Introduction by the Author (Excerpt)

Over a period of years, I developed the Story Map method of structural analysis, which can be used to construct a new narrative or deconstruct an existing one. I discovered the importance of not just hitting page points, but using what I call *Active Storytelling*, which is making your scenes and your characters' actions advance the story and bring about change while maintaining a cohesion built on theme and escalating conflict.

The purpose of the book is simple: **to help you improve your craft and increase your odds of getting your script to impress a decision-maker in Hollywood**. That's it.

This method is not a guarantee of success, or a way to sidestep the hard work of building your craft and developing your voice. It's a comprehensive working process that has guided hundreds of writers to craft their best work, and I'm excited and proud to bring it to you.

There are tons of books on screenwriting. **So why this one?**

- It's from the perspective of the person on the other side of the desk who evaluates your material. No matter where you're at in your career or who you know, you still need to <u>blow away the reader</u>, so I'm going to show you the best and most focused way to emulate the many successful scripts and movies that I've studied for over two decades.

- My structure system applies to <u>every genre</u> and the beats are *always in the same order*. There is no mixing and matching, order changes, or needless categorizing as with other systems. My method is stripped down to the practical essentials—let's leave the theory and the journal entries and the pats on the back behind—I'm preparing you for the market to get past brutal readers like myself.

- All of the analysis and guidelines in this book are based on the current, model spec screenplay in Hollywood. Lean, mean and fast-paced, this is not your uncle's screenplay – this is not a winking holdover from the "Boom-Boom" '80s and '90s (you know, when they were handing out spec deals at LAX?). This 100-110 page cinematic emotion machine has a very clear and clean set of guidelines, qualities and standards, some of which can be broken, but only if you've mastered them first.

- All of the advice (and the quotations, which you'll find in the "From The Trenches" sidebars) comes from my direct experience with working professionals in the movie industry. If I quote a source (other than the great Billy Wilder, R.I.P.), then it's because I personally spoke with them or was in the room when they spoke. These are exclusive bits of wisdom I've gathered from living and working in Los Angeles and New York City.

I'm going to strip it down.

I'm going to be tough on you.

I'm going to ask, "Are you a *real* writer?"

I'm going to show you many examples from produced screenplays written by top professionals. I'm going to keep up the pace and get to the point, with all the fat trimmed and focused only on the *crucial* information.

Just as I like my scripts.

Good Luck and Happy Writing!

Dan Calvisi

Story Maps: How To Write a GREAT Screenplay by Daniel Calvisi