



The Writing Works
Donna Matrazzo 
COMPELLING STORIES ON COMPLEX TOPICS

Key Information

OFFICE

15500L NW Ferry Rd.
Portland, OR 97231

CONTACT

Donna Matrazzo
Office: 503-621-3049
Cell: 503-705-5048

EMAIL

matrazzo@msn.com

WEBSITE

www.donnamatrazzo.com

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WOSB-Federal

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WBE-Oregon State

10 Surprisingly Useful Scriptwriting Deliverables

*Scroll down to see value-added writerly stages
of the production process that producers
and directors tell me they appreciate*

1. Writerly footage log organized by topic

What you get: A writerly detailed log describing shot scenes, with time codes, rated by stars, and organized by topic

Why it's so useful: Used in the script, the client can better picture the scenes; in editing, the director can readily find scene options

What it looks like (an abbreviated sampling):

WILDLIFE

***3:21 Wonderful misty shot with lots of buffalo—at least 6. They look ethereal, see some calves, pans left, buffalo slowly move

**4:09 Wider shot of buffalo with misty blue sky, see about a dozen on a slightly sloped hillside. They are moving around.

4:30 Buffalo in the river, silhouettes, misty and ethereal. They move slowly, two calves move on ahead.

**27:40 An elk standing in a field of orange grasses . He bends down to graze. Big rack of antlers. He walks to the right and out of the frame.

28:18 Close shot of elk grazing. Very orange scene . Shot opens up a little as he feeds.

BEAUTY SHOTS/SCENICS

***12:58 Gorgeous shot of three lines of hills in different shades of orange-black and then an orange sky; the tallest hills are mountains silhouetted against the sky

***13:14 Another amazing scene. Mostly blue and black but with a brilliant hot yellow surrounded by orange setting sun with a few orange “bubbles” from the camera in the foreground and trees silhouetted in front.

MUD POTS

***11:29 Great close up of a bubbling mud pot. Color is grayish brown. Bubble, bubble, bubble.

45:30 Close of this muddy water gushing out from the wall, steaming and bubbling

**45:42 Different angle of this gray mud bubbling spewing out

SCIENTISTS AT WORK

**41:10 Guy and woman at instrument. They are talking but we don't have dialog. Guy looks into the scope. They talk again. He look again through the scope. She types something into a device.

2. Phone interview questions

(pre-on-camera)

What you get: Longer, thoughtful, researched pre-interviews by phone

Why it's so useful: More time can be spent with the interviewee than there's usually time for on-camera; can use for casting based on phone "presence" and answers

What it looks like:

Phone interview questions for jury instructional film

- When were you on a jury?
- What kind of case was it?
- How would you describe your experience?
- Was it what you expected when you went in?
- Were you nervous? Excited?
- What was the most memorable part of the experience?
- Would you look forward to doing it again?
- When you first walked into the courtroom, how did it feel when the judge, the attorneys, the defendant and everyone's eyes turned and focused on you?
- At what point did it hit you that you were going to be making some big decisions that would change people's lives?
- Were you surprised when *voir dire* started, and you had to introduce and talk about yourself? How did that feel?
- Did it make you question whether you might have some personal biases?
- What do you remember about the attorneys making their opening statements?
- What do you remember about all the instructions you were given from the judge? [paying attention to the evidence, listening to the witness, disregarding what they saw or heard when an objection was sustained]
- Did you feel like you and the other jurors were listening intently the whole time?
- What was it like when the trial got to the end and the attorneys made their closing remarks? What was your impression of how the attorneys came across?
- Did hearing the closing arguments really make you focus on how a person truly is considered innocent until proven guilty?
- How did you feel about the deliberations? Was it a powerful experience?
- Was it difficult to make a decision just on the facts that were presented? Was it hard to get rid of some biases?
- What role did the presiding juror play? How did he or she handle it?
- Anything else you want to add?

3. Organized research in Outline View

What you get: All the useful information from the writer's research that has been cut and pasted into a compact and easy-to-reference format

Why it's so useful: When the View is collapsed, you see a complete list of topics; when expanded, you see the full breadth of material. Each item of research is coded to the bibliography so you can identify the source of everything.

What it looks like (an abbreviated sampling):

COLLAPSED VIEW

OMAHA—LANDSCAPE, GEOGRAPHY
 EARLY SETTLEMENT
 ROUGH FRONTIER TOWN
 TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD
 CATTLE INDUSTRY/STOCKYARDS
 IMMIGRANTS
 SMALL TOWN FLAVOR, BIG CITY

EXPANDED VIEW

TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

E5

No one could have predicted how busy the new depot would be. During the first month, 82 trains passed through the station each day. A month later that grew to over 100. Trains carrying people, freight and mail passed through Omaha 24 hours a day.

G6

More than 1000 miles of tracks—Omaha was the base. In 1920, over 750,000 tickets were sold in a single year. In just 21 years, the city outgrew the station.

W13

New UP station --truly modern--reflected the city's growth as a major railroad center in the U.S.--a modern and impressive facility that would symbolize the power of the railroad industry.

S10

After the war, auto usage increased and train travel dropped sharply.

Amtrak closed US in 1971. The era of passenger trains in Omaha was over.

4. Script dialogue drawn from phone pre-interviews

What you get: The best things that a person said in the longer phone interview, in a form that provides prompts to the director to ask about what the person already said

Why it's so useful: You get all the best material, in a shorter amount of on-camera time; having it in the script helps with client pre-shooting approvals

What it looks like: (an abbreviated sampling):

NM:

[something like this from phone interview:]

"Gentrification has had devastating effects on the black community in Seattle. Thriving areas have slowly and surely eroded."

LW:

[something like this from phone interview:]

"When my family comes to visit they ask where are all the black people? Because we're kind of all spread out. To someone on the outside looking in we may seem a little invisible. While we seem thin we're pretty thick. There's a lot of love in the black community here."

ES:

[something like this from phone interview:]

"There aren't many opportunities for young black men in Yakima, and so the black population is dwindling here."

BW:

[something like this from phone interview:]

"There aren't a lot of African Americans in the northwest, but there's a real community here."

5. Culled interview clips organized by topic

What you get: All the interview clip “selects” in Outline View, organized by topic

Why it’s so useful: In editing, you can see all the potential clip for any scene

What it looks like (an abbreviated sampling):

COLLAPSED VIEW

ABUNDANCE
 BOARDING SCHOOLS
 CREATION STORY
 FISHING/SALMON RESTORATION
 FOODS: BERRY-GATHERING
 FOODS: ROOT-DIGGING
 HORSES
 LANGUAGE
 LOSING THE LAND
 SELF-GOVERNMENT
 SONGS AND SINGING
 SPIRITUALITY

EXPANDED VIEW

SONGS AND SINGING

BS: 01:08:09 “This is the, it’s the song that I started using everyday. And telling them that when they feel bad, to stop and think about that song and ...and say it. Because everyone is special. Everyone. Regardless of how they feel or anything, I said, think about it and you say, I am special.”

JN: 08:11:18 “I don’t know quite how to describe it, but the faith is really built around these songs. And these songs are created, umthey’re divine. They were made by the Creator and they were sent back here to us from heaven.”

SW: 03:04:22 “One of the things that was a hallmark of those people was their artistic capabilities in music. They picked up music as a way of expressing themselves. And they maintained that, along with their cultural upbringing.”

AA: 17:12:22 “The songs that have the words are the ones that help guide us, that help teach us some things about who we are, and this is what the belief says.”

6. Revamped Post-production Storyline

What you get: A fresh, workable Storyline when a lot of footage has been shot that no longer nicely matches the Treatment/Shooting Script and needs to be re-thought

Why it's so useful: It turns a mishmash of footage and interviews into a clear and strong story

What it looks like:

1. Introduction: So Charmed

- a) Kids enchanted by otters

2. Our Fascination with Sea Otters

3. Threatened Status Today

4. The Surveys

- a) The surveys
- b) Overview of the scientific program

5. Importance of Otters to Ocean Health

6. Near-extinction

- a) Abundance
- b) The fur trade
- c) What survived
- d) Given protection/hope

7. Tracking

- a) What technology allows us to do today
- b) Going out on the boat
- c) Diving; getting two otters
- d) They get otters on the boat
- e) Transported to the lab
- f) Surgery/implantation

- g) Otter with TDS released back into the wild

- h) Spotters

- i) What the data look like

- j) Sequence ending

8. Studying Otters in Captivity

- a) Introduction to Wick
- b) His work
- c) Its value
- d) Sequence ending

9. Translocation

10. Strandings and Deaths

11. Pollution and Disease

- a) Oil spill threat
- b) Disease

12. People Who Come Looking

13. Competition for Food

14. Otter Rescues

15. Conclusion

- a) Science holds the key to saving the California sea otter
- b) People care

7. Meeting preparation questions

What you get: Questions designed to cover project requirements like goals and the audience, themes, viewing situation and research to date

Why it's so useful: It makes the most effective use of everyone's time, helps insure that no important topic is missed, can even be sent in advance

What it looks like (an abbreviated sampling):

History vs. Contemporary?

- There is a great deal of material up to about 1920. What percentage of the story should be history, what percentage contemporary?
- Do we expect the storyline to be somewhat chronological?
- How do we see past and present integrated? i.e., do we tell an old story, like Aunt Rittie, at cow camps and show cow camps of today?
- If we use contemporary footage, how will this film, "Into the Saddle," be different from "Ranch Women?"

How many stories to tell?

- Is there a way to use the multiple screens to tell concurrent stories? If not, each story will play in linear time.
- Are we agreed that we want to have representative cowgirls who are Spanish, African American, Native American and Caucasian and spanning multiple generations?
- How do we approach the research that tells us whom and where we're going to film?

Do we anticipate that we can show all the activities mentioned in the proposal?

- Potential activities include haying, mending fences, cooking, calving, cutting, breaking ice, dawn feeding, shipping cows, branding driving a truck, riding colts.
- Should we be focusing on a few activities like haying and branding? Or maybe use the flow of the seasons and the things done then?

How do we envision using the three screens?

- How many times will we have filmic panoramas? How often will all three screens be images of the same event? Do you see a percentage of old photographs? Do you see us using other techniques?

Do we have an overriding theme?

- What about animals? We have this quote: "The care of the animals comes first. Animals are not only a cowgirl's livelihood but also her reason and purpose."

8. Concept Outline

(Pre-Treatment)—for discussion with director

What you get: Content and images for each proposed sequence, to be discussed in detail before the Treatment is written

Why it's so useful: It makes sure the writer's ideas are on track and gives the director an opportunity to offer additional ideas for inclusion in the Treatment

What it looks like (Part 5 demonstrated):

Part 1. Wildfires • Part 2. Santa Ana Wind Wildfires • Part 3. USGS Research: The Wildfire Risk Scenario Project • Part 4. Fires as Unpreventable Disasters

Part 5. The California Chaparral Ecosystem Story

Content:

≈ The chaparral landscape has evolved over millions of years. It is the dominant ecosystem in California (actually much of the West).

≈ Chaparral has historically burned at 30 to 130-year intervals.

≈ Today the landscape gets fire at 5-10 year intervals. Vegetation can't grow fast enough to replenish seeds. In its place grow fire-prone non-native grasslands.

≈ Grass fire is the most dangerous fire we know of (in terms of fire-fighter deaths). Move so quickly, very little opportunity to stop them.

≈ The problem has been exacerbated by fire funding being used to masticate or grind up chaparral. It's said that it reduces the fuel load.

≈ People have not appreciated the incredible natural preserves of the chaparral landscape. Perhaps "national forest" names should be changed to "National Chaparral Recreation Areas."

≈ It's predicted that we will lose 50% of existing chaparral within the next century. It will be replaced by weeds.

Images:

Beauty scenes of chaparral landscapes

Maps that show their extent

Comparison with replacement landscapes

How chaparral burns

Time lapse of chaparral seed formation

Masticated chaparral landscapes before and after





Part 6. Why Science Is Essential: Because What It Reveals Is Counter-Intuitive • Part 7. We're Not Fighting Forest Fires Here: The Old Guard and What's Wrong With That • Part 8. Solution: Living With Fire – Plan for Fire-adapted Communities/ • Part Plan, Not Prevent • Part 9. Solution: Resolve Powerline Dangers • Part 10. Solution: Retrofit Homes to Accommodate Fire • Part 11. Conclusion

9. Variety of script formats

What you get: A ready-made or custom script format to match any style production
Why it's so useful: Some producers or clients require specific formats
What it looks like (an abbreviated sampling):

Teleplay			
<p>1. A close-up of packed, crowded earth.</p> <p>NARRATIVE (voiceover) The western Navajo Nation now has drought where less than three inches of rain fall in a year.</p> <p>2. A 3D on camera. Title: Ocean Nation, Department of Fish and Wildlife</p> <p>CHIEF TIM JANTZEN, QUINCY INN CAMERAMAN "We've had drought for months, weather patterns have changed drastically, the animals are a lot sicker and water access is limited. There are a lot of changes happening in the landscape. It's the whole ecosystem."</p> <p>3. An airplane in the sky flies, perhaps over the location of the Little Colorado River Valley.</p> <p>3D, voice over "I don't see drying up before there were a lot more lakes."</p> <p>4. A 3D camera pans down showing flying over the ground and looking at mountains in the distance.</p> <p>3D, voice over "The last five years the ground has been dry. We've had nothing but sandbars that last five years right around planting season and the whole just kill the plants—the corn, the squash, the watermelons. The whole just kill it."</p> <p>5. A new creek across a dry landscape.</p> <p>3D (voiceover) "The stream is not all gone. We used to have water coming out of the ground, some of the watering points that used to have water all the time are gone."</p> <p>6. RT on camera.</p> <p>RT, voice over "I'm sure the kid-logger like on the whole Navajo Nation, but only those hot of water right now."</p> <p>7. RT's photos of brownish mud in the sand.</p> <p>RT, voice over "I still remember it. I still remember the mud and the whole."</p> <p>8. A new truck in a large open country displaying water into gaps and tanks in the back.</p> <p>3D (voice over) "I still remember it. I still remember the mud and the whole."</p> <p>9. RT's photos of brownish mud in the sand.</p> <p>3D (voice over) "I still remember it. I still remember the mud and the whole."</p> <p>10. RT's photos of brownish mud in the sand.</p> <p>3D (voice over) "I still remember it. I still remember the mud and the whole."</p> <p>11. RT's photos of brownish mud in the sand.</p> <p>3D (voice over) "I still remember it. I still remember the mud and the whole."</p> <p>12. RT's photos of brownish mud in the sand.</p> <p>3D (voice over) "I still remember it. I still remember the mud and the whole."</p> <p>13. RT's photos of brownish mud in the sand.</p> <p>3D (voice over) "I still remember it. I still remember the mud and the whole."</p>	<p>14. RT on camera.</p> <p>RT, voice over "There are a lot of watermelons. In the drought, some people are using water from wells contaminated by the animals."</p> <p>15. RT on camera.</p> <p>NARRATIVE (voiceover) There's not just less rain. There's less snow.</p> <p>16. RT on camera. Title: Navajo Nation, Department of Fish and Wildlife</p> <p>RT, voice over "We had to start to get drinking water earlier. As I became a teenager, it changed to where there wasn't any snow."</p> <p>17. A graph based on the one that shows the decrease in annual snow depth.</p> <p>Rocky Mountain snowpack supplies water to millions of people.</p>	<p>Since the 1930s, average snow depth has dropped by one-third, from almost a foot to just under four inches.</p> <p>Before 1982 there had not been a recorded year with almost no accumulated snow depth.</p> <p>Between 2002 and 2011, there were seven years of no or almost no snow.</p> <p>18. Before and after images of the Little Colorado River showing the dramatic change in its width and flow.</p> <p>The lack of snowfall has a dramatic effect on livestock.</p> <p>Take the Little Colorado. In the stretch between Window and Leapy.</p>	

Two-column			
<p>AK MAP TO INSIDE PASSAGE TO UPPER INSIDE PASSAGE</p> <p>NARRATIVE EIGHTY MILES SOUTH OF POINT BARRETT, IN THE INSIDE PASSAGE, IS FIVE FINGER LIGHTHOUSE. NARRATIVE</p> <p>ON THE HOUR- HOUR BOAT TRIP SOUTH FROM ENGLAU... MEMBERS OF THE JUNEAU LIGHTHOUSE ASSOCIATION... MARVEL AT SCENES THAT HAVE CALVED FROM NEARBY CALACERS.</p> <p>... AND AWAY AT THE SEASONAL RESIDENTS IN NORTH ABERGEE'S LARGEST HUMPBACK WHALE FEEDING GROUND.</p> <p>THE LOOK THAT HERE COMES THE BOAT. OVER THERE, OVER THERE.</p> <p>CH These guys are humpback whales. When they're full grown they're 30 feet long and weigh a ton per foot. These things are roughly 4,000 pounds.</p> <p>NATURALIST CLARE HANSEN SHARES HER EXPERTISE OF ALASKA'S ASTONISHING MARINE LIFE.</p> <p>CH Here we're seeing a hump. They come up to breathe and the water between their blowholes and the surface gets shot up into the air up to 25 feet high. That one probably hit off but it's coming up to 200 miles per hour from the blowhole so it can spray and knock you out. It's really amazing.</p>	<p>LEIGHTHOUSE IN THE DISTANCE.</p> <p>3D Five Finger Lighthouse is a very remote place.</p> <p>5D Historically lighthouses are always put in inaccessible areas to keep mariners safe from passing around. That the island lighthouse here at Five Finger, there's a narrow five-mile island.</p> <p>WYON CAMERA.</p> <p>5D Here at Five Finger Lighthouse we're off into south of Juneau, which is north behind me and to the north north of Petersburg. And the only way I've been getting back and forth is with a small boat or I've got some airplanes if it's a nice day.</p> <p>5D If you want to come to a remote site, this is the place to be.</p> <p>MONTAGE OF VOLUNTEERS ARRIVING. BOAT IS UNLOADED AND SUPPLIES LOADED ON THE TRUCK. LIGHTHOUSE IN THE BACKGROUND.</p> <p>5D Today we had volunteers come down on a jet boat full of horses and that was great, they came right up onto the rocks and I came off the boat, they had the job of getting all the gear up, and had these one-man-rafts going to help. They came up the rocks and they saw the historic structure and they were going to look at the inside. They were right in the middle of nowhere. It's amazing how they must have</p>	<p>FOUR MEMBERS OF THE JUNEAU LIGHTHOUSE ASSOCIATION. BEST MONTAGE OF THE BOAT ARRIVING THE ISLAND.</p> <p>ARCHIVAL IMAGES.</p> <p>SUPER</p> <p>EVON CAMERA.</p> <p>5D Five Finger and Sentinel were the first two Alaskan lighthouses. Five Finger was built first although Sentinel and Five Finger were lit at the same day. Five Finger was a Victorian style wooden structure. It had a signal on top which held a Fresnel lens. The original lighthouse burned in 1910.</p> <p>EVON CAMERA.</p> <p>5D What we've got left is the two buildings on the island, the lighthouse and the companion house. There are original 1912 buildings. They weren't attached by the time in 1910.</p> <p>5D Five Finger Lighthouse was the last lighthouse to be decommissioned by the Coast Guard. And it's on the last slope - completely, primarily - out of all the lighthouses.</p> <p>SUPER MONT.</p> <p>5D Even from I think it's 10 miles like. I've got a million things to do. But we've managed to do it in such a way, it's completely healthy. The lighthouse needs a lot of paint and a lot of repair but we've been able to keep it from deteriorating any more.</p> <p>MONTAGE OF VOLUNTEERS WORKING ON LIGHTHOUSE. SPOILING PAINT.</p> <p>5D We've got painting water, absolutely, so we've alternate years of coating.</p> <p>MONTAGE OF HOW THE AUTOCRANE WORKS.</p> <p>5D We've got painting water, absolutely, so we've alternate years of coating.</p>	<p>Using the boat out in the water.</p> <p>5D Five Finger still got a long way to go. It will take years and years to have it completely up and going because if it's possible, it's a very remote place.</p> <p>MONTAGE OF BOAT PULLING BEACH.</p> <p>5D One of the things that's probably the best. When there was a light tower here, the light tower that had an eye over the water that's what kept the lighthouse together. And one of the things they did was pull them. I don't like to say get it back to the state that it was when it was a humpback whale station, then I've got a lot of stuff.</p> <p>EVON CAMERA.</p> <p>5D We can make a go of it but there's always improvement. They will never be done. The 30 years that we have five a hour on this thing will just be nothing. Somewhere else will be doing this after we're gone.</p> <p>MONTAGE OF WHALES.</p> <p>5D We have a lot of humpback whale here at Five Finger Lighthouse and the island surrounding it. We allow the boat, the program come on and the same pretty soon we're going to see the whales blowing, or show them the way.</p> <p>5D We have a lot of humpback whale here at Five Finger Lighthouse and the island surrounding it. We allow the boat, the program come on and the same pretty soon we're going to see the whales blowing, or show them the way.</p> <p>5D We have a lot of humpback whale here at Five Finger Lighthouse and the island surrounding it. We allow the boat, the program come on and the same pretty soon we're going to see the whales blowing, or show them the way.</p>

Storyboard			
<p>Storyboard</p> 	<p>Narrative/Visual Direction</p> <p>Wide shot of woman working in kitchen.</p> <p>Text on screen [TOS]: In 1920</p>		<p>TOS: was a year-long affair.</p>
	<p>Daughter, approximately 11 years old, lays the dining table.</p> <p>TOS: preparing a Sunday meal</p>		<p>Planting peas: shallow depth of field, close up. Mother or daughter's hand.</p> <p>TOS: May - 9 months earlier.</p>

... or production company's custom format

10. Footnoted revisions document

What you get: Instead of a tracking document with interruptive balloons or multicolored inserts, this is a clean text with all comments noted at the bottom

Why it's so useful: All the details of who said what or explanations of why a change was made are visible but not interrupting the flow of the script

What it looks like (an abbreviated sampling):

7

15. A class of very young children in Head Start or Day Care,⁵ learning to speak the Nez Perce language. The children are very animated and it seems clear that they are picking up words quickly.⁶

Voices continue: The children's energetic interactions with the instructors and with each other UP AND UNDER⁷

Voices over the sequence:
(something like this, based on our research conversations:)

"We have a lot of children talking the language. If not fluently, at least enough to understand what's being said. "

16. The camera dollies past a row of children in class, listening to the teacher, raising their hands, looking at their books, etc.

"Great-grandchildren pick up words real fast 'cause their mind isn't complicated with [lots of other things.]"

"Without the language, and understanding the meanings of the language, you lose a great deal of your culture."

dissolve to:

17. A transition scene tying the language class to words about the landscape. For example, with this quote, it might be a mountain range, with a saddle between peaks.

⁵ These are young kids. There's also a "Language Bowl" where [older] kids are competing. This happens at Umatilla and Colville, not at Nez Perce right now. Also can show a scene of kids using the language. (VW)
 That's when you start teaching the children. Especially the young ones. (BS)

⁶ Would like to see this later and have the story in more of a chronological order. (GR) I agree. (SR)

⁷ HC teaches a language class at the college in Lewiston. Other contacts are AS or TG at the Language Center.
 From 3:30 to 5:00 there's an after school program, K-4th/5th grade, with 20 minute of class. (BS)