

Ep #58: The Hard Truths

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On this episode, we're talking about the hard truths. Yeah, writing is a tough job, and there's some things that writers need to think about. So listen in.

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

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Hey everybody, this is Desiree. I am your host, and this is the Script Reader Pro Podcast. I'm here with Scott.

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Yes, I am Scott. I am with Script Reader Pro, one of our readers, writers, analysts, mentor, whatever you want to call it, and also my husband. I Yes, and I'm just part of our team, although none of the rest of our team are Desiree's husband.

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Well, let's hope not, because that would be questionable then, and yeah there, there'd be some questions on your part,

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Scott, I think although if it were a reality series, you would watch that. No, you would that's your thing. You are a reality junkie.

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I can't get enough of, like, my What's it? The sea one below deck, below deck. Yeah, we've talked about it before. I just love it. That's a fun one. It is a fun one. And I feel like I I went vicariously. Because if I wanted to go on a ship like that, I mean, that would be a cool job, just the ins and outs and the nosiness of all the people.

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Yeah, high stress job, like, holy, every single one of those are falling apart by the end of their seasons and the hours that get to work. Yeah, you know what I noticed about that show, though, it's only as good as the characters, true story, because Kevin, Captain, Kevin, he's he's fun to watch because he's, like, hard edge. Kevin, yeah,

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his name's Jason. Is it Jason? It's Jason.

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Oh, Jason. He's like a hard nosed, harder edge kind of guy, but he's also soft, and his crew is really cool. The one the yacht, the sailing yacht, one with Glen and Gary and stuff, those characters were awesome. But the Mediterranean one with the woman, yeah, it was boring. Like, the personalities aren't big enough. And that's just that just goes to show you, you respond to

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people right, do, and which is very true for writing as well, very much so that you respond to the people, right? Yep, it's characters. When we always do this podcast, we always start the same exact way. You guys are probably like, oh, boring, same exact way. But we talk about what we have watched lately. This one here

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is called free Bert, yes. Do you remember it? It was a very short series. You actually remember it on the title. There's no other seasons yet, right? Just came out. Yeah, there's a for news show six. I think there's only six episodes

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about a about a stand up comedian and his wife and kids. And the premise is that they've kind of come into more money, I think, yeah, he's successful as a comedian now. They've moved to a new area and are trying to fit in with the wealthy folk, yeah. But they are an interesting crew.

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They're, uh, yeah. He like the the comedian, his stick is taking his shirt off, and he's a, he's a kind of a bigger, chubbier guy, and doesn't fit in, and they're all over the place and crude, and they're a lot of fun crude.

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I couldn't I did have a hard time. It did take me off. Now with the kids,

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it was, I thought, I don't know. I mean, a lot of people don't care, but for us, we've always been like, Oh, we're uncomfortable when we see younger kids swearing and stuff. And these kids were dropping F bombs and all these inappropriate jokes, and they're like, grades seven and eight. And I was like, who would let their like I probably wouldn't let my kid be on like act in that show, just because I don't want them talking that way.

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No, you said that, but then at the same time, then you and you looked it up, and you were like, ah, that makes sense, because guess what you got.

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They're his real life kids and his real life wife. And so I was like, oh yeah. Well, obviously this is their dynamic, and it worked, but yeah, it's just you don't see that often, right? Don't and like, the first time I saw it, when I was kind of actually shocked, was when we watched shrinking, because the the dad and his daughter, like she was, he was dropping F bombs to her. She was dropping F bombs to him. And I'm like, Who does like, I think my daughter. She's 17 now, and I think she's heard me use the F word, like, once ever that was when you were mad, yeah, and that said daughter, you know. And that's just, I don't know. It's just who I am, but anyways, yeah, it's, it was, it was fun. It was fun. It was entertaining. It was clever, it was it was refreshing. So, yeah, check it out.

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It's different. What? What network was it on? Do you remember it was on Netflix? Okay, hey, today we're talking about the hard truths. Yes, you know what? Also the hard truth being

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married to Scott word, or being married to a writer in general,

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or being married to someone who's not as orderly and clean as you, and then you come into the basement to the do the podcast, and then there's things wrong.

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There's like a piece of dust somewhere. Isn't that funny? How just this morning, when I you're like, What are you doing? Why aren't you? Are. You ready to do the podcast? I said, Oh, I was just cleaning the kitchen for you. And you said, for me, it's for us. I'm like, no, no, honey. It's has to be a certain way for you.

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Yeah, okay, so maybe you can have those same skills for the basement podcast area.

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Yeah? Well, because I definitely don't have enough to do, I'm looking for more.

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Okay, guys, that's the hard truth. We're talking about some hard truths here. Glad you tuned in. Yeah, the real hard truths. When Scott handed me these papers, exactly like 10 minutes ago, the first thing I did was, yikes, what is going on? Because I'm used to having

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I usually have little jot notes, but I've got like, three pages here, because my brain is dumping out a little bit

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on this. So I like your dumpy brain. Thanks. Your dumpy brain.

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My dumpy brain. So what we're doing is we're just looking at some hard truths of writing. And, you know, I was thinking a lot about what I talked to, you know, mentorship clients about, or on consult calls, or we're doing this new rewrite, kind of like one on one, live accelerated program. And I just thought a lot of writers would probably, you know, find it valuable to to, you know, hear me talk on some of the things a lot of writers end up needing to be talked about. So, so that's what we're looking at today.

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So is it going to be good stuff, Scott, or is it going to be some hard truths?

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Well, it's called the hard truth, so everything will be easy. Oh, okay.

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What is that called when it's like, one thing, an oxymoron? Yeah, that was an oxymoron. A moron. Thanks. Oxy. Why? I don't know. Okay, so, Scott, how do you want

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to start that you can, how about you say what each of the truths are, and then we can talk about them.

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Oh, okay, so I see what you have here in jot form bullet. It says, Why most screenplays fail before page 20? Yeah, they do.

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You'd say, Well, no, I'm not that isn't to say most screenplays saying why most screenplays fail before page 20. If they're going to fail, it happens before 20 pages in. So a lot of the things that we talked about before, about what you need to do on your pages and scenes, and that kind of thing is part of this, but, but these are a few of the things that I see, especially after talking to a writer what's going on. So the first is that the writer tries to do too much, too quickly, right? There's there's nothing worse than introducing 17 characters in the first six pages. How are we supposed to remember all of that? And a lot of times, like, yeah, a lot of times you gotta, you have to create a lot of characters and get them in in quickly. But sometimes you'll see, like, Oh, here's, here's all our characters. You know, they're, they're going on this adventure, and there's, like, nine of them, and they're like, it's Jake and John and Joe and Janet. Like, it's like, here's all of them. And then it's impossible to know who everybody is and remember whoever. So you don't even know who the main character is. You start to track and be like, well, who's talking the most, who's focused the most? But by the time you get to 20 pages, they're just like, Okay, I don't even know who these people. I don't remember any of them. And then it's even harder to make that many characters come across as unique and different and have their own voices. So

that's, that's, you know, either put too many characters in too fast, or too much exposition. Or, like,

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gonna ask what else is? Because he says too much, too quickly. Characters, what else is? Too Much

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like, way too much description, way too much expert like, characters just explaining everything you know, or you starting off and hitting ground running, but not taking an attempt to build the world, right? It's hard to understand. I mean, the first 10 pages of a script usually should be focused on the main character in their world, right? This is their world. This is who they are. This is their ordinary life. This is what's going on. Here's a flaw, here's some issues, here's some stakes, and then, bam, something happens, and when that inciting incident happens, it makes the story come alive. We know the character. We know their world. We know why this is an issue. Can't see that if everything is just, you know, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, very, very quickly. So that's one of the major things, but mainly characters, right? Sometimes you overload the character. So that's one thing. The other part. The opposite of that kind of is that the writer takes too long to what I refer to get to what I refer to as the movie story, right? When does the movie story start? What's the movie story? The movie story is, this is why we're here. This is what makes this story happen, right? It, you know, if it's like, say, a gender, you know, a gender swap where it's like, you know, oh, they go to bed and the next morning the husband's in the wives body and the wife's and the husband's body. Oh, what do we do if that takes 37 pages to get to that point? Obviously, we don't know what the story is. Well, it's

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also that you lost a bit of interest because you're like, come on, already. Hurry up.

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Yeah. But, I mean, I used to say by page 30, right? We should be able to stop a script on page 30, and know what the movie is about. This is what it's about. This is where it's going. This is who it's focusing on, right? Something major has happened now. It's more like 20 pages right by 20 pages in if I don't know, as a reader, where this is going, what the genre is, who is important, who's not, what's at stake, if I don't know all that, then I lose. Confidence that I ever will know that.

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Do you think it's because times have changed and people have less of a attention span now?

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No, well, probably, yes, that's probably part of it. But for me, personally, it's I've read so many screenplays, it's like, okay, well, I can usually understand where it's going very quickly. So if it, if I'm 20 pages and I still don't know. It's probably the same with a lot of readers. If you still don't know what's going on, you don't even want to finish. You don't want to keep going, because

you're like, Okay, well, this is really just, it's taking too long. I don't even care anymore, right? So you don't take too long to hit the ground running and be like, This is the story, right? You know that that's important,

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I think too, though, like, for me, like, personally, I am, like, I've said I'm very nosy, so I like to listen to people talking. And I think from scripts that I've read, it can be that there's too much talking and not enough that we're seeing either enough description, yeah, is that something

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that it can be? Yeah, definitely. I mean, you'll see, so, yeah, you'll see some, some scripts where it's just like, two characters sitting in a room or at a coffee table or whatever, talking for like, seven pages and nothing else happening, and it's like, okay, yeah, if the dialog is like, brilliant, then great, right? We're entertained, but we still may not know what it's about, where it's going. You need to find a balance, right? Sometimes it's like, all action for nine pages, and you're like, there's not that a character hasn't said a single thing, while that can maybe be compelling, depending on what kind of movie it is, you got to find a balance. It's all about creating that balance. So that's kind of like, what the one of the things that causes that failure is you don't have the engagement of it, right? Again, it's all about people and characters. That's why we become engaged in something. And if, and if it's just straight action and exposition, we're not learning about characters, or it's too many characters, we can't focus on someone. It just causes problems.

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Okay? Makes sense? Next one, yeah. Next one is the truth about being optioned. Okay, yeah. So option. Do you mean like you're having your

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script, having your screenplay optioned, yeah, and it's a big one everyone always asks about. And you used to be back in, back in my day, getting optioned means your your career was starting. Someone's optioned your script. You usually, when they option it, they would make it

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right. These are yours. You have that one that was optioned for \$1

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Well, that's pretty much every month you spend it? Did you spend that dollar? I did. I remember when I had an option for like \$1,000 and I was like, Oh my gosh, this is insane, because every other options

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free or dollar, right? But money was so different too. It was, yeah, it's like \$1,000 was huge back then, yeah.

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And that's part of what, what I want to explain here, too, about options these days. So, so basically, being optioned means that someone's going to essentially rent, you know, they'll call it an option or shopping agreement, where they basically say, for this amount of time, right, six months here, something like that. No one else. You can't shop this to anyone else. You can try and sell this to anyone else. I'm going to take it as an option, and I'm going to try and see if I can get it made. No because if they have the, if they're, if they're trying to put it out there, you shouldn't be also going and doing it, trying to get it to other people, right? You're giving them the rights to it.

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I know that, but so many times things fall apart. So it's like, you wouldn't want that reassurance, I

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guess, right? Because, yeah, well, no, but you, I mean, this all comes down to making sure you don't just have one script, right? You gotta have a bunch. But some people, like, a writer's like, oh, is this sound like a good option? It was a three year option. Like, three years, if that person can't get something going in six months to a year, they're never going to get it going. Plus three years. Like, no, six months to a year should be maximum an option, my opinion. But it really just means that the producers don't, you know, they see it as something worthwhile, but they don't want, they don't want to pay anything. No one these days wants to pay anything upfront, because the money isn't like it used to be, right? All these companies have, like, Oh, here's a \$10 \$10 million development fund. We're going to use that just to get scripts and just to develop scripts and pay writers that they don't do that anymore. So they don't want to pay you, so they're going to option it for free for however long. And, you know, because they don't want to put an investment in, they're going to test it to see if they can get other people interested in and if they can't, then they'll let the option wane, right? They haven't lost anything, then you've potentially lost three, five. You've lost time, yeah, yeah. But for them to do something, yeah, it's true. But still, when you are option and someone's trying to put your stuff out there, people

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are reading your stuff. Yeah, right. So that option for like, six months, or what do you think a fair option is

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six months to a year? And like, this person that had one or three years, the writer told them, no, I think I'd like to just do one year. They lost it on them, like, you know, like they were like, you will, I will only do it for this much. I'm like, walk away, man, if that's the reaction, if that's the relationship you're getting, wow, how can you trust that person? Yeah, you know, that's crazy. Yeah, that's a long time. Yeah. And I mean, my in my opinion, yeah, yeah. In my opinion, if a producer who is a legitimate producer, can't get a project, at least having some kind of interest or legs or something, in a year, they're probably not going to be able. Probably have 20 other projects. Take options, right? You're not the only horse in the stable, right? So, yeah. So that's

basically, that's the truth about being optioned. It's great. You can say you're an option screenwriter, but a lot of times these days, it doesn't mean enough, as it used to. So, but if you can get an option, take it, right? Make sure it's good, make sure it's legit, you know, get a contract. Get something written down on paper, have an entertainment lawyer go over it if you're worried about it. But, yeah, so, so that's basically, right,

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you're okay. Next one we have is what we cut from our scripts. The hard truths, what we cut our

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own scripts? Yeah, so most writers don't want to cut anything, right? As someone who's tried to help writers develop their work. The biggest thing is, oh, I don't know how, you know, okay, you got to cut five pages off of this opening because it's just wasting time. Oh, okay, I hear what you're saying, but I can't do that. I don't think I can do that. You know, we don't want to cut our stuff, and the reason for it is because it's something we've created, something we brought to life. Yeah, right. Don't ever say if someone's trying to help you, if someone's trying to give you feedback and give you constructive criticism and stuff. Don't say that you can understand it or figure it out, or you couldn't possibly cut anything.

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Well, especially if you're working with a producer or a manager or something like that, and you're gonna say, No, I don't want to cut two pages off of this 30 page. Yeah, you know, like,

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exactly you have to try, and, I mean, trick yourself say, okay, so pretend a producer just said to you, okay, I'm gonna buy your screenplay and we're gonna put it into production in two months. But only if it's if these seven pages, you have to find seven pages in the first 40 to go then, like, just try it and do it exactly. You have to get you ready. You have to get used to cutting your stuff.

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That's what the whole process is. That's what a rewrite is. That's what a first draft is. Is intended to cut it to what it's supposed to be for its finished product, right?

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Yeah, exactly. And, I mean, you just have to try, right? Like you can, for an exercise, try cutting every single sentence out of your script, one at a time, and see if it makes anything different or affects anything. What do you mean? Every single sentence cut if you think every single sentence in that script must be there, cross out a sentence, look around it, see if it changes anything, okay, yeah, if it changes anything, even like how the tone is or like, not just, oh, I need that detail, but like,

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can you cut it? If you can give an example of that, sure.

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So Scott walks into the room, and he freezes when he sees that the refrigerator is open. He walks over to the refrigerator, looks around, opens the door, and sees that it's not cold inside anymore. Okay? So there's a bunch of stuff. There's a bunch of description of what you're seeing, right? What if you cut that first sentence, Scott walks into the room and sees the refrigerator is open. Do you need that whole thing? You probably don't need that, right? So the next line would be, he walks over to the refrigerator and looks around, and it's okay, right? So maybe you need that. So obviously that first portion of sense you needed to know that Scott was looking at the refrigerator. So you could just have that the refrigerator. You could have that say Scott freezes when he sees the open fridge. Not Scott walks into the room. You know what I mean? It's, yeah, cut it. See what you needed. You're like, Okay, I didn't need to see Scott coming in the room, but I needed to see him, see the refrigerator. So it's that kind of thing. Just challenge everything. And the thing

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too, that you talked about quite a few times is you don't have to necessarily cut full sentences. You can cut words.

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Yeah, exactly. Like, if it's 15 words say, How can I make it 13? Okay, done. How can I make it nine? Because at the end of the script, that just shortens everything up. Yeah. And that's the thing a lot of writers just don't understand, is when they go into development, if you have this beautiful lyrical page with all this stuff, they're not gonna that's probably not going to be the pages that they end up using to shoot. They're gonna get rid of all the stuff they don't need.

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The whole idea of cutting though. Why?

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Because you want to make it as close to the development ready as possible.

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And people don't like to read something that has, what, a bunch of extra fluff in it. Yeah, you don't need it. Is that what

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it comes down? That's what, yeah, that's what novels are for. You want to talk about someone's thoughts for 45 pages. Go ahead. In the screenplay, we need to know exactly what we need to see, and nothing else. So you know you have to do it well, right? But don't, don't say you can't cut words, basically, no.

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And the thing is, is like, you're not saying necessarily cut entire like, scenes and all this, no, but you should try. But you should just try, depending on what me, what will keep the story still going

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exactly without a hole, but yeah, basically being analytical and critical and calculated. Of okay, I'm just gonna cross this scene out. What happens? Just like stress test it if you cross and maybe it's your favorite scene in the whole screenplay, and you love it, but you remove it, and nothing is affected, nothing in it or around. Do anything. Okay? What's the point of that? So either remove it, but if you love it, add something to it, yeah, put something in there to make, yeah, fight and make it fight for itself. That's that's basically when it comes to cutting stuff, to be open to cutting stuff, because you're gonna have to, whether you think you're gonna or not. In this business, it's collaborative. You're gonna have to cut stuff. So start practicing. Okay?

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So the next one is, why structure isn't the problem. You are, no, you are, no, you are.

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Structure is easy. It's just a basic it's a basic frame, right? Like so many writers, Oh, I gotta buck the system. I don't want to follow that structure. I want to do this, and there's like so many endless ways that different experts and knowledgeable people have broken down screenplay structure into different versions, right sequences, four, act structure, eight, act structure. You know, all these kind of things, but it all comes down to you need a portion that sets up your story. You need the middle to play out, and you need a finale. There's building the same. It's been the same forever, since movies were first made, right? Since stories were first told. But don't like everyone else blames it. Oh no. I have to have I don't want to have this happen. I don't want my first act to end there. My first act point is on page 46 and that's where it is. Okay, good luck. So I'll say to you, if it takes 45 minutes for the first act to be over and the store to get moving, no one's gonna, no one's gonna gonna, gonna connect, right? So you need, you know, a screenplay structure, whether it's a movie or TV, there's an expectation to it, right? All these readers, a lot of readers, are taught these are the things to look for. We need this to happen here and here and here. You need to feel these beats, right? The true talent in screenwriting, in this specific medium is about making your story work within the structure, right? You a lot of like, that's, I mean, it's not like, okay? So, yeah, always. So your first act is on page 47 that's your that's when you shift from your first act to your second act. Is that? And you say, No, that has to be there. I can't get rid of all that stuff before there. I can't get rid of any of it. Is that your is that a problem with you or a problem with how structure is it's a problem with you, right? You're telling yourself you can't make that happen on this page?

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Yeah, it's like anything else. Like, if you tell yourself something can't change or be different, it's going to be that much more difficult to do.

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Yeah, if you tell yourself you're not going to succeed as a writer, you won't succeed as a writer. If you could tell yourself you first that can't get any shorter then, then that's it. This is never going to happen. So it's really important to understand structure and not just on, like, a basic cookie

cutter thing, but like, why, right? Why does this event have to happen here? Why does this change? What is his or her choice? Why does that have to happen before we get to this point in the story? It's not just page numbers. You know, your inciting incident doesn't have to be on page 10. Act doesn't have to shift on page 25 these are benchmarks based on overall history of movies. Some like the thing, right? The the original one, the inciting incident in that story happens on page one. That wolf is being chased by a helicopter, and the Wolf gets to the camp, and they let the wolf in the camp.

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No, I don't even know how you remember these things. I remember

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everything except what I'm supposed to that you tell me to do, but that's the inciting incident. It's that starts then, right? Bam, movie. That's it. If that wolf doesn't appear, movie doesn't start, right? So it's just about remembering that structure. It's moldable, but you, you can't blame it. You can't be like, No, it's keeping me from my creative process. Then go write something. Go in a different medium.

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Yeah, makes sense? Hey, the next one, the real work, starts at draft four,

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at least a draft at the minimum draft for right? I always say that anyone can write a first draft of a screenplay. Desire, you could sit down tomorrow and write a whole screenplay, a first draft, no, but you could. I know you're not, but you could, anyone can

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I own it? It would be amazing. Probably would.

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But anyone can do that. The real artistry, the real craft and the talent comes to comes down to reworking and reworking and reworking and and challenging and analyzing and being like, Why did I do this here? How does that work? I don't get it. Why does this character do that? Why would she say that? You know, that's where the

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real work happens. It's like basically asking your own characters why they're making the choices they're making.

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Yeah, exactly so. And you learn more about that character. That's why I love rewriting. Because every time I go back and I read through my script again to go in and see, okay, where are we at? I learn more about those people. They become deeper and and then you start to see things like, okay, you know what? Now that. I know her more. That choice that she made wasn't her

choice. That was my choice. Makes no sense for her to make that choice, because she's not who she was. Before you'll see that, and a lot of times you'll see, you know, writers will get notes, and they'll put something into their screenplay, and it'll change kind of the direction of the story. But then when someone reads it, it's like, this feels like two different movies. It was this movie, but then this happened.

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It feels like it's different. Too many people's hands were in there or what,

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yeah, or you just, you added something that changed everything, but you didn't think about going in and making sure it's set up properly, right? So we

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watched one yesterday, me and Asha watched that. What was it called? Do you remember? I don't remember. No, it was about being sleep deprived, and no one could sleep in the world, and there were so many holes. And it was like, did they like neglect to go back and look and see, Whoa, what happened there? Or, okay, now they're giving us all this information that never backed anything else up. And it was like, very choppy, yeah. And for us to stop and be like, Hey, I don't understand. Like, you could simply have made it say 24 hours later, and that would have cleared up a whole

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section, yeah? And sometimes it's tricky in movies, because in a movie there's so many factors, like, sometimes it could be movie shot done, goes to editing, it's edited, and then they're like, oh, wait a second. We don't have but they don't have the budget anymore. They can't reshoot because reshoots are done. Actors aren't the different things, I guess we just, we just put it, put it through a lot of times. It just happens. Has to right? But, yeah, it's all about going in and and, you know, just challenging your process and just just thinking your script isn't done until everyone tells you it's done, right? You can't tell yourself. Other people have to say this is ready, right?

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Yeah, makes sense. Hey, this next one, investors don't care about your dialog.

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No, they don't. What do they care about you think does money and why would they what would get them interested to spend their money. Do you think it's, it's, think it's reading the dialog in the script concept, exactly. It's a concept, more

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than anything, is where, where is this going to go, and how big is it going to be, and at the end of the day, how much am I going to make?

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Yeah, at the same time, sometimes, like directors, especially, sometimes like Ridley Scott says, he does this, I think it was Ridley Scott. He will read a whole he'll get rid of all the dialog in the screenplay. He'll just read the action. Because he's a director, he needs to see what see what it is. Same thing investors might be like. Just give me a summary. I don't care. I don't need to hear right? The dialog has to be great, yeah. But concept, movement, story, plot, the characters, choices, what they do, who they really are. That's what everyone's gonna remember. Example, well, watch a movie. Yeah? Anyone you watch a movie afterwards, when you talk about that movie to someone say, Oh, well, what was it about? When you explain that movie, do you ever mention something someone said? Not unless it's like an amazing line, yeah, right. Very often, right. You don't remember it all. You remember it all. You remember what happened because of the dialog, but you don't remember the dialog. So you have to have that visual understanding in your screenplay of this is why this is a movie, or this is why this is a TV pilot that's going to blow people away, right? But that's the thing. It's a business. You always have to remember that you can't be too precious. Be like, Oh, well, no one understands my artistic vision, and I'm trying to play to this theme of this and that, I'm like, okay, yeah, but it's, is it entertaining? Is it can you pitch it to someone? Do you will someone hear the idea and see dollar signs or think, oh my gosh, I've been waiting for this. I think it's important. Let's do this. It's not about the dialog.

28:35

I think, like, what it comes down to is that, really, the concept matters more than anything else, than anyone writes or does in the script,

28:44

exactly, and that comes down to being, don't be too precious, right? Concept matters more than your craft and how beautiful you put words together on a page. Yeah, that's important, yet they go together. But investment in here's \$20 million I'm going to give you because I want to help you make your movie. It's not about the dialog, right? It's about everything else. The dialog is the icing on top of it all

29:07

okay. What if you don't like the icing?

29:10

I love icing. I'll eat a bowl of icing. No cake required. And Asha does the opposite. Our daughter does the opposite. That's why we work together. We'll get a cupcake. I'll scrape off the icing. She'll eat the cake.

29:21

All right, next one is the emotional toll of rewriting.

29:24

Yeah, I mean, that that's a big thing. I hear a lot from the people I work with is, oh, you know, like they, they get, they get anxious or sad or upset or nervous or worried about the rewrite process.

You need to embrace it. All right, you we don't want to get anything. We don't want to get rid of anything we've created. We're like parents, that's our child. We've created all that stuff. We don't want to strike anything out, right? There's a reason that they you know the term, you know, kill your darlings, kill your babies, because we are the creators. We don't want to do it. And this is why rewriting should be done with a clear goal. You should have a goal for. You should have an analytical mindset where you challenge everything to make sure that it all collectively creates the biggest impact. Right? You need to make sure that you are challenging every scene. You need to take a step back and almost like personally, detach yourself from this group when you're rewriting, yeah, right? That will help you see it like, pretend it's someone else's script. Pretend it's someone else's, it's not yours. You didn't write this. Go into thinking, Okay, I didn't write this. Let's see. Why is that? There question it. Why did they do that? I don't get why they did that. Makes no sense, right? You need to, you need to take the emotional part out of it, just like when you receive notes. And as I've said before, and you know, I'm really bad at removing myself emotionally from getting feedback, especially when it's negative, but I have to, because otherwise it'll break me to pieces. That's the same thing with the rewriting process. You have to detach yourself and look at it from a different perspective, or you won't see the things that are problems, right? You're so in love with your own writing. We're so in love with our dialog. We think it's perfect. You can't otherwise your script will never progress and elevate well,

31:03

and you won't grow as a writer either exactly like, how do you get better and how do you, you know, achieve more if you're just stuck in that same,

31:13

yeah, it's like, a marriage, right? Your marriage is not gonna last if one of you is always like, you know, oh, you know, I don't really like or just like, Yeah, I don't like how you wipe the counter. There's four crumbs on that counter. Well, if I took that personally, every time you said that does, there was four crumbs on the counter. I didn't see it was gonna be generic until I said that, yeah. But if I, if I didn't take the if I, if I took that personally, oh, why is she attacking me? I'm just never happy with the No, you just don't like crumbs on the counter, simple as that. And I don't, and I am. I'm not a tall guy, but you're sitting so you see the light hit the counter and you see those four crumbs. I'm a bub. I can't see them, but let's but if I, if I don't take that emotional part out of it, my days would be awful. Yeah, right. It's the

32:01

same thing. Let's look at this differently. Is that you looking at your script from looking down on it, you're like, Yeah, this is pretty perfect. You come down, you have a different person, like me sitting, and I'm seeing it completely different, yep, different eyes, everything. So it's like, be open to make those changes by wiping those crumbs off the couch, yeah?

32:25

And just wipe them. Wipe them off like they need to go. These crumbs can't be on here, but I want them there. Like, I don't love crumbs either. But you know that's just, it's just don't take you, keep the take the personal part out of it, the emotional part of it, while you're trying to make it

work better, right? And then put your then go back in and love it, right? Next one is how development actually works, yeah. So developing anything, TV, movies, whatever it is, it's a grind. It's a, I mean, you try producing something of your own, even a short and you'll see how hard it is to put something together and develop something into something real. It takes time, energy, passion, and, of course, money, right? So development is what it really comes down to. It's about one person loving a script so much and deciding whether or not they are going to risk everything. That's the thing people don't Oh, no, one's taking a chance on me. Okay, so you have a great script. This person who makes the decisions knows that if they choose the wrong script and it fails. They're done. Their career is over. They're getting fired. They're moving on. They're closing up shop, right? You have to realize that they are risking everything. They're risking their time, energy, passion, money and their reputation to bring it to life. So you have to make sure that you are delivering something that is worth someone risking everything for you can't be mediocre. You can't just think, oh, you can't just pity yourself. Poor me, poor me. No one's good. I can't get a contest win. I can't No one will read my script. People are reading it and they're passing, yeah, because they have families to feed, they have to make good decisions. And there's 1000 scripts to choose from, more than that, right? So with development, as you probably heard about this if you listen to our interview with Erin Faulconer and her story about how everything lined up, everything has to line up exactly as it needs to, right, almost with like a sense of magic, which is why, as a writer, all you can control is what you put on the page, how much material you create. Someone can't develop something if you have nothing to give them. If you've written one script, say you write it and you option it, and it's going to take two years for that development process. I've had a script in development for eight years now. That's not that's out of my hands. Yeah, because this director came on and then, okay, got the needle moving. Oh, that director went for another project. Okay, back at square one. Oh, we got this talent. This talents interested? Oh, we can get this actor. Can you change that character, make them 11 years older, and then you change it, and then it falls through, and then that actor goes away. And then you're like, Okay, now we'll stop right now, right? And so it's, you know, but someone's still interested in they're pushing it. But it's development can take forever. Yeah. And the big thing of why I wanted to talk about this piece is that you again, you can't control anything, but you can't bank everything. If someone's interested in your script, it doesn't mean you have to stop hustling. You should still have 45678, scripts and just be trying to get them out there to everyone you possibly can. Don't sit around every year like a lot of writers do, and just ride that contest train and enter the same scripts in the same contest, hoping one day you'll win. Even if you win, it may not make a difference.

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Doesn't mean that anything's going anywhere after you win.

35:29

No. I mean, certain contests will help you get some movement, right? But they that script may never yourself exactly, you know? Yeah, so development, I mean, it's all about a team as well, right? It's not just about the writer. It's not about you, it's about everyone being on the same page. It takes a lot of people to put a project together, so development will eventually die most of the time. And that's the that's just the hard truth.

35:53

It's a hard truth. Yeah, it is something that I think a lot of people don't remember the industry. They just think, yay, this is my foot in I'm gonna be successful, and you have to work a day in my life again, other than writing,

36:05

and it's the perception from people outside of the writing world, right? Like, I'll tell Oh, what do you people say? Oh, what do you do? Oh, I'm a professional screenwriter. Oh, what? Like, what? What do you mean? I read movies, TV, stuff like that. What movie? What movies Can I see it? And I'm like, I'm like, yeah, here's one, here's one I had produced. But I've had, I've optioned almost every script I've written. I've had it. Is it six? Now, six scripts move through development all the way almost to the end, and then die. And it's like people don't get that right? So you have to just keep going. You have to keep churning, don't I mean, pat yourself on the back for sure. You want to be excited. Oh my gosh, it's happening, but at the same time it may never happen. So keep going on other things you can't my motto, send it and forget it. So many writers are like, Oh, I this. Priests are asking. They're sitting on pins and needles for six months. Forget about it. If they, if they're interested, they'll go back to you, right? If they're excited, they'll want to work with you. But don't. You can't count on the development process. Mean, meaning that your movie is being made tomorrow, right? So, because it's not logical, it's not going to happen. Yeah? Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

37:07

Yeah, okay. Next one is when to kill a script. So do you mean, like, stop when it's not good

37:12

enough garbage. Throw it aside. Toss it aside. Stop writing. That's a hard one, right? If it just isn't working or you're redrafting it from page 1457, times over, five, 710, years, right? It's not really becoming anything that anyone's excited about, so maybe try another one. You have more if you're, if you're a writer, and this is you, this is who you are. You have more than one story, right? Right? You should have. You probably have a dozen other ideas that are waiting to be written.

37:44

Well, yeah. And you only get better with time too. You really do. Yeah, yeah.

37:49

You get better with time. You get better with pages. Don't be that person who just gets stuck on that one script that never gets done, right? You want to finish something and move on to the next one. You know, it's the whole thing. You're only as good as your next screenplay, right? So you have to keep going. You have to, so it's it. And no one can tell you that. You have to tell that to yourself. You have to realize, okay, like, maybe, like, stop and be like, Oh, what's my timeline on this? And see where you're at and and sometimes, if you set it aside, be like, I'm just gonna kill this, not completely, but for now, you work on another project, something will happen. It'll get

you excited about that other one, or you'll have an idea. Be like, Oh, what if I did this in there? So you know that scripted is never dead, until you decide, I think I'm past that. Now, right? Yeah, it's all comes down to you. You know that is, what's that hard truth? That is the hard truth. So we're gonna take a pause for a quick second and come back and go over some questions that our listeners have sent in. So hang tight.

38:48

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.

39:31

Okay, we are at the part of our podcast where we have questions from listeners like you. I want to remind you guys that if you have questions that you want to have asked on the podcast. You can submit them to hello@scriptreaderpro.com and we will get Scott to answer them. Wonderful. I would try to answer them, but I can't guarantee they'd be any good for the answers.

39:54

Let's see. Let's try it. Let's see. I'm gonna ask you the questions. You answer them. Here we go. First one who is. One from this one is from Graham, from England, okay, Graham, Graham or Graham, or Graham, whatever. Okay, so does it matter what screenwriting software I use? Desiree? Yes, it does. It sure does.

40:15

Why it because some of them probably, probably I don't know, some of them probably aren't up to industry standard currently. And so the what you think the format might be at one time, correct might no longer be, okay?

40:36

No. Well, yes, I know right

40:39

answer the question, yeah, you guys, this is bad.

40:43

So pretty much, if it's a legitimate software that's been built in marketing, you can buy it. It's probably going to be, pretty much, right, right. Fade In Final Draft. Movie Magic Screenwriter those are kind of like the top ones, but movie magic screenwriters, I it's, it's a weird one, because you can't import or ex, you can't import any program. I believe, cannot import a Movie Magic Screenwriter, script into it, or write it in something like final draft and then export it to

Movie Magic Screenwriter. It's just one of those programs that's odd that way. But, you know, all the ones, even the free ones, like, you know, Celtics and stuff like that, you know, just don't build your own in Microsoft Word or pages like, just don't do that, because it's not going to be 100% right? I was all of what you just I knew you were okay. Second question, Desiree, what are some great screenplays to read to learn about great writing? What would you say is a great screenplay to read to learn about great writing? Titanic, sure, yeah.

41:43

This, by the way, was from Darlene in Phoenix, Arizona. You're not getting your portion of

41:48

the I'm sorry, I we're not used to this. This is weird. I would say your favorite movies first of all, right, if a movie like for me, right back to the future. You know, it's good. It's not great screenwriting, no, but this is the first part of my answer. Read the screenplays of movies you love. You love them for a reason. Read them. Find out why you love them. Find out how they did it. What did they do? How did they make doc work? How did they make Marty, who he is? How like, how was George McFly in the script based on them compared to the movie. Read your read your favorite screenplays, then I would say some great screenplays. For me that the ones, some of the best I've read is breakdown, which is a Kurt Russell film where his car breaks down as White gets a ride by a semi driver and then he can't find her. Great movie, really, did I watch this? Yeah, great screenplay. It's just so well done. Identity that's with John Cusack and all the people at the hotel, at the motel in the storm, and everyone's kind of got a secret. And that's a brilliant screenplay to read. Anything by Quentin Tarantino, because it's original and unique and effective. Anything by Christopher Nolan, anything by Aaron Sorkin, you know my favorite, some of my favorite, like, my favorite screamer screenwriter of all time is Eric Heiser. He wrote arrival bird box. He was the the clever one behind the final destination reboot. When, when you get to the end of it, you realize, I'm not gonna give it away, but it's such a surprise. Eric Heiser read any of his screenplays and you will see brilliance. So yeah, that's that's a couple for me. Everyone's got their own bit, but you can learn a lot from those screenplays.

43:28

Okay, next question comes from Omar from Toronto, Ontario, how can I get into a room to be considered to write the next remake or sequel to one of my favorite movies?

43:41

Sell a spec screenplay for \$4 million be the talk of the town, and everyone will want you in the rooms that's a outside of that you can't if they're okay. Well, we're doing our next Marvel movie. Let's bring in a bunch of unknown, unproven screenwriters no one knows, and let them come in this room, in this highly sensitive material that people need to keep secret, and let's have them give takes on what they would do. It's not going to happen, right? So if you want to say your goal is to write the next Batman movie in 10 years, do what you can to get in the system, write the style of movies you want to write, make people pay attention, have lightning strike and get in that room. Okay, so it's

44:18

a tough one. It's a tough one. Now the last question here comes from Victor, from Houston, Texas. Victor says, What is the worst thing a screenwriter can do to hold themselves back, be in a

44:31

relationship with someone that doesn't support you. It's probably the worst thing you can do. True story. True story, talking from experience, not with you, obviously, before, but that number one, number two, doubt yourself completely and tell yourself that you can't do it because then you will never

44:47

do it. Also, it's listening to people outsiders, like even your family. They're like, you're not gonna amount to anything writing and then listening to that.

44:56

Yeah, but probably the worst thing you can do as a screenwriter, to hold yourself back is. Is to become defensive of your work. If someone tells you it doesn't work, it doesn't work for them. You as a writer, you as a screenwriter, you don't even get to defend it anyways. Someone says, No, it's a past because they didn't like what you did here. You don't get to say, Oh, well, actually, you didn't get it. Because this is what or someone gives you notes. You don't get to be like, Oh, you didn't understand my story. This happened because, like, don't be that person. No one's gonna ever, ever, ever want to help you.

45:21

Makes sense. That's it. Hey, that's the end of our questions. That was good.

45:25

How was that was that good? Was that some hard? Was that hard, or was it

45:28

relatively easy? Again, I do not want to do that ever again.

45:31

Answer questions never. Okay, so everyone, when you have a question, you're going to send it in for Hello@scriptreaderpro.com say this is a question for Desiree, no, that'd be fun, not answered that fun. Or if you have a show ideas you want to hear about, use that email. Tell us that as well. That's where we get a lot of what we plan to do.

45:50

Also make sure that you share our podcast and

45:53

subscribe and give us a rating, maybe some stars. How many stars do you like? Des, great, four. I think five. I don't know if there is five, it's five, five. So don't tell people to give us four

46:05

stars. Well, I thought it was four stars.

46:07

Tells people, if they love it, give us five stars. Five stars, please. And that's it. So check out our website, scriptreaderpro.com we got everything you can imagine. There great team of writers. We're writers ourselves and all the other stuff that we do to help Help Help writers out. At Script Reader Pro, we are all about helping writers craft wonder one page at a time.