



# Thinking In Pictures: The Making Of The Movie Matewan

*By John Sayles*

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**Thinking In Pictures: The Making Of The Movie Matewan** By John Sayles

What choices--creative, practical, and technical--make a movie what it is? Here a gifted writer and filmmaker takes us behind the camera and provides a full description of the movie-making process. When John Sayles turned from writing fiction to making movies, he did so with little help from Hollywood: Return of the Secaucus Seven, Sayles's first movie as director and writer, was produced with 60,000 of his own money. Many films later, he still works outside the studio system and guides every phase of his productions. Now Sayles has written an illuminating book about the complex choices that lie at the heart of every movie. Using the making of his film Matewan as an example, he offers chapters on screenwriting, directing, editing, sound, and more. Photographs, sketches, and the complete shooting script illustrate this engaging account of how Sayles's curiosity about a coal miners' strike in the town of Matewan, West Virginia, became a screenplay--and then a movie.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A novelist, film writer and independent director explains how he conceived, wrote, casted, funded, directed, designed, shot and edited a movie about a coal miners' strike and massacre in West Virginia in the 1920s. Coinciding with the release of *Matewan*, Sayles's book provides the reader especially the student and would-be filmmaker with a step-by-step account of the thinking and planning that go into developing a story idea and transmuting it into a meaningful creation full of emotional impact. Coming from a writer of fiction, this book is not dryly technological but rather involving and exciting. It is enhanced by details of choice, pacing, and tension and by the inclusion of the full original film script. Photos.

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From Library Journal

Thanks to Sayles's honesty this is a rare gem of a book that actually delivers insight after insight about the process that transforms a script about the unionization of miners in the 1920s into a film. Sayles carefully leads the reader through the writing, shooting, and editing of his new independent film based upon the historical *Matewan Massacre*, explaining the coherent design philosophy that welds set design, lighting, and music to the film's key themes. Moreover, Sayles explains how the film's editing inventively aims to stretch viewers beyond genre expectations. As a result, reading the film's screenplay, which forms the second half of the book, is unusually rewarding. An exceptional book. Marshall Deutelbaum, English Dept., Purdue Univ., W. Lafayette, Ind.

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Review

"John Sayles is in a class by himself." -- *Studs Terkel*

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**Nathaniel Gonzalez:**

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