Marking The Shooting Script

The "lined script," or "shoot script," has all the scenes numbered, camera angles and shots indicated and contains directorial requirements to guide the director of photography in setting up the shots and the editor in postproduction.

#1A—WS　#1B—MS

#1C—CU

FADE IN:

(1) INT. LIVINGROOM – DAY.　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(1)

CHRIS is sitting in a comfy overstuffed chair, reading. KIRSTEN enters. She holds something in her hands, but we can't see it. She stands before Chris, miffed, waiting for him to notice her. After a BEAT, he does.

                KIRSTEN
      Do you love me?

Chris looks up, perplexed by the question. He is certain in his response.

                CHRIS
      Yes.

                KIRSTEN
        (eyes him incredulously)
      I found these next to your bed. You could have
      told me about this... I don't understand why you
      felt you had to hide this stuff... Chris? You're
      supposed to be able to talk to me...

#1F—XCU

While she rants, she holds something we still can't see; Chris slowly looks down to see what she has. His face drops with recognition of what she's found. His jaw opens, grasping helplessly for some explanation.

                KRISTEN
        (continuing)
      ...So I'll ask you again... do you love me.

                CHRIS　　　#1D—OS　　#1E—CU Rv Ang
        (less sure, maybe convincing himself)
      Yes... yes...

                KIRSTEN
      More than chocolate?

He is unable to answer... He looks from her face to the bag. And back... Silent... Apologetic. She is incensed. Without warning she throws the bag at him and storms out of the room. Chris opens the bag to reveal a pile of imported dark chocolate bars.

#1G—INSERT

                             CUT TO: BLACK

There is the sound of a candy bar wrapper being torn open...the sound of munching... FADE SOUND OUT.

                               THE END.

1A – MASTER – wide shot encompassing most of living room with CHRIS screen right reading, dining room visible in b.g.

1B – MS KIRSTEN – CHRIS in comfy chair off-camera

1C – CU CHRIS – 3/4 profile looking up at KIRSTEN who continues to talk off-screen

1D – OS favoring KIRSTEN – from CHRIS' level tilt as CHRIS looks up at KIRSTEN, we see her reaction

1E – CU reverse angle – KIRSTEN'S POV of CHRIS

1F – XCU CHRIS – reaction shot of what he sees in KIRSTEN'S hand

1G – CU – CHRIS' POV opening bag to reveal chocolate bars.

View of the back of page previous to the marked page indicating detailed shot descriptions &/or camera instructions

Marking a Shooting Script

A shooting script is an important document that is part of the planning stage. In truth, there are as many ways to mark (line, stripe, etc.) a shooting script as there are directors. But some common conventions still exist… The important thing is to pick a method, and stick with it! Consistency is what makes the difference between a useful shooting script and a bunch of lines obscuring dialogue.

- ◆ Solid vertical lines on the script indicate what each shot covers.
- ◆ Squiggly lines indicate off-camera dialogue or action not seen in that particular shot.
- ◆ Shots are labeled with the scene number and an alpha designation indicating difference in framing, perspective, location (to be described in detail elsewhere). The "A" tag is typically the Master Scene shot and runs the length of the scene. Subsequent shots are either cut-ins, cut-aways, or inserts.
- ◆ Descriptions of the camera shots are written in standard abbreviation above each line.
- ◆ Some directors use colored pencils to indicate shot types: blue for wide shots, yellow for medium shots, red for close-ups.
- ◆ Detailed descriptions of the camera shots are written (see above) to the left, on the back of the previous page. Some directors use this space for small sketches or storyboards to aid in composition. Others use this space to also keep track of the takes for each shot, circling the good takes &/or placing an asterisk by the best take of several good ones.

Double check to make sure that you have good overlaps between shots so the editor has a range of options for cutting from one to the next. Check especially the entrance of main characters, reveals, and elaborations in your script to make sure they are covered from several angles. Here, you make choices on POV, what to emphasize (or not) and transition types between shots. If you do this for the entire script, you will essentially build the "director's cut."

Finally, review the schematics (floor plans, location maps) taking care to specifically note camera setups.