



8/26/2005

CONNIE MARTINSON TALKS BOOKS

There is a hidden area of film production that has not been written about in such detail as in "I Liked It, Didn't Love It" (Lone Eagle \$18.95) by Rona Edwards & Monika Skerbelis. The book is based on the course they teach at UCLA Extension, which is on feature film development, this book is subtitled "Screenplay Development From the Inside Out". Beginning with a short history of film and the contribution of Frank E. Woods who worked with D.W.Griffith, whom they credit with influencing the structure of screenplays as we know it today as well as his work in innovative methods of production. The other historic book on screenwriting is by E.J. Muddle "Picture Plays and How To Write them" in 1911 whose advice they quote in detail on page 11..

In the book they address the role of the Story Analyst. They may be called "Readers" but believe me, after reading what the job entails, they are far more important than they have been credited. They can make or break a writer by their comments which can run five pages. They write a synopsis, a story line and log and they make a recommendation, hence the title of the book. Using the history within the studio system, they cover as an example a film script, "Black Dog", and then an outline on what a writing coverage must include. I told Rona and Monika that it was similar to writing a college thesis for one book much less for twenty scripts in a week. They did tell me that the speed in which a script is read can often depend on who submitted it.

For good measure they follow the history for the reader of the process if the studio producer submits the script and if a hot agent submits it as part of a bidding war. They did say that the era of the million dollar spec script is only a memory. As to the lousy box office of this summer, look to the need to guarantee returns thinking. The book has cartoon illustrations , my favorite being the one on "Ideas", with a man with an idea and a group of heads identified as the guys who trash it.

www.conniemartinson.com aired and streamed at 9am from www.sfgtv.org and at 3pm & 11:30pm from www.lacityview.org