

What Not To Do at a Pitchfest. (Part 2)

There are a series of writers I see at EVERY pitchfest. I'm going to spend this week talking about those writers.

You do not want to be ANY of these kinds of writers and I will tell you why for each one. If you recognize yourself as one of these writers, stop now. I promise you it will do wonders for your pitchfest career.

Let's jump in with one of my favorites...

THE A LA CART WRITER:

The A La Cart Writer is a special kind of writer. They sit down at the table, get comfortable and then hand me their menu.

Their menu is a one page sheet of 8-10 loglines for scripts they've written. After they hand it over, they ask me what I'm looking for and that they can pitch anything off the menu.

So why is this wrong?

A few reasons...

First, as I said last week, know who you're pitching to. Why are you giving me a list? You should know the company I represent and what I'm looking for.

Second, it takes a certain amount of time to write a script. You have to write it, send it out, get it read (even by friends) and rewrite it based on the feedback you get.

So you're telling me that you've done this? 8-10 times? In a few years?

Woody Allen has been making a movie a year since 1969. He is the only director to pull off such a task. Are you trying to tell me you're Woody Allen?

I doubt it.

So you have 8-10 scripts and none of them are probably any good. In my mind, you write and move on, continuing to write without ever re-writing. To me, that makes you a hack writer.

Lastly, if you have 8-10 scripts, this isn't your first rodeo. You've been pitching for a while. I see 10 scripts on your menu and see 10 passes. No one wants your shit, yet you keep trying to sell it. I see 10 scripts, I know I don't want any of it because no one has wanted any of it.

Being an A La Cart Writer puts a bad taste in my mouth and immediately makes me write them off before they have even opened their mouth. You got 10 scripts? Fine. Don't tell me. Know who you you're pitching to, pick your script and sit down with confidence. I won't know the difference and I won't be pissed at you for being a fucktard.

A LA CART WRITER REDUX

There's a second type of this writer. They're the ones without the menu. They sit down and the first words that come out of their mouth are:

"So what are you looking for?"

(see rant above)

For fucks sake DON'T DO THIS!

Know who you're pitching to and tell me your script with confidence!

Next!

THE AWARD WINNER

The Award Winner sits down and jumps right into all of the fantastic awards they've won with the script they're pitching.

I've never heard of any of the competitions they spew. Know why? Nobody fucking cares.

If you really won some shit then why are you at my table trying to pawn it off on me?

If I submitted to every fucking screenwriting competition, I'd win some to. But I don't. Know why? Cause no one gives a fuck.

There are, like, four major competitions out there. The Austin Film Festival. The Final Draft Big Break. The Nicholl and the prestigious Sundance Screenwriter's Lab.

And if you land in the top 10 of any of those, I'll listen. But in all reality, you shouldn't be sitting across the table from me at a pitchfest. I'll find you.

Nobody gives a shit about placing in the top three of "tom's basement screenwriting competition."