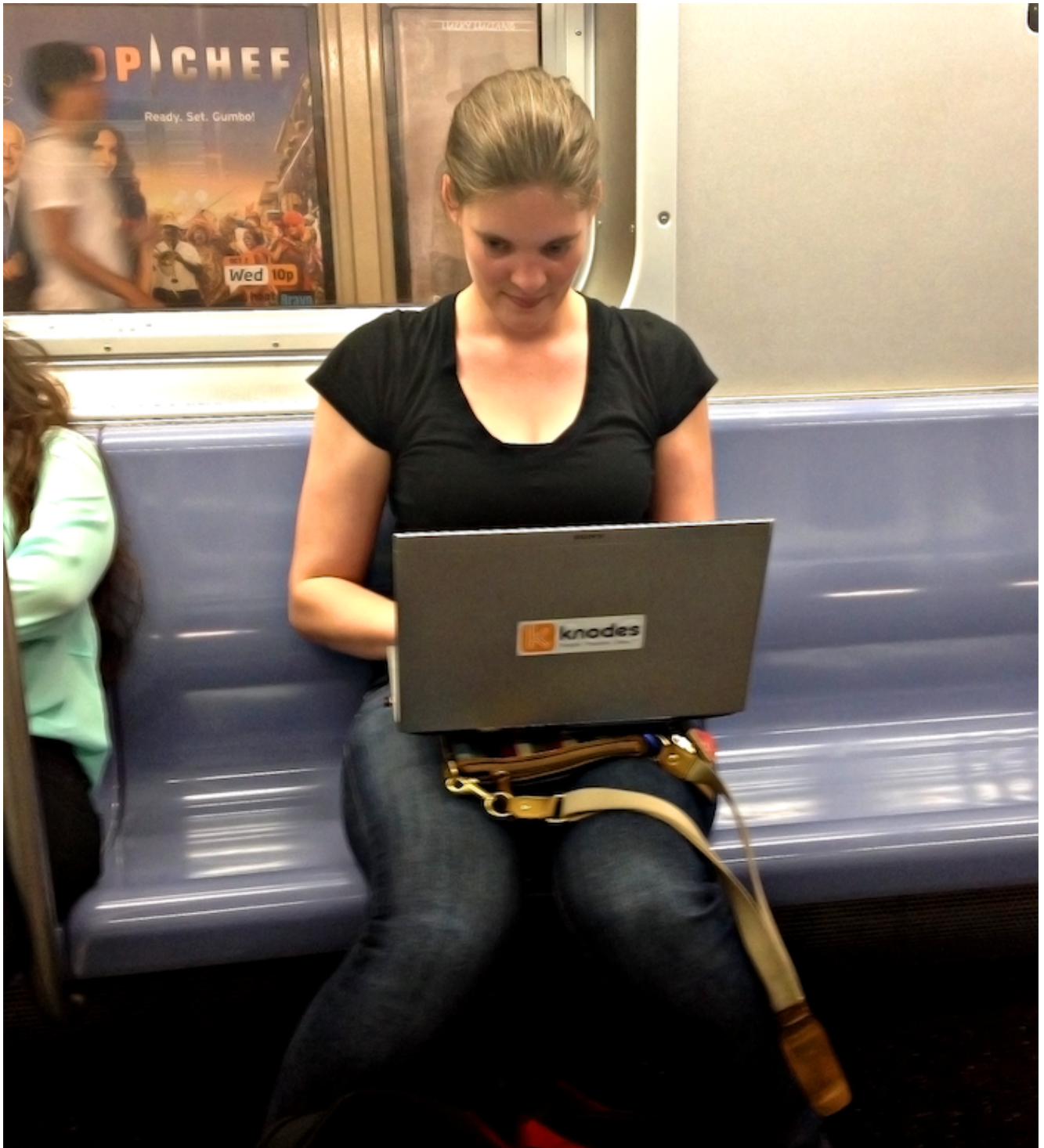


The Commuting Writer

[Scott Myers](#)

If your commute to work is a half-hour or longer, there is every reason in the world you should use that time on your writing projects.



Let's have a show of virtual hands: How many of you

commute to work? At least 30 minutes, maybe an hour or more?

Huh. A *lot* of you.

If you're a writer and you're NOT using your commute time on a writing project, time to face the facts: Those are some valuable minutes being lost to the void of link clicking, email answering, and cellphone fingering.

Let's say you work 5 days per week. Your commute to work is 30 minutes. Your commute home from work is 30 minutes. Even my limited math skills tell me that is 5 hours every week you could be breaking story... developing characters... writing pages... revising pages... you know.

BEING PRODUCTIVE!

In 1986, I used the [six-hour drive up or down the I-5 in California](#) to my various stand-up comedy gigs to work on my *K-9* spec script. [And that worked out pretty well!](#)

Therefore, when a writer I know Ricardo Bravo launched a new blog called [The Commuting Writer](#), I thought it was a good opportunity to revisit the subject. Here are some excerpts from Ricardo's first article:

You commute how many hours?

This is the first thing I hear when I tell people about my morning and afternoon routine. But I don't complain.

Yes, I have to take two to three trains every day to get

to my place of employment, and the trip takes around 2 hours door-to-door, but I like my work and I only have to do it three times a week. However, it does leave me with a lot of time on my hands. At first, I did the usual. Read, watch shows on the phone, social media... okay, in all honesty I mostly spent the time playing games on my phone... but then it hit me. What if I dedicated that time to something a bit more creative?

— —

As I found myself sitting on a train with a long commute ahead of me, inspiration struck. How about writing a movie? I mean, I love movies and everything cinema. I am a master in useless movie trivia (my movie experience doesn't with the rolling of the credits, but at the end of the trivia section at [IMDB.com](https://www.imdb.com)). Years and years wasted making up stories in my head, how about finally writing one. So, I rolled up my sleeves, downloaded a screenplay template in MS Word and got started. I mean, how hard could it be?

The first thing I ever wrote was a sexy comedy in Spanish, because... why not? I outlined the whole story, then I fleshed out the scenes. I would follow the same routine: during the day, in every bit of spare time I had, like when I was compressed like a pack of sardines in a busy morning train, I would think of the scene I wanted to work on and played with it over and over until I was happy with it. When the time came to finally seat down

on the train, I would get the laptop out and let the words flow out. Little by little my first masterpiece would take shape until, alas, one day it was complete.

Through a friend of a friend of a friend I got the script into the hands of a Mexican director who told me that, concerning the story, the concept, the characters, and the overall flow... it was absolute crap. It was full of clichés, new characters shot out of nowhere, some scenes were too long, some too short, my scene structure was the same throughout and the jokes fell flat. I was completely shocked, very much appalled, particularly outraged, utterly defeated, similarly spent and somewhat depressed. Mostly because when I re-read it myself... he was right. He was so right.

Thankfully, there was light at the end of the tunnel. My director friend said that there were some interesting ideas I could develop. My problem is that I lacked the experience and the technique to get them out. The best suggestion he gave me was to read a lot of screenplays. It was during my online search that I stumbled upon the only source I have ever used on how to write for the cinema: the [Go Into the Story](#) blog by Scott Myers. Within I found a community of like-minded screenwriters, from newbies to seasoned writers, who were more than willing to provide tips, guidance and, when all seemed pointless, emotional support.

This was six years ago. Since then I have written several feature length screenplays and TV pilots, in English and in Spanish, award winning short scripts, and even had a short story published. I have found my calling (screenwriting) and my genre (horror/sci-fi). I have a funnel of projects in different stages of development, two of them that I am currently writing. Furthermore, I am moving towards getting my screenplays into the big screen, which will require tons of networking, late nights and lots of work. I am not giving up my day job... yet. For the time being, what I really need... is a longer commute.

If you are a commuter — by car, train, bus, or plane — why not make use of that time for your writing projects? If you're thinking, "What can I accomplish in such a short period of time," check out my article on [how Judd Apatow sent detailed emails to himself](#) while doing the press tour for *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* to break the story for *Knocked Up*.

Generate story concepts. Do character development. Brainstorm scenes. Work on your story's outline. Even if you're not writing pages, you're still **writing**. When you get home and have some quiet time, you can pound out a scene or two. Meanwhile, when you are traversing geographic space between home and work... why not spend that time being creative AND productive?

Here's a *salute* to those who *commute* who in their *pursuit* of writing *repute* choose to be so *astute* they decide to

transmute travel time to *refute* wastefulness which productivity can *dilute*...

Does that point with you *compute*?

For the rest of Ricardo's blog post, go [here](#).