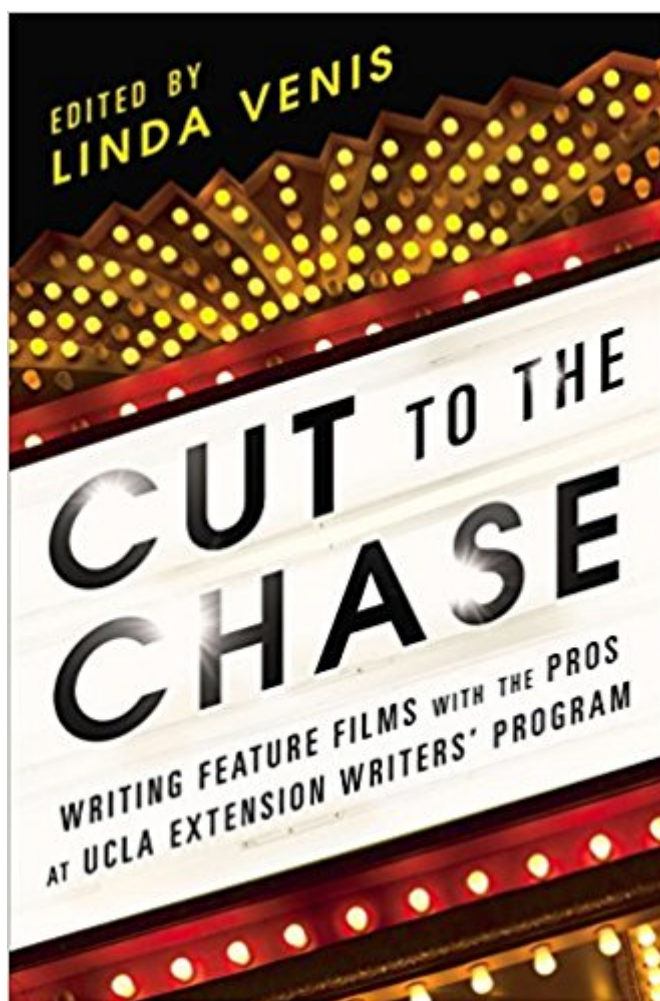


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# Cut To The Chase: Writing Feature Films With The Pros At UCLA Extension Writers' Program



## Synopsis

Millions of people dream of writing a screenplay but don't know how to begin, or are already working on a script but are stuck and need some targeted advice. Or maybe they have a great script, but no clue about how to navigate the choppy waters of show business. Enter *Cut To The Chase*, written by professional writers who teach in UCLA Extension Writers' Programme, whose alumni's many credits include *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl*; *Twilight*; and the Academy Award nominated *Letters from Iwo Jima*. From learning how to identify story ideas that make a good movie to opening career doors and keeping them open, this authoritative, comprehensive, and entertaining book, edited by Writers' Program Director Linda Venis, will be the film-writing bible for decades to come. "A well-organized soup-to-nuts manual for aspiring Nora Ephrons and Charlie Kaufmans, from the faculty of a notable screenwriting program. . . . A readable writer's how-to that goes down smoothly." - Kirkus Reviews

## Book Information

Paperback: 400 pages

Publisher: Avery (August 6, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1592408109

ISBN-13: 978-1592408108

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 33 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #87,097 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #81 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Movies > Screenwriting](#) #324 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Television](#) #559 in [Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Writing Skills](#)

## Customer Reviews

"Cut to the Chase is now the ONLY book I use for my advanced feature screenwriting class at S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. It's a book for aspiring screenwriters, written by professional screenwriters. The layout of the material follows an organic work-flow that mirrors the writer's process. It's the type of book that will one day be thanked at the Oscars!" - Keith Giglio, Professor, Syracuse University; Screenwriter and Executive Producer whose credits include *Cinderella Story* "A classic. Very readable. Very informative." - Producer Julie Corman (New World Pictures, New Horizons Pictures) "Cut to

the Chase is a state-of-the-art collection of articles by some of the best (and most prolific) teachers at the UCLA Extension Writers' Program. In addition to practical information on craft, the reader also receives some pithy, entertaining and frank advice on dealing with the realities of a screenwriting career. "As a therapist who specializes in working with creative people of all stripes, I appreciate even more the book's wisdom and common sense. Plus, it's a lot of fun to read." —Dennis Palumbo, author and licensed psychotherapist

"There's a lot written about writing for the movies—but not much of it comes from professionals who know whereof they speak. With Cut to the Chase, readers hear from real professionals talking about the art and craft of screenwriting and learn not only the nuts and bolts of what it takes to be a screenwriter, but also how to mold their creativity into that most challenging of forms, the screenplay. If I was starting out today, I'd be looking for a book like Cut to the Chase because I'd want advice and knowledge from people who have been in the trenches." —Diane Lake, Assistant Professor, Visual and Media Arts, Emerson College; screenwriter for Columbia, Disney, Miramax, and Paramount

"A well-organized soup-to-nuts manual for aspiring Nora Ephrons and Charlie Kaufmans, from the faculty of a notable screenwriting program. . . . A readable writer's how-to that goes down smoothly." —Kirkus Reviews

"Cut to the Chase cuts the fat out of the screenwriting process. It's lean and mean without being intimidating. I think it's incredibly smart and cuts close to the bone of what really makes a great movie; less is really more with these wise guides taking the grizzle out of process!" —Karen Leigh Hopkins, *Because I Said So*, Stepmom

"Cut the Chase is a great value for aspiring screenwriters, leveraging the knowledge of numerous UCLA Extension instructors with their collective experience of 20 produced feature films in one volume. Covering everything from the inception of the idea all the way to the business end of taking meetings and pitching, this book has it all." —Iris Yamashita, Academy Award nominated screenwriter, *Letters from Iwo Jima*

Over the past two decades, Linda Venis has guided the growth of the UCLA Extension Writers' Programme into the nation's largest creative writing and screenwriting program. She lives in Los Angeles, California, with her husband and their daughter.

A fun read. There is so much to know about the film business. These are lessons from the classroom, and I was surprised at how good and easy to read this book is. It is not a dry tome whatsoever. Recommended for your library. I enjoyed it very much, and I have probably 50 books on filmmaking, distributing, and screenwriting.

Written by accomplished writers and neatly edited by UCLA Extension, this book contains A wonderful collection of tips and tricks for screenwriters new, intermediate and advance. The book is a Must have if you want to write for film, or if you already are and want to improve your craft.

Very insightful. I especially like the part where the one contributor talks about working on Tarzan and how she formats her synopsis when she gets an idea. I found this book more useful than some other writing books I purchased.

great read. Authors are professional, seasoned writers. Great tips and exercises to apply to your writing. Book is paperback and at least 1" thick. Very helpful and is written to the point. No jargon. Plain English yet comprehensive. Give it a shot. After all, it's from the #1 writers program in the U.S.

Great book on screenwriting laid in a very clear format from beginning the screenplay to the end and beyond. Highly recommended!

I purchased the Kindle version of this book, which has its own strong points for layout. First off, this is a comprehensive book about the craft of screenwriting from beginning in the conceptual stage through the rewrite process, and finally an actual map that shows how a script gets sold. Subject matter experts write each chapter. This works well for few reasons. First, having several authors submit expands the experience base far beyond what any single author could offer. Second, the editing which sews these chapters together is fantastic. Often, multiple submission books seem jarring as they move from author to author. Not so with "Cut to the Chase," these chapters link together smoothly if read in order and stand-alone if read by skipping to a specific stage of screen writing. Third, and I think this is the advantage of the Kindle version, if the reader skips to a middle chapter, like Chapter 6 - Outlining, there are links to the concepts referenced in earlier chapters. "Cut to the Chase" gets five stars for being easy to read and informative.

Topnotch screenwriter's reference!

Okay, I'm biased. I wrote Chapter 12, which (besides a copyediting error in the FIRST DAMN SENTENCE) is pretty brilliant, if I do say so myself. But what blew me away, from a teaching perspective, was how good all the OTHER chapters were. Look: screenwriting isn't like practicing

law, or engineering. There is no set plan. There is very little formula, despite what many books have said -- when a story formula does emerge, it's copied and quickly grows stale for the audience. So having a bunch of different produced screenwriters attack the craft from different angles, you get a book that's greater than the sum of its parts. Think of it as the Blind Folks examining the Elephant. All of us get a piece of it right -- but if you read the whole thing, you might just be able to see the Elephant itself. This doesn't mean your screenplay will sell, but it does mean you'll have a greater understanding of how to tell a story well. And that remains the only formula to creative writing: a good story, well told.

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