

FOR A FEW DAYS MORE

Written by

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Based on, Academy's Previous Format

[NOTE: A typical title page may look like this. For the Academy Nicholl Fellowships competition, you should eliminate all instances of your name, address, phone number and email address from the title page and all other pages of the screenplay. Only the title of the screenplay is needed. It is also permissible to include a U.S. Copyright Office or WGA registration number on the title page (though registration is not a requirement).]

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[This format guide was originally written by Greg Beal in 1996 and has been revised several times by him since then, most recently in February, 2014.]

FADE IN:

INT. DRISKILL HOTEL SEMINAR ROOM - DAY

JOE and APRIL burst through the doors into a clean, well-lit seminar room.

JOE  
Are we in time?

APRIL  
How could they start without us?  
We're the main attraction.

Joe catches his breath as he leans against the podium at the front of the room.

JOE  
(looking about  
the room)  
We are?

APRIL  
Don't be an idiot. You know we've  
been invited to Austin to discuss  
script format.

JOE  
But why is the room empty?

April and Joe look out across the room - rows of empty chairs and nary a person in sight.

APRIL  
Okay, okay. Don't panic.

She takes three deep breaths. Then April looks at her watch and smiles.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
We're an hour early. . . . We  
should rehearse.

JOE  
Okay, you start. Margins?

APRIL  
Left, 1.5 inches. Right, 1.0  
inches. Top, 1.0 inches to the  
body, 0.5 inches to the number.  
(MORE)

APRIL (CONT'D)

Bottom, 0.5 to 1.5 inches,  
depending upon where the page break  
comes.

JOE

Page break?

APRIL

Right above you. There are rules  
for breaking a page. Scene headers  
remain attached to description. A  
single line of dialogue is pushed  
to the following page. A long  
dialogue passage would be split -  
but I'll get to that later.

JOE

What about fonts?

APRIL

Courier, 12-point, 10-pitch. Make  
sure it's a non-proportional  
version of Courier and avoid  
Courier New unless you want your  
script to be about 10% longer.

JOE

What about bold-face or italics? Or  
a cool font like Garamond? I love  
to jazz up my scripts.

APRIL

Mostly, you should steer clear of  
bold and italics. Definitely no  
Garamond, no Helvetica, no Times  
Roman. Stick with Courier. That's  
the industry standard.

JOE

Ah . . . we're talking about  
industry standards.

Suddenly, Joe bolts from behind the podium and runs out into:

INT. DRISKILL HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

Joe glances up and down the hallway, then reaches back to  
open the door.

JOE

(calling)

April - come on! There's no one  
here.

APRIL  
 (walking through  
 the door)  
 A scene heading. Or a slug line, as  
 I was taught in film school. Always  
 CAPPED. Usually begins with INT. or  
 EXT. What happens if we --

EXT. TEXAS CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

Joe looks startled as he stands with April before the seat of  
 Texas politics.

JOE  
 How'd you do that?

APRIL  
 There was a cut - from the hallway  
 to the capitol. What'd you want to  
 do - ride in a cab?

JOE  
 Dialogue margins.

APRIL  
 Left, 2.5 inches. Right, 2.5  
 inches. Of course, you can cheat  
 those a tad.

JOE  
 So, you have about 3.5 inches for  
 each line of dialogue?

APRIL  
 You've got it. And you can sneak  
 out another character or two to the  
 right and no one will hold it  
 against you.

Joe jots down notes on a 3 x 5 card, studies the card for a  
 moment, then scribbles another note.

JOE  
 (looking up)  
 And the position of the character's  
 name?

APRIL  
 ALL CAPS, and tabbed to about 4.0  
 to 4.2 inches, depending upon the  
 look you like. Some writers center  
 all characters' names in dialogue.  
 (MORE)

APRIL (CONT'D)  
Personally, I don't think it  
matters too much.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
The appearance of the script pages  
is slightly different in each case,  
but all are within the norm.

JOE  
Hey! What happened?

APRIL  
A page break appeared in the middle  
of my dialogue. You use (MORE) at  
the bottom of the page to show that  
the character's dialogue continues  
onto the next page. Then add  
(CONT'D) after the character's name  
to show that the lines have roots  
in the previous page.

JOE  
But not everyone uses MOREs and  
CONT'Ds, do they?

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

Joe stares up into the dome. April examines the portraits of  
Texas governors on the nearby walls.

APRIL  
Some writers just plan their page  
breaks so as to avoid them.

JOE  
(considering)  
What about parentheticals?

APRIL  
Start them about 0.5 inches to the  
left of the character name tab  
mark. In our case, that would be at  
3.0 inches.

JOE  
And what are they for?

APRIL  
For years, parentheticals were used  
to express emotion, the manner in  
which a character spoke her lines.  
Loudly, passionately, sadly, and so  
on.

(MORE)

APRIL (CONT'D)

That's frowned upon these days, but some writers still use them for bits of action.

JOE

(going up a stairway)

Something like this?

APRIL

(following him)

Exactly.

JOE

How wide are parentheses?

APRIL

Not very - about 1.5 inches. And they should wrap to the following line when they extend beyond that point.

(pointing to the top of the page)

If you place a parenthetical in the middle of a dialogue passage, it should remain distinct from the dialogue.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVERBOAT - NIGHT

A gambling boat is docked along the riverfront. April and Joe wander about its upper deck.

JOE

I have to ask. What happened to CUT TO:s between scenes.

APRIL

Some writers still use transitions such as CUT TO: and DISSOLVE TO: between scenes.

JOE

Those would introduce a new scene header?

APRIL

And typically a different place and/or time. But many writers have dispensed with such transitions, feeling that a new scene header clearly signifies a cut without the need of any additional indicator.

Joe gazes out at the river.

JOE  
How did we reach the Mississippi  
and when did the sun set?

APRIL  
If you'd rather . . .

EXT. AIRPLANE - SUNSET

A jet liner cruises across Texas towards the setting sun.

INT. AIRPLANE

A customized interior, outfitted with leather chairs and sofas. April and Joe sip salt-encrusted margaritas.

JOE  
Is this a flashback?

APRIL  
Or it could be tomorrow or next  
month?

TITLE OVER:

October 25, 2014

APRIL (CONT'D)  
You see, a whole year has passed.

JOE  
Okay, I didn't notice. But I  
thought only DAY and NIGHT were  
allowed in scene headers.

APRIL  
Production managers might prefer it  
that way, but many writers use  
headers as a means of depicting a  
particular time of day. For  
instance, SUNRISE, DAWN, LATE  
AFTERNOON and SUNSET.

JOE  
That's allowed?

APRIL  
On a writer's draft, without a  
doubt.

JOE  
A writer's draft?

APRIL  
Essentially, any draft that hasn't been paid for. A draft to be submitted to agents, managers, producers, development execs. Or even to a screenplay competition. Those are writer's drafts. And they should all be FIRST DRAFTS, no matter how many versions the writer has actually written.

JOE  
You really think so?

APRIL  
That's my recommendation.

INT. BLUE CAMARO - DAY

April drives along Austin's Congress Avenue as Joe rides shotgun.

JOE  
You speak any foreign languages?

APRIL  
(in French)  
Of course, I do. Why do you ask?

JOE  
What about action sequences?

SUDDENLY, A BLACK MUSTANG

Whips around a corner, racing quickly towards them.

APRIL  
Punches the accelerator and --

THE BLUE CAMARO

Leaps forward, laying a trail of rubber. The Camaro takes a screeching left, then a quick right to accelerate into --



AN ALLEY BURIED IN DEEP SHADOWS

Where the Camaro all too quickly runs into a dead end, just as --

THE BLACK MUSTANG

Roars into the alley, sealing it shut.

APRIL

Looks to Joe, fear filling his eyes.

EXT. DRISKILL HOTEL PORTICO - DAY

April guides a dazed and confused Joe from the Camaro towards the front doors held open by a smiling VALET.

APRIL

That's one way to write an action scene. It's a variation on the Bill Goldman style used by many pros.

JOE

(coming to)

But other writers just use standard scene headers and description for action scenes, don't they?

APRIL

Many do.

INT. DRISKILL HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

A confused Joe speaks into a house phone.

JOE

I thought we were walking together.

APRIL (O.S.)

(filtered)

Well, we were, but I realized a phone call was needed.

JOE

You're filtered?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. STATE CAPITOL - DAY

With the capitol dome looming large behind her, April speaks on her mobile phone.

APRIL

Only when you hear my voice over the phone. Radio voices and phone calls can be filtered, though it's a convention that isn't used as much these days.

JOE

Let's try something easy. What about page numbers?

APRIL

Number each and every page, though you can start with page two. The numbers should appear in the upper right-hand corner, about 0.5 inches down and 0.75 inches from the right page edge. Those dimensions are not set in stone, but the page numbers should always be placed in the upper right-hand corner.

INT. DRISKILL HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

Joe strolls slowly towards the seminar room.

JOE

You know, that pronouncement almost seemed godlike.

APRIL (V.O.)

If it were, I probably would have spoken in a voice-over and not on the phone.

Joe searches the hallway, trying to decide just where this disembodied voice is emanating from.

JOE

What's a V.O. used for?

APRIL (V.O.)

Often for narration, for a narrator's voice. In film noir, the protagonists often filled the audience in on their thoughts or story details.

(MORE)

APRIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Scorsese films are often filled  
with voice-over, as are many  
documentaries.

INT. DRISKILL HOTEL SEMINAR ROOM - DAY

Joe races past April to reach the podium first. April walks casually past the still-empty chairs.

At the podium Joe gestures with his hands as if he were delivering a major political speech.

April sneaks up behind him and mimics his gestures - until he notices. Joe spins to confront her.

JOE  
Why I ought'a . . .

APRIL  
I was simply demonstrating the way  
many writers break descriptions  
into shorter paragraphs. As opposed  
to allowing description to fill  
dense blocks running on for lines.

JOE  
That makes for tougher reading,  
doesn't it?

APRIL  
I know studio readers who claim  
they skip long description passages  
and only read dialogue.

JOE  
But there are pros who write  
scripts with extended description.

APRIL  
They do - but that doesn't mean you  
should too. When you're paid to  
write a screenplay, you just have  
to satisfy the people writing your  
checks.

Joe balances on one leg atop the podium.

JOE  
But when you're like me, you should  
stick to format. Is that what  
you're trying to say?

APRIL

You just want to make your script  
as easy a read as possible.

Joe jumps down from the podium and hustles out the door just  
as conference ATTENDEES begin to enter.

APRIL (CONT'D)

By the way, the first time you  
introduce a character in  
description, you CAP his name. And  
when you break a dialogue passage  
with description, the standard is  
to place (CONT'D) next to the  
speaking character's name.

April watches as a number of people find chairs in front of  
her.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Of course, many writers have  
dropped (CONT'D) from their  
repertoire. I mean, it's obvious  
that I'm still speaking, isn't it?  
And that I never stopped speaking.

JOE (O.S.)

(shouting from  
beyond the door)

Hey, April! C'mon! There's a  
barbeque at the Governor's Mansion  
and a shuttle leaving in two  
minutes.

APRIL

(shouting)

We haven't mentioned master scenes.

A sheepish Joe slides back into the seminar room, slowly  
walking to the podium.

JOE

That one I know. No CLOSE UPS, no  
WIDE SHOTS, mostly no shots of any  
kind. Just scene headers,  
description and dialogue. And no  
scene numbers. Those only belong on  
shooting scripts.

APRIL

It's okay to sneak in a shot here  
and there when it's necessary to  
highlight a moment or move the  
action along.

JOE  
 Okay. I can get behind that.

APRIL  
 And don't worry. I would never let  
 you miss a meal.

	JOE	APRIL (CONT'D)
Perfect		Perfect

FADE OUT.

### **THE END**

#### A FEW ADDITIONAL NOTES:

How closely should the format presented on the above pages be followed?

Close enough so that your script at least resembles these pages. That said, there is no absolute standard format within the U.S. film industry. The format used by professional screenwriters can vary considerably from writer to writer - but overall the format used by one professional writer generally resembles that used by another professional writer. Nuances may vary - margins slightly different, a dash here or there, parentheticals used this way or that or not at all - but overall, professional screenplays fit within or near these guidelines.

Clarity is the goal. If your script's format can be easily read by anyone working in the film industry, then it falls within acceptable standards.

Do realize that "shooting scripts," the form in which scripts are most often available online, in books and at libraries, are not the form in which most professional writers submit their scripts. Submission scripts, sales scripts, first draft scripts - all usually share certain characteristics: no scene numbers, few designated camera shots and sequences generally written in master scenes.

If you're confused about which nuances are acceptable and which would push your script into an "out-of-format" category, you would do well to follow these guidelines and eliminate those questionable nuances.