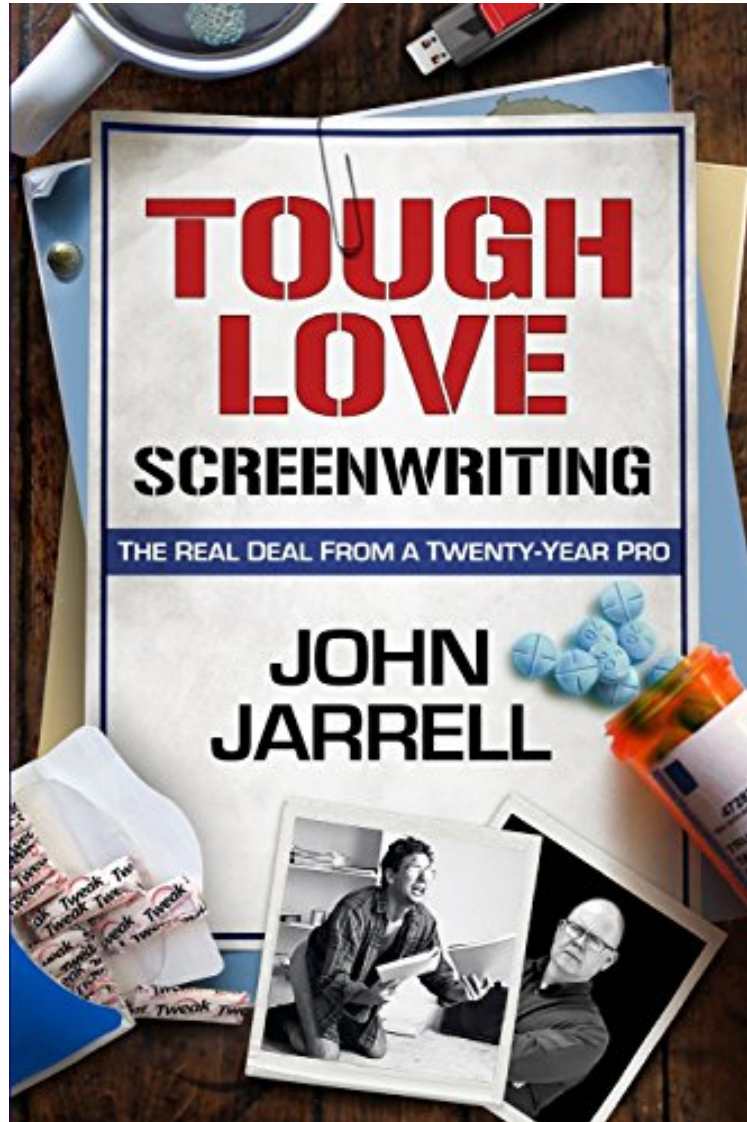


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# Tough Love Screenwriting: The Real Deal From A Twenty-Year Pro

John Jarrell

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**John Jarrell : Tough Love Screenwriting: The Real Deal From A Twenty-Year Pro** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tough Love Screenwriting: The Real Deal From A Twenty-Year Pro:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fun look into the biz of ScreenwritingBy Rachel SheridanTough

Love Screenwriting was a fun, encouraging read. I have around 10 books on screenwriting and there is a whole bunch of duplicate info in all of them. Hindsight being 20/20, reading only Syd Field's Foundations and Tough Love (and other scripts), would be sufficient enough before attempting the first screenplay. Field's book for the how-to, John's for a look into the business. Much of what John says about the biz was new info to me. I found the book to flow much like a casual, energetic conversation. John has no filter and gives fair warning to anyone who may have issues with heavy doses of profanity and the like. That was one warranted warning. I'm religious (and part Polish...) but was able to stick it out- chalk it up to having worked on +30 sets. I did glaze over some and some of it did have me cackling. Suffice it to say though, John would be a worthy contributor to Urban Dictionary if he so desired. I was interested in reading Tough Love because of the promised perspective of a working writer's life from someone who makes a living at it. It was not a let down. I like how John throws out real numbers in his experience writing and selling. Who doesn't want to know how much someone gets paid? So you truly get a firsthand account of the business. I'm in the middle of my first feature, first draft and I found his section on Writer's Arbitration very interesting and not premature as a new writer. Then again, Armageddon isn't here yet and I looked forward to reading Revelation. There is a very helpful section called Screenwriting 101. Even though it's info I've heard before, I read it as if reading it for the first time (we're urged to) and it was a helpful blast to read. The info was concise and coming from someone who sells screenplays to the big guns- that was key for me. There are no real cons to the book that would have prevented me from buying it if I would have known about them. But if I had to nitpick, I did feel the flow of the content was schizophrenic from time to time. Bear in mind this is coming from a sleep-starved Mom with a baby who isn't sleeping through the night yet, so it could be just me... Lastly (yes, I know, the road to Hell is paved with adverbs), it's evident John has a head full of fun facts, "useless knowledge", what have you. I thoroughly enjoyed the many quips he stuck in, from Three Dog Night to Faulkner to Cezanne. As someone who's been around the block several times, it's obvious John also has several blocks under his belt, so it was fun to relate to him in that way. As the book is over 400 pages, there is still a lot of quality stuff worth mentioning. If you pick it up, I hope you find it as helpful, humorous and insightful as I did. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Unique Insights Into What It Takes To Make It As A Hollywood Screenwriter By David Garfinkel Unvarnished truth and all the alternatives to unvarnished truth play interesting roles in Hollywood. No other town could have spawned a book like "Hello, He Lied," after all. But don't dismiss the weird reality that threads through Hollywood all that fast. Here is why: We (we, the people of the world) \*depend\* on Hollywood to deliver us truths that no one else can, will, or does. And Hollywood delivers, sometimes more successfully than other times. Take Major League Baseball. You could read books, go to games, watch Sports Center on ESPN, swallow wholesale droppings from the baseball industry promotion machine- or you could watch "Moneyball" and "Trouble With The Curve," and get a fictionalized sense of the truth that, I'm pretty sure, is much closer in many ways to the day-to-day reality of Major League Baseball than anything else you could get without being part of the game. The complex set of people, rituals, business units and God knows what else that created those two movies is, of course, called "Hollywood." I'm an accomplished and experienced professional writer, but not in Hollywood. My field is just as high-stakes but maybe not quite as dramatic: direct marketing copywriting. Nevertheless, for many years I was exploring how to write screenplays and get them produced. I made a decision some years back that I didn't like the way business was done in Hollywood enough to give up any plans to be a screenwriter. This book hasn't changed that. It has, in fact, reinforced my decision. But it has also made me like Hollywood, and many different aspects of it, one hell of a lot more than I did. So, to be clear: I am writing this review as an outsider, who in all likelihood will stay an outsider. Most other reviews are by insiders (READ THOSE) and people who want their way in. Just as important: I know the writing game, in different arenas. Been making a living at it, and helping others do the same, for about 40 years. I can smell when something is fishy and I can smell when something is authentic. So. This book is the real deal. Without reservation. John Jarrell has done everyone a \*huge\* favor by writing this book, and he has balls the size of twin asteroids. Not just in what he reveals, but in the energy he brings to every page. I've never seen a book quite like this, and mind you, I \*write\* books like this myself, including a kindle bestseller on copywriting (look it up). What's so great about this book is that it will keep a writer at any level of his/her career, out of trouble in Hollywood. I saw it live on TV: Fixed in my mind is the image of the 405 freeway in LA, shut down as up to 20 cop cars chase O.J. Simpson driving northbound before his epic arrest in June, 1994. For any screenwriter in Hollywood, the stakes are just about as high if you screw a few things up. Oh, you won't be O.J. and it won't be cops in the cars and you may not get physically chased. But make no mistake, there are records ("coverage," as Jarrell explains) that don't fade into history, and follow you forever. There are ways to avoid that kind of trouble, and Jarrell spells them out in hard-headed details. This book convinced me that the scene at the movie producer's house with the Jon Voigt character, in "Ray Donovan," is not that far from how the business really works: Mickey made some cardinal errors, and his short-lived screenwriting career is over. Forever. Don't get me wrong. This book is NOT mainly a list of "don'ts." But nowhere else (and yeah, I've taken all the seminars and read most of the books myself) have I seen anything REMOTELY close to the few stern warnings Jarrell generously gives. Just as important are the tons and tons and tons of valuable tips, ideas, techniques, and systems he jams into the book. For example, one really stupid thing you can do is submit your screenplay in the wrong format. Jarrell gives you the EXACT dimensions to toss into your version of Final Draft to

match the standards at Warner Bros. To a working pro or wannabe working pro, this is not trivial or stupid information-this is gold.I know this from "parallel experience." Like I said, I have no film industry experience. But I've been a freelance writer, publisher, editor, author, copywriter, and mentor to other copywriters. And I've seen bonehead mistakes people make, because no one warned them about them or because they were stubborn and needed to 'stand out.' Mistakes that have relegated them to the status of Permanent Outsider.What's some of the other good stuff in this book? A few basic questions you need to have crystal-clear answers on before you start writing a screenplay. How to deal with meetings and notes, which takes a lot more social intelligence and creative flexibility than are native to most writers. What Henry Miller said about writing, which, to my mind (especially since what Miller says covers any kind of professional writing), is alone worth far more than the price of the book, by itself. What to cut out of a screenplay that you love but directors, producers, and audiences will hate. All in all, what things are really like, and how to deal with them to your best advantage.As an added bonus, this book is filthy (the way most writers talk) and hilarious. That's a real plus. No putting on of airs. Right there where the rubber meets the road, screeching tires, locked brakes, skid marks, and all.You should get this book. If for no other reason that it sure looks to me like there's lots of unvarnished truth in it, from a town that doesn't particularly like unvarnished truth, by a guy who has gotten the town to like him, and his work. That's a rarity, right? So you'll enjoy what you read and have a better shot at the success you've been dreaming about all these years.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. If You Are Serious You Better Read This Book First...By Craig A. HinrichsIf you are looking to become a full time screen writer and would like a safe place to hear about all the pitfalls and problems you could come upon along the way this book is for you. I absolutely love John's straight forward approach to the topic. He does not promise you anything and doesn't hold back anything when it comes to what your chances are in this industry. Just before you feel like your chances of writing for the big screen are all tore away and reduced to rubble, John begins to tell you why screenwriters are important and how much value they bring. You remember and fully realize that great screenwriting is needed now more than ever. But if you are to become that great screenwriter you must prepare. John gives his accounts that will depress you and give you hope at the same time.I personally am not looking to work in the industry. I love reading a variety of topics that I can reference for my own research. This book is easily in my top 10 books on the subject of screenwriting. Can not recommend this enough.

Tough Love Screenwriting is NOT another dreaded "how to write" book. It's also not the extremely popular Save The Cat. Or How To Write a Screenplay in Twelve Seconds. Or Ten Easy Steps to Becoming a Hollywood Script Zen Master. Or any other mass-marketed screenwriting hustle based on shortcuts, gimmicks, getting rich quick, smarmy "plug in your story" paradigms or the "what Hollywood wants" approach. So exactly what is Tough Love? A brass-knuckles, boots on the ground guide to building a paid, professional screenwriting career -- written by a veteran who's made a good living doing it for over two decades. There's a critical mass of street knowledge essential to any screenwriter's survival, and that's in addition to the ball-shattering task of writing well -- yet precious few sources outside the Business seem interested in sharing the 411 or giving the fresh meat a fair warning heads-up. This books seeks to remedy that. And unlike 99% of the cottage industry books, classes and webinars out there -- 99% created by people who haven't made a dime in the real-life Film Industry -- these pages come from the direct, firsthand experience of a produced professional who's sold scripts, had a hit movie, been hired on numerous writing assignments, dealt with sadistic studio deadlines and handled crazy producers, directors and actors at their most extreme. Massive Bonus -- it also includes THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO WRITERS GUILD CREDIT ARBITRATION by anyone, anywhere -- written by a WGA Screen Credits Committee member with vast personal experience on all sides of the Arbitration aisle. Ultimately, Tough Love Screenwriting is aimed at the dedicated writer, the pragmatic dreamer who has pledged themselves to their craft, regardless of results, come Hell or high water, win lose or draw. The straight-shooting individual who understands the odds of becoming a successful screen or television writer are long, but certainly not impossible; and that superb storytelling and stellar writing are your best tools when scaling Hollywood's unforgiving granite walls. Bottom line, there is nothing else like Tough Love out there. It's a wicked fun read guaranteed to get you laughing in some pretty twisted ways. But beware -- this book is not gluten-free. It doesn't nurture your heart chakra and not everybody gets a trophy. Tough Love prides itself on presenting the brutal truth without pulling punches, whether you dig it or not. You may not like some of what this book has to say -- which is proof-positive that it's working. Tough Love Screenwriting is essentially the book I wish someone had given me when I first came to Hollywood. It's as much combat field manual as practical navigational guide and memoir. One shrewd dose would have saved me years of blind, unsuccessful struggle. Hopefully reading it will keep you from enduring the same.

About the AuthorAn Honors Graduate of the NYU Film Program, I sold my first screenplay at 24 and have been a professional screenwriter ever since. The film I wrote most people are familiar with is "Romeo Must Die" -- the hip-hop/kung-fu actioner starring Aaliyah and Jet Li. During my career I've written many films and TV pilots for major studios Warner Bros., Universal, Fox, Sony and Dreamworks, and have been fortunate enough to work with some of

the best producers and directors in Hollywood. These include -- Jeffrey Katzenberg, Neil Moritz, Joel Silver, Terence Chang and John Woo, Mike Medavoy, James Foley, Carl Beverly, Sarah Timberman and Warren Littlefield. Among other projects, I wrote "Hard-Boiled II" for John Woo, scripted the animated family film "Outlaws" for Dreamworks, and most recently co-wrote "The Man With The Iron Fists II" for NBC/Universal which will be released first quarter 2015. A member of the Writers' Guild of America since 1991, I currently serve on the WGA Screen Credits Committee. I am repped by WME and managed by Ensemble Entertainment.