English 112: Screenwriting Workshop
Instructor: Michael Schilf

PREPARATION AND AFTERMATH

Objective: Scene economy, planting and payoff, involving an active audience.

Exercise: Write two short scenes (1/2 page each). NO DIALOGUE.

Scene 1: Your character is in alone in a room getting read for a date. We should be able to tell from the way in which he/she prepares if he/she is looking forward to the date, apathetic about it, dreading it, etc.

Scene 2: The same character enters the same room after the date. What happened on the date? We should tell by his/her actions - how he/she moves, gets undressed, looks in the mirror, etc. - how the date went. Was it a disaster? Unexpected? Predictable? Passionate? Remember, you must know what kind of date it is: a wedding, a funeral, the prom.

Remember: Scenes of preparation and aftermath should be at an emotional extreme. Hints: Since the scene of aftermath should contradict the preparation, you want to bring the character from one extreme to the other.

Example: Imagine a hitman in a suit with a press pass for the Democratic Convention. He’s assembling his elite sniper rifle, while looking over the dossier of the party’s Presidential nominee... We know who he is, where he’s going, what he’s going to do, how he’s going to do it... and we feel smart because we put the information together. And when he returns, his mission will have been a success, or maybe he’s the one who has been shot.