

The background is a yellow and light-yellow checkered pattern. A vertical grey line runs down the left side, and a horizontal grey line runs across the top, intersecting at the top-left corner. Along the top and bottom edges, there are rows of yellow squares with rounded corners, resembling film sprocket holes. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

**One humiliating day.
One dangerous offer.
One shot at something more.**

SIX DEGREES OF TED



An Original Short Screenplay by Rita Hanner-Ward



Logline & Synopsis

LOGLINE

After losing his job, a humiliated car salesman with an unfortunately infamous name is pulled into a reckless, improvised sting by a bold stranger – forcing him to choose between the life he knows and the one he never imagined.

SYNOPSIS

Ted, a mild-mannered Toyota salesman saddled with the world's most unfortunate name, is having the worst morning of his career – a botched sale, a humiliating mishap, and a brawl that costs him his job. His home life isn't faring much better, and a pair of petty thugs in a beat-up Yugo seem determined to make things worse.

Enter Sally, a sharp-tongued theater major with a flair for chaos, who barrels into Ted's unraveling day armed with a fake badge, a prop gun, and a plan he never asked for. What follows is an improvised sting that jolts Ted out of the life he's been sleepwalking through and into something far stranger, funnier, and more alive than he ever expected.

As the day spirals, Ted is forced to confront what he truly wants – and whether he's finally ready to reach for it.

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Characters

Ted

A mid-life, stick-in-the-mud Toyota salesman who clings to traditional roles and the status he's earned. Ambitious but emotionally stagnant, he's stuck in a rut he can't see. Potential casting: Y'lan Noel, André Holland, William Jackson Harper, Jay Ellis

Sally

A brash, sharp-tongued theater major whose world is pure improv and risk-taking. Restless and intuitive, she becomes the catalyst who blows open Ted's carefully controlled life. Potential Casting: Odessa Young, Grace Van Patten, Sophie Thatcher



Director's Vision

Six Degrees of Ted is a dark comedy about disruption – the moment an ordinary, set-in-his-ways man is jolted out of the life he's been quietly coasting through. The film embraces the analog texture of the late 70s–early 80s: herculean office chairs, humming Musak, and the casual sexism baked into workplace culture. The tone is dry and character-driven, letting the comedy emerge from escalating missteps as Ted's rigid world collides with Sally's chaotic improvisation. It's a story about ambition, identity, and the strange clarity that comes from one disastrous day.

Hype Media

Six Degrees of Ted moves with constant momentum – sharp dialogue, quick turns, and a chain of escalating moments that never let the audience settle. The film uses playful overshots, quirky angles, and heightened visual beats to amplify the absurdity of Ted's unraveling day. It's a fast inhale of a story: one breathless run of missteps, improvisation, and desperation that keeps pushing forward until Ted finally exhales and chooses what kind of life he wants to live.

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Why This Story Now?

The film explores how one disastrous day can crack open a life – a theme that resonates in a world where many people feel stuck, unseen, or overdue for change.

WRITER'S STATEMENT

I wrote this short to capture the absurdity of a man waking up to the fact that he's been on autopilot for years. Ted's disastrous morning becomes a catalyst – a darkly comic chain reaction that pushes him toward risk, self-reflection, and a long-overdue awakening. It's a story about ambition, disruption, and the surprising ways change shows up when we stop resisting it.

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Genre, Tone & Style

- Genre: Dark Comedy
- Tone: Dry, Escalating, Human.
- Style: Analog, Grounded, Deadpan. Stylistically, the film draws lightly on the grounded absurdity of Mel Brooks and the character sincerity found in early Rob Reiner.
- Film Comparisons: *After Hours*, *The In-Laws*, and *Raising Arizona*.

Audience

Six Degrees of Ted is a PG dark comedy with mild profanity, no sexual content, and humor that comes from character, chaos, and escalation rather than shock value. The film has strong multicultural appeal and resonates with audiences who appreciate late-1970s to early-1980s nostalgia – viewers who aren't easily rattled by the cultural norms of that era, including outdated workplace attitudes and social dynamics. Ideal viewers range from late teens through their 60s and gravitate toward character-driven comedy, dry humor, and stories where disruption leads to unexpected clarity. Fans of grounded, indie-leaning dark comedies will connect with Ted's unraveling and the film's throwback charm.

Budget

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Six Degrees of Ted can be produced on a modest budget, ideally in the \$350K–\$500K range. The film's contained structure – approximately 5–7 scenes, a nominal cast, and flexible locations – allows for efficient use of resources without compromising quality. The budget supports fair wages for cast and crew, production design that captures the analog late-70s/early-80s aesthetic, and a streamlined shoot that can be executed in virtually any city. With careful planning, the film can be completed at the higher end of the range while still maintaining the indie sensibility and character-driven focus that define its tone.

- Production (30–35%) Camera, lighting, sound, set operations, equipment rentals, production supplies.
- Cast & Crew Wages (25–30%) Fair compensation for actors, director, DP, AD team, sound mixer, gaffer, grip, production staff.
- Locations, Permits & Insurance (5–10%) Flexible since the film can be shot anywhere; includes liability and production insurance.
- Production Design & Art Department (10–12%) Set dressing, props, wardrobe, and the analog late-70s/early-80s aesthetic.
- Post-Production (10–15%) Editing, sound design, color grading, music licensing or original score.
- Contingency (5–8%) Standard buffer for unexpected costs.
- Marketing, Festival Submissions & Deliverables (3–5%) Poster design, DCP creation, festival fees, promotional materials.

Festival Strategy

Six Degrees of Ted enters the festival circuit with a strong foundation of screenplay recognition and a clear path toward both regional and top-tier festivals. The project has already demonstrated broad appeal across comedy, dark comedy, and character-driven categories, positioning it well for festivals that champion innovative storytelling and sharp, performance-driven shorts.

Accolades & Recognitions

The screenplay for *Six Degrees of Ted* has earned multiple placements across respected competitions:

- Wiki Fastest Screenplay – Finalist
- Santa Barbara International Screenplay Contest – Semifinalist
- Outstanding Screenplays Shorts Competition – Quarterfinalist
- Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIFF) – Semifinalist
- Oregon Film Festival – Official Selection

Pending Submissions

The project is currently under consideration at several additional festivals and competitions:

- Scriptation
- LA International Screenplay Awards
- Creative World Awards Screenwriting Competition
- Austin Short Film Festival
- BlueCat
- Sedona International Film Festival
- Austin Revolution Film Festival
- Phoenix Film Festival
- Cambridge Script Festival
- Atlanta Film Festival Screenplay Competition
- Atlanta Short Film Festival

The festival strategy emphasizes:

- Comedy & Dark Comedy Programs – Showcasing the film's dry humor, character-driven chaos, and throwback aesthetic.
- Indie-Friendly Festivals – Targeting festivals that champion grounded, performance-centered storytelling.
- Regional Strength – Leveraging Arizona, California, and Southwest festivals for proximity and audience alignment.
- Prestige Screenplay Competitions – Continuing to build momentum and visibility through screenplay-specific categories.

Distribution Strategy

Six Degrees of Ted is designed for a focused short film release path centered on festival visibility and curated online platforms. As a dark comedy with analog 70s–80s texture and multicultural appeal, its strongest distribution opportunities lie in the indie and underground-indie short-film ecosystem, where character-driven comedy thrives.

Primary Targets:

- Festival Circuit – comedy, dark comedy, and character-driven shorts programs.
- Curated Online Platforms – Short of the Week, Omeleto, Film Shortage, NoBudge, Vimeo Staff Picks consideration.
- Niche Streaming – IndieFlix, Argo, Seed&Spark (post-festival window).

Release Path:

1. 12–18 month festival run to build visibility and momentum.
2. Online premiere on a curated short-film platform.
3. Optional niche streaming or educational/library licensing.
4. Ongoing use as a calling-card piece for future development and industry outreach.

Audience Alignment: The film's PG tone, mild profanity, multicultural cast, and analog nostalgia appeal to viewers from late teens through their 60s who enjoy dry humor, dark comedy, and grounded, character-driven storytelling.

Writer/Creator

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Rita Hanner-Ward is a screenwriter and contemporary American author whose work centers on emotionally grounded, character-driven storytelling. She writes drama and dark comedy with a focus on transformation, reconciliation, and the moments that define relationships. Her work is known for emotional clarity, intimate character arcs, and a restrained visual sensibility that honors the spaces between words.

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Screenwriting Recognition

Feature – What We Leave Unsaid

- Finalist – Wiki Screenplay Contest
- Semifinalist – Santa Barbara International Screenplay Awards
- Quarterfinalist – Palm Springs Diversity Screenplay Contest

Short – Six Degrees of Ted

- Finalist – Wiki Screenplay Contest
- Semifinalist – Flickers’ Rhode Island International Film Festival
- Quarterfinalist Outstanding Screenplays Shorts Competition
- Official Selection – Oregon Short Film Festival



Writing as Kiva Wolfe™, Rita is the author of internationally set romantic-suspense novels, bringing a strong sense of voice, atmosphere, and narrative tension to her screenwriting.



THANK YOU

for your time and consideration!

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