

Ten-Step Scene Breakdown

Use the full process when you have time. When the clock is short, reduce the work to the event, objective, urgency, resistance, stakes, and relationship.

01 READ EVERYTHING

What does the full page give you before you invent anything?

02 CIRCUMSTANCES

Which facts about who, when, and where change the work?

03 EVENT

What changes from point A to point B?

04 WHY

Why does this person need this result now?

05 SUPEROBJECTIVE

What deeper drive organizes the larger story?

06 SCENE OBJECTIVE

What do you need from this person?

07 STAKES

What does success or failure cost?

08 OBSTACLES

What specifically makes the objective difficult?

09 CONFLICT

Where does the objective collide with resistance?

10 RELATIONSHIP

How does this person affect you, and what do they do?

Before the take

Read. Prepare. Reduce. Put the page down. Let the other actor into the work.

What Changes the Scene?

PROJECT

CHARACTER

SCENE OR PAGES

READ EVERYTHING

What facts are explicitly on the page? Which one creates the most pressure now?

WHO

Age, occupation, status, culture, condition, and anything pulling the character away from neutral.

WHEN

Time period and time of day. What expectation, restriction, or urgency is created?

WHERE

Immediate location, privacy, distance, intimacy, geography, and cultural context.

WHY

For each useful fact, finish: This matters because...

THE EVENT

At the beginning... By the end...

Objective, Stakes, Obstacle

SUPEROBJECTIVE

Across the larger story, this person needs...

SCENE OBJECTIVE

By the end of this scene, I need them to...

IF I SUCCEED

What becomes possible?

IF I FAIL

What do I lose or confirm?

THE STRONGEST OBSTACLE

I cannot simply get it because...

THE CONFLICT

I need... They need... The collision is...

FIRST TACTIC AND NEXT AVAILABLE TACTIC

What will I try first? What might their resistance force me to try next?

Let the Other Person In

THE LABEL

Who is this person to me?

THE EFFECT

How do they make me feel?

THE CAUSE

What do they do that creates the feeling?

THE VERSION OF ME

Who do I become around them?

THE UNIQUE POWER

What can they give or take away that nobody else can?

Your playable pass

THIS IS WHAT IS HAPPENING:

THIS IS WHAT I NEED FROM THIS PERSON:

THIS IS WHY I NEED IT NOW:

THIS IS WHAT STANDS IN MY WAY:

THIS IS WHAT SUCCESS OR FAILURE COSTS:

THIS IS HOW THIS PERSON AFFECTS ME:
