

Format for a Movie Script

Scenes from *On the Spot*, a Screenplay by Richard Stone, Enid Duchin Jackowitz and Syd Jackowitz

The following excerpts from *On the Spot* illustrate that what is not said, but rather shown, is as important in a movie as the dialogue of the characters. Note that descriptive copy that let's the reader know where the scene is occurring and what is happening has margins of 1.25" both left and right. Dialogue has margins of 2" left and right, with the character speaking centered and all caps. Scene changes, such as "CUT TO:" are right justified. For more examples of screen plays, try these links:

www.dailyscript.com

www.breakingin.net/format_tutorial.htm

www.allmoviescripts.com

www.bfi.org.uk/gateway/categories/scriptsscriptwriting/online/

www.screentalk.biz/gallery.htm

On the Spot

INT. KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SUNDAY MORNING

Joe and Jennifer are standing in a que with their baggage, on the way to their honeymoon in the Caribbean. Initially, they aren't talking to each other as they slowly move up in line, rolling their baggage ahead of them.

JENNIFER

You've got the passports, right?

JOE

No, you've got them. They were right next to your purse on the kitchen counter.

JENNIFER

No they weren't.

JOE

Great. I can't believe you left our passports in the apartment. We're going to miss our flight.

JENNIFER

You blaming me again? So it's always my fault.

JOE

It's not your fault. I said I was sorry about blaming you for what happened at the wedding. How many times do I have to apologize? Check your purse. I'll check the bags.

The two of them begin to frantically unzip all of the pockets in their bags looking for the passports. They're nervous wrecks as they rummage through everything, dumping the contents of the bags on the floor. Joe then feels his jacket and pulls the passports out of his pocket.

JOE (CONT'D)

Ahh, thank God, here they are.

JENNIFER

Oh, right next to my purse on the kitchen counter, huh. You can be such a jerk.

JOE

Will you just can it, it's our honeymoon for goodness sake.

JENNIFER

How can I? I just lost my best friend because of you.

JOE

Great, now it's all my fault.

Joe hands Jennifer his cell phone.

JOE (CONT'D)
Try calling her again.

JENNIFER
What's the point. I've called
three times and she won't return
my calls.

JOE
Then call her at the office
tomorrow.

JENNIFER
If you think it's such a good
idea to call tomorrow, why did
you give me the cell phone now?

The bickering and back biting continues as further back in
line three people comment on the scene that is unfolding in
front of them.

PERSON 1
Newlyweds. I give them three
months.

PERSON 2
At this rate, I don't think
they'll make it past the
honeymoon.

PERSON 3
What do you mean? Ten to one
they don't even make it through
security.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE OF NEW YORK MONDAY
MORNING FOLLOWING THE WEDDING

Valerie enters the coffee shop where she regularly stops
before work. After getting her coffee and a muffin at the
counter she sits down at a table by herself staring blankly

into the distance. GEORGE BUCHANAN, an 80yearold African American man whom she has gotten to know over the last years is sitting just two tables away, but she doesn't even see or acknowledge him. George comes over and stands by her table. She breaks out of her reverie and looks up and sees him.

GEORGE

Young lady, you didn't even say hi.

VALERIE

Oh, I'm sorry George, I didn't even see you.

GEORGE

Alright if I sit down?

VALERIE

Oh sure, yeah, pull up a chair.

George pulls up a chair and sits down backwards with his arms across the back of the seat.

GEORGE

I don't know what happened to you since I saw you last, but the way you're looking you remind me of my cousin Marcus who ate a bad batch of collards when I was about eight years old. He belched up collards for two whole days. And honey, he didn't look as bad as you do.

VALERIE

I didn't know it showed.

GEORGE

Something fierce musta happened to you. You want to tell old George about it?

Valerie's eyes begin to tear up and she sobs.

VALERIE

I, I, I . . .

GEORGE

Honey, if you don't get it off your chest, like my momma used to say, tears without words is like an omelet without eggs.

VALERIE

An omelet without eggs?

GEORGE

Sure, you know, you gotta tell me what's heavy on your heart or it's just going to keep eatin' at ya child.

George pulls out a handkerchief and hands it to her, and she blows her nose. She delivers next lines in between sobs.

VALERIE

George, you won't believe what my friends did to me this weekend.

GEORGE

At the wedding?

VALERIE

It started off as such a nice wedding. And it didn't even bother me that I'm the last one of my friends that isn't married. Then they tried to marry me off to some creep I've never even met.

GEORGE

Whoa. I'm not quite following you. Start from the beginning, would ya.

VALERIE

It all started with the bouquet .
. . .

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP OF THE CAPPUCINO MACHINE

Various shots of attendant lining cups up in an orderly fashion for various coffee drinks.

CUT TO:

VALERIE (CONT'D)
. . .with a rubber glove on his
head . . .

CUT TO:

Milk being poured and splashed over the lip of the container and then steamed.

CUT TO:

VALERIE (CONT'D)
. . . and he compared me to Big
Bad Beattie. . .

CUT TO:

Espresso being made and then the grounds dumped in the garbage.

CUT TO:

VALERIE (CONT'D)
. . .he told me to lighten up,
can you believe it. . .

CUT TO:

Coffee being poured with the steamed milk into a cup but then accidentally spilled everywhere.

CUT TO:

VALERIE (CONT'D)
. . .and called me a jerk with
the mic on . . .

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP OF FEMALE ATTENDANT'S FACE WHO WAS MAKING THE LATTE

ATTENDANT

(She is mouthing an expletive.)

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT ANGLE ON VALERIE AND GEORGE CONTINUOUS

VALERIE

Do you think I'm a jerk, George?

GEORGE

What kind of friends are these anyway? Hmm. Did I ever tell you about my friend Peg Leg Peters who used to play ball with me in the Negro League? He was one of the best short stops I have ever seen, but when he lost his leg in the war, they switched him to first base. But I tell you, he could still run those bases faster with a peg leg than I could. What's even more amazing is that year he batted 331, which was better than he had ever done. Now I have a theory, I think he confused those pitchers so much that they weren't really sure where to pitch him. You see he had that peg shaped just like a Louisville Slugger. They tried to pitch him low and inside, but I saw him hit a double off that leg one day. I swear to you, if he had been white he would have made a fortune in endorsements. Now you might wonder why I'm telling you about Peg Leg.

Valerie's tears have subsided.

VALERIE

As usual, George, you read my mind.

GEORGE

When old Peg Leg would come in after the game he'd hang that peg on the outside of his locker and hop down to the shower. I remember once when some of his friends, if you want to call them that, thought it would be a cute idea to cut two inches off of that peg before he came back to dress. Peg Leg nearly fell flat on his face. To make matters worse, he had to miss three games waiting for a new peg, and as a result, we didn't make the playoffs. So, you get my drift?

VALERIE

Sorry George, I'm almost there but I haven't quite gotten it.

GEORGE

Honey, let me spell it out for you. Like I told Peg Leg that day, it's time to get yourself some new friends. And that's what I'm telling you. Find some new friends and get a new life.