26 Fake Trailer Scripts
For Independent Filmmakers
by M. Robert Turnage
Don’t Get Sued!

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How Projects Are Formatted

**Project Name**
This is the technical exercise for the project. For example, “Showcase an Actor” would be the purpose of the project.

**Working Title**
This is the suggested title of the script. Like all aspects of the scripts, this can be modified as necessary.

**Settings**
This is a list of locations for the film.

**Characters**
This is a list of characters for the film.

**Ideas for Customization**
This is a list of ways that a person could tweak and modify the script to fit a particular set of resources or limitations, such as casting, location, and budget. This is to help generate ideas and to see the scripts as flexible.

For example, the Project Page for the script on the next page would be as follows:

**Project Name**
One-Page Example

**Working Title**
Initiation Rites

**Settings**
Clubhouse
Executive boardroom

**Characters**
Donnie
Ricky
Susie
Susan
Executive
Board of directors

**Ideas for Customization**
The initiation rite doesn't have to be as disturbing as eating a spider, but it should be something visual and one that generates a degree of tension.
FADE IN:
INT. CLUBHOUSE - DAY
DONNIE and RICKY (age 7 to 8) sit across from SUSIE (also 7/8ish). They look at her disapprovingly.

DONNIE
You sure you want to be in our club?

Susie nods.

RICKY
(to Donnie) I don’t like her.

Donnie cuts off Ricky with a look. Donnie turns back to Susie.

DONNIE
Before you can join, you need to perform a sacred ritual.

Donnie pulls out a jelly jar with a screw-top lid. Inside the jar is a TARANTULA. Donnie sets the jar down in front of Susie.

DONNIE (CONT’D)
Eat it.

Susie stares at the spider. Ricky looks nervous.

RICKY
Not Herman! I love Herman.

Donnie cuts off Ricky with a glare. He taps the jar lid for emphasis.

Susie picks up the jar and begins to unscrew the lid.

CUT TO:
INT. EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY
A grown-up SUSAN (mid 30s) sits in a plush boardroom at the head of a long table. A BOARD OF DIRECTORS line the sides of the table and stares at her. In front of her, on the table, is a tarantula in a jar. An EXECUTIVE taps the jar lid.

EXECUTIVE
This is just a formality.
The MacGuffin is a concept introduced by Alfred Hitchcock in the interview book Hitchcock Truffaut. The main concept is that the MacGuffin is an object that all the characters want, and it drives the plot. This fake trailer introduces four characters and, in very broad strokes, explains why they all want the same thing.

Settings

Living Room
Magazine Office
Office
Museum Office
Restaurant
Business Office
Movie theater
Streetside
Airport
Sand Dunes

Characters

Ben
Julie
Elliott
Jeff
Mike
Ray
Harold
Lloyd
Narrator
Ticket Counter Assistant

Ideas for Customization

This fake trailer introduces the characters and their overall motivation, but does not set the tone of the project. Many MacGuffin films can be serious and suspenseful or breezy and light. So the tone and general approach to the material can be suited to whatever grander artistic statement you want to make. If you think this particular MacGuffin is stupid, then the tone can be ironic, depicting a bunch of silly people in pursuit of a pointless goal. If you find the MacGuffin compelling, it can be a serious story of a group of people striving for something better.

Many of the scenes take place in different offices. These can all be the same room decorated differently. The guy who works at a museum is an obvious reference to another film. If you think it is too in-jokey, change it.
INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

BEN is shocked at what JULIE just said.

BEN
What you mean you don’t know who Friedrick Needlebaum is?

INT. MAGAZINE OFFICE - DAY

ELLIOTT, the reporter, is shocked at the apparent ignorance of JEFF, the editor.

ELLIOTT
The greatest director of our time?

JEFF
I thought he was just a reclusive nut.

ELLIOTT
A genius reclusive nut. Who was working on the greatest project of his entire career.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

MIKE and RAY, two executives, continue their conversation.

MIKE
Audio commentaries?

RAY
For all thirty-seven of his films.

INT. MUSEUM OFFICE - DAY

LLOYD confides in HAROLD.

LLOYD
You know what a find like this means?

HAROLD
It should belong in a museum.

Lloyd smiles in agreement.
INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ben and Julie share a bottle of wine.

BEN
I am just saying, if I had those commentaries I could use them to finally make my film.

INT. MAGAZINE OFFICE - DAY

Elliott reviews a stack of papers with Jeff.

ELLIOTT
You’ve got an unlimited expense account as long as you-

INT. BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY

Mike slides a stack of money across a desk to Ray.

MIKE
-get those commentaries.

INT. MUSEUM OFFICE - DAY

Harold straps on a gun.

HAROLD
I am already on it.

INT. MOVIE THEATER

Ben sits in a darkened theater, watching a movie. Ben gets emotional while images flicker in front of him.

NARRATOR
We all love movies, but some people care more about how movies are made.

The POV zooms in on Ben’s face as he beings to tear up. Ben whispers to himself.

BEN
Those commentaries are mine.
EXT. STREETSIDE - DAY

Jeff looks up into the air, happy to be alive.

NARRATOR
These four-

JEFF
The scoop of a lifetime.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Ray approaches the ticket booth.

RAY
Get me a ticket to the place where they make movies.

TICKET COUNTER ATTENDANT
Hollywood?

RAY
Are you kidding? New Zealand.

EXT. SAND DUNES

Harold jumps over a sand dune. An explosion fills the air behind him as his body is silhouetted against the flames. The image freezes while Harold is in midair.

NARRATOR
-are process junkies.

Title "Process Junkies."

THE END