

So I hope everyone had a great holiday. I myself was happy to get back to L.A. from Detroit. I went from raining 30 degree weather to sunny 82 degree weather. Nothing better than hitting the pool at the end of November.

Love it.

So this week I'm turning to the mailbag to generate content for y'all. Mostly due to the fact that I feel that all of you would benefit from the answer as it's something that keeps coming up.

Rewrites and what you do about the notes.

So let's get to it...

Hi Manny,

A few questions I had on the development process and rewrites you currently are working through...

-Understanding the process needs to be collaborative, do you or have you ever given in too much from where you felt the story should go?

No because at the end of the day it's my fucking script and if I don't agree with something, then I'm not going to do it.

BUT, the key to being collaborative is to use their idea to get you to a higher level. It's spit ballin', that's all. They say, "what about this..." and you think about it and fire back with "No, that's good because then we can do this..."

And you hammer it out so that you're both equally happy with what you're looking for.

Now, keep in mind that I have yet to encounter studio heads and junior exec's that want to fuck up the script for stupid reasons (ego, product placement, star head fucks...etc.) so this is coming from a purely positive development process.

Remember one important thing: You should always be on the same page as to "where the story is going to go." That's already been talked about, re-talked about and discussed a little more. As long as you're there before you even start writing, then the only things that are going to get hammered out are the finer details.

Further have you agreed to rewrite something - it sounded great at the time - then a day or so later determine it is not the best way to go?

Sure, all the time. It's part of the process. Sometimes you can make it work, sometimes you can't. Sometimes what seems like a good idea in a development meeting doesn't turn out to be a good idea when you actually sit down at the keyboard.

Don't worry about it. That's first and foremost. Remember, you're the writer. Sometimes you just have to roll with it and make do. Who knows, maybe it'll spark your imagination in another direction and

you'll come up with something even better than what you did in the meeting. Roll with what feels right to YOU and then be prepared to defend your choice(s) when you meet again.

I know that is also part of the process discovering new things, but I am looking at it from the perspective of the writer who does not have the pull in the situation.

Okay, I get what you're saying but I want to change your attitude a little bit. Recognize son! You DO have pull. Know why?

CAUSE YOU'RE THE FUCKING WRITER!

Of course you have pull, they asked you to do it, right? You haven't gotten fired, have you? You're doing all the hard work. They're just sitting in their chair throwing shit out at you. Don't undermine yourself. You have just as much say in that room as they do. More so if it's your script and your idea.

Even if it's your pitch on THEIR idea, it's still yours. So buck up and act like it.

Now, that doesn't mean be a dick and be arrogant. But do put a little bass in your voice and have some authority.

Should the writer just continue the rewrite since he said agreed in the meeting?

Yes and no. It depends on what you're feeling. If you can't make it work, do the best you can and understand that it's just a rough sketch.

If you take it in another direction...fine. Just be prepared, as I said above, to defend your decisions.

Best way to defend? Get excited. Go in there and go "Oh my God, I figured it out and you're going to love this!" Then launch into your new idea. 9 times out of 10, they're going to get excited that you're excited and completely forget what they even said in the first place because you presented your idea as being AWESOME!

Manipulate people. It's all part of the game.

-Somewhat tangent to the above - you meet with the team, exchange notes, and agree to meet again by such and such date to review the new agreed rewrites. Have you ran into moments where you needed more time to complete the next set of rewrites before the next meeting?

Okay, this is tricky. Once again, it's going to depend on who you're dealing with. The situation I'm in right now is kind of a fluke. I'm working for free for a guy who wants to set this up as a side project. So he's not really in that much of a hurry and wants me to take as much time as I need to get it right. That being said, I don't have too many hard deadlines.

Now, doesn't mean that I want to slack off and fart around with it. I still want to present myself as an efficient writer that can bring a script home in a timely manner.

With that, I ALWAYS over compensate. He wants 15 mages by Monday? I punch through and bring him 20. He's asking for the first 30? I bring him the first 40-45.

Then, when I get into re-write mode, I can sort of be a little slacker-ish because he knows I can deliver when I need to.

Read the situation accordingly and do the best you can. If you have the right group you can either a) call before the deadline, tell them you're stuck and then brainstorm to get unstuck, b) call and ask for more time or c) go in there and say that you ran into a wall and let's put our heads together and figure out a solution.

Have you come back to the meeting with only a portion of the agreed rewrites completed due to time constraint?

Yup. Is what it is.

Understanding you likely gave advance notice before the meeting of where you gotten... I guess this also depends on how elaborate the segment being rewritten is...

Exactly.

So that's the end of the screenwriting portion of the email. So if you got what you needed, I would suggest tuning out for the rest because we are about to get pretty fucking geeky up in this bitch.

Yup. That's right. Comic books.

So for those of you that are tuning out...catch you next week...everyone else...let's get fucking nerdy!

-Totally tangent... I know you read Year One, so I'm guessing your read others... I am not much of a fan of The Dark Knight Returns, but loved Year One. Is this a complex of mine :)... or do you know others in this boat?

Big fan of Year One, obviously. I mean if you like Batman, Year One pretty much fills the Bat Love Juice quota. I haven't read Dark Knight in years but I don't remember being turned off by it. So it might just be you.

Anyone care to weigh in?

Books 1 & 2 of DKR were great, though I was not connected with Robin which diluted the fight against the Joker in book 3...

Sorry, but Fuck Robin. Robin is a... oh, DAMN YOU BRETT RATNER!

Yeah, not a fan of the Boy Blunder.

and Batman and Superman save the universe on a yearly basis, but they cannot overcome this "misunderstanding." Superman could just ask "did you really kill him" instead of going into full on battle with his long time friend...

You know what? That happens everywhere. I was watching a movie last night where shit could have been resolved by just having a conversation. Think about it though, what would you rather see?

Batman and Superman fucking sipping tea and having a heart to heart?

Or...

Batman and Superman fucking going fist-a-cuffs, razzling through the streets?

Yeah, I thought so. Remember, sipping tea is only allowed in stuffy, British period pieces. Everywhere else?

Fist-a-cuffs!

Do you have any favorite reads or specific books you follow?

I'm so glad you asked this because I've sort of wanted to talk about this for a while now, but couldn't really find a way to bring it up in the column.

This might be a little trendy given the fact that it's been turned into a TV show, but seriously...people...

The Walking Dead.

The books are fucking phenomenal! I downloaded the entire series (91 books to date) and read them in a weekend. I just couldn't stop. I even got my friends hooked on it too. So now we read the books, watch the show and then discuss where it's going, how the show is veering from the books, where the show is making up for things lost in the book and vice versa.

The art is amazing. The action is off the hook and the best part is that no character is sacred. Anyone can go at any time which, in a zombie apocalypse, is pretty accurate.

Even if you're not into comic books, I highly recommend you give these a peep. You won't be disappointed, I promise you.

Later,

Jovan

Thanks Jovan! Hoped I could help and hoped you all learned something.

Till next week...