

## Ep #72: The Art of the Blank Space

0:00

On this episode, we're talking about the art of the blank space. Yes, what is unsaid, unseen? Tips and tricks on that. So, listen in.

0:12

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. Hi

0:25

Scott, hi Desiree. How are you today? You love technical problems, don't you?

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I love, I love sitting here so much, waiting for an hour and a half to have said podcast ready to go, only to realize it's been an hour and a half of adjusting camera shocks. That's not a watch. What are you doing?

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What are you doing? Are you saying I have to buy you more jewelry because I mean, you're lucky

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that I just went shopping and bought three new articles of clothes, so

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you're in an okay mood,

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decent. Well, for those I was in a very good mood.

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For those of you who are listening on audio and not watching this on video, we just, we're getting used to this whole video thing. Got a different setup today, we're trying to see what works really well, and that kind of thing. So, little troubleshooting. Desiree isn't the most patient when it comes to that, so

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no, Desiree is patient. Let's get this right. The issue at hand is he's rolling his eyes. The issue at hand is that I suggested a tool that would be ideal to bring all of our stuff together,

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and what's even better is she says, "Okay, get it all figured out, and then I'll come, but I can't really figure it out, so I figure it all out, and then she comes, and the first thing she says, "I don't like that angle, I

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don't like it.

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So then we have to revamp it all, and now she's frustrated. Get ready for Frustrated Desiree today.

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This is going to be a fun one, so tune in

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anyways. Welcome to our podcast. If you haven't been listening to

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difficulties there, yes,

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if we.. if you haven't been listening, welcome. If you have been listening, welcome back. If you want to catch us on video, watch for it on our YouTube channel, we'll be posting them there, so, but you can keep listening to it, like you usually do on the audio side of things. So, anyways, I'm Scott, I'm with Script Reader Pro, I'm one of the team here. This is your host, really good at hosting.

2:34

I know, I just bring so much cheer, can hardly handle

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it. Uh, huh,

2:40

I'm having a very bad hair date. No,

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you're not. You look great.

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This little flute, it's like a floopy floop thing here, and this is a tucky tuck tuck over here

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to me today, Scott. I have a hat on.

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Let's see your hair,

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it's

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unshaved,

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it's unshaved and growing, yeah,

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and very white, very white. That's why I have my hat on. Anyways, I'm Desiree. Yes, this is a Script Reader Pro podcast. It is. We're so glad that you have joined us today. We don't normally bicker this month. We don't. I'm getting points today, guys. But what can I say? Married life, married life, going on 25 this next year. Holy, if you're lucky, I can't believe that I have lived. I'm surprised she hasn't killed me yet. She, what, she listens to a lot of,

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lot of podcasts about killing, and a lot of Dateline episodes. I'm

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on to the Betrayal series. Actually, I'm almost done the podcast. Yeah, we talked

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about that last time. Yeah,

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I remember what we talked about.

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Yes, I'm sure you're the

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one with the memory issues, honey. Hey Scott.

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Yes,

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today we're talking about something called the art of the blank space. I'm guessing it's something to do with art. The blank space, I'm guessing, is a page,

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not really, but we'll get into

3:54

it.

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Yeah, we'll get into it. You'll learn something today. So, don't look at our notes. I have any idea what we're talking about until we start. What do we usually do to start off an episode, is right?

4:04

Well, what it says here is welcome and hello. I think we've already decided who is who and what is

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why. Yes, we did.

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We talk about what we've seen lately. Yeah, now this one here is this actually how you spell his name, or did you have a spelling?

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Sure, it's a spelling. I don't think you spell Jerry J A R R Y.

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Some people like to throw it in and just mix it up a bit, but every time we do this, Scott,

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yes, typos,

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but you're a writer who edits, yeah,

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but it's hard to see your own typos,

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but anybody looking at Jerry, I

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don't read it over it. Harry, you can do the notes next time has that

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Perry, maybe not Perry, Larry, Barry,

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and Jerry.

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No,

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why phonetics makes sense. If it's Larry and Barry, think that would be Jerry. Hey, I had Jari.

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Listen, I had an.. I had two uncles that were twins.

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Yes, that

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you know.

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Yes,

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Larry and Barry.

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Yeah, and Jerry. Jerry,

5:00

no. There was no Jerry,

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anyways. If it was Jerry,

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it would be Jarry.

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Yes, we watched a movie when Desiree's friend was in town. She was

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in town from Arkansas. You guys, I miss her so much. How did John

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say Johnna? It's called Jerry and Marge Go Large.

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Jarry and Marge,

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Marge Go Large. It was

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that actually rhymes better. Sorry,

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Jari and Marge,

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I thought it was so good, it was

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so good, I wasn't sure what to expect, because it was, you know, it was, you know, Bryan Cranston and Annette Bening, right, good, good, good stars talking about the lottery, and I was like, well, how, how good is this going to be, how dramatic is this going to be, and it was so good, and I think it was, I think it's like it's probably a movie that's better, it's probably better experience watching that movie if you're, if you're with someone, right? If you're in a relationship and you've been with each other for a long time, because a lot of it was all about how things go as you get older, this old, yeah, like you're just not as excited about things anymore, and you don't kind of know, you know, how to just make life fun anymore.

6:00

Are you talking from experience? No, I'm

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talking about the movie, that's what the movie was going over. Oh, we never lose that, and it was just.. it was just the best part of the movie for me was just watching

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the ending.

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Yeah, the ending was good, but I'm saying,

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I'm saying, when the movie ended over.. no, no, it was really good. It

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was just watching them realize that all this stuff that they were doing, they enjoyed. they. it wasn't. they weren't all caught up in what they were actually doing, like what the job was. It was just that now they were spending time together, and they were having fun, and they were enjoying themselves, and that was what it did for them. And this, for me, that just got what that was, the heart of the movie.

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Yeah, and it brought the spark back, right?

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Yep, yep.

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And, and it doesn't need to necessarily be surrounded, obviously, with lottery, but I think it's something important to remember as couples that there's different things you can do to try to bring that closeness back, and their story was a lovely story, I thought it

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was, and I think the big part of the theme in the story also was communication, right, they just weren't talking, weren't telling each other what they were missing or what they were wanting. They would tell other people, but not each other. So, anyways, I would recommend it. I thought it was a lot of fun. It's an older movie, it didn't just come out that's been out for, I think, was 23 This came to Netflix as new, right, which everyone thinks, oh, it's a new movie, but you know, check your, check your years, check your year, check your years. Yeah, so anything.. Oh no, I forgot to turn on my DeLorean.

7:24

Oh geez, there we

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go. That's better, better, everyone. Better. Okay,

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so embarrassing.

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Why?

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Like, are you gonna change all

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to hit this every time now? No, not no. I just.. it just times out.

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Well, then you're gonna have to keep your finger there the whole time, just hold your fingers,

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capacitor is not flexing,

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it is not, and stop being cheesy and using a line, basically from the movie, it

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is pushing the

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button,

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okay, there we go. So today, just,

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you didn't answer my question. Oh, what was

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your question? Are

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you going to be changing this every year,

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every time? Well, this is probably not going to be the same setup we have next time, because it didn't - it was a little tricky. It was really simple, not the right angle, not the right person fixing

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the angles. Yeah,

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yeah, it was that person's fault. So, anyways, okay,

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so the whole title of the episode is The Art of the Blank Space.

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Yeah, and I think what you would probably understand easier is don't be on the nose, so when someone says that to you, it's too on the nose. What does that mean?

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Like it's in your face, like instead of going and just tying your shoelace and stopping during part of your walk. Sorry, could I just please stop for a second? I need to tie my shoelace because my shoelace just came undone.

8:43

Yes,

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it's on the nose

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very much, so because you're telling it, telling them it cares. You

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just stop and you tie up your shoelace. There doesn't need to be an explanation surrounding it.

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Yeah, really good example. Perfect example. I think a lot of writers don't quite understand that you can be on the nose visually as well, right? Where you show us exactly every single thing, right, and you're not leaving that blank space for the audience to think about,

9:07

like a surprise,

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yeah, like a fill in the blank, right? What that does, it allows the audience to feel like they're participating, right? So when I tell you something and I leave a whole bunch of stuff out, doesn't that feel like you're able to like participate and play along, play a game like, what is my husband really saying to me here?

9:23

No, I absolutely hate

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it. So, in real life, we don't want to always fill in the blanks, but in a movie or a TV show, we want to be part of it, right? It's that participation. Billy Wilder, famous screenwriter, he had this famous quote about, you want to give the audience two plus two, not two plus two equals four, two plus clue. You just said flu again, clues, clues. I said it again because you said it, clues. Yes, yeah, two plus two, right? You don't want to give them the answer to everything. That's a great way to think about it's easy to understand that if you give them the answer, it is. Then

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well, on the

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nose,

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it's on the nose, but it's also predictable. I mean, it doesn't keep you focused on what you're looking at or reading.

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Yeah, exactly. It's just

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like, what's the point of me sitting here? If you're gonna just tell me what it is, then why am I investing this time into reading it or watching it?

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Yeah, exactly, exactly. And I mean, a really easy example is, you show a character sitting there reading, they just got an email, so they're sitting there, got hair on my something, they're sitting there, and they're

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half hair,

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they're sitting there, they're looking at their computer, but you don't show us the computer, you show with them, you show them reading it, you show them looking at it, you show the shock on their face, but

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you know that they're reading by just their eyes, you know,

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yep, but if they look afraid for their life, suddenly their

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eyes bulge

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right, or they, or they back up, and they bump in, or something bumps, and they jump, because they're so, yeah, the lip quiver, yeah, totally, that's how that's totally a giveaway,

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that is not better, no, but if there was a lip, if it was like, oh yeah, something happened, then you're reading something.

11:02

If it was Claire Danes in the shot, you know there's gonna be a quiver.

11:06

Does the quiver?

11:06

She's a quiver,

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a quiver, but

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that is that. That's playing with the blank space, that's leaving that blank open. You're.. if you showed us that it was a letter saying that I'm gonna kill you if you don't give me your kid, then it takes a surprise away, right?

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So it's like that's the art

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of

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it. So, like, when it comes to things like visual, visual clues and stuff like that, that would be a clue we're dropping, kind of like a bread crumb, like you talked about before. Yep, we're just dropping a couple, we're not giving you the entire loaf of sourdough bread,

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exactly, because once you get the sourdough, you're like, oh, well, I don't like sourdough, but if you maybe didn't know it was sourdough, you'll keep going, right? That's the surprise. What kind of bread is this going to be, right?

11:50

Wow, that's a stretch.

11:52

Why everyone doesn't like sourdough? Not everyone likes it.

11:55

Okay.

11:56

Yes. So that's that's exactly what you want to be, be looking for. So that, that's the thing to keep in mind,

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so my question

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is,

12:02

you've explained what it is, so how do you go about doing this art of the blank space and having the art to write it so that it's not on the nose?

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Yeah, and I mean that's the million dollar question, right? How, how do you become.. is

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it?

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Yes, how do you become great about this.

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Is there a million dollars after if you answer them? If you are

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great at screenwriting, you will probably make a million dollars for a screenplay. Whatnot,

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necessarily. Sorry to burst everybody's bubble.

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Well, you hope you hang on to that hope, right? You don't have to be so on the nose. What you just did is you canceled out the participation and the surprise. You said no, they won't

12:41

with the lip quiver,

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with the lip quiver, but if you leave it as an, as an option, you don't give it all away, then you're going to be there. Okay, so let's just kind of go through some examples on exactly kind of how

that works, okay? So the blanks in dialog, right? Characters, they rarely say what they mean, right?

12:58

Blanks and dialog,

12:59

yeah. So, leaving that blank, leaving that question right. Don't, when I say leave the blank, don't fill in every blank. Don't say I am so angry at you right now. You say you suck, or I really wish I had a whip in my hand right now.

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Don't give us the, so don't give us the solution. Let us figure out 2x times 472

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plus blue

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blues clues blues clues. No, Scott, seriously though, I'm asking you, that's is that what you want?

13:33

Yeah, you just won't want to give it all away, right? So characters should speak in subtext, right? Your job is to weaponize that silence, right? I would say use their words like weapons. Every line of dialog in a, in a movie or TV show, it's supposed to have something more behind it.

13:49

Not every line, every word should have a purpose.

13:52

Listen to her. I, because I don't know why I'm here. She has.. I don't know why you're here either. They're always the best way. You're annoying me. Well, thanks, honey. Thanks. But again, it's about playing along. It encourages the audience to try and figure out, oh, what did they really mean, right?

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And what's the per.. but what I'm saying with the words is, what is the purpose of that single word in the context of even that full sentence? And do you need all of that to explain it, or can you just simplify it too?

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Yeah, exactly. The less words, like screenwriting, is about using as few words possible to say the most.

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I wish that you did that too in life.

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I will start doing that, and I mean, a lot of times too, it can be great to just show the aftermath of something, right? That we don't need to see everything,

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like if there's a storm or a murder or something, you start it while you're right in there, instead of showing leading up, you mean

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yes, or, or like, okay, so say a couple is having an argument, right? Or a guy comes home, let's flip it, wife comes home, finds out, you know, they're calling for their husband, where are you, what are you doing, hears a sound, goes upstairs, and as he's about to go in the room,

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the, as,

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as she's about to. She's about to go in the room. The husband storms out, and she's like, "What's going on? He doesn't answer, he's gone. She goes into the room, she looks, and their family photo is on the ground, broken in pieces. Instead of her walking in and sees him throw that picture on the ground and say, "Rule, what are you doing? You see

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the broken picture,

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right, which then makes you wonder, what,

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what happened, like, why is that broken, and what caused that to be broken, and you

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would get the audience thinking, right, because bad writing is the wife comes home, goes into the room, and then they have their full fight about everything, and he's like, oh, what, why are you so angry at me, oh, because I just saw the text message on your phone from this guy that you're seeing tonight, and then they have this big fight, and then he throws the picture and storms out. Okay, so now we know everything, but if, if instead you just show the actor that makes you wonder, okay, wait a minute, you didn't, you know, you're putting it together, like, well, he didn't even say anything to her when he left, he obviously was mad and threw the picture, why, you know, like, or why is there blood on it, or why is it ripped into shreds outside of the frame? What's going on, right? It intrigues you.

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Yes, but what also mixes things up too is if you say something, but then something that we see is different.

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Exactly, exactly, that's the art of it, right? Using visual, so then you're questioning,

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you're like, but that was sad, so how does so what?

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Yeah,

16:26

right,

16:26

yeah, yeah, and very good. Then, then the lip quiver, it just comes, but I mean, that's that's the fun of it, that's that's what I mean when I say you want the audience to participate, right? You want them to be thinking about, well, what? What did we miss? What did we walk in on? What just happened? You know, like that kind of stuff, right? It's about finding those moments, right, to not give it all away, so we have something to hang on to, something to hang on for.

16:52

Here you have this juxtaposition. I hate that word.

16:56

Okay,

16:57

what a stupid word creates a blank space where the audience must deduce the truth.

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Yeah, it's deduce that's about deducting what happened. Kadush, skadouche, yeah,

17:09

right.

17:09

Yes. Well, be is

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that from

17:11

from Kung Fu Panda? Yeah, but yeah, it'll.. it's just it's all about giving us enough but not giving us everything.

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Okay. What does juxtaposition mean?

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So, two things that don't match facing each other, kind of thing, right? So the juxtaposition is the opposites in action, right?

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Also, though, what I was saying about saying one thing and then visually seeing something different, would that be considered

17:38

that? That's a juxtaposition, yeah, just like what you said, right? Quiver. Let's just do it. Do it.

17:44

Let's just end it right now.

17:46

Done. Yeah, I mean, the most powerful cinematic moments happen when dialog says one thing and the picture says the other, right? Like, we know that this guy's looking at her cell phone, seeing the text from a guy, and he's like, "Oh, who was that? And she says, "Oh, is Jennifer texting me, and he can see that it says Mark, right? That's powerful, because you're like, well, she's lying, and he knows it, and we know it now. What's gonna happen, right? So, yeah, juxtaposition is a great word, and it's a great thing to keep in mind, and put that as a post-it on your computer if you want more

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Post-its.

18:17

Okay, so let's

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know, Scott, you really do like the amount of poison. I say

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it because I know it bugs you. That's the only reason that's not a good

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idea. If he wants to, Scott, I'd like to know. For the hang

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on,

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I'd like for those

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not watching, I pushed my light on my DeLorean. Fluxing, keep fluxing. You're

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gonna split your tea out.

18:39

No

18:40

flux, or what is

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it?

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Fluxing flux capacitor. Yes, and when you say it, it does. It

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does sounds very inappropriate.

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That's because you're inappropriate. I'm smiling at my wife right now. Speaking of inappropriate,

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please pause this if you'd like to pause this. Okay.

19:00

Yes.

19:02

Went in for an appointment this morning. Some lady said, "Oh my goodness, you're not gonna leave. I saw this girl that must have been like nine or 10 and had like nails this long.

19:12

Oh, okay, like fake nails. Yeah, this long. How long, Desiree? That long? Which, if you're not watching this on video and you're listening to the audio, how long? That was about three inches, three

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inches,

19:22  
yeah,

19:23  
three inches long,

19:23  
yeah.

19:25  
So she says to me, I can't believe not only how long they are, because some people, women like girls, obviously like nails that long, but she was like, but like, how do you do anything with the nails, and I said, like, wipe your butt,

19:41  
of course she did. Did you? Did you cup your hat? I did coming together.

19:48  
I did. I went like this. I said it would be like this, and she's like, yeah, right. How would you know that? And I said, because I've asked someone. And then she looked at

19:59  
someone. She wipe your bum with those nails.

20:02  
Then she looked at me, and she says, "Yeah, right. And I said, "Crystal was there, Krista was there. Yeah, and I said, "No, really. And she was like, like someone you know, and I'm like, "No,

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just the lady next to you in the salon. I can see me, like a question. I really gonna know, how do you wipe your butt?

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Sometimes I just surprise myself. Is that a juxtaposition one thing, but not the other? Okay, whatever. That's lack of filter. Anyway, you guys, but if it was made into

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river, if

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it was made in a scene, you could show something different,

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yeah, but not everything needs that, like, not everything, no,

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because then it gets to be over the top, yeah, it's not on the nose, and so, like, cliché, that's so creative

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and clever that you're just, you're paying attention to the fact it's, it's revealing character, you, this person who says that to someone, that's a certain person,

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I said that for real, that I see stuff like this a lot.

21:04

Okay, let's continue. Examples about some movie examples, so so we can put it into practice. Okay, so

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first we're going to talk about thriller horror. You have here examples you want to of the art of the blank space.

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Yes, so examples: shadows, half open doors, out of focus background. You're making the audience wonder what is there, right? You're filling in that space with the door creaking, yeah, yeah, you're filling in, you're filling.. I don't know, a door that sounds like yes, that's more like it, right? But you're filling in the space with their fear, right? If it's a thriller, it's a horror, you're filling that in, you think of Jaws, right? Or that sound you did that once to me when I was asleep.

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After what was it, the movie,

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I can't remember that had that some movie player, which

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project

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was it? I don't think so, but she did that. She came right up in my ear and she made that sound, and it freaked me right. Sorry,

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but it does go with the thing, I was doing sound effects, actually I felt like the listeners who can't see didn't get to see the full fact with the

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with the hand,

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so I'm giving you doing

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the audible things,

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but seriously, sounds like that, like if I did that, you'd be terrified,

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oh for sure, for and that's why thrillers and horrors work so well, if you watch a horror movie, and you set it to campy fun music. It's not scary, right? It's the.. it's the sounds that scare us. Jaws, exactly. You do not see that shark for most of the movie,

22:31

no?

22:31

Right? They, because they don't want to, because they don't want to give it away. A lot of times, if you.. if you show us everything, then there's nothing to fear.

22:37

You know what else is scary?

22:38

What

22:40

baby shark

22:42

too, that is kind of scary after a while.

22:45

Anyway, no, the shark can draw. Yeah. Next one, do you have anything else to add?

22:49

Nope.

22:50

Next one is drama romance.

22:52

Yeah, so a lingering gaze, you know, distance between people.

22:56

This is my lingering.. why am I doing this with my mind? Do you have

23:02

something in your eye that would be in a comedy? What's in your eye? A

23:05

style that's

23:06

been done. I was sty in my eye, but, but it's that kind of thing. It's the distance. It's, it's if you have the couple come together and hold hands and touch immediately, then then you're taking all the anticipation away, right? You want to have that space of, you know, oh my gosh, look how close they are. They're they're so close, their fingers are about a half an inch from the other. Are they going to touch right?

23:27

What if their spouses are just visiting in another aisle down the

23:33

way? Ooh, and they're

23:34

like,

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and they don't know the spouses are there, but we do, but we don't see them as being as close as they touch Mikey's touch, pinkies, pinkies, electric. Yeah, so recent movie people we meet on vacation. If you haven't seen that, it's a good show, but it's that idea of best friends who should be together but they can't. So in that movie, great examples is there's always it's the physical reactions that the one has to the realization that the other person is dating someone right now, so every time they meet, it's like, okay, are we now single, is this gonna happen, but there's always something going on that doesn't allow them to be together, so it, and they don't say

they're not telling each other how they feel, they see someone with them, the audience gets to know how they feel, but they don't say it right, or they say

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they show us without telling us,

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right? Or they have the character say something that that

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is not on the nose, misdirects them. Yes,

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and but you know that juxtaposition, we know that they're looking at them like, I want to kiss her right now, and then, oh, there's a guy, oh, so why were you looking at me like that? Well, yeah, broccoli in your teeth, you know, like that juxtaposition, right? So that's what you kind of see in those. What's the next one, the

24:49

topic or the genre? I hate you guys more than anything. Sci-fi fantasy, hate it, hate it, hate it, hate it, hate it. All the movies in the theater right now are sci-fi fan. To see it sucks.

25:02

I know people want to escape life for a while, like all of us

25:05

want to, like, do something that's going to do something

25:09

different. I know, but yeah, in science fiction, it's all about showing us enough about the world, right? And the rules of the world, why this is different, how things work, without blatantly having someone say, okay, so this is everything you need to know about this science fiction world we put you in, right? It's using visual clues to just make us wonder, ooh, what, but why is that person walking like a robot, and you know, why is that person not able to drink water out of the sink? They're not going to say, oh, the water's water doesn't come out of the sink in the right way anymore, it's poison, right? That the sink will just, the taps will be off, and they have to get water from the fridge, and you're like, "Oh, must do something wrong with the water. You're leaving it out, you're giving us the visuals, but you're not fully explaining everything. Science fiction big for that. Yes,

25:53

I have a question.

25:54

What's your question?

25:55

My question is not question.

26:00

Yes, your hand is up. Can I help you?

26:03

I have a comment. I wonder how many times you're gonna take this

26:07

out. None.

26:10

I have a comment.

26:11

Yes, what's your comment? This

26:12

is why I hate sci-fi.

26:14

Yes,

26:14

sci-fi. What did you say?

26:16

Fantasy.

26:16

Yeah, I hate

26:17

it. Why?

26:18

Because when I watch a movie, I want to escape. I want to feel like, okay, yeah, I'm in a different place.

26:23

Yeah,

26:24

things that are sci-fi fantasy make me have to think too much. That makes sense sometimes, like most of the time, I just want to just

26:34

escape and not have to think,

26:35

not have to think, and a lot of times it's just the, it's they're known to have so much information, because it's not real life, or you have to

26:45

really, really pay attention, because if you miss one thing, you're like, why is he doing that,

26:49

and for those who love this genre, sorry to tell you, none of them are based on true stories,

26:57

none of them are real, but the whole point of it is, it could be no, it

27:00

can't be real,

27:01

that's the whole point of no, but that's the whole,

27:03

so for me, I can't, obviously, we've talked about that, that I can't just be like, okay, yeah, that's that's cool, that could maybe happen, no, I can't do that, but for me it's mainly that I can't, like I don't want to think about

27:16

it, yeah, makes sense, it's

27:17

too many complex moving parts, yeah,

27:20

so and that's the thing, is if you just then said, 'Hey, Desiree, hang on a second, I'm gonna explain all of this to you now, let's go.

27:26

It's even more boring. It's

27:27

boring because there's nothing, there's nothing fun to learn. So, yeah, it's not for everybody. Comedy, comedy is all about..

27:34

I was just.. oh, sorry,

27:35

what is the next subject? Desiree,

27:36

comedy, comedy is all about..

27:38

it's about reactions, right? It's about how the characters react to things. A lot of time, that's where comedy comes from. You don't tell us how they're thinking, what they think, or how they're going to do something. They just do it, right?

27:49

Think you should probably have put the story about this toilet paper sales chick in this part of comedy.

27:55

That would have been that, would have been the good one,

27:57

because they don't, right? You just say, and then I think with comedy too, it's a lot of like,

28:02

oh,

28:02

I can't believe they said that,

28:04

yeah,

28:04

right, it's the unexpected,

28:06

yeah, exactly, it is, it's the unexpected, and especially in comedy, it's heavy juxtaposition, right, because you'll be like, oh, I heard some shouting in here, is your wife okay, and they're like,

yeah, she's fine, and then you see her throwing up wildly on the floor in the background, right, a lot of that juxtaposition happens, right? Like something about Mary, he comes to the door and she's like, you know, he's like, "Are you ready? And she's like, "Oh, you have some, you have some hair gel in your hair, right? After he was just doing his thing in the bathroom, and he's like, "Oh, no, that's not gel, and she grabs it and puts it in her hair, and we all know what it is, but she has no clue, which makes it funny, right? It's one of the most iconic, funniest moments in a movie,

28:42

so you know how, like, you know how I am.

28:44

Yes, how are you?

28:46

So, when me and my bestie, we went out for our nails,

28:49

yes,

28:50

we met this really nice guy that was doing her pedicure, and he had a glob of something in his hair.

28:56

Oh, and you thought of that movie when I did think of that movie,

29:00

that was the first thing, but John is more on the proper side, so I didn't want to say, John, I look what's in his hair, it looks kind of like this, right? So what it does, right? Do

29:13

you took it out of his hair?

29:14

I sure did.

29:15

Oh,

29:16

I said, then he came over, leaned over, and

29:22

said, "You summoned him with your.. I did,

29:24

with my long nails. Yeah, I summoned him over, and then I went like this.

29:31

Yes.

29:32

No, I didn't. I picked it out of his hair, but then I realized it was a piece of gel. I'm hoping it was gel, but it had dried, it had dry, so then I picking that, I, I, I took the plunge, you guys, I picked out the big chunk, but then it left little pieces of, like, of dandruffy stuff, so it was like monkey eating, eating your,

29:58

you weren't eating it, don't put that in. Mitch, there. No,

30:00

but I'm saying I kept picking

30:02

monkey cleans their other monkey, yeah. And

30:04

then he was like, are you almost done? And I'm still picking.

30:08

That's like a great movie scene for a comedy, right there, right. And that's the key. That's the thing. It's if you can tell us something visually instead of having characters put words to it, do it every single time you can, every single time, because it's always like I always say this to people, I'm like, so you, you go to a movie and you come home, so as you go to a movie and you come home and I say, oh, what was the movie about? You could tell me everything that you saw, but you will rarely ever tell me what someone said. You don't remember everything people say in a movie or TV show, you'll remember certain lines and things, but you will remember everything you saw, right? Because it visually, that's how our minds work. So great examples, the ring drop in the sixth sense. If you haven't seen the sixth sense, I'm ruining it for you. I don't care, you should have seen it. If you're.. if you haven't, you should have. Go watch.

30:56

If you haven't, you're a loser. Yeah,

30:57

basically. So, instead of us, instead of like the characters or the kid, the kid could have said, you know, I know that you're dead, I know that you're not here, because I see dead people. It's right

in front of us, no one sees it, but instead of saying it, instead of putting words to it, his ring falls on the floor, rolls across the floor to show us his wife, because he's not there, because he died, and you, that's when you realize this character is actually dead this whole time. They don't put words to it, it's all done visually, right? The opening of up, like one of the greatest openings of all time, the montage of Carl and Ellie, and the adventures they had in that sequence. Not a single word is spoken to the audience. By the end of that audience, you feel everything you've ever felt in your life, and you're ready to go. They don't tell us, "Oh, I miss my wife, we used to have adventures, you know, she died, she got sick. Like, you can have characters say that, but if you can show it instead, that's it. That perfect example, the ending of Inception. Pretty much anyone who's seen Inception knows it ends with the spinning top,

32:03

Inception.

32:04

Yeah, so there for people who don't know about Inception, with Leonardo DiCaprio, Christopher Nolan movie, it's about entering the dream state, right? And so he spins this cool spinning top, and when that top falls, it means you're out of the dream, that's how it's set up in the movie.

32:21

So at the end of the movie, the whole idea is we don't know if all of this stuff is actually real or if it's just this is all a character's dream.

32:28

I hate these movies,

32:29

it's so good. So that the end of he spins the top and we're watching it and we're watching it and it spins forever, and then bam, cut to black. We don't know if it fell or not. So you're not telling us everything, you're leaving it open, right, but you're not explaining, you're not saying, you know, oh, he could be sleeping, I don't know if he's sleeping. Are we a dream? Are we real? It doesn't do that. It doesn't waste words. So I'm gonna read this scene excerpt, right. This is, this is just made up. There's no dialog here, no dialog at all. It's all visuals, it's all action, but it's not visuals that specifically tell us something, either it's an example that leaves us in the dark, and that I'll post this in the show notes, so that everyone can kind of take a look. Okay, as a

33:08

suggestion,

33:09

yes,

33:10

for all those that are watching or listening, I think you would get this part better if you closed your eyes,

33:18

sure,

33:19

to see if you could see it. Now, if you're driving a motorized vehicle, or jogging might suggest,

33:26

or watching your baby, you know, maybe don't close your eyes, pull over to the side of the road, or pause and reconvene when you're not going to be in danger.

33:34

Yeah,

33:34

yeah, okay. So here we go. See if you can see if you can understand how it's making you wonder what's going on. That's why I

33:41

said closing your eyes, because sometimes you can see it better. How about

33:44

you? Close your eyes, and you tell me what you don't

33:45

want them to watch me close my eyes. How lame is this?

33:47

But some people are only listening, so they won't know. Okay. Exterior suburban house, night rain lashes against the dark windows. One lone light burns on the second floor. Interior kitchen continuous. The room is spotless. Bleach hangs heavy in the air. Mara 40s stands at the sink. She wears a pristine silk blouse. She scrubs a cast iron skillet. There is no food on it. She scrubs the same pot over and over rhythmically. Her knuckles are white. On the kitchen island sits a single untouched plate of cold pasta. Next to it, an empty chair beside the plate. Mara's cell phone buzzes. The screen lights up. 12 missed calls. David, Mara does not look at it. She keeps scrubbing faster now. Mara stops, turns to look at the phone. The sponge drips soapy water onto her clean shoes. She doesn't blink. She listens to the silence that follows. She turns off the faucet. The quiet is deafening. Mara walks to the kitchen trash can. She scrapes the entire untouched dinner into the garbage. She takes her cell phone, drops it face down in the puddle of soapy water left in the sink, and walks out. Mara walks toward the. Door sitting by the umbrella stand is a single large leather suitcase. It is packed full, the zipper straining. Mara reaches the front door, her hand hovers over the deadbolt. She rests her forehead against the

cold wood of the door. She stands there for a long beat, breathing in the dark. Then she pulls her hand away from the lock. She walks back toward the stairs, leaving the suitcase behind. So, there's a lot going on there. It's not

35:27

gonna happen, that's what I want to know,

35:29

right? Why doesn't she leave, right? So, like the breakdown of everything, right, the bleach and the scrubbing, right? It's a metaphor. The script never says Mara is feeling intense guilt or she's trying to erase a mistake, like you'll see that in action. Writers will say that she is scrubbing this because she's trying to get rid of her mistakes. Well, you can't see that exactly. Don't write unless her mistake,

35:49

unless she's written something with Sharpie on the plate.

35:52

Yeah,

35:52

and she accidentally had a mistake.

35:54

Yes, you know right. But the audience can infer it through her compulsive cleaning, right? How she's clean, scrubbing the pan that's already clean, over and over and over, like with

36:03

white knuckles,

36:04

right? She's, or she's just not in her head, she's out of her head somewhere else, and not even noticing. There's so many things, because

36:09

she's in her head. But

36:10

we get to play along, right? We're like, oh, why? Right, the missed calls. We don't need a scene of David yelling at her. We don't need a scene of her yelling at David.

36:17

We just know she's not answering the phone,

36:18

right? 12 calls, right?

36:20

Why is David calling?

36:22

Why is he keep calling? Why is she ignoring it? Why? Right, it's visually communicating that there's something toxic going on, right? She, the way she throws her phone in the sink, after it's like that's she's done.

36:34

Final,

36:35

there you go.

36:35

It's a final choice, that's

36:37

what it said to you, right? Yeah, instead of saying I'm so done,

36:41

she's done,

36:41

even if she's by herself. Like, I mean, we talk to ourselves sometimes, but

36:45

it would be the same

36:46

if you cannot have characters talk to.

36:48

Speaking of talking to yourself, I helped Chandra, my good friend, move her laser machines right in the van.

36:54

Yeah,

36:55

she got a kick out of this because I was talking to her, and then you know how I sometimes talk, and I'm like,

36:59

yeah,

37:01

and she was in the back just laughing because all the other drivers thought I was talking to them because I kept looking in the rear view. Do you know what I mean? But we do talk to ourselves, we

37:14

do, right? But that's the thing, is she could have.. are

37:16

you gonna get that drip off here?

37:18

She could have easily said, I like yells at the phone that keeps ringing. I don't. I'm done with you, or I'm gonna get the hint and throw.

37:27

The thing is, that doesn't happen to real life. It might, but it's not

37:31

often.

37:31

But if you don't have to have your character speak, don't know. But that's what I'm

37:34

saying. How often, when you're done with someone, do you say, I'm done with them?

37:39

Yeah,

37:40

you don't typically,

37:41

typically, no,

37:42

no,

37:42

no, the suitcase at the front, the deadbolt on the door, right, the physical proximity to the door and the suitcase, right, that, that, like, how long was the suitcase there, was she, is she leaving, and she's just cleaning, like, this was the last shot, she was ready to go, if he doesn't come home for dinner, my suitcase is packed, and I'm gone. That's what I thought, right? If it, why else? She

38:04

goes back in the house, though,

38:05

right? But I'm saying she walked to the door, and the suitcase was already there, waiting, so that says something,

38:11

unless she just needs reassurance. That's still there, that's still my way out.

38:15

Yeah, but, but, but, why? Like, then why does she pack it? How long has it been there?

38:19

And then, why does she come back,

38:20

right? Or my twisted brain is that that's not that, that's not clothes in a suitcase,

38:26

that's a body,

38:28

because I mean the phone buzzes, but no, it's not David, but it doesn't say the phone says

38:32

there's 12 missed calls, and a lot

38:34

of times when you have missed calls, your phone will keep buzzing to let you know that you've missed call,

38:37

right, so this could be this could be David in a suitcase, for all we know,

38:41

exactly right. So, I mean, that's the thing, is you're not telling us what's going on, you're just showing us enough to get us wondering, right? The audience is forced to ask, ask those questions: Is she trapped? Did she choose to stay? Is she ready for one more chance, or what? What's holding her back?

38:57

But I can tell you, for very, the very little amount that I know about her, I already side with her.

39:04

Of course,

39:05

I do. Just even from the dishes scene,

39:07

yeah, you can feel her emotion, and I'm

39:09

like, yeah, I'm on your side, like I can sense what you're feeling. I've been in that place, I want to see what's going to happen to you, and I'm invested.

39:17

Yeah, exactly. And if you give too much away, then the scene isn't interesting anymore. Like, my thought was, okay, so she stops, she's about to open the door, and she stops, and she locks the bolt again, and she backs away. And I thought, oh, that'd be so cool if, as she walked away, we looked down and there's blood dripping from underneath the suitcase, and she's going back to get a rag to clean it up before she leaves. That's what I thought. I'm like, yeah, but still, even if I saw that, it's still, yeah, it's interesting, but it ends it now. I know what's in the super, or when she's

39:44

washing the dishes, maybe she's washing a knife and she's scrubbing the blood from the knife, and then that gives away, right? Right, you just give it away, you just,

39:53

you're instead, you're you in this writing sample, it's using visuals to set up a lot of dish. Different options, and allow the audience to try and figure it out. So, that is a perfect example of the art of the blank space. You use things visually, you don't give us everything visually, you don't give us everything audibly, right? You just give us enough to play along. Got it? That is art. That is a hard thing to do. I'm not a master at it. It's difficult, right. It's a hard thing, and that's why screenwriting is hard. It's not easy, because you can't just go and on for 17 pages about something. You have to convey so much in one small thing,

40:31

unspoken and spoken.

40:33

Yeah, the one of my favorite stories, and maybe the details might not all be perfect, so don't like, be like, "Oh, Scott, you got it wrong, but there was like this competition among all these like big writers, and the idea was write the shortest possible story that tells us the most it possibly can in as few words as possible, and Ernest Hemingway wrote six words that told an entire story.

40:56

What I killed her, then funny,

41:01

no, no, for sale baby shoes never used.

41:10

Huh,

41:11

that tells the story right there. In six words, you immediately are like, okay, wow, baby, they miscarried the baby, like

41:18

maybe they couldn't get pregnant,

41:19

anything, right?

41:21

Baby died,

41:22

such as, and six words, you're just, you're showing us, you're making us see a for sale sign, you're making us see baby shoes, and then never use the sad, you feel sad, and then you're just like you try to picture the person's face who's selling them, it's just, it's like brilliant, right, it's it's so much, two plus two, right, you're not giving us the, the four, so, so that, that's a lot to kind of like take in. I know there's a lot of complicated stuff in there, but it's important because a lot of books, a lot of different things, they don't dig deeper into the deeper aspects of screenwriting that make you great, right? A lot of these give you the tips, gives you certain kind of the same things over first

41:56

level stuff. Yeah,

41:57

and I'm not saying that, oh, I'm so much smarter and all that, I'm not, but these are the kind of things that I think writers need to know and think about, because it'll make you better, I guarantee, if you keep this in mind when you're, when you go back into your script, even just go pick an old script, look at a scene, and see if you're leaving out more than you're giving away, so soak that in, think about that, we're going to pause for a promo, and we will be

42:20

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

43:06

Okay, just so the viewers and the listeners know, this is our question period. If you have a question, you could submit your question to [hello@scriptreaderpro.com](mailto:hello@scriptreaderpro.com) We love to get the questions. Yeah, we also like to hear your comments, any ideas that you have, show

43:22

ideas for

43:23

future episodes. Yeah,

43:24

things you don't want to see Desiree do with her long fingernails on video anymore.

43:28

Please, let's get a better glimpse of who I am, not that they don't know already.

43:32

No,

43:32

you probably all know what I'm like, so this probably was like, yeah, not shocking,

43:36

not shocking,

43:36

right? Okay. First question comes from Jason Bangor, Jason

43:42  
from Bangor, Banger Main, maybe

43:44  
Banger

43:45  
Bang or Main.

43:46  
Why would you kneel?

43:48  
It's not Banger, it's Bangor.

43:51  
Why would you name it still Bangor?

43:52  
I don't know. Not everyone has an immediately dirty mind like you do. Are you pushing your glasses up with your microphone, you've never done that.

44:04  
Hopefully you guys didn't hear. Okay, first question.

44:10  
Yes,

44:10  
Jason, how do you write a character's blind spot without blind spot, without relying on another character to explain it?

44:18  
Like, like, your blind spot is you immediately care too much?

44:22  
I do.

44:22  
So, instead of saying you immediately care way too much about strangers,

44:27  
that's a good spline, right? Instead

44:28

of having another character say that, show you having your blind spot of immediately caring too much. So, show Desiree on her way into a store, and she stops, and she sees a lady only has one sock,

44:42

don't tell no

44:43

story. Most people would just.. most people would just

44:46

talk about this last year.

44:48

No, I don't know if we did. Most people would just continue on, right?

44:51

Yeah,

44:52

showing Desiree, stop.

44:54

I would say back

44:55

up, go back.

44:56

Do you need.. I'm sorry,

44:57

I just.. do you. I'm just going into the store. Do you need a, like, a new pair of socks? That's legit, right? And then, and then you sidetrack your day, and and then they say no, I'm okay, actually. And then Desert will go in, she'll do her shopping, she'll actually come out with a new pair of socks and give it to them anyways, even if they said no, I don't need. I did

45:15

that today at the dollar store.

45:17

Don't take no for an answer.

45:18

No, I, because I don't.

45:19

So then that's an example of showing the blind spot instead of just having a character. Oh, Desiree, she just.. she does.. she cares too much. She needs to stay in her own lane, or whatever, right? Yeah, does that make sense? I hope that makes sense.

45:32

Okay. Cass from St. Lucia.. St. Lucia.. How do you.. I'm not going to try to do my St. Lucian accent.

45:40

Don't do it.

45:41

How do you write a script that says it is a movie or TV show that defies second screen syndrome? Why are these these hard questions?

45:49

Well, you picked them, not me.

45:51

No, random. How do you write a script that says it is a movie or TV show that defies second screen? What's second screen syndrome?

45:59

So, second screen syndrome is you. When you watch a TV show. What are you normally doing,

46:03

Scott? What just happened?

46:04

You jerked your head back. What? What are you accusing me of?

46:07

No, because I always say, Scott, Scott, what? What's he gonna write?

46:11

What do you normally do when you're watching a show or a movie in bed by yourself or with me? You are on your phone looking at things at the same time. A lot of people, that's second screen syndrome, they, they, they are being distracted

46:23

around your

46:24  
glasses.

46:25  
I was showing that

46:26  
microphone, that's

46:27  
some doing something else, and listening,

46:28  
but that's that's that's what a problem, a lot of problems are lately, is that people aren't focusing on the show, so they're on their phones. I don't know how you,

46:37  
I will tell you, I don't know

46:38  
how you write a script that defies that, it, I mean, a science fiction would be a perfect example, because if you're not paying attention, you're done, right? So, but I don't know if that.. I don't know if producers are like, "Oh, I want to make sure that we produce a movie that no one can look at their phone while they're watching it. I don't know how that would work.

46:56  
Once you figure that out and you get your magic stuff,

47:00  
yeah,

47:00  
Calabazu collected. whatever.

47:05  
Yes,

47:05  
get back to us.

47:06

Yeah, I don't.. I mean, I know what you're meaning, but I don't know. I know what you're writing, but I

47:10

don't know what you're meaning. I

47:12

do. Don't worry, I got you. I

47:13

don't understand. Okay? What advice? This is from Marcus, from Mini. Oh, look, Scott, your spelling mistake, Minnesota.

47:22

I don't write, I don't write the question. People, that's the, that's how Marcus, Marcus said, you, because we say, where give us your name and where you're from. So, Marcus from Minnesota, he probably started right, Minnesota, Minnesota, and then he decided it'll be Minneapolis. Sorry, Marcus, we're having fun. I'm

47:41

really worried about you. Where do you live, Marcus?

47:45

Where do you live, Marcus?

47:47

Call home.

47:51

Oh, okay. Marcus,

47:53

yes.

47:53

Here's your question. What did Marcus

47:54

ask?

47:54

Here's your question, Marcus.

47:56

What does he ask?

47:57

What advice do you have for writers who are being told that AI can do what they can

48:05

do, keep doing it. I don't know, everything comes in phases,

48:10

like anything else, like

48:11

anything else. It'll get to the point, like the thing is that I mean, so if someone told me, oh, AI can do what you can do, I'll say probably, like probably to a point, but I know that the way I write, the voice I have, the way I view the world, and different things, an AI can maybe mimic, but there's always going to be something that makes it more authentic from my point of view, just like any of you, right? Our life experiences make us AI doesn't

48:38

help life experiences,

48:39

an AI would not have a character going across and heading into a store and seeing that a lady was missing a sock and have that character stop and go like that. AI wouldn't come up with

48:48

that,

48:48

they would have the character go in the store,

48:50

right?

48:50

Right? Or so, if they were like, oh, get have the character distracted, something horn would honk or something, and they'd become distracted, not like, does like that's.. I think that is it. Draw upon your very personal experiences,

49:03

authentic.

49:03

Yeah, you're, yeah, your authenticity, your life experience is what makes you

49:08

you.

49:08

That an AI cannot be you, right? Don't stop. Don't let AI make you feel like you can't write if you want to write. If you feel like, oh, I'll just use AI to write, you're not a writer, don't do it. It's an insult to everyone who does this. If you're, if you have to use AI to write a story, don't write a story, do something else with your life.

49:32

Maybe you want to go and do a typing job,

49:36

or go and work at a fast food joint. I'm just saying,

49:39

like, you're obviously able to type things and write things, so maybe this isn't the right. Write a

49:44

nonfiction book, AI can do that too, right? Like,

49:47

jump in a lake,

49:48

yeah, just be jumping, you jump in a lake. AI can't jump in a lake, so

49:54

this is from Bud,

49:56

Bud

49:56

from Texarkana.

49:58

Ooh, Texarkana. I said that, right? You did,

50:01

Texarkana. I can say it right, y'all, because my best friend is from Arkansas.

50:07

There you go, y'all. So is Bud.

50:11

So is Bud. Obviously, do what? Do what,

50:16

Bud? Do what

50:16

Bud says. What makes a great inciting incident that is clearly the insulting incident.

50:24

Oh, that's a good question. Because, so,

50:25

what makes a great inciting incident that is clearly the inciting incident?

50:28

Okay, so the inciting incident, for those of you who don't know, if you're just starting out, the inciting incident is something that happens early in the story that makes the story happen. If that event did not happen, it wouldn't be a story. There's no movie, right? If Marty doesn't go to the Twin Pines Mall, and he doesn't see the DeLorean pop out of that truck, there's no movie, right? It's not him going back in the past, that's that's that's the end of Act One. That's, you know, what? Scratch that. Why? Because there's too many Back to the Future people that will then start arguing about it all.

51:00

Why do we have to reference the Back to the Future exactly? Hey, don't. What are

51:04

you doing?

51:05

Nobody puts Marty in the corner. They

51:10

put him behind the building where we can't see him. Okay, so what? How do you know? Right, what makes a great inciting incident that makes it clear is if it doesn't happen, there's no movie that's clear, that's your inciting incident. Okay, so that's it. That's the answer. If you can remove that and still have your movie, it's not your inciting incident. It has to be something impactful that makes the story happen. The end,

51:35

the end,

51:36  
the end.

51:37  
Would you like Yoda to tell the viewers and listeners about where they can contact Script Reader Pro if they have questions.

51:44  
We have a baby Yoda here for those of you who don't. His name's Groggu. Okay, he's baby very good, but I don't. Groggu doesn't have a voice like Yo, but just

51:52  
pretend it's Yoda,

51:53  
all right. So for any of you who scream at Lake and won't know where to go for advice. Screenwriting is pro reader script.

52:13  
No, why are you doing backwards?

52:15  
Talks backwards,

52:16  
so right, he dives

52:17  
his words of that. Okay, this is taking

52:20  
too long. Yeah, go to [scriptreaderpro.com](http://scriptreaderpro.com) check us out. We have every service you'd ever imagine a writer would need. We are all writers ourselves, ourselves in and out of the business, different levels, different types, but we've all been there. That's where experience and our viewpoint comes from. So, check us out. Choose your reader, you choose

52:36  
your reader. Yes, and there's lots of other services available as well on the website. Yeah, I also want to mention, if you liked me specifically,

52:44  
subscribe to Desiree and give Desiree some, some gold stars. Five of them would be wonderful. Tell your friends about it if you enjoyed it. Our goal, there you go. Our goal is to educate and

entertain, so if you learned something great, if you were entertained, even better. Come back next time at Script Reader Pro we are all about helping writers craft wonder one page at a time.