

Ep #53: The Writing Process

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In this episode, we're talking all about the writing process. Yes, every writer needs to make it their own. 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, and this is the Script Reader Pro Podcast, nice intro.

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Thank you. That's gonna be my new one. Now I like it. No, I really like it. Did you like the singing I love, love the little sing songy thing at the end. Thank you. You're welcome.

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Podcast sounds like a 60s, you know, commercial, like they had,

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it's like they when they open the Simpsons. Never

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really got into the Simpsons, did you? Scott?

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I sort of did, like when I was in high school and I was young. When you were young, I was young. You were young. One school. I was but like, everyone had, like, a Bart Simpson shirt, really. And like, they would sell them at like, Walmart or whatever. And it would be like, eat my shorts. It would say on shirt with Bart Simpson's face, or, like, I don't know, he always ended things with, man. So it was like, yeah, yeah, my shorts. Man, yeah. What the hell man, eat my shorts man, and then the BART man came out. Do you remember the BART man, no, there's a song. What was it? It was the BART man. How does it go? Oh, man, I don't remember. Do the BART man. It was like it was the BART the woman who does his voice, and just he had the stupid Bart man dance, and it was like the thing. So Simpsons was huge, huge when it first came. It's still huge. But like, not like it was, it was just everywhere.

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I wonder how many seasons and episodes there are? Well, it's

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the longest running television show ever. I believe most seasons of any show animated or not, because it's like, on season 35 or something, like, it's ridiculous, how long it's run. I'm looking to see. Of course you are while you're looking to see. Well, I'm done 800 800 episodes. Over 800 episodes. Wow. Like January 2026

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and is currently in its 37th

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37 it was close, yeah. So back

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then you're really invested in that. You know what else was huge back then, those shirts, I can't remember you. We've talked you and me have talked about them before. How I always wished I had one in the 80s and 90s. The the Life's a beach, no, the one that looks like it's like knitted.

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Sidewash, yeah. Sidewash, sidewash. Does anybody still have a side wash? I saw someone wearing one side wash, or side wash, sigh, wash. Why? What does that mean? I don't know. It's some cultural word, I believe is where they kind of took it from. What is how about you? Look it up later, and we get going on our podcast. People are here, actually, to listen to about writing.

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Actually, you guys a side wash sweater is, oh, it's a derogatory term.

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As I said, it was like some cultural word that they misappropriated.

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Let's not talk about that one. Moving on. What?

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How do we normally start these episodes? By the way, I'm Scott Desiree, just nice host, didn't even introduce me. I'm Scott. I'm one of the team here. Pro, do we really need to introduce you? I know I'm not as important as you, but still, people should know who I am. Yes, this is Scott, yes, and I'm here to talk about writing, and listen to him talk about writing. And Desiree drops really great pearls of wisdom that she doesn't even realize she's dropping. So watch for those pearls, pearls of wisdom. But today we're talking about the writing process. But before we get into that, what do we normally do?

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Desiree normally talk about a movie that we've seen or a TV show or a TV show, and this is called the writing process. So I'm guessing it's something to do with a movie or a TV show, because it's the writing process of a movie or TV show.

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Yes, it is called, we just watched this show. It's called the beast in me. And you know, you remember this title,

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the beast in me, or the beast and me?

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Yeah, that was one of the episodes. Was called that, but it's the beast in me. It was great shows Claire Dani, yeah, Claire Dani is and

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surprised that I got that name out there. No, we did talk about the other actor,

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dude, can't remember his name now, but holy, like, after the first episode, we were like, Who is this guy? Why we've never seen him before. He's amazing. He's so good. He was so good. And the writing in this, the writing in it, is so elevated, just like watching just for him, just for Nile Jarvis, his character, just he's so like, he's so true to himself. It's a perfect example of a character not being able to be anyone else besides who he is. He's unapologetic and being a jerk. He says everything, everything he says is just loaded with subtext, and he just plays games with people, and you can see it on his face. He doesn't even hide it. He knows he's being a jackass, but he's. He's okay with it. So, yeah, I really enjoyed it.

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Is he? What I found interesting for when it comes to, like, the technical side of things, with writing, is that the writer used the word Nile, which, like the name, you mean, yeah, what did I say? The word Yeah, use the name Niall. And I thought that's an interesting choice, because typically people seem to pick really easy names to remember. And Niall wasn't Niles, yeah.

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It was not you normally say Niles, yeah. And then her name was Aggie Wiggs, I'm like, what kind of a name is Aggie Wiggs? How many G's do you need in your first and last name and her first name? It's just short for Agatha, so, but Aggie Wiggs, it's just like Aggie wigs Nile Jarvis, their names you instantly remember, because they're different, right?

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But my question is, with that, like with that, because it's a limited series, with that limited series, was it a book previously, I

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don't know about that one. I'm not sure it was very like the show itself was very, very literary, right? Because she was an author, and so there was a lot of stuff about writing, and she would

read excerpts from her writing. And it was very, it was like the writer or writers of the show were definitely really educated people, right? So definitely check it out. It's a great example of solid writing and fantastic character work. And if you can handle Claire Dani is and her quivering, the quivering lip and crying, it was, it was, it was a little much. I found like, Okay, a couple times. Okay, yes, she's emotional. We get it. She's broken and she's on the edge. But like, it was, it was distracting, and her crying face and stuff, it's like, okay, yeah, real crying face. But like, I felt it was a little too much, over the top.

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And Claire Dani, if you are listening to this, get a grip.

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I saw, I saw on Instagram. I wonder, of a woman impersonating Claire Dani show, yeah, but like, calling her mom and telling her she went to the grocery store, but, like, in that, like, over the top crying way, it was pretty funny, but, yeah, I found that. But other other than that, it was almost a perfect show.

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It was amazing, and it's on Netflix or prod Netflix, yeah? Okay, yes. Desiree, well, talking about the writing process, which all those listeners out there, you know how much I love talking about a topic called the writing process, because I love writing so much.

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But I thought I wanted to talk about this first of all, because a lot of writers ask me, and a lot of times when I'm doing mentorship, or other other readers here are doing mentorships. That's the question a lot of writers get, because they lack confidence, and so they they think they can cop like the well, how do you what's your process? And they want to try and emulate your process and and it can't work that way. You have to find your own process. So that's why I wanted to talk about that. And I thought you would offer great insight, even though it's about writing you because of your need to use a wheelchair to get around, you have a different process of doing something than anyone else does, and you have to make it your own right. And so

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And yes, and something I say to one of my little friends who's nine years old is, I say, which can also be applied to writing. I say, what do we have to remember that we have to do? And then she knows now, because I've said it to her 100 times, we have to make our own rules. Yep, you have to make your own rules that work for you. What works for you, and that's the same I would say with the writing process.

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Yeah, so we're gonna talk about that today. I'm gonna give some kind of tips and ideas and stuff on, on, you know, ways to think about the writing process, whether you're a new writer or a seasoned writer. Because sometimes, as a seasoned writer like I've I've changed mine, my own process up over the years, I'll learn something from someone that I hear they do, and it

resonates with me. And I think oh, I'm gonna try that. I'm gonna put that in my process. And sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't, but I always find it's a good way to kind of get yourself motivated again. So anyways, we're gonna talk about that stuff.

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Yep. Question for you, what is the writing process? Exactly, exactly. Aren't you glad I asked that question three words. It's a

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three word answer, how?

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No, I don't know how

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you write, right? That's it. It's a writing process. It's turning into this episode. It's how you go about writing, how you how you treat it, how you move through it, how you process it yourself. So, so that's, that's what we're going to talk about. And the biggest thing to remember is you need to have your writing process be about whatever makes sense to you. Okay, I hate nothing more than going to some kind of panel or watching a, you know, an online webinar or something when the. The person, the writer, who's pushing it through, or whoever it is, tell you that this is how you have to do it. You must do this. You must write every day. You must sit and have this perfect like nothing in Stephen King, right? He's Stephen King Who can argue with Stephen King, but in his book on writing, he says, The worst thing you can ever do is have an office with a window, because then you're constantly going to be looking outside and being distracted and thinking, right? But I can't office

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without if you have an office, an office, if you have an office without a window, you're going to make yourself go crazy. I think, well,

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it depends. I have a writing space, and for you, when you look at my writing space, you you just start shaking. Is chaos, because it's so chaotic because I have about 9000 little action figures and Funko Pops and different memorabilia that's staring at me, but it keeps me motivated whenever you whenever I sit down on my desk, I especially when I'm having on one of those bad days, or I'm just like, I can't do it today. I stop and I look at them, and I just kind of look over each one, and I think this is why I'm doing this, this. This is why I want my own movie to have its own action figures one day. So that's that's and so I don't have a window where I find this is my space. So, ever so. So if you hear someone say, you know, like, I went to Austin, and I've said this before, and this guy up there was like, Do not outline, never outline. And I was like, that's just a wrong thing to do, because everyone has their own process. Exactly. They have their own way and their own brain and how they process things, right?

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So yeah, Scott, speaking back of your figures, how they like, scream chaos and like, this is kind of what I imagine your brain looks like. It's exactly that it doesn't make sense. There's no rhyme or reason as to why the things are where they are, and there's 7000 things happening at once, and you can't focus on one thing because your eye is going to something else. You should take a picture,

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post it in the show notes. Sure.

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I'll do that just so that people can get an idea of what I'm what I'm looking at here when we're doing this podcast, what I have to suffer through.

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Isn't it beautiful 45 minutes, glorious of chaos my brain? Yes, before we continue on, very clean, yes. I know it's like our upstairs. No problems in the brain, no crumbs, not a single crumb on the counter of your brain.

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No dirty floors in there. Okay, Scott, so you said it has to make sense to you, yeah?

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So nobody can tell you what your process. Don't let someone tell you, right? If you find Hey, I like that. I like that process. I really love that, right? And I'm gonna try doing it like they do, because I heard to how they do it, fine, you know, try it, and if it works for you, great, but, but but don't let anybody tell you that your process is wrong, right? Unless you're getting absolutely nothing done and you're just every page you crank out is just awful, then maybe you need to look at a different process, but that's for you to decide. Right? No one can say your process is wrong, because my process is I write a full like, first of all, I have a pen and a notebook, and I write all of my thoughts down. I do a lot of Mind Mapping. I draw pictures of the different characters and the different sets and different things and locations. And I just have to, cinematically, have a come to life in my brain before I even write a word of what the actual story is going to be about and the characters and stuff. And then I go into what I call my my first draft is basically an outline. It's my entire screenplay, beginning and except for 95% dialog, right? There's hardly any dialog. But that's my process. It's my outline, but I see it as my first draft, because then when I actually go to write, I write 1015, pages a day, because it's all there, and I just have to turn it into the script. That's my process, right?

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It's like having a puzzle and having all of the pieces ready to be placed and knowing kind of where those pieces are going to land, opposed to having no pieces at all and then just starting to almost go from the end backwards.

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That's so funny. You say that I never thought of that. But like, if you look like, we have my puzzle board right beside me. And if you look at it, when I do a puzzle, I have to sort out all of the pieces into the different color schemes and shades before you know where to go. Well, just before I can do it, because I put all the pieces out, and it's a pure chaos, and I can't see anything. I get frustrated. But my daughter, she will not sort she'll just pick up a piece and tried it. So, yeah, it's the same thing. That's obviously how my brain is wired. I need that sorted. This sort. Need everything in its place before Yeah. QUESTION though

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about telling people telling you what your process is. We're we're gonna have just an asterisk here. Okay, no one can tell you what your process is, except for your spouse. Okay, no, I just want to be clear on that squad, yeah, if I tell you what to do, you do it. You You do know with the asterisk down at the bottom, okay, that

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that's, that's your life lesson, yeah, good to know. Good to know. Okay, okay, so because he Yeah, because what works wrong, right? Because what works for others may not work for. You, right? And so, yeah, you just basically don't become a cookie. And what I mean by that is, there's so many cookie cutter things out there, like save the cat. I always use an example when save the cat came out it. It's a book that breaks down the feature film screenplay format so easy, the structure of it. It's so simplified that it's impossible not to understand how to put a movie together, like it's a brilliant book. But all of a sudden, everyone was writing screenplays, and everyone's like, Oh, I can do this. Is so easy. And then you you read a script, you're like, this. You could tell that all they did was take save the cat and made sure that they like, literally, people we're having moments where the character saves the cat. And what that means, for those who don't know Desiree, do you know what that means?

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I'm gonna guess, saves the person in this script.

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No, it means have your leading character do something that makes us like them, like save a cat in the first 10 minutes of the story. Oh, the first time, right? So, like, is, and if you look at every movie, that's usually what happens, is the main character will do something. You're like, oh, that's a good guy, that's a good person, something like that, right? But anyways, so it just don't like, yeah, go ahead and follow, but, but play with it. Don't let it just own you, right? Just like a process. Don't let it own you. Don't think you can't write that first page because you haven't written your outline yet, or you can't write an outline because you have to just start at the script

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so you like you've talked about save the cat. So would you say, then that you have followed these things that you've read over the years? Or have you made up your own process?

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Yeah, great question. My process is pretty much amalgamation of everything I've learned. A big word, thank you. So I've combined like and that's to say it. So, yeah, save the cat. Very cookie cutter, but I in my little kind of and if anyone wants to see my kind of master format, structure, outline template that I have, happily, it'll be in the show notes. Please take it. Use it if it works for you. If it doesn't throw in the garbage, it doesn't matter if it's confusing, let me know, because I've got things on there to very only make sense to me.

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Probably. I wonder if they could also use it for starting a fire.

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They probably could, yeah, because my life is a dumpster fire, but, but it's a little bit save the cat a lot of a writer's journey by Christopher Vogler, the lead process that I shared before, loner, Explorer, activist death, that structure basically what I've learned over time is that my structure is based solely on character. My character structures the entire story. So that's that's my process, and I built it from a bunch, like, pretty much every book on screenwriting I've read, I just kind of like took the pieces that made sense to me, and that's my structure. So that's and that's what works for me, and and I share it with people and say, if it works great, if it doesn't throw it away, because it just doesn't the piece of it, that's the thing to take pieces at work,

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yeah, pull from what would possibly work for you. Maybe you're noticing, hey, I do already do that kind of thing with my process, but I'm going to add this to this with what I

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do make. Oh, that's clearer. I get that your own, yeah? Like you'll notice if you look at my outline, and this is the thing I learned from a writer. Her name is Diana Ippolito, and worked with her about 15 years ago on something, and as we were breaking the story down, she showed me what she does, which is break she breaks everything down in five page or five minute increments. And I was like, it breaks everything down keeping more. Like, this is what happens in the next in these five pages. That happens and then next five, in these five pages, it's about this. Like, it's about, okay, things are getting hard. Next five pages, this is going to be fun and game section. Next five pages, the bad guys are closing in, right? It's kind of like, save the cat stuff, but just broken down in five pages. And I was like, a light bulb went off for me like nothing ever has, because my brain is so it's running at such full speed all the time that when I get to my second act, I've got, like, how do I fill these 60 pages? Like I got to get to the midpoint. What am I gonna like? So then seeing it, and, oh, actually, in these five pages, here we go. And then done now next. It just made my brain work so much smoother,

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which makes sense, because we've talked about this before. You have ADHD, and typically with ADHD, someone who lives with ADHD. I said, ADHD, like a lot of times, can get things done better and more efficiently if you break down larger tasks into smaller,

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yeah, which? And that's the thing. Is, I hate making lists. I hate making little tasks. I hate even in the morning, I'm like the best, my most efficient day is when I make a list of all the things I'm doing. But I hate making a list, because my brain doesn't want to be confined. Don't confine me.

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I love right? But yeah, like today on my calendar, I have nothing nice that's for you,

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right? Because my but you have one

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for me. I actually do. I know you. To fix things in the house. But I don't have a list for me today, which is very unusual. It is unusual. My life is made of lists,

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yeah, but yeah, it's, it's, it's a matter of just doing what works for you, right?

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So you have a note here. What are all these things you have? Okay? So you have different things, yeah?

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These are just different authors that and writers that, well, these are that have shared what their process is, right? So like, for example, Christopher Nolan, he always writes with two computers. Is he's a writer. He's the writer and director of Oppenheimer Batman Begins all the biggest movies, right? So anyways, he big writer and director, and he has two computers. One computer, he does all of his writing on no internet is hooked up to it. The other computer, he has computer with internet, but he can only access research pages.

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So that's kind of what your life is like. What you have to have your life being,

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yeah, I do. I have to lock myself out of the internet when I'm writing, because otherwise my brain is like, oh. And then I'll like, go research something. And then four hours later, I forgot I was researching something, and I didn't even research what I saw, because a banner popped up, or this popped up, or whatever. But that's his process, which makes a lot of sense. And I'm like, Yeah, because, because you need it. So then James Patterson, right? Biggest author, biggest novelist in the world. He writes every single day of his life, 365, days a year. He goes to his office at four in the morning and he writes from four until, I think 10, nine or 10, right? But he locks himself in his office. He locks the door, and there's no internet in his office, so if he has to research stuff, he just writes things down on a legal pad, being like, look this up or look this up,

right? Yeah, but, but that's his process, and holy, he gets stuff done, right? Mark I Smith, he's the writer of, like, twisters and just, like, just tons, tons of movies, Big time, big time screenwriter. And, but he, he's the, he's the guy that said, Never outline, do not outline. Oh, my guy that you heard talk yeah. And I'm like, okay, yeah, you know, fine, great. It works for him. He's like, Well, no, I don't outline. I go. I have my idea. I start writing. And when I hit a brick wall and I'm like, I don't know where I'm going anymore, I'll go back and I'll read what I've written and see where I go. I'm like, Okay, fine, that works for you, right? So that's his process. If you want to try that, try that, right? I mean, that's a great way to, like, make sure you're not, you're not cutting yourself off or doing things that, oh, I need the plot to go this way. So I'm going to make the characters do this. It's a great way of just being free with it, right? And then art and Haas, writing team, they wrote, wanted all the Chicago Fire, Chicago hospital, Chicago, all these, they're huge, right? But I asked them, once, I'm like, do you guys outline? And he's like, No, me and him, never, we never outline our own stuff. Michael writes the first stuff, and then Derek says, I go in and I just play with what he's written. That's how their process works. But he's like, but when we're hired, when we gig out, we have to write an outline. Because they're paying you, they want to make sure they understand. Okay, you're following. This is your outline. Okay, good. So it's like, so if you don't know how to outline and you get a gig, you're in trouble. You might be in trouble, especially like, early on in your career, right? If you're like, like Mark I Smith, I doubt anyone makes him write an outline. Here's \$5 million go write this movie. Who is he? He's a guy wrote twisters, and that's untamed. Yeah? That TV series in the in the National Park, right? So, anyways, so everyone, so all of their processes are a little bit different, right? They do things

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a little differently. No one is better than the next. It's whatever works for you. Exactly.

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Yeah, exactly. So, so that's that's something to keep in mind. The other thing is, how often do you write, I am a big proponent of proponent, proponent, right? Which means I support this writing every single day, if you can. This is the thing is, and I think sometimes, like these gurus are like top level writers that are giving advice, they don't, they forget that as a struggling writer, you don't have free time, usually, and especially in this economy for new writers, you're working like a full time job and a part time job just to pay your bills, then you're going to somehow find time to write, right. But if you can, just like, if you carve out even a half hour a day, right, if you can write three pages, and you should be able to crank out three pages in a half hour an hour, right, if you know what you're doing, even if you're just playing, if you write three pages a day in one month, you'll have finished your spec pilot for sure, or a full feature film. Doesn't mean it's beautiful and ready to go, but you've got pages that you can't, that can't be taken away,

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no, and that you can work with, right? Like Phil, haven't. If you have nothing, you have nothing, you have nothing, right?

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And you're not, what's the point? Yeah, but like, we talk about Phil all the time, right? Phil McSween, and he works full time job. He's a business guy. No, he cranks out, like, a script a month. He just sits down and make sure he's sitting down at his desk and writing anytime he can. That's what will make you a successful writer. But that should be part of your process. I'm bad for it, because I've got so many other things, like for my own stuff, right? Like, I if, like, I've always got jobs, I've always got stuff. Got to. Writing for people, but, but I, I don't make enough time for myself and my own specs, my own stuff, that that keeps me me. You'll always say to me, Scott, are you? When's the last time you've written your own stuff? I don't know. And you're like, because you're not yourself, I can tell right?

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I But I need to get better at saying that to you, yeah,

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but, but I noticed it like, I don't get as excited about life if I'm not writing my own things, right? So, but, but you have to make that time. If you don't make that time like, it has to become a habit if you want to take it seriously, not just a hobby, especially like it novels. Novelist. Novels are different, because whatever it takes 10 years write a novel, you can still publish it and do what you want, but movie scripts like, there's a timeline on certain things, right? And, and it's not designed to be read by people. It's well, it's designed to be read to see if it's but it's designed to be made, yeah, and to be and, and so you have to do, you have to put something in and, and you can't get, like, a rep, like a manager or an agent or anything in the business if you're not cranking out constant material. Because they can't, they make money. They make no money unless you do so if you don't have stuff to constantly be giving them good luck. Try to get a manager right. You have to keep going so sitting down and writing every day. And then I learned this from an old manager of mine. It was like the pearl of wisdom that I always hang on to and pass on to other people, which is more thinking than writing. So many writers are too hard on themselves, thinking, Oh, I just I am not writing pages. I haven't written anything down. Well, have you been thinking about it non stop for five days? Yeah. Well, that's writing thinking. Is writing like you have to process it in your head, just because you're not getting words down, as long as you're getting all that out of your head eventually, then that's part of your process, right? That should be part of your processes. Is not just writing every single thought that comes in your head and like, Oh, here's my first idea. And go. You should be thinking about it, challenging it, make sure that you're not just putting one word after the other, but everything is intentional, right?

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You can also do that too, during anything while you're driving exactly it doesn't it's

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while you're listening to your wife talk. You can secretly be on your phone if she's not looking.

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I don't think that's a wise idea, not a wise idea. You do that to me, and that's one of my biggest pet peeves. Okay?

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So the next, next tip here is, is, okay. So this is a big one, and I noticed this with every single mentorship client I have and every writer that I know that's working on something I always say, Hey, do you want to send me over what you have so far? I'll take a look and just give you my reaction to it, whether it's like, here's a one page synopsis that breaks it down, or here's my detailed outline, or I got my first act. So many writers are afraid to share something until it's done. A lot of the mentorship clients are like, No, I can't. I'll send it. When I have that whole script down, I'm like, Okay, fine, but you're still new at this, and you're moving like, what if on page 27 you go, what direction that I'm saying sense but? But then, like, you share, and you talk about, you brainstorm, and an idea comes up, oh my gosh, this part, what if I go this way? Then you've written a whole script that would have been maybe better had you waited, gone through your process, talked it out or something, and realized, here's a better way to go, right? And so

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say that, like, what if you're like, page 10 in, and then you're like, oh, that just doesn't work. And they've gone and spent all this time writing something that it's like, this doesn't make sense and it doesn't connect.

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Yeah, and that's why I like to write my detailed outline ahead of time before my script, because if there's a hole, or if there's an issue, if there's something that someone points out, it's a lot easier to fix and alter and play with. It's a lot less heartbreaking than having to get rid of 67 screenplay pages, right? But getting outside feedback as you're building your story. I've had so many writing friends, and we talk like, Hey, I this idea. And hey, what do you guys think of this? And here, here's my script. I got 68 pages. I don't know where to go. Can you read it?

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And not even just writing friends. I think anybody that likes movies in general, yeah, oh, for interrupt anyone just Yeah.

28:38

Talk more talking, more thinking than actually writing, right? But always try and get feedback. If you can. If you don't want to, don't though, I'm not saying you must get feedback halfway through your script, no, but be open to it, right? Especially if you're stuck and you're not sure where to go and go to the creative people that you know don't treat it like it's top secret. Okay, that's

28:58

what a lot of people do, I find too, is that they're scared to share because they think that you're going to go and then take it and go and run with it, right?

29:06

Yeah, and it's not going to happen. Like writers are so like, I mean, not to be rude, but like, every writer thinks that their stories and their writing is the greatest and someone's going to steal it. No, they're not. They just want to, like, if they want to read you this, because they want to help you, right? So don't, don't treat it like that. It's, it's just it closes you off, right? That part of the process of keeping everything in and writing in this bubble like you're, you've got this the greatest treasure of the 21st Century, maybe it is, but, but don't treat it that way. But, yeah. I mean, do you want, do you write everything paper and pen, or do you go right to the computer.

29:41

No, you do a little bit of both. I do. Yeah, you used to write on paper a lot more than you do now. I find I don't see you ever writing in paper. Yeah. I mean, I've

29:50

got my journals and stuff, but I've been so busy and I mean, this last year was garbage 2025 can just die, please. I've never had you, and I've never had so many awful things happen. In one year, we lost so many people. Just had one awful thing happen after another, and so I just, I was, like, I did not have even for writing, like, I basically did nothing for myself for the whole year. Did you get what I said? It was a write off. Yeah, it was a write off. Good pun. See, thank you. Pearl of Wisdom there. But yeah, like some if you write everything, write your whole script down on a on a legal pad, and then type it in, like whatever, whatever gets your thoughts flying. I always find that pen on paper, right, is so much more organic than keys on a computer for your brain to process your thoughts out of your brain onto a piece of paper. I just find everything just kind of like your mind just flows more. You know, they both got their, they both got their pros and cons, right, but, but it's just be open to trying new things and then, and then the whole writing team option, like, I've written, okay, so I've always been a writer who writes alone.

30:55

Yeah, this is a, this is a scary thing, so scary. And it's like putting so much trust into another person?

31:02

Yes, so, but the thing is, with the writing team, you have double the ideas. That's why, maybe not don't even writing partner, but just talk to other writers to help build your story. Like, what's wrong? They're not going to be like, Oh, you, you have to give me credit for that piece that you put no, no. They're not going to do that unless they're garbage people and then just don't deal with them. But I, I've tried, I've had writing partners, and every single time I had a writing partner, it failed, except for once, and we wrote a really great script, and it did. It hit second round in Austin. And, you know, got some people, got some people impressed with Julius, or that you did this? No, I, you know, I didn't write shadow diplomat with him. He gave me his story, his life story, and said, Here's, here's what I think would make a good movie. And then I said, Oh, I think, think it needs to be more of a movie this way. You know, I wrote it from there and wrote the actual screenplay. He didn't write the screenplay, but, yeah, it'll work for some people, and it

won't work for others. But only write someone, only write with someone you actually can trust, and that you feel gets you right. Otherwise you're just gonna be batting, you know, butting heads, and it won't be a good

32:04

yeah, we have seen that happen with you. I've like, you've had that happen to where you're just, yep, even someone like, that's not the same

32:11

caliber, yeah, it's like, you feel like you're carrying someone, or you're like, I can't compete with this person. I don't even know what I'm doing. They're amazing. I can't match this, right? I've had that too. So, yeah, so it all comes down to storytelling, right? When you're going to write a story, it should have that same vibe. And I learned this from a writing buddy of mine years ago. His name's Kevin C Jones, and brilliant screenwriter. I'll never forget his one script is just so good. And you know now he's a novelist. He was nominated for, like, the, what was it, the Bram Stoker award, and for new novelist. Like, he's really good. But he said to me, he's like, in his screenplays, I'm like, I don't know why your screenplays are so good. Like, I said that to him, like, I don't get what it is, but I really feel it like, I feel like you're sitting there, you know, across the campfire, and just being like, Hey, come here, come here. Let me tell you a story. That's how it feels. And he's like, That is so weird that you say that, because that's exactly what I tell myself. I'm doing that campfire style storytelling. And I was like, How the heck did that happen? That that's what I picked up, just but, but that's the thing. Is, be a storyteller, whatever your process is, as long as you're telling the story. And every great storyteller that you've ever had someone like when Desiree tells a story, for example, no, when you tell a story, you're okay, so, so if I told the same story, it's very my story would take 23 seconds to tell the story. I saw this lady at the grocery store, and I ended up knowing her from grade three. Okay, that would be my story. Desiree's story was then 27 minutes long.

33:40

And I'll say, into the grocery store. I couldn't find what I was looking for, so I I skipped aisle 234, and five. I went into aisle seven, and then I was halfway down the aisle,

33:51

yeah, and that's that. And then the whole time I'm just like, Uh huh, uh huh, yeah. And then I won't say anything when you pause and you're like, are you listening? I'm like, Yeah, I'm waiting for you to get to the end of the story. But it doesn't matter what your style or preference is, right? Just be a storyteller, because that's what movies and TV are. They're just stories told in a cinematic way. So whatever your process is going to be, you find it and you stick with it, right? Whether you outline or not, whether you use act, you know, like three acts, four, Acts, eight, sequences, whatever makes sense to you, right?

34:24

Just like outline, same with the outline, yeah, right, but the outline format,

34:28

yeah, yeah. However you want to outline, right? Some people just do, like, a one page outline. My my outlines are usually like, 1015, pages. You know what? I use different color coding and you know, it's just someone looking at the process makes no sense to them, but I'm telling a story. But don't get caught up on gimmicks, right? Don't be like, Oh, I read this book and it was like, Oh, this cheesy, whatever the gimmick is. And you think, oh, mistake that. And then that's becomes your new thing. And it's like, you're doing it just because you think it'll be successful, not because it's it helps you be better, right? If it helps you be better, then that's organic. That makes. Sense, but yeah, so many, so many writers, like, oh yeah, I just do this, and it's exactly like this. I'm like, okay, that's why it's not working, right?

35:07

So you have to not you, I think the pages have this. They have to scream. The person who's writing them, yeah, the voice, like we talked about before, right? Has to say, Oh yeah, this is something Scott wrote, yeah. You know, not, not not someone else that you're trying to be. You're never going to be that other person, no, no matter how much you try, because we're all unique people, right? Yeah.

35:28

Like, like, again, you guys, people must think I'm like, obsessed with Phil or something, but like, Phil has such a unique way, right? But, like, okay, so he, so the scene is set in a diner, right? And instead of, like, explaining the diner and all the details of so many writers be like, we go in the diner, and it's, there's garbage here, and he just says, interior nasty ass diner. And it's like, you know that you're in a nasty ass diner and, and no one else would do that, but Phil, right? So, but if you meet, you know, meet Phil, you would know, you're like, yeah, that's something, yeah, but, but it's like that. That's his process. Is infusing those, those quirks, even just in his in his descriptions and his scene headings and yes, and that kind of stuff. So that's, you know, and he does, I don't even know if he outlines, I've never asked him about his process, but I mean, he has his own process, just like everyone else, right? So just, you know, it all comes down to be, be intentional, right? About about what you're doing, why are you writing and that, why is that your process? You know, and can it be better? Always ask yourself that if it's working, then it's working. Try every process until you find one. Mix them together. Is these new writers like this is mainly for new writers that just don't know how to do it yet they just want to know more about the process. Just try every process until

36:44

something works. But maybe, maybe seasoned writers need something fresh and new.

36:50

Yeah, sometimes you get started right, and then I mean, study screenplay structure, study pilot structure, no structure. When you know the structure of what you're doing, your process will form around that, and it'll be easier in the long run. Yeah, like my process begins with character. Now, who is my character, and that's how my process starts. Some people, that's not going to work for certain people, but that's what works for me. So try. You know, the more you inherently

know the structure, the easy it'll be to find your process, and that will help you define what works for you. And if you're if you're generating great material, then you know what works. And if you're not, try something different. Makes sense. Makes sense. All right, I'm gonna go in right, right now. Are you No? Did I inspire you? No, but I did

37:35

say to you the other day, we should maybe write a script together.

37:39

You know why? Because now, when we're watching movies, I know what's gonna happen. Well, no, not necessarily that, but we know. We we say the person's next line, and then most of the time, we're both right that they that's what.

37:56

And a lot of sometimes, we're like, they totally should have said the line. We were thinking that would have been a way

38:01

better line. Yeah, it would have been a better line. So we're gonna write some Hallmark movies, me and Desiree, because those are her favorite at Christmas time. It's so funny, because she loves Christmas Hallmark movies and romance and stuff, but she also loves true story, murder, killing, awful, violent things. It's such a strange mix, right?

38:22

No, it's I know, and it's depending on how I feel, though too that day, if I feel stabby, sassy and sappy, sappy and stabby.

38:30

But Nothing excites you more than watching True Crime stuff I love you. Choose that over anything. Whether it's whether it's doc full documentaries or your Dateline episodes, doesn't matter. You want to watch that stuff. So, you know, it says who? It says a little bit about who you are, yeah. So anyways, we're just gonna take a quick second while you retain that, and we have a little beat here about one of our other services.

38:56

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.

39:39

Okay, in this part of the episode, we always talk about questions. Yes, it has been submitted previously. Yeah, if you want to submit a question, what is should they do? Desiree, they should email us at hello.

39:53

Hello. Isn't me. You're looking for

39:58

Hello. Character, reader, pro.com.com,

40:02

all right, what do we got for questions then Desiree.

40:05

This question comes from Dave, from Alaska. Ooh, Dave, that's far. We're sorry. Live in Alaska. It must be cold right now for sure, thinking, yeah. Dave says, How do I know if each of my characters sound different? I don't know, Dave, do each of your characters sound different? Then, if they do, they probably are different.

40:26

No, I get, I get what he's saying, because on them saying, well, on the page, it's just text, right? You don't know, like in your head, you think character sounds different than the other character, but that you also know, as the writer, how that's being delivered, right, how that character saying that line, someone who's reading it that doesn't know anything about it, they're not going to read it the same way. It's in your head. So it's hard to know sometimes, if they do sound different, best way to do it. Table read. Get some friends together, whether it's over, zoom or whatever. Get some some pizza. Bring some friends in and just say, hey, let's read my script and give each one of them a different character, and see how it sounds. See how it sounds.

41:03

That's a great way to do should the person that had written this script? Should they be part of the reading, or should they just be listening?

41:09

They should just sit back, close their eyes and listen and record it. Another way to do it is just have your computer or program read it to you, because it's the same voice, and then you'll know if every single line sounds like it works, then it's all the same voice. So it's a hard it's probably the hardest thing for a writer to do is understand dialog and voice, but those are a couple ways to figure it out.

41:28

Makes sense? Hey, Scott, yes, I never know how to say this place correctly. I always say. Albert Turkey, there's no t in the word I know. I always is

41:38

that how you spell it? A, I, b, u, Q, U, E, R, Q, U, E, albacore, Queen. That's how I'd say it. Albuquerque. How do you say it? Albuquerque, I say Turkey. What a strange you know, when you look at a word long enough you're like, how did that every like, how did they decide those letters were gonna go together as that?

42:00

But charity knows, because that's where charity Okay, yeah, oh, charity asks. This is core for question two, what's the difference between a character's goal and their motivation?

42:11

Ah, do you want to answer? Do you know

42:14

their goal and their motivation? Nope, you, I'll, I'll send that one to you.

42:18

Scott, well, I just think it's like anything in life, like the goal is something you want to achieve, and the motivation is, why? Why do you want to write? So I am, I don't even know an example, but I am going to clean my upstairs of my house so it is spotless. Okay, that's, that's my goal, to have a absolutely spotless kitchen. What's my motivation? My wife is grouchy, Happy wife, and I want my wife to have a better day. That's my goal. My That's my motivation is to get my wife to be happy, happy wife, happy life. My motivation is, that's my motivation. My goal

42:56

is, no, wait a minute. Yes, your goal is to have the house cleaned. Your motor, your Mo Yeah.

43:00

My goal is clean house. My motive is my wife will be happy, which then will make my life happy, right? And like you better, make your day better. Yeah? So yeah, it's what your character goal is, what your character wants to achieve. The motivation is, why, right? I need to risk my life to get to this place and deliver this thing. Why? Well, my motivation is someone's kidnapped my wife and daughter.

43:20

That might be some good motivation. Yeah, question three is Fatima from California, and the question is, what does it mean to have the escalating stakes?

43:35

Oh, that's a big question. I think sometimes people get confused as as far as, like, what, what an was is, what is an obstacle that escalates and what is a stake that escalates? Right? Because stakes are pretty much the same. So, for example, your wife and daughter are kidnapped, okay? Stakes. The stakes are my wife and daughter and kidnapped. They'll probably die if I don't get this done. That's a pretty those are high stakes, right? The obstacle is not the

same. That's not an obstacle. But, yeah, you're up your wife, and you have to get you have to overcome the obstacle of getting to them.

44:06

But what, what do you need to overcome along the way?

44:08

Right? And how do those escalate? So if those stakes are already really high, okay, well, how do they escalate? Well, it means that every time you do something, those stakes now get worse. Oh, you kidnap you to come here and not tell the cops. So you go there, but you told the cops. Now they see the cops, then they say, Okay, well now I'm going to cut your wife's hand off. Okay, well, now the stakes are even higher, right? Like things keep getting worse. So stakes, the escalating stakes, means that every time something happens, the pressure is higher, the risk of what you're going to lose grows, right? Obstacles will fit in that. Because whenever you overcome an obstacle, there should be another obstacle that's even bigger, then you got to overcome that, and then even bigger, right? In a movie, in any movie, and any TV in it, in life, right? Like, not necessarily, like to keep you moving forward, to go forward. Yes, that's true. Yeah. So, so the Yeah. So escalating stakes just means. Is there a way, you know, is it happening that, that what is at risk gets, gets, you know, more and more and more in danger, kind of thing, right?

45:07

Okay, hopefully that makes sense. Totally. It probably doesn't. But okay, whatever. It's in Scott's brain, and we already know it's messy and chaotic. Yep. Question number four, how much description should I use? And this is from Winston from London,

45:20

what do you think Desiree? What's the answer to this one?

45:24

As much as you need, don't over describe. I think

45:28

I would say as little as possible. Yeah, yeah. I was going through a script with a mentorship client the other day. And beautiful script, wonderful writing, but it read long, and you might hear readers say this sometimes, that even though a script, that script is only like 105 pages, but it read long. And that just means, like, it felt like I was reading more like 120 or 30 page script, or it's like, oh, this average script takes me this long to read. This was another 20 minutes so, and then I was looking at the script, I'm like, I don't get it, because it looks good. It's smooth. There's a lot of white space, vertical writing was moving, but I was just like, there's something about it that was slowing me down, and I couldn't figure it out. So then I said, let's just pick something and go over it. So we go over it, and it's, it's this scene where there's these people, it's a Western and they're, they're waiting, and there's these sounds all foggy, and all of a sudden, these buffalo just come booming through the fog, right? So the buffaloes. The Buffalo exploded

through, exploded through the fog, and started trampling everyone. And this things were happening. So then I read it out loud as and so the bison, you know, a stampede of bison, explode from the fog. I'm like, beautiful sentence, cinematic. We see it. Then the next sentence was something like the the large nose and dark eyes of the curly haired Buffalo's face closed in on the guy, and I was like, but we've, but they've already come through. Well, everyone knows what a buffalo looks like, right? So you don't need to explain unless it's specifically like, that one has a blue eye and it's been haunting him forever, right? But, but if it's so and then it was like, I was like, Okay, so the buffalo explode through the fog. Bam, trample, stamp, they run over everybody as they burst through, right? That was what we needed, not little details of every little thing. So that's the kind of thing you definitely, you know, yeah, you're painting a picture. But is that important? Do we already see that? Just give us what we need to know, right? It's a movie. They're going to shoot it. They don't need that all.

47:26

It's different, more the director that would be deciding on where you zoom in on the camera, exactly?

47:32

Yeah. So you don't think you're directing the camera, but you kind of are, right, and so you don't want to take away their vision. So, so, so that's an example, right? Try and just give us only what we need, but in an impactful way, and that's what I say. And that's what I said to him too. Is like using great words, you know, explode, trample, stampede, hoofs, crushing and cracking, you know, like it was great descriptive words, so we didn't need to see all the little details. So makes sense? Yeah, it's a good balance.

47:55

Yes. Scott, yes. We just went through the process, uh huh, of what we do typically for our podcast? Yes, and I hope that the process that you learned about writing was helpful to the listeners. I do

48:10

too, and if you did find it helpful, share it with your friends and other colleagues and other writers. Subscribe. Subscribe to it. Yes, we are going to be gearing up here in the next little bit to have this be a audio and a video podcast. So you will all get to see Desiree and her nice outfits every day that you know. And you'll get to see, you know, how lucky I am and how unlucky she might be, and

48:38

basement. Yeah,

48:39

watch for that. But yeah, see

48:41

me saying, Scott, hurry up and all my

48:47

you have to be like, don't be on your phone researching stuff while I'm talking. For the whole episode, I'll

48:53

have to look more interested you guys. What am I going to do? Because right now I'm just like, this is interesting.

49:00

So if you want to ask us any questions or give us ideas, love to hear what they go well, I'd love to hear what, what some subjects are that you guys want us to podcast about. You know, get out of my brain and talk about something that that's specifically different.

49:16

And they can email, Yeah, hello@scriptreaderpro.com

49:19

yeah, and check out our website. We have everything that a writer needs to have for services. So check us out, because we are all about helping writers craft wonder one page at a time.