

Drive (2011)

Written by Hossein Amini
Based on the novel by James Sallis
Directed by Nicolas Winding Refn
Running time: 96 minutes

BASIC SCREENPLAY ANALYSIS

PROTAGONIST: Driver, 20s, getaway driver, stunt driver, mechanic

CHARACTERIZATION/MAIN MISBEHAVIOR: loner / violent

EXTERNAL GOAL: To care for Irene and Benicio / To protect Irene and Benicio

INTERNAL GOAL: To act selflessly

MAIN DRAMATIC CONFLICT: Bernie Rose / Nino / Standard

THEME: True fulfillment comes from sacrificing something for someone with no expectation or benefits.

CENTRAL DRAMATIC QUESTION: Will Driver protect Irene and Benicio from Bernie Rose and Nino?

ENDING: Driver kills Bernie, protecting Irene and Benicio from harm, but in the process suffers a potentially fatal wound.

ARC: Driver goes from a loner with an unfulfilled life, to a man who gives everything to protect the woman and child he loves.

STORY ENGINES

ACT I

Driver works as a getaway driver, stunt driver, and mechanic. His boss and mentor, Shannon, sets him up as a driver for a racing venture with mobsters Bernie Rose and Nino as investors. He meets and falls for a married woman and her son (Irene and Benicio), acting a surrogate husband and father.

ACT II-A

Irene's husband, Standard, comes home from prison and Driver gives the family their space. He's brought back in to the mix when Standard's prison debts put Irene and Benicio in danger. Driver acts as a getaway driver to assist Standard in a score to pay off his creditors, but Standard is killed during the robbery.

ACT II-B

Driver discovers the score was a setup and the money he has from the botched robbery belongs to Nino and Bernie. When Nino sends one of his thugs to Irene's apartment, Driver, knowing Irene and Benicio are in danger, kills Nino's thug and starts a war he must finish to protect what he's grown to love.

ACT III

Driver kills Nino. He arranges a meeting with Bernie Rose to drop off the money. Bernie tells him he'll die if he gives him the money, but Irene and Benicio will be safe. Driver gives Bernie the money and Bernie stabs him in the gut. Driver manages to get the knife out of him and kills Bernie. With a potentially fatal wound, Driver leaves Bernie dead with the money and drives away.

FULL SCREENPLAY ANALYSIS

PROLOGUE

1- OPENING IMAGES: A detailed map of downtown Los Angeles marked with different routes. **DRIVER** stares out the window of his hotel room, talking on his cell...

DRIVER

There's a hundred thousand streets in this city...
You don't need to know the route... You give me a
time and a place, I give you a five minute window.
Anything happens in that five minutes and I'm
yours. No matter what. Anything happens a
minute either side of that and you're on your own.
Do you understand?

2 - On the TV, an aerial shot of the Staples Center. Superimposed is a score: Los Angeles is down to Toronto at the half. Driver finishes his call, tosses the cell, and exits.

3 - Driver arrives at a garage and picks up a car -- a Chevy Impala -- the most popular car in California -- from **SHANNON**, the owner of the garage. Shannon walks with a prominent limp.

5 - Driver arrives at the location. Two **MASKED MEN** appear from the shadows and break into their target. Driver starts the clock. He monitors the police radio on a walkie-talkie, but he shows more interest in the fourth quarter of the Los Angeles / Toronto game on the car radio.

6 - Over the police radio, the call comes in. One of the masked men arrives at the car, but the other is still inside. A police officer responds to dispatch: he's two minutes away.

6 - The other masked man arrives and Driver takes off. Dispatch sends out the description of their car. Driver concentrates on driving, narrowly avoiding a patrol car's search lights.

7 - Driving across a bridge, lights from the helicopter hit the cars ahead. The inevitable -- visual contact from the helicopter. Dispatch relays the communication. Driver speeds away...

8 - Driver pulls under the bridge and the helicopter loses his trail. Dispatch calls the helicopter to a gang shooting and they leave, but the patrols are still searching...

9 - Driver pulls to a stoplight. Directly across the street, a cop car communicates a visual. The light turns green and Driver steps on the gas. A chase ensues...

10 - With some serious skills, Driver loses the patrol car. He pulls in to a parking garage outside The Staples Center as the radio announcer proclaims The Clippers' victory.

10 - With a good amount of fans already in the parking garage, Driver parks and calmly walks out of the garage. He puts on a blue cap, turns his white jacket inside out and casually walks past the patrol cars that are attempting to catch him.

ACT I

12 - Driver arrives into the parking garage of his low-rent apartment building. He passes **IRENE**, his neighbor, on the way to the elevator. They do not acknowledge each other.

13 - Arriving at his apartment, Driver throws his bag on the bed and exits. He drives the city streets at night...

14 - Morning. Driver and Irene are alone in the elevator. They exchange a pleasant smile, but say nothing.

15 - Driver wears a police officer uniform. Shannon approaches him and it's apparent they are on a movie set.

15 - Driver puts on a latex mask. He performs a roll-over for the cameras that goes off without a hitch.

16 - At the grocery store, Driver notices Irene with her son, **BENICIO**.

17 - INCITING INCIDENT: Outside the store, Driver discovers Irene's car won't start and lends a hand.

18 - Driver escorts Irene and Benicio home, carrying their groceries for them. He shares a moment with Benicio, giving him a toothpick.

19 - Driver notices a picture of Benicio and a man. Irene comments Benicio's father, and her husband, is currently in prison.

20 - Changing the subject from her imprisoned husband, Irene questions Driver about his occupation. He tells her he drives for the movies, but it's just part-time work. He really works in a garage.

20 - Driver thanks them and leaves.

22 - At Nino's Pizzeria, Shannon solicits **BERNIE ROSE** for a \$430k investment in a stock car. Bernie throws a hard objection -- what does he have that the professional racing teams don't? Without hesitating, Shannon says "I got the driver."

23 - Nino enters his pizzeria and immediately fucks with Shannon, asking him about his leg. Intimidated by Nino, Shannon says "I've paid my debt."

23 - Bernie will consider the investment, but must meet Driver first. Shannon is enthusiastic.

23 - Driver races a stock car for a test. Afterwards, Shannon introduces him to Bernie...

Bernie extends his hand to Driver...

BERNIE ROSE

Nice to meet you.

The old mobster holds out his hand, meeting Driver's gaze.

DRIVER

My hands are a little dirty.

BERNIE ROSE

So are mine.

He gives Driver a big grin and a warm handshake, sizing him up. Driver smiles politely, gazing back at him.

24 - Driver walks away and Shannon asks Bernie if they have a deal. Bernie agrees to a 70% investment. Though slightly disappointed, Shannon accepts and extends his hand. Bernie doesn't shake it.

25 - Irene arrives at Shannon's garage to have her car repaired.

26 - The repairs to Irene's car will take a number of days. Shannon offers to have Driver take Irene and Benicio home...

27- STRONG MOVEMENT FORWARD: Driver takes Irene and Benicio through LA river drainage canals, ending at a secluded spot that seems like an oasis.

29 - Driver carries the sleeping Benicio back to their apartment. Irene looks on approvingly.

30 - Driver informs Irene that he's free over the weekend. She offers a smile that suggests interest in a date.

31 - END OF ACT ONE TURN: The relationship with Irene and Benicio deepens. Driver takes Irene to and from work; acts as a surrogate father to Benicio.

ACT II-A

32 - Back the garage, Nino and Bernie inspect their investment, a shoddy-looking stock car. Nino dismisses the car as having any value, but Bernie informs him it's what's on the inside that counts.

33 - While Shannon humbles Nino, Bernie chats with Driver as he works on a car. He asks him if he's ready for the race and Driver replies, "I hope so." Bernie laughs it off, but subtly lets Driver in on the dangers for Shannon if things go wrong.

BERNIE ROSE

Did Shannon ever tell you how we met?

Driver shakes his head.

BERNIE ROSE

I used to produce movies in the 80's. Kinda like action films, sexy stuff. One critic called them European. I thought they were shit. Anyway, he arranged all the cars for me, did all the stunts. I liked him. I liked having him around...even though he overcharged the shit out of me. His next business venture, he got involved with some of Nino's friends. They didn't go for the overcharging bit. They broke his pelvis. He's never had a lot of luck.

34 - Irene gets ready for a work. Driver watches TV with Benicio. Her phone rings...

35 - In the car, Irene informs Driver that the call was from her husband's attorney -- he's coming home in one week. Though he's hurt, Driver doesn't respond. He remains quiet, as does Irene.

36 - Driver works on a carburetor at his dining table. The music from Irene's apartment pours into his.

37 - A welcome home party. Irene's husband, **STANDARD**, affectionately holds Benicio close. Irene, a little sad, looks on with a sense of optimism now that her son has his father back. Standard addresses the party...

STANDARD

We're her celebrating, but it's a shameful thing. What I did... I have a lot of making up to do. To everyone. But second chances are rare, right? And that's worth celebrating. Right? So, I want to make a toast to that lady right there...thanks for staying. I love you, Irene.

38 - Driver exits his apartment to find Irene in the hallway, alone.

IRENE
Sorry about the noise.

DRIVER
I was gonna call the cops.

IRENE
I wish you would.

39 - Standard confronts Driver in the hallway. He's passively confrontational, letting Driver know it's not okay to interfere with his family anymore.

41 - Driver eats alone at an all-night diner. A man approaches... a man he once worked as a getaway driver for. The man informs him of an upcoming job, but Driver comes back with a violent response. The man backs away.

42 - Arriving at his apartment's parking garage, Driver spots two gangster-looking figures. One carries a baseball bat.

43 - On his way to the elevator, Driver hears Standard talking, telling Benicio not to worry and to not tell his mother. Driver sees him -- Standard's face is covered in blood. Driver immediately checks on Benicio, who is unharmed.

45 - FIRST TRIAL: Back at his apartment, Standard informs Driver of the situation. He received protection in jail and now the men are blackmailing him -- he must rob a pawn shop, risking both his freedom and family, or face their wrath. He tells Driver they're coming for Benicio and Irene if he doesn't do the job.

46 - Driver approaches Benicio. Driver asks to see what Benicio's holding -- it's a bullet. One of the men gave it to him. Drivers asks Benicio if he can keep it for him. Benicio agrees.

47 - Driver meets with Irene at her restaurant. He asks about Benicio. It's revealed that Standard lied to her about his "accident." She invites him over to dinner to see Benicio.

49 - Driver has dinner with Standard, Irene, and Benicio. Standard tells the story of how he met Irene. He ends the story with the birth of Benicio, calling it "the best of my life."

49 - Driver steals a Ford Mustang.

50 - Driver speaks with Cook, organizer of the score.

DRIVER

If I drive for you, you get your money. You tell me where we start, where we're going, where we're going afterwards, I give you five minutes when we get there. Anything happens in that five minutes and I'm yours. No matter what. Anything a minute either side of that and you're own your own. I don't sit in while you're running it down, I don't carry a gun -- I drive.

COOK

You look like you're hard to work with.

DRIVER

Not if we understand each other.

50 - Standard pleads with Cook -- he can't do the job alone. Cook comments Standard has **BLANCHE** -- a nearby woman who seems completely uneasy with her role in the score. Cook sends Standard and Blanche away...

51 - Writing the words "fuck off" on the palm of his hand, Cook lets Driver know he won't make a dime off the score. Unfazed, Driver informs Cook that Standard's debt will be paid -- and to not go near his family again.

51 - Driver eats dinner with Standard, Irene, and Benicio. Standard makes a toast to their "new friend."

52 - Standard and Blanche enter the pawn shop. Driver waits outside.

53 - As Driver waits, a car, windows tinted black, pulls into the lot. No one gets out of the car. Driver's suspicious, but remains patient...

54 - Blanche comes out with a satchel. She gets in the car. The other car still waits. Driver remains calm.

55 - MIDPOINT: Standard comes out of the pawn shop. A few feet away from the entrance, a bullet grazes his neck. He falls the ground. Driver gets out to help, but the pawn shop clerk comes out with a gun drawn. He puts a few bullets into Standard and kills him. Driver speeds off and the mystery car pursues...

56 - Driver meets a fierce competitor, but ultimately escapes when the mystery card crashes.

ACT II-B

57 - At a seedy hotel, Driver waits with Blanche for the drop off. The money is much more than expected. Blanche seems anxious.

57 - Police interview a devastated Irene at her apartment.

57 - Driver calls Irene and Benicio answers. Benicio informs him that police are interviewing her. Driver tells Benicio to tell his mother that he'll call her back.

59 - The hotel room's TV plays a news segment covering the robbery. The reporter claims that Standard acted alone and no money was stolen and Driver knows they were setup. He questions Blanche, who plays dumb, but Driver isn't in the mood.

DRIVER

Did you have any idea there'd be a second car?

BLANCHE

I already told you everything.

Driver suddenly slaps her -- hard.

DRIVER

Now, you just got a little boy's father killed. You almost got us killed. And now you're lying to me. So, how 'bout this? From now on, every word out of your mouth is the truth, or I'm gonna hurt you.

60 - Blanche spills the beans. Cook informed her there would be another car to hold them up, but didn't say anything about the money. Driver tells her that she's gonna take him to Cook. She agrees.

61 - Blanche gets up to clean herself off in the restroom. Her cell phone vibrates on the bed. Driver inspects...she's in on it. Shadows appear outside the window -- the door handle begins to move. Driver reacts quickly -- upturning the bed at the front door, blocking the entrance.

62 - A man appears outside the restroom window with a shotgun and takes off Blanche's head with one blast. As Driver flings the mattress at the door, the shotgun man peppers him in the arm with buckshot.

62 - Driver waits patiently for the man with the shotgun as the man at the front door attempts to get around the mattress blocking his entrance. Driver takes out the man with the shotgun and kills the man at the front door seconds before he can unload on him.

63 - With Shannon's help, a doctor tends to Driver's wounds.

64 - Driver leans on Shannon for support. Shannon will investigate Cook. Shannon's frustrated because Driver won't give up the cash, but still agrees to help.

SHANNON

You know, a lot of guys mess around with married women, but you're the only one I know who robs a joint just to pay back the husband.

66 - Driver locates Cook in the dressing room of a strip club and takes a hammer to his hand. He gets Cook the ground and makes him eat the bullet he gave Benicio. He demands to know whose money he has.

67 - ASSUMPTION OF POWER: Cook gets Nino on the phone and Driver immediately recognizes the voice. Revealed it's one million dollars in cash.

Driver hears a heavy chesty voice come on the line.

NINO O/S

You got something that fucking belongs to me?

Driver registers the quiet menace in the voice.

DRIVER

Seems that way...

NINO

And you're calling me...why? You expect me to buy my own shit back from you?...

DRIVER

I'm not selling it. I'm gonna give you a time and place and you're gonna come and get it. Do you understand?

NINO

And what do you get out of it?...

DRIVER

Just that. Out of it.

68 - Nino sends one of his thugs -- **TAN SUIT** -- to find out who Driver is.

69 - Irene comforts her sleeping son. A family member is there for support. A knock at the door -- it's Driver and he wants to speak with her. She agrees to go for a walk.

70 - Outside the elevator, Driver tells Irene the details that led to Standard's death and confesses his involvement. He apologizes and offers her the money. She slaps him.

DRIVER

I just thought you could get out of here if you wanted. I could come with you. I could look after you.

71 - The elevator opens and Irene gets inside. A man -- Nino's thug -- Tan Suit -- waits inside the elevator. Driver is immediately suspicious. He gets follows Irene into the elevator.

72 - END OF ACT TWO TURN: On the way down, Driver notices Tan Suit carries a gun. He pulls Irene to the other side of him as far away from Tan Suit as possible and kisses her.

Driver knows Nino will kill Irene and Benicio.

73 - DECISION: Without warning, Driver attacks -- Tan Suit doesn't have a chance to react. Driver gets him to the ground and kicks in his face until he crushes his skull.

74 - As soon as the elevator doors open, Irene rushes out. She's in complete shock, but doesn't run, she just stares at Driver and he stares back. The elevator doors closes with Irene outside and Driver and what's left of Tan Suit inside.

ACT III

75 - Driver confronts Shannon -- Shannon gave up Irene to protect Driver because he was assured everything would be okay. Shannon had no idea everything ran back to Nino. Driver forgives Shannon, telling him to get the hell out of town and never come back.

77 - Bernie and Nino argue over their situation. Cook, both hands broken, sits nearby. Nino setup the robbery to take cash out of an east coast mob operation that was meant to setup on their turf. Shannon and Driver are the only ones who can point back to them. Nino informs Shannon they must be killed or its their ass.

78 - Bernie's steaming. He knows what must be done. A look to Nino regarding Cook and Nino nods his need. Bernie stabs him in the eyeball with a fork and then stabs his throat three times with a knife.

BERNIE ROSE

Now it's your turn to clean up after me.

79 - Wearing his bloody scorpion jacket, Driver steals a mask from the prop department of a movie set.

80 - On his way out of town, Shannon packs up his last things at the shop. Bernie waits for him near his car. Shannon knows he can't run. He must face the music, but he doesn't give up Driver. Bernie comments how much he wanted to make their racing venture work. He extends his hand to Shannon. Shannon takes it and Bernie opens up his arm with a straight razor.

83 - Driver discovers Shannon dead in the garage. The entire time, the money was in the trunk of one of the cars in the garage.

85 - Outside of Nino's Pizzeria, Driver, wearing the prop mask, observes Nino entertaining guests at a party.

86 - Driver tails Nino after leaving the pizzeria. Waiting until Nino's car reaches a secluded area near the ocean, Driver knocks them onto the shoulder of the road.

87 - Driver rams his car into Nino's again, this time knocking the car off a steep ledge, crashing onto the beach.

88 - POINT OF NO RETURN: Nino attempts to flee, but Driver stalks his prey. Nino seeks safety in the ocean, but Driver catches up and drowns him.

89 - From a top a parking garage, Driver calls Bernie.

DRIVER

You know the story about the frog and the scorpion?
Your friend Nino didn't make it across the river.

89 - Bernie setups a meeting with Driver. Along with Irene, Driver and Bernie are the only ones left. Driver knows he must meet with Bernie or Irene and Benicio will be killed.

90 - Driver calls Irene...

DRIVER O/S

Can I talk to you? I won't keep you long. I have to go somewhere and I don't think I can come back. But I just want you to know, getting to be around you and Benicio was the best thing that ever happened to me.

92 - Driver meets with Bernie. Bernie gives him the only offer he's willing to make: if Driver gives up the money, Irene and Benicio are safe, but he will die.

BERNIE

I can't offer you the same. So, this is what I would suggest. We conclude our deal, we shake hands... you start the rest of your life. Any dreams you have, plans, or hopes for your future... I think you're gonna have to put that on hold. For the rest of your life, you're gonna be looking over your shoulder. I'm just telling you this, because I want you to know the truth. But the girl is safe.

92 - Bernie asks where the money is. Driver lets him know it's in the car.

93 - CLIMAX: Driver opens the trunk, takes out the money and Bernie stabs him in the stomach with his blade. Bernie attempts to stab again, but Driver grabs the blade and plunges it into Bernie's neck.

95 - Driver sits in his car, his hand over the wound in his gut, and doesn't move. He drives off, leaving Bernie and all the money behind.

96 - Irene knocks on Driver's door, but he doesn't answer.

96 - CLOSING IMAGE: Night. Driver drives away, leaving everything behind.

96 - THE END.

A note from the author:

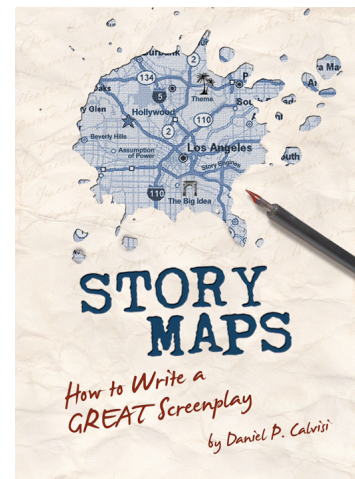
Written analysis of film is a crucial step for any screenwriter. I've found no better way to learn the craft than breaking down my favorite films and discovering what makes them tick. If you've never completed analysis of a film and/or screenplay, I recommend using this method with your favorites. Get detailed. Put in the hours. You'll be glad you did.

The analysis you've just read is based on Daniel P. Calvisi's *Story Maps: How to Write a GREAT Screenplay*. After reading a great number of books on screenwriting, Dan's *Story Maps* method helped bring it all together. With thorough commentary on concept and theme, his structure paradigm is easy to understand and apply. *Story Maps* is an insightful look at the craft of screenwriting, a must read for the aspiring screenwriter.

About the book:

Learn the secrets to writing a GREAT screenplay from a major movie studio Story Analyst who will show you how to BLOW AWAY THE READER! Master the structure and principles used by 95% of commercial movies by studying detailed breakdowns, or "Story Maps," of several recent hit movies in all different genres, including *The Dark Knight*, *The Wrestler*, *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*, *Drag Me To Hell* and the classics *As Good As It Gets* and *Sunset Boulevard*.

The book cites examples from hundreds of films, several television series and includes samples from actual produced screenplays to show you HOW TO DO IT. The book provides detailed lessons on format, capturing voice and tone on the script page and developing great characters with powerful dialogue.



You can purchase Dan's book from [Amazon.com](#) or the [iTunes Store](#).

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"A person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read."

~Mark Twain