BBC RADIO FORMAT: CUE STYLE

by

Matt Carless

Sitcom scripts require a separate title page with one contact address only at the bottom. Sketches do not have a title page but include the contact details on every page. Include a phone number and an e-mail address if you have one.

If you have an agent, the address and phone number can go here. A draft number or date is not required on a spec script.
TITLE OF SHOW (sketch shows only) Name & contact details on every page of a sketch.

TITLE OF SKETCH (on every page)

F/X: CUE STYLE IS THE BBC'S HOUSE FORMAT GENERALLY USED FOR AUDIENCE SITCOMS AND SKETCH SHOWS. THIS IS BECAUSE SOUND EFFECTS AND MUSIC CUES ARE GENERALLY PLAYED IN LIVE.

CHARACTER #1: Character names appear in all capitals with a colon. A character is designated by either their first or last name, but a role designation may be used instead with personal titles abbreviated. The designated character name should remain consistent throughout the entire script or sketch.

CHARACTER #2: Dialogue begins on the same line as the character name in normal upper and lower-case text with double-spacing.

GRAMS: MUSIC CUES APPEAR LIKE THIS. IF SOUND OR MUSIC INTERRUPTS A CHARACTER'S SPEECH ON THE SAME PAGE...

CHARACTER #2: Then you must begin a new character cue when continuing the dialogue.

F/X: ALL SOUND EFFECTS SHOULD BE USED SPARINGLY AND WORK WITH THE DIALOGUE.

CHARACTER #1: Try not to break dialogue across the page. But if you have a particularly long speech, then this is how to handle it.

(CHARA #1/CONT'D OVER)
CHARA #1 (CONT’D): Begin the following page with a new cue. The only means of establishing a character's presence is to have them speak or be referred to by name. If there are too many characters in a scene, the listener will lose track.

CHARACTER #2: (BEAT) Parenthetical instructions appear in capitals enclosed within round brackets in the dialogue. (PAUSE) It is recommended that these are used sparingly!

F/X: THERE ARE A NUMBER OF COMMON TERMS USED FOR TELESCOPING DIALOGUE.

CHARACTER #1: (OFF) Indicates that the actor should speak away from the microphone. The audio equivalent of "off-screen".

CHARACTER #2: (V.O.) Voiceover indicates a character who is narrating over sound, music or dialogue.

CHARACTER #1: (D) Distort indicates a character who is speaking via a mechanical device like a telephone or radio.

CHARACTER #2: (LOW) Indicates that the actor should speak quietly, almost in a whisper.

CHARACTER #1: (CLOSE) Indicates that the actor should be in close proximity to their individual microphone giving an intimate feel to the dialogue.
Don't forget to number all of your pages, except for the title page. Keep all your pages together with a simple paper binder in the top left corner. Unfastened pages can become separated from the rest of the script and get lost! It is customary to sign-off a radio script or sketch in the following way.

END