



## Useful hints and tips for writing short films by David Griffith

*“Take a chance to tell your story!”*

To help you get to grips with writing your story outline (and later the screenplay), we have put together a basic guide to screenwriting. These notes are intended to help you get started, but never let them overrule your own creativity and imagination.

- ① **HOT TIP:** *Remember!* Since you are writing a short screenplay you will be limited as to how many scenes you can write, and by how much they will cost to film. So, it’s probably not a good idea to include expensive locations (Hawaii), hundreds of characters (Lord of the Rings), or Star Wars style special effects – unless of course, you’re planning an animation.

## Getting Started

First Writes is here to help write short screenplays; this means you need to think of a story that is short and to the point. Consider all subjects and styles; your screenplay could be a comedy, a love story, science fiction, a crime caper, horror, social drama or animation – the choice is yours.

Remember, though, that you are writing a screenplay - not a short story. So try to think of a series of events that will be interesting to watch – as well as to listen to. This doesn't mean the story needs to be set somewhere strange or beautiful, it just means that you should try to tell the story with pictures and sounds, as well as dialogue (what your characters say). For instance if a boy likes a girl, you don't have to have him say, "I like you." Most of the time a single look will be enough. For example you might write:

Alex laughs at Angela's joke. She catches his eye. He looks away slightly embarrassed. Then glances back at her again.

So, before you start your screenplay, why not look at your favourite video or DVD, turn down the sound and see how much of the story is told through the pictures. Then as an exercise try describing what happens in each shot in a simple sentence. For example:

A hand reaches down. Pulls a tent-peg out of the ground. Then another. Then another. The tent collapses on top of Angela's Dad. He shouts out angrily:

ANGELA'S DAD  
Angela! That better not be you!

If you don't have a video or DVD at home, you could also study comics to see how they tell a visual story. Filmmakers often draw storyboards before they start filming to check the story works and plan their camera movements. These storyboards look a little like comic strips; you can find examples of storyboards in many film books as well as later on in this document.

❶ HOT TIP: You can always find screenplays for feature films in bookshops and libraries, so check 'em out!

## Inspiration

You may already have an idea for a story; but if you don't, read on. These ideas may help you find the inspiration.

Story ideas can come from just about anywhere:

- You might have a funny title that suggests a story. For instance you might know two sisters called Mercedes and Portia, or want to frame a story around a saying like "Out of the frying pan, into the fire".
- You may want to write a story based on something you did. Perhaps on a camping holiday, at a picnic or during class at school.
- You may want to write a story based on what happened to someone else (though don't make it too much like them unless they give you their written permission).
- You might have already written a short story you want to adapt.
- You may want to make up a story completely, though it's usually good to write about the type of people, emotions (anger, greed, love) or situations you know and understand (e.g. an argument between friends, moving house, parents separating).
- You may like drawing or modelling and want to create an animation.
- You might like particular types of films like horror, thrillers, comedies, love stories or science fiction BUT even here it's worth basing the story on a situation you understand. For instance, a thriller about someone who finds a bag of stolen money could be based on what you would do if you found someone's lunch money.

But once again, remember you're only making a short film, so keep to the point!

- ① **HOT TIP:** The best way of deciding whether you've got a good screen story is to ask yourself one simple question: if someone else had written it, would I watch it through to the end? If the answer is yes, you could be on to a winner.

## Characters

The key to all good stories is to write about interesting characters. But how do you decide what makes an interesting character?

Almost all popular stories are based around a main character who at the start of the story thinks that s/he wants or needs one thing, but by the end of the story discovers that something else is more important to them, or that they must improve their attitude in order to succeed. This may sound a little complicated at first, but if we look at a few well-known movies, you'll see how this works.

**Shrek** – Shrek is a bad-tempered ogre who just wants to be left alone in his swamp. But the only way he can get his swamp back is to rescue hot-tempered Princess Fiona. All goes according to plan until Shrek unexpectedly falls in love with Princess Fiona and finds he doesn't know how to be friendly – let alone express his love. Now, Shrek has to take a crash course in friendship and win Fiona's heart before she marries scheming Lord Farquaad.

**Legally Blonde** – After 'dumb blonde' Elle Woods is dumped by her cute but snobbish boyfriend Warner Huntington III, she decides to win him back by any means necessary. Following him to Harvard Law School proves a big shock to Elle's laid-back LA ways, and she struggles to keep up. But when Elle finally does knuckle-down to study, she discovers that she has a natural talent for the law. After she wins her first case, she realises that it is Warner who is not good enough for her.

**Toy Story** – Woody is top toy in the playroom until Andy is given Buzz for his birthday. Woody is jealous and takes it out on Buzz, who refuses to accept he is just a toy and not a real space ranger. When Buzz and Woody are captured by Sid on the way to the shopping mall, Woody must learn that friends need to support each other - not undermine each other - if he and Buzz are to escape from toy-torturing Sid and get back to Andy before the family moves house.

**Scooby Doo** – The gang splits up because Fred, Daphne and Velma all want to take credit for solving the mysteries. When they are all lured to a nightmare island, Scooby and Shaggy must overcome their feelings of uselessness and convince the others that they all have an important part to play in the gang if they are to solve the mystery and defeat Scooby's mad nephew, Scrappy Doo.

- ① **HOT TIP:** Try writing your story as a single paragraph as we have done. Write down who the main character is, what the situation is, what s/he wants, what s/he does, what problems s/he encounters and how s/he has to change by the end. For more examples, look in any TV or video guide to see how journalists break down 90 minute films into a few short sentences.

## Action

Action doesn't just mean fights and chase sequences; it means the actions that the main character takes to try and get what s/he wants. It also means the actions that his/her opponents take to stop him/her. To help you plan your story, try breaking it down into these elements.

1. **Introduce your main character and setting** – Where is s/he? What is s/he doing? Who is with him/her? What is his/her character weakness?
2. **What does s/he want** - The main character finds out or reveals that s/he wants something, or discovers s/he has a problem that must be solved.
3. **Initial actions** - The character then sets out to solve his/her problem or get what s/he wants.
4. **Set-backs** - Because s/he is not aware of what it is s/he *really* needs, s/he will usually go about getting what s/he wants the wrong way. This will bring him/her into conflict with other people (both enemies and friends) who don't like what s/he is doing - or the way s/he is going about it.
5. **Conflict** - The arguments and fights become increasingly heated until it looks like the main character will be defeated.
6. **Final Struggle** - The main character summons his/her strength for a final attempt to achieve his/her goal.
7. **Endings** - Whether the main character succeeds or fails, s/he discovers from what's happened that what they thought they wanted in the beginning was only part of the truth, and there is more to life than they thought.

Think of that great action movie: “Wallace and Gromit – The Wrong Trousers”

1. **Introduce your main character and setting** – Wallace and Gromit live alone in a large house.
2. **What does s/he want** – Wallace wants company (and money), but he is forgetting that he already has his faithful dog Gromit.
3. **Initial actions** – Wallace takes in a shifty lodger, the mysterious penguin.
4. **Set-backs** – Gromit thinks the penguin is a known criminal and tries to make Wallace suspicious too. Since Gromit can't speak, Wallace thinks he is just being jealous and banishes him to the doghouse.
5. **Conflict** – The penguin tricks Wallace into putting on the radio-controlled techno trousers and forces him to commit a robbery. Wallace tries to fight against the trousers with hilarious consequences.
6. **Final Struggle** – Gromit rescues Wallace and together they capture the penguin after a dramatic chase.
7. **Endings** – Wallace admits that he was wrong and should have trusted Gromit all along.

- ① **HOT TIP:** Screenplays are *always* written in the present tense – even when you are writing a flashback. You must always describe what the audience are seeing at that moment on the screen.

## Surprise

The most powerful tool a screenwriter has is surprise. Audiences love to be surprised and they love to see people playing tricks on each other. It is the screenwriter's job to make sure they are not disappointed.

If your character is doing something obvious in an obvious way, like walking through a door, parking a car, or telling someone else exactly what you've just shown him or her do, you probably don't need this scene at all. Often it's best simply to cut straight to the next scene: if it doesn't have a real reason to be there, drop it.

When the audience can guess exactly what's going to happen, they quickly become bored. You are in control of the story - so whether you are writing an animation, thriller or love story, you should try to make the audience *think* they know what will happen next - and then surprise them with something a little different.

Once again, why not study your favourite movies and this time look for examples where the filmmakers make their characters do something a little different from what you were expecting. For instance, in 'The Simpsons: Lisa on Ice', Lisa discovers that she is a natural at ice hockey. Bart is envious of her newfound skill at his favourite sport and decides he's going to show her by becoming a teacher's pet. We then cut directly to the classroom where Bart puts up his hand to answer every question the teacher asks. At first we think that he has changed his ways and become a really good student, but at the end of the sequence we discover he has answered every question incorrectly and only made the teacher angry.

So, whenever your main character has to do something obvious, like ask their dad for extra pocket money or a new pair of shoes, try to think up a clever way for them to ask for it. For instance, s/he could lie, s/he could beg comically like s/he was begging for her life, s/he could try and convince dad that he really needs new clothes himself, s/he could try to sell him something else in exchange, try to flatter him – or whatever is most fun to watch.

① **HOT TIP:** In some short stories, particularly comedy sketches and adverts, the writer holds back a key piece of information right to the very end. All the way through the story, the audience thinks they are watching one story and only at the very end do they find out that they have been tricked. These types of surprise stories make some of the most effective short films of all. So think hard: consider who knows what, when? What secrets do you want to hold back from either the audience or your characters?

## Endings

Almost all films revolve around disagreements, arguments, fights or battles between the main character and secondary characters, whether they are friends, enemies, family members, boyfriends or girlfriends. But what really makes a story interesting to the audience is the fight going on inside the main character's head and heart.

Audiences identify with the main character not just because they are clever, cool, beautiful or attractive, but because we know that - like us - they are not perfect. They too have to make difficult choices, and still have something to learn about themselves. As an audience we are interested in finding out how they face up to their problems. The ending is the part of the film where you have to tie up the external action, as well as the character's inner conflict, to show that s/he has learned something from the story.

Now you might say that in an action film, a hero like James Bond remains the same from start to finish, defeats the bad guy and then goes home. However, on closer inspection you will see that in every story the writers take the trouble to make Bond fall in love with one particular woman. So while in the beginning James Bond may be interested in lots of beautiful women, by the end he is only interested in one. The final battle always involves him rescuing her from the clutches of the bad man - proving that he loves only her at the same time as he saves the world. Very romantic!

Audiences love it if the writer can tie-up the external action and the internal conflict at exactly the same moment, but if you can't don't worry. Lots of professionals have trouble with this too. So let's look at a few more famous examples of recent films to see how their writers managed it:

**Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring** – In the heat of the battle with the fighting Uroquai, Frodo must overcome his fears of betrayal and accept Sam's help in taking the ring to the Crack of Doom.

**Spy Kids** – In the midst of the final showdown with the seemingly unstoppable robot children, Carmen must make friends with her brother Juni and give him proper credit for helping her to get this far. Only then can they rescue their parents, turn the tables and defeat Minion.

**Spiderman** – Peter needs to overcome his natural shyness so he can tell Mary Jane Watson that he loves her as Peter Parker - and not just as Spidey! He works up to it through the whole film, but then the Green Goblin finds out his true identity and kidnaps Mary Jane as bait for his trap. Spiderman kills the Green Goblin and saves Mary Jane, but (unlike Bond) Peter unexpectedly becomes worried about her future safety. Instead of telling Mary Jane he wants her, Peter tells her that they can't go out together. This leaves her sad and confused,

because s/he doesn't know he is only saying this to protect her. It also sets up Peter's problem nicely for the inevitable sequel.

- ① HOT TIP: The ending of a film always ties back to the first scene where you introduce the main character. If s/he acts crazy at the start, s/he must learn right at the end that this is only a way of avoiding admitting s/he needs friends (*Lethal Weapon*). If s/he thinks s/he is better or different in the first scene, s/he must learn that she has similar needs to everybody else at the end (*Emma or Amelie*). If s/he wants to write about love at the start, s/he must learn that one cannot learn about love without falling in love (*Shakespeare in Love*). As is often the case, the tag line for the 'Shakespeare in Love' film poster sums up the story and ending very well, 'Love is the only inspiration'.

## Layout

The layout of your script is the least important part of your story; so don't worry about this until the end.

That said, it is always worth writing your screenplay in the standard screenplay font (Courier 12 – the old typewriter font) and using standard margins for the main elements.

SCENE HEADINGS:	Left Margin: 1.50"	Right Margin: 7.50"
ACTION (description of what happens):	Left Margin: 1.50"	Right Margin: 7.50"
CHARACTER NAME:	Left Margin: 3.00"	Right Margin: 6.00"
DIALOGUE:	Left Margin: 2.50"	Right Margin: 6.50"

There are several reasons for this:

1. When screenplays are formatted correctly, one page translates, on average, into one minute of screen time so you can tell whether your story is the right length
2. Readers and producers do not like it when writers pretend their screenplay is shorter than it really is by using a tighter font
3. Formatting helps you check whether you are writing unnecessary dialogue or describing things in too much detail
4. Formatting helps readers to compare one script with another without being confused with fancy letters.

① **HOT TIP:** Ask a friend to read through your screenplay to check that everything makes sense. Sometimes when you are in the middle of writing a screenplay, it becomes difficult to see which parts of the story are clear and which are not. Making a film is a collaborative business from beginning to end, so don't be afraid to ask for comments and suggestions.

## How to write an outline

An outline is a short visual description of a screenplay. It is usually written in the present tense, like the final screenplay, and usually does not include any dialogue (what people say), except perhaps for a few key words.

It is like a map of the screenplay that tells the writer and the reader what happens at every stage of the story. If you are stuck, try to lay out your story in the form described in the **Action** section of the guidelines and try answering all of the following questions:

- **Introduce your main character and setting**
  - 1) Where is s/he?
  - 2) What is s/he doing?
  - 3) Does s/he have friends or family with him/her?
  - 4) What is his/her character weakness?
- **What does the main character want?**
  - 1) What does s/he need to learn?
  - 2) Is there something s/he is overlooking
- **How does s/he set about getting what s/he wants?**
- **Set-backs** - Because s/he is not aware of what it is s/he *really* needs, s/he will usually go about getting what s/he wants the wrong way. This brings the main character into conflict with other people who don't like what s/he is doing - or the way s/he is going about it.
  - 1) Who tries to stop him/her?
  - 2) And how do they try to stop them?
  - 3) How does the main character try to overcome them?
  - 4) Does anyone help him/her?
- **Conflict** - The arguments and fights become more and more heated until it looks like the main character will be defeated.
  - 1) How does fight get worse?
  - 2) Do the friends support or desert him/her?
- **Final Struggle** - The main character summons his/her strength for a final attempt to achieve his/her goal.
  - 1) What happens? And where?
- **Endings** - The main character discovers that what they thought they wanted in the beginning was only part of the truth; that there is more to life than they originally thought.
  - 1) What is the outcome of the conflict or adventure?
  - 2) What has the main character learned?

If you can answer these questions, you're well on your way to writing your outline. Good luck!

- ① **HOT TIP:** Try to make your outline as exciting as possible. It is more important you communicate your enthusiasm for the story, than you tell the reader every last detail of what happens. Concentrate on the important events and how the characters react.

## Script and Storyboard Example

Written by David Cairns and produced as part of BBC Scotland and Scottish Screen's *Tartan Smalls* short film competition, *Inside an Uncle* is here to provide you with further inspiration and a good example of what your final script and storyboard should look like. You will also find an outline of the story and a short 'pitch' for the film.

This screenplay shows not only how a screenplay should be laid out, but also how to set up a story, the different ways to introduce characters, and how to be economic with your dialogue and descriptions.

To help focus your mind you might like to try answering the following questions about *Inside an Uncle*:

1. Is it a drama, thriller, comedy, horror, fantasy or love story? Or is it a combination of several different types of story?
2. Who is the main character?
3. What do they want?
4. How do they go about trying to get it?
5. Who tries to stop them and how?
6. What happens during their dispute?
7. How do they try to resolve their problems?
8. How does the ending tie back into the early scenes?
9. What has the main character learned about his or herself?
10. Finally, try describing the whole story of *Inside an Uncle* in a single paragraph.

❗ **HOT TIP:** Not all the answers to the questions will be contained in the dialogue (what the characters say) or the description of the action. Screenplays are meant to conjure images in your head, so read the script and then try to imagine what it will look like as a finished film. From this you will see that sometimes characters do not have to tell us directly what they want, or what they learn, for us to understand what's going on inside them.



first writes

**Script, outline and storyboard for**

***Inside an Uncle***

**By David Cairns**

**Script - *Inside an Uncle* by David Cairns**

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gavin, aged seven, sits on the stairs and watches as MUM and DAD pull on their coats, ready to go out.

MUM

'Night, Gavin. We'll be  
back at ten. Do what  
your Uncle Bob says.

UNCLE BOB, a big sweaty fat bloke, smiles warmly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

One robot punches another. Gavin works the handset of his video game, making this happen.

UNCLE BOB

Hoy!

Gavin's hero is knocked flat.

UNCLE BOB

(cont'd)

Bedtime.

Gavin is appalled.

GAVIN

But it's only -

UNCLE BOB

You've to do as I say,  
remember? And I want a  
quiet evening, which  
means bedtime for you.  
And brush your teeth!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gavin's head hits the pillow in a huff.

GAVIN

Just 'cause he's bigger  
than me...

KLANG! A distant impact.

Gavin sits up. What was that?

KAPOW! Now he recognises it - the  
unmistakable sound of robot butt being  
kicked.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gavin creeps out of his room and down the  
stairs.

He peers into the living room. He can see  
the back of Uncle Bob, on the couch facing  
the TV, the video game playing.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gavin creeps closer.

And is shocked to see it's NOT Uncle Bob  
playing the game. On his lap is a small,  
fat, sweaty boy, LITTLE BOB, working the  
controls. Little Bob is just like Uncle Bob  
- only little.

GAVIN

Hey!

Little Bob spins around, startled and  
guilty.

GAVIN (cont'd)

Who are you? That's my  
game!

The boy looks nervous, shooting glances at Uncle Bob, who sits motionless, giving no sign of hearing Gavin.

GAVIN (cont'd)  
Uncle Bob?  
(to Little Bob)  
What have you done to  
Uncle Bob?

LITTLE BOB  
Nothing! I AM Uncle Bob.

This is patently nonsense.

GAVIN  
THAT'S Uncle Bob!

LITTLE BOB  
No it's not.

Little Bob looks furtive - he's said too much. Gavin whips out his mobile phone.

GAVIN  
This is weird. I'm  
calling mum.

LITTLE BOB  
Don't! You wouldn't want  
to get your Uncle Bob in  
trouble, would you?

GAVIN  
Wouldn't I?

He starts to punch in the number - BEEP BEEP  
BEEP -

LITTLE BOB  
I can explain  
everything!

GAVIN  
(skeptical)  
Oh yeah?

He enters another digit - BEEP.

LITTLE BOB

(cont'd)

Look - you believe that  
when you grow up, you'll  
turn into a big adult.  
Well you don't. You'll  
just get given one of  
these.

He pats Uncle Bob's knee.

LITTLE BOB

(cont'd)

A BOB - Big Outer Body.

Little Bob presses the buttons on Uncle  
Bob's waistcoat. They beep, and Uncle Bob's  
chest pops open, revealing a dark cavity,  
fitted with a small chair. Gavin is amazed.

LITTLE BOB

We decided it was  
important for us adults  
to be bigger than you  
kids so we could boss  
you about. But inside  
every Big Outer Body is  
one of us.

GAVIN

You live in THERE?

LITTLE BOB

Why not?

He climbs in.

LITTLE BOB

(cont'd)

Look, the whole thing's  
done -

He puts on a set of headphones with a microphone attached, and Uncle Bob comes to life:

UNCLE BOB  
- with electronics. It's smaller than a car and the insurance is cheaper. It's -

Little Bob removes the headset and climbs out.

LITTLE BOB  
- the safest way to travel.

Gavin lowers the mobile phone and thinks.

GAVIN  
But you can't be my uncle, you're just a little kid.

Little Bob is indignant.

LITTLE BOB  
I am not! I'm a fully grown adult. This is as big as I get.

GAVIN  
But what about growing up? Getting hair on your chest? Getting interested in girls?

LITTLE BOB  
Those are just stories we use to frighten kids. NOBODY'S interested in girls - I mean, YUCK!

GAVIN  
This is a lot to take in. You mean I'll never really grow up? I'll just get -

LITTLE BOB  
- a Big Outer Body. Yes.

Gavin thinks.

GAVIN  
I want a go.

LITTLE BOB  
No way! When you're  
older.

GAVIN  
(grinning  
wickedly)  
Try and stop me.

He pushes Little Bob aside and jumps into  
Uncle Bob.

GAVIN (cont'd)  
Ready, steady -

He slams the hatches, nearly hitting an  
indignant Little Bob.

UNCLE BOB  
- go! this is great!

INT. UNCLE BOB - NIGHT

A small TV shows what Uncle Bob sees. A  
greenish glow from the screen lights Gavin's  
face. He scans the instrument panel. A red  
button looks tempting.

GAVIN  
Let's see what this -

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

UNCLE BOB  
- does.

Uncle Bob farts.

UNCLE BOB  
(cont'd)

That's BRILLIANT! Again!

Little Bob is frantic (and nauseated) as Uncle Bob lets off a plethora of pumps. His hair wafts in the warm breeze.

LITTLE BOB  
Stop it! You'll blow a  
gasket!

BANG! The last fart tapers off into a strangulated whistle.

UNCLE BOB  
OK, what else can this  
baby do?

LITTLE BOB  
That's enough! You've  
already burst my farter!

Uncle Bob wobbles to his feet.

UNCLE BOB  
Wow! This is -

INT. UNCLE BOB - NIGHT

GAVIN  
- fantastic! Let's hit  
the road!

He starts throwing switches randomly. The compartment rocks, and on the TV he sees the living room lurch past, while Little Bob jumps about in his path, trying to stop him.

LITTLE BOB  
(TV)  
Stop! You're too young  
to drive!

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Uncle Bob collides with the doorframe, backs away into the other side of the doorframe, and bounces back and forth in the doorway several time.

UNCLE BOB

Oops!

LITTLE BOB

You'll break it!

Uncle Bob boings into the hall and heads for the stairs. He stumbles up each step, swaying precariously.

Little Bob follows him, trying to grab him, backing off when it looks like Uncle Bob might fall on top of him.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Uncle Bob falls onto the bed, laughing.

Little Bob jumps onto his chest, and presses the buttons on Uncle Bob's waist coat.

UNCLE BOB

Ha ha! That was -

The hatch flips open.

GAVIN

- cool.

Little Bob is beside himself - in a very real sense.

LITTLE BOB

Do you have ANY idea how much one of these costs? Get out!

Little Bob climbs in, but Gavin won't get out.

GAVIN

No! I'm the grown-up  
now! You're the little  
kid! Go to bed! And  
brush your teeth!

LITTLE BOB

Get out of my body!

The hatch falls shut on them.

INT. UNCLE BOB - NIGHT

The two kids wrestle for the controls.

GAVIN

Come on! You get to play  
with it all the time!

On the TV we can see the bedroom wobbling  
about.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Uncle Bob bounces around the room, waving  
his arms, hopping, and pulling strange  
faces. His head turns from side to side as  
he argues inside.

UNCLE BOB

Get out! Will not! Will!  
I want you out of there!  
It's my turn! No it  
isn't!

His torso bulges as Gavin and Little Bob  
battle within.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Uncle Bob cavorts out of the bedroom.

UNCLE BOB

I'm going to count to  
three! I don't care!  
One! I'm not listening!  
Two! La la la la! Three!  
Get stuffed!

Uncle Bob teeters at the top of the stairs -  
- and down he goes.

INT. UNCLE BOB - NIGHT

The kids rattle around as the compartment  
turns over and over. The TV shows the  
staircase from a variety of ever-changing  
angles.

CRASH! The screen fills with static.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Uncle Bob's hatch pops open. His arms and  
legs break off at the joints. Springs  
sproing from odd places. His head rolls into  
a corner.

Little Bob's legs stick out the legholes,  
and his head emerges from the chest.

LITTLE BOB

Gavin?

Gavin sticks his head out of Uncle Bob's  
neck-hole.

GAVIN  
Oh. Sorry.

LATER.

Gavin and Little Bob sit on the bottom step,  
looking over the wreckage of Uncle Bob.

LITTLE BOB  
We are in so much  
trouble. They'll never  
give me another one of  
these.

A small fart.

GAVIN  
Hey, at least the  
farther's fixed.

LITTLE BOB  
(sad small  
voice)  
No. That was me.

Little Bob is in despair. Gavin looks  
sheepish. Then he looks at the hall clock -  
ten to ten.

GAVIN  
Get Dad's tool kit.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

With Uncle Bob's bits laid out on the bed  
under the glare of a standard lamp, Gavin  
and Little Bob prepare to operate. Both wear  
hankies as surgical masks and Gavin wears a  
set of Playstation miniature floodlights on  
his head.

GAVIN  
Screwdriver.

LITTLE BOB  
Screwdriver.

Little Bob slaps the device into Gavin's hand and he gouges at Uncle Bob's innards, discarding a chunk of machinery.

GAVIN  
Sticky tape.

LITTLE BOB  
Sticky tape.

Gavin rips off a length and binds it round Uncle Bob's neck.

GAVIN  
Cheesy toast.

LITTLE BOB  
Cheesy toast?

GAVIN  
(shrugs  
apologeticall  
y)  
My Mum says I've to eat.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Furious banging and boinging as they operate...

LATER.

The hands of the clock hit ten o'clock

The front door opens and Mum and Dad return.

MUM  
We're back.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They enter the living room and head straight for Gavin, who is sat on the floor playing his video game.

Uncle Bob slumps on the couch. His head is at a funny angle, one leg is raised, and his left hand keeps twitching.

MUM

Hello dear.

The hatch on Uncle Bob's chest pops up involuntarily. Inside, Little Bob frantically hushes Gavin and pulls the hatch shut.

MUM (cont'd)

Hope he wasn't too much bother.

Uncle Bob replies, his voice crackles and slurs.

UNCLE BOB

N-n-none at allll.

Mum smiles.

MUM

Is that right, Gavin?  
Were you a big grown up  
boy?

Gavin works the controls of his video game and smiles.

GAVIN

Briefly.

game over

## **Outline - Inside an Uncle**

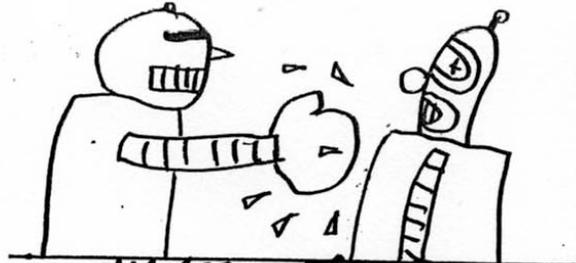
A freewheeling comedy where we learn literally what we already know metaphorically - that inside every adult there's a small child working the controls.

Seven-year-old Gavin discovers that his babysitter, Uncle Bob, has a small boy (Little Bob) inside him, making him work.

Gavin soon realises that inside EVERY adult is a little boy or girl. Grown-ups don't really exist at all. They're just robots, driven about by kids. BIG robots, so that they can boss other kids around.

Disaster strikes when Gavin decides he wants to drive Uncle Bob - first he blows a gasket and then he falls down stairs. Little Bob is in despair, a Big Outer Body (B.O.B) is not a toy and he'll never get another. Can Little Bob and Gavin put Uncle Bob back together before Mum and Dad get home?

Storyboard - Inside an Uncle



POW!  
CGI, TV image (pixels)

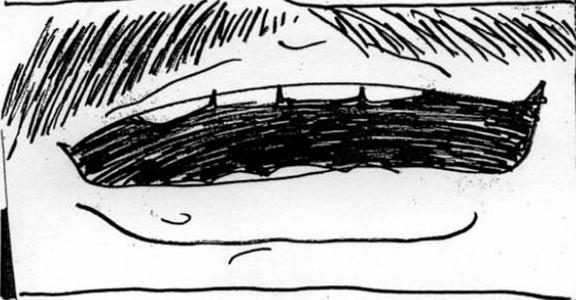
1



wide angle  
blue TV light  
Unc Bob looms in

2

cover whole scene



COVERAGE - CU BOB  
"and brush your teeth"

3

cover whole scene



Gavin lies DOWN into shot

3

"Just cause he's bigger than me"

1.

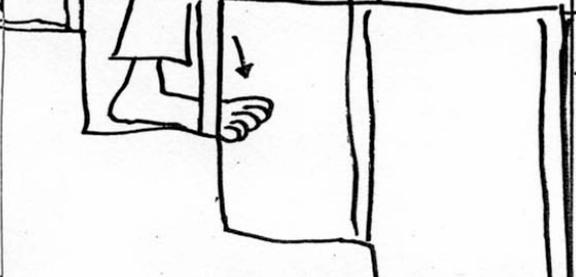


Gavin sits UP into view

exits screen right

we see his shadow on wall leave after him

2



4

Gavin tiptoes downstairs  
FAST.

1.