



## **Proficient Screenwriting**

### **An advanced screenwriting workshop for writers**

Designed by Emmanuel Oberg, ID2 Films

### **Dates to be defined**

We are thrilled to offer writers a specially adapted version of our advanced development workshop, which we have successfully run over the past decade in the UK (notably for the development team of the UK Film Council, for Screen West Midlands, for Cornwall Film and for independent producers), as well as in Ireland, in Sweden, in France, and in Germany.

The aim of this workshop is to provide writers with a better understanding of story structure as well as very practical scriptwriting and development tools which *can* be used. It is not to pretend that there are any kinds of rules, methods or theories which *have* to be followed.

Armed with these tools and this knowledge, talented writers will become more proficient in the script development process, should help them to reach a wide audience at a national and international level, without having to sacrifice their originality or their cultural integrity.

Extensive and up to date documentation will be delivered throughout the workshop: detailed notes for each training module, excerpts from out of print theory books, a list of recommended readings and web resources, scene breakdowns and scripts from produced films, etc...

The workshop will take place over 3 days (dates to be defined). The cost is £495 per participant for the three days, not including travel and accommodation.

**For more information about ID2 Films / Emmanuel Oberg: [www.id2films.com](http://www.id2films.com)**

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:**

The workshop will take place over 3 days (dates to be defined).

During the first days (Friday & Saturday), we will study the main dramatic tools used to write and develop feature film scripts.

During the last day (Sunday), we will focus on practical development issues, from a writer's point of view: differences between writing tools and development tools, different writing stages, useful writing techniques...

The participants should watch the following films before the beginning of the workshop:

- Groundhog Day (H. Ramis)
- Psycho (A. Hitchcock)
- Amadeus (M. Forman)
- Misery (R. Reiner)
- The Apartment (B. Wilder)
- Back to the Future (R. Zemeckis)
- City Lights (C. Chaplin)

### **3-DAY WORKSHOP SCHEDULE:**

#### **DAY 1 (Friday, 10:00 until 19:00)**

**THEORY 1** (Managing conflict: protagonist, goal, obstacles, conflict, and emotions)

During this session, we study the basic elements of structure. We see how we can generate and manage conflict in order to maintain the interest of the audience over the length of the story, to allow the audience to identify and empathise with a protagonist. We study the real three act structure (in opposition to the Syd Field/Robert McKee simplistic paradigm), and the relationship between character and plot. We watch and analyse a clip from *Frenzy* to see how we can structure a 13mn sequence within a film the same way we can structure a two hour feature film. We also watch clips to illustrate the identification process (*Ridicule*), the relationship between conflict and emotion (*Elephant Man*), the role of the inciting event and the notion of co-protagonists (*Alien*), the use of external obstacles (*Die Hard 2*), and the exploitation of a strong internal obstacle (the climax of *Cyrano de Bergerac*).

**DVD clips:** *Frenzy* (A. Hitchcock), *Ridicule* (P. Leconte), *Elephant Man* (D. Lynch), *Alien* (Ridley Scott), *Die Hard 2* (Renny Harlin), *Cyrano de Bergerac* (J.P. Rappeneau).

**THEORY 2** (Managing POV: mystery, surprise, dramatic irony and suspense)

During this session, we see how the writer can play with the audience and use different tools to change the audience POV. With surprise, we suddenly discover something we did not know. With mystery, we know just enough to be aware that we do not know something important yet. With dramatic irony, we know more than some characters, and we love it. All this is, as usual, illustrated by some clips: in *Ridicule*, an example of a simple setup, exploitation and resolution of a local dramatic irony; in *The Court Jester*, a festival of installations of dramatic irony; in *There's something about Mary*, a mutual dramatic irony or "quid pro quo"; in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, a beautiful exploitation of a double dramatic irony; in *City Lights*, a visual resolution of a structural dramatic irony; in *The Great Escape*, the resolution of a dramatic irony where the victim is the antagonist; in *Misery* the use of dramatic irony in a thriller as well as another illustration of a classic use of fractal structure, and in *Psycho* a brilliant combination of mystery, surprise and dramatic irony, as well as a successful change of protagonist.

**DVD clips:** *Ridicule* (P. Leconte), *The Court Jester* (N. Panama), *There is something about Mary* (Farelli Brothers), *Cyrano de Bergerac* (J.P. Rappeneau), *City Lights* (C. Chaplin), *The Great Escape* (J. Sturges), *Misery* (R. Reiner), *Psycho* (A. Hitchcock).

## **DAY 2 (Saturday, 10:00 until 19:00)**

### **THEORY 3** (Managing information: exposition, activity, dialogue and ellipses)

During this session, we study the different tools writers can use to convey information to the audience. We see how we can tell a past story using exposition or flashback (as little as possible), and how we can show rather than tell, using activity (as often as possible). We also see how we can write good dialogue, and how we can use narrative ellipses to avoid wasting precious screen time. We watch clips from *Frenzy* to study exposition and from *Rio Bravo* to study activity. We will also watch a clip from *Un Air de Famille (Family Resemblance)* to illustrate dialogue, and from *Parenthood* to illustrate the use of narrative ellipses.

**DVD Clips:** *Frenzy* (A. Hitchcock), *Rio Bravo* (H. Hawks), *Un Air de Famille* (C. Klapish), *Parenthood* (R. Howard).

### **THEORY 4** (Managing foreshadowing/planting/setup and payoff)

During this session, we study the different ways to use foreshadowing and payoff: to justify some elements that would otherwise be rejected by the audience, to raise the emotional involvement of the audience, or to assign a specific meaning to an element. We also watch clips from *Aliens* and *Jurassic Park*, to show how American blockbusters can use foreshadowing efficiently or forget it and create a “deus ex machina”. We finally make a synthesis of all the tools we have seen, through an in-depth analysis of an excerpt of *The Apartment* (Clip + script), to demonstrate the effective and creative use of dramatic irony, foreshadowing/payoff, activity, dialogue and conflict.

**DVD clips:** *Jurassic Park* (S. Spielberg), *Aliens* (J. Cameron), *The Apartment* (B. Wilder)

In-depth analysis of an excerpt of *The Apartment* (script & DVD clip).

**FILM ANALYSIS (plot led story): MISERY** (R. Reiner)

### **DAY 3 (Sunday, 10:00 until 19:00)**

During this last day, we will discuss the development process, from a writer's point of view, in a very practical way: the different development stages, the most useful writing tools and documents, and a few other techniques... but before diving into this, we will study another great film from a "learning of the craft" POV:

**FILM ANALYSIS (character led story):** GROUNDHOG DAY (H. Ramis)

### **The development process**

We have studied the main dramatic tools, so let's now see how we can put this knowledge in practice during the development process. As it can be quite difficult to define something as complex as the script development process, let's try to show first what it shouldn't be:

**DVD Bonus:** *Script Doctors*

### **The development stages: presentation tools and writing tools**

Here lies one of the worst problems in the industry: classical development stages and development documents do not necessarily make useful writing documents, which creates confusion, frustration, and often, chaos.

#### ***Presentation stages & tools***

Definition & use

#### ***Writing stages & tools***

Definition & use

#### ***Practical tools***

- Making the most of feedback (good or bad!)
- Checklist
- Common problems & solutions
- Keep an open mind

Please note that at this stage, the content of the course is only indicative. We reserve the right to change the dates (for example it could be Friday to Sunday, or Saturday to Monday) and some of the content based on the level of experience of the participants for a group, and the availability of the majority. A final schedule and description will be available before a firm commitment is made by the participants and any payment is taken.