

## Ep #55: Making The Most Of The Page

0:00

On this episode, we're talking all about making the most of the page. Yes, we're gonna have some examples and tips and tricks on what really works

0:07

well. So listen in.

0:11

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.

0:24

Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, you've done this before. You need to be more original. You need to listen to the episode we've that we've made about originality. Okay, I'll go back and do that. Come up with an original entrance instead of,

0:41

Okay, start over. Just do your Hey. How's that original and unexpected? Hi everyone. I'm Scott from Script Reader Pro.

0:59

I'm the poor sucker that has to look at this space,

1:03

otherwise known as the host and his wife.

1:06

Hey, I'm kind of not excited about doing a video of us soon instead of just podcast, yeah, we're not excited.

1:13

We're gonna be moving to some video podcasting as well. So that'll be interesting. You guys

1:17

want to know why? Why I wasn't asking you, I was asking listeners. Oh, let me, we'll ask him again. We'll see what they say. Do you guys want to know why?

1:29

Hello, why are you gonna tell them? Why is anybody there? You can tell them why?

1:35

Hello, it's me. Are you gonna tell them? Yes, I'm gonna tell you guys why I am nervous. Because not nervous, but kind of a little bit annoyed. Why? Because, guys, right now I can come down to my pajamas. I can have my hair looking anywhere wanting to look,

1:58

but you never do. I can you never come down. I sometimes am in pajamas, but you're always done up, and your face and your hair is always done. So I don't know what I'm

2:06

the one who should worry. The main thing is, I'm worried about remembering that I'm on video and not going to look at you with a stupid face like you are so dumb. But what is your issue? But listeners get to experience that as well, and I'm not going to be able to do, like, my little hand signal I'm doing now, like, stop talking, hurry up, get to the point, and I'm not gonna be you still

2:31

will, though. Instead, you'll like, deadpan, look at the camera and tilt your head, like, is he? Can he just be finished already?

2:38

Well, and we've got to be like, on like, what happens if there's an interruption and then we're like, mid video?

2:46

Well, it's not live, it's recorded.

2:48

Sorry in advance. You guys, hey, Scott, yes, I don't think people want to hear me rambling and feeling sorry for myself about this, because there are bigger things in the world.

2:56

Yes, there are, yeah, especially screenwriting. Oh, is

2:59

that what we're talking about?

3:01

That's what we're here for. Yeah, I'm part of the team here, one of the readers, one of the mentors, writer as well. I'm here to try to enlighten you, try to pass on some some something that comes across as maybe wisdom or knowledge or something like that, or that he

3:14

thinks is wisdom and knowledge or something like that. But guys, my name is Desiree. If I haven't mentioned, did I even mention my I don't think you did. I am the host of the script of your

pro podcast. This is my co host, Scott. Yes, you've already been introduced to Yeah, I'm Scott. Hey, we always start the podcast the same way. Yes, we talk about something we've seen. Have we talked about this one before?

3:38

No, we have not. We just finished it. It's called run away, and it is a new Harlan Colbin limited series on Netflix. Oh, I remember. Just remembered.

3:49

Now, I wonder if there's a way to check to see how many times in the last 54 podcasts I've said I remember very few I forgot, or I think there's only a few where you're like, I have no idea what this title is. Okay, well, now that you said, but you just now you didn't know what it was. I remember, I said, I remember

4:11

once I said, it's the new Harlan Coben one. You're like, oh, right, yeah, it was good. That was good. We talked, we talked. I talked about him a lot. It's almost like you have a crush on I do. He's amazing. But all about secrets. And I saw that, do

4:25

you and Harlan have a secret that you're not telling me?

4:27

I wish, but I just saw that he has a maestro course, BBC, Maestro course. There was a thing that came out a while ago called masterclass, where it was like different professionals in different fields had, like, a masterclass series you could buy and go through, and a lot of screenwriters and stuff did it. But now there's one called BBC Maestro. It's the same kind of thing, but Harlan Coleman has one, and it's basically his, his like, masterclass Maestro Class on how to write thrillers. And I was watching it in one of, you know, in the preview, or whatever. And he's like, give. He's like, we'll talk about secrets, how you got to give everything. One of your secret. Every single character a secret. And, and that's what I always say is so great about his stuff, is that everyone has a secret. And a lot of times it doesn't tie into the plot, but it makes them shifty. So anyways, it was really 50. It was really fun. There was lots of secrets. He's like, the master of, like, the double twist. This one had like a triple twist, like, it was

5:16

crazy Drupal twist. What's a five times twist?

5:20

Quinn, Quint, a quinty twist, I don't know, quintup, not quintuplet, yeah. Well, Quint would be the five but Quinn a Quint twist. That sounds dirty. Anyways, yes, it was good. Lots of twists, lots of turns, really like crazy ending. It reminded me, and you probably won't even remember this. Yes, I do remember, oh, it reminded me of a series that we call, watched, called behind her eyes, and it was about like, Don't spectral viewing, and they would leave their body, and then, like, souls

got swapped. And but it was, it was a crazy twist, and just like, it reminded me of that. So, hey, hey, yeah, it

6:03

this one, though, if I get to have a talk, if I get to talk this episode, because you normally don't let me talk at all, and you're doing some weird thing with your hand, which, this is a good example of what I mean during the live show that I'll just then be like, Okay, why are you doing that with your hand? I'm gonna have to say, that's

6:22

how I keep my mind going. What would happen? Anyways? What were you cut off? I don't know. What were you gonna say?

6:29

I was gonna say, this was a really good show, but it was a little bit confusing for me. And I'm pretty smart, I think I'm gonna think I'm pretty smart. Yeah, people who think they're smart aren't always smart.

6:40

The most confusing part was when Desiree looked over at me and she said, weird actress looks like who she saw. She really kind of looks like Mini Driver. And I was like, well, she is Mini Driver. And you're like, What? No. And she had to pause it and look her up and make sure she was in the show. She was exactly like mini drivers. She had mini drivers face.

7:08

Her hair was different. It was style different. She had a new hairstyle.

7:12

Oh, anyways, yes, recommend it. I recommend all Harlan stuff, but, but this one, this one was good. You're crushing on Harlan. Yeah, it's one of those ones you got. You got you got to kind of watch back to back. If you have too much time between episodes,

7:24

you're gonna, yeah, that's what it was. We didn't even have a lot of time between episodes. It was very little time.

7:28

And I was like, I watched it in like, two days.

7:31

Yeah, that we, we typically don't binge No, Hey, Scott, yes, we're talking about making the most of the page.

7:37

Yes, that's what we're talking about today, because it's sad. It's about writing and it's about pages. That's what we're going what we're gonna go over. So we got lots of examples to read through. Desert isn't even know this because she never

7:49

prepares herself for these. But I come as I come as prepared as I need to.

7:52

We're going to be going over some pages just to show some examples on what really works. What people mean when they say vertical movement down the page. Some produce screenplays that have a lot of text on their first pages. So we're gonna, yeah, so grab your pencil and your notepad and check your show notes, because we've got some some pages and stuff to read in your show notes,

8:13

if you remember to put the show notes in, oh, I will.

8:17

I never forget things. Okay, so there's, there's so much advice out there on how much or how little should be on a screenwriting page, right?

8:26

But, Scott, I'm sure you're gonna tell us, tell you what, how much there should be on a page.

8:33

No, I'm not. That's what you I thought that's your job. But the biggest thing to remember is, less is more, you know, and there's always going to be contradictions to the rule, exceptions to the rule,

8:45

especially with decor styling. What I know people are wondering, what the heck come from guys, because that's all that I have on my mind lately, is, is minimalism in our home? Yeah, less is more, less is more. Less is more in a lot of in a lot of areas, less of DES is sometimes more it is less of Scott.

9:09

There's like nothing if it's less of me, there's so little lesser than less, yes, but less is more. A few things to kind of keep in mind, yeah, like and some pages will be really thick, and you'll see produced screenplays that are really, like, thick pages of, like, big, huge paragraphs of text, right? And whenever, and I sometimes you'll say to writer, oh, you probably don't want to do this, because that's a lot, and it makes, it makes a reader want to kind of skip ahead, and they're saying, Yeah, but look at this screenplay did it, and this screenplay did it, and you're just like, okay, then go ahead. You know, do what you want. I'm not saying not to, but if you can have less words on a page, it's usually going to help you. You don't want to use big words that you

don't need to Nothing's worse than having this. There's nothing wrong with a beautiful, eloquent sentence, but if it's using. Big words that don't really seem to make sense, or we have to look up. Yeah, reader has to pause and look up. Or even just like it's it makes a sentence really clunky to get through it. It reminds us that this is a that we're reading something, and you want to make them, make a reader forget their reading. You want to make it easy for them to just see it coming alive in their head. So using small words, short words, not using big, long, complicated words that don't need to be there. Use them if it's like a character's dialog, and they're like, super smart, and then that's the way they talk. But try and keep that stuff to a minimum in your in your script.

10:33

Would you say that a movie like the Titanic uses like, a lot of stuff, like with the length of it, and just thinking back, especially in the last scene, scenes, it would have been all description, right?

10:49

Well, yeah, there's a, yeah, that's a good point. You know, lots of description doesn't mean it needs a lots of work, a lot of words. You know, a big, huge paragraph can be broken down into quick and effective shots. You know, if you read a screenplay that's been written by its director, it's probably going to be a lot different than someone who isn't directing the story, because the director's vision is in there, and they probably put more than needs to be there. But yeah, you want to, you want to do what you can to showcase your skill at describing something in as few words as possible. Okay, right? You want to have a nice balance on the page of white space and text, so when someone looks at the page, it doesn't look like a book, that it's more there. It's more, you know, fluid. There's a lot of a lot of space to pull your eye quickly down the page.

11:37

Yeah, there are examples, though, of movies that or scripts that would have be heavy on the on the page, yeah, and they probably work really well some classes, right? But you're not saying to not do it all the time. You're just saying that there's a time and a place depending on what you're writing and what the scene is on when to write?

12:01

Yeah, it depends. And that's the thing is, don't just write a big, huge chunk paragraph of stuff just because you want to. If you have a reason for have a writing a paragraph too.

12:11

Maybe, maybe you want to be more of a novelist. Yeah, true. Yeah. If you're just like, Oh, I love writing this description, I love the, you know, having all these adjectives. Of adjectives Is that what's a descriptive word? Yeah, an adjective? Yeah, no, adjective is what's a word? What's the word for the action verb? Oh, adjective. I was right, you guys. I hated that Adjective. Verb, grammar sucks. Oh, anyway, do you know what I'm saying? Yes, yeah. Am I making any sense?

12:46

No, you're making sense. Because that's the thing. Is, you have to remember that a screenplay is designed to be shot, and a big, huge, lengthy paragraph doesn't necessarily make it easy to shoot. Sometimes you'll see, I'll hit a paragraph and I'll be, oh, that's a big chunk of words. But then you go through and you're like, I think understand why the writer did it that way. Not the whole script is written that way, but there'll be certain pieces because it's like, keying in on the emotions, or how that character might be processing something, you know, but we're gonna, we've got, I've got some examples to show how, how different styles can actually work. So if it works, don't, don't worry about the rules, right? There's always Oh, but the rules say this, and the rules say

13:23

that people argue whatever way that they think is the right way, that's what they're going to argue towards, what they think is the way it needs to be done.

13:30

Yeah, exactly like Christopher Lockhart, who runs William Morris. He's their big development guy. He talked about the first time he read the screenplay Nightcrawler, right? Which turned into a big movie with Jake Gyllenhaal, and there's no slug lines, no scene headings at all in that screenplay, okay, which is slug line again, like interior, okay, yeah, right, like the actual setting of the scene. And he's like, he was like, when I read it, I didn't even notice, because the writing was so good and the visuals were so good. So yeah, there's rules, and there's rules that don't necessarily apply based on a specific style or project or voice. So, you know, don't break every rule. Don't deliver a screenplay with 250,000 words in it, because that's just, that's a book, right?

14:14

So I think the whole point is for the person who's reading or see not reading, reading or viewing the movie. I guess it would be reading the script. Is to make the person see things. That's the most important thing, you would say, is to be able to see what they're reading, because it's going to be a movie, right? So they're going to want to see it, even though they're reading the words, they're going to want to see what it would look like produced.

14:41

Basically, yeah? And it's not just about make us see it, but you got to make us feel it right. And that's the balance talked about that with emotion and stuff, yeah, but when you're reading it, like I always say to writers, anyone, anyone can make someone you know, anyone can write something to make someone see what you need them to see, right by using your descriptive words. But not everyone can make you make. A reader feel what they need to feel right? And that's the big difference. And sometimes more words can be effective that way. Sometimes it can hurt it. So just a couple examples here that we're going to look through. The first one, and these are a metro client of mine was going through a program, and she just wanted you know she had this assignment that she had this assignment that she had to do, and she just wanted to see if it was working. And so I said I'd love to use this an exam as an example of how clean a page can look just by looking at it invites you in. So in the show notes, you're going to bring up the document called fortune teller, and me and Desiree are going to read through this. Yeah,

we're gonna Okay, So Desiree, you play, you play Sylvia if you want, and I'll play madame. Matriosh, matriosh, matriosh.

15:50

It sounds very Ukrainian,

15:52

very current. Okay, so here we go. So, and this is, you know, it's just one page, okay, so fortune teller interior, fortune teller parlor. Day, a dark, cramped front room of an old house, heavy damask curtains, curios and beaded table lamps, a table with a crystal ball sits at the center of the room. Incense smoke blurs the air. Great description of an entire room. We can see it, right? You can see, you know, where we are. It's dark, it's it's kind of creepy. It's, you know,

16:21

see the smoke in the air, because, you know it's dark, so, you know the where it's like, dusty, Smokey, almost, where the smoke lingers in the air, yeah?

16:31

And that, like, just like the heavy damask curtains. I don't know what damask is, but I feel word, yeah, but I feel like, I feel a heavy curtain. I feel like, okay, that's dark, it's shrouded. It's got to be, right? So anyways, that's a great, you know, it's a four, four line paragraph, right? Nice and nice and tight, but it, there's no more other description. Needed a really good job. So then Sylvia 26 bookish with tortoise shell glasses. Hey, looks like you and a Jackie O boostley booty. See, that's a word I'm like, I don't know what that is. So that kind of trips me up. And thinks, Okay, I don't know what that is, but I'm not gonna look it up. It's a jacket. So a jacket thrown over a t shirt, which there's a nice contrast there, right? If it's like a fancy jacket and T shirt, steps into the room and sneezes loudly.

17:13

Ah, hello. Is anyone? Yes.

17:19

Come. Come. Please. Please sit. Madame matroska speaks in a gravelly pan Slavic accent, and we realize that she and her cat are camouflaged seamlessly into her surroundings.

17:30

Oh, I didn't you were there the whole time.

17:33

Sylvia sneezes again. Madame Matroska slaps a box of tissues on the table. Elbow your sneeze, please. Madam M is not young, immunocompromised. Sylvia takes a tissue and blows her nose.

17:46

I'm sorry, the incense is very strong.

17:49

Must have incense. The spirits demand it. They insist. Madame matroika sets a bottle of hand sanitizer on the table for the palm disinfect, please. Because of the covid, Sylvia dutifully pumps some hand sanitizer onto her hands. So it's accent changed quite a bit. Well, yeah, I'm not good at playing a Slavic old lady.

18:14

But thinking of your old you were thinking of Kitty, weren't you

18:18

kitty in Vancouver? Oh, my old landlady, yeah, no, Kitty's thinking of her boyfriend in his half, half housecoat,

18:28

smoking, smoking in the hallways crossed.

18:32

So it's just, it's just a good example of a clean page, right? That this, this is what, when you say there's a good balance of white and text, white space and text. It's just clean. It's smooth. The visuals are tight. There's not any description that isn't needed, right? We see the table. We hear the tissue box slam down. We have the sanitizer slam down. It tells us extra stuff. This girl's sick. Something's going on. I love the idea of how the madam speaks, and she's just, she's just in the shadows there. She's standing there with her cat. She's been there the whole time. So it's just a good example of, you know, moving smoothly and effectively into a scene. So works really well.

19:10

Anything that doesn't work well on this page, well,

19:12

just, I think what tripped me up, right? The word, the description, you know, what kind of jacket it is, you know, but Damascus, I didn't know what that is, but heavy damask curtains that just made me still feel something and understand something.

19:24

For me, it was her name, because I was like, how do you pronounce that? And it's like, I wonder if there's a way that you could use a name that still is, like Slavic, but that is maybe a little bit easier with a little bit less letters Yeah, or

19:39

shorter or easier to say, Yeah, because in your head, even though you're not speaking it out loud, when you read it in your head,

19:44

you are, and I'm still like, is that how you say it? That's what tripped

19:48

me up. Yeah. So it anyways, that's just an example. I thought that was, that was clever, yeah. So always remember that the script is supposed to be shot, right? I think this stuff. An effective job of that. She's not over flowery in the writing, not being excessively literary on the page. All that stuff is only going to be removed when they get to shoot it, right? And so you're trying to deliver something that can be shot tomorrow, that no more development is needed, right? That's a great way to showcase that you know what you're doing and you understand the assignment, right? Vertical, writing is also showcased on that page. The it's a balance of dialog and action. Even the action, you've got lines that aren't all going across the page, some of them are going halfway across the page.

20:34

You know, that's what vertical means, that it keeps your eye going down. It almost to me, looks like a Christmas tree. Okay, no, do you know what I mean? Yeah, yeah. About a shape of a tree, if you were to draw a tree as a kindergarten kid, yeah? And you're drawing it with it out, yeah, and out and out and out.

20:54

Yeah? Good. Good analogy. I like it look.

20:57

Make sure your page looks like a Christmas tree if you want

21:00

that's it. That's our podcast, guys. Yeah, that's your note, some tinsel, some popcorn, and you're good. Yeah, it's sold. So, so yeah, it's just, it's a good example of that for people who don't quite know what that vertical writing means, whereas, if it's really big paragraphs, it's pulling your eye across the page, back and forth, back forth, back forth, because there's so much to take in that would be more of a shrub, sure, yeah, yeah. Or a bush or no, but hedge? Do you see what? Yes, I see interesting.

21:30

Draw a Christmas tree on on that particular page and included in the show notes. I can do that, sure.

21:37

All right, let's not so, but but vertical writing, yeah, but at the same time that doesn't, you know that's a good example, but it doesn't mean that you can't have a page that is mostly action and description and large paragraphs, like Titanic as an example, or this example we're going to use right here. I have an example here. If you can just move three pages ahead, Desiree, I certainly

can. You will see it. You'll know it when you see it. This is this became quite a controversial page. When this script first came out, everyone was like, well, we're told we're not supposed to do anything like this. So how is this possible? Why did this work? Why did someone even read this script when they started? So it's called the sound of metal, and I'm not going to read the whole page, but we're just going to go over. We're just going to go over this first paragraph.

22:26

This is also coming from someone who does not like reading. I do not like reading, so the second that I see something like this, I get a bit of anxiety in me.

22:35

Well, me too is a reader. I see this, and I'm like, and the first thing I think is, oh, I surely were, I sure hope the entire script is not written.

22:43

I think I look at it and I think that's a lot of words. I'm thinking

22:47

this is going to take me five hours to read. Okay, right? And the whole script isn't like this, but this first page is, but then when you read it, I'll just read it. We'll read it. We'll all read it together. Okay, it's the one that's called sound of metal. So he hears heavy feedback building and squealing. Interesting way to start a page, right? We have no visuals yet, and it's saying that he hears heavy feedback. So it definitely puts us in the experience of this is the character we're with. This is the point of view we're in. So interior, club, stage, night, harsh white lights illuminate Ruben, 40 beady eyes, punk like weathered boyish face and tattoos everywhere. He's waiting intensely for the beginning, for it all to start. He looks up and his focus locks in tight on Lou, an assured freak creature dressed in black with an air of royalty about her. The loop of her sound grows guitar pedals and thin synthesizers lay on the stage floor as she looks to Ruben with a suddenly manic intensity. She picks up her she picks up her beat up some of it. Yeah, she picks up her beat Oh, her beat up. See, I would have put a dash there in the beat up. She picks up her beat up Telecaster and strikes a chord with surprising menace. She stomps on her Looping Pedal. The sound hisses low, wild and bracing, Reuben starts and waits, stares and waits, poised. He can almost taste her sweat. She flashes a quick glance toward him, and Reuben unleashes, bringing the sticks down upon the drums with pure demonic ecstasy. Lou leans in toward the microphone, relishing the moment her desperate and distorted scream fills the hall. The whites of Reuben's eyes flash as if igniting an erotic charge, this glorious being merging with him. Sweat drips from Reuben's hair and his eyes burn in an endless climax.dot.or. Pain. So what do you think does

24:34

next script you'd stop? I'm sorry I would. It's a lot too, definitely a lot, and I'm already slightly lost, and, yeah, it's a lot, it's a lot of description. For me, for reading a

24:52

script, I would think I was reading a book honestly. I would, I would honestly think that it is written well. It's written well, I mean, but. Stood out to me. And there's just like, there's some really great descriptions that make me understand his state of mind. Like he merging with him, erotic charm, yeah. Like he bring, bringing the sticks down upon the his drums with pure demonic ecstasy. It's like, okay, I can see and understand this guy. This is everything to him, right? Takes him

25:18

over, suddenly manic intensity.

25:21

And then, like, you know, like, yeah, an endless climax or pain. It's like, okay, we really get it, but I don't, as per me personally as a reader, I would not need that much to understand that.

25:33

That could have probably been some depth in about four lines. It could have

25:38

been but it could also be broken up, like at the end of the end of the third line. For a tall to start, I What? Why not put a space there? Have a new paragraph. He looks up and his focus locks in, and then a new paragraph. When we start talking about her, right? The sound hisses low, wild, like it could have still been broken up and pulled her eye down the page, right? I don't know. I actually don't know where the script, if it was like a spec sale, if it came out of nowhere, if it was like it was like through, I don't know, but it surprises me to see a script with this much on the page. What is this movie? It's called the sound of metal, and that's what it is, yeah. And it's about a drummer and his he got nominated for an Oscar, and yeah, like it was a big movie

26:19

they get now, though, the things nominated for Oscars, it's like they've gone from being really great nominations to now being like, I don't want to say eccentric, but do you know what I'm saying? Like, almost like,

26:32

it's very different, like, for the Golden Globes this year, I didn't see half the movies that were even nominated for different things, right? There's which is great because a lot of independent stuff is getting, stuff from other countries, and things are getting nominated, which is good, but, yeah, it's different than it used to be. Different. Yeah, it's different than it used to be. So that's just an example of different styles. And if you want to go with this style, go with it. The risk these days is that a lot of readers are just jaded, or they're overloaded, or they're being replaced with AI. I wonder if this was loaded into an AI coverage system, what it might say about that first page, right? So a lot of times that would be interesting to know. A lot of times it's the content and the context and exactly what's there. And anyways, they're making a point with it. You know, it is effective to certain degree, but it could have been effective the other way too. So there's no way

to say if it's right or wrong. It'll work for some people, like any other script and we're will not work for others.

27:27

I get it looking at this though, you like we read that first section, but in the show notes, if you're actually following along with the script, the rest of the page does not get much better.

27:38

It's the same, yeah? But about as you flip through the script, it this doesn't happen again.

27:42

This is the only time it happens. Yeah, pretty much see, and that's the problem. Is for someone who only wants to read two or three pages, this is a problem. Well, it might be, but it might no it is, to me, it would be, because it's like, you want your first page to be the best page, and then I see this, and it's like, okay, what am I expected to read

28:02

the rest of that's what, that's what I said when I was see a page like this, I think, oh, gosh, is this what the whole script is going to be like? And then I would quickly flip through it, and then see, like, Oh no, it isn't okay. And then I would settle in, but, yeah, I mean, you can't argue with it. It's sold and it was made. And right. So that's the thing. People will point to certain contradictions and say, well, this worked. And it's like, okay, yeah, it did, but Yeah, who knows? Who knows where it got its juice from, and that kind of thing. So, all right, yeah, so that's an example of that. Another example is from the first place page of challengers. We'll see that in the show notes as well. We haven't seen this one yet the movie. Yeah, no, we have not. I've watched the movie. You have not watched the movie, but it was a big one as well. It sold, was on the blacklist, sold Zendaya, Zendaya, Zendaya, Zendaya, she got involved. It got made. But it's an interesting choice there again. It's a lot of words on the page, but I wouldn't say this is excessive, no, because it's broken up exactly the kind of the unspoken rule is, try to not have any ear paragraphs go over for four lines, right? And so we've got 446364, it still has a decent balance, right? But this one's interesting, just how it starts, right? A Donaldson, 00, P, swag, 00, we know we're in a tennis court because that's we. Most people will know that that's that's how tennis scoring looks. But then we're in a tennis court in New Rochelle, late afternoon, evening. Tashi Donaldson, 31 black, a former player wearing sunglasses, sits looking out at the court, where two men stand across the net from one another, looking like they are, almost like they're about to fight to the death. Now I didn't know that Tashi is a woman. Neither did I. I don't know if Tashi is a female's name or not. I've never heard that name, but it doesn't say anything. Doesn't say her at all. So I couldn't tell there if it was a man or a woman. First of all, I.

30:00

Um, why did they do that? I don't know. No, like

30:03

Tashi was a female name, I don't know. But that's not typical, is it to not have usually you will say if it's or you will use some kind of pronoun in the description or in that action. I'm sure that does after but then Patrick Zweig, 31 Jewish scrappy, ranked 271, in the world. That's a great line, because it tells us he's good, but he's not great, right? Wears a mishmash of clothes from different companies. He's got no sponsorship deal, though. He has haphazardly iron to his shirt the logo of random Italian company impato. So this is interesting, because I

30:36

like that, because it makes it seem like he's sloppy and he's showing up, but he's doesn't have a lot going for him, yeah.

30:44

And, I mean, you know, like he's got no sponsorship deal. Well, that's not something the audience understands, because it's written for the reader, but so normally you don't do that, but that just adds to the voice. I thought,

30:55

I thought that's just character too. It makes you think, what kind of person this guy? Yes, and

30:59

then we don't know that he's put the logo that he's haphazardly ironed it on his shirt. We can't see that by seeing a logo. We don't know he put it there, right? But it just really sets an understanding of who this guy is. And it's like, oh, I want him to win. That's what immediately thought, I

31:13

thought, I thought, I want him to get some clothes that match. Yeah,

31:18

true. Then we go, come on, yeah. But it shows that he, I think for me, it shows that he's more he's more worried about his game than he is all the other stuff. So he's, he's a scrapper, right? Says that then art Donaldson, 31 wasp. I had to look up what Wasp was when I first read this, because you always hear that, oh, is a wasp. It's waspy, or they're wasps from from the Hamptons. I've never heard that white, Anglo Saxon person is what it stands for, so that they would call kind of like white, rich people back in the day. I don't like that right there. That takes me out, but that's just, that's just a term, right? So, but yeah, you would be like, what's a wasp? Why is it Wasp, right? And I even have to look it up. I mean, I've heard it before. I just, I knew what kind of what it meant, like, what it was referring to. I didn't know exactly what the words meant. So third one, wasp, good looking, dressed in pristine uni glow. What's a UNIQLO? I don't know, but that's a Q, not a G. UNIQLO. Let me look. I don't know. Look it up for you. Look it up is the biggest men's tennis star in the US that the US has seen in a generation. Okay? I don't know how we see that, but it tells the reader his shocking presence at this rinky dink tournament is the sole reason why the modest venue is packed with locals, tourists and anyone living in the vicinity of the New Rochelle of New Rochelle who was even remotely interested in tennis.

Okay? So that entire descriptive paragraph the audience in the seats will not get any of that you can't shoot, that you can shoot the people that are packed in, you know, a standing room only that the bleachers are filled, but there's 173 other people standing around in awe of this guy, like Something like that tells me, tells me, as an audience member, like it shows me this, just everything about this one tells me what I need to know about him without showing me, whereas the previous one showed me, yeah,

33:11

it takes you off the page, because it's like, mixing it up too much.

33:16

It just yeah, like it, yeah, okay. It tells us, tells us kind of what, what the other guy told us about the other guy, but the other guy just had more to him. It was more substance, right? Then the next one. This is the final of the 2019 Phil's tire town Challenger and ATP 80 professional tennis event, lowest level of the tournament of the man of the men's tour. Why are you telling us this? Right? I'm like, Okay, again, there's other ways to interesting information, right? Like other ways, Phil's tire town challenge, okay, that tells me it's a pretty low level. But why? Why not just say the banner, the banner on the fence next to tennis court, says 2019 Phil's tire town challenge. You like, oh, gosh, what kind of tournament is this? Right? Yeah, so, I mean, and again, Kent falta went on the blacks list. It sold. People got through the page, and we're like, okay, I want to keep going. But to me, I was like, Okay, I don't get the choice. I just, I didn't understand the choice the way we're being vetted, the information choice

34:11

either this is, I looked up the name brand, yeah, the unit glow. What's the point?

34:19

It's a turtleneck.

34:21

It's just normal, looking close, nothing spectacular. Why did we need to know? That is my question. I don't know. Did they sponsor, I think

34:30

probably be. I mean, for me, when I reached that, when I read that, dressed in partisan uni glove, even though I didn't know it, I was like, Oh, he's rich. Oh, he's he wears top and stuff. That's compared to the other I think it was to compare to the other guy. The other guy's mishmashed in his clothes with an iron on thing. This guy's outfit is pristine. He's the top men's tennis guy in the world.

34:49

There's other names, yeah, you could use it, or more known is my point.

34:53

He's dressed head to toe in Nike or something, you know, like, it could have been that too. But I think it's just trying to make this guy a little more unique than other. People will be seen, right? So that works for me. Then we go to on every available surface, there are banners with the name of the local chain of auto shop sponsoring the event, which why had just said, why not put a banner up? Why did we need that previous one? We're getting that right. We're almost getting it twice. Yeah. Out in the parking lot, a guy sells merch with art's personalized logo to the side of the court, a goofy looking trophy sits waiting for the victor, an anthropomorphized tire holding a tiny tennis racket. Anthony, when you take something that is that is not a person that has legs, and give it legs like Zootopia, right? Animals that are running around like people, so it's a tire that's like a person holding a tiny tennis racket giving a thumbs up. Okay, so it's cheesy. That's still a lot. There's a lot of detail for a very small thing like, okay, so whoever wins part, right? For a small piece, yeah, and then, you know, aside from an oversized check for \$7,200 the winner today receives a measly 80 ranking points. But you wouldn't know it. Looking at art Patrick and Tashi spaces, they all seem to suggest that this is about something much more than tennis. Again, how does the audience going to see that the winner today receives a measly 80 ranking points if you're if Okay, and this is an again, right? It's hard to say that though this is wrong, because it's not necessarily wrong, but it goes against so much of what makes sense to me as a reader and a writer, we're told, Do not put stuff on the page that you can't show, right, that can't be shot. Don't give us stuff the only, the only the reader gets to the audience doesn't so if, if you if the audience needs to know that they get a measly 80 ranking points, have someone in the audience say, You know what? These guys get measly 80 points. Or there's like a local newscaster, whoever wins today gets \$7,200 check and 80 points up on there. Like, this trophy and this trophy, like, yeah, like something that is active, like this. Just like, information, information, information. Right then the umpire talks, speaks up Donaldson to serve art goes into into his service motion right before he tosses the ball, he places it for a second perfectly in the hole on the neck of the racket? Okay? Yeah, you're telling us how he does it, right? So for me, I was like, Okay, get get going. Can we see? Is he good? Is he not like? And why is she watching like? Do they look at her? Do they see her? Are they connected in some way? Like, there's like, there's so much on here that could have been done in a quarter of a page, right? That's not them. It's not I have a problem, but for me, I would that would if I was giving notes on this, that would kind of be my thing. I'd say it's very visual. You're telling us a lot as a reader, but it's hard to understand how this translates into something we need to shoot. It's It's wasting words, is what I would essentially say. We don't need these many words, let's get moving, right? That that would be what I'm and just like, oh, well, Scott doesn't know what he's talking about, because this was sold. And, yeah, fine. That's why I say Fair enough. It got on the blacklist. Got sold a lot of times. The Blacklist is, you know, very political thing. This, the writer of this was not some spec writer out in the middle of nowhere. He was someone else's he was another screenwriter or showrunners assistant. And so certain things help projects get moving. But for me, that's kind of my reaction to that. Do you

38:06

think that that's also that it gets reaction and gets made and stuff? Do you think that's a one of type situation, well, where it's like, yeah, most of the time you should probably follow what screenwriting is all about and what the process is and what the layout is, yeah,

38:23

you should, like, that's the thing is. So, okay, so Zendaya gets this script, right? I guarantee Zendaya wasn't pitched the script of the writer, and she picked it up and then read it. She was probably told it was about before she even read the script by her people, right? Like, I don't know, don't quote me, but it's like, Oh, hey, here is a, this is a highly sexually charged screenplay about these two tennis players and this other tennis player that one used to be involved with, and they get in this kind of like sexual relationship. And it has themes of, you know, LGBTQ and all these things and and it's sexy, and that most likely was the pitch to get it read right. So it's a lot, it's hard to say a lot of the times, how a project gets legs, how it gets to people, is it the script itself? Is it the actual content? Is it? Well, whatever, right? But that, you know, take it for what it is. Have your opinion as you read through it. I always look at something and think, Okay, I'm not going to read through and say, This is great just because I know it's sold. Or, Oh, this is great because this person wrote it. I just like, I go on any screenplay, I just go in completely unbiased to read it and just give my honest reaction. And that would be my honest reaction. Again, it's sold that, you know, but I talked to other screenwriters about this, and they're like, Yeah, I don't get it. I don't get why this page got people excited. I don't buy all this stuff. So, yeah, anyways, take it with a grain of salt. But just to show you different examples of what people are doing and how it's worked for some people, but not for everybody.

39:45

So I think that the at the end of the day, when you're reading something, for me, even though I hate reading, it should be something fun, right? Like it should be a fun read, no matter what you're writing, no matter what the genre is, is what it comes down to.

39:59

It does. That's my biggest thing, right? You want to like, I heard someone say this once. I'm not taking it as my own quote, and I thought it was brilliant. It was probably me. I think it was at a screenwriting conference. Probably wasn't you, but they said, write your script in mind with the reader in mind who has to read your script at 11 o'clock on Sunday night and give their boss a breakdown and a coverage of it at eight o'clock Monday morning. Don't give them something they have to slog through. Hit them with a first page that gets them

40:29

excited to go. Well, that first page better be darn good. Then, yeah,

40:33

because your skill and your voice and who you are, it's revealed on the first page. The very first page, it hits you, right? And in TV, right during staffing season, I talked to a lot of execs here, a lot of showrunners and stuff, talk about staffing rooms. And they'll, they'll read three, three pages, five pages at the most of a pilot, right? Because they then they, and a lot of them say, Oh, I know on the first page of this is worth reading. I know on the first page of this is the voice I'm looking for. So sometimes that's all you have, is, is that first page to really, really suck someone in. And pilots. I mean, you ask any writer, they get it, they got to do coverage on or

any reader they could do coverage on something, and it's a pilot, they're like, Okay, let's go, because it's fast, it's short. Some are 30 pages. Some are 60 pages. A feature is a big investment for a reader, right? That's a they're sitting down to commit a significant amount of time to read that. So you want to, you want to make it enjoyable. You want to keep it simple and fluid and keep it, as you know, deliver the shortest possible version of your script that

41:31

you can we, and we've talked about, like, the length and stuff of a script. But what should like you're saying it keeping it simple and fluid and short and to the point. What should

41:41

a script be? So the average half hour pilot should be like, 2530 pages. Hour pilot, 55 to 65 ish pages. Average feature. Every genre is a little different, but like I heard a manager say once, okay, fine, go and do this, but I want you to deliver a 108 page draft. It cannot be any longer than 108 pages. And the writers like, I don't know why. I don't know why manager said this. I'm like because we're in that that whole idea of 99 cents is not \$1 it's 99 cents, or it's not or \$199 isn't 200 bucks, it's 190 so you deliver a script that's 108 pages. When you make the PDF in the title page, it's a 109 page script, 110 so when you see 109 you think 100

42:30

but also, I think to the way the world is, is that they don't have time exactly. So it's got to be, it's got to seem shorter than what it is.

42:39

Has to be. The days are gone of 120 plus page screenplays being what people want, right? If you think there's no way your story can be told in 100 pages, and then it needs 136 pages. I have three words that you need to hear. You are mistaken. Oh, anyone who thinks, anyone who thinks that they can squat, why don't you comment? I said That's rude. I don't like tell writers they suck. I just tell them that I just sometimes, oh, I suck, yeah. Oh, thanks, thanks. Appreciate that you are mistaken. Yeah, because you can, you can cut something down. And you know, I'm gonna do a whole episode. We're gonna do a whole episode of cutting, cutting pages down. Here's a thick page. This is how you might be able to do it otherwise. So So watch for that. But you just want to be making the most of your page. You want to you want to do what you can to set yourself up for success. And fine. If you think that those thick pages is how you want to write, then go ahead and write that way. But again, like even in the last five years, like these scripts were made five over five years ago, right? The world is different now. Every month that goes by, our our attention spans are shorter. Things are getting shorter. People want to free up time. People use AI so they don't have to waste time. So you want to make sure that if someone's going to sit down and read your script, that you're making it exciting, that it's short and effective and fluid, and you're making the most of their time exactly, because time is precious. Yeah, make the most of the page to make the most of their time. That's a greasy desert. Always drops these pearls of wisdom. I love it.

44:18

I didn't even say half of that. Yes,

44:21

you did. Said, make the most of their time. Make the most of your page. So that's, that's a little bit of a breakdown of some things that you can keep in mind, right? And make your choices on how you want your first page to hit someone, and you're writing overall, on how to make better use of your pages. So I hope, I hope people learn something from that, and with that, let's take a quick break to hear about one of our other services.

44:49

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. 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](http://www.scriptreaderpro.com/rewrite) and use the code rewrite 15 during checkout for the rewrite proposal to get 15% off.

45:32

Well, thank you guys for joining us again for another episode of the Script Reader Pro podcast. This part of the episode is usually my favorite, the question period. And I want to remind those listeners out there, if you have questions that you want to have answered, you can simply submit your questions by emailing us at [Hello@scriptreaderpro.com](mailto:Hello@scriptreaderpro.com) These are four questions that have been previously submitted to us from you, the listeners and their first question we have from Evan from Pasadena, California. And Evan has the question, what is the best way to introduce a character, huh?

46:11

Well, there were some interesting examples on these pages that we went over, right? The one example is very minimal, right? Only what you need, the fortune teller, we could kind of see and understand who she was based on how she talked, the things she said and did, rather than a breakdown of everything she looked like, right? The other girl we saw about her jacket and her t shirt, told us some about her sneezing, not covering it. That kind of explained a lot about her, you know, then you see the sound of metal. That's a pretty big description of that character. It really went deep on him, so we fully understood him by the end of that paragraph. In the challengers, we saw examples of different ways to all three of those characters were described in very different ways. Some are specific, some were not. So whatever you feel sets up the right tone and atmosphere. You can just say, this is John. He's 30, and that's it. And then what he says and does describes him. Or you can say, this is John 30s, but he looks 60, and he's never been good to himself, too many years of drinking and drugs like it all depends on what you're wanting your audience to pick up on and how you want them to feel. And that's that's the big thing, right? Don't just make us see something. Make us feel what looking at that person for this first time should make us feel

47:27

when you introduce a character, does the way that someone introduces a character? Does that change? Do you think depending on the genre, do you want to have, like, the, if it's like a horror, do you want to have the it being more of a gloomy description

47:48

of a character? It really depends on what you're wanting the audience to pick up on, right? So if

47:52

it's, if it tends to be a thriller or something like horror related, you want it to you want the person reading to feel that?

48:01

Yeah, yeah. Again, it depends on the atmosphere you want around that character, right? If it's a horror movie and but you introduce the first character, you know, here's Sarah, girl next door with a massive chip on her shoulder. Well, that tells us some about her. Got some attitude. Don't mess with this girl. Yeah, something. But it doesn't necessarily say it's a horror film, right? So it doesn't, but if it's a horror entity, you want to describe it in a way that gives us chills. Okay, so

48:24

question, then side question, how do you introduce a character?

48:28

It really depends on the genre and but, no but. But what I'm want the audience to feel in the genre, like in Foxtrot or max, the way I first described Max, I wanted people to feel that. Feel sad for the kid. This is a kid. He's a loner. He's slumping his shoulders. He's dragging his feet, you know, like I described him physically, and, you know, in something like mine, when I when I describe when I remember how I described it. But it was just like, here's, here's, here's one of the most trustworthy guys you can know kind of thing, like, yeah, that's what I want people to feel. Say that. But it but it

49:00

was like, yes. So for you, it's all goes back to feeling, always feeling okay. So that's good. That's good to know, yeah, it can help. Okay. Hopefully that answers the question of, yeah, what's best way to introduce character? It just depends on how you want to introduce them, how you what person, what you want the character, and what you want the reader to feel, yeah. Okay. Question number two, and this one comes from Callum from Christchurch, New Zealand. Interesting. Callum asks the question, how many rewrites are usually needed on a script? Do you even have to have any rewrites? Sometimes people ace it the first time.

49:33

Sometimes your scripts perfect when you put it out. Yeah, I know that Mark I Smith was talking about was that Austin and his manager was like, I seriously, I've never, I don't this never happens with anyone else. But when Mark turns a script into me, I barely have a single note

ever, but he gets other people to read it, and he gets, you know, and I'm sure he does rewrites based on feedback of colleagues and things like that. But it really just depends. I mean, sometimes I'll write a script and be like, Man, this is, this is pretty. Odd so far, and might only need a few rewrites, whereas some I've had 100 rewrites on. It really just depends. I basically don't, don't set yourself a number if it needs more work. Keep going. Okay, don't be afraid to rewrite. Embrace it, though. It's the best part of it all. All right? It only makes it better, yeah, because I think every time you go through your script again, you learn more about your character, but you can also overwrite a rewrite. Oh, for sure, for sure, you can, like, don't rewrite just because you got nothing else to do. Only rewrite. It keeps me, yeah, if you get more notes that are consistent, that say this isn't working here, then yeah, go and do a rewrite.

50:35

But a rewrite isn't necessarily completely trashing the whole thing from beginning to

50:39

end, no. But a rewrite is also, if all you're doing is changing four words, stop, yeah, you don't need to rewrite it anymore.

50:45

Yeah, yeah. And it's more, it's it. Rewrite is sometimes just considered a Polish. Would you say you're polishing it?

50:52

Yeah, anytime you're going through and doing some more work on your script, you're doing a rewrite, right? Even if it's just like, Oh, I gotta check continuity and make sure this character sounds consistent, that's a rewrite pass. But, yeah, just just know that a script is never done, right? You just have to get to one where you're like, This is the best version. You're happy this story that I want to tell in the way I want to tell it right now. Okay, it'll always change.

51:11

Next question, question three, what is the reason for writing short scripts? Is there a market? And that question comes from Marianne from Oakville, Ontario, oh,

51:23

that's a good question. What is the reason for writing shorts? Yeah, usually, if you're going to write a short, it's because you want to make it right. You want to showcase your voice. You want to have something tangible that you can send out to people. You want to make it yourself. Yeah, usually it's like writer directors usually do shorts, but a lot of writers write shorts, send them out to, you know, contest festivals. It's just trying to get someone to make something that doesn't cost a huge investment. So that's usually why you'll want to write a short, or just do it for fun to get to know who knows. You'll write a short and be like, Oh man, I want to write a whole movie on this now, you know, like that fortune teller scene we read through. It's like, that was just an exercise. But I'm like, I can see I want to know more. What's this, what's going on, what's this all about? It could turn into something bigger. So sometimes you can do that just to get yourself out

of, out of a rut, or something like that. But is there a market for scripts, for short scripts? I don't know how many people bought are looking to buy short scripts, but the people who are usually wanting to find short scripts are like, directors right out of college and stuff, and they were in their film school, and they're like, oh, I need a short to direct, but they're not a writer, so they'll try and find people, right? You know, it's a big one, Pixar. Pixar, yeah, they do little shorts before their movies, yeah, but it's animated, and they're the animators themselves. Are usually writing them, but, yeah, but yeah, I don't know. Is there a market? Yes, if you're gonna do it, do it because you want to make it yourself. Okay.

52:43

Question number four, last question is from Graham from Fort Collins, Colorado, and Graham says, Why do I need to have more than one finished screenplay to get a manager?

52:55

Hmm, okay, so imagine you have a job, and you're doing stuff for people, and you only get paid when that person gives you something and you are able to sell it, and you only get 10% of what it is you sell. If that person you're going to work do all that work in time for only has one thing. How excited are you going to be to try and sell that for that person, if there's not no other money, how much time and energy and hours you're going to want to work with that person on that product? If they've got nothing else, why back? Wonder? Yeah, that's why a manager only makes money if you make money if you have one script, and even if it's like, it's not a marketable commercial script that they could sell for whatever 100,000 even so they get \$10,000 in their pocket. How hard, how excited are they going to be? They want to see someone that's got a lot of work, consistent work, that are cranking stuff out consistently, so they can invest their time in them. That's why. So if you only have one script, and you're looking for a manager already, they're going to even if they read you and they love your writing and they're like, hey, what else do you have? And you say nothing, they're gonna be like, Okay, how hard is this person gonna work for me? Is this worth my time? So that's, like I said, one hit wonder too. You never know. They want to see if you're actually good at this or this is a one, one shot. You had one story. Good point, yeah. So that's, that's, I think that's, I hope that explains that. So if you enjoyed what you heard today, please subscribe. Give us. Give Desiree five stars. She deserves it. Share it with people you know. Keep coming back. We've got lots of content. Watch for the new video version. We're gonna have it up on YouTube as we get going. Check out our website, [scriptreaderpro.com](http://scriptreaderpro.com) we got all that you need. Email us. Where can they email us? Desiree with show ideas and questions. At [hello@scriptreaderpro.com](mailto:hello@scriptreaderpro.com) [hello@scriptreaderpro.com](mailto:hello@scriptreaderpro.com) Yep, because we are all about helping writers craft wonder one page at a time you.