

ROBERT WEINBERGER TV PILOT WINNER - "LONG ISLAND"



What first got you interested in screenwriting?

I've always been a film buff since the age of twelve when my older brother took me to see "Bonnie & Clyde." I went back two more times the following week. Screenwriting just seemed like an inevitable offshoot of my movie-going obsession.

How long have you been writing for?

I wrote a two-hundred-page novel when I was thirteen and then ripped it to shreds when it didn't live up to my standards. So, I guess you could say the seed was planted at a young age.

Do you have a routine?

I'm always thinking and plotting. In the shower, the beach, watching "Golden Girls" reruns, pushing a cart up the supermarket aisle. When a concrete idea gels in my mind, I sit down and write.

How do you find time to write?

I know there are writers who set aside a specific time each day to write. I'm not one of them. I try. But when I have my ideas together, I write like a madman. It all spews out.

How many TV Pilots have you written?

LONG ISLAND is my first TV pilot.

What gave you the inspiration for this Pilot?

My life. Several years ago I began writing memoirs about growing up in Brooklyn, New York and moving to the suburbs of Long Island as a teenager. I've been fortunate to have seven of them published. LONG ISLAND is based on those recollections.

How long did it take to write?

Not very long. All of the characters were there from the memoirs. It was just a matter of outlining the dramatic narrative and deciding who was going to be included in the pilot and how they would be introduced. I belong to an outstanding writer's group and their feedback was enormously helpful with rewrites.

What do you enjoy most about writing?

Freedom. Writing (and publishing) seven memoirs, a TV pilot and a first episode was nirvana. The satisfaction that I created something of my own. Now comes the hard part: getting it made and finding an audience who are as enthralled with the material as I am.

What do you struggle with the most?

Personally? Time. Having more of it and getting enough sleep. Professionally? Having the right people read my work. And by "right," I mean people who connect with the material.

Do you feel that the film industry embraces new writing talent?

Absolutely. There's a hunger for new voices. The challenge is to get yours heard.

Have you found it difficult to get your work out there and read?

It's a struggle, but you need to get out there to get your script read. Meet people. Go to film festivals. Join (or start) a writing group. Enter contests (carefully). And network. If something's not working, re-invent yourself. I was writing screenplays when I turned to memoir writing to quell my frustrations with the film industry. Those memoirs were published which led me to write *LONG ISLAND*. Which led me to this Q&A for Shore Scripts.

How did you feel when your script was shortlisted, then a finalist, and then one of our winners?

Excited, thrilled, and honored. With a tinge of nausea. That tends to happen when I'm hyper-stimulated.

How did you hear about Shore Scripts?

From friends who were aware of the high caliber of talent associated with the Shore Scripts community.

What goals do you have for this script and your future career?

I'd like to see LONG ISLAND brought to the screen as an ongoing series. The first episode is complete, and I've outlined the rest of the season. And since it's based on events in my adolescence you could say that I have a wealth of material to draw from.

If you had any advice of aspiring for screenwriters, what would it be?

Several years ago, a screenwriter whose work I admire sent me a note of encouragement. I keep it on my desk next to my computer. I'll quote it verbatim: "Keep at it and just tell your story...and stay in the moment...and stay out of your own way...and don't attach yourself to the outcome...and don't judge your work. Just do it...and stay disciplined because the discipline of the writer protects the writer's talent. And just write the next word."

