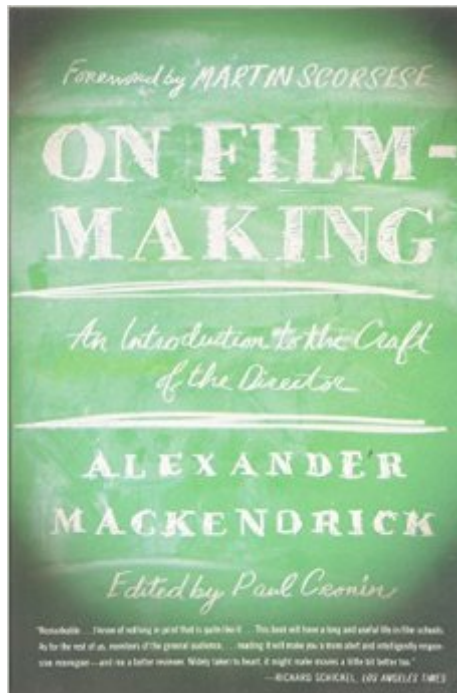


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# On Film-making: An Introduction To The Craft Of The Director



## Synopsis

A priceless examination of the filmmaker's craft, from the renowned director of *Sweet Smell of Success*. After more than twenty years in the film industry as a screenwriter, storyboard editor, and director of memorable films such as *The Ladykillers*, Alexander Mackendrick turned his back on Hollywood and began a new career as the Dean of one of the country's most demanding and influential film schools. His absolute devotion to the craft of filmmaking served as a powerful impetus to students at the California Institute for the Arts for almost twenty five years, with a teaching style that included prodigious notes, neatly crafted storyboards, and handouts containing excerpts of works by Kierkegaard, Aristotle, and others. At the core of Mackendrick's lessons lay a deceptively simple goal: to teach aspiring filmmakers how to structure and write the stories they want to tell, while using the devices particular to the medium of film to tell their stories effectively. In this impressive volume, edited by Paul Cronin, the myriad materials that made Mackendrick's reputation as an instructor are collected for the first time, offering a chance for professionals as well as students to discover a methodology of filmmaking that is challenging yet refreshing in its clarity. Meticulously illustrated and drawing on examples from such classic films as *North by Northwest*, *Citizen Kane*, and *Touch of Evil*, Mackendrick's elegant lessons are sure to provide inspiration for a new generation of filmmakers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Shaw said, "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach." In a strange way, Alexander Mackendrick fits both sides of that dictum. "Sandy" Mackendrick was an accomplished film director. After having

worked in advertising, he started making films for the British Government during World War II. After the war he wrote scripts and he began directing. For the Ealing Studios, he made *Whiskey Galore!*, *The Man in the White Suit*, and *The Ladykillers*. Then he came to Hollywood, where he made the wonderfully biting *Sweet Smell of Success*. He could direct fine movies, and he did; but then he slipped into the "can't do" category, not for any lack of talent, but because he was not much of a deal-maker, and resented having to negotiate details with the studios. He started teaching, becoming dean of the film school at the California Institute of the Arts in 1969. He continued teaching until his death in 1993, but now filmmakers and audiences can get a glimpse of what he taught, in *On Film-making: An Introduction to the Craft of the Director* (Faber and Faber). It is a sampling of his lecture handouts, some illustrated by his own sketches, that he delivered to students over the years, and shows the richness of his thinking on the surprising complexities of artistic decisions regarding even simple shoots on tiny films. Those who enjoy movies, but don't know much about how they are made, will be astonished at how many details of technique the director has to consider before anyone yells "Action!" Those who make movies, or want to, could not do better than to study what Mackendrick has to say. Mackendrick emphatically agrees with Truffaut, who in his interview book with Hitchcock wrote, "Whatever is *said* instead of being *shown* is lost on the viewer.

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