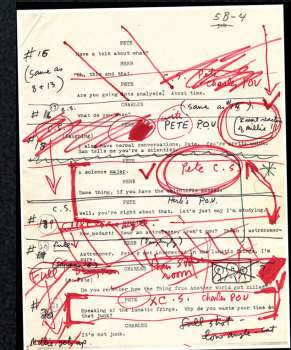
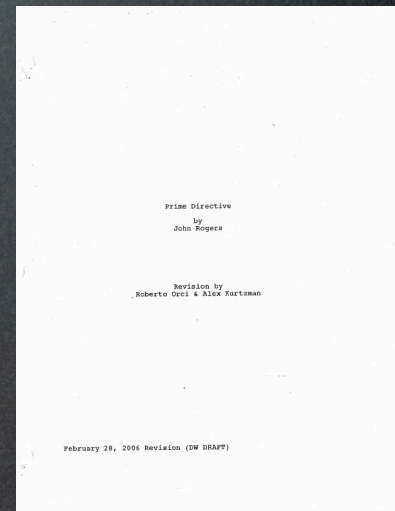


CS 5964

The Evolution of an Idea: Scripts & Scripting



Who is the script for?

- **Actors and crew**--talent gravitates to a good script (voice is talent)
- **Investors**--selling your story
- **Yourself**--a good script directs itself
- **The Director**—especially when the writer and director are not the same people.

Script Format

- **1:1 ratio**--1 page equals 1 minute of screen time
- **12 pt. Font**--Courier New
- **Spacing**--done in www.Celtx.com

Script format*

Formatting in a nutshell

There are three parts of a screenplay: *headings*, *narrative description*, and *dialogue*.

1. Headings (slug lines)

There are three types of headings.

A. Master scene headings, which consists of three main parts:

1. Camera location (EXT. or INT.)
2. Scene location
3. Time (DAY or NIGHT)

B. Secondary scene headings

C. Special headings for flashbacks, dreams, montages, series of shots, and so on

2. Narrative description

The word "narrative" loosely means *story*, and it consists of three elements:

- A. Action
- B. Setting and character (visual images)
- C. Sounds

3. Dialogue

The dialogue block consists of three parts.

- A. The *character cue*, or name of the person speaking, which always appears in CAPS.
- B. The *parenthetical* or *actor's direction* or *wryly*. This is optional.
- C. The *speech*.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The moon shines on the pale, serene face of ELEANOR SAWYER.

ELEANOR
(softly)

Midnight.

She mounts a horse and rides into the darkness, the hoof beats muffled by the leaves and flora on the forest floor.

* Extracted from "The Screenwriter's Bible" by David Trottier

Script format

- **EXT.** (when outside), **INT.** (when inside), or **EXT./INT.** (when moving from inside to outside like with a car)
- **CAPS** for first intro of character
- **CAPS** for sound effects
- **Voice Over (V.O)**--for narration
- **Off Screen (O.S.)**--for character not visible
- **“MONTAGE”, “SERIES OF SHOTS”, and “BACK TO SCENE”**

Script Grammar

- **Subject-Verb-Object (S-V-O)**
 - ex.- “Jack and Jill walk up a hill.”
- **Simple present tense (mostly)**
 - ex.- “Jack and Jill walk up a hill.” Not “Jack and Jill were walking, or walked, or might walk”, just “walk” works. (watch for gerunds)
- **Active voice (not passive)**
 - ex.- “Jill hit Jack.” Not “Jack was hit by Jill.”
- **Action verbs (use a Thesaurus)**
 - ex.- “Jack and Jill **bound** up a hill.”

Script Writing

- **Descriptive adjectives/adverbs**--
impressionistic rather than elaborate;
the essence of a person or place
 - ex.- “Stale pizza and Rock Band” in a dorm room captures the essence of a college student instead of listing everything in the room and on the walls
- **Beats of action, or units of action**--not a shot, but two or three
- **Keep paragraphs short**
- **Spec script**--not about camera yet

Script Guidelines

- **Show don't tell**--if it's not an action, you can't show it
- **Read out loud**
- Keep the **flow** of the story
- Let your own **voice** and the **style** of the piece come out
- Finding the right word is like hitting the right note; **take time with it**
- **Writing is rewriting**

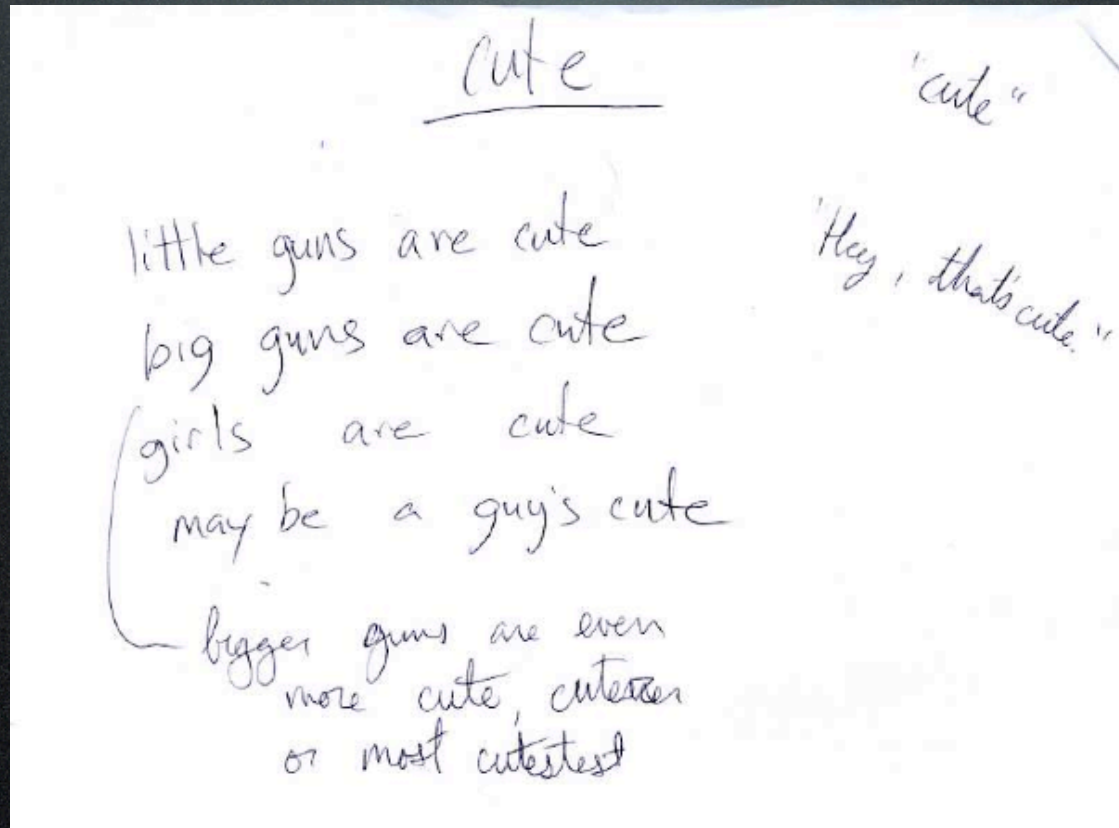
Celtx

Let's check it out.

Celtx

“Cute”

an original piece written in class



“Shitty first draft” or “child’s draft” -- Anne Lamott