

STRESS-TEST THE STORY BEFORE THE PAGES

Test the outline with bounded alternatives while the writer controls every choice

Start from the approved premise, fixed choices, and unresolved questions. Separate researched facts from story decisions, test only bounded alternatives, and record approved consequences before any file changes. *Anything set as dialogue is an instruction you can give the agent word for word; adapt names and files to the production.*

PREPARED FOR THE AVS SCREENWRITING TEAM · JULY 2026

FADE IN:

STATE THE FIXED CHOICES AND OPEN QUESTIONS

Development starts from writer-approved choices: premise, audience, format, teaching objective, and story promises. The agent may compare bounded alternatives and trace consequences; the writer decides purpose and meaning. Record fixed and unresolved items first so an invention cannot pass as an approved premise.

Rule 1: The writer starts with the premise and non-negotiables.

Rule 2: Facts are sourced; choices are logged. Never blur a real-world claim with a creative option.

Rule 3: Scratch work is labeled and separated from canonical material.

1. **State the fixed choices before asking for alternatives.** Name what may change and what must remain: midpoint, reveal, character promise, running time, audience need, or teaching objective. Mark unsettled choices provisional. A risk tied to past notes informs judgment; a rubric is not a veto. The writer may keep a risky beat.
2. **Build the story bible from current evidence, not memory alone.** It is the current record for characters, chronology, world rules, promises, and unresolved facts. Mark items locked, provisional, disputed, or unknown; cite the file behind each locked item.

The Writer
(to the agent)

PROPOSE only. Read `projects/return-visit/premise.md`, `projects/return-visit/outline-v3.md`, and `evidence/return-visit/development-notes.md`. Check whether `projects/return-visit/story-bible.md` exists. In chat, preview full contents or, if it exists, a minimal diff. Mark items locked, provisional, disputed, or unknown; cite file and section for each locked item. Do not create or change files. Await a separate APPLY naming the target.

You should get: a current-record preview with disputes and unknowns visible. Next: approve statuses and resolve only what this decision requires.

3. **Reconcile the production files before generating.** Compare the approved premise, outline, notes, and proposed bible. Do not patch contradictions. After the writer resolves one, use a separate APPLY for each named file and inspect its diff.

When approved materials conflict, preserve both positions, cite their sources, and keep the item disputed. Unknown keeps a guess out of continuity. Resolve only what the present decision needs.

4. **Separate research needs from story decisions.** Bound the scan by section and item count. Accept government or standards records, original research, authorized legal or contract records, named expert interviews, or AVS-approved trade publications. Snippets and generated summaries are leads.

The Writer
(to the agent)

ASK only. In `projects/return-visit/outline-v3.md`, review [approved section range] and list up to [claim limit] external claims affecting teaching accuracy, rights, safety, or credibility. Cite each section and name the acceptable source type needed. Do not research, rewrite, or change files.

You should get: a bounded claim list. Next: authorize numbered items and acceptable source types.

The Writer
(to the agent)

PROPOSE only. Use the approved numbered items. Check whether `projects/return-visit/source-log.md` exists. In chat, preview full contents or, if it exists, a minimal diff. Record claim, outline section, source type, pending status, and owner. Do not research, create, or change files. Await a separate APPLY naming the target.

You should get: a finite queue with no findings yet. Next: approve it, then use a separate APPLY limited to `projects/return-visit/source-log.md` and inspect the diff.

5. **Record each choice and rough in its assigned file.** The decision log holds dated writer choices, reasons, useful rejections, and affected files. Labeled reference roughs belong under `scratch/`, never in the screenplay. Approved project files hold the current record.

THE PRODUCTION AT A GLANCE

```
projects/[production]/
├─ outline-v3.md current approved structure
├─ story-bible.md approved facts + open questions
├─ decision-log.md writer choices + consequences
├─ source-log.md claims + traceable sources
└─ scratch/reference-roughs/ comparisons, never canonical
```

DECISION 014 · Move reveal to scene 7

Why: preserve the teaser question
Keeps: midpoint reversal
Updates: outline · story bible · episode 4 setup
Owner: writer · 2026-07-10

READY WHEN

The writer can name what is locked, what is undecided, which facts require sources, and exactly where an accepted choice will be recorded.

CUT TO:

BOUNDED ALTERNATIVES TEST THE FIXED STORY

Check the current files for conflicts and unsupported facts before requesting alternatives. Ask for bounded options that preserve fixed choices and show cited risks and downstream effects. The writer decides whether a risk is a flaw, a tradeoff, or the point.

ASK reads and reports; no file changes · **PROPOSE** previews in chat; no file changes · **APPLY** changes only writer-named files and approved consequences · screenplay pages remain untouched

Run the production-record check before asking for options.

The Writer
(to the agent)

ASK only. Compare `projects/return-visit/premise.md`, `projects/return-visit/outline-v3.md`, `projects/return-visit/story-bible.md`, and `projects/return-visit/source-log.md`. Report premise/outline, chronology, character, world-rule, and source conflicts; unsupported locked facts; and approved facts absent downstream. Cite filename and section. Do not fix or change files.

You should get: a cited exception list, not silent reconciliation. Next: resolve only the decisions the current stage requires.

Stress-test the outline, not the writer's authority. Preserve the fixed choices while comparing bounded alternatives. Require evidence for each concern and the tradeoff in each option.

The Writer
(to the agent)

PROPOSE only. Read `projects/return-visit/outline-v3.md`, `rubrics/committee.md`, and `evidence/return-visit/development-notes.md`. Report up to three act-two risks supported by a rubric criterion and source note; cite both sections. Preview at most two alternatives per risk that preserve the midpoint and teaching objective. If evidence supports fewer, report fewer. Return in chat; change no files.

You should get: bounded alternatives tied to specific risks. Next: choose, combine, reject, or consciously accept each risk.

Expose the cost before moving a beat. A move may alter knowledge, setups, and later beats. List those continuity consequences before proposing a patch.

The Writer
(to the agent)

ASK only. For a reveal moved from scene 4 to scene 7, compare `projects/return-visit/outline-v3.md`, `projects/return-visit/story-bible.md`, and `projects/return-visit/decision-log.md`. List affected setups, knowledge states, and later beats. Cite filename and scene or section. Do not propose fixes or change files.

You should get: a dependency map, not a rewrite. Next: decide whether the move is worth its downstream cost.

Research each claim so another person can check the source.
Use approved source types; generated summaries are leads.

The Writer
(to the agent)

ASK only. Research approved items in `projects/return-visit/source-log.md`. Accept government or standards records, original research, authorized legal or contract records, named expert interviews, or AVS-approved trade sources. Return the source title, author or publisher, publication date, URL or record identifier, access date, exact supporting passage, limitations, conflicts, and outline section; mark missing fields `unverified`. Change no files.

You should get: traceable sources, exact support, limitations, conflicts, and unverified gaps. Next: request a PROPOSE-only diff for `projects/return-visit/source-log.md`. Approve that diff before a separate APPLY, and inspect the saved file before proposing an outline change.

Use roughs as comparisons, never pages. Keep each outside the script and label its status.

The Writer
(to the agent)

PROPOSE only. In chat, preview two teaser structures that preserve the reveal and two-page limit. Use the label "REFERENCE – NOT CANONICAL" for each. Do not save or change files.

You should get: two labeled comparisons. Next: choose a structure, write it yourself, and log the decision.

The Writer
(to the agent)

PROPOSE only. For the approved scene-7 move, preview Decision 014 for `projects/return-visit/decision-log.md` and exact diffs for `projects/return-visit/outline-v3.md`, `projects/return-visit/story-bible.md`, and `projects/return-visit/episode-4-setup.md`. Include only consequences approved after the dependency check; preserve the midpoint and unrelated beats. Change no files.

You should get: one decision entry and approved-consequence diffs. Next: APPLY one named file; inspect its diff before authorizing the next.

Keep development records current.

- Start with fixed choices; request bounded alternatives and tradeoffs.
- Cite rubrics for story risks and sources for factual claims.
- Use approved, file-specific APPLY instructions; inspect each diff.
- Label scratch; archive it only under approved retention policy.

WHEN THE BOUNDARY FAILS

If the agent invents a fact, loses a fixed choice, or writes to a canonical file, stop and inspect the diff. Restore only unauthorized hunks; preserve later human work. Repair the boundary, then rerun in **ASK** or **PROPOSE**.

Ready when. Risks are addressed or accepted, choices and sources are logged, and roughs stay out of the script.

Guardrail. The agent compares options and consequences. The writer owns meaning, risk, and every canonical word.

FADE OUT.