

## The Contact

### LOGLINE:

Why are you here?

### SYNOPSIS:

a experimental shortly dealing in retrospective view of the spy genre. influences like Salt, Atomic Blonde etc. Main Character Jackie meets a contact with a important package and lead on her own current assignment and the consequences threaten to expose her and cause the assignment to fall apart.

feature 85mins

act I frame up the assignment

Who

Where

Why

Characters of Jackies based around Salt (2010) and Atomic Blonde

Act II the consequences of the contact

Act III

Does she get found out?

Notes on screenplays from Lucy Hay.

here's some great tips here [on adaptation](#). Though most screenwriters aren't going to have the money for options on adapting bestselling books, they can still collaborate with authors (especially self published ones, though literary agents may pair scriptwriters with authors too – always worth asking!). Beyond adaptation, it's always worth doing lots of work on your central concept (aka premise, controlling idea, seed of the story, etc) to avoid it being [too samey](#). On the other end of the scale, if writers don't do their foundation work, they may end up in what I call [The Story Swamp](#), either because they grind to a halt or no reader knows what the hell the story is!! To avoid both these things, make sure you write a logline FIRST to 'focus in' on your story, especially what I call '[The 3 Cs](#)' – clarity, conflict, characters. Good luck!

## How Long Should A Screenplay Be?

120 minutes is the 'ideal' length for a screenplay, but only in THEORY. Time is money, so the longer your screenplay is, the more expensive it is to make. This is especially important for us UK screenwriters to realise, where ultra low-budget indie movies are typically as low as 80-90 pages. I like the fact the infographic reminds writers about profit, too – after all, this is show BUSINESS. We may love story, but money IS factor too, whether we like it or not. More about screenplay length, [HERE](#).

## The Rules of Screenplay Format

I always say that script format is the LEAST a writer can do. Obviously you don't need to fret over it too much – just make sure it doesn't interrupt the 'flow' of the read with daft, niggly things and reader pet peeves. But what are these?? Well, luckily it's never been easier to find out! I've created a mammoth list of the various formatting issues I see on a regular basis – plus what to do about them! – called [The B2W Format 1 Stop Shop](#). I keep it updated. Worth a bookmark!

## Screenwriting Pitfalls

As I always say on this blog: there's no RIGHT way to write a script, just multiple WRONG ways! I like what the infographic has flagged up here, especially the dreaded deus ex machina. Though [these are rare are produced works](#), they turn up in spec screenplays ALL THE TIME.

Stories about writers are (usually) quite dull, not least because I read SO MANY of them. It's worth thinking about yours will be differentiated from the rest if you're going to try this one.

I like the term ‘micro-managing’ here – the notion writers tell characters how to stand, move etc in the screen I call [FALSE MOVEMENT](#). These are not ‘true’ visuals and again, very dull.

I don’t like the idea voiceover is automatically bad. We see this advice given out A LOT, yet voiceover can be a brilliant tool. It is a considered risk, which is why you **MUST** do your research in depth if you’re going to use this device. Click [HERE](#) for more on this.

Lastly, I understand what they mean regarding ‘ban exposition’, but all stories **NEED** exposition (since ‘exposition’ refers to the background information **needed** to understand the story). I’d wager what they really mean is ‘ban **BAD** exposition’ – in other words, dialogue that feels ‘on the nose’, or various plotting contrivances. For more on how to use exposition well, [CLICK HERE](#).

## The Fundamentals Of Screenwriting

If this infographic has whet your appetite for finding out more about The Fundamentals of Screenwriting and how to apply them to your **OWN** writing, then [CLICK HERE](#).