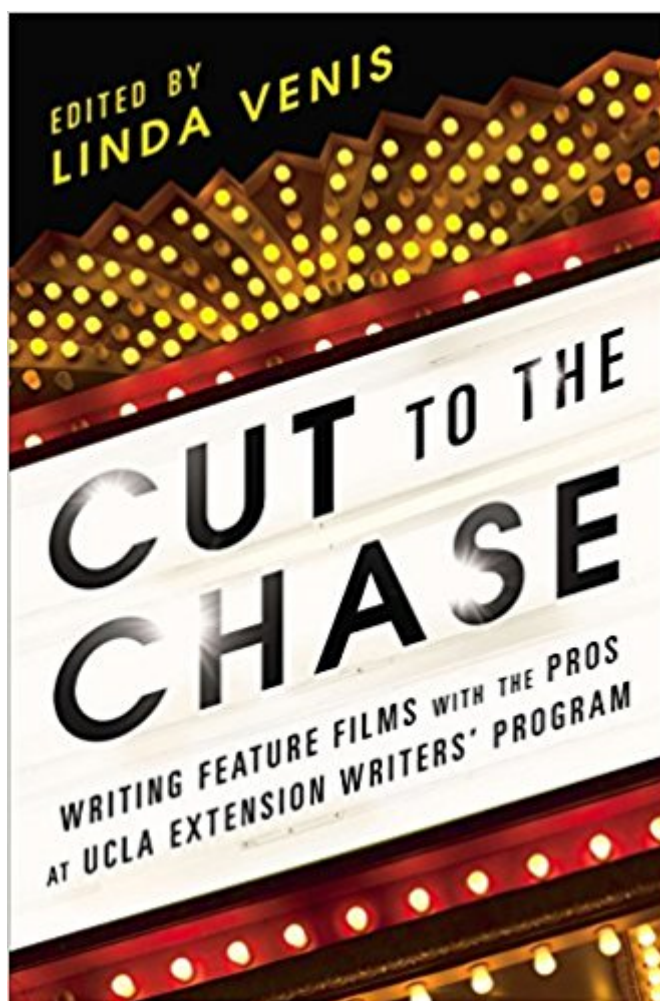


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# Cut To The Chase: Writing Feature Films With The Pros At UCLA Extension Writers' Program



## Synopsis

Millions of people dream of writing a screenplay but don't know how to begin, or are already working on a script but are stuck and need some targeted advice. Or maybe they have a great script, but no clue about how to navigate the choppy waters of show business. Enter *Cut To The Chase*, written by professional writers who teach in UCLA Extension Writers' Programme, whose alumni's many credits include *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl*; *Twilight*; and the Academy Award nominated *Letters from Iwo Jima*. From learning how to identify story ideas that make a good movie to opening career doors and keeping them open, this authoritative, comprehensive, and entertaining book, edited by Writers' Program Director Linda Venis, will be the film-writing bible for decades to come. "A well-organized soup-to-nuts manual for aspiring Nora Ephrons and Charlie Kaufmans, from the faculty of a notable screenwriting program. . . . A readable writer's how-to that goes down smoothly." - Kirkus Reviews

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Written by accomplished writers and neatly edited by UCLA Extension, this book contains A wonderful collection of tips and tricks for screenwriters new, intermediate and advance. The book is a Must have if you want to write for film, or if you already are and want to improve your craft.

Great overview on all aspects of the writing process. A lot of great advice from the pros like Karl Iglesias, Michael Weiss, Deborah Dean Davis and more. I like the chapter that went into great detail about the premise and theme of movies. Books rarely go into the depth this book did and that was

helpful. Quinton Peebles outlines his six step "foolproof rewrite process." Again, this is a topic that many books rarely will go into and there's a lot of great advice to help with the rewriting process. The book is for beginners and those who are trying to step out of the beginners stage and gain new skills to take them to the next level. What I believe this book offers that many other books do not offer are discussing the rewrite process, crafting dialogue, making the script more visual and how to launch your career. Other books I've read only scheme over these topics and do not go into any details that are useful to the work you're trying to accomplish. I also like the realism that the writers bring. They do not try to sugarcoat the process. They also do not try to make parts of the process harder than it needs to be. If you like books from UCLA professors like Richard Walter's *Essentials of Screenwriting*, Lew Hunter's *Screenwriting 434*, and *Screenplay: Writing the Picture* by Russin and Downs then you'll love the advice in this book as well. A great addition to your library.

Okay, I'm biased. I wrote Chapter 12, which (besides a copyediting error in the FIRST DAMN SENTENCE) is pretty brilliant, if I do say so myself. But what blew me away, from a teaching perspective, was how good all the OTHER chapters were. Look: screenwriting isn't like practicing law, or engineering. There is no set plan. There is very little formula, despite what many books have said -- when a story formula does emerge, it's copied and quickly grows stale for the audience. So having a bunch of different produced screenwriters attack the craft from different angles, you get a book that's greater than the sum of its parts. Think of it as the Blind Folks examining the Elephant. All of us get a piece of it right -- but if you read the whole thing, you might just be able to see the Elephant itself. This doesn't mean your screenplay will sell, but it does mean you'll have a greater understanding of how to tell a story well. And that remains the only formula to creative writing: a good story, well told.

I purchased the Kindle version of this book, which has its own strong points for layout. First off, this is a comprehensive book about the craft of screenwriting from beginning in the conceptual stage through the rewrite process, and finally an actual map that shows how a script gets sold. Subject matter experts write each chapter. This works well for a few reasons. First, having several authors submit expands the experience base far beyond what any single author could offer. Second, the editing which sews these chapters together is fantastic. Often, multiple submission books seem jarring as they move from author to author. Not so with "Cut to the Chase," these chapters link together smoothly if read in order and stand-alone if read by skipping to a specific stage of screen writing. Third, and I think this is the advantage of the Kindle version, if the reader skips to a middle

chapter, like Chapter 6 - Outlining, there are links to the concepts referenced in earlier chapters."Cut to the Chase" gets five stars for being easy to read and informative.

great read. Authors are professional, seasoned writers. Great tips and exercises to apply to your writing. Book is paperback and at least 1" thick. Very helpful and is written to the point. No jargon. Plain English yet comprehensive. Give it a shot. After all, it's from the #1 writers program in the U.S.

It's so unique to find a book about feature film writing written by true pros working in the entertainment industry now. It's also rare to find such expert, real-world advice on how to sell your screenplay once it's complete. Not everything we write is a masterpiece (at first), any writer can agree. But, if you follow the advice from this book, you might actually have something you can pitch and -- gasp -- SELL. I love the excerpt on writing for "the Suits" and not sweating the small stuff. It's easy to get caught up in every minute detail, but author Steve Mazur (Liar Liar, Heartbreakers, The Little Rascals) reminds us that "you don't really know your story until after you've completed your first draft." There's tons of great advice within these chapters for both the novice and experienced writer. "Cut to the Chase" is my screenwriting bible, and I keep it on my nightstand to read religiously, especially during those horrible bouts of writers block. It's candid, insightful and filled with tips you can actually use. Highly recommend for anyone who wants to improve upon their writing and sell, sell, sell!

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