

The following pages are from The Complete Guide to Standard Script Format, Part 1: The Screenplay, by Cole and Haag, 102-106 (Shooting Script) and 107-110 (Reading/Spec Script). Please note that we will be using only Reading/Spec Script format. (Note: Because these are scanned and scaled pages the margins correct.)

The next four pages are an example of standard shooting script format. Following is the same example only in reading form. Beginning writers will want to use the reading form when submitting a project to an agent.

"RIOT!"

FADE IN:

1 EXT. LOS ANGELES, 1968 - AERIAL SHOT - DAY

A panoramic view of familiar Los Angeles sites: The Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood and Vine, the Capitol Records Building, a freeway, downtown area. Finally ZOOM IN to:

2 EXT. WATTS - ESTABLISHING SHOT

A small crowd of blacks gathered around a police car. Two officers, one white, one black, are attempting to control the crowd. The black officer, SGT. EDWARDS, about 40, is a veteran policeman who goes strictly by "the book" but yet tries to remain a "brother" and speak their language.

EDWARDS

Okay, everybody, cool it! Go on about your business.

The other officer, BROOKS, a brash, young rookie, is holding a black youth by the arm. His name is LESTER.

LESTER

(to crowd)
This white pig pushed me, man.
Nobody gonna push me aroun'.

CAMERA PANS the crowd as they react with AD LIBS: "Yeah!" "You tell 'em, brother!" The crowd is growing now, getting noisier. The mood is intense. Years of anger seem to be surfacing all at once. CAMERA PAN ENDS on:

BROOKS

(meaning Lester)
We have several warrants for this man's arrest. Now he's resisting!

3 BROOKS' POV - THE CROWD

They are moving forward, menacingly.

4 BACK TO SCENE

Edwards moves to the police car and picks up the car mike to radio for assistance.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

Several blacks begin pushing the police car swinging it back and forth. The crowd now is much larger. They are yelling and cursing. The CAMERA MOVES IN on their angry faces as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

5 INT./EXT. APPLIANCE STORE - NIGHT - CLOSE ON STORE OWNER

who is being tied up by two blacks. CAMERA WIDENS and we SEE several blacks milling around, taking toasters, irons, and whatever they can carry. We can HEAR the rioting noises O.S. One black man, laden with loot, hurriedly walks toward an exit and out of the building.

Outside, the riot is in full swing.

6 SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Looters break store windows.
- B) Blacks setting a building on fire.
- C) A cop car, overturned, its windows broken.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. ROADBLOCK - NIGHT - MED. SHOT

Several police cars, lights flashing, are parked close together. Helmeted police helplessly watch the rioters in the distance. MOVE IN on TWO POLICEMEN. They are drinking coffee from paper cups

POLICEMAN #1
I've never seen anything like it.
On the force 22 years.

The other Policeman nods in agreement as he leans uncomfortably against the squad car.

POLICEMAN #2
Have you ever shot anybody?

They are interrupted by the VOICE OVER car radio.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

(filtered)

Helicopter Ten-Z calling Roadblock-A. A large crowd is gathering at Fifty-Fourth Street and Western Avenue. They are carrying what appear to be Molotov cocktails.

(beat)

There are 500 National Guardsmen due to arrive at 10:00 p.m.

8 INT. KITCHEN - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

MR. ATKINS is sitting at the kitchen table with his daughter, HELEN. His 72 years in Watts have given him the patience and wisdom the younger generation lacks. In the b.g. his grandchildren are playing.

ATKINS

I tole that husband of yours to stay home but he wouldn't listen.

HELEN

He'll be all right...

ATKINS

I've never seen anything like it. I'm glad your ma wasn't here to witness this.

(beat)

Ain't no good gonna come to our people.

Helen goes to stove to get coffee pot.

ATKINS

(continuing)

What're we gonna do?

JAMES (O.S.)

(calling)

Helen! Poppa!

JAMES walks into the kitchen carrying a television set.

JAMES

Look what I got, Poppa!

ATKINS

What you got there, boy?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

INTERCUT children's reaction to their grandpa's anger.

ATKINS

I don't want no stolen merchandise
in my house.

JAMES

Everybody's doing it, Poppa.
There's stuff just sittin' all
over the sidewalk.

We can HEAR people shouting and running O.S.

VOICE (O.S.)

Here come the pigs again!

ATKINS

Listen to them. Haven't you
learned anything from this, James?

JAMES

Yeah... I learned how you get
folks to hear you. Nobody listens
when you talk soft.

ATKINS

What good's gonna come of wreckin'
our own schools and destroyin'
property?

JAMES

Our people are sick of talk.
We're sick of askin' for handouts.
Only one thing those suckers
understan'. We had to act. It
was the only way.

9 CLOSE SHOT - MR. ATKINS

His look reflects deep, troubled concern. Slowly he
turns his gaze to the children who have stopped playing
and are now listening and wondering.

RIOT!

FADE IN:

EXT. LOS ANGELES, 1968 - DAY

The panoramic view of Los Angeles is dazzling. Familiar sites are a reminder of how exciting this city is. The Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood and Vine, the Capitol Records Building, a freeway, downtown L.A. But there are other sites less familiar and less dazzling.

EXT. WATTS - DAY

A small crowd of blacks are gathered around a police car. Two officers, one white, one black, are attempting to control the crowd. The black officer, Sgt. Edwards, about 40, is a veteran policeman who goes strictly by "the book" yet tries to remain a "brother" and speak their language.

EDWARDS

Okay, everybody, cool it! Go on about your business.

The other officer, Brooks, a brash, young rookie, is holding a black youth by the arm. His name is LESTER.

LESTER

(to crowd)

This white pig pushed me, man.
Nobody gonna push me aroun'.

Angry faces in the crowd react shouting "Yeah!" "You tell 'em, brother!" The group is growing in both numbers and volume. Faces intense. Mood volatile. Years of disillusionment and frustration seem to be surfacing all at once.

BROOKS

(meaning Lester)

We have several warrants for this man's arrest. Now he's resisting!

The crowd moves forward, menacingly.

Edwards moves to the police car and picks up the car mike to radio for assistance.

Several blacks begin pushing the police car swinging it back and forth. Their numbers still more than before. Their faces distorted with anger.

INT. APPLIANCE STORE - NIGHT

The terrified owner is being tied up by two blacks. Several other blacks are milling around taking toasters, irons, and whatever else they can carry.

The rioting noises continue. One black man, laden with loot, hurriedly walks toward an exit and out of the building.

OUTSIDE

It's a war zone. Looters breaking store windows, fire set to a building, an overturned cop car, the windows broken out.

EXT. ROADBLOCK - NIGHT

Several police cars, lights flashing, are parked close together. Helmeted police helplessly watch the rioters in the distance. Two policemen are drinking coffee from paper cups.

POLICEMAN #1

I've never seen anything like it.
On the force 22 years.

The other Policeman nods in agreement as he leans uncomfortably against the squad car.

POLICEMAN #2

Have you ever shot anybody?

They are interrupted by a voice on the car radio.

VOICE ON RADIO

Helicopter Ten-Z calling Roadblock
A. A large crowd is gathering at
Fifty-Fourth Street and Western
Avenue. They are carrying what
appear to be Molotov cocktails.

(MORE)

VOICE ON RADIO (CONT'D)

(beat)

There are 500 National Guardsmen
due to arrive at 10:00 p.m.

INT. KITCHEN - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Mr. Atkins is sitting at the kitchen table with his daughter, Helen. His 72 years in Watts have given him the patience and wisdom the younger generation lacks. His grandchildren play in the background.

ATKINS

I tol' that husband of yours to
stay home but he wouldn't listen.

HELEN

He'll be all right...

ATKINS

I've never seen anything like it.
I'm glad your ma wasn't here to
witness this.

(beat)

Ain't no good gonna come to our
people.

Helen goes to the stove to get the coffee pot.

ATKINS

What're we gonna do?

JAMES

(calling)

Helen! Poppa!

James walks into the kitchen carrying a television set.

JAMES

Look what I got, Poppa!

ATKINS

What you got there, boy?

During this conversation we notice the children's startled reaction to their grandpa's anger.

ATKINS

I don't want no stolen merchandise
in my house.

JAMES

Everybody's doing it, Poppa.
There's stuff just sittin' all over
the sidewalk.

Outside people are shouting and running. "Here come the pigs
again!"

ATKINS

Listen to them. Haven't you
learned anything from this, James?

JAMES

Yeah... I learned how you get folks
to hear you. Nobody listens when
you talk soft.

ATKINS

What good's gonna come of wreckin'
our own schools and destroyin'
property?

JAMES

Our people are sick of talk. We're
sick of askin' for handouts. Only
one thing those suckers understan'.
We had to act. It was the only way.

Mr. Atkins' face reflects deep, troubled concern.
Slowly he turns his gaze to the children who have
stopped playing and are now listening and wondering.