

Plans for Movie Screenplays

Here is my outline of my screenplay material and my plans to make a movie based in some way on my “Do Ask Do Tell” material.

While there is an indie film called “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” now, as far as I can tell, no one has tried to use my domain name as the title of a commercial film. It’s obvious that it’s “only a matter of time” before someone tries.

While egocentricity might suggest my own autobiography would make good film, real world values say, no, not without “something else”. I don’t inspire that much rooting interest “just as I am”, gospel hymnology notwithstanding.

So what I have is a variety of materials, with some of it aimed at the sci-fi market, with my own touch.

This is the place to mention that Hollywood has a “third party rule”, supposedly to protect itself from copyright suits, which means that studios or production companies must receive scripts only from impartial agents. The possibility of posting scripts online or even their loglines or story ideas would confound this concept. But what I will do here is present some discussion of the issues with a few of my scripts, with the idea that ultimately there would have to develop sources of independent funding anyway.

Some of the screenplays have been posted online, in this directory.

(<http://www.doaskdotell.com/scrplys>). There are four major scripts here and a number of short ones. Generally, I’m not posting newer materials online now because of concerns over the way materials are sold.

In the film world, screenplays go through a process called “Script Clearance”. Here’s a typical explanation (link <http://www.indieclear.com/whysc.htm>).

I’ll run down the screenplays that I plan to focus on.

- (1) “Do Ask Do Tell”. That’s the name, all right. My main effort now is a layered story in which a protagonist (me) finds himself being interviewed and then processed to live in a smaller, simpler world than the one he left. Is this a job interview, or life after death, a dream, or what? It doesn’t go away. The film is introduced by a black-and-white sub-script called “The Sub” which the protagonist had authored. He seems to alternate between living inside his own screenplay and this new, possibly extraterrestrial setting. The critical events of his life are recalled, and people appear, simultaneously, at their most important age-points (generally as young adults). Slowly, he gets a handle on how he wound up in this fix, how to “pay his dues” (not just his “bills”) and how he could go back (there is really a Rachmaninoff-style ossia here), and the consequences for his World that are about to become manifest, very publicly.

- (2) "69 Minutes to Titan". The title refers to the amount of time for light (and maybe neutrinos) to get to the possible life-bearing moon of Saturn, at least in some orbital positions. I'll say that the "angels" have set up boot camp for earthlings to be processed for their next era of history, but the story with the specific characters is just one way it could happen. This one (written in 2004) is posted online, but in altered fashion, with not the full plot twist, which involves some legal risks if I display it (the whole script clearance thing). The protagonist is again based on me (called "Clem", or maybe like "Slim" in Army Basic). As the film opens, he's about to get out of jail on probation. Then the film goes back about six years to how he got in trouble over his book, involving the parents of a young man who had been in a class when he subbed, and who had worked with him on Libertarian politicking. The young man seems to have bizarre contacts to other worlds, which first became manifest at a "speaking in tongues" that Bill had watched. Eventually, Bill's websites are hacked and Bill gets prosecuted and winds up in jail. But he gets out in time to help everyone find out the real "secret" of what is out there. I've actually gotten calls on this script.
- (3) "Titanium". There is some similarity to "69 Minutes" (the title is a pun), but this time the protagonist is a journalist whose fiancée has "gone up". But the journalist is a bit of a philanderer – both with other women, and men – and that hasn't discouraged the young lady who has disappeared. Okay, does this really come from the characters, or do I need his "adventurousness" to have a real plot – but the journalist obviously wants an adventure (and maybe a "rite of passage") for his own life, before he "settles down". He encounters the "Clem" character and is led to a mysterious "re-education" academy out in West Texas (thankfully, no real connection to the FLDS), and a betaMax tape from the 80s that provides critical evidence of the "origins" of some people in a nearby Texas town, all connected to the disappearance. He's led to an initiation ceremony that eventually leads to his own UFO abduction, and revelations for what's in store for Earth. At a screenwriting class in 2006, a "Hollywood" type tried to get me to introduce "urgency" into the opening, with involvement of the police who suspect the journalist of ulterior motives.
- (4) "Prescience" is a sequel to "Titanium". I actually vetted this in a screenwriting group in Minneapolis before I came back to DC in 2003. Some of the characters are taken to another world, to escape the Earth's going through the "Purification". They find a kind of "Purgatory" where civilization is segmented by several historical epochs with differing levels of technology. The character "Clem" (maybe with the journalist's "help", and maybe with a doppelganger) tries to smuggle modern music into the "primitive" kingdoms. But then the "Arinelle" planet is itself threatened by an approaching brown dwarf, forcing everyone to go back to the restructured Earth. Prescience is supposed to show how a civilization could function without money.
- (5) "Baltimore Is Missing" was my entry into the 2004 Project Greenlight". It is available online.
- (6) "Make the A-list" has two different instantiations, one of which is available online (and I know is too long, at 185 pages in FinalDraft). A young actor auditions for a film in which the director will depict his own earlier incident involving a friend of the actor.
- (7) "American Epic" is another ambitious story with legal trickeries but no extraterrestrial out. 9/11 is recreated in detail in the middle, as one lesbian officer in the Pentagon has a partner in the South Tower.

The main effort will be focused on the first four scripts. Scripts (3) and (4) may sound like upscale “B movies” sometimes released by companies like Screen Gems or Tristar, or Lionsgate, or Summit, or even Dimension or Rogue.

I also have a novel manuscript called “Brothers”. I have sometimes used the title “Tribunal and Rapture”. Actually, there are several manuscripts. One of them (T&R) is told from the viewpoint of an aging FBI agent, another (“Rain on the Snow”) follows the worldview of a character like me, but the best effort, “Brothers”, follows a thirty something CIA agent with a family and a front job as a history teacher, who develops a relationship with a precocious gay college student while investigating the source of a mysterious disease that seems to start only at higher altitudes. The college student has the evidence linking all this to angels and extraterrestrials and “Purification”, just as in my movie scripts. There are road trips, abductions, and finally a “landing” that more people gradually find out about. In a recent posting on my TV blog (Sept 22, 2011), I discussed the idea of how it could be a TV series.