



Series Screenwriting Overview

What is Early Media?

Early Media: Early Media is creating and distributing groundbreaking original series. We craft narratives with viral potential while preserving the heart of indie production, telling meaningful stories audiences actually care about. Every creative decision is sharpened by a proprietary testing and marketing engine that collapses the distance between filmmaker and audience into the tightest iteration loop in the industry.

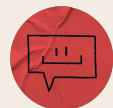
Series Format: We're looking to produce 90-minute series, strategically split into 45-second to 2.5-minute episodes. Since our content is made with an eye on social media, roughly a third of a show's episodes should be designed to thrive on social media without context.

Why Vertical? Social media reaches the largest audience in history, and vertical video is its language. But that audience is drowning in either dopamine-hacking slop or mediocre-at-best microdramas. We aren't trying to plug into a pre-existing vertical ecosystem to create the best microdramas, we're trying to create something entirely new that taps into what's powerful about the vertical format and combines it with the creator-driven storytelling of indie filmmaking.

Early Media's vertical format takes advantage of a unique opportunity. When Early Media launches a show, our creator networks enable us to quickly reach hundreds of millions with social-optimized clips. Our first batch of pilot episodes garnered 50M+ views. Early Media is built around the belief that stories are most powerful when they impact the largest audience, and vertical is how we make that happen.

Character, not Spectacle: There's a reason behind why horizontal is called "landscape" and vertical is "portrait." Horizontal is how you capture a place, vertical is how you capture a person. Vertical is personal. We're making intimate stories driven by relationships between characters without the need for breathtaking visuals or complex action sequences. We're playing to our constraints, opting to create great stories about characters rather than sub-par action/adventure epics. This is informed by the viewing format; audiences will be watching these on their phones first, not on the big screen.

Your Pitch



What We're Looking For: We're looking for two things:

- A 1-page treatment and logline for a 90-minute show that shows you have a strong vision for a viral-first concept that is engaging from beginning to end.
- A sample of 3 episodes, each one 1-3 pages in length. Each episode should be constructed with a very strong hook in the beginning and cliffhanger at the end. This sample should showcase your ability to write with virality in mind.

Please keep in mind that this is a spec script, but if we see the viral and storytelling potential that we're looking for, we'll pay you to write the script in full. If the script works on every level we believe it should, we'll then pay you to direct it.

Content Guidelines: Our audience consists of the majority of people who watch social media, so we're targeting ages 13-30. You don't need to specifically write with young teens in mind, but we want to keep it relatively safe for those audiences, following similar guidelines to PG-13.

Scale: Since these are small-scale verticals, minimize stunts, animals, extras, and location changes. Prioritize shot/reverse-shot dialogue over action, movement, or spectacle.

Creator-Led, Data-Driven

We believe that social media algorithms are largely harmful to almost everyone who engages with them. They *are* incredibly engaging, but if you ask someone to remember one short they watched out of a 2-hour doomscrolling session, they might not be able to tell you.

Despite the effects of social media, it cannot be denied that it surfaces the content people most want to see, a near-perfect model for consumer demand. We're testing our concepts within that environment to learn as much as we can about what genres, characters, and stories people engage most with.

We believe in the power of data to help inform which stories we tell, but we never blindly let performance data make decisions for us. Data is a tool we use to help us confidently tell human stories, driven by real people with lived experience, but it exists only in service of that end-goal. Our data-informed lots-of-small-bets model allows us to take risks on content that is left behind by big studios that don't have the ability to listen to viewers in the same way.

Writing for Virality

Because our content is frequently presented on social media without any surrounding context, a selection of our episodes need to work as standalone scenes for an audience that has never seen the series. This emphasis on virality is heaviest at the start of a series. Once an audience is sold on the characters and story, the episodes can breathe.

Audiences make a subconscious decision about whether to keep watching almost instantly. The best hooks clearly communicate what the audience can expect to see, which typically falls into one of three categories: *structure*, *collision*, or *answer*.

Establish a structure: The hook communicates to the audience the shape of what they're about to see, and stays to see it play out.

- In this viral [How I Met Your Mother clip](#), the structure of the joke is immediately established. The audience then waits for her to say "But, um" to see the effects of its setup in the beginning.
- [This](#) is another perfect example. How I Met Your Mother is ripe with them!
- [Example #3](#)
- [Example #4](#)
- [Example #5](#)

Promise a collision. Two forces with mutually exclusive goals are on a collision course. The audience waits for impact.

- [This](#) is a great example: people pointing guns at other people immediately signals conflict. The tension carries through the entire short. The caption is also carrying a bit of the load here.
- Note— some shorts do this synthetically by using a caption: in [this clip](#), the audience is waiting for the moment where they break character, as promised by the caption.
- [Example #3](#)

Promise an answer. Something is off, unexplained, or confusing. The audience stays for the answer.

- Although our own short [Knead Me](#) has elements of the other two kinds of hooks, it primarily falls into his category: the audience sticks around to find out why he said “you need me.”
- [Good example](#) from Kingsman.
- [A subtler example](#) from Split. Piques interest to watch the movie.
- [Great example from The Boys](#)
- [Example](#) from Tubi’s most popular original show, The QB and Me. This movie became popular due to shorts like these, so it’s a perfect example.

At Early Media we value unique stories and aspire to bring them to audiences. We aim to cut through all the noise with quality content and break through the red tape of bureaucracy.

P.S. We’re new to this! If you have an idea that would improve our process, or just want to say hi, [shoot us an email](#).

[Early Media Home Page](#)

