

# **SCRIPTWRITING:**

## **SCRIPT FORMAT:**

### **1. Look Professional:**

- CLEAN and easy to read.
- SPELLING has to be correct.
- Just because it is a script doesn't mean you can ignore GRAMMAR.

### **2. Rules:**

#### **Do's:**

- Break up dialogue with description.
- Written in 'master' scenes.
- Use active words in description.
- Concise character description.
- Metaphors and similes.
- You can use FADE IN and FADE OUT but avoid using them too often.

#### **Don'ts:**

- Do not cover a page in dialogue – break up with description.
- Never more than 6 lines of description in one section.
- No shot selections.
- Do not 'right justify'
- Do not centre dialogue.
- Avoid parentheticals.
- Do not use "we see" or "we hear".
- Avoid bold text.
- Avoid abbreviations.
- No synopsis.
- No character lists.
- No actor suggestions.

### 3. Specific Rules:

#### Font:

- COURIER - 12

#### Slug-line:

- Marks the beginning of a new scene.
- E.G:

EXT. NEIGHBOURHOOD STREET - MORNING

Double Space

Single Space

#### Margins:

- Typically:
  - 1.5 Inches from left.
  - 1 inch from right.

#### Pages:

- Numbered, top right and always with a full stop.

#### Spacing's:

SLUG LINE  
*Double space*

FIRST LINE OF DESCRIPTION  
*Double space*

CHARCTERS NAME  
DIALOGUE  
*Double space*

DESCRIPTION  
*Triple space*

NEW SCENE

#### The End:

THE END – Two lines after the last line.

**Donnie Darko:**  
Incorporates all aspects of these rules.

97.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT (1:30 A.M.)

The jet engine falls silently through the night down towards the Darko house... having travelled back in time.

INT. DONNIE'S ROOM - NEXT

Donnie wakes up. He is laughing hysterically.

The engine crashes through his ceiling... engulfing the room.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NEXT

Eddie jumps up from the La-Z Boy... startled awake by the impact.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NEXT

Rose sits up in bed, hearing the crash.

ROSE

Eddie?

INT. FOYER - NEXT

Elizabeth leans against the wall, screaming.

INT. DONNIE'S ROOM - NEXT

The mammoth jet engine has plummeted all the way down through the house, creating a cavernous hole that splits Donnie's room in half. The smoke from the wreckage begins to clear.

Above the engine is Donnie... impaled through the stomach by a wooden beam that was once part of the floor beneath his bed. There is blood gushing from his mouth, as his face is contorted into an expression that could almost be a smile.

EXT. NEIGHBOURHOOD STREET - MORNING (11 A.M.)

The same disaster scene as before... only more media, more neighbours, and a Coroner. People stand around in shock... disbelief.

From the other end of the street, a girl comes riding along on a bike... slowly taking in the entire scene. She pulls up to the kerb where a kid named David (eleven) is standing around.

It is Gretchen Ross.

GRETCHEN

Hi... what's going on here?

DAVID

Horrible accident. My neighbour...  
he got killed.

GRETCHEN  
What happened?

DAVID  
He got smooshed. By a jet engine.

She stares at the house, where paramedics wheel a body out of the front door.

GRETCHEN  
What was his name?

DAVID  
Donnie. Donnie Darko.

They stare at the front yard for a while. We see Elizabeth. We see Eddie, carrying Samantha... who is crying.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
I feel bad for his family.

GRETCHEN  
(long beat)  
Yeah.

DAVID  
Did you know him?

She stares at the family for several moments... and then shakes her head slowly as if trying to locate a memory that is slipping away.

GRETCHEN  
No.

Rose, leaning against a tree while smoking a cigarette, notices them. She seems to recognise Gretchen... from somewhere in the vast reservoir of her memory.

She waves at her.

She waves back.

FADE OUT.

THE END