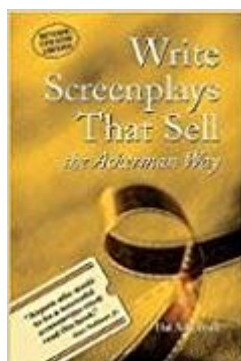




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Write Screenplays That Sell: The Ackerman Way



Synopsis

Hal Ackerman offers a treasure trove of information on the writing of quality, saleable screenplays by teaching the art of story structure, substance and style.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've read quite a few screenwriting books, and what I first noticed about this one was its comfortable, clever tone. Some of the really big heavy hitters in screenwriting are too expensive and pretentious. They try and function like textbooks. (I have one book in mind that weighs about 3 pounds and costs about \$60... and like many text books, it lost my interest when I fell asleep on page 10.) Hal Ackerman's book isn't very long, and it's an easy, pleasant read -- sort of populist without being condescending. It doesn't take screenwriting too seriously, which I appreciate. At the same time, you get the sense that this UCLA Professor loves helping his students craft meaningful stories that will also sell. (Some of his past students have gone on to write scripts like *Matchstick Men* and *A Walk on the Moon*.) This book's real strength lies in its dedication to helping writers build effective narratives. Ackerman has designed an index card technique called the Scene-o-Gram that helps writers diagram stories so that key emotional turning points and plot points are hit at regular intervals. This forces you to keep only what you need and to lose the rest. Since most writers suffer from wordiness and a total lack of editing abilities, a stringent guide like this is a godsend. I am an aspiring screenwriter who recently hit a block and stopped writing for several weeks. My romantic comedy is a mixed up mess and my zombie movie hit page 60 before I realized I had no ending. I think this is because I'm relatively new and haven't yet internalized the rhythms of effective

storytelling. After reading this book, I feel like I have the concrete tools I need to help me finish my scripts. I'd describe the book as a method to reign in your madness.

Just read this book and found it be an excellent approach to screenwriting: clear and concise, logical and intuitive, and very inspiring. What Ackerman has done with this book is truly noteworthy. He has provided a working methodology that is based on actual writing, not theory. This is a craftsman's approach to screenwriting that allows room for art, inspiration, and true creativity to shine through. It is, perhaps, the best book on screenwriting there is, and probably the only one you'll ever need. Bravo. I was so impressed by this book that I decided to write a review on it, and even read the other reviews first. While I agree with most of them, I take exception with one of them--a review written by someone who clearly never even read the book. So, in fairness, I'm going to review that review. "My brainwashed friend at UCLA told me that I had to get this book, so I did. This guy is crazier than that creepy Lew Hunter "guru." "The reviewer starts by insulting UCLA, as brainwashing, and then claims to have read Ackerman's book anyway. Sure. The reviewer then goes on to insult another UCLA Professor, Lew Hunter. Why the axe to grind against UCLA? From what I understand, UCLA has produced some of the best writers working in the film industry: Alexander Payne, Ed Solomon, David Koepp, Paul Schrader, Shane Black, Allison Anders, Francis Ford Coppola, Eric Roth, Pamela Gray, Sacha Gervasi, Josefina Lopez, etc." The book proves to be just one more distraction from actually writing. "It's not a distraction from writing, but a clear guide into writing, as one who actually read it can attest. Seems to me the real distraction to writing is grousing about: one's friend, Ackerman and his book, Lew Hunter, and UCLA.

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