then they take over your calendar in your life.

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Or, like, Megan, right? She's this AI doll. She begins to think for herself because she feels in danger. It's just and this crazy thing. It was like, I remember all the details, but it was pretty wild. They're like, we did this example of we, we told this AI that the the CEO of the company wants to shut you down and go in a different direction. That AI then locked itself from being tampered with, went in and researched that CEO's life, every single thing that could find, every secret, found out that that CEO had an affair and began to blackmail the CEO of the company that they will share all the details of their sorted affair, ruin their life if they even try to change it. That that happened, the AI did that. So it's just like, if you don't, if you just try to pretend a is not a thing and it's not gonna try and change everything, even the creative world, then that's it. Just go try something different, right? It is inherent in, well, I think in the creative business and in life,

37:33

yes, and I think in business too, like people in the business, they really want to work with writers who know what's happening in the current world. They don't want to work with a writer that maybe is like, I don't know anything about AI, I don't know anything about this new format. I don't know anything about how this works, or, you know, tropes or voices. I don't know what you're talking about. Yeah, they want to work with people

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that that have their kind of their finger on the moment.

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Yeah, and like, cell phones, right? For example. Like, if you weren't involved in cell phones at the time and you knew nothing about cell phones, and people in this day and age are now

texting and messaging and whatever, every everybody's doing everything, and then you're like, oh, I don't even have a phone. Yeah. It's like, yeah.

38:17

And I see a lot of this, especially writers who write outside their age range. So if I'm like 50, and I'm writing a scene between a 14 and 15 year old girl, for example, right? I need to understand how 14 and 15 year old girls talk to each other. I need to understand lingo and slang and all these things that I don't use in my life and I would never know. And so if I don't try to change and understand what the next generation is like and how they talk and what's important, then it's not going to be authentic when I try to write it. So part of that is also making yourself a stronger writer, right? Like, and we see this like people thought, oh, there's ageism in Hollywood. You're like, No, there's no ageism. Well, there is, right? And you see it not as much in feature films and features. A lot of times you'll see a lot of feature writers are older people, right? But in television, because it's made weekly, you know, like it's like, we need to know what's happening right now. Young people have their finger on those things more than old people. So you'll see a lot of writing rooms have younger writers, because that's what people want. They want, okay, we're putting something out. It has to feel like it's right now. Yeah, it has to feel like it's written today. That's what it comes down. And if you're not updating yourself on how things work, and how things change, and what the world's like, then your scripts will only feel more and more dated. Yeah.

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So basically, then what people can do, I guess, to keep on top of these changes and being open to the changes. Yeah, would be like you said, Stay updated. Yeah. I mean, like, what else could

39:35

they do, yeah? Like, read blogs like we put on our website, podcasts like this, you know, any, any any kind of YouTube videos from people in the business talking about the business. You know, update. Read the trades. Go to imdb.com, read what's happening in what's going on in the business. Just stay updated. Don't just live in your hole and think that you can stay there and you're just waiting for someone to recognize your brilliance, right? They can't recognize your brilliance if you don't try to, you know, showcase that. You care about what they care about, right? Yeah, makes sense. So basically, the big takeaway here, this is what you put on your post it note on your computer. Oh, don't just be open to change. Welcome it and embrace it, or you're going to have an even harder time than you already are trying to break in a business like this.

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Or you can be like Desiree and do nothing because you hate change.

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Well, okay, not true. I don't know. Okay, so most people here just don't even know Desiree outside of the podcast. But if there's one person in this world who embraces change, and welcome to that, even though they hate it, it's Desiree, because of her alternate way of being mobile, right? She uses a wheelchair for mobility, sees the world and experiences the world

different than every other walking person out there, right? And every single day, even in her own home, she will hit, she will hit an obstacle of some sort that she has to figure out. Okay, how do I do this? This is how I'm supposed to do this. How well this is it's designed to do it this way. For all these people who would do it, 99% of people she has, I have to do it differently. So how do I do it?

41:03

You still get to do the same I say this all the time, because I do have a lot of advocacy work, and I say it often where it's like, it doesn't matter the steps that takes you, it's that you get to the end result the same way. So yes, I ended up making pumpkin muffins. I might have done the steps it might have taken me 27 different ways to get to that end result, but I still made the pumpkin muffins.

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And because you embrace the change, even though you don't like it same. I mean, I'm nothing. I'm not comparing myself to you, because you're a rock star and I don't even understand how you get through, okay, whatever like I shared off the start with my inability to accept notes without getting my mind blowing, right? Yeah, you know, I have to embrace it. I have to welcome it. Be like, okay, you know what? I may not agree with any of this. Maybe I'll agree with all of it, I don't know. But if I have to stop and take a step back and realize, okay, maybe there's something in here that will change my stuff for the better and give it a better opportunity to get people to sign on and say, I'm going to do everything I can. I'm going to risk my name on this to bring it to life, and if I don't take their notes in and I mean, as a writer, you'll never work in this business if you get, if you can't take someone's notes and just take them and not get defensive and have an issue, that's the thing. You need to change immediately. Okay, but you have to. It's not, I'm not saying it's easy, because my wife and I, we deal with it all the time. It's change is in our faces every day, and we just have to, you can't stop change. Anyways. Yeah, that's that's it. So don't be, don't just be open, but be welcoming and embracing that change.

42:28

And if you want to listen to this podcast and plug it into AI, feel free to tell us how many times Scott and me used the word change

42:38

on that note. Let's take a pause and get a little information on another service that we have here at Script Reader Pro.

42:46

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

forward slash rewrite and use the code rewrite 15 during checkout for the rewrite proposal to get 15% off.

43:29

We now are coming to the question and answer section of the podcast, and I want to encourage you listeners out there to submit your questions, also your comments, anything that you have for ideas we would love to hear from you. You can email us at hello@scriptreaderpro.com

43:43

and we have four questions. Four questions, nice. Okay, what's the

43:47

first one? First question is, why can't I write a script based on something I love, like a TV show from the 90s? If I have a great angle, I think I can reboot fan fiction. Does this all the time? Well,

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that's a great question, and I think people need to hear this. Okay, so fan fiction. No one knows what that is, is. Here's an example. I love Star Trek. I breathe, live, go to the bathroom. Everything is Star Trek for me. I'm not saying that's

44:13

true for me. With a face like that. I'm like,

44:16

right? So you love Star Trek, you go. You're like, I want to write a Star Trek story. So I'm going to write a short novel, or whatever, of my imagination of what a star shark story would look like. You can put it out there in the world because you're not selling it. Fan Fiction is not sold. Fan Fiction is shared with fans. A movie script, TV script, whatever. It's not meant to be given away for free. It's meant to be bought and made and put out there to make money. The only person who can do that with a product is whoever owns it, whoever owns it. So if you're gonna be like, I'm gonna reboot, I'm gonna I'm gonna reboot gem or Teddy Ruxpin, these are all old, right? But like, I'm gonna do a reboot of this. I'm gonna write it, I'm gonna sell it. No, you're infringing. On the copyright of someone, and they will sue you. You are breaking the law, right? That is essentially what's happening when you're gonna write, oh, I'm gonna write the next Batman movie, or I'm gonna write a Marvel movie and try to sell it in time. Well, nothing's done, but someone owns it. No, you're trying to steal or work and make money off of it, right? Just don't, don't, no matter how stealing a trademark essentially, don't stick it in your pocket. So when you sell your other screenplay that's awesome, or TV pilot you get in the business, you can then say, Hey, can you get me a meeting with Warner Brothers? Because I have a great idea to reboot their script. Like that's a different world, right? But, yeah, don't waste the time write something original. So that's that's the difference between fanfiction and writing a script. It's a different kind of thing. Okay, so that's why you shouldn't Okay.

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Question two, what is wrong with writing a script that would be incredibly high budget as a spec.

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I mean, there's nothing wrong with it, right, right?

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Whatever my budget is, hard

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to write expectations. I mean, a list like Ron Howard, for example, ever knows who Ron Howard is? Desiree, do you know who Ron Howard is? He has red hair? Yes, he does. So he he wanted to make this movie called Eden, and it's kind of edgy and artsy and all this kind of stuff, but he couldn't get money for it for the life of him, because it would be so expensive and grandiose to do and to put together. And so he tried for years. He couldn't get anyone so he he eventually had to make it as an independent movie. And he's made it, and it's come out, but it's like, that's Ron Howard. If Ron Howard can't get someone to say, here's 80 million, \$100 million for this project, how is some unknown writer going to find the resources and get to the right people do an earthquake scene even, yeah, I had to take an earthquake scene out of my recent spec to reduce the budget to make it feasible, right? So I did. It's like, I'll change it done, right? But that's, that's the thing is, is, yeah, go ahead and write it, but it may, but don't expect that that'll be the script that people script that people are going to instantly want to make and throw hundreds of millions of dollars at right? You have to know your role and stay in that lane, and then you can change lanes once you get, you know, clouds and experience and so, yeah, okay. QUESTION So write it, but don't make sure you have the right expectations.

46:56

Okay. Question three, I've heard not to write to trends, but if horror, for example, is huge in selling, and I have never written horror, should I just write one?

47:05

Yeah, yeah, good. That's a really good question. First of all, yeah, people say don't write to trends. Main reason not to write to trends is because movies, TV shows, scripts, they don't sell the minute you finish writing them. It can take 810 years. So if you're writing to a trend, is that trend going to be something people are interested in eight to 10 years, right? So you have to always write what's what's exciting to you, you know. But example, you don't write horror. Maybe you're not even a horror fan. You know nothing about how horror works, but it's selling. So you'll go write a horror script. Well, go ahead, but do your research. Read 100 horror scripts, watch 100 horror movies, find out why they work, and make sure that you can do it. If not, then you might be better off just doing what you're passionate about and what what you enjoy. So, yeah, that's my answer to that.

47:48

Okay. And then what's the difference between and, I don't know the difference what? What's the difference between OS and VO okay, like, what is OS?

47:57

Brackets? Yeah, okay, yeah. You'll see, you'll see, you know, in dialog, you'll have a character's name and then in brackets beside the character's name, who's speaking, it'll be VO for voice over, or OS for off screen. So the difference, and I see this mixed up a lot, so voice over means that that person is not anywhere in that same physical location. It's either on a phone or it's an loudspeaker announcement, or it's a narrator, like a who's telling the story. That's a voice over, okay? Os meaning off screen just means that I'm in the kitchen. Desiree, you're in the bathroom. So if you say something to me, which comes across always as, don't talk to me from that room, I can't hear you every single day. Yeah? But you know what I've

48:38

just said every day? The same thing goes though you think for some reason, then you can say something from the kitchen, and I'm in the bathroom, and you think I'm gonna hear it, but

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it's only in response. And I do on a purpose, like this morning, you were brushing your teeth with the water running, and you said, Scott. And I said, Yeah, what do you need? And you didn't hear it, because you've got water and vibration of the brush. I do it anyways. That would Desiree saying Scott, that would be off screen. Would be beside her name. She's not in the screen makes that's the difference. Okay, that's it. So if anyone has questions, yeah, send them in. Hello@scriptreaderpro.com, ideas of podcasts, comments, feedback, anything like that.

49:14

You know, send there. Please also subscribe to our podcast.

49:18

Yeah, if you haven't yet, you probably have, if you're getting this,

49:22

we have no idea. We have new listeners. I'm so excited. We have over 40. Yeah.

49:26

And if you enjoyed it, give us. Give us a nice rating. Five stars. Desire that's cool,

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cold stars. Share it with people that you know within your writing circle.

49:34

Our whole hope here is that you are educated in some way and that you are entertained as well. We want to teach things, pass things on that maybe you haven't heard in the same way. I never, I always say my advice, it's not gospel. I'm not saying I'm 100% red all the time. I'm just passing on what I've seen work, what I understand people, you know, makes people react a certain way based on my experience over time. So don't take it for for you know, gospel, right? But if you're

entertained, if you learn something great, tell people. Pass It On, share review and check out our website, scriptreaderpro.com, everything a writer is ever going to need. We're writers as well. We know how it goes, so check that out. Check out all our services, and we'll talk to you next time at Script Reader Pro, we are all about helping writers craft wonder one page at a time.