



Crafty TV Writing: Thinking Inside the Box

By Alex Epstein



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A professional TV writer's real-world guide to getting paid to write great television

Everyone watches television, and everyone has an opinion on what makes good TV. But, as Alex Epstein shows in this invaluable guide, writing for television is a highly specific craft that requires knowledge, skill, and more than a few insider's tricks.

Epstein, a veteran TV writer and show creator himself, provides essential knowledge about the entire process of television writing, both for beginners and for professionals who want to go to the next level. *Crafty TV Writing* explains how to decode the hidden structure of a TV series. It describes the best ways to generate a hook, write an episode, create characters the audience will never tire of, construct entertaining dialogue, and use humor. It shows how to navigate the tough but rewarding television industry, from writing your first "spec" script, to getting hired to work on a show, to surviving--even thriving--if you get fired. And it illuminates how television writers think about the shows they're writing, whether they're working in comedy, drama, or "reality."

Fresh, funny, and informed, *Crafty TV Writing* is the essential guide to writing for and flourishing in the world of television.



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Editorial Review

From Booklist

Epstein, author of *Crafty Screenwriting* (2002), draws on his experiences writing for the television shows *Naked Josh* and *Charlie Jade* to create an essential guide for those hoping to break into television writing. Epstein starts with the big picture by examining what great television series have in common: a hook that draws viewers in, compelling characters the audience cares about, and stories that unfold naturally on the small screen and make people want to return to the world of the show every week. From there he gets into the specifics of how to write a good script. Here he tells writers to create a beat sheet--something similar to an outline--of their episode before sitting down to write the script. After offering insightful writing hints and tips on how to write comedy, Epstein walks writers through finding jobs writing for television--and how to get along with everyone from story editors to show runners once one does. Enlightening and straightforward, this is a must for anyone who wants to write for television. *Kristine Huntley*

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Review

No need for me to ever write a book on TV writing. Alex Epstein has covered it all . . . along with a few things I wouldn't have thought of. Save yourself five years of rookie mistakes. *Crafty TV Writing* and talent are pretty much all you'll need to make it.

--Ken Levine, writer/producer, MASH, Cheers, Frasier, The Simpsons, Wings, Becker

About the Author

Alex Epstein is the author of *Crafty Screenwriting*. He has worked as a development executive, television story editor, and television writer for more than a decade. He cocreated the comic drama series *Naked Josh*, and was head writer for the science fiction series *Charlie Jade*. A graduate of Yale University and the UCLA School of Film and Television, he writes the popular blog Complications Ensue.

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