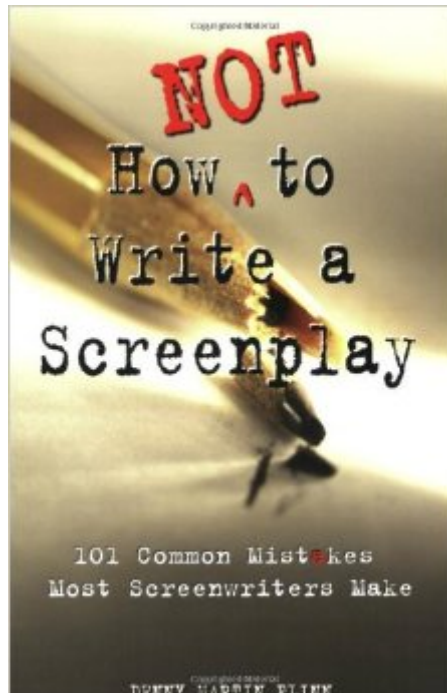


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# How Not To Write A Screenplay: 101 Common Mistakes Most Screenwriters Make



## Synopsis

All good screenplays are unique, but all bad screenplays are the same. Flinn's book will teach the reader how to avoid the pitfalls of bad screenwriting and arrive at one's own destination intact.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Anyone who reads screenplays for a living knows that ninety-nine out of every 100 are absolutely horrible. And not just because the stories are weak, the characters are bland and the dialogue is inane. No, most scripts are painful to read because they're painful to read. Description is confusing, overwritten, or just plain obtuse. UPPERCASE words POP up OFTEN enough to cause MOTION SICKNESS, or the script is riddled with misspellings and grammatical errors. Author, screenwriter and story analyst Denny Martin Flinn has written a masterful, must-read book for anyone hoping to get a spec screenplay past production company readers and into the Hollywood pipeline. Since no one can teach talent or originality, he instead tells readers the traps to avoid when assembling their cinematic opuses, ranging from formatting errors to descriptive gaffs to thematic omissions. Illustrating his points with both horrid and well-written screen passages--all genuine-- Flinn has created a book that is smart, insightful and often painfully funny. Allen B. Ury, Fade In Magazine

... and I've read almost all of them. Flinn starts his book with the admission that he has never written any great movies... and then states blatantly that he didn't write this book because he can write screenplays, but rather because he has had to read a ton of them. Well thank god he did, because he distills horribly written screenplays into crystal clear examples of why they are poorly written. This

information is wonderful, and I found myself delighting in his revealing why I too am unsatisfied with the screenplays I have written. The book is broken into two primary sections with a third "final thought section." The first is devoted to form, and he cuts to the chase providing examples of "good writing" and, even more importantly, examples of "bad writing". His examples are very accessible, and will illustrate to any writer, producer, or director why it is that they want to cut their wrists when reading some screenplays, and can't put others down. The second half of the book is devoted to content. This is not as strong as the first half, but is certainly on par or slightly better than most books on how to write your story. He even quotes from all of the guru's of screenwriting, and shows that they are all ultimately trying to say the same thing. I am absolutely serious when I say it is the best book on screenwriting I have ever read. I think it should be mandatory reading for anyone that ever thinks of giving their screenplay to another individual to read. Happy writing!!!

Compared to other screenwriting books I have read, this is decent, but falls short in two important respects. First, the cynical attitude is no doubt honestly acquired, but the book makes for a very bad read for someone who is still struggling with their screenplay. The best how-to books both explain and inspire, this does not. Second, the liberal use of actual (or slightly altered) bad screenplays (sometimes multiple pages of unbroken screenplay examples) make for (often) difficult (if not confusing) reading of the (sometimes) useful prose. The book feels like 1/3 advice, 2/3 filler. Some of the examples are needed to display the problem being discussed, most are either a trivia contest (how quickly can you spot which movie the example is from?) or dreck which adds nothing to the explanation given. I recommend that you read the book, or something like it, before you send your screenplay out into the world. There is good advice here for rewriting, format and polishing. However, I recommend that you read THIS book only after you've written your screenplay, unless you're looking for an excuse to quit.

I inhaled this book in one reading. The next day I read it again. The third day, I started taking notes. How can you resist a book that opens with: "The first thing you really want to know when you're buying a book about screenwriting is...who is this guy? Has he won an Oscar?" (I'm not going to tell you the answer.) I know nothing about screenwriting, but by dumb luck and reading the reviews, I selected this as my first book on the subject. I learn faster from my mistakes and Mr. Flinn kindly offered up a platter full of them for me to consume and learn from. Very, very comfortable, practical reading from a man who is a professional reader of screenplays. He tells you the most basic information like what margins and tab settings to use, the preferred length of movie scripts, all the

way through to character development, structure, conflict and story pacing. I have since skimmed two other books on the topic, but I would recommend reading this one first. I'm glad it's getting 5 star reviews. It is an excellent book for beginners! But to get the most out of it, read it several times so his overall message will REALLY sink in: pacing, pacing, pacing...make your story move like greased lightning and keep the reader interested!!

Flinn knows his stuff. This is an exhaustive catalogue, if you will, of all danger signs and bear traps posted along the path of writing in the illusive art of screenplay. Presented in a slight tongue-in-cheek tone, Flinn is able to reduce this complicated world into a fun-to-read and easy to understand format. By referencing well known works which have already made it to the big screen, this book makes those, sometimes vague, concepts all the more relevant and meaningful--a problem I find with many of these "how to write screenplay" books. Besides, Flinn has a writing credit on a movie already (Star Trek 6), something I find many of the authors to these books are lacking. It makes this read all the more authoritative.

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