

MMF Screenplay Development Masterclass

*By
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About NIF Screenplay Development

**NIF Screenplay
Development motivated by
contemporary Nigerian
cinema story directions and
screenwriter's
international experiences,**

About NIF Screenplay Development contd.

**advocates thematic
evaluation of Storytelling
Directions and
Screenwriting for wider
global market access.**

Issues

- * Film Culture
- * Story Directions
- * Intellectualism and Cultural References
- * Building Film Audience in terms of genre
- * Selling the New Nigerian Storyteller and Screenwriter vis-à-vis Story Directions and Screenwriting craft.

Objectives

- * Evaluate Nigerian Film Culture in Story Directions**
- * Situate Story Directions in Global Social Discourse.**

Argument

Film culture originated from storytelling in traditional variety shows; anyhow, anywhere and all over the world. It still mirrors community social discourse.

Argument contd.

Overtime the filmmaker's message has been embedded in films, dreamlike to impact on his or her audiences.

Argument contd.

Such audiences are created first from a general pool that eventually adapt to and adopt dialogues and pictures respectively.

Argument contd.

To a large extent audiences also adopt lifestyles; invariably enabling definite recognition of genres: determined by the producer, screenwriter and director; ultimately the storytellers.

Argument contd.

NISF Screenplay

**Development is thus
motivated by current
Nigerian cinema story
directions and
screenwriter's
international experiences.**

Argument contd.

**It advocates thematic
evaluation of Storytelling
Directions and Screenwriting
for wider global market
access.**

Argument contd.

These the Nigerian writer cannot ignore; must reflect in current anecdotes; indeed create lifestyles pursuant to Nigerian dream of a productive community.

**Argument contd.
Tomorrow's Analytical
Nigerian Screenwriter
critical of today vis-avis
yesterday, with collective or
individual point of view or
opinion should cause social
orientation and essential
development.**

Writers & Fate

* Who is  he 

* What is his  her life 

* How is his or her life 

* Forlorn

* Prosperous

* Doomed

* Star  struck

Slug line

Nigerian film story directions and screenwriting craft resist critical researches and analyses of themes and objectives, as contemporary writers fear dramatization costs in socio-cultural and political-economic themes and objectives.

Outline

- *What should be the recurring objectives in contemporary Nigerian film story directions in the 21st Century?
- *What are the dominant storytelling and screenwriting themes in Nigerian films in the 21st Century?

Outline contd.

- *What pertinent crafts should screenwriters have to reflect the unavoidable socio-cultural and political-economic demands of Nigeria 21st Century outlook?
- *What are the implications of resisting dramatization costs in planned or finished screenplays,

Outline contd.

should it be justified that the production costs will be too much?

❖ How should an average screenwriter have problem-solving collaborations with producers?

Outline contd.

- * Why do contemporary Nigerian screenwriters fear critical research on themes, objectives and premises, which should enrich and embolden their craft and truest output in low and high concepts?
- * How should contemporary Nigerian screenwriters compare

Outline contd.

and analyze own screenplays in screenwriting workshops to improve craft and empower themselves?

❖ What are the pertinent themes and objectives should we as a film culture explore in films to reflect Nigeria's 21st Century socio-cultural and political-economy?

What should be the recurring objectives in contemporary Nigerian film story directions in the 21st Century

Consider Nigeria's filmmaking evolution in changing nuances of evolved global arts, media and entertainment industry. Have a general review of Story Directions in Nigeria's film industry vis-a-vis the country's popular music.

Yes Nigerian pop music has finally precipitated a Pan-African genre, Afro-Beats. It is that tendency to identify with Fela Anikulapo-Kuti's Afro Beat.

In that context, lack of national intellectual policy direction in Nigerian filmmaking, may have impacted an unfocused film discourse, despite frequency in productions.

Otherwise frequent and regular Story Directions seminars/workshops should excite global audiences beyond Africa and the African Diaspora.

It will mean the development and production of High Concept Themed movie stories. These should inspire producers, storytellers, screenwriters and directors and crew ensembles to create the missionary Nigerian film or movie.

**Nigeria's Nollywood,
Yorubawood or Kaniwood may
well be like fading pop songs'
struggle to retain hard-earned
reputation as world's largest
filmmaking nation. Please let
us always consider story quality
for global statements!**

Short of intellectual deliberations and compromise, to ultra-commercial and ‘intellectual,’ filmmakers will miss a common vital objective of improving Nigeria’s Story Directions and aggregating a Nigerian Film Culture.

What are the dominant storytelling and screenwriting themes in Nigerian films in the 21st Century



**"My Body Parts is a story
driven suspenseful story
fueled by self-will, romance
and political maneuvers, ..."**

- * Independent filmmaking created Nigeria's Nollywood; sprung from market oriented venture spirit. Thanks to Ken Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* (1992),
- * Many years since the success of *Living in Bondage*, highest domestic revenue earners
 - * *Chief Daddy*
 - * *The Wedding Party*
 - * *A Trip to Jamaica*
 - * *10 Days in Sun City* etc;

took over our domestic cinemas and household screens!

Those had followed

*Tango with Me and
Phone Swap etc*

These may have designed what I will love to call *New Nollywood* ; an alternative to *Old Nollywood*; modeled on informal, vague and off-the-record producer financing;

susceptible to unskilled execution.

Old Nollywood critiqued for earliest low quality may have recently embraced improved aesthetics, story and cinematic quality cum culture to interest the international audience.

We have embraced *Half of Yellow Moon* , a Nigerian Civil War romantic; starring *Chiwetel Umeadi Ejiofor*, an international; who also starred in acclaimed US movie, *12 Years a Slave*.

These became audience's favorites, because of definable artistic crafting, technical and commercial objectives.

Comparably we may go through the development of *My Body Parts*, that I created. It is story subsumed in self-definition and actualization for rounded fulfillment.

It happens for a cause in a politicized situation. It also intends to showcases the ‘...ordinary man, who lives for his woman!’

My Body Parts tells the story of a leadership cause obsessed ex-Niger Delta militant and female activist filmmaker. She risks missing a music star’s love devotion to get her benevolent guardian elected against a desperate guilt driven ex-governor’s plan to impose a successor.

Albeit there's scholarship and industry element in *Veronica*:

Zogline  www.tnttoowoo.com

School girl proves correctness of her love for common good in a morally bankrupt high school; after failing to impress careless school teachers, with brilliance and industry.

Story Origination Analysis

Programme:

Television

Genre:

Drama Serial/Series

Theme(s):

❖ **Community**

❖ **Civics**

❖ **Mutuality**

Title: Veronica-Kid with Attitude

Objectives:

- ❖ **Define high school environment as a community with its peculiar customs and mores.**
- ❖ **Demonstrate what the school as a community should impress on outsiders.**
- ❖ **Impress civics as requirement to belong in the school scholarly community.**
- ❖ **Demonstrate how civics develops a living principle and beneficial lifestyle in a high school community; being one another's keeper.**
- ❖ **Feature an outstanding school kid, who demonstrates focus on scholarly and principled lifestyle.**

Premise Argument or Background

Premise:

The principle of integrity in Nigeria's school system is achievable by building characteristic individual standards to secure scholarship and industry.

Synopsis

School girl proves correctness of her love for common good in a **MORALLY BANKRUPT HIGH SCHOOL; AFTER FAILING** to impress careless school teachers, with brilliance and industry.

Logline Breakdown

1. School girl 2. proves 3.
correctness of 4. her love for 5.
common good 6. in a morally
bankrupt high school 7. after
failing 8. to impress 9. careless
school teachers with 10. brilliance
and 11. industry.

Tagline Breakdown contd

1. School girl 2. proves 3.
correctness 4. her love 5. common
good 6. MORALLY BANKRUPT HIGH
SCHOOL 5. after failing 4. to
impress 3. careless school teachers
3. with 2. brilliance 1. industry.

Let's Write Our Synopsis

Act 1. What's the Main Character's Dream?

1. School girl 2. proves 3. correctness 4. her love 5. common good 6. MORALLY BANKRUPT HIGH SCHOOL 5. after failing 4. to impress 3. careless school teachers 3. with 2. brilliance 1. industry.

Get a What is the Main Character is
Worst Nightmare

1. School girl 2. proves 3. correctness
4. her love 5. common good 6.
MORALLY BANKRUPT HIGH SCHOOL 5.
after failing 4. to impress 3.
careless school teachers 3. with 2.
brilliance 1. industry.

1. School girl 2. proves 3. correctness
4. her love 5. common good 6.
MORALLY BANKRUPT HIGH SCHOOL 5.
after failing 4. to impress 3.
careless school teachers 3. with 2.
brilliance 1. industry.

Get What is the Resolution of Main Character's Dream

1. School girl 2. proves 3. correctness
4. her love 5. common good 6.
MORALLY BANKRUPT HIGH SCHOOL 5.
after failing 4. to impress 3. careless
school teachers 3. with 2. brilliance 1.
industry.



- * Act 1- What is School Girl's dream?
- * Act 2 a. What is School Girl's worst nightmare?
- * Act 2 b. What will School Girl die for?
- * Act 3 .What's the resolution of the School Girl's dream?



Self-assured, foster child and biggish Veronica, 13 years has just been admitted into Junior Hill High School, Abuja. She is approached by restless school Senior Schoolboy, Benji, 16 years. Finally, she tasks him to become Senior School Prefect of Hill High, if he wants her friendship. He wonders how, given his bad school records.

தமிழ்நாடு & Contd  WWW.TAMILNADU.COM

But Veronica won't take any excuses from Benji over his inability to be a good boy, given the prevalent corruption in Hill High School.

Equally corrupt teachers, who patronize parents in Parents Teachers Association are worried she could jeopardize usual bribes to favor students. She proves brilliant scholarship to resist any suggestions to bribe for score good grades.

She goes as far as rejecting low marks, where there is incorrect scoring.

This invariably provides Benji a chance to prove, what he calls 'crush' for Veronica. She makes it clear he will not be fighting for his so called 'crush,' but the bad influences on teachers and students by rich parents. Indeed those , '...who feel they can buy their way through everything in life!' Benji again wonders how he could given his ' Hill High Baddest Boy,' reputation enabled by his rich parents.

Benji & Co. Contd.  www.benjico.com

'My parents influence Mrs. Wuse a lot. She gets government contracts apart from owning Hill High.'

Sometimes she lectures Benji and his numerous friends on conducts and habits that could either '...score failure or success.' Therefore she impresses Hill High Grandmother; the Proprietress, Mrs. Andrea Wuse's mother.

తెలుగులోకం Contd. www.telugukoo.com

Hill High Grandma soon befriends Veronica's foster parents, whom she learnt adopted Veronica after biological parents' death in a terrorist attack.

Mrs. Bernard is intolerant of Veronica's growing popularity and friendship with her mother. Some influential PTA members threaten to withdraw their children, who cannot match Veronica's performance. She is singled out for bullying by losers.

Chapter 10 Contd WWW.TWTOONOO.COM

She suggests the only way Benji could start is by fighting his parents' influence. Benji can't figure fighting own parents to become prefect and get her to reciprocate his feelings. He argues against fighting with his parents, who are building his future just to make Hill High a better place. However though it is not Veronica's dream to have an affair at 13 years, despite her size, she assures him becoming prefect may just be what she needs.

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Veronica assures '...if Hill High became a better place it would benefit generations unborn. We all are living organs of that common good.' She suggests they form a Students Study Group to discuss rights, duties and responsibilities of citizens. Therefore as new generation of citizens to discourage parents' bad influence in Hill High.

WWW.TWITOONDO.COM

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Logline:

Barrenness stigmatized incarnate woman reveals mystery of Yoruba earth goddess following pregnancy for shaman, consulted to protect husband's community leadership, under aggravated embarrassment by her jilted virile ex-boyfriend.

Logline Rewrites  www.thetoonoo.com

End of the Day  www.thetoonoo.com

*1

*2



During early Euro-Christian colonial era in Yoruba land: 35-year old barren Arike returns from direct incarnated self, (*Uwa*) Eve and true origins in the Garden of Eden to her Aye community. She had consulted Aye's 70-year old notorious spiritualist, Otaaba. This followed their Aye community's insistence her childless rich influential 55-year old businessman husband should resign leadership. She reveals Otaaba (*Esu*); notorious spiritual Incubus impregnated her to birth mankind. Otaaba had enriched Olaitan (*Obatala*) to worship him in return.

Olaitan ought to sacrifice his seeds and remain impotent for a lifetime; promote Incubus' worship among Aye people. That Aye is merely actualizing Esu's punishment for Olaitan by sustaining its strong belief that leaders with children bring progress.

In the physical realm Aye had insisted on virile family man, 45-year old Oluwole, his barren wife's ex-lover; who has had many children in and out of polygamy.

Aye sends Oluwole as sole representative at meetings summoned by Olaitan for eventual succession. Oluwole rubs it in, even in Arike's presence that a virile leader is like Adam married to Eve, who multiplied, filled, blessed and created vast wealth for the world. Oluwole and Aye agree Olaitan could avoid resignation by adopting Oluwole's children by Arike. Olaitan bars Oluwole from his house; refuses resignation creates community-wide uproar.

Oluwole had warned Otaaba will cause more problems than solutions. Aye community issued official proclamation through Town Crier that Arike and Olaitan should avoid Otaaba's usual manipulations for money. Otaaba contrived a spiritual journey for Arike to become as fruitful as Eve, mankind's mother. Albeit except Olaitan, nobody sees Otaaba's clear intent from Olaitan's refusal to compensate after making him rich.



WWW.TATTOOGIRL.COM

In physical realm Otaaba, Incubus or impregnates Arike, who realizes Oluwole and Aye's warning has resulted in Olaitan's jeopardy. She fears social shame in her pregnancy's trimester. She tries to figure out what to do, when the baby is born; unlike Olaitan but Otaaba. She either will confide in Oluwole, risk divorcing Olaitan; but her ex-boyfriend knows it is not her husband's baby.

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He seeks to end Olaitan's leadership; so that the next generation successor will not be from Otaaba, Esu or Incubus lineage.

Selfish and greedy Aye fights war on either side of Olaitan or Oluwole. Factions' destructive wars entertain Esu or Incubus! And nobody seems to be a winner!

My Body Parts' heroine, Keye (Keinde) of a single intellectual activist mother, escapes comfort in Atlanta, US; joins Niger Delta militants in the creeks to face deadly Nigerian Army. She could abandon her chosen activist filmmaking cause aimed at winning votes to install her boss at Niger Delta Commission (NDC). She could therefore completely opt for romance and marriage to a sincere loving music star.

Indeed as forces of money and general apathy dissuade her; even so the very man, she campaigns for to attain State leadership.

Should *My Body Parts* ignore politics, it will still appeal deeply to general Nigerian audience. More so made a political drama, it leaves the realm of ordinary Nigerian concerns and tests our collective yearning for good leadership in all aspects of life.

My Body Parts at face value, a soft sexual flick suddenly shocks a considerable audience with the nuances of a steadfast heroine. She rides a commonly presumed masculine realm to achieve something for the ‘...ordinary man; ... for his woman.’

It has an unlimited appeal to a wide consumer demography, young and old generation; weak and powerful; female and male.

Its meaning loaded music based storytelling delineates elements of music and pictures. It thus creates choices for distribution as standalones or a combination to audiences.

Even so focus on women's voice, girl-power and influence, invariably enriching its storytelling

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 [WWW.TWTOOWOO.COM](https://www.twitter.com/WWW.TWTOOWOO.COM) *Keye*  [WWW.TWTOOWOO.COM](https://www.twitter.com/WWW.TWTOOWOO.COM)

My Body Parts' heroine, Keye (Kehinde) of a single intellectual activist mother, escapes comfort in Atlanta, US; joins Niger Delta militants in the creeks to face deadly Nigerian Army.

She could abandon her chosen activist filmmaking cause aimed at winning votes to install her boss at Niger Delta Commission (NDC). She could therefore completely opt for romance and marriage to a sincere loving music star.

Situation and Manipulation

Indeed as forces of money and general apathy dissuade her; even so the very man, she campaigns for to attain State leadership.

Definition

*Program: Film

*Genre:

*Theme(s):

*Subject:

*Topical:

*Duration:

*Objective(s):

Definition contd WWW.TWOTOONOO.COM

Premise:

My Body Parts' heroine, Keye (Keinde) of a single intellectual activist mother, escapes comfort in Atlanta, US; joins Niger Delta militants in the creeks to face deadly Nigerian Army. She could abandon her chosen activist filmmaking cause aimed at winning votes to install her boss at Niger Delta Commission (NDC).

Definition contd



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She could therefore completely opt for romance and marriage to a sincere loving music star. Indeed as forces of money and general apathy dissuade her; even so the very man, she campaigns for to attain State leadership.

- *Logline*
- *Synopsis*
- *Treatment*

What pertinent crafts should screenwriters have to reflect the unavoidable socio-cultural and political economic demands of Nigeria 21st Century outlook

- * "...and all of us go into a kind of lock step where, if we were watching a tennis match, you'd see that perfect synchronicity of heads going left-right, left-right. The same thing in a movie theatre, when the movie is working and the audience is galvanized, almost hypnotized, all watching the same things, all knowing where to look at the exact same time...it's a wonderful thing. There is nothing greater than that."
(Spielberg, [2013](#)).
- * "If a million people see my movie, I hope they see a million different movies." (Tarantino, [1995](#))

What are the implications of resisting dramatization costs in planned or finished screenplays? Should it be justified that the production costs will be too much?

It is reported that *Half of a Yellow Moon* 's release in Nigeria was delayed, given its focus on the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) as background. We, producers and screenwriters will always fear such obstacles.


*How should an average screenwriter have problem solving
collaborations with producers*

It certainly means you may not be able to make certain statements filmic statements, because of the cost of not getting released. As a screenwriter your focus on such stories that offend political correctness may mean job scarcity. But as can be seen in *My Body Parts*, there is always a chance to agree with your commissioning producer.

Why do contemporary Nigerian screenwriters fear critical research on themes, objectives and premises which should enrich and embolden their craft and truest output in low and high concepts

- * Culture- We do not understand our a world is pieced together and enriched by cultural diversity ; though driven by commercialism.
- * Meaning- We should consider localized meaning to fire outbreak in Brazil's Amazon forest, which may cut off 20 percent of global oxygen production.
- * Manipulation-We misplace storytelling context for identity, pride and dignity in material visualization than mental impression on audience; who soon want more engaging stories.

- * Interpretation- We misinterpret filmmaking as a buying and selling profession; albeit it is about sales of intellectual property enhanced by everyday by science and technology.**
- * Influence - We lack influence because of financial limitations and could write anything to survive; trying always to live up to the joneses with fancy lifestyles.**

How should contemporary Nigerian screenwriters compare and analyze own screenplays in screenwriting workshops to improve craft and empower themselves. 

Good enough the Screenwriters Guild of Nigeria, SGN organized Storytelling and Screenwriting talk-shop recently.

I will however plead for more localized seminars and workshops focused on interpreting the Nigerian cosmos vis-à-vis global diversity. Humanity is woven by cultural diversity and similarity. Nigerian harmattan can adapt the Igbo International businessman to dead cold snow in Iceland.

What are the pertinent themes and objectives should we as a film culture explore in films to reflect Nigeria's 21st Century socio cultural and political economy

We should focus more on global themes with localized interpretation. Of course romantic stories are good; but a recent flick about someone slaving for the family from the UK by remitting pound, speaks very loud.

Conclusion

Nollywood's volume may typify Africa's peculiar cinematic standards, but innovations for updated international cinematic values will need to embrace skills upgrade, business accountability and quality; even so current global thematic thrusts, story directions and dramatic effect.

Therefore we should know that Nigerian Film Culture's real value could be doomed by pedestrian commercialization; but can be redefined by intellectual evaluation for new story directions aided by appropriate technologies to evolve a dynamic industry.