Script/Film Planning Guide for the 3in6 Digital Video Competition 2005

> "Always bear in mind that a film production begins and ends with a screenplay." Ernest Lehman 1916-2005.

What is a Script?

- A blueprint for a movie
- A story told with pictures
- Theme, character and structure
- A collaborative process
- A Technical Instruction Manual

How to Write A Script

- The Premise- a statement of the main character/s and their dilemma
- The Synopsis-3 paragraphs- The Beginning, The Middle and The End of the story
- The Outline-1 to 3 pages- Describes the Setup, Development and Resolution and Sketching of the Characters
- Character Notes- Outlines different characters and the background

How to Write A Script, Cont'd....

- Pitch Document- Contains all of the above
- Scene Breakdown- A list of points outlining the key events of each scene
- The Treatment- More detail of each scene eg: character detail, dramatic moments. Is written in third person present tense
- Sample Dialogue- Test scenes so that ecah character speaks in their own distinctive voice
- The Screenplay- A4 page, Courier 12 point font, has scene headings, stage directions and dialogue

So Where Do We Start?

- Surprisingly you can start anywhere?
- An idea, featuring a central character and a situation-news story, song, dream etc…
- A Genre- comedy, adventure, sci-fi, thriller
- A Theme- No Place Like Home, Revenge, Tell the Truth, Loneliness
- Adaptation- Novel, Short Story, Biography, Real-Life Event

Successful Films- All With A Central Key Character

- Michael J "Crocodile" Dundee in Crocodile Dundee
- Muriel Heslop in Muriel's Wedding
- Babe- the sheep pig in Babe
- Archie Hamilton and Frank Dunn in Gallipoli
- "Mad" Max Rocktansky in Mad Max
- Scott and Fran in Strictly Ballroom
- Darryl Kerrigan in The Castle
- Harry Harbord in Breaker Morant

Screenplay Character Descriptions

SPIDER MAN (Produced David Koepp)

PETER PARKER, a 17 year old boy. High school must not be any fun for Peter, he's one hundred per cent nerd: skinny, zitty, glasses. A GIRL stands in the entrance to the alleyway. MARY-JANE WATSON, seventeen, sexy, with a knowledge and sadness way beyond her years. A Character Decsription is composed of: NAME, Age, Physical Features, Nationality, Social Background, Phsychological Traits.

Example Synopsis

THE WIZARD OF OZ

Dorothy Gale, 16, an attractive, spirited and energetic girl with a great love for animals, has a little dog called Toto, wants to escape the boredom of her life on her farm in Kansas. However when a tornado sweeps her away into a strange land called Oz, she encounters strange beings and situations and makes new friends.

Finally both in spite of-and because of-her amazing journey, she realizes there is "no place like home".

The Pitch

In 20 words 'hook' the listener's interest and 'sell' the screenplay concept to a producer. It makes them say "Tell Me More!" or "What Happens Next!"

For example:

An American reporter goes to the Australian Outback to meet an eccentric crocodile poacher and invites him back to New York- Crocodile Dundee. A Blind Man is being abused by a jealous housekeeper and seeks to show that he doesn't need her- Proof.

The Plot

THE JAMES BOND FILMS

•M gives a task to Bond

•The Villain appears to Bond

•Woman appears to Bond

•Bond goes crazy about woman

•Villain captures Bond

•Bond Conquers Villain

•Bond re-unites with woman- whom he then loses

The One-Liners

FAMOUS ONE-LINERS- Very Effective!

•"To Infinity and Beyond" – Toy Story

•"That's not a knife- THAT's a knife"- Crocodile Dundee

•That'll do pig. That'll do" –Babe

•"I'm sorry Dave, I'm afraid I can't do that" – 2001: Space Odyssey

•"Bond, James Bond"- The Bond Films

•"May the Force Be With You"- Star Wars

•"I'll get you my pretty and your little dog too"- The Wicked Witch
                    of the West- Wizard of Oz

Zach Alexakos 2005