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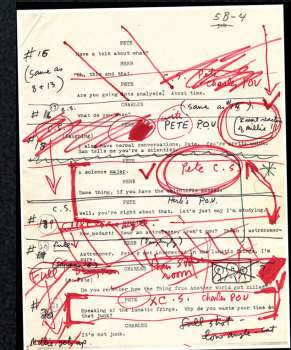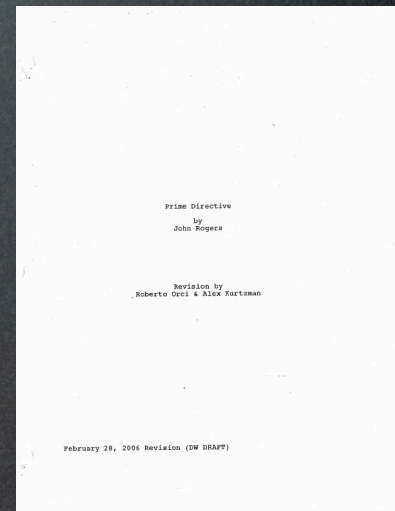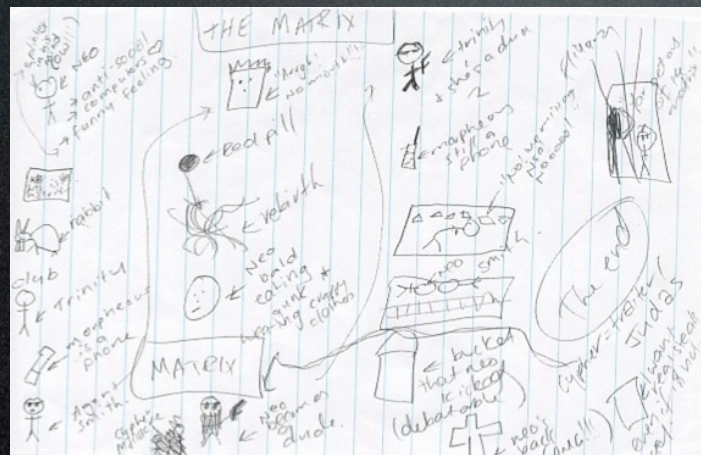
The Evolution of an Idea: Scripts & Scripting

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

Script Format

- **1:1 ratio**--1 page equals 1 minute of screen time

- **12 pt. Font**--Courier New

- **Spacing**--done in www.Celtx.com

Celtx Overview

"I'm a Ute and I'm a Cougar #2 (Real Cougar)"

Script format*

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.

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 s

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 a in CAPS.
    B. The *parenthetical* or *actor's direction* or *wryly*. This is optional.
    C. The *speech*.

*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
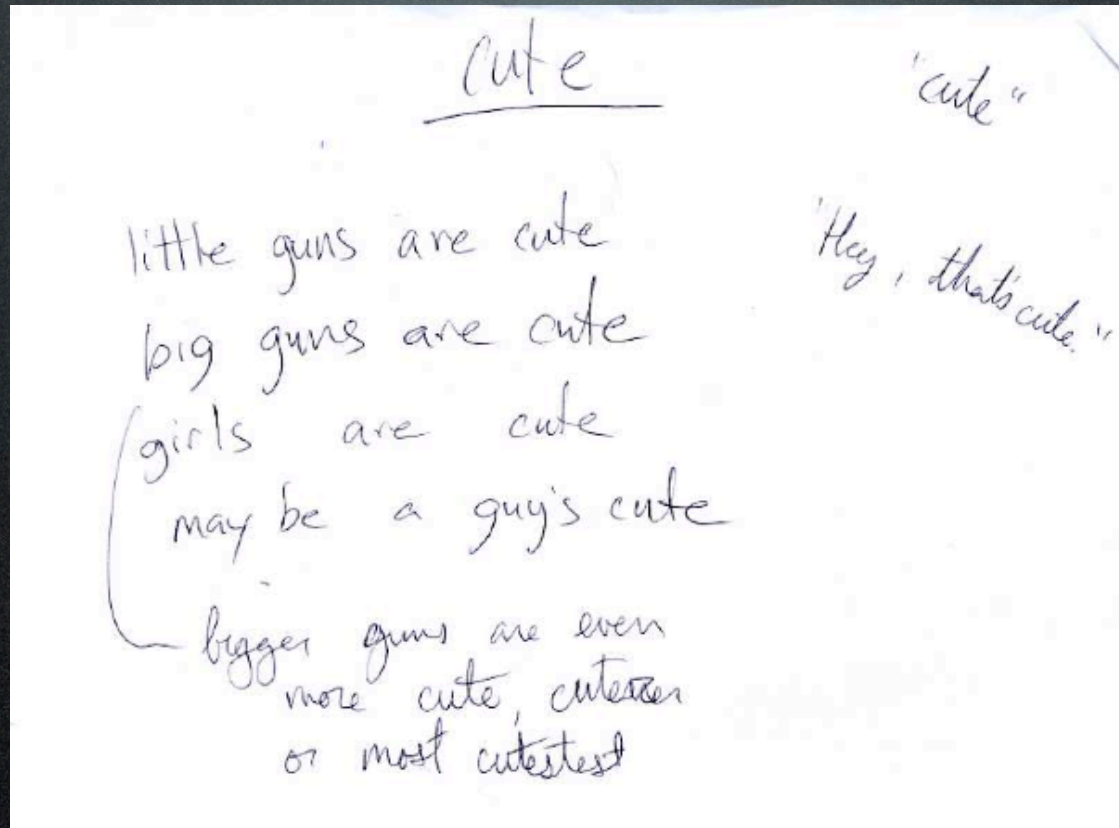
- Writing is rewriting

Celtx

"I'm a Ute and I'm a Cougar #2 (Real Cougar)"

Celtx

"Cute"
an original piece written in class

"Shitty first draft" or "child's draft" -- Anne Lamott