

## UNIT 2 PREPRODUCTION

WITH JIM SOTO

# THE CREW-THE WRITERS



I don't think screenplay writing is the same as writing — I mean, I think it's blueprinting.

- Robert Altman

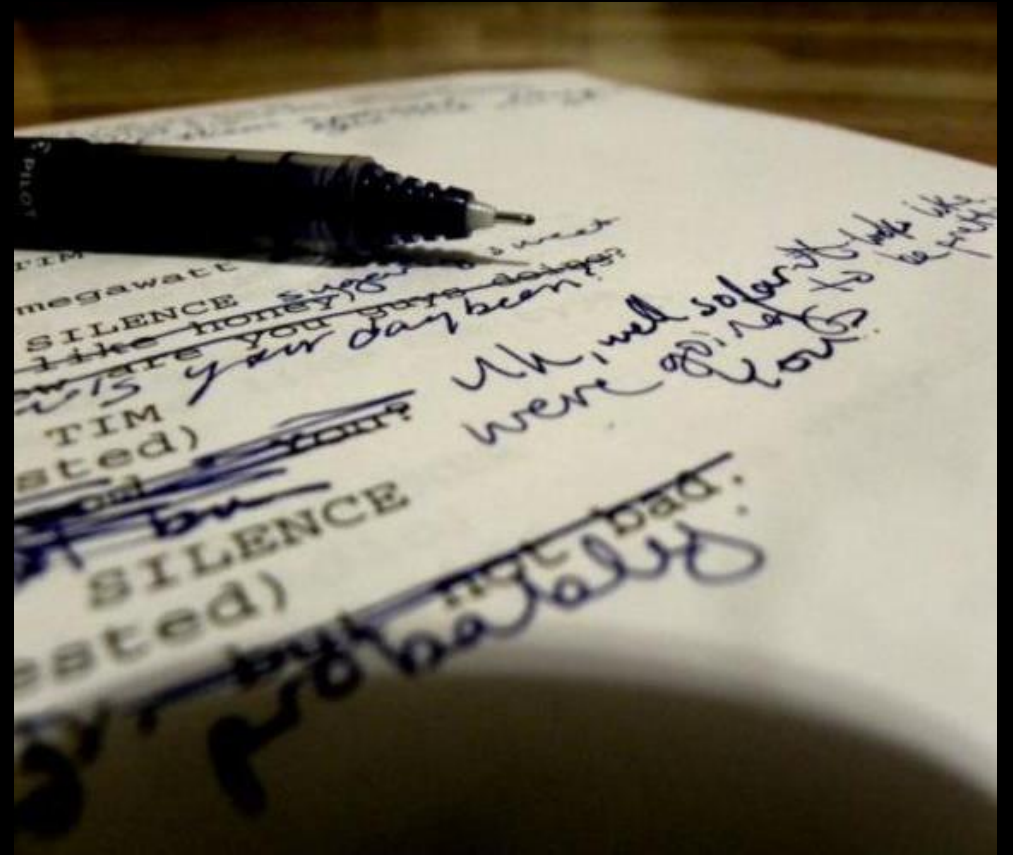
**A Screenwriter's role in the overall film-making process is truly vital. It is in the screenplay that the film is first born. And once the screenplay is ready, it is the single most important document that forms the basis on which everyone else (the Director, Actors etc.) builds the film.**



# IN THE FILM INDUSTRY

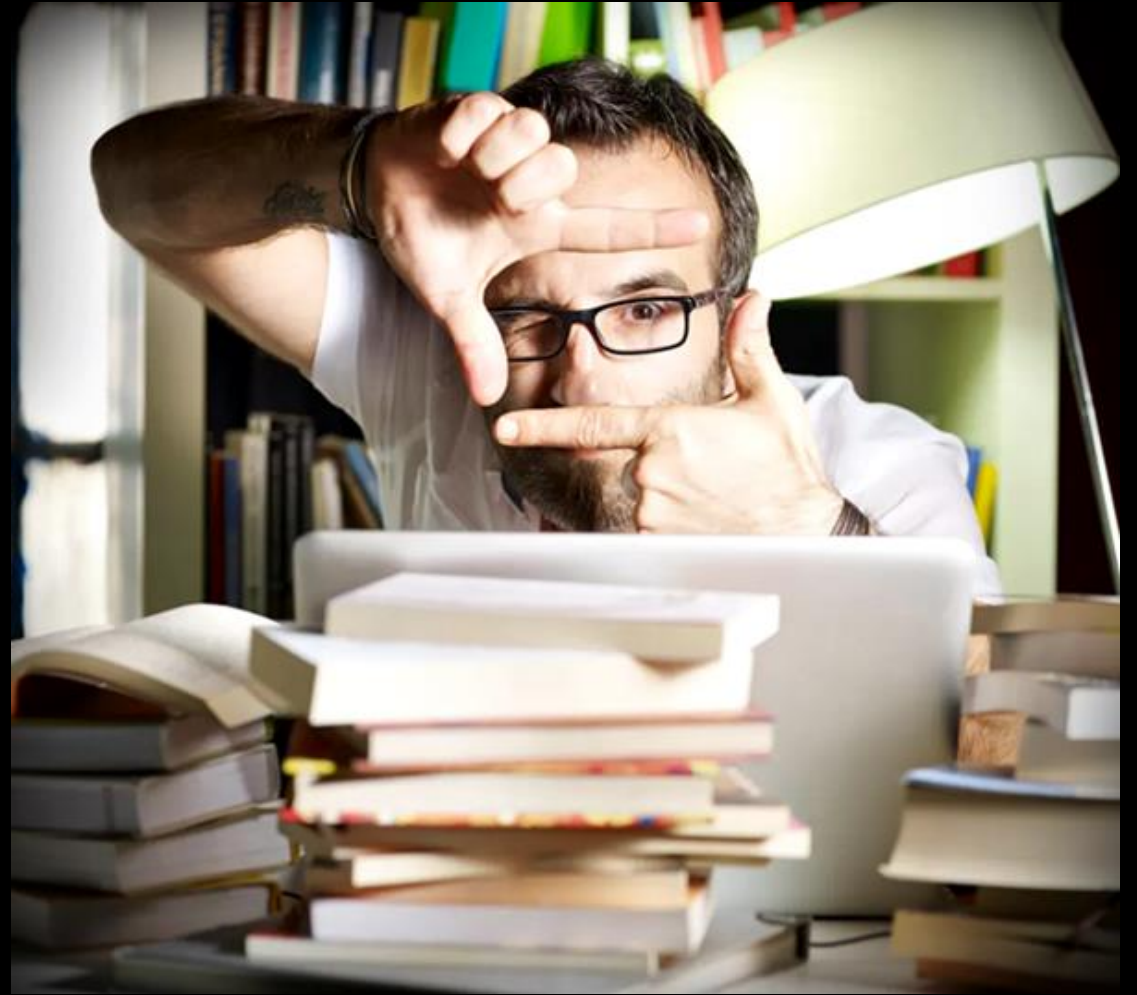
Screenwriters are not hired employees, they are contracted freelancers. Most, if not all, start their careers writing on speculation (spec), meaning they write without being hired or paid for it.

There are thousands of would-be screenwriters who attempt to enter the film industry but it often takes years of trial-and-error, failure, and gritty persistence to achieve success.





Screenplays begin with an idea, and screenwriters use those ideas to write scripts, with the intention of selling them and having them produced. Most of the time, a film project gets initiated by a screenwriter and because they initiated the project, the writing assignment exclusively becomes his or hers. Once the script is sold the writer only has the rights that were agreed with the buyer.



# SCRIPT DOCTORING

Many screenwriters also work as full or part-time "script doctors", attempting to better a script to suit the desires of a director or studio.





**For instance, studio management may have a complaint that the motivations of the characters are unclear or that the dialogue is weak or that the script would be too expensive to shoot. Script doctors improve scripts. Famous Script doctors include: Carrie Fisher and Daniel Glover.**

After a screenwriter finishes a project, he or she will often pair with a producer, director, literary agent, entertainment lawyer, or an entertainment executive to pitch their project to others who could further a project. A screenwriter becomes credible once their work is recognized, giving the writer the opportunity to earn a higher income.





# PRODUCTION INVOLVEMENT



Screenwriters are rarely involved in the development of a film. Sometimes they come on as advisors, or if they are established, as a producer. Some screenwriters also direct. Although many scripts are sold each year, many do not make it into production because the amount of scripts that are bought every year outnumber the amount of directors that are working in the film industry.

# SCRIPT SUPERVISION

Script Supervisors ensure that, despite the films being shot entirely out of script sequence, they eventually make continuous sense. This entails checking on and keeping detailed records of dialogue, action, costumes, props and set design, so that when different takes are finally edited together, the film is not disrupted by dialogue and action **continuity errors** which may distract the audience.





Script Supervisors closely observe every shot filmed to take detailed notes, in order to provide a reference point if any doubt arises about how a previous take or scene was filmed. These reports provide an invaluable resource for Directors and Editors enabling them to assess the coverage, including how many shot options there are for each scene of the script. Script Supervisors are involved during pre-production and principal photography.



# IN YOUR PLANE OF REALITY

- Remember, without a screenplay you should never proceed!
- The screenplay clarifies everything for everyone.
- The entire cast and crew should have a copy.
- If you're making a short film, three (3) weeks is a reasonable time to crank one out.





# RESHOOT

1. Explain the importance of the screenwriter after having handed in the screenplay.
2. What is the role of the screenwriter throughout the entire film production?
3. Explain the main responsibility of the Script Supervisor.
4. What are dialogue and action continuity?
5. Who should get a copy of the screenplay?



Next:

**MORE CREW**

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