Every script should have a title page with one contact address only in the bottom left hand corner. Always include a phone number and an e-mail address if you have one.

If you have an agent, the address and number can go here. A draft number or date is not required on a spec script.

BBC RADIO FORMAT: SCENE STYLE

by

Matt Carless
SCENE 1.

SCENE STYLE IS THE BBC'S HOUSE FORMAT GENERALLY USED FOR DRAMA, PLAYS AND NON-AUDIENCE COMEDY. TECHNICAL DIRECTIONS FOR SOUND AND MUSIC APPEAR IN CAPITALS UNDERLINED TO DISTINGUISH THEM FROM DIALOGUE. OPTIONAL SCENE NUMBERS AND HEADINGS INDICATE THE START OF A NEW SEQUENCE. A SEQUENCE IN A RADIO PLAY MIGHT BE ONE LINE LONG OR LAST FOR 20 PAGES, AND CAN BE ANYTHING FROM A MONOLOGUE TO A COLLECTION OF BRIEF SCENES OR SOUND EFFECTS.

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.

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

IF TECHNICAL DIRECTION INTERRUPTS A CHARACTER'S SPEECH ON THE SAME PAGE...

Then continue the dialogue without repeating the character name.

CHARACTER #1: Split dialogue between pages only if at least two lines appear on the first page, and only after a sentence.

(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.

SCENE 2.

TECHNICAL DIRECTION SHOULD BE USED SPARINGLY AND WORK WITH THE DIALOGUE. ONLY DESCRIBE THE IMMEDIATE SOUND PATTERN AND NEVER USE SUPERFLUOUS NOVELISTIC TEXT. AVOID PARAGRAPHERING UNLESS THERE IS A CHANGE OF LOCATION WITHIN A SEQUENCE. MUSIC IS GENERALLY ONLY INDICATED WHEN IT IS A SOURCE CUE OR PERFORMS A FUNCTION SUCH AS A TRANSITIONAL DEVICE BETWEEN SCENES. SCENES CAN ALSO END WITH A TRANSITION.

FADE.

SCENE 3.

CHARACTER #1: (BEAT) Parenthetical instructions appear in capitals enclosed within round brackets in the dialogue. (PAUSE) It is recommended that these are used sparingly!

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF COMMON TERMS USED FOR TELESCOPING DIALOGUE.

CHARACTER #2: (OFF) Indicates that the actor should speak away from the microphone. The audio equivalent of "off-screen".
CHARACTER #1: (V.O.) Voiceover indicates a character who is narrating over sound, music or dialogue.

CHARACTER #2: (D) Distort indicates a character who is speaking via a mechanical device like a telephone or radio.

CHARACTER #1: (LOW) Indicates that the actor should speak quietly, almost in a whisper.

CHARACTER #2: (CLOSE) Indicates that the actor should be in close proximity to their individual microphone giving an intimate feel to the dialogue.

SCENE 4.

DON'T FORGET TO NUMBER ALL OF YOUR PAGES - PAGE ONE BEGINS WITH SCENE ONE, NOT THE TITLE PAGE. AND 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 IN THE FOLLOWING WAY:

END