

I spent most of the week doing something I rarely do. Reading scripts for fun and not for work. I spend most of my days trying to get through spec scripts that I start to get bitter about the process. So I decided to load up on scripts that are going into production or have already wrapped on production and will be out in the next couple of months.

I have to tell you, from a writing standpoint, you can really see the difference. These scripts are downright page turners. I get lost in the world's that are created and actually care about the characters.

Here's a shortlist of what I read: Dark Shadows, The Gangster Squad, Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter, Taken 2, Argo and Project X.

It was really motivational as a writer. Seeing what quality, working writers are doing and knowing that you're not that far off from them. Made me want to sit back down at the keys and get crackin'.

I strongly suggest that you go out and seek quality material. With the internet it's not that hard to find scripts. Besides the barrage of screenwriting websites that have scripts, there's also [imsdb.com](http://imsdb.com) which has a shit ton of scripts available.

If you want to be a screenwriter, it's best you read scripts. Seems like a no brainer to me, but I know how stubborn some people can be. I know, I know... just reading a book and a taking a seminar makes you a screenwriter. I get it.

Please, take the time to read GOOD scripts.

It's funny, but the one thing I notice the most about good scripts, is how fast I get through them. They are literally page turners.

Yesterday I was given a script from a guy I met a couple of times. He called me up and asked me to give it a read.

Now, it's not horrible, but it's not very exciting either. It took me half a day to get through the first 12 pages because I just wasn't compelled to read it. The dialog was kind of cheesy and the action wasn't really full of well...action.

So I shelved it for the day and pulled out Taken 2. I was about 30 minutes in when I got interrupted and had to stop reading. I was on page 40. I just couldn't put it down because it was just such an easy read and fun to read.

Isn't that what you want for your scripts? Don't you want execs to be annoyed that someone came in and interrupted them while they were reading your script?

I know I would.

Anyway, didn't get lucky enough to read all great scripts this week...there was one bad script. I can't tell you the name of the script because I wasn't supposed to have it, but let's just say that someone slipped me a script of a straight to DVD sequel of a movie franchise that I kinda like.

It's pretty much B-action, but hey, that's what I grew up on so it's a guilty pleasure. (ironically, as I write this I have Code of Silence on starring Chuck Norris.)

Fuck the script was horrible! I mean really bad. I read it in between reading Abraham Lincoln and Gangster Squad so I'm sure that didn't help, but wow...if THIS guy can write and sell a script, none of us should have any problems.

So what was bad about it?

Couple of things and please, if you do these...STOP.

First, he went into major detail of every little punch, kick, dodge, throw and slam in every fight scene. He literally choreographed the fight scenes on the page. You know what's NOT exciting? Reading every detail of a fucking fight scene!

It was pages of "He does this, he does that, he throws this dude here but then this guy came and did this..." on and on. It was pretty shitty.

The other thing that was a major problem was that it read cheap.

What do I mean?

I mean it read like a straight to DVD feature. It read like it didn't have a budget.

Now, I understand, sometimes that's the constraints of the job. Sometimes you're going to have to work for a company that just doesn't have the financing to back the project. Sometimes producers are going to force you into a box. The one I see the most is the "one location" box.

This script was no exception. I'll give you the setup: The gang of bad guys were planning to go and rob a bank. In the process they were found out by a teenage girl and her boyfriend by accident...so they kidnap them for "insurance." Yeah, nothing new here.

And guess what?

Daddy is a bad ass and doesn't like it when people kidnap his little girl.

Original, right?

Gee, I wonder what's going to happen!

He tracks them down to the hideout and all hell breaks loose! I know, shocker...but here's where it's shitty. They never make it to the bank! Instead of racing to foil the crime, they never make it out of the hideout, they're foiled there.

Thus, the one location.

It's shitty when you tease us the entire time having them TALK about what they're going to do and never show us them actually doing it!

Remember, film is a VISUAL medium. We want to see some shit!

Again, I know this is for budgetary reasons, but come on...give us a little something for the effort. Know what I mean?

Moving on...

As you know, the re-write contest is going on and the deadline is next week. I want to thank those that have already submitted their re-writes. It's pretty awesome. If you haven't gotten involved yet, there's still time. The deadline is next week on the 14<sup>th</sup>. So get yours in before then.

Please don't wait until the last minute because I have to read all of the entries and break them down. I can tell you one thing, there hasn't been an entry yet that has TRULY blown me away yet. So if you want some bragging rights, get to the laptop and git a'writin'.

Till next week...