

Last week, I started to tell you, as a Creative Exec, what I look for in a script. I want to continue on that thread and clue you into a little more of what I'm looking for, as well as, what I've seen others look for.

First, let's talk subject matter...

Thrillers.

Everyone wants thrillers.

Low budget. High concept. Tentpole pictures. Blockbusters.

Any kind of thrillers ya got (that's well written) we want them.

EVERYONE does.

Everyone wants the next Jason Bourne series. Hell, I want to WRITE the next Bourne series.

Why?

Cause people fucking love 'em! People love thrillers. It's a box office guarantee.

Now, let me get my biggest pet peeve about people with thrillers. By thrillers I mean Hitchcock. I don't mean the next slasher flick.

It doesn't mean a remake of a Japanese horror film.

It doesn't mean you got caught cheating with some psycho dickwad.

It means running and dodging and fighting and crashing.

It means government conspiracies and political crimes. It means espionage and plots against America.

It's all about the guy next door, the local cop, overcoming odds and beating the bad guys.

THAT is a thriller. Go write that, cause I'll want to read it.

On this topic, do you know what I DON'T want to read?

Christmas movies.

EVER.

Funny thing is? I get pitched and sent Christmas movies ALL the time.

You do know that I work for the man who put Gwyneth Paltrow's head in a box, right? The guy who won an Oscar for producing a movie that depicted American soldiers killing innocent women and children in Vietnam?

No, you're right...what am I thinking. Totally, send me your Christmas movie. It's right up our alley.

Along with that, send me your stoner comedy, fantasy flick, lame spoof film and period drama cause that's totally what we do.

Now that that's settled let's dive back into some of the writing...

Typos.

Please don't have them.

I'm serious.

I had a guy pitch me his script and all he could rave about was how well he did in screenwriting competitions. To the point of annoyance.

I read his script and in one VERY long monolog by his main character he used the word "strait" for the word "straight" several times.

Think I continued to read?

I didn't.

I closed the script and moved on with my life.

I know it sounds petty, but it really shows a lack of caring on your part to not take your craft seriously. My scripts go through a rigorous proof reading process through several friends before I give it to people to read.

Sadly, things STILL slip through the cracks.

But at least I know how to use the right words at the right time.

What's next?

Blank title pages.

Final Draft gives everybody a standard title page. You wouldn't believe the number of scripts I get where people don't know this page exists and then sends their PDF file with said blank title page attached.

Nothing makes me happier than to open a PDF of your script and see:

"SCRIPT TITLE"

Written by

Name of First Writer

Not cool.

This shows you don't know how to use Final Draft.

Although, props for using Final Draft, but learn the program. This is your career we're talking about here.

COME ON!

Moving on...

I want a page turner.

I want to read the first page and be excited to read the second.

Then the third.

And so on...

It's not an easy thing to do and it seems like an obvious thing to look for, but you have no idea how boring people can write sometime.

If you're writing an action movie about a terrorist cell in LA, don't open the movie with a three page long montage of people doing menial tasks. Open in the action. Get us going right from the start.

If you EVER want to be a successful writer, read Raiders of the Lost Ark. The script gets started and NEVER stops.

In fact, all of the Indiana Jones movies are like that. Even the one where he fights aliens.

Study those films and desire to be the person that writes THAT. Would it really be so bad to be the person that writes the next Indiana Jones series? Really? You don't want that kind of a career?

Take a post it and write the following on it: "Tea sipping is for dry British period pieces!" and put that on the side of your monitor or the bathroom mirror. Somewhere where you'll see it every day.

This note will work two ways. A) you're writing a movie that moves and you'll never slow it down thanks to this note. Or, B) you're actually writing a British period piece and this note will serve a constant reminder of what makes THOSE movies great.

See? I gotcha covered.

Lastly, and I know this is going to be highly repetitive, but it's really kind of the most important thing to look for.

Marketability.

I know it seems obvious. I know there are exceptions for the rule, but the bottom line is that it's got to be able to sell.

The market is a lot different now than it was 20 years ago. Hell, even 10 years ago. Why do you think there are so many comic book franchises coming to the big screen? Or remakes? It's because the higher ups will know that they will get the core fans to come out.

It's safe.

Remember that next time you hear about a remake and gag and proclaim: "Ugh! They're remaking THAT?! Why?!"

It's safe. That's why.

But I love Wes Anderson movies!

That's great, but chances are...you're not Wes Anderson. You might be one day, but you're not now.

In fact, add that to a post it and put it underneath your other one.

"You're not Wes Anderson!"

On a completely different topic, I've been thinking that I'd like to make this column a little more interactive. Maybe I'm not hitting specific situations or maybe you have questions that would benefit the greater audience. That being said, if there's anything you want to ask or talk about, please send me your comments and questions.

You can email them to weekendread@gmail.com.

Hopefully we can get a dialog going and have some awesome conversations.

Fair warning though, anything you send me is subject to be reprinted in the column. Good or bad.

Till next week...