

# Coverage Program

The Endeavor Coverage Program is designed to serve two purposes:

1. To facilitate coverage on all scripts submitted by the Endeavor Motion Picture Department, be they for our client's consideration, written by our clients or for representation and packaging purposes.
2. To train incoming floaters, assistants and trainees on how to cover scripts and to give them practical coverage experience for use on their desks, in their application for the trainee program and in their future life as an agent or other executive within the film industry.

Weekly Coverage is mandatory for all floaters, assistants and trainees employed at Endeavor, and is assigned on the basis of seniority.

You are required to attend an hour-long Coverage Training seminar in the Story Department before you are assigned your first coverage.

Attached please find an agenda for Coverage Training, as well as a guide to writing perfect Endeavor Coverage. This includes Requesting Coverage, Coverage Overview, Recommended Scripts and Movies and a Sample Coverage.

Should you have further questions, please contact the Story Department.

FORM - word template to use

Man man - find a computer to input coverage into FileMaker

- page/minute onscreen translate
- try to read at least that fast
- take two hours to write

→ overtime 4-5 hrs \*  
for coverage

Type of Material: Can control avail. Material - by client, poss client, own by agency to sell

packaging - what kind of director/actor to put together where success in setting up? studios, indiv

casting - roles, challenging or no (programmer) → filler - not whole

ODA - specific director or general - period? starts? orig or diff

offer OWA do NOT ref. by names

Books set same scripts say in broad

General or specific terms "A-list actor" "comedienne"

is cinematic? Dialogue? Visuals? themes

needs to be more philosophical in covering - well-written

starts/SPDX great roles director attributes?

cinematic? director attributes?

intranet - story  
 - coverage request form  
 - send to story analyst 1

and it's your responsibility to research this beforehand. It is okay to send up a more recent draft of a script for coverage. Please note this on your Coverage Request Form as "Latest Draft" or "Comparison Coverage."

Because the Story Department and the Endeavor Coverage Program has limited resources, we can only cover scripts that have legitimate offers to clients, are set up or have at least a producer attached. The only exceptions are available material from Endeavor clients and submissions for representation by Partners.

In order to request coverage, please order your script from scanning, or else remove the submission letter from your hard copy to save for your files. Fill out and email a Coverage Request Form, with ALL appropriate information on your script to [storyanalyst1@endeavorla.com](mailto:storyanalyst1@endeavorla.com). Then, print out a hard copy of this form, attach to the front of the script and interoffice it to the Story Department.

Coverage closes for the weekend at 5:00 pm on Friday afternoons. Be sure to get your Coverage Request Forms into Story well before closing, in order to ensure that your coverage will get done on time.

## Coverage Overview

### 1. DEADLINES & SUBMISSION OF COVERAGE

- Coverage is assigned on the basis of seniority.
- All coverage is due at 8am on the Monday morning after it is assigned. The only exception to this is with the prior consent of the Story Department.
- Although you are welcome to write your coverage using the Microsoft word template that we will provide for you, be sure to transfer it to its proper FileMaker Pro form before turning in.
- Submit one hard copy of the finished, FileMaker Pro draft of coverage to the Story Department.
- Submit the original script back to the responsible agent.

### 2. READING

- As you read, try not to take notes. Make a mental note of important plot points and characters.
- Keep in mind the three-act structure, and the reason for reading the script (Available Material, Packaging, Casting, Open Directing, Open Writing and Representation).

### 3. EVALUATION

- Most of what you read will be a pass. Be willing to defend your stance to the responsible agent, but don't be afraid to make a strong judgment.
- Always recommend writers who are clients, and those writers with whom you think we should be in business. Consult the Client Database Master and the IMDB to check credits.

### 2. FORM PAGE

- The form page is a thumbnail sketch of your entire coverage. Be sure to fill out as many blanks as you can so that all the pertinent information can be evaluated at a glance.
- Always complete all pertinent information, including the entire production scheme, genre, draft date, page numbers, type of material, agent's name, and your name.
- Make sure that your logline (the protagonist's journey) summarizes your synopsis, just as your comments summary previews your comments. Keep your logline to one sentence if possible. Do not use characters' names in your logline.

### 3. SYNOPSIS

- Tell a linear short story about the script. Don't recount it beat for beat.
- Focus on the main plot. Avoid sub plots unless they have a direct bearing on the main story.
- Only mention key characters, which relate to the lead and move the plot forward.
- Be concise. Your synopsis should be no more than a page unless you are covering a novel.
- Don't use any phrases that take the reader out of the story (like "the story opens with.")
- Put character names in all caps the first time and only the first time you introduce them.
- When introducing secondary characters, be sure to relate them to the protagonist.
- Don't use first person; use the omniscient third person.
- Don't use past tense; use present tense. If you are describing a flashback, be creative.

info - need  
 to go w/  
 script in  
 hand cp  
 as well

The W...

conclusion - what init for the director  
themes  
Moral of story

Commercial vs. critical acclaim

5. BREAKDOWN

- A. The breakdown provides character descriptions which are crucial for casting purposes. It also allows you to elaborate on characteristics there is no room for in your synopsis.
- B. Write a brief character description and their character arc (function in the script).
- C. List the characters in order of importance (from Lead, to Strong, to support, etc).
- D. Do not make casting suggestions. Keep characters ages in 5 year brackets.
- E. In the "Type" column, indicate the importance of each character with one of the following designations: Lead, Strong Support, Support, Small Support, Small or Cameo.
- F. Enter characters in order from most important (Lead) to least important (Small or Cameo)
- G. Every character important enough to name in your synopsis should have a breakdown.
- H. Provide a physical description (if known), including the character's occupation.
- I. Provide a description of their emotional arc.
- J. For minor characters, indicate their relationship to the lead character or other important roles.

Careful marketing to garner awards then reiterate

6. COMMENTS

- A. Treat this section like a mini essay, using your comments summary as your thesis paragraph. Each subsequent paragraph should have a topic sentence, support and a conclusion.
- B. Assign value judgement to your statements, and back up your assertions. Don't just say something isn't working - you must indicate why it's not working. Never write in first person.
- C. Address concept vs. execution, idea vs. writing. This is one of the most crucial aspects in differentiating what your evaluation marks are going to be.
- D. Compare the script to another movie or movies to give the reader a quick feel for the material.
- E. If you have ideas on how the script can be improved, this is the place to indicate them.
- F. End with a sentence that indicates whether the script is a pass, consider or recommend.
- G. If you are ambivalent about the script, it's a pass. If you like something, but it has a few flaws, it should be a consider. If the script is perfect or practically so, or if you love it so much that you would put up your own money to get it made, it should be a recommend. Don't strongly consider or recommend anything you can't defend.
- H. Your comments should be broken down as follows:

Speak in general terms

Address all issues in your comments, even if don't build seats around them

Must be most of a page

- Comments Summary
  - o Comparison to other movies
  - o Genre - defies, celebrates or reinvents
  - o One good thing / one bad thing
  - o What it means for our clients

paste @ top to start

riff = rip but nicer

emphatic  
cinder, gentler way to bag of the script

Sequential or no  
make sense or no

crucial moment  
hinge when looks like will lose

-inciting incident  
what encourages character to go on path

- The Story / Concept - What is this script really about?
  - o Concept - Does it deserve to be brought to the screen?
  - o Originality - Does this script compare to other movies?
  - o Plot - Are there holes in it that need fixing?
  - o Concept vs. Execution - What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?

return, etc

- The Writing / Execution - Does it serve the story? Is it effective?
  - o Writing - Was the script too long? Was anything missing?
  - o Visuals - is this cinematic? Are there special effects? Stunts?
  - o Dialogue - Is it catchy, lifelike, funny, in need of a punch-up?
  - o Tone - does it suit the story's concept?

new take on the topic, etc

well-structured?

- Structure - What is the dramatic tension? What is at stake in the story?
  - o Structural tension - Ticking clocks? What keeps us in our seats?
  - o Conflict - Man vs. Self, Man, Society, Nature, Technology
  - o Antagonists - What stops our hero from success?
  - o Characters
    - o Lead and Supporting Characters - Who is the protagonist?
    - o Talent - Will talent be attracted?

→ bomb, etc what waiting for?

Not all have them or star later

- The Big Picture / Conclusion
  - o Themes - What is the moral of the story?

internal conflict - often necessary but lacking in many scripts

to choose path always need moment

## 7. PROOFREADING

- A. Spell Check – Misspellings will not be tolerated. Use the spell check function.
- B. Proofread a printed copy. Spaces and fonts (Helvetica 10 pt.) must be correct.
- C. Place your coverage in this order (Form Page, Synopsis, Breakdown, Comments).
- D. No profanity – it's not appropriate anywhere in your coverage

## 8. TRANSFERRING (Microsoft Word to FileMaker Pro)

- A. Create a new record in the coverage library. Make sure you do not write you coverage in "find" mode. Copy and paste your coverage into this record, making sure that you click outside the coverage to save. Check to make sure that your coverage has saved.

## 9. PRINTING

- A. To print everything but your comments go to SCRIPTS and scroll to / select NEW-PRINT ENTIRE COVERAGE. Hit Return / Okay when prompted.
- B. To print comments, use the toggle bar on the upper left corner of the Coverage Library and scroll to NEW-COMMENTS. Then push CTRL + P, and Return / Okay when prompted.

## Recommended Scripts and Movies

The following scripts should be read as an example of outstanding writing.

AFFLICTION  
 AMERICAN PRINCESS, THE  
 AUGUST BLOW OUT  
 BAD SANTA  
 BASIC  
 BENITO CERENO  
 BENJAMIN BUTTON  
 BIG FISH  
 BLOCKHEAD  
 BOUNTY  
 BRIGHTON ROCK  
 CASTLE, THE  
 BUTTERFLY EFFECT  
 BYE BYE BROOKLYN  
 CASH MONEY  
 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN  
 CHANGING LANES  
 CODE, THE  
 DEATH TO SMOOCHY  
 COLLATERAL  
 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND  
 CONFIDENCE  
 DISSASOCIATE, THE  
 DOMINO FALLING  
 EMPEROR ZEHNDER  
 ETERNAL SUNSINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND  
 EVERMERE  
 EXTREMELY COMPLICATED WOMEN  
 FAT MAN  
 FROM HELL  
 HOW IT WAS WITH DOOMS  
 GIDEON FORCE  
 GUARDIAN, THE  
 HARDER THEY COME, THE  
 HOT SPRINGS  
 HUMAN NATURE  
 IN NOMINE DEI  
 KEYS TO THE STREET, THE  
 IN THE HEART OF THE SEA  
 INTERNATIONAL, THE  
 JUAREZ

LAST BOY SCOUT, THE  
 LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN  
 LETTING GO  
 LONGEST YARD, THE  
 LOWLIFES  
 MAN ON A LEDGE  
 MATCHSTICK MEN  
 PASSENGERS  
 MEAN GIRLS  
 MOIST  
 NIGHTCRAWLERS  
 PAINTED VEIL  
 PAYCHECK  
 PEOPLE VS. LARRY FLYNT  
 PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY  
 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN  
 PRE-ASTRONAUTS, THE  
 ROOKIE, THE  
 PRIDE & GLORY  
 RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS  
 RAVENOUS BY TED GRIFFIN  
 RULES OF ATTRACTION  
 SAHARA  
 SENTINEL, THE  
 SEVEN DAY ITCH  
 SHOCKPROOF SYDNEY SKATE  
 SMART PEOPLE  
 SOLDIER FIELD  
 SPORTS WIDOW  
 STAY  
 STRANGER THAN FICTION  
 SUSPECT ZERO (1997 DRAFT)  
 TAKING LIVES  
 TALISMAN, THE  
 TERMINAL  
 TICK TOCK  
 TOURIST, THE  
 TRU BLU  
 TRUTH, JUSTICE & THE AMERICAN WAY

UNNATURAL, THE  
 UNTITLED CHARLIE PETERS\_3  
 UNTITLED JOHN HAMBURG  
 VENDETTA  
 WILL SEBASTIAN  
 WORCESTER GOLD STORAGE  
 YOUR LIFE IS NOW  
 YOUR WORD AGAINST MINE  
 ZAMPERINI

The following are some of our favorite films,  
 all of which are well written.

8 1/2  
 ABOUT A BOY  
 ADAPTATION  
 ALMOST FAMOUS  
 AMADEUS  
 AMELIE  
 AMERICAN BEAUTY  
 ANNIE HALL  
 BACK TO THE FUTURE  
 BAD AND THE BEAUTIFUL, THE  
 BEING JOHN MALKOVICH  
 BICYCLE THIEF, THE  
 BIG LEBOWSKI, THE  
 BIRTH OF A NATION  
 BONNIE AND CLYDE  
 BOYZ N THE HOOD  
 BREAKFAST CLUB  
 BUGSY  
 CHASING AMY  
 CHINATOWN  
 CITIZEN KANE  
 CITY LIGHTS  
 CITY OF GOD  
 CLOCKWORK ORANGE, THE  
 CLUELESS  
 CRIMES OF THE HEART  
 CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON  
 COLOR PURPLE, THE  
 DAVE  
 DIRTY DOZEN, THE  
 ELECTION  
 EMMA  
 FARGO  
 FAST TIMES AT RIDGEMONT HIGH  
 FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF  
 FINDING NEMO  
 FORREST GUMP  
 GODFATHER I & II  
 GOOD WILL HUNTING  
 GOODFELLAS  
 GRADUATE, THE  
 GRAND CANYON  
 IN THE BEDROOM  
 GREAT DICTATOR, THE

KISSING JESSICA STEIN  
 LA DOLCE VITA  
 LOST IN TRANSLATION  
 M  
 MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS, THE  
 MANHATTAN  
 MONDAYS IN THE SUN  
 MOTORCYCLE DIARIES  
 NETWORK  
 NIGHT MOTHER  
 NORTH BY NORTHWEST  
 OPEN CITY  
 PHILADELPHIA STORY, THE  
 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN  
 PLAYER, THE  
 PRINCESS BRIDE, THE  
 PULP FICTION  
 RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK  
 RASHOMON  
 REAR WINDOW  
 ROSEMARY'S BABY  
 ROYAL TENENBAUMS, THE  
 RUN LOLA RUN  
 RUSHMORE  
 SAY ANYTHING  
 SCENT OF A WOMAN  
 SCHINDLER'S LIST  
 SERPICO  
 SE7EN  
 SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE  
 SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION, THE  
 SHINING, THE  
 SHREK  
 SILENCE OF THE LAMBS  
 SILKWOOD  
 SIMPLE PLAN, A  
 SOME LIKE IT HOT  
 STAR WARS TRILOGY  
 TAXI DRIVER  
 TERMS OF ENDEARMENT  
 TOOTSIE  
 TOY STORY 2  
 TRAINING DAY  
 SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS  
 SUNSET BOULEVARD  
 TRUE ROMANCE  
 UNFORGIVEN  
 USUAL SUSPECTS, THE  
 WHEN HARRY MET SALLY  
 WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT?  
 WILD BUNCH, THE  
 Y TU MAMA TAMBIEN

For additional good choices, note AFI's 100

greatest American Movies List at:

<http://www.AFIonline.org/100movies/>

Look up credits of writer - can rec. one or other

Title **Red, White, Black and Blue**

Author **Andy Kevin Walker**

Studio **Paramount**

Producer **Illusion Entertainment**

Format **Screenplay**

Draft Date **3/26/1999** ensure not re-covering

Pages **116**

7 Feature Grid

- double check to make accurate

Submitted To **Barcos** (Agent name, Client's Name full last name of agent)

Evaluated By **Jennifer Bilovsky** yr. nat

Submitted For

Completed **7/14/2002**

Submitted By

Need to make sure no coverage done on script.

Purpose of Submission **ODA** (casting, etc.)

**PRODUCTION SCHEME**

Locale **Los Angeles**

specific

Setting **Urban**

general (metropolitan, alien planet, etc.)

Time **1976**

Mostly present

Genre **Action**

pick what applies

Budget **High**

15-under-low

15-50-mid

50-over-high

**LOGLINE**

A trio of wily, offbeat cops take on the corrupt LAPD and the department's nefarious drug-dealing gangster ally, all during the nationwide Bicentennial celebration on July 4, 1976.

single sent. that describes what happens in entire script. Bare bones min.

**COMMENTS SUMMARY**

subject-always main character, arch type or trajectory

Riffing off of STARSKY AND HUTCH, THE MOD SQUAD and other 1970's cop shows, this action comedy is effervescently written, with well-realized characterizations, attention to detail, visual flair, funny dialogue and fast-paced action sequences. However, it is incredibly familiar and predictable. Even its slightly self-mocking tone, although effective, is too much like CHARLIE'S ANGELS and the aforementioned. (Without the built-in audience of these TV show's fans, this project could be a hard sell.) -> sum up pros or cons

is 1st para. of comments page

Always use hollywood eye to start (this needs this, etc.)

-> At least 3 sent. what about

Always something salvageable, can ask - put positive spin. see benefit in movies outside your taste

**EVALUATION**

- Story  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor
- Structure  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor
- Dialogue  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor
- Writing  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor
- Commerciality  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor
- Visual Elements  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor
- Title  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor
- Characters  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

- Project  Recommend  Strongly Consider  Consider  Consider with Reservation  Pass
- Writer  Recommend  Strongly Consider  Consider  Consider with Reservation  Pass

stay consistent w/ comments

Always a  
reason that sucks

high-concept  
down the middle  
programmer  
tentpole  
genre - usually horror  
piece made for a price (little money)

breaking bandonies / barriers  
feels familiar

More you put into, better off writers going  
to be

Always  
with a rewrite — that . . . .  
strengthens  
changes  
narrows  
pushes up

will always could be a success  
get you out of a jam

### Comments.

Riffing off of STARSKY AND HUTCH, THE MOD SQUAD and other 1970's cop shows, this action comedy is effervescently written, with well-realized characterizations, attention to detail, visual flair, funny dialogue and fast-paced action sequences. However, it is incredibly familiar and predictable. Even its slightly self-mocking tone, although effective, is too much like CHARLIE'S ANGELS and the aforementioned. Without the built-in audience of these TV show's fans, this project could be a hard sell.

The concept is not inherently commercial, but would still attract audiences with its sense of humor. Other than the fact that these cop shows from the 1970's have already been put into development or produced to varied success, this exact plot has not yet been seen. The plot needs to be elevated to reflect the prowess of the writing, as that much of what happens is cliché or doesn't fit.

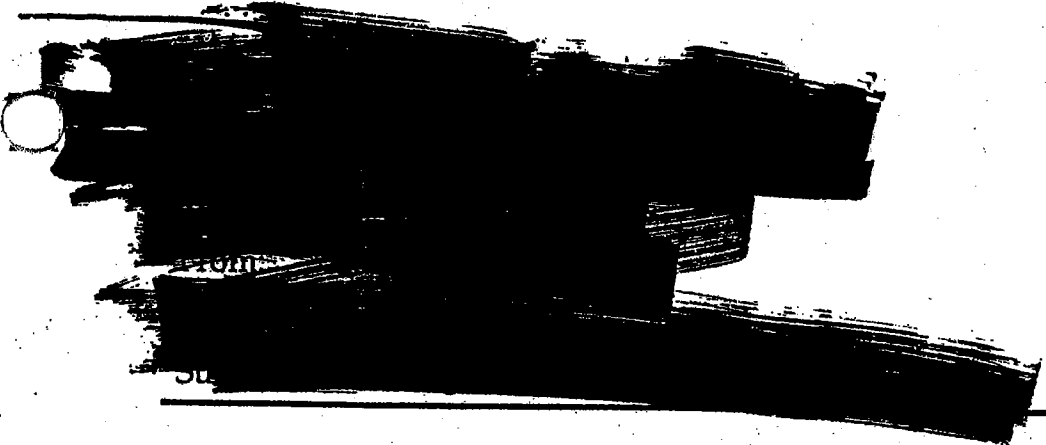
With that in mind, the writing combines details and structural strokes as to paint this world for us completely. Visuals are the most effective part of the execution, as that it would translate easily cinematically. The dialogue is funny and true to the times, and while it still keep the story moving, it often feels overly-familiar and tired. The script's tone mocks the characters even as it celebrates them, but should probably take itself more seriously if we are in turn supposed to take the characters the same way.

Structural tension exists with the knowledge that the heroin shipment will be coming in over the Fourth of July weekend. A ticking clock occurs when we know that our heroes' jobs are on the line, although this could be explained more clearly. These three characters battle other men, themselves and society before learning their lessons and changing the world around them. The antagonist of Sullivan is fully-drawn, despite his being a caricature. However, the other antagonists such as the chief of police need work.

The three lead characters are all given equal parts humor and drama to contend with throughout the script. Although their backstories are somewhat pat, they add humanity to what would otherwise be stereotypical characters. Kittle has the potential to be the strong, sympathetic hero, an everyman that has had a particularly tough twist of fate in his life. However, his scenes of clichéd clutching of his comrades' heads as they die, dilutes his potential. Nena stands the chance to be a powerful role for a strong African-American actress. With this in mind, her backstory has an intriguing foundation that is never followed up with a resolution. Billy-Boy has the promise to have the most effective character arc, as that he is the most easily relatable. But as it is written, he is a shadow of his possibilities. Talent could absolutely be attracted to these roles, if they were given the polishes they deserve.

Themes of patriotism and what it means to be free permeate the story, giving it a seriousness that it would not otherwise possess. However, the tone needs to be elevated to match these morals. While its commercial potential is mixed, the proper rewrite could draw out the elements in it that would attract an audience. A director could have a fun time with this project, but only if the aforementioned changes are kept in consideration.





At New Regency, the readers are considered an extremely important component of the creative group. The opinion of the readers is regarded very carefully, it is relied upon and given serious consideration.

The goal of coverage is to give executives the experience of having read the material, to help guide them in their decision-making process and to help them prioritize material. Coverage should give executives all of the necessary tools and information to make a decision.

We also prefer that readers evaluate material based on the quality of the work and excellence of the concept without concern for the "taste" of New Regency, the size of the project or other material in the marketplace (both produced and unproduced.) You may, of course, mention similarities to other projects but please do not "pass" or "consider" a script based solely on what you think New Regency may or may not be looking for.

## **Coverage Guidelines**

### Format

- please follow the format on the attached template disk.
- let us know if you need a specially formatted disk for systems other than Windows/PC.

### Logline

- the logline should be no longer than 2-3 lines.
- please keep it concise but make sure to capture the heart of the material.
- TV Guide and Halliwell's Film Guide have the best examples of log lines. in one or two lines, they are able to describe the movie, sell it and make it sound exciting.

### Brief Comments

- brief comments should be no longer than 4-5 lines.
- this is an "at-a-glance" reference and should be your most concise and clear-cut opinion of the material.

### The Graph

- make sure that your evaluation breakdowns reflect your written comments.
- do not do a graph for New Regency projects.

### Evaluations

- please use PASS, CONSIDER and RECOMMEND evaluations only.
- do not use qualified evaluations such as "weak consider", "consider with reservations" or "consider concept" because, although it may be difficult, we encourage you to have a firm opinion on the material and make a judgement call one way or the other.
- a RECOMMEND evaluation is to be used for perfect material only, material that should be purchased immediately.
- at New Regency, the criteria for a CONSIDER evaluation is significantly more stringent than at other companies. here, CONSIDER means "consider making" not simply "consider reading" this material.
- a PASS should be given to everything else.
- always make a project and writer evaluation, even if the material is a writing sample or book/manuscript. however, if the material is a New Regency project, eliminate the "evaluations" section (as well as the graph, see above.)

### Elements

- when you receive material to be covered, there will almost always be a cover letter attached. please read the cover letter carefully and note any attachments/elements. also, be certain to include other information from the cover letter such as financing in place, project in turnaround, etc. however, please do not include film budget information in your coverage.
- please use the following notations:  
P: Producer                      D: Director                      C: Cast

### Project Information

- please make sure to clearly indicate the type of material you're reading (screenplay, manuscript, novel, video, treatment, etc.) as well as the length or running time.
- also make sure to indicate (and spell correctly) the agent and agency name as well as the name of the executive(s) who received the material.

- Correct spellings are:

Arnon <del>Goldberg</del>	Chairman, Producer	David <del>Wasserman</del>	President & CEO
Sanford <del>Green</del>	President, Production	Bridget <del>Langley</del>	Producer with First Look Deal
Pat <del>Langley</del>	Exec. VP, Production	Peter <del>Gruber</del>	Sr. VP, Production
Alexandra <del>Mitnick</del>	VP, Production	Kara <del>Fennell</del>	VP, Creative Affairs
Keetgi <del>Yogan</del>	Story Editor		

- if you are covering a writing sample please make sure to indicate whether it is a general sample or a sample for a specific project.

### Synopsis

- for scripts, treatments, videos and articles, synopses should be no longer than 2 pages. try to use the rule of thumb of "two paragraphs per act." that way you won't find yourself spending too much time setting up the first act and then having to tie up the rest of the script in the last paragraph of your synopsis.
- if you are covering a book or a manuscript, however, feel free to make your synopsis as long and detailed as needed. make sure, though, that you do not turn in needlessly lengthy synopses filled with extraneous information. remember, the goal is to provide the executive with enough information to make a decision without having to read the material.
- synopsis should be written in the present tense and from the objective point of view.
- introduce each character in capital letters, followed by their age range in parentheses. if there are a large number of characters, please use both first and last names whenever possible.
- the key to writing a good synopsis is: clarity, accuracy and tone.
- it is important that you do your best to impart the tone of the material within your synopsis. do not be afraid to emulate the writing style of the author, use period/genre appropriate language and use quotes from the material itself. once again, the goal is to give executives the experience of having read the material.
- please use clear and straightforward language that is easy to read.
- make sure that your synopsis is accurate and effectively reflects the plot of the material.

### Comments

- please try to keep your comments section to one page but do not be afraid to go over if there is more that is important to say.
- you do not have to re-introduce characters in all caps.
- the key to writing the comments portion of the coverage is to have a firm opinion on the material and truly develop an argument to back up your assertions.
- think of the comments section like a mini-essay. your first paragraph should lay out your most concise and clear cut opinion of the material and writer.

- in the second paragraph discuss what is good about the material.
- in the third paragraph discuss what is bad about the material.
- in the fourth paragraph discuss the writer. how does the author write within the genre? is the author strong with character and dialogue but weak with structure and plot? should the author be considered for assignments? if so, what kinds. try to really analyze the writer's strengths and weaknesses.
- the fifth paragraph should be a short summary of your main points.
- give concrete and well thought-out reasons for why you like or dislike the material. someone may have to pass on the material having only read your coverage. give them plenty of ammunition.
- ultimately, the best coverage will give the impression that you have thoroughly dissected the material and thought out your arguments.

### Common Pitfalls In Writing Coverage

- please make sure to spellcheck and proofread your coverage *before* you send it to us. coverage that comes in with spelling and grammatical errors, missing words, etc. causes a tremendous backlog in the story department and keeps us from getting coverage to the executives on time.
- you may, of course, restate the theme or premise of the material within your comments but please do not resummarize the synopsis in the comments section.
- don't be redundant in the comments section. occasionally, readers will make the same point, repeatedly, in different ways. please be as concise and to the point as possible.
- don't editorialize or comment on the material within the synopsis. the synopsis should be a microcosm of the plot and tone, not your feelings about the material.
- please use clear, straightforward language and sentence structure. executives should not have to re-read your coverage several times in order to understand what you are trying to say.
- although we encourage you to try and make your coverage fun to read, please keep in mind that coverage is pulled hundreds of times and is read by a wide range of executives. therefore, always write your coverage as if Arnon Milchan or David Matalon are going to be reading it.
- please avoid using "I" or "we" in your coverage. remember to keep an objective point of view and do your best to convey the writer's voice.
- please do not discuss whether material is "commercial." we are willing to consider all quality material, regardless of the size or subject matter of the project.

## Availability

- please call or email us every day by 2:00pm to let us know whether you're available to read and what you are available for (overnight, next day, regular).

## Reliability

- it is extremely important that we receive coverage from you on time. part of our decision in hiring and using readers involves the reliability of the reader.
- executives know what time coverage is due and will come looking for it so, once again, take every precaution to BE ON TIME with your coverage.
- if you have to be late, even by 15 minutes, please call us and let us know. that way, when executives request coverage we can give them an update and an ETA.

## Faxing Coverage

- we are currently looking into establishing a system for emailing rather than faxing coverage.
- in the mean time, please fax your coverage to the story department by the specified deadline: (310) [REDACTED] if the line is busy or you are having difficulty faxing, please notify us.
- if you have coverage due on Saturdays and Sundays, please fax the coverage to both the story department and Keetgi's home at (310) [REDACTED]
- if you have an original script or book, you need to return it. however, copies do not need to be returned.
- if you are faxing to the homes of the executives, please include a cover page that indicates the name of the project, your name and your phone number, in case there is a problem with the fax.
- we realize that it can be inconvenient, however, because we receive coverage from you by fax, we are reliant on you to make any necessary changes. therefore, please make yourself available immediately after you fax in your coverage so that we can call you with any changes.

## Messengers

- unfortunately, we are not at liberty to messenger material to you, except in emergencies and extreme cases. therefore, we ask you to pick up your material from us.

# General Guidelines on Coverage:

When writing your coverage please keep in mind that your comment page must be helpful to the executive when they are making their response to the agent/producer or writer. For that reason, please be very specific in your commentary, especially with regard to:

- Story Structure
- Characterization
- Concept
- Dialogue
- Plot

Write the comments in words and phrases that would be easy for the executive to use when speaking to the person who submitted it.

Constructive criticism consists of pointing out the flaws in conjunction with giving evidence, and as well, pointing out flaws in as diplomatic a way as possible. While many, many scripts are boring to read, and perhaps badly crafted, you must take the time to balance your coverage with parts of the story that do work. If there is nothing that works in the story then give some possibilities that if they had been handled differently might have made for a better script. Most importantly, make sure that your scripts display whether or not you are recommending the script. Give a sentence or two or three about why it is or is not appropriate for HBO to consider or pass on.

In addition, if a script is being covered as a writing sample for a specific project, please be sure to address that specifically in your comments. Evaluate whether the writer/director would be an appropriate choice for the particular project.

The attached Readers Meeting Transcript should be very helpful in explaining what HBO executives expect from a reader.

**It is imperative that you carefully check your coverage for spelling, grammatical, and factual errors. If you do not pay careful attention to the thoroughness of your work, then simple mistakes will undermine the quality of your entire piece of coverage, and the result may be that an executive will request that you not be assigned to their submissions.**



**ARTISTS MANAGEMENT GROUP**

# Memorandum

To: Readers  
From: [REDACTED]  
Re: Reader Guidelines

---

Generally speaking, a reader holds a lot of power in his or her hands. If a reader says a screenplay is lousy, there is little chance it will go on to the next step. If a reader recommends a screenplay, there is a good possibility that it will be given serious consideration. Time is at a premium, and few executives can read every piece of material that is submitted to them. Thus, you must provide a clear, concise summary of the story and present comments that will help the executive make the decision to pass or consider the material. After reading your coverage, the executive should have a general knowledge of what the story is about, who the main characters are, what genre it is (comedy, drama, etc.) and the tone of the piece.

The following are guidelines for AMG coverage format:

## COVER PAGE

- Follow the format of the example coverage attached. I have enclosed sample coverage for APG (specs and available material – scripts and books), AMG-NY (books – available), ATG-MOW (scripts and books – available for MOW, miniseries, HBO, TNT, etc.), AMG (scripts – casting), AMG-Renaissance (books – available and representation).
- Read the cover form carefully and note any attached elements in the “Creative Personnel” section.
- Be accurate about who submitted the material and to whom. Put the agent’s name and the agency when provided.
- Be specific about the genre. Some examples are drama, action, thriller, comedy, romantic comedy, sci-fi, western, etc.

### *Reader Guidelines, cont'd.*

- The log-line can help sell or bury a screenplay. In one to two lines, you are to tell the executive what the story is about. Please try to keep this as concise and clear as possible.
- Your comments summary is the second thing one usually looks at and is also extremely important. Sum up as briefly as possible your thoughts in a clear and definitive manner. These comments should directly reflect, in briefer form, your comments page.
- Make sure the graph at the bottom of the page mirrors the thoughts you have expanded upon in the comments page.
- Many times, a script will be submitted for a particular client. If noted on the submission form, please include the name of the client in the "Submitted For" section. Along these lines, you may like the script but perhaps not for the client for which it was submitted. Since we are both a production and management company, you can recommend a project for production but recommend a pass on it for the client and vice versa.

### **SYNOPSIS**

- The synopsis should be 1 1/2 to 2 pages long. Books, of course, usually require longer synopses but should stay under 3 pages.
- Try to capture the tone of the script or book in your synopsis. Spin a story, rather than give a rote point by point summary. The synopsis should be written in the **present tense** and from an objective point of view.
- Introduce each character in capital letters. Please follow with age (or age range) in parentheses.

### **COMMENTS**

- Comments should be 3/4 to 1 page long.
- When possible, compare the script to produced movies that we might be familiar with to provide a frame of reference.
- Your comments should provide the executive with clear and comprehensive reasons to pass or consider a script. It's important that you give a "bottom line" in your comments. Again, remember to keep the graph on the cover page consistent with your comments.
- You should be evaluating all of the categories on the cover sheet graph, namely the premise, structure, dialogue, writing style, characterization and pacing.
- If you don't like a script, give concrete reasons why you are passing. Someone may have to pass on the material having only read your coverage. Don't attack the writer unnecessarily - this is not



Reader Guidelines, cont'd.

helpful. Instead, back up your comments with specific examples that will give the executive some ammo when responding to the material.

**CHARACTER BREAKDOWN**

- On the last page of your coverage, include a brief description of five to seven major characters, indicating if they are lead, supporting or cameo. If available, include their age, race, and a two to three line summation of their personality and role in the plot.

**DEADLINES**

- Make sure you pay attention to deadlines. If something is due by 9am, then it must be turned in by then. Please let me know as soon as possible if there is going to be a delay so I will be able to inform the executive who is waiting for it.

**GRAMMAR & SPELLING**

- Never turn in a piece of coverage that has not been proofread. Bad spelling and grammar lead the executive to question the reliability of the reader and are extremely distracting.

**RECOMMEND COVERAGE for APG**

- If you are going to give a piece of material submitted to Steve, Sean or George a **RECOMMEND** or **RECOMMEND WITH RESERVATIONS**, you need to call them and let them know, even if it's late at night. Steve's number is ~~310-860-2910~~, Sean's number is ~~310-860-2918~~ and George's number is ~~310-860-2916~~.

**TURNING IN COVERAGE**

- E-mail your coverage (~~stacy@amg-la.com~~ ~~stacy@amg-la.com~~ ~~stacy@amg-la.com~~ @amg-la.com) to me by 9am so I can make any necessary edits. In case of an emergency where the email system is down, fax to (310) ~~860-2918~~ ~~860-2918~~.

**INVOICES**

- You can fax or e-mail your invoice on the 15<sup>th</sup> and last day of each month. Include your name, address, social security, the date you turned your coverage in, and the fee for each piece of material. Also, please number your invoices - Invoice #1, Invoice #2, etc.

**MESSENGERS**

- Usually, it is much faster for you to pick up the material. However, we will messenger over the material, but please be aware that it might be several hours before you receive it.

**SCHEDULING**

- Please e-mail your availability in before 3pm each day. This makes my life easier when we get in a bunch of specs at the end of the day that need to be covered.

# ARTISAN

ENTERTAINMENT

TO: All Readers  
FROM: [REDACTED]  
CC: Andrew Zee  
DATE: 10/7/99

It's been a while since a formal memo has gone out so this will serve to update the readers that have been with us for a while as well as serve as an introduction packet to our group of new hires. There are some important notes concerning formatting your coverage so that it will be able to be incorporated into our database, so please read carefully. The past year has brought many changes and new faces to Artisan so hopefully this memo will serve to let you know where we stand and what we are expecting from our readers.

## WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

Two words- Commercial Material. While we would still love to find the perfect script that is neatly packaged with talent, we are also very "development minded". Please let us know if there is development potential in a project or if at the very least there is a good kernel of an idea at the story's core. Your job as a reader is to analyze the material on its own merit and then to let us know how it fares. Your job is not to tell us which projects we should or should not be making but rather clueing us in as to what is quality material and would potentially make a good movie. We also have open writing assignments and are constantly looking to add new names to our list of writers that we want to work with. If you read something and the project is a PASS but the writing is good, let us know so we can keep the writer in mind for future assignments.

## TURNAROUND:

**ALL coverage is due back by 8:30 AM the absolute latest for scripts covered during the week and by 8 AM on Monday mornings unless otherwise noted.** I can not emphasize this point enough. The execs expect coverage to be on their desks when they arrive in the morning and if Andrew and I don't have it, there is obviously no way for us to pass it on.

As in the past, coverage is due on Monday morning regardless of when we send it to you during the week unless it is an overnight or other arrangements have been made. Late coverage has become somewhat of an epidemic and is something we will no longer be tolerating on a regular basis. Please don't make us call and remind you of the due time. **It is your responsibility to make sure that you are not taking on too much work that you can't meet these deadlines.**

All coverage needs to be emailed to BOTH Andrew Zee (~~andrew@artisan.com~~) and Josh Naughton (~~naughton@artisan.com~~) in a Microsoft Word format. Use the title(s) of the script you covered as your subject.

**COVERAGE:**

**GENERAL:**

Samples of coverage are attached at the end of this packet showing the format that we use. Please include all pertinent information from the cover of the script on your coverage. This includes submitted to, submitted by and company, draft date and number, all attachments to the project, and if it is a SPEC project. We will have written in some of this information by hand.

We are exclusively using the Studio System software to keep track of all of our coverage. It is important that all coverage be emailed to us so that it can be converted and entered into this system. If there is a problem getting coverage to us by email, please fax to (310) 255-3920 and then also send an email with the attachment as soon as possible. One of the best features of this system is that it allows the entire Development and Acquisitions departments to have access to all coverage on their desk-top computer and this is why an emailed version of your coverage is so important.

Please remember to proof your work and run your spell check!

**SUBMITTED TO:**

The following is a list of current execs and their initials.

AM-	[REDACTED]	CS-	[REDACTED]	LF-	[REDACTED]
AG-	A [REDACTED]	DR-	[REDACTED]	MC-	M [REDACTED]
AS-	[REDACTED]	GR-	[REDACTED]	MD-	[REDACTED]
AZ-	[REDACTED]	JB-	J [REDACTED]	ST-	[REDACTED]
BB-	[REDACTED]	JN-	J [REDACTED]	TS-	[REDACTED]
CG-	[REDACTED]	JS-	[REDACTED]		

\*\*Projects submitted to BB and JS should always take priority.

**LOG LINE:**

Please be specific in your logline and keep it limited to 3.5 rows of 12 pt. type. Any more than this and it will not fit into our Studio System database.

**COMMENT SUMMARY:**

Very briefly tell us what works and doesn't work about the project. This should be one to two sentences summing up your comments and should be limited to 5 lines of 12pt type. Any more than this and it will not fit into our Studio System database

**RATINGS:**

Your ratings of the project should appear in the following order: Structure, Character, Dialogue, Story, and Setting. If you create a graph, mark an X in the appropriate box. If you write out the rating, only use the ratings of Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor or a combination of the two. (Ex. Good/Fair) DO NOT use ratings like Very Good or Very Poor as they will not translate into our database.

**BUDGET:**

Pick only High, Medium, or Low. Combinations will not fit into our database.

**PROJECT/WRITER RATING:**

Use the following ratings only. Any other rating or combinations of these ratings will not fit into our database. Recommend, Consider, Consider with Reservation, Consider Concept, Pass. Use your Comment Summary to expand upon these ratings if necessary.

**SYNOPSIS:**

We are looking for about a 1-½ page summary for scripts of the story retold in your own words. Do not write the summary to match the beats in the story, rather tell us the story as if you were verbally telling a friend from memory. If you have a very "beat" way of writing your synopsis, you probably were not hired anyway and this is more than likely a mute issue.

If you are covering a novel, your synopsis should be broken down by chapters and labeled with the chapter headings. Obviously a synopsis of a novel will vary in length depending upon length and number of chapters and font size.

**COMMENTS:**

We are looking for a ¼ of a page of comments on the project. Tell us what works with the project as well as what doesn't. As mentioned before, we are development minded so we need to know the strengths as well as the weaknesses of a project. If there is something you wanted to say in your ratings such as Consider with a rewrite, this is the place to do it.

If you are covering a novel, don't just let us know if it is a good novel or not. Tell us specifically if there are parts that will or will not easily translate to film and assume that certain liberties can be taken with an adaptation. Grisham style novels make just as good a movie (sometimes even better) as Fitzgerald novels.

Be consistent and **MAKE SURE YOUR COMMENTS ARE REFLECTIVE OF YOUR RATINGS ON THE FIRST PAGE** and vice versa.

**RATES:**

Script:	Regular	\$40
	Overnight	\$70
	Same-Day	\$80
	Comparison	\$80
	Overnight Comp.	\$140
Books/ manuscripts	up to 250 pages	\$65

is a sliding scale of \$5 for each 50 page increment.

**Example:**

251-300	\$70
301-350	\$75
351-400	\$80
401-450	\$85

For an overnight rush on a novel, the rate is 1.5 times the regular price- i.e. a 275 page book overnight is \$105

**NOVEL RATES:**

I've had many complaints about our novel rates and have taken them all to heart. Understand that Andrew and I did not make up these rates and that covering novels is part of the job description. We are working on becoming more competitive in this area but we need your patience as these things take time. In the mean time, reading novels is part of the job and so you will be expected to periodically cover novels with a smile on your face.

**COMPARISON COVERAGE:**

We will periodically ask for comparison coverage on two different drafts of the same script. These are generally projects that we are developing or are considering for production. You should write coverage as normal on the latest draft of the script and include in your comments the major differences between drafts. In addition, you need to go page by page and line by line through the two drafts and let us know about any and all changes regardless of their significance. Sample comparison coverage is also attached.

**TV/DIRECT TO VIDEO COVERAGE:**

If you are covering a project for our TV department, keep in mind that by TV we do not mean network TV. Rather, we mean we are looking at the project as a potential HBO Premiere, Showtime movie, or Cable/Video feature without a theatrical release. In this forum, the attachments to the project are a strong selling feature and the script can be rated with slightly lower expectations than normal.

**RETURNING MATERIAL:**

Per our Legal department, all material needs to be returned. We ask that all read material be returned to us. This includes scripts and novels. Generally readers stop by every couple of weeks to return their read material but we can also send you Fedex supplies if you are unable to make it by. I've asked our Legal team to draw up a confidentiality agreement as well as a return policy agreement so look for these to come your way for a signature some time in the near future.

**TIME OFF:**

We understand that part of the appeal of being a freelance reader is that you get to make your own hours. Nobody is ever going to tell you that you can't take a few days off but please do not leave us hanging. Let us know preferably a week in advance so we know not to count on you for that week. We need to have time to make other arrangements.



PROJECT RECOMMENDATION: STRONG CONSIDER  
PROJECT: CONSIDER  
WRITER: N/A  
WRITING SAMPLE: N/A

TITLE: THE PRIZE WINNER OF DEFIANCE OHIO      GENRE: Drama  
AUTHOR: Terry Ryan      CIRCA: 1950's  
FORM/PGS: BK/351      LOCALE: Ohio/Texas/NYC  
SUB TO: [REDACTED]      DATE: 3/28/01  
SUB BY: Diana Kerew Productions      ANALYST: [REDACTED]  
ELEMENTS:      DRAFT DATE:

---

LOGLINE: This is the true story of Evelyn Ryan, wife and mother of ten children, whose remarkable wit single-handedly kept her poverty-level family afloat by coming up with prize winning slogans time and time again in the "contest era" of the 1950's and 1960's.

---

COMMENT SUMMARY: THE PRIZE WINNER... is a gem of a story that has all of the right elements for a touching, funny, and altogether original M.O.W.

---

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
PREMISE		XXX		
STORY LINE	XXX			
STRUCTURE		XXX		
CHARACTERIZATION	XXX			
DIALOGUE		XXX		

---

Evelyn doesn't come out a winner every time. There are two big contests that Evelyn enters, but never wins. In one, the winner gets a producing oil well, in the other, they win their weight in gold. Evelyn waits by the window every day for POKEY, her name for their slow-as-molasses mailman. LEA ANN tells Evelyn that she wants to get married. Evelyn has no money to pay for the wedding and no contest winnings seems to be on their way. Thankfully, Lucy steps in at the last minute and pays for the whole thing.

As teenagers, Dick and Bub are accepted into Detroit Tigers training camp. Evelyn wins a luggage set and she sends them on their way to follow their dreams of becoming professional baseball players. *The Toledo Blade* publishes a column with Evelyn's poems and stories about the life of a housewife.

Christmas looms around the corner and Evelyn and Dad have no money for presents. On Christmas day, all of the kids wake up to find a tree with dozens of presents... all Evelyn's different prizes, from radios to toy trucks.

One night, Dad gets out of control and he pushes Evelyn down, sending her to the hospital. He is torn up with guilt. Evelyn wins another big prize, this time in Bruce's name, from BeechNut gum for coming up with a name for a sandwich. The company flies Bruce and Evelyn out to NYC to appear on the MERV GRIFFIN show. Evelyn wins a jukebox and a Triumph sports car. She sells them both.

Mom receives a letter from DORTHA SHAFER, a housewife who lives in Payne, Ohio. Dortha explains that she saw Evelyn on TV and she congratulates her on her win. Evelyn is part of a club of housewives who call themselves the Affadaises who are all avid contest participants. They meet every month to share contest tips and stories. The name "Affadaises" refers to the affidavits that the women receive in the mail just before they are going to win a big contest. Dortha comes to Defiance to spend the afternoon with Dortha. Mom has finally found a soulmate. Since it is very difficult for Mom to get out of town, the Affadaises correspond with each other through a Round Robin of letters.

Dad and Bruce catch the contest fever and they fill out a form for free gasoline at the local filling station. When they win, they fight over who filled out the winning form. Evelyn receives a letter from Dick at training camp, telling her that he was let go from the Tigers when he injured his arm. Bub is so shaken by Dick's dismissal that he decide to quit baseball as well. They both move to Los Angeles to go to school and get jobs. Soon after, Bruce decides to join his brothers in Los Angeles.

Terry finds out a little more about her Mom's upbringing. She was the valedictorian of her school. She went on to work for the local newspaper and write short columns. Instead of having a career, she quickly settled down and married their father. Terry doesn't quite understand her mother's decision.

When Bruce needs money for dental work, Evelyn is shocked when Charley produces \$150. Soon after, she finds out where Charley got the money. The bank calls and tells Evelyn that they are going to foreclose on the house if Charley doesn't pay off the \$4000 that he owes on the new mortgage. Charley took out a loan on the house a year before and didn't tell anyone. Evelyn is furious and desperate.

Just when it looks like all hope is lost, Evelyn receives an affidavit from a Dr. Pepper contest. She soon finds out that she won the grand prize... a trip to Switzerland, a new car, and \$3,440.64. Again, Evelyn is able to keep the wolves at bay. She and Charley head to Texas to receive her prizes. The money is just enough to save the house.

Over the next few years, the popularity of these kinds of write-in contests begins to wane. With her children out of the house, Evelyn gets a job at JCPenny. In the 1970s, Dad dies from diabetes. Evelyn lives another twenty years. While going through some photos, Terry learns why her mother gave up her career... she was pregnant when she married their father. When Evelyn's health starts to fade, all of her children return home to be by her side. During her years at JCPenny, Mom saves up sixty thousand dollars to leave to her children. Evelyn passes away with his children by her side in 1998.



## COMMENT:

**THE PRIZE WINNER OF DEFIANCE, OHIO** is a gem of a story. Terry Ryan recounts the life of her amazing mother who was able to support an entire family through pure determination and wit. While the subject matter is a little too sentimental for a feature release, this is about as solid a basis for a TV movie as one could ever hope to read.

This story manages to break away from the recent pack of autobiographical tributes to a writer's parent mainly through the protagonist's unique hobby and unbreakable spirit. If she lived today, Evelyn Ryan might be a lauded newspaper columnist, a TV writer, or the president of an advertising agency. As an underprivileged woman in the 1950s, the only occupation open to Evelyn was housewife. Still, Evelyn's creative impulse is too strong to be stifled, despite constant diversion from her ten children. She finds another outlet, writing short poems for the "25 words or less" contests that are popular at the time. Evelyn's prodigious writing talents wins her and her family thousands of dollars, two cars, a washer/dryer, a refrigerator, bicycles, and dozens of other toys and knick-knacks. She wins three grand prizes of over \$4000 dollars during her contesting days. Each one seems to come just at the knick of time, right before they are to be evicted, or the bank is going to foreclose on their house. In between winning contests, Terry finds the time to raise ten children and with no help from her alcoholic husband. Over the course of the story, we get the sense that writing is Terry's release and escape from the pressures of daily life. The prizes are simply a very welcome bonus.

This is more than just the story of a one women's successful hobby. **THE PRIZE WINNER...** is a detailed portrait of a very different time in America. Nostalgia would often lead one to believe that the 1950s were an idyllic time in American history, where most everyone (everyone who was white, that is) got their piece of the American Dream. This story proves that the average family's problems have not changed all that much. Poverty, alcoholism, teen violence were all a daily part of the Ryan family life. Today, as in the 1950s, the only thing that truly can hold a family together is love, which Evelyn Ryan had in abundance. At the same time, the story doesn't feel overly sappy and melodramatic. This is not a cliché story of a "noble woman rising up against all odds." Instead, it is the story of a simple woman with a tremendous gift who faces day to day life with courage and humor. There is a wonderful irony to the parallels between the upbeat, witty jingles that Evelyn produces, and the often sad reality of the Ryan household. No matter how bad things get, Evelyn always seems to be able to produce her poetry. And, like the greatest artists, Evelyn takes tidbits from her life and infuse them into her art.

Translating this story into a screenplay will be no easy feat. The screenwriter will have to find just the right blend of pathos, humor, and drama. Also, the act of watching someone sitting and writing is not a terribly cinematic endeavor. The writer will have to find a unique device that will take Evelyn's clever wordplay and bring it to the screen. What the book does have is a natural structure already in place. Evelyn's big wins always seem to arrive right on cue, just when it looks like all hope is lost. Also, there is the running question of why Evelyn gave up a potential career to marry Charley. This is finally answered at the end of the story, with Evelyn is on her deathbed. Quite simply, Evelyn got pregnant and she didn't have choice in the matter. The characters are memorable, from Charley, the well-meaning but inept father, to Dortha, a fellow contest winner who invites Evelyn to join her women's club.

Altogether, this script has just what it takes for a strong and original TV movie targeted at a female audience.

ARTISAN ENTERTAINMENT

TITLE: BACK TO THE TEEN MOVIE DRAFT:  
SUB'D TO: CG AUTHOR: Timothy Dowling  
SUB'D FROM: [REDACTED] GENRE: Spoof  
COMPANY: DRAFT DATE: 9/6/00  
DATE SUB'D: 9/12/00 ANALYST: [REDACTED]  
# OF PAGES: 106 FORMAT: SP  
ELEMENTS: d; Joe Nussbaum LOCATION:

LOGLINE:

A protagonist from the world of 1980's teen movies travels to the present to prevent the onslaught of violence and raunchy humor in today's teen movies.

COMMENTS SUMMARY:

A timely goofball spoof with a rather unique premise and some great gags. This is a very specific kind of project, however, this cheaply made comedy could be just the thing to take the SCARY MOVIE phenomenon to the next level.

	<u>excellent</u>	<u>good</u>	<u>fair</u>	<u>poor</u>
STRUCTURE		X		
CHARACTER			X	
DIALOGUE		X		
STORYLINE		X		
SETTING		X		

BUDGET HIGH: \_\_\_\_\_ MED: X LOW: \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT: CONSIDER WITH RESERVATIONS

WRITER: CONSIDER

## SYNOPSIS:

Sometime in the 1980's: We are in the world of the 1980's movie, where parachute pants wearing guys try to get the prettiest girl in school to go out with them. MATTY MCFOX, who is playing a high school student even though he is well into his twenties, drops out of the sky in a time traveling Jacuzzi, crushing a GREMLIN. He arrives just in time to see that the evil JUDGE is about to foreclose on his home. Thankfully, Matty's little brother SKIPPY shows up with a FREAKY MAN and a treasure that he found in his back yard to save the day. Matty blows off TIFFANY, the prettiest girl in school, to kiss FRAN, a less attractive girl who turns out to be gorgeous when she takes off her glasses.

Just when it looks like the story is going to end, the wild haired DOCTOR ERWIN M. MARTIN falls out of the sky in a Jacuzzi. He tells Matty that they must go into the future to save the fate of the 1980's teen movie. They get into the time machine and wind up in the present. Doc explains that, sometime in the late 1990's, teen programming started to get more and more risqué. This has spiraled out of control to the point where gratuitous sex and violence are the norm. Matty and Doc are here to prevent an event that will send the teen movie over the edge to a perverse land where there are not plots, characters, or segways. They arrive at the high school to find a Sodom of sex and violence. In the cafeteria, teens are having sex with food and peeing on each other while serial killers off people at random. Doc points out DICK and DIRK BRASILTON, two asshole jock types. Dick and Dirk make a bet that they can make the geeky BILLY have sex with his dad on stage on prom night. Doc warns Matty that if they follow through on this bet, it will send the teen movie over the edge into oblivion. The only way to prevent it is to get Billy to fall in love with CINDY, a girl who would be pretty if she just took off her glasses and let her hair down. Doc also points out that Cindy just happens to be Matty's daughter from the time that they both donated sperm together.

Matty introduces himself to Billy, who cannot believe that anyone is talking to him. Billy shows Matty around school, pointing out the different types of kids. There are the Jocks, the Gay kids, the closeted Gay kids, the Vampires, and the Vampire Slayers. None of these kids have ever actually been in a classroom. They run into AMBER LYNN, the gorgeous ice queen who is the most popular girl in school. Billy is awestruck by Amber, but Matty does not seem to notice her. Amber is intrigued and she insists that Matty come to her party that night. Matty decides to bring along Billy and Cindy to see if she can hook them up. Someone makes off with the Jacuzzi time machine and Doc goes looking for it.

Amber Lynn's party is a non-stop sex and drug fest. Meanwhile, Doc winds up in at an all-naked party where he spots his Jacuzzi. Unable to retrieve his Jacuzzi, Doc eats some magic brownies and goes on an all night party fest. At the other party, Bobby finally notices that Cindy is actually a very pretty girl. Then, he gets distracted and tries to hump a tropical fish.

Afterwards, Bobby and Matty head over to Cindy's house. They stand outside her window and Matty tries to council Bobby, Cyrano-style. However, Cindy's repressed homosexual Marine Corps father THE COLONEL shoots Bobby and brings him inside the to patch him up. Matty meets BENTLY, Cindy's weirdo brother who likes to film trash bags, and her vegetable MOTHER.

At school, Matty finally stands up to Dick and Dirk and they kick his ass. Still, the kids at school treat Matty as if he is some kind of a hero. This begins a montage of Nick changing things around the school. Matty shows the students what a classroom is and tells them about other things that they can do for fun besides screwing and killing. In the middle of the film, JEFF PROBST from "Survivor" shows up and points out that the time has come to vote one of the cast members out of the movie. They all vote for BALLS, one of Dick and Dirk's henchmen and he is ousted from the film.

All the kids gather for Dick and Dirk's giant prom beach party. There, Billy sings a karaoke tune that wins everyone over, even Amber Lynn. Billy ditches Amber Lynn to help Cindy, who is being pawed by Dick and Dirk. Billy realizes that he has X-Man style superpowers and he kicks some serious ass. Cindy and Billy share a great big Hollywood style kiss. Matty returns to the eighties to see Fran. Just as they are coupling with their respective girls, Billy and Matty wake up covered in goo in a weird pod to realize that they are actually trapped in the Matrix.

## COMMENTS:

A timely goofball spoof with a rather unique premise and some great gags. This is a very specific kind of project, however, this cheaply made comedy could be just the thing to take the SCARY MOVIE phenomenon to the next level.

This script works because it exists on a couple of levels at once. First, it is a spoof of teen movies from the 1980's, which in itself is a lot of fun. However, just an 80's movie spoof ends up alienating the teen audiences that (gasp) were not around to enjoy those films. So, the writer brings the 80's teen genre into the 1990's, AUSTIN POWERS-style. The humor comes from watching these two very different worlds collide. The writer has a sharp eye for pop culture and he skewers with a ruthless hand. The writer portrays the world of today's teen films as a lawless Sodom of rampant sex and violence. This is contrasted with the gentle nostalgia of the 1980's teen movie where the worst thing that could happen is that you accidentally take a pill that makes you switch places with your father. In a sense, the script delivers two spoofs for the price of one. Rather than weakening the story, it actually heightens the genre.

The jokes come at a fast and frenzied pace, taking on everything from Survivor, to Anne Heche, to American Beauty, to the slew of 1990's sex comedies. Some of the gags are so timely that they would have to be updated again in a matter of weeks. But such is the nature of this kind of anything-goes comedy. The most memorable gags in the script include Billy's drive to have sex with inanimate objects, the Wes Bentley character that only videotapes trash, and Matty and Amber Lynn's antagonistic relationship. The writer has an almost disturbingly deep knowledge and affection for teen films from the 80's and 90's. Occasionally, the script gets a little reference heavy, simply making mention of a film instead of finding an actual joke to support the reference. However, for the most part, this is a very funny script.

Again, this is a very specific kind of film and that needs the right production company behind it. And there are other spoof films out there in various stages of development that may hinder its chances of actually getting made. However, the premise is too solid and the laughs are too abundant to ignore.

ARTISAN ENTERTAINMENT

TITLE: BLONDE  
SUB'D TO [REDACTED]  
SUB'D FROM: [REDACTED]  
COMPANY:  
DATE SUB'D: 10/1/99  
# OF PAGES: 358 (738 total)  
ELEMENTS:  
CVG DATE: 10/3/99

DRAFT#:  
AUTHOR: Joyce Carol Oates  
GENRE: Biographical fiction  
DRAFT DATE:  
ANALYST: [REDACTED]  
FORMAT: Manuscript  
LOCATION: Southern California  
CIRCA: 1932-1953

**LOGLINE:** The illegitimate child of an insane mother, desperate for love and terrified of abandonment, grows from neglected, abused and anonymous girl into neglected, abused but famous woman.

**COMMENT SUMMARY:** A dark and beautiful fictionalization of Norma Jean Baker's life has a pathetic tone as it follows the girl who would be Marilyn from one sad moment --albeit occasionally tinged with success-- to the next. The main problem is the arc. Every moment, even the rare joyous moments, are saturated with Norma's pain. The result is a lack of true peaks and valleys with an almost gothic progression to inevitable pain.

	: Ex.	: Gd.	: Fair	: Poor	:
Structure	:	:	: X	:	:
Character	: X	:	:	:	:
Story	:	: X	:	:	:
Dialogue	:	: X	:	:	:
Setting	:	: X	:	:	:

WRITER(S): Recommend      PROJECT: Consider

Budget:      High      Med.-- X      Low

**NOVEL / MANUSCRIPT**

**SYNOPSIS:** 1962 - Special Delivery - DEATH on his messenger's bike speeds through traffic to the house of MARILYN MONROE who "laugh[s] and sign[s] without hesitation."

1932-1938 - The Child

**The Kiss** - Sitting in the dark of Graumans Chinese Theater since the age of three, the child grown into woman, wants nothing more than to be the one kissed by the Dark Prince on the screen. The picture becomes real as the PRINCE taps her shoulder, kissing her deeply as the same scene plays on the screen up front.

**The Bath** - NORMA JEANE BAKER's mother rarely comes to see her at her grandmother's house. She doesn't even like to be called Mommy - insisting on Mother or better yet just Gladys. GRANDMA DELLA thinks GLADYS is a hophead but for Norma Jeane's sixth birthday, she's willing to let the two go out. With strangely nervous euphoria, Gladys drives Norma Jeane to her own apartment where she hints that someone special is waiting for them. Norma Jeane is so happy, it's like "broken glass in [her] mouth". So busy with her work at the studio, so often smelling of her sickly sweet medicine smell, Gladys is usually too busy for her girl. The child's stammer, severe at times, often annoys her mother. Rushing up the stairs to the apartment, Norma Jeane meets the man who mother has been hinting at. On the wall in the bedroom is a framed studio glossy is the man Gladys insists is Norma Jeane's own father. Though Gladys has been married twice, Norma Jeane's father was neither of these men. Instead, he is an actor who has moved away. But Gladys promises he will back for them both. Soon, they have sticky cake and Norma Jeane is handed the world's most beautiful doll. She can't figure out a name, however, and begs her mother too do it for her.

Later, napping, Norma Jeane thinks her mother might have slipped her some medicine as she occasionally does. The phone rings. Gladys tells some man she's not alone and not to use his key. Norma Jeane had been unwanted, her mother given \$225 to "GET RID OF IT". Instead she chose daily to keep the child, bathing her while strange men sad, "Like a silk purse down there. Smoooooth." Now Gladys takes her from the bed to bathe her. But the water and scalding and Gladys must hold her daughter in the tub, squirming and choking because "there's so much dirt. Outside us and in". And the front door opens, not for the last time.

**City of Sand - 1** - Fire is burning. Not like the usual ash that sings the bed Norma Jeane shares with Gladys now that Grandma Della is gone. This is real fire from the mountains, burning through the country. The pair hurry out in their nightgowns and Gladys drives wildly down the road. But the fire is approaching rather than receding. At the roadblock, the officers insist she turn back. Gladys tells them her child's father lives in the hills. He has a fireproof house and she needs to get by. She tells him to shoot her if she runs, but not her daughter, her daughter - an orphan and unloved. They send her away and Norma Jeane is confused - does her father really live this close? Norma Jeane sits quietly crying after her mother slaps her.

2 - To get passed the Walled Garden, a girl must make the doorkeeper like her and once inside, she will be with her Dark Prince and never be alone.

3 - The summer before, Norma Jeane hid playfully as Grandma Della called for her. When she finally went home, Grandma Della was dying, saying as she went, "God bless you child I love you."

4 - While Norma Jeane blames herself for Grandma Della's death, Gladys resolves to bring the girl home to live with her. Both born in June, both Gemini, Gladys hopes the danger sure to befall them won't harm her other two daughters who live far away with their father. Alone at length with the girl for the first time, Gladys finds her nightmares and anguished cries irritating and especially hates that doll she drags around.

5 - When the fires come, Gladys is 34, her life ahead of her, and Norma Jeane 8, a "young-old soul". Living in fear of the war, of being laid off, of the alien invasion H.G. Wells had prophesied, Gladys is determined to be a good mother for what ever little time they have left. But Gladys is a woman with a sexy voice and a look that made men stare, even though she sleeps alone, fully dressed passed out from booze and pills. If Norma Jeane tries to help her undress, Gladys slaps and kicks her away.

6 - Feeling herself to be very special, Norma Jeane is allowed to walk at night to the theater alone if her mother is working late. There, Norma is safe and protected by the Fair Princess and the Dark Prince. Not like at school where she has to win over the bullies so that they won't hurt her feelings any more.

7 - With hopes for some career for Norma Jeane, Gladys brings home a piano, though she has little patience for the girl's slow progress. On Sundays they drive past all the stars homes, and Norma hears how she was named for both Norma Talmadge and Jeanne Eagels - who died a "hophead drug fiend." They pass the home of Valentino who had no talent but knew it was the right time to die.

8 - Dressed in "borrowed" clothes from the studio, Gladys drags Norma Jeane to the great funeral procession of the late Irving Thalberg. The stars, so mournful, seem close enough to touch. Pushing and shoving tears Norma Jeane from her mother, the woman throwing the tell tale signs Norma Jeane knows and fears. During the ride home, Norma Jeane wets her pants.

9 - The chaos in Gladys's brain swirls endlessly, as she's convinced her daughter is poisoned, that she herself has been poisoned at the lab she works in at the Studio, that the child is a freak, that she herself is a freak, that the fires in the hills are a sign. Home, in her soiled bed, Gladys forbids the child to leave the house and neighbor JESS FLYNN tries to help out when she can. Gladys strips the child of clothes, the girl hiding being the spinet. She drags her out to be placed in the scalding tub. She screams at the girl, "You're the reason. He went away." The child runs naked to a neighbor and begs him to help her mother.

**Aunt Jess and Uncle Clive** - They're telling her it's time to go see her mother. She knows something is wrong because they are talking in movie language. It's been ten days since Gladys was taken away. She saw her mother in the jacket with long white sleeves though they tell her she never did see such a thing. Uncle Clive is Aunt Jess's friend and gives Norma Jeane piano lessons, often smelling of the same medicine as her mother, tickling her arm, sometimes licking her ear. Uncle Clive and Aunt Jess haul her suitcase to the car as Norma Jeane carries her doll, scorched in one of her mother match-wielding fits. She's sure they're taking her to her mother's hospital, but instead the sign says LOS ANGELES ORPHANS HOME SOCIETY. Aunt Jess says her mother is too sick, they have no choice. DR. MITTELSTADT tells the girl, not cruelly, to "Save your tears! You may need them."

**The Lost One** - *"If I was pretty enough, my father would come and take me away. Four years, nine months and eleven days."*



Norma Jeane can remember little of what lead to her life at the orphanage. Glimpses of a fire, scalding water, and her mother. "I am so ashamed, nobody wants me, I want to die". Yet there are others at the home more wounded than Norma Jeane - the retarded, crippled, beaten, raped. The girl called FLEECE whose sisters brains were splashed against the wall. Her eyes watch RKO sign she can see from her new home as she wonders when her mother will be well enough to save her. Her clothes, packed by aunt Jess are quickly stolen, though no one is interested in her shabby nameless doll. Fleece is the surprising girl, always ready to tell the truth. When Norma Jeane finally explains her father is famous and her mother will come back, Fleece answers, "Bullshit!..Your mother and father are dead like everybody else. *Everybody is dead.*"

**The Gift Givers** - The night before Christmas, the Fair Princess and the Dark Prince come to give them gifts. The girls who've been around a while know that the gifts run out so they surge to the front. The royal couple smile and tell the children they love them as they hand out toys - one to each girl. Norma Jeane reaches for hers and the bulbs flash, startling her - she vows never to be caught like that again. Her Magic Friend in the mirror, the one who is always happy, laughing and smiling, the one who loves her and is loved by others will help her. The toy is a stuffed tiger and is soon stolen from her bed.

**The Orphan - 1** - Yet again encouraging Dr. Mittelstadt must tell Norma Jeane her mother would like another day to consider allowing the child to be adopted. Dr. Mittelstadt has become Norma Jeane's touchstone and her faith - Christian Science - Norma Jeane's belief.

2 - As she waits for her mother's decision, Norma Jeane becomes certain she is related to Mary Baker Eddy. Devoted to her new religion, Norma Jeane doesn't to join in the other girls' fortune telling. Instead she prays that someone will want to take her home and keep her. She is lucky. Fleece, DEBRA MAE and the others have that used wounded look. Norma Jeane is sweet and smiling and lights up in the visitors room. Two couples so far have wanted to make her their own. Her mother always gets in the way. Bitter at her mother's cruelty, Norma Jeane crawls from the dorm on the roof to watch the RKO sign. Fleece joins in and Norma Jeane isn't sure if they talk about running away, but that's how she remembers it.

3- In a cheerful and loving letter, Norma Jeane asks that her mother please let her be adopted. Furious, Gladys writes back that as long as she's alive her daughter will not be adopted.

**The Curse** - All of twelve and already the men on the street comment on Norma Jeane's ass. She wishes her school jumper could hide her growing body but the dress is too tight. Faithful the Christian Science, Norma Jeane wouldn't dream of taking aspirin when her head aches and stomach hurts. That day at school, blood starts to flow inside her panties - the curse. Unwilling to give in to the pain, Norma Jeane denies it's happening, almost fainting at the fierceness of the cramps. Fleece is never embarrassed, showing the others her blood when it starts. But Norma Jeane insists she's not like them, and prays to get her mind beyond the pain. As she bleeds on a chair, Debra Mae insists Norma Jeane acknowledge that blood and cramps are real.

When Norma Jeane rails at her mother's cruelty to Dr. Mittelstadt, the woman promises to find her a home. They don't need permission for her to go into foster care. Though the haze of pain, she holds on to the fact that by Christmas, she'll have a home.

### The Girl - 1942-1947

**The Shark** - Engaged to be married, she and her fiancée see a shark strung up and dying on the pier. Later, her fiancée and his mother talk, the older woman wondering if the daughter might someday turn out like the mother. Norma Jeane pretends not to hear.

**"Time to Get Married"** - 1 - ELSIE (40's) blurts it out one day, that it's time for her foster child to get married. Norma Jeane doesn't understand, doesn't believe it at first. She's just fifteen, she loves sharing a home and family with the PIRIGS. She's different from the other's they've had, quiet, cheerful, eager to help. She stays home from school on laundry day to help. But Warren has been watching her and it's time for Norma Jeane to get married. Elsie checks the girl's diary and finds only copied poems and Christian Science prayers. She resents that the girl has driven her to this. When she asks her about men, Norma Jeane innocently asks if Elsie means MR. HARING or MR. WIDDOES, promising she didn't know they were married, they she never let it go anywhere. But Elsie says she needs to get married, or she might somehow end up back at the home.

2 - She'll go overseas if she has to, give aid to those suffering from the war. MR. PIRIG takes the newspaper from her hand, telling her she doesn't need to be looking at that.

3 - The list is endless, the boys she's dated. They take her to movies, rowing, canoeing. They kiss close mouthed. But then she meets DETECTIVE FRANK WIDDOES who takes a shine to her, gives her money now and then, or a ride. When he spots a boy hassling her, their friendship comes to an end. He beats the boy senseless and realizes he could lose his job.

4 - Things that hurt her are beginning to slip from her mind, especially her mother and her monthly pain.

5 - MR. HARING remembers his average student Norma Jeane - average except in looks. She wants to write poems, showing him first her mother's, which he dismisses, then her own, which he criticizes for improper rhyming. Yet she's so earnest and such a relief from his life as husband and father to infant son, he invites her to bring all the poetry she wants. As she stays late so often, she starts to drive her home. He doesn't touch her, though he thinks of it. They have a falling out when Haring disputes her faith in FDR, revealing she knows little about the truth of the man. The outburst is forgotten. Even as he struggles with himself about touching her, she stops coming to school. He wonders if he loves her, wonders if he can save her. He drives by her house, but sees Warren and drives away.

6 - Elsie works up the nerve to tell her husband it's time for Norma Jeane go away. He's angry, resentful and she knows not to push too far, knows that he might hurt her. He asks if she intends to send her back to the orphanage, she answers, "No. I'm going to get that girl married and out of here and safe." He stalks out, returning late that night and putting himself on her, fierce and aggressive, until she's afraid her neck might break.

7 - Elsie arranges for a friend and her son to watch Norma Jeane at the movies one night. On that same lucky night, Norma Jeane wins the door prize, going on to the stage and accepting it like a princess. They talk more about what men want and what Norma Jeane so

far has given. Elsie explains about sex and condoms and having babies. That does it for Norma Jeane - she hadn't yet thought of babies. She thinks she might like that part.

**The Embalmers Boy** - Just after her sixteenth birthday, Norma Jeane is a wife. It was love at first sight and now they are man and wife. Her husband BUCKY GLAZER is an awkward young man, a wrestler and football player in school. He works as an embalmer's assistant part time. The wedding is a dream, with his sister's dress altered for the young bride's gown. It's true almost no one is there for Norma Jeane but she's happy regardless.

The fantasy isn't quite what it appears. Bucky wasn't terribly interested in Norma Jeane at first but growing to want to her for the way other man would look at him if she were his. He had a girlfriend, an old divorcee but he likes woman soft, like Norma Jeane.

**Little Wife - 1** - "No wife of Bucky Glazer's is ever going to work. Ever."

2 - For Bucky, she wants to be perfect. Cleaning the house, making him dinner, making love all the time. Bucky deserves nothing less. She vows to do what her mother couldn't - keep a man and make him happy. But her nightmares interfere and her screaming and night sweats wear Bucky out, though he does try at first to soothe and calm her fears. She calls him Daddy. He calls her Baby-Doll. When he is inside her, she knows she is safe.

3 - She puts notes in his lunch box for his job at Lockheed. The sexy ones, he shows around. The poetry and the needy notes, he tosses away. Though it hurts her that he never mentions those, she doesn't bring it up. He comes home from work and changes clothes. She make food he'll like, though rationing makes it hard. It starts to wear him out how much she loves and needs him. He thought she was different from that.

4 - A friend gives Bucky a Japanese skull, a trophy from the war. Norma Jeane doesn't tell him how repulsive she thinks it is.

5 - Norma Jeane finds a sense of self in the cleanliness of her house and the hardening of her husband's cock: "when a man wants you, you are safe." She uses a carpet sweeper, scrubs the bathroom and kitchen, cleans his clothes. She covers the skull with a scarf during the day. She dusts her wedding photos and remembers how frightened she was, how Bucky threw up on her borrowed dress, how she asked Elsie if she could go home with them that night. She remembers Bucky's frantic fumbling and how much it hurt. She thinks less about the Dark Prince and her father now.

6 - Norma Jeane likes to hear about Bucky's other job, as an embalmer. It unnerves him knowing how interested she is, but curled up on his lap, she urges the stories out of him. Her need for him is suffocating him.

7 - Pushing a baby carriage down the street, Norma Jeane imagines taking the child to see Gladys, how happy and normal and forgiving the old woman would be. But the child is her neighbor's, HARRIET, one of the women whose husbands are in the war. Harriet no longer has the strength to get off the couch much less look after her baby. She resents Norma Jeane's judgmental cheeriness and tells her to go to hell.

8 - Restless at home, Bucky gets a camera and asks Norma Jeane to pose for him. They're awkward, silly poses at first. Soon, he asks her to take her clothes off. She's nervous but obedient. Then he has her put on a wig and pose like in dirty magazines. It embarrasses, makes her ashamed, especially when he likes her better that way. He yells, tells her he'd like a change from her. The snap shots surprise him. Nervous in real life, she is sexy and poised.

on film. He takes them to work and smugly shows off his wife's body until co-worker BOB MITCHUM tears them up, asking what kind of man shows pictures of his wife.

9 - Whining to his parents, Bucky rants on about how needy and smothering his wife is and says to himself it doesn't need to be forever.

10 - Bucky registers in the merchant marines. She knew he would go. They spend many evenings at the movie. She loves them as she always did. He watches the March of Time.

11 - Harriet leaves the apartment building and Norma Jeane misses the baby that wasn't hers. She sees the baby being scalded in a tub in her mind. Bucky finds her in the bathroom late one night, crouched and shivering with eyes like an animal's.

12 - The day he registers, Bucky is triumphant. He will soon be free of Norma Jeane, his family and the town he grew up in. She begs in the night for a baby and he pushes her away, demanding his sleep. Wailing and pathetic, she begs him not to go. She straddles his lap, trying to make love. "You sad, sick cow" sends her running to the kitchen. He finds her with a knife and gashes on her arm. He wraps the wounds and takes her back to bed, waiting for when he can rise and shower and wash her smell off himself.

13 - AS Norma Jeane and her in-laws wave Bucky off, she stands bravely, earning their good thoughts. Before he left, he promised they'd have kids on his return. On the ride back, her mother in law tells her she can move in with them, "You're out daughter now."

War - "I'm nobody's daughter". Norma Jeane gets herself a job at the Radio Plane Aircraft in Burbank and a boarding house room near the trolley line. Her in-laws tell her she can't, but she does. She lives on her own for the very first time. She is free. Norma Jeane loves her work on the assembly line. They almost didn't hire her at first, but she begged them to give her a try. She dresses and does her face and works hard at all she learns. The other girls think she's stuck up but she does her job and gets her paycheck. The war means there is conversation enough to go around, everywhere she turns and her stammer almost disappears with strangers these days.

The war brings work and independence for thousands of women. Norma Jeane won't risk a second of it, even when a pungent compound burns her eyes. She is promoted quickly and wants to go even farther.

One day, as she dreams of the Dark Prince taking her into his arms, she sees him, standing in the plant, a camera in his hands.

**Pinup 1945** - Glazer's face falls. In his hands is *Star's & Stripes* featuring the photo of an adorable plant worker working for the cause - his own Norma Jeane! Mr. Haring sees a different flirtier photo, and feels he should have helped her, should have saved her from herself. Frank Widdoes sees a leggier shot in *Pix* by a corpse at a crime scene. He tucks the magazine in his pocket. Warren Pirig gets a copy of *Swank* and blames his wife for what the girl has become. Bucky's mother shows a shot to Elsie and bemoans the insult to her son.

**For Hire** - For \$12 a day, Norma Jeane will be anyone - Miss Paper Products, Miss Aluminum Products, Miss Southern California Dairy. She finally takes aspirin to get through the horrible cramps that can lose her two or three days of work a week. With the cost of cosmetics and nylons and sometimes even costumes, a run in her stockings can set her crying on the trolley.

Otto Ose, the photographer is the Dark Prince who followed her around the plant forcing her to smile for his camera. His photo's lead to the Preene agency who rents her out to be anyone that day. The first time she went to the agency, a hard young woman stopped her - Debra Mae. Debra Mae from the orphanage had been at Preene's. But she took money at a job for a date - something she's not allowed to do. She takes Norma Jeane's curiosity as insult and tells her to go to hell. Norma Jeane calls after her, asking about Fleece. "Fleece is dead."

**Daughter and Mother** - Norma Jeane sends the "nicer" shots to her mother at the home, waiting for her to notice and congratulate her. Finally, Norma Jeane visits the woman for the first time in ten years, stuttering as she says hello. Gladys smells, her dress stained and her hair and skin faded. Norma Jeane knows the nurses can see the resemblance. Norma Jeane brings her mother a book of poetry, a tribute to the love the mother instilled in the daughter. Gladys doesn't react. To Norma Jeane, the place is familiar and she wonders if her mother sent her pictures in her dreams. She puts a shawl around her mother's shoulders, not telling her it's from a man, the man who taught her to ice her nipples before she strikes a pose. Norma Jeane condenses her lifetime for Gladys in that visit, talking about her work, her marriage and showing her all the pictures. Under contract at the Studio now, Norma Jeane has asked around. She asks her mother for her father's name. Gladys widens her eyes and says, "Who are you?" Outside, Otto shoots her as she stumbles to the car, and tells her she is not sexy and she smells, too.

**Freak** - Norma Jeane is lead crying back to her chair. In acting class she is all raw emotion, revealed nerves. In class, they study technique, not feeling. They think what she does isn't acting, but what she does scares them nonetheless.

**Hummingbird** - In a series of scattered and thoughtful diary entries, Norma Jeane writes about her upcoming audition for *Scudda-Hoo, Scudda Hey!* She's set to meet Z and see his famous aviary. She writes about Otto and how she loves him though she knows he can hurt her. Z has called her a tramp yet wants to meet her. She has seen him with Debra Mae in the past. She visits Z and is taken though his draped office to the aviary. Inside there are birds, but they are all dead. He flips a switch and birds sing. After, he takes her back into his office and orders her on the floor. She thinks he's not really a cruel man, just one used to getting his way. She shuts off, and considers her salary as he pushes himself between her buttocks. She wonders if he's her father. After, his secretary points to the rest room. When Norma Jeane goes to her audition, she's told not to bother. The role is hers. She calls her agent, MR SHINN and of course he already knows. Later, they try to name her, thinking MM, with the last name Miller. She resents it and offers Monroe, a family name and not long after, they have Marilyn Monroe. She stumbles home, gets off at the wrong trolley stop. She is Marilyn Monroe and 21.

### The Woman - 1949-1953

**The Dark Prince** - In a borrowed Jaguar, she sits outside a rich man's gate, having asked around and thinking he might be the one. A policeman asks her to leave.

**Miss Golden Dreams - 1949** - She begs Otto not to make her a joke. Her movie debut was a year ago. The studio dropped her and now she needs the money that Otto holds out like a taunt. She had to come to him - he likes it that way. She undresses, for \$50, behind a screen and comes out to the red silk sheet. He starts shooting and she begs him not to shoot her feet. She feels so naked there. She can't tell if Otto loves her or loathes her. He's Jewish and she feels she is less than he, being "only an American". Her mother told her Jews were the chosen. He shoots her, standing on a ladder. He remembers when Shinn told him how fragile she was. Otto insisted she was Life Force itself. Shinn maintained that was the most dangerous kind. Watching her, he can see her entire squalid life pass by with an inevitable early end. When he has magic on film, he releases her. When she's dressed, he introduces her to CASS, the most beautiful boy she's ever seen.

**The Lover** - She has complete hope and faith in the man she is certain is her twin.

**The Audition** - The director takes the audition as a favor to Shinn, all roads at the time leading back to favors in fear of HUAC. He already has the part filled, but will go through the motions. His first thought when she enters is that she is a joke. She and Shinn look like some Hollywood Beauty and the Beast. Then she starts, so in the role, no one knows if it's the girl or the part playing out in front of them. After, the room buzzes, waiting to hear what he'll say. Staring at her ass, he gives her the part.

**The Birth** - In an era of nuclear testing, alien fears and the communists, Cass Chaplin - Charlie's disinherited son, tells her movies will on longer be enough. She thinks instead people need a place to hide now more than ever.

**Angela - 1950** - At the screening of the movie where she plays Angela, the audience wants to know who she is. She's alone and afraid in the ladies room - Cass wouldn't come with her to the movie or the party after. Shinn and he don't like each other but Norma Jeane won't hear a word against her twin. Shinn bought her the dress she wears that evening, as well as other investments into Marilyn. After the shopping spree, she knew he wanted something in return. She kissed him lightly and called him Daddy. He doesn't like Otto either and she doesn't tell him what how she posed when she was broke. But now she has Cass and it was love at first sight. They spend nights at any of the various homes he crashes at, no home of his own except his car. They walk around naked and fall into bed endlessly.

Norma Jeane realizes that in her role as the niece in *Asphalt Jungle*, she imagined Uncle Clive as "Uncle Leon" in the film. Her fierceness in the role took costar Louis Calhern by surprise. She lived and breathed for her first real role, Cass wondering why she was so worked up. But if she failed, she would die - she was sure of it. She would ask for additional takes, get them, and do even better. She wants to marry Cass and give him children, though he has no drive, no money, and little talent. Shinn warns her about all the HUAC mess, that Cass is tainted by association. Norma Jeane can't understand why friends would agree to hurt each other.

So that night, at the screening she gets high on champagne and knows that she will soon make \$500 a week. Sick with love for Cass, she's introduced to V, a married man, an actor she's watched and loved on the screen. She's introduced to others but it's V she wants to be near. After, someone gives her a petition to stop the HUAC madness. She signs with all

her many names before Shinn scolds her like a child. She runs from the party, eager to be in Cass's arms. She goes to one of his many beds, finding him there with another man.

**The Broken Alter** - In disguise and discreet, Norma Jeane attends night classes in poetry, studying, listening and rarely speaking. They suspect she's a secretary out for some self improvement. The PROF calls on her to read a poem. When she's done, the class is moved to applause and the Prof declares her a poet. Not long after, a student recognizes her photo in a movie magazine. They crowd around her, praising her and calling her Marilyn. She smiles, thanks them and runs away.

**Rumpelstiltskin** - When Shinn asks her to marry him, Norma Jeane doesn't believe it. He is a gnomish little man and has ex-wives and grown children. He promises to leave her everything but she wouldn't want to do that to his kids. He says he loves enough for both of them but she says it still isn't enough. She tells him how she feels Jewish in her heart and he has no reply.

**The Transaction** - W summons her to his dressing room. She knew this time would come. She is Nell, the role she wants. She knows this and knows what kind of man W is, how he hates women. She'll try to make him love her. She'll try to make "this asshole think she was listening to him." She finds bruises later, on her arms and elsewhere. The role is for a crazy baby-sitter in *Don't Bother to Knock*. Shinn calls her jubilant to tell her "we got the part." She "sucked off" W and two others but "we" got the part. She's not happy enough to suit Shinn but things are cool between them anyway.

**Nell 1952 - 1** - Norma Jeane feels she is Nell. Neither has a father.

2 - Norma Jeane realizes "Jed Towers" in the movie is Frank Widdoes from her youth. She is so forceful in the role, costar Richard Widmark wonders if she's even acting. But she is acting, creating the role, planning the nuances, giving her life. And it shows in the dailies, every time. She steals the scenes, Widmark can see this.

3 - She realizes only Marilyn is known now.

4 - Norma Jeane supplies the motive for the baby-sitter's murderous urges. She isn't trying to kill the child, she's trying to kill herself.

5 - Nijinski too was abandoned by his father.

6 - She starves herself and drinks icewater. She sweats and breathes and is Nell, but more than Nell, containing the character but not giving in to it. She doesn't sleep and doesn't need pills to rest. She misses interviews and attracts and repels her costars, especially Widmark. Shinn worries she will burn out. She tells V acting is lonely. It's the loneliest profession he knows.

7 - She visits Gladys at the home, reminding herself she did not exploit this wounded woman in creating Nell. She gives her gifts, asks her father's name, tries to get her mother to love her - the same things she does every visit. She ponders the ideas of being and nothingness to the woman who is barely there. Looking at her mother's hands she winces and apologizes.

8 - She did steal from this woman, she stole her nervous hands and gave them to Nell.

Cass and his lover EDDY G. ROBINSON JR see Norma Jeane's new film. Cass declares himself in love with her and Eddy does the same.

**The Death of Rumpelstiltskin** - The scandal breaks - Marilyn's nude photos! Shinn calls her screaming, the shots could ruin them both. She rages to herself about Otto betraying her and Bucky not giving her a baby to prevent all this. Hours earlier Shinn had called to read her the glowing reviews of her performance, now he is cursing her. Norma Jeane goes to the Studio and be absolved of her sins. She had thought of slashing her wrists but the phone rang instead. She hears it in her head "Sad, sick cow." She asks why aren't the photos of the death camps pornography, instead of "some dumb broad desperate for fifty dollars".

The next morning, she keeps the phone off the hook until finally she gives in. The caller is Shinn's secretary. He had a heart attack and died. Convinced she killed him, Norma Jeane takes lots of pills, and mourning the Baby she will never have, lies down to die. Instead, she vomits up the mess and brushes her teeth until her gums bleed.

**The Rescue** - "After [she] sucked all their cocks, " the studio forgave Marilyn, giving her a raise which she promptly used to have her mother moved to a smaller hospital. Fame and love were raining on her. She and V go to Monterey to celebrate Niagara, her first starring role.

She wears herself out with preparation, playing out every scene a hundred times for the movie and real life. She misses appointments, comes late to the set. She loves this role that is not her, Rose, the evil murderous slut who mocks her husband for his impotence. At a party, she meets Bob Mitchum who tells her he knew her before she was Marilyn, back when she was Bucky Glazer's wife. He tells her if the studio gives her shit, give it right back. She wants to hear more but he walks away.

She thinks of V and their moderately successful love making. Every man has a unique way of making love but all of them - not matter what kind of cock - get sucked off the exact same way. She doesn't feel much, especially with V but she gives the performance of a lifetime.

The party is for those in Hollywood who did what their country asked - named names. Peacocks shriek on the lawn and Norma Jeane feels she is being watched. She asks Z if her remembers her bleeding on his rug. The men start swarming, giving her looks as if they've had her and will have her again. V sees and walks away. Norma Jeane stumbles after to be caught in the arms of her lover, her twin, her rescuer Cass.

**That Night...** - Cass and Eddy, reckless and wild, capture Norma Jeane and take her to their latest bed, both of them making love to her poolside.

**Rose 1953 - 1 - "I was born to play Rose"**

2 - She's never felt so alive. Rose in *Niagara* and the lover of two Hollywood sons. They bring her roses to the set and take long breaks in her dressing room.

3 - They insist she get a new apartment - Marilyn deserves better. The threesome walk around naked and sleep like puppies. Norma Jeane tells them of her Magic Friend in the *Mirror*. Cass has his own and understands perfectly.

4 - Norma Jeane gets a 1951 lime green Caddie from a friend of Eddy G's. After, he makes love to her and she wonders if it's right to be doing it with Cass. With Cass and Eddy, she gets carried away - never a good lay, she has no rhythm when she's with them.



She finds white powder hidden in the car. Eddy takes it, thanks her and say it's their secret.

5 - On set, when she's especially focused, she often rubs herself low on her belly. She's decided that Rose killed a baby once, shut it in a drawer (where she slept as an infant) while she was making love and the baby died. She rubs herself on screen often, H having to cut because it won't get past the censors. All the men there are entranced or repulsed. Only a year before she was stiff on a set. Now she often forgets to get dressed. They burst into applause when JOSEPH COTTON finally strangles her.

6 - At night she dreams she has a huge swollen sex instead of the bloody gash she usually dreams of.

7 - It's 1953 and Rose mocks her husband, doesn't bow to him, doesn't belong to him. For some it is liberation. "We are sick of being good!"

8 - She takes books with her when she goes on location to Niagara. She knows the Gemini won't visit her though she loves them both so dearly. She thinks she might be pregnant but during the shooting of a morgue scene, when she's shown her dead husband, she starts bleeding and faints. The studio doctors give her codeine and she stays in bed reading Nijinsky for the next couple of days. She reads the *Actor Handbook* and *The Interpretation of Dreams*. She wants to free herself from the curse of wanting to die if she feels unloved. H brings her to the set himself.

9 - The death should have been more up-close and painful.

10 - Norma Jeane rings her lovers incessantly, never finding them anywhere. She knows their laughter can be cruel, and the way they call her "fishie" when they ask her for money hurts her, now that she knows what it means. It wouldn't hurt her if they were with another man but a woman might break her heart. When she calls again, a woman answers.

The Gemini - They're there, the Gemini, waiting for her at the gate but they don't recognize her. Finally she asks, "Don't you know me", and they rush to her with kisses and roses. The boys are equally changed, new clothes, and for Eddy G, a drugged edginess and puffy face. As Eddy drives her Caddie and both men press her hands against their groins, she can't get over that they really don't know her.

Their lives get unruly as Cass wins a role only to break his ankle and he and Eddy talk more of their "famous/infamous" fathers. They insist their fathers never wanted them born. Norma Jeane tells them not to trust everything their mothers tell them. She tries to bolster their egos, all while protecting her own, telling them she doesn't like when they call her Fishie. They drink champagne of the balcony, arguing about constellations and fathers and sons. The bottle breaks and Eddy proposes a blood vow. All three slice their arms with the glass and mingle the blood before making love intermittently throughout the night.

The premiere of Niagara has Cass and Eddy watching their girl from the cheap seats. She must be with the studios bosses who think of her as a body or a mouth. Cass and Eddy adore Rose - she is sexual and cruel and just like them. They realize, for the first time, that she is acting.

A few nights later - after days of glowing reviews - she has strange dreams again of something different between her legs and rises brightly, going for a run in the early dawn. As she comes back around to her home, she finds Eddy and Cass just stumbling in from their evening. She kisses them excitedly convinced now everyone will know she doesn't just play herself.

The news comes later, that she is indeed pregnant. Producers are asking for meetings, so are journalists and photographers. She would love to tell someone who might be happy for her about her good news. She tells the men and they are happy. It must be Eddy's, the more persistent of the two. They know she lives for this chance to be a mother, though her own mother tried to kill her.

That night, Cass and Eddy on another binge, break the window of a charming little toy store. All Norma Jeane wanted was the striped tiger, like the one she had stolen as a child. The next morning she takes the tiger to the store and conjuring a story asks to pay for the toy.

The Vision - The three of them go for one of their nighttime drives, Eddy, as always, driving madly in her car. Eddy has joined AA and Cass is thinking of it. They are soon to be a family and wanted to be healthy for the job. With a hand from each on her belly, Norma Jeane sees what they want her to see -- her thirty foot self on the Niagara billboard, the one that's been said to stop traffic in LA. "There she is. 'Marilyn'."

**COMMENTS:** A beautifully told story of a child born into madness. For this frail child, every day she doesn't lie down and die is a day she chooses to live. Mr. Shinn is right, while she is the very life force itself, she is infinitely breakable. Carefully constructed to show that no one ever knew her and she rarely knew herself, the story outlines all the many ways she was failed by those who loved or hated her. Without love, affection, attention, or sexual interest, she is nobody. If she is just herself, without an outside reaction, she is nobody. And like she learns in grammar school, you have to win the bullies over fast before they break you. But in her case, they always break her anyway.

The story is a path from one wound to the next -- as an infant, then child, then girl and young woman. She is constantly rejected, humiliated, abused. The last scene, where she is with her lovers and gazes at 'Marilyn' can hardly be seen as the triumphant moment at which to end the film. It's tawdry and pathetic that she is another couple's "Fishie", and a Fishie to lend them money to boot. So then the question comes up on what kind of story is this? Tragedy? Noir? Underdog with unhappy/happy ending? To perhaps give her only one lover with whom she hopes to raise the baby would make the story telling more traditional but clearly break the integrity of the book - and maybe it's not even a option with such a prominent author and novel.

There is very much a gothic romance feel to the story, with madness, repression, need and betrayal. Gladys is almost the woman in the attic and Norma Jeane the terrified virgin, but no one ever comes to save her. There is little happiness or euphoria that isn't tainted with some sadness or betrayal. We know, when she caresses her pregnant belly, that Marilyn Monroe never had kids. We know, having never even heard of Cass and Eddy, that she didn't marry one or the other. Though the story is fictionalized, we do know enough about her to know where the story can't go. As a result, we can never feel she is safe or truly happy.

The book is filled nasty little moments that the audience will be hungry for yet appalled by. There are intimations her mother left men touch Norma Jeane even as an infant. Most certainly she included the child in sex play later on. The older married men she sits in cars with as a teen may brush her hair and discuss poetry, they still have massive erections. Bucky and she communicate almost entirely through sex, though as he and others tells us, she is a pretty bad lay. She has a couple of suicide attempts and emotional outbursts. All these moments live up to the Norma Jeane tragedy.

Gladys is the other lead for the most part. The source of all Norma Jeane's pain, Gladys is in a twilight place where Norma Jeane can never heal. Gladys isn't dead and mourned or alive and dealt with. She is close enough and far enough away to remind Norma Jeane what she'll never have - mother love. Gladys is Norma Jeane caricature self. Beautiful, vain, desperate for a man. To watch Gladys early on is to see what her daughter might become.

The men in the story are almost encyclopedic and few can be called good guys. The study of Marilyn is almost the study of men; young, naive, jaded, kinky, ruthless, cruel, and above all selfish. The line in which some movie goer wishes Rose's death had been uglier and longer is the greatest indication of male attitude in the book. Her sexuality marks her for death. But really it's her need and their sexuality.

The book itself is poetic in its structure and language. Events are not always chronological. One may be hinted at early on, but explained fully pages later - as with her wedding. Norma Jeane's adult thoughts are sprinkled throughout and many passages are third person limited - from Bucky's POV or Cass's or a student from poetry class. For the most part, Norma Jeane's childhood thoughts are filtered and we mostly know she is in pain and wanting to be loved. We know a little more of her adult thoughts and often they are equally simplistic.

# EXAMPLE OF AMG coverage

Usually for a client rate

## AMG

SUBMITTED TO:  
SUBMITTED BY:  
SUBMITTED FOR: Casting Ideas

DATE: 5/23/00  
EVALUATED BY:

ONE HOUR PHOTO  
(screenplay, 124 pages)

### CREATIVE PERSONNEL

WRITER: Mark Romanek

DIRECTOR:

PRODUCER:

CAST:

LOG LINE: A lonely man becomes psychotically obsessed with a seemingly ideal family through the rolls of film that they bring to his 1-hour photo shop.

COMMENT SUMMARY: At the core, this is a frightening and intriguing story, but the execution isn't the most sophisticated. Simply said, the story fails to thrill.

GENRE: Thriller/drama

PERIOD: Present day

SETTING: Suburbs

PROJECT: RECOMMEND   
RECOMMEND WITH RESERVATIONS   
NOT RECOMMEND WITH RESERVATIONS   
NOT RECOMMEND

WRITER: RECOMMEND   
NOT RECOMMEND

CLIENT: RECOMMEND   
NOT RECOMMEND   
NOT APPLICABLE

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Premise		X		
Structure			X	
Dialogue			X	
Writing Style			X	
Characterization			X	
Pacing				X

Budget: High \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ Low X

Summary

To most people, the family snapshot is not a truthful thing. Everyone poses and it doesn't honestly show people's real emotions. The subject of this family snapshot? The young, shy JAKE YORKIN (9). It's Jake's birthday party and he's clearly not the most popular kid in his class. His loving mother NINA (30s) tries to make everything happy. But all he wants is more attention from his gruff, workaholic father, WILL (30s). Whenever Nina asks Will to accompany them to places like the store, Will refuses. He's "busy".

At the local Sav-Rite drugstore, the 1-hour photo development counter is manned by the strange, awkward SY PARRISH (30s). A chubby man with no friends, Sy lives through the photos he develops. He's fanatical and precise about the process of developing pictures. He sighs when bumbling fellow co-worker YOSHI (20s) talks to Sy's regular customers. Yoshi doesn't understand the craft of developing. Yoshi doesn't understand how to use the machines with love. Nina is surprised when Sy remembers so many details about Jake. Sy gives Jake a free disposable camera for his birthday. Though she thinks nothing of it, Nina is slightly irritated with Sy's extra attention. Sure, he gets her pictures developed faster than normal, but she isn't interested in having them enlarged. (Sy does this without her asking.) To Sy, there is nothing more irritating than ordinary people who don't know how to work their cameras.

It becomes clear that Sy's fascination with the Yorkins isn't just customer service. His car, home and pockets are filled with stolen prints of the Yorkin's family snapshots. He is obsessed. On his walls at home, he has framed snapshots of Jake (starting at Nina's pregnancy). He has photos of the Yorkin home. Eating in a diner one night, Sy tells the WAITRESS that Jake is his nephew. Sy has no family, so these Yorkin snapshots fill the role. Sy is desperate to get close to Nina. Seeing a Deepak Chopra book in her bag at the drugstore, Sy buys the book. He reads it voraciously. Sy fantasizes about the snapshots, imagining himself in the picture.

Sy becomes more confident about pursuing the Yorkins. He not only chats with the surprised Will and Jake when they come in to shop, but he also watches Jake's Little League practice. But the people at Sav-Rite are starting to find Sy's attitude strange. Sy demands an expensive repair on the developing machine, because it appears "slightly" off. His manager MR. YAVNO (40s), tells Sy to watch his attitude. It's just a drugstore.

Meanwhile, things aren't going well in the Yorkin marriage. Nina and Will fight, as Nina is furious that Will spends no time with them. Jake overhears their fight. During weekends, Sy frequents flea markets. He buys old photographs. To Sy, these are the only proof that people exist. Without photos, everyone is eventually forgotten. Sy sees Nina at the mall one weekend. Pushing his way through the food court, he steals the seat next to her. Clearly uninterested in talking to him, Nina forces herself to chit-chat. She is intrigued to learn that he reads the Deepak Chopra books. Sy tells Nina she's lucky to have a family. He shows her a snapshot he bought at the flea market, claiming it's his parents.

Suddenly, Sy discovers the key to getting Nina's attention. One afternoon, beautiful MAYA BURSON (30s) drops off personal photos. Sifting through them, Sy is shocked to

see that Maya is having an affair with Will. There are racy photos of the adulterous couple kissing. What should he do? Sy is horrified to realize that innocent Nina is being cheated on. Sy sneaks into the Yorkin house when nobody is home. He wears Will's sweatshirt, cleans Jake's room, and drinks their beer. It's as though he lives in the house. When the Yorkins come home, Nina suspects that someone has been in the house.

Sy's games catch up with him. Mr. Yavno notices a discrepancy in the number of photos being processed and the number of photos sold. There are hundreds of missing photos. Yavno is furious and fires the creepy Sy. No questions asked. Sy must leave that day. Before he leaves, Sy fills out a photo order from Nina. Sy does the unthinkable. He slips one of the Maya/Will photos into it. Nina is horrified when she sees it, but she doesn't yet confront Will.

Now gone from Sav-Rite, Sy is listless and depressed. He wanders the streets with a telephoto lens, following Nina and Jake during the day. Sy watches them closely. Back at Sav-Rite, panic strikes the store when Yoshi comes to Mr. Yavno with a creepy find: a series of photos of Yavno's daughter RISA. Sy has been stalking Risa, too. It's a direct threat.

The POLICE are called. The intrigued DETECTIVE VAN DER ZEE (40s) informs Yavno that Sy must be stopped. He will harm someone soon. The police go to Sy's house, finding the horrifying display of Yorkin family photos. The only difference? All the faces of Will have been scratched out. The police call Nina. Next, they try to find Will. The only problem? Will is currently in a hotel with Maya, having a lunch rendezvous. Meanwhile, Sy registers at the hotel and steals a room service uniform. He forces his way into Maya and Will's hotel room. For the next grueling few hours, Sy forces the frightened couple to pose in grotesque sexual poses. He urges them to enjoy this game. During this time, Nina gets the hotel name from Will's reluctant ASSISTANT.

Finally, the police make it to the hotel. After a tense chase through the hotel and the surrounding streets, Sy is caught. To Sy, he was only taking pictures. When the POLICE question Sy, he claims he was trying to get revenge on Will. Will wasn't appreciating his family. Sy never had a family, so he wants to make Will pay. Sy believes that Will made Jake do bad things for the camera. Meanwhile, Nina decides to forgive Will, happy to have her family back.

Comments

1 HOUR PHOTO is a classic stalker tale of a lonely man who becomes obsessed with a seemingly ideal family through the rolls of film that they bring to his 1-hour photo shop. Only when he begins to follow them, does he realize they are far from ideal. In fact, they are proof that the All-American family is often just a deceptive lie. At the core, this is a frightening and intriguing story, but the execution isn't the most sophisticated. This is a grave problem, particularly since it prevents us from becoming as frightened by stalker Sy as we should. Rather than frightening or dramatic, we regard antagonist Sy with equal measures of pity and mild annoyance. He isn't nearly as creepy as he should be, despite the dozens of photos that adorn his apartment. Sy has stellar potential, though. He could be a truly creepy character to play, though he's hardly an attractive, charismatic man. He's a role for a strong, quirky character actor who could bring their own oddball energy to the role. Sy is a strong presence in the film, so it needs to be an actor who can conceivably carry the film and still be appealing despite his strange behavior.

Chubby, shy, and incapable of normal relationships, Sy isn't a role for the handsome leading man. If anything, the typical handsome leading man wouldn't do justice to this role. It is imperative that Sy be played by an actor who conceivably reminds the audience of the types of weird guys who normally work at photo lab counters. His unattractiveness must stand in stark contrast to beautiful, pure characters like Nina and Jake. The Yorkins are easy to figure out, and the story really isn't about them. It's about Sy. Nina is a fairly simple role, though it requires an actress who can display a range of emotion. Throughout the story, she is stalked, cheated on by her husband, and nearly killed by a madman. But the author fails to give her a realistic ending. Nina just resigns, then gives Will a forgiving hug. This will make the audience instantly regard her with less respect. During the other parts of the story, we liked her strength. She defends Jake and she devotes her energy to making the shy boy feel comfortable. This will endear an audience to her. An inherently likable character, Nina does nothing to deserve the injustices that are inflicted upon her. Nina has good appeal, but she's not a complicated woman. The same goes for the character of Will. Jake is a great character for a boy to play, but it is a role that could be made more complex by making his relationship with Sy bigger. If Jake talks to Sy more, it becomes a much greater threat, a la SLING BLADE or HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE. The script is missing this dimension to Jake.

In terms of the writing, the script is a disappointment. Sy talks in voice-over throughout most of the scenes, which defeats the tension in the story. It also makes the story feel too analytical, rather than raw and emotional. Everything is pre-digested and analyzed before we see it. Audiences will be disappointed when the script fails to provide the on-the-edge-of-your-seat thrill that stories like FATAL ATTRACTION, CAPE FEAR or COPYCAT did. All of Sy's thoughts, philosophies, and views on life's sadness are explained in deep detail. We have been given an academic examination of a human character, rather than seeing a realistic character (and coming to these conclusions on our own). As a film, this script needs work. We need a believable build-up to the tension and threat of Sy. Sy should start out more innocently, then slowly be revealed to be a madman.



Main Characters

**SY PARRISH (30s):** An awkward, socially inept man, Sy doesn't know how to relate to people. He grew up in a troubled home and hasn't found love in his life. Rather than meet new people, Sy becomes obsessed with the seemingly perfect lives of the families whose snapshots he develops at the one-hour photo. However, his idle crush on Nina goes over the line when he realizes she is being cheated on. Sy's fantasies have become reality, and he is convinced that he must save her from Will. Even when arrested, Sy feels innocent. To him, he was only taking pictures.

**NINA YORKIN (30s)** A beautiful, patient woman, Nina has put her heart and soul into her marriage. She spends her days trying to make her husband and shy son happy. With Jake, Nina has a special mother-son friendship. Her husband's distance makes Nina sad. She doesn't understand what has come between them. When she sees the photos of Will and Maya, it all makes sense. After Sy tries to ruin their lives, Nina forgives Will.

**JAKE YORKIN (9)** A shy boy, Jake just wants friends. He has a sad wisdom about him, though we never learn exactly why. (Sy suggests that Will does bad things to Jake, but it isn't a confirmed fact.) Jake smiles for his pictures, but is secretly sad when the camera is off. When Sy approaches him, Jake thinks nothing of it. He feels sorry for Sy, but doesn't suspect that Sy will try to hurt him.

ARTISAN ENTERTAINMENT

TITLE: COCK  
SUB'D TO: CG

DRAFT:  
AUTHOR: Matt Nix  
Based on the Novel by Will Self

SUB'D FROM: [REDACTED]

GENRE: Drama

COMPANY:  
DATE SUB'D: 6/5/00  
# OF PAGES: 108  
ELEMENTS:

DRAFT DATE:  
ANALYST: [REDACTED]  
FORMAT: SP  
LOCATION:

LOGLINE:

A miserable housewife who is married to a drunk discovers that she has a penis growing out of her vagina.

COMMENTS SUMMARY:

A trashy and intentionally disturbing story that tries to bill itself as a fable about female empowerment. While the premise is certainly inventive, the result is exploitive, violent, and occasionally just dumb.

	<u>excellent</u>	<u>good</u>	<u>fair</u>	<u>poor</u>
STRUCTURE			X	
CHARACTER			X	
DIALOGUE			X	
STORYLINE			X	
SETTING			X	

BUDGET HIGH: \_\_\_\_\_ MED: \_\_\_\_\_ LOW: X

PROJECT: PASS

WRITER: PASS

COMMENTS:

COCK is an intentionally disturbing yarn about a woman who grows a penis. While in theory this could be interesting, in practice it is simply mean, explicit, and ultimately pointless.

COCK is an adult fairy tale that attempts to comment on the nature of male female interaction. The idea of woman growing a literally penis as a way to deal with her problematic marriage and confusing sexuality is certainly unique. In the novel form, this story probably comes across as hip and unconventional. In the screenplay form, it is abrasive, pointless, and at times even nauseating.

The story device that this whole thing is being told as a fable from the Driver to the Young Man does not work for several reasons. First, the character of the Driver is pretentious and utterly unlikable. He spouts preposterous dialogue such as "tolerance of vice is an underrated virtue" as he spins his tale. In theory, the Driver is the one who must keep our attention throughout the entire film. If he is a lousy narrator, then the story is shot. At present, we want the Young Man to hop out of the car the moment that the Driver starts speaking. More importantly, the entire Dan and Carol story is soaked a tone of pompous irony, as if ever action is filled with hidden meaning and life changing importance. Aside from the penis, Carol and Dan's story is woefully cliché and predictable. In an attempt to create a fantasy home life, Carol marries a lame college guy who ends up being a drunk and a failure in bed. This tale of a suburban nightmare has been told hundreds of times before. Hopefully, AMERICAN BEAUTY has put the nail in the coffin of the whole suburban nightmare genre. The version of this story in COCK is particularly uninventive and dull. Even the storyline about the penis is predictable. The moment when Carol discovers the tiny nub, we can guess where the story is headed. Still, the writer takes thirty more pages before they reveal that Carol is growing an actual penis.

In the third act, things take a turn for the worse as the story becomes intentionally shocking and graphic. Carol comes up with a scheme where she knocks her recovering alcoholic husband off the wagon and then anally rapes him with her new phallus. At the same time, the Driver holds down the Young Man and rapes him at knifepoint. Perhaps the writer thinks that this is cutting edge cinema, but it is as trite and stupid as it comes. Especially since this entire story is couched as a tale of female empowerment. Instead, this comes across as intentional trash without the style of someone, like say John Waters, to make it palatable. In the end of the script, the Young Man turns to the viewer and attacks us for showing up to the film in the first place... a bit redundant as the writer has been berating us for the entire story.

**ARTISAN ENTERTAINMENT**

(comparison coverage)



TITLE: BICKFORD SHMECKLER'S COOL IDEAS DRAFT #: 1st Revision

SUB'D TO:

AUTHOR: Scott Lew

SUB'D FROM:

GENRE: college comedy

COMPANY:

DRAFT DATE: 9/13/99

DATE SUB'D:

ANALYST: [REDACTED]

# OF PAGES: 108pp.

FORMAT: SP

ELEMENTS:

LOCATION: U of Michigan

CVG DATE: 9/18/99

CIRCA: present day

---

LOG LINE: A loner college freshman overcomes his fears of being mentally ill and opens his heart up to a pretty young co-ed when he goes on a search for his stolen journal of deep thoughts.

---

COMMENT SUMMARY: The writer made changes on most every page. It amounts to a lot of tweaking rather than major content changes, clarifying, streamlining, and taking off some of the sharp edges of the protagonist. However, the changes risk harming the story's quirky and seamless, organic flow by saying things a bit more overtly. A polish seems in order.

---

Structure: **good**

Character: **good**

Dialogue: **good**

Story: **fair**

Setting: **good**

WRITER(S): **CONSIDER**

PROJECT: **CONSIDER**

BUDGET: High \_\_\_ Med. \_\_\_ Low X

**SYNOPSIS:** In his basement room, college freshman BICKFORD SCHMECKLER (19) paces back and forth, conjuring up deep thoughts to add to "The Book," his written collection of profundities. But the noise from the toga party upstairs makes concentration impossible, so Bic goes upstairs to investigate the festivities. In the kitchen he catches a stoned and pretty young co-ed, SARA, raiding the refrigerator. A brief conversation, and Bic decides to brave going out into the party, where he quickly realizes he doesn't fit in. Bic heads up to the roof, where one of his housemates, RALPH, and a few buddies are drinking beer. Thinking he might be about to jump, the guys talk Bic into stepping back from the edge of the roof and talking to them. Bic unleashes on them the tip of his intellectual iceberg, while meanwhile in his basement Sara stumbles on the bulk of his ruminations in the Book during her quest for munchies.

Sara decides to take her bootie along on her trip to get some drunken sex from her pretentious boyfriend TRENT. When Bic returns to his room, he finds the Book gone and he goes ballistic. Ralph tries to talk him down, but Bic stops the party and accuses the partiers of pilfering his prose. A drunk jock tosses Bic out of the house, and Ralph is the only one who cares enough to keep Bic from doing something rash in his quest to get the Book back. The next day, however, Bic is blowing as hot as ever, and he organizes Ralph and his two stoner housemates into an investigative unit. Bic soon figures out that Sara was the one who stole his book, but when he goes to her room he soon learns that she'd given the book to Trent to read because it blew her away so much, and that Trent had thrown it away because he'd been jealous of Bic's genuine intellectualism.

Sara tries to apologize as Trent helps Bic look in the dumpster, then Bic and Ralph go to the dump to try and recover the Book. It's a dead-end, but then SPACEMAN, a campus crazy person with tons of broken electronic equipment strapped on his head, shows up looking for Bic. Spaceman had grabbed the Book out of the trash, and he'd tracked Bic down from the address inside. Now Spaceman wants Bic's help in contacting the aliens he tunes in through his gear. Spaceman is obviously schizophrenic, but Bic plays along for days and days trying to get the Book back. He offers bribes and even offers to refer Spaceman to a good psychiatrist Bic knows, then finally gives up and contemplates killing Spaceman in a rage. Ralph talks Bic down, and Bic descends into a deep pit of depression over the loss of his Book. He even starts looking into dropping out of school, and in his despairing conversations with Ralph about not fitting in at school, Ralph

reveals that he's gay and thinks Bic might be, too. Bic isn't gay, but he doesn't spurn his new best friend for his sexuality. He doesn't have time to, since Sara calls up stoned, having discovered that printed copies of the Book are being circulated around campus.

Bic tracks the source of the copies down to a bunch of grad student geeks who hang out in a comic book store and play dungeon & dragons games. They had put aside their games when they were given the Book by Spaceman, and now have built up what is practically a cult around it. Bic, aluminum bat in hand, demands they stop distributing his incomplete book, and he collects the original and all copies of it. But getting the book back doesn't put a stop to Bic's obsession with it. Then, one day during cosmology, his professor, PROFESSOR ADAMS (sexy, female) calls him aside and lets him know that she'd given a copy to a publisher friend who is coming out to meet with Bic. Bic gloomily goes to Sara with the news, which she thinks is great. But Bic doesn't think so, and he explains the history behind the Book. Before he started college Bic had been hit by a BMW while driving his MOTHER. She'd been killed, and he'd though he'd been able to control his emotions over the loss. But he ended up blocking out friends and feeding his loner tendencies, becoming a super-monastic academic, isolating himself and thinking deep thoughts until he started losing his mind. His concerned FATHER had come with mental health workers and taken Bic away to a mental hospital, where Bic started writing the Book as part of his therapy. After a few weeks he was good enough to return to school, where he went back to obsessing about his deep thoughts. Sara tries to get Bic to loosen up and forgive himself, and get a grip on reality by getting a grip on her and making out.

Bic meets with the publisher and agrees to look over his offer to publish the book. Afterwards, Bic's friends throw him a party to celebrate, but Bic doesn't loosen up. He's still looking for the ending to his Book, and he can't think of it. Sara finally gets so fed up with him that she says he's full of shit, which is exactly the perspective Bic wants on his book. So, with a prologue saying that he as the writer is full of shit and that ultimately these thoughts aren't the truth and that we should just be happy after we let it expand our minds, Bic lets the Book be published...by the comic book geeks. Bic wants it free for anyone who wants to read it. He then calls and lets his Father know that he's happy finally at college...and that he's had sex with Sara, who lies asleep with him while he whispers into the phone. Bic hangs up with his understanding Father, then he slips out of bed and starts writing again.



BREAKDOWN:

note: Page numbers refer to the most recent draft.

p.1 A superimposed quote from Bic's Book has been added to the start of the screenplay.

p.1 Some minor phrasing changes have been made.

p.1 At the bottom of the page, Bic no longer slams the book closed and eats another Tootsie Pop and paces. Now he slams the book and wearily looks up at the ceiling.

p.2 THE BONG OPERATORS are now named as RED and PJ. Before they were anonymous.

p.2 RED (BONG OPERATOR #1) has the order of his first two sentences of dialogue reversed.

p.3 DRUNK JOCK loses hey-hey from his first line.

p.3 SARA has a line now that breaks up the Drunk Jock's dialogue. Now she says ...great. Yeah. Splendiferous...

p.3 DRUNK JOCK no longer checks his breath after Sara runs off. Now a COMELY CO-ED catches his eye and he has a line of dialogue saying hi to her.

p.3 The dance floor is described as being where some Roman PARTIERS are gettin' down.

pp.3-4 Added at the end of the dance floor scene, a ROMAN PARTIER approaches Sara and asks her if she wants to dance. She replies that she already is dancing.

p.4 In the basement with Bic, his foot no longer taps along to the music and he no longer looks at The Book.

p.4-6 Sara now turns the Captain Crunch upside down before finding it empty. The refrigerator is no longer locked. Sara opens it and starts rummaging around before hearing footsteps. Then once Bic catches her red-handed, Sara says she's "busted," but Bic and she just talk awkwardly about the party and how Bic has been wrestling with his thoughts. Before they'd just talked about whether he lives in the house. At the end of the scene, Bic now makes a big deal of going into the party.



p.6-7 NEW SCENE. Bic stands awkwardly in the party, gets insulted, then leaves.

p.7 Sara looks at Bic's basement door and there's an additional bumper sticker on it that says "Think."

p.7-8 This same scene, the scene with Sara foraging for food, no longer intercuts with Bic walking out to the edge of the roof and his talk with Ralph, Fred and Mellow Guy. Now Sara's scene is before the roof.

p.8 On the roof, now Fred has an exclamation point when he says it looks like Bic is going to jump. Before, it was not emphasized, as if it were a casual, drunken observation.

p.9-10 Ralph now starts off by offering Bic a beer, rather than doing it later. Fred no longer accuses Bic of having smoked pot. Fred admits he's ridiculed all the time. Fred says he will puke if Bic jumps off the roof and splatters on the ground.

p.11 In Bic's room, it's now both Hubble AND Chandra X-Ray photos on his walls.

p.11 Bic now paces as he lectures Ralph & co.

p.11-14 Bic's lecture is a little different, with a key difference being that he says we might be existing in not just the 5th dimension but maybe the 6th.

p.15 When Trent opens his door to Sara, his Aphrodite line has been changed to a much less erudite "Hey...hi."

p.15 Trent now says "What's this?" rather than "What's this notebook?"

p.15 Sara's nudity is now only suggested by the writer.

p.16 Sara says the Book is "Rocket fuel." rather than "Brain food...of the Gods."

p.16 When Bic sees his book gone, he's no longer described as a deer caught in the headlights.

p.16 The Drunk Jock no longer has his line and no longer checks his breath (because the earlier breath joke was cut).

p.17 Bic's accusation of the partiers has been trimmed down a bit. The "What's a cretin?" joke has been cut.

p.17-18 The Drunk Jock tosses Bic out of the party now instead of intimidating him into leaving.

p.18 Bic now walks rather than runs as he blows off steam.

p.18 The cop is now listed as a campus cop.

p.18 Bic says *some fucking pod-person* stole his book rather than a bastard.

p.19 The cop is more fed up with Bic, telling him to shut up.

p.20 Bic no longer says he doesn't believe in God when he thanks Him for Ralph (supposedly) finding his Book.

p.21 Bic now hugs Ralph in gratitude.

p.21 Ralph now says *cops* rather than *fuzz* in his big dialogue block.

p.21 Bic no longer says that he's 19 and that Ralph is a moron when he explains drinking 8 cups of coffee.

p.22 Bic calls Ralph a *fucking fibster*.

p.22 Ralph has a new line after Bic says to get away. Ralph says he feels he knows Bic and gets where he's coming from.

p.22 Ralph no longer says he can't leave a friend. Now he just stands there to indicate that he's not leaving.

p.22 Bic is no longer crying on the phone. He just looks like he had been crying for hours.

p.23 When Bic's Father talks to him on the phone, he's not as hard on Bic, and Bic now says he wants to come home to finish the Book.

p.24 Sara now reads a passage from the Book that's more scientific than poetic.

p.24 Sara says the ideas in the book make her brain orgasm.

p.25 Trent mocks Igmarr Bergman more, but doesn't go on to list "Chant" and frozen bananas as part of Sara's fads.

p.26 Trent now starts off counting higher numbers when thinking of how many people attended the party. The total is the same, however.

p.27-28 (and later pages) Bic no longer breaks out the police procedural book.

p.28 Red and PJ no longer say they don't study and that high school was for studying.

p.28 The Eagle Scout references have been removed here and on all later pages.

p.28 There's new dialogue where the guys discuss the meaning of "quisling."

p.29 There's new dialogue of Red and PJ calling Ralph things like a "pole smoker." Ralph joins in now with a gay slur of his own to be one of the guys.

p.30 The Siegfried and Roy homosexuality crack aimed at Ralph has been taken out. Replacing it is a slap fight between Red and PJ over a Gatorade bottle.

p.31 Herbie says homework *before* practice rather than homework after practice.

p.32-33 Bic accuses Sara of stealing his book in a more straight-forward way than before.

p.33 Sara's explanation of her painting has been shortened at the end.

p.34 Instead of Bic saying he doesn't give a rat's ass about Sara's stupid painting, Bic now says he's a little distracted right now, to which Sara responds with a relevant quote from the Book.

p.35 Instead of saying "Oh, shit." when Sara brings Bic by, he says "Oh, Mandy."

p.36 Bic now notices when Trent says Sara wanted to have sex with him. Sara shows embarrassment at having this revealed.

p.36-37 Bic and Trent's interaction at the dumpster has been shortened.

p.37-38 A scene has been added with Sara catching up to Bic on campus to apologize to him. Bic calls Sara a Siren and insults her further, saying her bad qualities outweigh her allure.

p.39 In the dump, Bic's line about a little college town generating all this garbage is cut.

p.39 Bic no longer yells at Ralph. Instead he laments not being able to find the Book.

p.40 The dump scene ends with Bic in the massive pit with his lips trembling. The security guard part has been cut out.

p.40 There's now a time lapse in the Big Old House going from day to night.

p.41 When Bic is thanking Ralph on the phone for his help, he doesn't say it was half-hearted.

p.41 Bic no longer talks about rewriting the Book nor about withdrawing from school.

p.41 Bic no longer talks about how complex reality is at the end of his Mobius Strip explanation.

p.42 Spaceman now questions whether Ralph is a clone.

p.43 Bic's Father no longer asks over the phone if it's Bic who's the caller.

p.43 At the start of the interrogation scene, the lamp no longer momentarily blinds us.

p.43 Spaceman no longer talks about each individual molecule containing the center of the universe.

p.43-44 The initial schizophrenic references have been cut, but the later "But this guy's a schitzo!" has been left in. Ralph's inquiry into Bic's knowledge of schizophrenia has been moved to this section of the scene, with Bic stopping it by asking who's on trial here.

p.44 Spaceman asks Bic for help.

p.44 When Bic demands his book back, he says being schitzo doesn't mean you have to be a thief.

p.44-45 Spaceman no longer repeats *Clues across the transom*. Instead he ends this dialogue with *Critical information*. He later says *Clues across the transom*. after playing the tape player static.

p.45 Bic now is less certain that Spaceman wants Bic to help him get home, phrasing it as a question now.

p.45 Ralph says *Poor guy*. in reference to Spaceman.

p.45 Bic cuts short his dialogue about all the things he'll do for Spaceman as long as he gets the book back. This cuts out Ralph's defenestrate joke.

p.47 Red now says "Spaceman did?" rather than "He did?"

p.47 Red now has a Kurt Cobain joke.

p.47 Bic now threatens Spaceman not with accusing him of trying to steal their stereos but with throwing him in a loony bin.

*p.48 READER'S NOTE: The page from the Book Spaceman holds up to burn is described as having the introductory poem that Sara read to Trent. However, now that poem (on p.23-24) has been replaced by a scientific passage.*

p.48 Bic now clicks off the lamp before admitting Ralph is right about not being able to negotiate with aliens.

p.48-50 A new scene has been added with Sara finding a cute guy too boring to fool around with.

p.50 The intro to the picnic scene has been re-ordered a bit, but no real content change.

p.51 Spaceman now says *puzzle* in two lines.

p.51 *Bic loses it*. has been cut after Spaceman picks up the Etch-a-Sketch. Bic now snaps and is more exclamatory in demanding to be allowed to talk.

p.52 Spaceman now interjects "Good, good."

p.52 Spaceman now interjects "Medication?"

p.52 Bic ends his speech about medication by saying he knows doctors who can help for reasons he won't get into now.

p.52 Spaceman now says "You mean...drugs?"

p.52 Spaceman rattles off more drug names and no longer says that the aliens are immune and he and Bic will think them out of his head.

p.52-53 Instead of the scene ending, Spaceman keeps rattling off things, and Sara stops by and says how much she likes Bic but how she doesn't have to talk to him anymore since she's just unburdened herself. Bic laments being stuck with Spaceman.

p.54-55 Bob gets to the point about Spaceman more quickly, then he rattles off his lines with less quips from other characters.

p.56 The montage is now two scenes, one of typing the Book into a computer and the other of making copies. The part with handing it out around campus and Bic and Spaceman talking has been cut (they still talk after the montage).

p.56-57 Bic losing his patience with Spaceman has been reworked and his threat has been made less gruesome.

pp.57-58 Bic's interaction with Ted has been cut out completely.

p.58 Bob's Book club is now given the name of "Reality/Isn't."

p.58 Now the woman in a suit stops by and picks up a copy of the book from Bob in the same scene as Bic, rather than in a separate one right after the making-of-the-Book montage.

p.58 Bic says "I'm busy." replacing "Fuck you." to Bob.

p.59 Nintendo is now Play Station.

p.59 Bic no longer contemplates peeling off Spaceman's skin.

p.60 Boy Scouts reference cut.

p.60 Bic accuses Ralph of trying to save the world.

p.60-61 Some minor reworking of Bic and Ralph's lines, including a Credible Force line and Bic saying he's gone through Spaceman's stuff three times. Ralph no longer says Bic isn't a murderer, and he no longer asks for the fork.

p.62 A new scene with Bic pacing and hitting his head on a beam.

Type-o on P.62 -- It sounds like *may be* Bic crying.

p.63 Trent now walks past three sun-bathing sorority girls, one of whom is reading the book and discusses it with the others.

p.64 Guys in a gym discuss the Book.

p.64 A skatepunk bashes the book as being over-hyped like "Blair Witch."

p.64 A procrastinating student reads it in the library.

pp.64-65 The academic lady from Bob's stand reads the Book in her bath.

p.65 Girls in line for kebabs talk about the Book.

p.65 A guy in bed with a girl discusses the Book rather than have sex with her.

p.66 Sara now has a painting with a Buddha on it. She also initially rejects the idea of smoking the joints Trent gave her.

pp.66-67 A new set of scenes with Bic in the dean's office to find out how to bail out of school because he's losing his mind.

p.69 There's now less description of Bic's face between the Hubble pictures.

p.69 Bic's swearing has been removed, and his dialogue changed a little bit. Also, now Bic and Ralph are discussing Bic dropping out of school.

p.70-72 Now Ralph gets out that he's gay without being interrupted. Bic says he's not gay, but that he won't freak out about Ralph being gay.

p.73-74 A little tweaking of the dialogue. Ralph gets part of a Sara line. Ralph also says *talk* instead of *vent*. Sara no longer says "I love your cool ideas." Sara also comments on getting so looped on just pot.

p.74 Sara says it's been 3 weeks since she stole the Book, instead of one week. She also says she's going to give up pot for the semester.

p.74 Bic declines Sara's invitation to get together not because he's going to kick some ass, but because he has to think about it.

p.75 Ralph and Bic talk less about Sara, and Bic invites Ralph, whom he knows is gay, out to have a beer to show he's cool with it.

pp.75-76 The car accelerating scene is cut. Replacing it is Bic and Ralph having a quick beer at a sports bar.

pp.76-77 The nerds are no longer playing chess. Instead, they are trying to come up with their own profundities.

*READER'S NOTE: The nerds are referred to as "the chess players" after Bic smashes the cash register. They're not playing chess in this draft.*

p.78 Bob no longer says that Bic is the asshole who threw the Book on the Union roof. Bob also doesn't say he couldn't have written it because he's an undergrad. Bic just gets down to the business of proving his authorship.

p.78 After Bic proves it's his book, they don't ask to show off their club house, they want to show off their own cool ideas. Bob also says he thought Bic would look more like Abbie Hoffman.

p.79 Bic says the "Reality Isn't" hats are a copyright infringement.

p.79 Bob no longer says Bic sucks. He says he's an arrogant prick.

p.79 Bic doesn't get into why he wrote the Book. He just wants the key chains and tee-shirts. The scene with him overseeing the handing over of the Book gear is also cut.

p.80 Bic no longer gives Spaceman the finger as he walks across campus.

p.80 Bic is now nice about refusing Ralph's help with the box.

p.82 The glare off the white page and the sunglasses gag have been cut.

p.82-84 Bic's conversation with Ted is now with Sara, and slightly altered.

pp.85-86 Bic now calls the professor "Professor Adams." She's described as a teacher in an Aerosmith video. Minor alterations in their dialogue. She no longer calls Bic's ideas brain-teasers. She also says Bic will owe her for the publisher thing.

p.87 Red and PJ have their dialogue tweaked a little bit.

pp.87-88 Bic and Ralph's dialogue has been changed to avoid the whole gay reveal, since it's already been done. Now Ralph tries to talk Bic into letting himself be happy.

p.88-89 A new scene has been added in a coffee bar where Bic is met by Spaceman, who says the aliens miss him.



p.89 Sara is no longer described as looking much better and clear-eyed.

p.90 Sara no longer invites Bic in and says the girls bite. Also, minor dialogue changes. A bigger change is Sara no longer goes into the whole "you've got the shoulder of the most sexy girl in the galaxy to cry on." speech.

p.91 The scene with Sara and Bic at the sorority has been lengthened to have Sara bring up Bic's craziness earlier when he was looking for a knife to kill Spaceman, and Bic saying he killed his mother with a car.

p.91 When Bic discusses the car crash, he puts more blame on himself for letting it happen. Bic also no longer talks about what he said at the funeral.

p.94 Bic no longer apologizes for blaming Sara for stealing his Book, and she no longer says that it was odd to hear him refer to it as a notebook.

p.98 When the publisher probes Bic for his literary influences, Bic now says he's not in the same league as the people that were listed, and the publisher says that depends on the sales figures of his book. Before, Bic had said it was personal, which led to a discussion of how the book came to be found in the dumpster, etc.

p.99 PJ no longer says "Let's eat!"

p.101 Bic now says "Fuck this noise." rather than "Damn it all."

p.101 Bic says he can't help thinking this whole thing is just a "big mistake" rather than a "crime."

p.102 Sara just tells Bic that misery loves company but she doesn't. Before she'd said go ahead and burn the book and then went off on his feelings of guilt over his mother and his obsession with the Book.

pp.105-106 Bic apologizes to Bob now by reiterating Bob's line about committing hari kari. Minor dialogue changes.

**COMMENTS:** With at least a tune-up on nearly every page, the writer has obviously dived back into his story and given serious attention on how to improve it. There are several major areas the rewrite covered. First, the writer tries to make Bic a nicer crackpot, rather than the caustic nutcase he was in the earlier draft. This is effective in making him more sympathetic, but also takes away a bit of Bic's loveable irascibility. Wisely or not, Bic is now much less dangerous seeming, with his desire to kill people who have messed with him (like Spaceman) less pronounced. Bic also seems a little more normal, being able to interact like a regular, if distanced, human being. Part of this comes from a seeming need for Bic to say the right things at the right time, and thus risk breaking him out of character. Attention should be paid to seeing if what Bic does is really right for Bic, rather than just right for the story.

Another area that has been changed is moving up Ralph's gay reveal to earlier in the story. Also, Ralph's Eagle Scouts background has been removed, which eliminates some good jokes but seems sensible for legal reasons. More specifics have been added about the content of the Book, however by changing the passage Sara reads to Trent from poetry to scientific musings seems to be a loss, eliminating a glimpse into the poetry of Bic's soul. Scenes with supporting characters have been trimmed or switched to being with more central characters, such as Sara talking to Bic in the quad rather than Ted. Overall, it's a tough call about whether this rewrite has improved the story. True, the story needed more direction than before and needed to avoid straying off on tangents. And Bic has been made less distancing, but the changes risk stating things too overtly and making things too obvious. They also risk taking away the quirky flow of the story by creating stoppers that don't seem to fit into place. A read in which the reader is stopping on every page to record changes is hardly the best judge of whether a story flows naturally, but it seems a polish is in need to make the changes fit more seamlessly in the story.

EXAMPLE AMG-NY coverage  
Usually Available material

AMG

SUBMITTED TO:  
SUBMITTED BY:  
SUBMITTED FOR: Available

DATE: 4/27/00  
EVALUATED BY:

FOUR BLONDES  
(Book, 319 pages)

CREATIVE PERSONNEL

WRITER: Candace Bushnell

DIRECTOR:

PRODUCER:

CAST:

LOG LINE: Four vignettes that tell of four women as they search for love, meaning, and careers in New York City.

COMMENT SUMMARY: Though well written, the vignettes feel unconnected. There isn't a strong thread tying the stories together and the four women aren't always likable.

GENRE: Dramedy

PERIOD: Present day

SETTING: New York

PROJECT: RECOMMEND ( )  
RECOMMEND WITH RESERVATIONS ( )  
NOT RECOMMEND WITH RESERVATIONS (X)  
NOT RECOMMEND ( )

WRITER: RECOMMEND (X)  
NOT RECOMMEND ( )

CLIENT: RECOMMEND ( )  
NOT RECOMMEND ( )  
NOT APPLICABLE (X)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Premise			XXX	
Structure				XXX
Dialogue		XXX		
Writing Style			XXX	
Characterization		XXX		
Pacing			XXX	

Budget: High \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ Low X

### Summary

New York City, 2000. Out-of-work fashion model JANEY WILCOX (late 20s) qualifies as a "lukewarm celebrity". This status allows her certain privileges. Each summer, Janey finds a rich MAN to let her stay in his Hamptons house. Being part of the summer society at the Hamptons is crucial. (If it means having sex with an ugly man, so be it.) In spring, this becomes her challenge - choosing a man with a good house for the summer. True, it introduces Janey to all varieties of awful men. For instance, self-absorbed lawyer, PETER (30s), dumps women who won't put out on the first date and is furious when anyone tries to drive his car. However, Peter has a lovely house, so Janey puts up with him. Janey meets handsome English record producer, ZACK MANNERS (30s). REDMON RICHARDLY (30s), a writer, is horrified that she's interested in Zack. Redmon wants Janey to be with him.

Janey's most favorite summer man was billionaire HAROLD VANE. (Women love Harold. His ex-girlfriends constantly set him up with new women.) Harold lets Janey pick a car for the summer from his big collection. Harold even sets Janey up with snide magazine editor MAEVE (40s) when Janey claims she wants to be a writer. When Harold breaks up with her, it's a quick, efficient transaction. Later, Harold begs Janey not to date guys like Peter. She's not going to have a career, so she should really find a husband.

During the winter in New York bars, Zack is fascinated by Janey. He thinks she's a socialite girl. He invites her to his Hamptons house for a drink. Janey goes and Zack tries to force her into awkward dirty sex. Zack considers her to be a whore. Janey is forced to escape out the bedroom window and call Harold for a ride home.

The next year, Janey decides to take matters into her own hands. She won't have rich people thinking she's a whore. She'll get her own place. Redmon is sensitive about the fact that, at \$2 million, Janey doesn't think he's really rich. Redmon introduces Janey to his best friends, the WESTACOTTS. A horribly unhappy couple, BILL WESTACOTT is an asshole, while HELEN WESTACOTT is crazy. Though he insinuates that Janey is just a whore, Bill tries to have sex with her. Janey gives in. They begin to sleep with each other regularly. Finally, Bill confesses to a horrified Redmon and Helen. Janey is sent home.

Back in New York, Janey gets annoyed. Her little sister PATTY (27) is a "hot shit TV producer" and is getting more attention. They compete for the spotlight at parties. Patty sometimes wins because she's dating a pallid musician, DIGGER. Janey and Harold have become best friends. They discuss marriage. Harold claims that he doesn't need marriage, though Janey knows that "older man, younger woman" just leads to very fucked-up kids. In a bar, someone tells Janey "go to London: you get married."

Janey begins dating ugly, but incredibly powerful film producer, COMSTOCK DIBBLE (50s). She's in love. He rents her a small cottage in the Hamptons for the summer. She gets a computer and begins writing a screenplay. (She actually finishes about 40 pages before she loses interest.) Comstock is a man who encourages Janey to use her mind and have an opinion. During the summer, Janey bumps into Bill. After trying to rekindle their affair from last summer (to no avail), Bill gets revenge by telling her news: Comstock is

married to a "horsy socialite", no less. At the swank society wedding of Patty, Janey's fear is confirmed. Comstock actually shows up at the affair with the horsey socialite.

Determined to help Janey get a job and be self-sufficient, Harold signs Janey up for real estate agent classes. Janey gets a call from the people at Victoria's Secret. They have a shoot and need "real women". A \$2 million deal later, Janey doesn't need her real estate agent classes.

We meet our next New York couple. The unhappily married JAMES and WINNIE DIEKE (30s). An intellectual couple, they're both serious journalists. Winnie has risen to a top-ranked columnist position, while James flounders in his own writing career. Winnie is irritated by James' defeatist attitude. Winnie is the ultimate "tight ass". She doesn't drink, eat too much fat, and she thinks women who sleep around are whores. Winnie's life must go according to schedule, or else. James and Winnie live in mutual, secret fear that they'll be abandoned by each other.

Winnie has an impulsive, sexpot sister EVIE (20s). The rigid Winnie is horrified when Evie snags a coveted NY Times piece by flirting with a well-placed EDITOR at a party. Winnie thinks something is wrong with James. Why hasn't he written a book by now? James thinks something is wrong, too. Namely, he hates Winnie. For her birthday, James goes shopping for Winnie. He meets Evie and they buy Winnie a pair of expensive shoes. James is hoping the afternoon will turn into having sex with Evie. No such luck. James is crestfallen when Winnie sneers at the shoes. The next morning, Winnie celebrates her new birthday by vomiting up her breakfast and reading Evie's fluffy NY Times piece.

Deep inside, Winnie fears failure. Each morning, she scours Amazon.com to find out if competing authors are making more money. If her peers aren't on the bestseller lists, it makes her happy. James brings Winnie to the fancy premiere of a film that their old friend, TANNER (30s), a movie star, starred in. Winnie is incredibly attracted to Tanner. In the past weeks, James has been reading on alpha males. Leaders of the pack, alpha males sleep with lots of women (to reproduce). James realizes Tanner is an alpha male.

At the end of the night, Tanner goes home with Evie. James ends up snorting coke with a friend and comes home in the morning. When confronted by a furious Winnie, he thinks he's having a heart attack. He's rushed to the hospital, but it is only a false alarm. In the morning, James covers a press conference. There, he meets Winnie's voluptuous co-worker, AMBER ANDERS (30s). They discuss alpha males, then go back to Amber's seedy apartment for wild sex. Across town, Winnie goes to Tanner's hotel room to screw him. In the morning, James gets an email from Amber. Does he still want to discuss writing an article on alpha males? He's worried the one-afternoon-stand will be exposed to Winnie. James says no.

We meet our next character, the emotionally distraught PRINCESS CECILIA LUXEMBOURG (30s). Married to steady TV producer HUBERT (40s), she's an emotional wreck. She won't eat and she snorts bad-quality coke in the morning (it makes her puke up any leftover food). Her day is filled with visits to DOCTORS, SHRINKS, and avoiding the rabid PAPARAZZI that follow her everywhere. She tells the amused

DR. Q that someone is trying to poison her. Her gossipy male best friend D.W. (40s) is angry that she's lost touch with him. After weighing herself, Cecilia decides she's thin enough to go outside. She meets DW for a drink. DW knocks some sense into her. Her weird behavior is making her husband consider divorce. She needs to be seen at parties again. He decides she needs a charity (he chooses encephalitic babies). Deep inside, she wonders if she can still manipulate Hubert like she used to. (When first married, she convinced Hubert to buy her new clothes. She wore last year's togs in front of the press, they criticized them, and the humiliated Hubert finally gave her cash for new clothes.)

But Hubert is growing tired of her dramatics. When she chases him out of the house one morning in her nightgown, he lets the PHOTOGRAPHERS snap photos of her. She's privately hurt that the tabloids are calling her anorexic. She decides to go to a salon for a makeover. When a SALON EMPLOYEE is clearly gossiping about her, she has him fired. One evening, she attends the Ballet, claiming to be her own cousin. She's soon found out. She makes a dramatic dash out of the party with movie star, MILES HANSON. In the morning, Hubert is hurt to read about it in the papers.

One afternoon, feeling better, Cecilia decides to visit Hubert at work. There's a cold reception. He isn't around. Cecilia waits for him in the greenroom, befriending the show's guest, the nutty DIANNA MOON (30s). Cecilia suddenly deduces that nervous Hubert is having an affair with a CO-WORKER. Furious, Cecilia has lunch with Dianna Moon. The press finds this fascinating. Cecilia is thrilled to finally have a girlfriend again. She flashes back to her first experiences in New York. She was working as a poor salesgirl at Ralph Lauren. There, she met DW (a customer), who found her a job at an art gallery. There, she fell in with high society and was adopted by the press as the newest millennium girl.

Cecilia spends a debauched few weeks in Cannes, for the film festival. On yachts and in French clubs, she drinks, does drugs, and goes to parties. When Hubert arrives for a few days vacation, Cecilia refuses to stop hassling him about his affair. She learns that LIL BIT PARSONS, an ex-flame of his, is in town. At a dinner party at his AUNT URSULA's, they meet Lil Bit. Though Lil Bit is innocent, Cecilia fumes. When Lil Bit reads tarot cards for the party, Cecilia claims that Lil Bit is a complete fraud. Exhausted, Hubert wonders why he and Cecilia fight this much. At a society wedding, they put on a happy face. GUESTS wish they could have a marriage this happy. Dianne tells Cecilia they're good friends because they're both outsiders to New York society.

We cross the Atlantic to London, where our next character is. In her 40s, she's been sent to London to write a piece on British men. For research, she's been out meeting British men and notices that London women are all married, even the ugly ones. In New York, a woman can be beautiful and successful, but unable to find a date. She hears that British men are lousy in bed, but make great husbands. In contrast, British gals are frigid. She meets with her prim EDITOR (40s), who guesses she hasn't nailed a real story. There's a deadline and she desperately needs a story about sex in London. She must screw an Englishman. She meets a variety of NOBLEMEN. The longer the name, the worse they are in bed.

However, her world is thrown upside down when she meets RORY ST. JOHN CUNNINGSNOT-BEDWARDS (one of the "long names"). He even admits that he has a tragically small penis. Nonetheless, they spend a weekend together. She thinks she's falling in love with him. Sadly, Rory ends the affair. But, all is not lost. Flying back to New York, she meets a man on the plane. He's reading Forbes and they make a date for dinner.

### Comments

FOUR BLONDES is an collection of vignettes that tell the stories of 4 women as they search for love, meaning, and careers in New York. However, it's mostly about searching for love. All in all, the book feels like a combination of SEX AND THE CITY and HUSBANDS AND WIVES, with a few paragraphs from a Cosmopolitan Magazine article thrown in for good measure. The writing is strong and the author has amassed quite a collection of oddball ladies, but this story suggests more of an interesting small independent film in the vein BABY TALK. There just isn't enough of a storyline. The four women don't have that much in common with each other, other than residing within walking distance of their respective Manhattan apartments. There isn't an obvious thread connecting these four women. This is a problem that may prevent this book from truly engaging an audience – what exactly is this story about? We finish the book without a clear idea. It doesn't feel like enough to say it's a character piece. Admittedly, each of these characters could shoulder the weight of a film story, but the film doesn't commit to any one. We see brief bits from their lives, then quickly move on to our next story.

Unlike Bushnell's SEX AND THE CITY, FOUR BLONDES jumps to a new character each 60-80 pages, often leaping precariously from 3<sup>rd</sup> person p.o.v. to 1<sup>st</sup> person p.o.v. without warning. The tales of "how the other half lives" is curiously interesting, but it's *not* a glamorous look at the other half. The stories of these four girls aren't uplifting. In SEX AND THE CITY, we love the fact that our four heroines toss back pink cocktails and frankly discuss the messy intricacies of sex. They're smart women with an enviable, likable core. FOUR BLONDES hasn't convinced us to like these ladies. In fact, we feel sorry for them as they scheme for free summer homes, more Xanax, new handbags, and ways to get their under-achiever husbands plum spots on the Amazon.com best-selling lists. They're simply not chasing goals that a massive, wide-reaching audience will empathize with.

The characters are a colorful bunch, but they are all markedly different in tone. Their stories feel like pieces that would all be directed by different directors. Janey's story is an interesting look at the culture of the "summer Hamptons society" similar to the recent bestseller MILLENIUM GIRL. Winnie's story reminds us of the pent-up married character that Judy Davis plays in HUSBANDS AND WIVES. The nutty celebrity character of Cecilia (though a thoroughly intriguing oddball) almost feels like a caricature that Libby Gelman-Waxler's column would lambaste. Cecilia is too nutty to be considered a reliable main character in a romantic comedy. Our sex journalist in the 4<sup>th</sup> and final vignette conjures up visions of what Carrie from SEX AND THE CITY will be in 15 years. (Beautiful and working on taboo journalist subjects, but still unable to find Mr. Right.) At 30, it's endearing. At mid-40s, the audience starts to get uncomfortable.

All in all, an intriguing read, and definitely something that Candace Bushnell/SEX AND THE CITY fans will be eager to buy. It's almost a continuation of the other book, but we see too much of the cold and awful reality of this gold-digging world, without the likable edge that the previous book had.



## Main Characters

**JANEY WILCOX:** Lacking an ambition to go into business, Janey is trying to find a sense of security. Fat as a child, she is now thrilled that her adult career has been based on the fact that she has a perfect body. She doesn't apologize for her body, but instead uses it to get the things she wants. She is often cold and scheming, using people to serve her needs. Vain, Janey hates being considered a whore. When the real members of New York society meet her, she's convinced they don't see her as anything other than a gold-digger.

**WINNIE DIEKE:** An intelligent woman with exacting standards, Winnie has painted herself into a corner. With the absurd standards she has set for her husband and friends, there is no way she'll ever be happy. Nobody can possibly live up to her tough demands. Winnie longs to be cherished, but she doesn't realize that her own husband does cherish her, in his own way.

**CECILIA LUXEMBOURG:** Anorexic, bulimic, and craving one more bottle of Xanax, Cecilia is a messed up young woman. Married to a steady husband, Cecilia's realizing that even he is becoming tired of her antics. She's unable to find anything that makes her happy and is tormented by the rabid paparazzi that waits outside her apartment. Bored with her life, Cecilia resorts to tormenting her husband for entertainment. At the root of it all, she's lonely.

**40SOMETHING AMERICAN LADY JOURNALIST:** In England to research the amusing topic of Englishmen in bed, our journalist is secretly looking for a man of her own. Now in her 40s, she's past what New York men consider the prime. She finds that, even at 40, there are men who refuse to commit to relationships. However, she's still able to go out and drink like a professional.

**ORIGINAL**

**NEW REGENCY PRODUCTIONS, INC.**

**TITLE:** THE LOWER FORTY-EIGHT  
**AUTHOR:** James Seale  
**FORMAT:** S.P.  
**PAGES:** 125  
**DRAFT:**  
**DATE:**  
**BASED ON:**  
**BY:**  
**ELEMENTS:**  
**STATUS:**

**DATE COVERED:** 6/10/98  
**SUBMITTED TO:** [REDACTED]  
**SUBMITTED BY:** [REDACTED]  
**AGENCY/CO.:** Writers & Artists  
**DATE SUB.:** 6/9/98  
**ANALYST:** [REDACTED]  
**CIRCA:** Present  
**LOCALE:** Alaska, Montana  
Washington D.C.  
**GENRE:** Thriller

---

**LOG LINE:** When a mysterious killer called the "Snowman" begins committing ruthless mass-murders, the widow of one of his victims attempts to hunt him down, aided by the insight of another serial killer who has escaped from prison and has a personal vendetta with the Snowman.

---

**COMMENTS:** THE LOWER FORTY-EIGHT is, at heart, a dumbed-down version of THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS, foregoing its forebear's cerebral thrills for a plot more dependent on action set-pieces. Despite a few decent sequences, the script is killed by a silly macguffin and by the inept characterization of the "friendly" serial killer, who lacks Hannibal Lecter's elemental mystery and grandeur.

---

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Premise			X	
Characters			X	.X
Dialogue		X	X	
Plotting		X	X	

**PROJECT:** PASS  
**WRITER:** PASS

**SYNOPSIS:** In the Alaskan wilderness, psychiatrist MICHAEL RENFRO (30s) is found dead, his eyes gouged out. Near him, a snowman wearing Renfro's eyes. In the months to pass, Renfro's undiscovered killer is nicknamed "The Snowman." His widow, wealthy JULES RENFRO (32), has given up her ultra-successful financial career to hunt down the killer, employing a private 737 full-time and a detective, GORDON ADKINS (68). Bribing an FBI agent for the latest info, she learns that the agent in charge of the "Snowman" hunt, JAMES HIGGINS, is in San Quentin to see GRAHAM WINTER (44), a serial killer on death row. Graham burned alive 16 young women, but is tortured by guilt in his rare lucid moments.

Higgins meets with Graham before his scheduled execution. Graham has received letters from the Snowman, saying he wants to meet his famous killing forebear. The Snowman has threatened a massacre if Graham is executed. But Higgins wants to test him, and lets the execution take place -- lethal injection. That night, it snows in Butte, Montana. DR. RICHARD COOK, his family, and some 20 others, are brutally massacred. The Snowman has struck again. Higgins flies to the scene, Jules close behind. Arriving at the site, Jules scolds Higgins for letting the Snowman strike again, and threatens to publicize the FBI's foreknowledge of Snowman's threat. To shut her up, Higgins agrees to let her work with the FBI. He also has another reason...

Higgins reveals that the Snowman has sent another letter, requesting that Jules accompany Graham to meet him in Chicago. Or he will kill a young lady. At a safe-house, Jules meets a shackled Graham -- who is very much alive, his execution having been faked. Although she is horrified by the grim, unpredictable Graham, Jules agrees to meet the Snowman with him. Flying to Chicago, Jules and Graham take a subway to Logan Square as indicated by Snowman. But there's only a tape recording -- asking Jules to ditch her FBI tails and tracking-collars or the girl dies.

Jules complies, to Higgins' dismay. Losing the FBI agents, she and Graham follow further instructions on the tape leading them to an abandoned factory. Their entry sets off a trap, causing the factory to explode. Graham shouts a warning to Jules, who barely escapes. Graham dives into a hole in the ground, obviously placed there by Snowman, and comes to afterward. Coming to, he finds keys to his handcuffs and further instructions leading him to a car outside. Calling him on a cell-phone, Snowman explains that he needs to keep Graham alive to "play the game." Looking in the trunk of the car, Graham is horrified to see the dead body of his daughter KELLY ANN -- the only person he ever loved.

**NEW REGENCY PRODUCTIONS, INC. "THE LOWER FORTY-EIGHT" 4**

**COMMENTS:** THE LOWER FORTY-EIGHT incorporates elements of THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS -- a female protagonist forms a bond with a ruthless serial killer while using his insight to catch a second killer -- into a less cerebral action/thriller format revolving around an unlikely premise: a group of scientists have created the "ultimate killer" by combining the DNA of Charles Manson and others, in order to see whether nature or nurture produces a monster.

The implausibility of this macguffin more or less sinks THE LOWER FORTY-EIGHT from the start. The concept that homicidal tendencies are genetically based is almost as unbelievable as the supposition that a group of well-trained scientists would perform such a dangerous and irresponsible experiment. Never mind that there aren't any controls or other standard procedures attending this "scientific" study. This premise might suffice for a B-grade thriller, but is too silly for this script's ambitions.

Another -- and more central -- flaw is the characterization of Graham Winter, the 16-time serial killer who helps protagonist Jules Renfro to catch the villain, a la Hannibal Lecter. Author James Seale makes an important error in presenting Graham. Rather than an inscrutable sage a la Lecter, Graham ultimately comes off as a cuddly partner -- someone we can trust. This is reinforced by several long sequences in which we are with Graham alone -- not seeing him through someone else's eyes, as we always saw Lecter -- and watch him battling his own demons. Seale attempts to offset this by various scenes in which Graham appears frightening and unpredictable; but he fails to merge these two extremes into one believable character.

The scene in which Graham resists the temptation to kill a teenage girl (pp.70-72) is fundamentally wrongheaded because it attempts to bridge the gap between Graham's psychosis and his status as a sympathetic character. To bridge that gap is a move SILENCE OF THE LAMBS wisely never attempted, and would require a far more sophisticated level of writing than THE LOWER FORTY-EIGHT evinces. Graham's crimes are too horrific to be trivialized as a simple dialogue between the angel and the devil on his shoulder.

There are a few decent action set-pieces and plot-twists along the way, like a scene involving a runaway jet on an airport runway (pp.74-78). But for the most part, THE LOWER FORTY-EIGHT only invites comparison to THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS, a comparison that's never flattering to this script.

Example of APG coverage for a  
AMG SPEC

SUBMITTED TO:  
SUBMITTED BY:  
SUBMITTED FOR: Spec

DATE: 7/11/00  
EVALUATED BY:

TRICKS OF THE TRADE  
(Screenplay, 130 pages)

CREATIVE PERSONNEL

WRITERS: Jeffrey Goldberg & Richard Taylor  
DIRECTOR: N/A  
PRODUCER: N/A  
CAST: N/A

LOG LINE: Facing a deep recession upon graduation, four unemployed Columbia MBA's start an e-commerce web site with the mob, but soon get in over their heads.

COMMENT SUMMARY: Too much GOODFELLAS and not enough ANALYZE THIS, TRICKS OF THE TRADE tries too hard to be a bloody gangster drama when it might have been a very funny comedy. It starts out with a tongue-in-cheek look at how a future recession creates the perfect motivation for four unemployed MBA's to retool the mafia's aging business model, but then devolves into the last act of CASINO. The transitions are awkward, the characters lack credibility, and the story itself seems more silly than fun. The end result is a promising concept that feels totally wasted on what turns out to be a banal tale of gangland turf war.

GENRE: Dramedy  
PERIOD: Present  
SETTING: New York

PROJECT: RECOMMEND ( )  
RECOMMEND WITH RESERVATIONS ( )  
NOT RECOMMEND WITH RESERVATIONS ( )  
NOT RECOMMEND (X)  
WRITERS: RECOMMEND ( )  
NOT RECOMMEND (X)  
CLIENT: RECOMMEND ( )  
NOT RECOMMEND ( )  
NOT APPLICABLE (X)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Premise		XXX		
Structure			XXX	
Dialogue			XXX	
Writing Style			XXX	
Characterization			XXX	
Pacing			XXX	

Budget: High \_\_\_\_\_ Medium XXX Low \_\_\_\_\_

Summary

For four Columbia MBA's in their 20's—handsome, dirty blond PARKER WHITEHURST; athletic and dark TOMMY LEONARDO; slim, nerdy JOEL SANDERS; and intense competitor ROGER CARLSON, the only African-American—their imminent graduation date is anything but a joyous occasion. The nation has sunk into a terrible recession, and job prospects are non-existent. In the dingy apartment the friends share, their “Wailing Wall” holds dozens of rejection letters for each of them. There are simply no places left to apply. A trip to a bustling Atlantic City only serves to underscore their problems: no money, no fun, no life. Even the keynote speaker at their commencement ceremony, founder of WorldComNet.com FRANK MOONEY, is an erstwhile billionaire ravaged by the economic downturn.

Adding insult to injury, Parker goes out to a celebratory dinner at Tavern on the Green with his father GORDON, one of the few Wall Street players who hasn't lost his shirt. This has only amplified Gordon's natural propensity for arrogance. Coupled with the fact that his current wife TAMARA is a former high school classmate of Parker's, the evening proves an endurance test, capped off by their big graduation gift: a check for \$750. Then, as if things weren't bad enough, Parker gets dumped by his girlfriend CAROLINE (20's, gorgeous). It's obvious she doesn't want to share her trust fund with a no-prospects loser.

Parker heads home to commiserate with his cronies, and there finds himself distracted by news reports about a big bust of the Montiglio crime family. Their latest stash of stolen goods was raided by FBI agents at the airport, sending a lot of people to jail. It seems like the mafia is only getting stupider, and Parker is sure he could do it better. In fact, the way he talks about crime and sin as recession-proof businesses gets all the guys thinking. With nowhere else to test their new skills, they draw up a crazy business plan for organized crime and the internet. Strangely enough, they just might be onto something.

In the days to come, Parker grows more and more obsessed with the idea of “victimless crimes.” He knows from other business models that retailers expect to lose five percent a year to “shrinkage”—shoplifting, petty theft of employees, undelivered shipments, etc. Insurance companies expect to pay it, so why not find a ready market for it with an internet web site? When Parker and the rest of the guys learn that their former roommate PAT SWANSON (sandy-haired and self-possessed) has just managed to land one of the only jobs in the land, they get just desperate enough to pitch their idea to an actual mobster.

It's hard just getting through the door of the social club where organized crime veteran VINNY “BUGS” SALERNO (50's, hulking) runs his operation. His guards JOHNNY THREE FINGERS and BUTCHY, both massive enforcers, are eager to kick the college kids around. Worse still, they're not fans of ethnic diversity, and give Roger a hard time. Through a combination of audaciousness and ignorance, the boys get to pitch part of their idea to Vinny, who brings them back to tell the whole crew. The mobsters love the idea that they don't have to conduct any business face-to-face, and that people will just anonymously fork over their credit card numbers. A short time later, and the guys are sitting in an office of stolen computers with a small amount of startup cash.

When the guys get things up and running, they have a hard time finding ways to explain the details of the business to Vinny and the others. Veteran lieutenant CARLO takes great offense at being handed an "Internet for Idiots" book. Still, perseverance and the natural greed of the criminals means that when the money starts rolling in, everybody's happy. And soon enough the money really starts rolling in. The site takes off like a rocket, and creates a whole new breed of gangsters in the process. They're trading stocks on-line, talking about market corrections and mutual funds, and paying off their college kid partners with suitcases full of cash.

Unfortunately, the longer he hangs out with the hardened criminals, the more Parker becomes obsessed with the gangster business. He finagles ways to go on enforcer jobs with them, and gets a huge rush from the dirty work. When he starts to ignore the internet business, Joel, who gets stuck with the day-to-day operations gets angry. Tommy is upset, as well, but he worships Parker and is too mild-mannered to take a stand.

Meanwhile, it turns out that Vinny knows the big secret about Roger's dad, who was prosecuted for embezzling from his Wall Street firm. Roger defends his old man, but when he stops by to pay LEE CARLSON a visit to share some of his newfound success, his father gets nervous on Roger's behalf. It turns out that Lee really did steal from his firm; in fact, everyone did. Lee was just the only one to get caught after being framed by his partners. Now, seeing his son engaged in a black market business with people who may not be trustworthy, Lee worries about history repeating itself.

Things only get worse with Parker. More and more, he adopts a gangster attitude, flashing money and using his fists without hesitation. That's exactly what happens when he spots Christine having dinner with Pat Swanson at a swanky restaurant. Parker's MBA cronies are horrified at his behavior; his new mob pals want to know if they should take care of Pat on the side. For the moment, Parker plays the magnanimous up-and-comer. He's got bigger fish to fry than Pat Swanson, namely a takeover of internet mob business. He foments a rebellion with LITTLE VITO and other gangsters that in short order leads to a full-blown gang war.

Parker really changes under the pressure of constant violence. When Tommy is wounded in a shootout, Parker finishes him off rather than going to a hospital that might draw unwanted attention. Then Parker even has the gall to speak at Tommy's funeral. Later, he has Roger beaten to within an inch of his life. Joel he feels he can control, but when Joel spots Tommy's money clip in Parker's things, he organizes a counterattack. It proves as simple as e-mailing some incriminating information to now net-savvy Vinny. The electronic missive offers indisputable proof that Parker is the one behind the recent troubles, and warns Vinny of an attempt on his life. From here, Vinny goes on the offensive. He snuffs Parker's gang, then delivers Parker to Roger and Joel. They offer their former pal a graceful way out: a swan dive off a Columbia campus library roof. Parker has no choice but to take it. In the aftermath, Roger gives Joel a payoff, buying him out of the business. As for Roger, he intends to partner with Vinny and take advantage of the recent downsizing in order to boost his profits...

Comments

Too much GOODFELLAS and not enough ANALYZE THIS, TRICKS OF THE TRADE tries too hard to be a bloody gangster drama when it might have been a very funny comedy. It starts out with a tongue-in-cheek look at how a future recession creates the perfect motivation for four unemployed MBA's to retool the mafia's aging business model, but then devolves into the last act of CASINO. The transitions are awkward, the characters lack credibility, and the story itself seems more silly than fun. The end result is a promising concept that feels totally wasted on what turns out to be a banal tale of gangland turf war.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE seems to set up an early obstacle for itself with an exhaustive cast of characters. Not only does it insist on four twenty-something Columbia MBA's, but there is also a former roommate, an ex-girlfriend, and a dozen or so mobsters. Not surprisingly, the authors are forced to resort to simple stereotyping for most of these figures, and the choice proves counterproductive. The mobsters suffer the most. They can be big and cartoonish when the script is still in its comedy stages, but when things turn serious, characters like JIMMY THREE FINGERS, BUTCHY and LITTLE VITO seem ridiculous. They're always far more like the supporting players in ANALYZE THIS than the hardened criminals in GOODFELLAS.

Among the four business school friends who come up with the big scam, PARKER WHITEHURST emerges as the protagonist. Aside from ROGER CARLSON, whose father was once prosecuted for stealing on Wall Street, Parker is the only central character given any appreciable backstory. Unfortunately, he's also the antihero, and the man ultimately responsible for all the Ivy League gang's problems. His descent into criminality becomes the focal point of the script's second half, and it's both overt and uninteresting. He grows obsessed with becoming a tough guy, and even foments a gangland turf war over the internet. It's a fairly familiar story idea that might have worked again save for one thing: it's hard to be so melodramatic about [www.swag.com](http://www.swag.com).

Parker's transformation goes hand-in-hand with the script's single biggest complication, it's inability to balance the comic and dramatic elements of its storyline. For about half the piece, the four MBA's are portrayed as minor comic stumblebums, slobs who inadvertently come up with a way to make millions for the mob and themselves. The gags are all about getting dumb mobsters up to speed in the twenty-first century, and finding ways to enjoy the influx of ill-gotten gains. Then the script suddenly switches gears, refocusing on Parker and attempting to create an atmosphere of suspense as Parker—who just months ago was an unemployed, snot-nosed WASP—becomes the architect of an epic, bloody, gangland turf war. It's a transition that seems neither credible nor effective, and cuts off what was till then the far more promising storyline.



Main Characters

**PARKER WHITEHURST** (lead, 20's): Dirty-blond WASP who turns to the mob when he can't find a real job after spending big money on his Ivy League MBA. Unfortunately, he gets greedy, willing to kill his friends in order to reinvent himself as an internet crime boss.

**TOMMY LEONARDO** (supporting, 20's): Parker's weak-willed best friend, who, sadly enough, follows blindly right to his own grave.

**JOEL SANDERS** (supporting, 20's): The resident tech wizard among the MBA's, Joel gets frustrated when he gets stuck with most of the day-to-day operations.

**ROGER CARLSON** (lead, 20's): The only person of color on the team, Roger has a big secret in his past. His father was once prosecuted for embezzling from his Wall Street firm. It turns out that Roger is twice the criminal his father was...

**VINNY "BUGS" SALERNO** (supporting, 50's): Tough veteran mobster who, when he is shown the internet, sees the entire future of organized crime unfolding before him.

**JIMMY THREE FINGERS** (supporting, 40's): Vinny's massive enforcer and bodyguard.

**LITTLE VITO** (supporting, 30's): Upstart mobster who teams with Parker in a bloody gangland turf war.

Example of Renaissance coverage  
 Usually Available or if Renaissance  
 AMG Should represent the  
 DATE: 1/24/00 book.

SUBMITTED TO:  
 SUBMITTED BY:  
 SUBMITTED FOR:

EVALUATED BY:

GUARDING HANNA  
 (Manuscript, 261 pages)

CREATIVE PERSONNEL

WRITER: Miha Mazzini (Translated by Maja Visenjak-Limon)  
 DIRECTOR: N/A  
 PRODUCER: N/A  
 CAST: N/A

LOG LINE: A powerful but deformed bodyguard is told by his gangster boss to watch over a meek young woman who has witnessed a murder.

COMMENT SUMMARY: GUARDING HANNA is a disturbing mixture of THE BODYGUARD and BEAUTY AND THE BEAST—all seen through the darkly distorted lens of a German film like "M." The characters are purposely two-dimensional and incredibly depressing, with precious few opportunities for redemption. The core relationship is one that deals more with irritability than understanding. Although opportunities for action are plentiful, the plot capitalizes on almost none of them. The end result is a listless pace that leads to an incredibly unsatisfying payoff.

GENRE: Thriller  
 PERIOD: Present  
 SETTING: Unspecified European city

PROJECT: RECOMMEND ( )  
 RECOMMEND WITH RESERVATIONS ( )  
 NOT RECOMMEND WITH RESERVATIONS ( )  
 NOT RECOMMEND (X)  
 WRITER: RECOMMEND ( )  
 NOT RECOMMEND (X)  
 CLIENT: RECOMMEND ( )  
 NOT RECOMMEND ( )  
 NOT APPLICABLE (X)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Premise			XXX	
Structure			XXX	
Dialogue			XXX	
Writing Style			XXX	
Characterization			XXX	
Pacing			XXX	

Budget: High \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ Low XXX

Summary

Although the PROTAGONIST works a lot and gets paid well for it, he spends it all on his one vice: women. When the shoebox in his dingy, one-room apartment gets full enough, he'll book a posh hotel room and call up the agency he always uses. He orders a new girl every time, and by dropping the name of his employer, MAESTRO, he gets excellent service.

When the latest GIRL arrives, he exposes his disfigured body to her in the light, then forces her to touch him all over in the dark. As she touch the bristly hair that covers his entire body—even his face—he will describe what it was like to grow up in his body, and even tell them of the insatiable urge he'll sometimes get to gnaw a patch on his shoulder with his sharp, misshapen teeth.

His dark appetites sated for the moment, the beast gets called to a meeting with his employer. They always meet at the same place, the bar of the posh hotel, where the Maestro's sons TONY (a young wannabe gangster who emulates TV bad guys) and ALEXANDER (a foppish homosexual) make their father coffee before the bar opens.

The Maestro did the protagonist a great service many years ago by rescuing him from the orphanage where he was raised. For years, the beast has made a good living through the Maestro, a small-time gangster, by collecting debts. Usually, only the beast's appearance is required to force prompt payment; sometimes, he must use his superhuman strength or his powerful, sharp incisors to make his point. Yet, he's never had the opportunity to pay back that debt—until today.

The Maestro has an unusual job for his collector. It seems that hair stylist HANNA WOYCZIK (late 30's, early 40's) witnessed a getaway after a botched bank robbery. Although she didn't get the license plate of the getaway car, she did see the make and model. Maestro knows that the robbery was perpetrated by an inept underling of his arch-rival BABA. Since Baba grows stronger as Maestro grows weaker—Maestro has just been released after a protracted hospital stay—anything that keeps Baba busy is a good idea. To that effect, the beast is assigned to guard Hanna day and night until her court appearance in one week's time.

Adding to the pressure is a surprise appearance by INSPECTOR KURT. He's received a pair of anonymous phone calls telling him that Hanna's life is in danger. One said to watch out for Maestro, the other for Baba. Kurt is putting both gangsters on alert, to which Maestro responds that he's arranged for Hanna's 'round-the-clock care.

The protagonist knows that guard duty is going to be difficult not only because of his appearance, but also because of his personality. Ever since his days in the orphanage, he's kept to himself—for obvious reasons. Even in school, he kept his intelligence to himself, reading books in private when no one was watching, and studiously avoiding having to answer any teachers questions. For a time, he was even put in classes with the retarded children, until his looks proved too frightening for them.

friend TANYA, who had several little ones. With just one afternoon proving so exhausting, Hanna couldn't imagine the full-time burden of young children.

As if things couldn't get any worse, the beast gets conjunctivitis. He has to constantly flush his eyes with cold water, prompting the LANDLORD to complain about the additional water usage. Before long, the protagonist is ready to kill Hanna, fantasizing about plunging a knife into her while he cuts cabbage for their supper one evening. Instead, he grabs a fistful of cutlery and squeezes hard until the urge passes. He spends the next several hours bending the cutlery back into place.

The beast makes peace with his rage, but lets his guard down in the process. His normally acute senses, worn down by his illness and environment, aren't functioning at their peak during the assassin's next attack. Fortuitously, the beast attacks the intruder during one of those dreams in which he gnaws his shoulder. When he awakens, the protagonist finds the remains of the man he chewed to death in the night, as well as the weapon with which the assassin intended to slit his throat. Before Hanna can awaken, the beast disposes of the remains, then pretends as if nothing unusual has happened.

On the night before the trial, Hanna insists on going out to dinner. She gets terribly drunk on tequila, and suggests that they spend the night at a hotel. In her drunken state, she even attempts a pass at the beast. He rejects her, leaving her angry and humiliated. Afterwards, they return to her flat, only to find another assassin there waiting.

The beast takes Hanna on the run, but things get complicated when she gets very ill from too much alcohol. They slide across the frozen river that runs through the center of town, then try to hide in the forest on the city's outskirts. Hanna gets dirty and her clothes get ripped along the way. When the assassin continues to give chase, the beast manages to corner and kill him.

Unsure where to go until Hanna's court appearance, the beast takes her to the posh hotel, expecting to find the Maestro and his sons having coffee. Curiously, the Maestro is all alone, and deeply depressed. He looks sicker than before, and the reason why becomes apparent in his subsequent ranting. It turns out that Baba had nothing to do with the botched bank robbery. The heist was Tony's idea, and Alexander was forced to bail his brother out when things went wrong. The beast was assigned to guard Hanna because he was ill-tempered and expendable. The Maestro hoped the beast would kill the insipid Hanna after a few days. When he didn't, Tony and Alexander sent assassins. Now they've fled, and the Maestro has been forced to give his business over to Baba to ensure their future safety.

Dejected, the protagonist nonetheless fulfills his mission by seeing Hanna safely to her deposition. She is met at the courthouse by Inspector Kurt, and taken inside. When someone points out the condition of her dress, Hanna assumes the worst of the beast, even though he has risked his life to protect hers. She shoots him a withering final glance before being led away.

Comments

GUARDING HANNA is a disturbing mixture of THE BODYGUARD and BEAUTY AND THE BEAST—all seen through the darkly distorted lens of a German film like "M." The characters are purposely two-dimensional and incredibly depressing, with precious few opportunities for redemption. The core relationship is one that deals more with irritability than understanding. Although opportunities for action are plentiful, the plot capitalizes on almost none of them. The end result is a listless pace that leads to an incredibly unsatisfying payoff.

The PROTAGONIST of GUARDING HANNA, never given a name, is a most unusual antihero. A disfigured, hirsute beast, it's easy to understand how he acquired his penchant for isolation. Lengthy flashbacks to his days as a persecuted orphan do an excellent, if at times distasteful, job of fleshing him out. Unfortunately, what the novel fails to provide is any reason to stay interested in this beast's life. Time and again, the protagonist does what he can to negate any sympathy through callousness and savage behavior. In the end, he remains a dark figure, one who spends his days collecting debts for a small-time gangster and his nights torturing call girls with his physical appearance.

The titular character is even more unusual than the protagonist. In the face of her circumstances, HANNA WOYCZIK has the opportunity to be many things: compassionate listener; righteous witness; terrified victim. Oddly enough, she manages to be none of them. Instead, she spends her time nattering about ex-husbands who didn't love her, the perfect kind of marmalade, and her favorite movies and television programs. It's an astounding collection of moments that make the audience want to murder her as much as the bad guys.

Although GUARDING HANNA has the perfect—albeit hoary—excuse to construct a taut action plot, it spends most of its time around Hanna's flat in idle conversation, interrupted by occasional trips to the grocery store. Perhaps there is some hidden literary message in the ways that the various tertiary characters interact with the leads, but it proves decidedly dull source material for a potential feature. Over the entire course of the story, there are only two half-serious attempts on Hanna's life. Both assassins are easily dispatched, leaving time for more trips to the store. Ultimately, the book is an astounding collection of missed opportunities and baffling choices, and seems ill-suited for development.

Main Characters

**THE PROTAGONIST** (lead, late 30's, early 40's): Disfigured, hirsute, and incredibly strong, the protagonist suffered through torturous years as an orphan to begin working as a collections agent for a small-time gangster. Now he has to play bodyguard to a woman who witnessed a botched bank robbery.

**HANNA WOYCZIK** (lead, late 30's, early 40's): A daft hair stylist who doesn't seem to realize the precarious position she's put herself in by offering to testify.

**MAESTRO** (supporting, 70's): The ailing gangster who employs the protagonist and assigns him the job of protecting Hanna—with an ulterior motive in mind.

**ALEXANDER** (supporting, 30's): The foppish gay son of the Maestro.

**TONY** supporting (20's): The hot-headed younger son of the Maestro, who fashions himself after TV gangsters.

**INSPECTOR KURT** (late 30's): The mild-mannered detective and expectant, first-time father who watches the action from a distance.

Example of Available book coverage  
for feature AMG  
Consideration

SUBMITTED TO:  
SUBMITTED BY:  
SUBMITTED FOR:

DATE: 6/5/00  
EVALUATED BY:

ABYSSINIAN CHRONICLES  
(Book, 462 pages)

CREATIVE PERSONNEL

WRITER: Moses Isegawa  
DIRECTOR: N/A  
PRODUCER: N/A  
CAST: N/A

LOG LINE: A man recounts his struggles growing up in the turbulent climate of Uganda, a country that seems filled with despots of every sort.

COMMENT SUMMARY: ABYSSINIAN CHRONICLES is a bleak, depressing tale of one wayward youth's unique upbringing. At the same time, it is a portrait of a tortured African country in an awkward transition from colonial imperialism through a series of harsh dictatorships. Unfortunately, while the novel develops several strong characters, it has trouble uniting them into a gripping narrative; the piece often reads more like a longwinded diary than anything else. Episodic and as concerned with political history as personal experiences, it covers more than two decades of one extended family's life in a whirlwind of mini-events and minor happenings set against a violent backdrop. The end result is an interesting but not fascinating picture of a very different time and place, but one that requires a lot of explaining in order to understand, and then only rudimentarily.

GENRE: Drama  
PERIOD: 1960's to Present  
SETTING: Uganda

PROJECT: RECOMMEND ( )  
RECOMMEND WITH RESERVATIONS ( )  
NOT RECOMMEND WITH RESERVATIONS ( )  
NOT RECOMMEND (X)

WRITER: RECOMMEND ( )  
NOT RECOMMEND (X)

CLIENT: RECOMMEND ( )  
NOT RECOMMEND ( )  
NOT APPLICABLE (X)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Premise			XXX	
Structure			XXX	
Dialogue			XXX	
Writing Style			XXX	
Characterization		XXX		
Pacing			XXX	
Budget:	High _____	Medium XXX	Low _____	

Summary

Narrator and protagonist MUGEZI spends most of his young life in the house of his GRANDPA. Once a clan leader, Grandpa was ousted when the tide turned against Catholics and began to favor Protestants. The fact that Grandpa was never a terribly devout religious man made no difference at all. His faithful sister, who Mugezi calls GRANDMA, remained by his side. They still talk and argue and plot like old cronies, despite the fact that the family home no longer has the same aura it did when it was the clan chief's lodge.

Even though he no longer has politics to worry about, Grandpa still has the marriages of his many children to give him sleepless nights. His two daughters give him particular trouble. TIIDA, the more headstrong of the pair, weds SSALI, a medical assistant she has originally introduced to the family as a doctor. Grandma, who has never gotten along well with Tiida, relishes the discovery of dissembling on Ssali's behalf, and takes every opportunity she can to bring it up in conversation.

Tiida, who can sometimes be fickle, surprises everyone as she stands by Ssali through thick and thin. Their relationship is put to its first test when Ssali decides to convert to the Muslim faith. Neither Grandpa nor anyone else in the family can make the remotest sense of this. Being Catholic and not Protestant is bad enough; being Muslim is like volunteering for exile. Regardless, Ssali continues forward with the conversion, which involves a painful circumcision that doesn't heal properly. The way he walks as he fights the ensuing infection invites ridicule and rumor, but Tiida stands proud.

To make matters worse, their new home turns out to have a secret history. Although Ssali's transaction was totally aboveboard, the widow of the previous landowner decides she doesn't like the way her children handled the affair. She tries to curse the property by leaving the entrails of various animals—including dogs, the most powerful offering in such curses—by a tree in the backyard. Ssali, unable to clean it up himself while he recovers from his surgery, is thus forced to endure more humiliation.

Tiida gets a brief respite from being the center of family gossip when her sister NAKATU returns to the family fold. Her first marriage was to a man Grandpa liked very much—especially because Grandpa was given a Raleigh bicycle in exchange for his daughter's hand—has dissolved, and she is moving back home. Next she surprises everyone by taking up with local man HAJJ ALLI, another Muslim convert. When she marries him after a whirlwind courtship, Tiida's own life is under far less scrutiny. Fortuitously, the animal sacrifices on Tiida and Ssali's land stop at about the same time.

With his daughters out of his sphere of influence, Grandpa focuses on his son SERENITY ("Sere" to some). The secret hope is that Serenity will choose a clan wife and enter into clan politics. However, Serenity surprises his father by falling in love with a former nun, called VIRGIN by some, and PADLOCK by narrator Mugezi, her firstborn son. Grandpa, whose own politically motivated marriage dissolved years ago and left him and Grandma to raise their children, backs off when he sees that Serenity is in love with this woman. Above all, he wants his son to be happy.



not so much antagonistic as ineffectual. He holds out the promise of great things, like the arrival of the *Agatha*, a twelve-foot boat from a wealthy European donor, but they really turn out to be hollow. In the case of the *Agatha*, she proves a barely seaworthy old barge that the boys never get to use anyway. Mugezi defaces it by carving "Oh God" into the side; once again, he goes uncaught and unpunished. The incident is quickly forgotten when a vandal begins striking the power supply at the campus. With no power to the freezers, the priests are forced to feed the boys real food. The blackouts continue—usually just in the priests' quarters—until the boys are fed properly and regularly.

The most valuable thing Mugezi learns at school proves to be the fine art of dissembling. It's something that will serve him in good stead as he tries to make his way in the world. From the distance of the seminary, he's loosely followed the travails experienced by his country and the family. Padlock's parents both die of natural causes, the mother from a poisonous snakebite administered by a viper hiding in her kitchen, and the father from a severe attack of malaria. Worse still, Grandpa dies in the uprising of 1979, when Amin is thrown out of the country as the guerilla forces sponsored by Tanzania's president NYERERE move in and seize control. In the aftermath, a terrible disease begins to infest the country. Called "Slim" by the locals, it leaves its victims ravaged, emaciated, and bleeding from horrible sores. Many think it is witchcraft and seek appropriate remedies until medicine gives it a name: AIDS. Tragically, it strikes down Mugezi's beloved aunt LWANDECKA, with whom he spent his holidays from the seminary. Losing both her and Grandpa, two of the most vital people Mugezi has ever known, impacts him greatly.

In the 1980's, Mugezi leaves the seminary to begin his studies at Makerere University. It's a career filled with disappointment. Overcrowded and poorly funded, access to the programs Mugezi wants is denied. Unable to gain admission to law school, he is left with a disappointing teaching career as his only prospect. To supplement his income, he opens the Boom-Boom Brewery, and begins making ten times his annual salary every month. He meets and falls in love with fellow teacher JO NAKABIRI, only to learn that she is his biological half-sister. Both are horrified, and although Mugezi wants to throw it in his father's face, he ends up ending the affair quietly and going on with his life.

Meanwhile, horrible events are taking place in the country's hotly contested "Triangle" region. Guerillas attack the puppet governments that come and go, and only innocent people seem to be harmed. Eventually, the climate turns sour at the backyard Boom-Boom Brewery after a worker is injured and his brothers tear up the place. Mugezi decides to let the business die, and after trying out a disappointing government job which is riddled with black market corruption, he takes a friend's advice and leaves the country on vacation. Funded by a Dutch religious organization, he goes to Holland to help raise funds to lift his country from despair. They prove to have ulterior motives, however, so Mugezi disappears in the local Ugandan ghetto. He uses some of his funds to buy an excellently forged British passport, and gets a job at a cemetery. There he meets an older white widower and has a torrid affair. When the relationship finally dissolves—she proves too controlling—he vows to stay in Holland and make a better life for himself. By this time, both of his parents are dead—Padlock was trampled by a buffalo; Serenity was eaten by a crocodile while looking for her body—and Mugezi is left without a home.

Comments

ABYSSINIAN CHRONICLES is a bleak, depressing tale of one wayward youth's unique upbringing. At the same time, it is a portrait of a tortured African country in an awkward transition from colonial imperialism through a series of harsh dictatorships. Unfortunately, while the novel develops several strong characters, it has trouble uniting them into a gripping narrative; the piece often reads more like a longwinded diary than anything else. Episodic and as concerned with political history as personal experiences, it covers more than two decades of one extended family's life in a whirlwind of mini-events and minor happenings set against a violent backdrop. The end result is an interesting but not fascinating picture of a very different time and place, but one that requires a lot of explaining in order to understand, and then only rudimentarily.

Although narrator MUGEZI is essentially the protagonist, he doesn't factor into the story significantly until the later chapters. Initially, all of the focus is placed on the house of his GRANDPA, a former clan leader who has been ousted from politics. Without that daily wrangling in his life, Grandpa proceeds to meddle in the affairs of his children, especially as they face the complicated prospect of marriage. The exchange of cows, bicycles and tin roofs follows, a disconcerting glimpse into what happens when ancient traditions conflict with modern human avarice as well as the influences of imperialist entities like western governments and missionaries of the Catholic, Protestant and Muslim faiths. The result, predictably, is pandemonium, but it doesn't seem well exploited from a narrative context. While Mugezi recounts incidents in great detail, he seldom offers the kind of insight into the characters and their situations that would play well onscreen. Instead, his role is reduced to the observational, and while these observations are sometimes interesting, most are on-the-nose and of questionable relevance overall.

It takes a long time for Mugezi to develop as a character, a function of spending so much time with his parents, mother PADLOCK and father SERENITY. Both drifting for different reasons—Padlock is recovering from years studying in a convent; Serenity is trying to find a way to assert himself as a man—they are reasonably well developed figures, but lack the kind of core conflicts that might make them truly gripping. Essentially, ABYSSINIAN CHRONICLES is developing the antagonists of the story as it spends time with them. Unfortunately, Mugezi is not long under their direct sphere of influence. After fighting back as best he can, including petty theft and a faked love letter from an imaginary cuckold to stir up the family nest, he is shipped off to the seminary, where he is subjected to the whims of dictators in different clothes. Indeed, it's obvious in short order that the novel is primarily interested in using Mugezi and his experiences as a rather overt metaphor for what is going on in Uganda as a whole. Unfortunately, while most of the world has heard of Idi Amin, conflicts involving him from twenty years ago are not exactly news today. New guerillas, their puppet governments and atrocities are now what is making headlines; to be frank, even those stories are of marginal interest to today's moviegoers. Making things more complicated for ABYSSINIAN CHRONICLES is the lack of a universally engaging larger narrative that fits all of these elements into context. This is not THE ENGLISH PATIENT, but rather a mix of awkward Dickens novel and PBS documentary; as such, its prospects for adaptation seem slim.

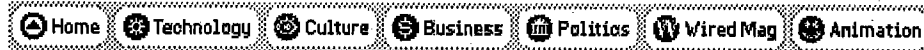
Main Characters

MUGEZI (lead, various ages): Scrappy youth who grows up in Uganda in the midst of its horrible transition between the end of colonial imperialism and the beginning of harsh dictatorship. A great actor, liar and manipulator when he needs to be.

GRANDPA (supporting, 60's and 70's): Caged old clan politician who wants to see his grandson grow up go to law school then follow in his footsteps.

SERENITY (supporting, 20's to 50's): Grandpa's eldest son, he proves to be a disappointment in everything from his selection of a wife to selection of a profession.

PADLOCK (supporting, 20's to 50's): After years in the seminary studying to be a nun, she was lured into matrimony by Serenity after meeting him at a wedding. She proves to be a harsh, despotic ruler over her children.



**W** ON NEWSSTANDS NOW  
Issue 11.05 | May 2003

## To Live and Die in L.A.

**Information leaks, bid-rigging, pumping and dumping. Just another day inside the secret network that will make or break you in Hollywood.**

Pg 1 of 3 >>

Print, email, or fax  
this article for free.

By Ben Mezrich

I'm at a party, and it's as crowded as it is glamorous. Elbowing my way to the balcony for a breath of fresh air, I gaze down at the unreal scene below: Fur coats draped over pink tank tops, sable hoods dyed to match, Gucci boots with impossibly high heels, designer cell phones in waterproof holsters, pashmina scarves, sunglasses hanging from platinum straps. Nobody seems to care that it's 30 degrees outside, with a stiff wind sweeping down from the mountains. There's enough star power here to keep everyone warm: Matt Damon, Tobey Maguire, Kate Hudson, J.Lo, Ben Affleck.



**Carlos Serrao**

"Welcome to fucking Sundance," somebody next to me says. I turn to see Dana Brunetti, who's also watching the crowd. Brunetti is a producer with TriggerStreet.com, Kevin Spacey's production company. He's the reason I was able to get past the black-clad goon at the door.

The truth is, I don't belong here. I am not a Hollywood player. I am a writer from Boston, a novelist and occasional journalist. Over the past few years, like a million other struggling writers out there, I have chased the dream of breaking into the movie business. I've collected hundreds of rejection slips from agents, producers, and studios. Recently, all this changed. I

wrote an article last year called "Hacking Las Vegas" (*Wired* 10.09), and the next thing I know I'm being approached to turn it into a movie starring Spacey. (We're in the very early stages of negotiating a deal.) I want to believe that Hollywood sat up and took notice of my talent and hard work. But I've heard rumors that have made me question my confidence - whispers of a dirty little industry practice that has brought me here to Utah on a mission both personal and journalistic.

I've been tipped to the network of semisecret cyberhallways, called tracking boards, that are open only to the most elite power players in the industry. In simplest terms, these boards are sophisticated chat rooms and BBSes where high-level executives at various studios trade information about potential projects.

They may seem innocuous at first glance, but the boards are where a writer meets his fate. Before a script goes out, it either gets deep-sixed or hyped up. Often, it's said, execs will go online and leak privileged information or even lie about projects in order to drive prices up - or down. If the rumors are true, it means that the fix is in: major collusions between studios, arbitrary blackballing, a system that mocks any standard of fair play. It's not just scripts - books, directors, even actors are tracked.

I need more than rumors, so I have arranged a rendezvous with a tracker. She's here, wedged between two frumpy screenwriters and a director with a shaved head. She's a tall, striking brunette with pouty lips and oil spills for eyes. As I approach, she shakes free and beckons me toward a quiet alcove near the coatroom.

"If you use my name," she says by way of a greeting, "I'll have lawyers all over you."

She knows why I asked for the meeting. She's talking to me as a favor to Brunetti, but she's defensive. She's an exec herself, a director of development at a studio synonymous with Oscar-quality fare. She - and people like her - control the purse strings that make movies possible.

"I'm not kidding," she continues. "I could get fired for talking about this."

She takes a breath, then plunges in. "Bottom line," she says, gesturing to the scene around us, "all of this starts with the boards. You've heard of the herd mentality, right? How no decisions in Hollywood are made independently? A project that's interesting to one studio is interesting to all studios; likewise, a project with one detractor is dead with everyone.

Well, the tracking boards are the herd mentality gone digital."

*One detractor? A single, semi-anonymous comment can sink a script?* I'd heard as much from other writers but had assumed it was just the fruit of febrile imaginations - or sour grapes. But here was the woman who signs the checks, confirming my paranoia.

"If you get behind a project that nobody else wants and it fails, you're fucked. If you buy a project that everyone wants, you're at the front of the herd," she explains. I know she catches the expression that flashes across my face, because she pauses briefly before continuing in a low voice. "This business runs on fear," she says, "and the tracking boards give that fear a voice."

I look around the room - at the stars, writers, directors, producers - and for a moment I can actually see the system at play. A positive track leads to a heated auction, a seven-figure deal, a blockbuster movie - not to mention parties at Sundance. But more likely, the trackers conspire to end your Hollywood career before it gets off the ground.

"If you're dead on the tracking boards," the executive whispers, "you're dead in this business."

Back in LA, I decide to dig a little deeper. Acting on a tip, I find what I'm looking for in a black glass building in Santa Monica. There's no lobby: It's just a stack of spartan offices that rises high into the smoggy sky.

Rafi Gordon, president of Baseline-FilmTracker, and Alex Amin, executive vice president, are waiting for me when the elevator doors open on the fifth floor. They're young, bright, and shiny in that LA way, affable and smiling. They introduce themselves as they lead me through their office.

Five years ago, there were just a few homegrown tracking boards in Hollywood; today, there are many, but they are all managed by Gordon and Amin. FilmTracker's parent company, Hollywood Media Corporation, specializes in industry-specific databases - film credits, bios, and the like - but the glamour end of the operation is the by-invitation-only boards. They're kept small by necessity. Membership is strictly controlled. Anytime a new studio executive, producer, or development person is hired, one of the first things they do is try to sign on to a board. They're let in either by a democratic vote or an administrator who decides if the applicant is qualified. "We have the tracking-board business pretty much cornered," Amin says.

---



**W** ON NEWSSTANDS NOW  
Issue 11.05 | May 2003

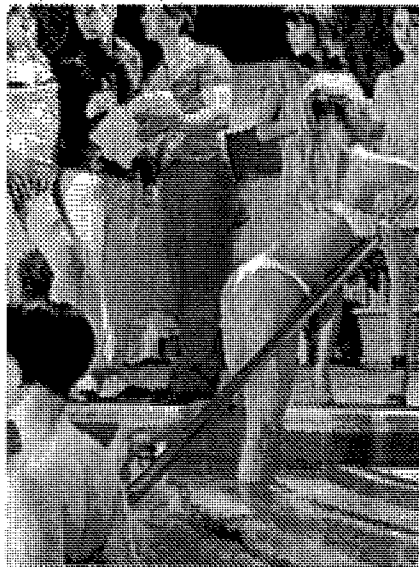
## To Live and Die in L.A. (continued)

|< << Pg 2 of 3 >>

Print, email, or fax  
this article for free.

"I think we're up to 200 separate boards now, tracking over 2,000 projects," Gordon adds, as we reach a corner office. They shut the door behind me. Amin takes a position at a computer on one side of a cluttered desk, Gordon by the window.

"In the beginning," Amin explains, "there was this very rudimentary message board started by a guy named Roy Lee. I was at MGM at the time, about 1997 - hell, we didn't even have email or Internet capability - and Roy started this service that was basically just a bulletin board. People would add comments to a text stream about spec material that was going out for auction."



**Carlos Serrao**

Spec material - original projects in either script or treatment form - are the lottery tickets of the movie industry. Unlike assigned projects, which are always given to established screenwriters, spec material can come from almost any source: unknowns, wannabes, even novelists like me. Through spec auctions, new projects and writers are introduced to Hollywood. When a studio buys a spec, a career begins.

"Around 1999," Amin continues, "about 12 major-studio junior execs - me included - got together. We wanted something more sophisticated. We wanted to be able to search for the info we needed, to keep archives, to do this quickly. So we built ScriptTracker - which eventually became FilmTracker, a central Web site where tracking boards are managed and maintained."

While he's talking, he's hitting keys on the computer in front of him. I

can't see the screen, just the blue-green reflection in his eyes.

"And who uses these boards?" I ask, looking from Amin to his boss.

"Pretty much anyone who has any power," Amin answers. "From the top levels down to the junior execs. Studio VPs, heads of development, producers, buyers, sellers, and assistants. They pay anywhere from \$15 to \$300 per month for the privilege, depending on their level of access. Currently we have about 10,000 active members."

Robert Dowling, the editor in chief and publisher of *The Hollywood Reporter*, corroborates: "Everybody uses the boards," he says, "and at the highest level they can."

Still, it seems remarkable to me that these two photogenic kids built a machine that's used by everyone from Jerry Bruckheimer's assistant to the head of development at Paramount, from the grunt who reads scripts for Matt Damon to the major buying executives at MGM.

"People begin tracking projects the minute an agent mentions it to anyone else," Amin continues. "By the time a script goes to auction, everyone's already tracked it."

Opinions, comments, information on buying and selling - all of it is available before a project is officially on the market. It's a Hollywood cartel.

"All the information you need on a project is at your fingertips," Amin says smiling. "In fact, I've got your tracking page right here in front of me."

With a flourish, Amin positions the computer screen so I can see. My name flickers past in glowing green type, followed by a description of my Vegas project - and a string of comments from various handles, presumably Hollywood heavies. I quickly read some of the posts:

*Crime caper.*

*Need more info now. Getting buzz.*

*In at Warner. But they aren't going to*

And then Amin spins the screen away. I feel cold.

Hollywood's way of making sure you know where the power lies is to keep you waiting - which explains why a certain development executive



at one of the biggest studios in town is 20 minutes late for our meeting. I'm just cooling my heels in her stark corporate office. Nothing personal.

She finally sweeps into the room and answers the question I've been saving up for her. "Of course you can manipulate the tracking boards," she says, all business except for the playful smile tugging at her lips. "It happens all the time."

I sit up in my chair. If the boards can be gamed, then the auctions that result - and, in turn, the daily liaisons that shape the movie industry - are inherently corrupt.

"Why would people manipulate the boards?" I prod, trying to push her toward the answers I already suspect.

She crosses the office to her desk and drops into her chair. Opening her desk drawer, she pulls out a cordless telephone headset.

"If I wanted to get back at an agent who screwed me on something, I could put on the board that my studio is passing on their script. That would pretty much kill the heat on the project.

"Likewise, maybe as a favor to an agent, I could post something like, 'I love this, my boss loves it.' That will create buzz, and quite possibly people will start bidding preemptively because they're afraid of losing the project."

Movie titles flash before my eyes: *Bubble Boy*. *Kangaroo Jack*. *Dude, Where's My Car?*

To prove her point, she logs on to the FilmTracker board and gestures for me to come over to her side of the desk. "At about 8 this morning, this script called *Pet Store* appeared on my tracking board. It's about to go out, and it's getting some interesting hype."

Leaning over the back of her chair, I scan the trackers' comments. Each begins with a handle, followed by a few words:

*This is everywhere.*

*In at Paramount. My boss is jumping on this!*

*Better move fast*

*And then, simply: Huh? Talking animals?*

On their own, the comments seem inconsequential. But it's the collective wisdom of 27 top development executives at the major studios: Paramount, Universal, Sony, MGM.

"When someone wants onto the board," She explains, "the moderator emails us all and asks if that person is OK. We can blackball someone we don't like. It's like sorority rush." Is she joking? I can't tell. "I know all these people. So this hype makes me interested. The next step is to call the script's agent, see what's shaking."

She hits the speakerphone. After three rings, a male voice answers. She tells the agent on the other end that she loves Pet Store (no matter that she hasn't actually seen it yet) and she wants to know where it stands. He gives her the standard agent line: It's hot, very hot - we'll have a deal by the afternoon. You better get moving, blah blah, et cetera.

<< Page 1      Page 3 >>

**Previous Story: The Lab that Fell to Earth**

**Next Story: The Minister of Net Defense**

Ads by Google
<p><b>Blogs</b> Breaking news &amp; indepth features Up-to-the-minute Arts coverage cbc.ca/arts</p>
<p><b>Sexy Girls &amp; Sexy Guys</b> Video Conferencing &amp; Mingling! Having Fun on the Internet www.onthe-Internet.com</p>
<p><b>Create a Free Blog Today</b> Many Features and Easy to Use! Share your ideas, photos and more. webhelps.com</p>

### Wired Blogs

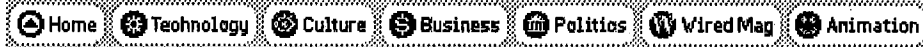


Read *Wired* magazine columnist Bruce Sterling's blog, *Beyond the Beyond*.

### Gadget Lab Newsletter



Sign up for the newsletter that gives you the 411 on the latest tech toys.



**W** ON NEWSSTANDS NOW  
Issue 11.05 | May 2003

## To Live and Die in L.A. (continued)

|< << Pg 3 of 3

Print, email, or fax  
this article for free.

She rolls her eyes at me, then gets off the phone to show me the synopsis. Pet Store is about a pet shop. All the animals talk, and there's an evil cockatoo who hacks into the owner's computer, somehow getting the store's bank to foreclose. Now the animals are finding a way to fight back

She rolls her eyes again. But the tracking is good, the hype is still rising.

"It's really about buzz," she says, deferring to the will of the herd.  
"Tracking boards create it. This script, as bad as it sounds, has it."

The thing is, as far as I can tell, no one has actually read the script yet. It hasn't even gone out to auction; nobody is supposed to have this script. I have to ask: "Would a studio buy a project based on positive tracking, without ever reading it?"

She gives me that smile. "They'd never admit it."

I try a different approach.

"Would you turn down a project without reading it because of negative tracking?"

She doesn't even pause.

"Absolutely."

Another day, and another bigwig movie executive won't go on the record. We're sharing a booth at a nightclub, and he's giving me a fat dose of Hollywood reality. "The bottom line? It's the studio's job to say no. A bad track simply gets the job done."

We're in Vegas for yet another movie industry party, and the club is swarming with development people. It all seems a lot less glamorous now. I'm not starstruck anymore, I'm angry.

"Is it legal? I ask. "Opinions are one thing. But collusive behavior, or manipulative lies - like the pumping and dumping on an Internet stock board - these are more complicated issues. With no regulation, there's just no way to know how dirty the system really is."

My rant is interrupted by a curvaceous blond hostess brandishing a bottle of Cristal:

The producer replies: "Sure, people do try and manipulate the boards. But whether it's unethical or mildly illegal - does it really matter? Good projects turn into good movies. Bad projects turn into bad movies. The buying is just one part of the process."

"It doesn't seem like a very fair system," I say, but I can't sustain my righteousness. I'm embarrassed by how naive I sound. I've seen how the system works, and can no longer pretend that projects are considered purely on their own merits. I am an insider now, reeling from a week that started in Utah, passed through LA, and ended in Sin City.

"No shit," the producer laughs. "I get agents calling all the time: 'Hey, I know you have this project: Please don't kill it.' I don't want any part of it; I actually try to read the damn things."

I nod, but I don't believe him. His words are noble, yet I can see the glint of shark in his eyes.

Someone slides into the booth next to us. It's Dana Brunetti. He's been eavesdropping. He takes a glass of champagne and waves it in my direction.

"You realize, of course, now that you know all our secrets, we're going to have to kill you."

I'm pretty sure he's kidding.

<< Page 2

**Previous Story: The Lab that Fell to Earth**

**Next Story: The Minister of Net Defense**

### Crib sheet when calling agencies/ studios/ groups/ etc

Take the agency list from this packet and start calling. It sucks, I know, but after awhile you realize that you aren't bothering these people, so it is not like that pyramid scheme job you had last summer.

The main goal here is to only talk with someone who can help you. Therefore the first thing you need to do when someone answers is ask for their "Lit. Department or "Literature Department" if you aren't a big douche like me. Anyway, they will either transfer you or they will field the call themselves because they only have one receptionist.

Either way, your next move is to then say something like, "Well I am just out of college and I am looking to intern as a reader. I was hoping to read some scripts and write coverage for free, and you know get some experience under my belt." Emphasize free/ intern and then stick to the idea that you are willing to do this for a couple months. That is what they will expect no more, no less. Well more, but you can't do that, you have better things to do.

Ultimately there are three scenarios that happen next; they will say that they don't need any readers; fine cross them off the list. Or they will take a message, which means you call them tomorrow. Or they will transfer you to someone directly, this is good, at this point you repeat what you told the receptionist and go with your instincts. Hopefully they will meet with you and give you a script to cover, or they will simply just give you a script to cover and you go from there. If they like you, they keep you.

*After* your internship, you now have a bulletproof cover letter, and resume. As well, you have three different samples of your work (at least). Start getting the resume and cover letter to people and follow up with calls. I hate calling people as much as anyone, but trust me. Call and ask, "I was just checking to see if you received the resume and cover letter I sent you." Then hit them up with, "I can send some samples if you like."

Also start telling friends, acquaintances, family, everyone that you are looking to land a job reading scripts. After awhile someone will put your resume and samples on the right desk. You'll get some work and your own work will improve as well.

Phoenix, AZ 85032  
(602) 953-0164

### California

Above The Line Agency  
9200 Sunset Blvd #804  
West Hollywood, CA 90069  
(310) 859-6115

[References Required]

Acme Talent & Literary Agency  
4727 Wilshire Blvd #333  
Los Angeles, CA 90010  
(323) 954-2263

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Agency For The Performing Arts (LA)  
9200 West Sunset Blvd #900  
Los Angeles, CA 90069  
(310) 888-4200

[References Required]

Alice Fries Agency, Ltd.  
1927 Vista Del Mar Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 90068  
(323) 464-1404

[References Required  
Letter of Inquiry Required]

Allen Talent Agency  
15760 Ventura Blvd #700  
Encino, CA 91436  
(213) 605-1110

[No Unsolicited Material]

Alpern Group, The  
15645 Royal Oak Road  
Encino, CA 91436  
(818) 528-1111

[References Required]

Bohrman Agency, The  
8899 Beverly Blvd #811  
Los Angeles, CA 90048  
(310) 550-5444

[References Required]

Brant Rose Agency  
6671 Sunset Blvd  
Suite 1584 B  
Los Angeles, CA 90028  
(323) 460-6464

[No Unsolicited Material]

Broder Webb Chervin Silbermann Agency  
9242 Beverly Blvd #200  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210  
(310) 281-3400

[References Required  
No Unsolicited Material]

Candace Lake Agency, Inc.  
9200 Sunset Blvd #820  
Los Angeles, CA 90069

[References Required]

(310) 247-2115

Career Artists International  
11030 Ventura Blvd #3  
Studio City, CA 91604  
(818) 980-1315

[No Unsolicited Material]

Cary Kozlov Literary Rep  
16000 Ventura Blvd  
Suite 1000  
Encino, CA 91436  
(818) 501-6622

[No Unsolicited Material]

Catalyst Literary & Talent Agency  
(818) 597-8335

[No Unsolicited Material]

Cavaleri & Associates  
178 S Victory Blvd #205  
Burbank, CA 91502  
(818) 955-9300

[References Required]

CEO Creative Entertainment Office  
1801 S Catalina Ave #103  
Redondo Beach, CA 90277  
(310) 791-4494

[References Required]

Cerise Talent Agency  
11715 Hortense Street  
North Hollywood, CA 91607  
(818) 766-8226

[References Required]

Chasin Agency, Inc., The  
8899 Beverly Blvd #716  
Los Angeles, CA 90048  
(310) 278-7505

[References Required]

Cindy Romano Modeling & Talent Agency  
414 Village Square West  
Palm Springs, CA 92262  
(760) 323-3333

[No Unsolicited Material]

Conan Carroll & Associates  
11350 Ventura Blvd #200  
Studio City, CA 91604  
(818) 760-4730

[References Required]

Contemporary Artists, Ltd.  
610 Santa Monica Blvd #202  
Santa Monica, CA 90401  
(310) 395-1800

[No Unsolicited Material]

Coralie Jr. Theatrical Agency  
4789 Vineland Ave #100  
North Hollywood, CA 91602

[References Required]

(818) 766-9501

Criterion Group, Inc.  
8331 Keokuk Avenue  
Winnetka, CA 91306  
(818) 998-8885

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Dale Garrick International  
1017 N La Cienega Blvd  
Suite 109  
West Hollywood, CA 90069  
(310) 657-2661

[References Required]

David Shapira & Assoc., Inc.  
15821 Ventura Blvd. #235  
Encino, CA 91436  
(818) 906-0322

[No Unsolicited Material]

Diverse Talent Group, Inc.  
1875 Century Park East #2250  
Los Angeles, CA 90067  
(310) 201-6565

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Don Buchwald & Associates (LA)  
6500 Wilshire Blvd #2200  
Los Angeles, CA 90048  
(323) 655-7400

[References Required  
Letter of Inquiry Required]

Dytman & Associates  
9200 Sunset Blvd #809  
Los Angeles, CA 90069  
(310) 274-8844

[References Required]

Endeavor Agency, The  
9601 Wilshire Blvd  
3rd Floor  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210  
(310) 248-2000

[No Unsolicited Material]

Epstein-Wyckoff-Corsa-Ross  
280 South Beverly Dr #400  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
(310) 278-7222

[No Unsolicited Material]

ES Agency, The  
6612 Pacheco Way  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
(916) 723-2794

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Field-Cech Agency, Inc.  
12725 Ventura Blvd #D  
Studio City, CA 91604  
(818) 980-2001

[References Required]



Film Theatre Actors Exchange  
390 28th Ave #3  
San Francisco, CA 94121  
(415) 379-9308

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Gage Group, Inc., The  
14724 Ventura Blvd #505  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403  
(818) 905-3800

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Geddes Agency  
8430 Santa Monica Blvd #200  
West Hollywood, CA 90069  
(323) 848-2700

[No Unsolicited Material]

Gerald K. Smith & Associates  
(323) 849-5388

[No Unsolicited Material]

Hart Literary Management  
5686 Antelope Trail  
Orcutt, CA 93455-6066  
(805) 937-3342

[References Required]

Hohman, Maybank, Lieb  
9229 Sunset Blvd #700  
Los Angeles, CA 90069  
(310) 274-4600

[References Required]

Hollywood View  
5255 Veronica Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90008  
(310) 480-5118

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Identity Talent Agency, Inc.  
7080 Hollywood Blvd  
Suite 1009  
Hollywood, CA 90028  
(323) 469-1100

[References Required]

Innovative Artists  
1505 Tenth Street  
Santa Monica, CA 90401  
(310) 656-0400

[References Required]

Irv Schechter Company, The  
9460 Wilshire Blvd #300  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
(310) 278-8070

[References Required]

J.K.A. Talent & Literary Agency  
1926 N. Crescent Heights Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90069  
(323) 650-2093

[References Required]

Jack Lenny Associates  
9454 Wilshire Blvd #600  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
(310) 271-2174

[No Unsolicited Material]

Jack Scagnetti  
5118 Vineland Ave #102  
North Hollywood, CA 91601  
(818) 762-3871

[References Required]

Jana Luker Talent Agency  
1923 1/2 Westwood Blvd #3  
Los Angeles, CA 90025  
(310) 441-2822

[No Unsolicited Material]

Janette Anderson Talent Agency  
9682 Via Torino  
Burbank, CA 91504  
(818) 768-3358

[References Required  
No Unsolicited Material]

Jerome S. Siegel Associates  
1680 North Vine St #617  
Hollywood, CA 90028  
(323) 466-0185

[No Unsolicited Material]

Jon Klane Agency  
120 El Camino Dr #112  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
(310) 278-0178

[References Required  
Letter of Inquiry Required]

Kaplan Stahler Gumer Braun Agency  
8383 Wilshire Blvd #923  
Beverly Hills, CA 90211  
(323) 653-4483

[References Required]

Larchmont Literary Agency  
444 N Larchmont Blvd #200  
Los Angeles, CA 90004  
(323) 856-3070

[References Required  
Letter of Inquiry Required]

Larry Grossman & Associates  
2129 Ridge Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90049  
(310) 550-8127

[No Unsolicited Material]

Laya Gelff Agency  
16133 Ventura Blvd #700  
Encino, CA 91436  
(818) 996-3100

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Lynn Pleshette Literary Agency  
2700 North Beachwood Dr  
Los Angeles, CA 90068  
(323) 465-0428

[References Required]

Lynne & Reilly Agency  
10725 Vanowen St  
North Hollywood, CA 91605-6402  
(323) 850-1984

[No Unsolicited Material]

Maggie Roiphe Agency  
1721 South Garth Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90035  
(310) 876-1561

[References Required]

Marion A. Wright Agency  
4317 Bluebell Ave  
Studio City, CA 91604  
(818) 766-7307

[References Required]

Maris Agency  
17620 Sherman Way #213  
Van Nuys, CA 91406  
(818) 708-2493

[No Unsolicited Material]

Markwood Company, The  
1813 Victory Blvd  
Glendale, CA 91201  
(818) 401-3644

[References Required]

Media Artists Group  
6300 Wilshire Blvd  
Suite 1470  
Los Angeles, CA 90048  
(323) 658-7434

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Merrily Kane Agency  
857 S. Bundy Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90049  
(310) 820-0020

[References Required]

Metropolitan Talent Agency  
4526 Wilshire Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90010  
(323) 857-4500

[References Required]

Michael D. Robins & Associates  
23241 Ventura Blvd #300  
Woodland Hills, CA 91364  
(818) 343-1755

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Michelle Gordon & Associates  
260 South Beverly Dr #308  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
(310) 246-9930

[References Required  
Letter of Inquiry Required]

Mitchell K. Stubbs & Associates  
8675 W. Washington Blvd #203  
Culver City, CA 90232

[No Unsolicited Material]

(310) 838-1200

Monteiro Rose Dravis Agency, Inc.  
 17514 Ventura Blvd #205  
 Encino, CA 91316  
 (818) 501-1177

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Nancy Chaidez Agency & Associates, Inc.  
 6399 Wilshire Blvd. #500  
 Los Angeles, CA 90048  
 (323) 655-3455

[References Required]

Natural Talent, Inc.  
 3331 Ocean Park Blvd #203  
 Santa Monica, CA 90405  
 (310) 450-4945

[References Required]

Omnipop, Inc. (LA)  
 10700 Ventura Blvd  
 2nd Floor  
 Studio City, CA 91604  
 (818) 980-9267

[No Unsolicited Material]

Orange Grove Group, Inc., The  
 12178 Ventura Blvd #205  
 Studio City, CA 91604  
 (818) 762-7498

[References Required]

Panda Talent Agency  
 3721 Hoen Ave  
 Santa Rosa, CA 95405  
 (707) 576-0711

[No Unsolicited Material]

Paul Gerard Talent Agency  
 11712 Moorpark St #112  
 Studio City, CA 91604  
 (818) 769-7015

[References Required]

Paul Kohner, Inc.  
 9300 Wilshire Blvd #555  
 Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
 (310) 550-1060

[References Required]

Preferred Artists  
 16633 Ventura Blvd #1421  
 Encino, CA 91436  
 (818) 990-0305

[References Required]

Privilege Talent Agency  
 14542 Ventura Blvd #209  
 Sherman Oaks, CA 91403  
 (818) 386-2377

[References Required]

Qualita Dell' Arte

[New Writers OK]

5353 Topanga Cyn Rd #220  
Woodland Hills, CA 91364  
(818) 598-8073

Quillco Agency  
3104 West Cumberland Ct  
Westlake Village, CA 91362  
(805) 495-8436

[References Required]

Rebel Entertainment Partners, Inc.  
5700 Wilshire Blvd #456  
Los Angeles, CA 90036  
(323) 935-1700

[References Required]

Rogers Hartmann Literary  
6565 Sunset Blvd  
Suite 415  
Hollywood, CA 90028  
(323) 856-5058

[References Required]

Rothman Brecher Agency, The  
9465 Wilshire Blvd #840  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
(310) 247-9898

[References Required]

Sarnoff Company, Inc., The  
10 Universal City Plaza #2000  
Universal City, CA 91608  
(818) 753-2377

[References Required]

Shapiro-Lichtman, Inc.  
8827 Beverly Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90048  
(310) 859-8877

[References Required]

Shirley Wilson & Associates  
5410 Wilshire Blvd #227  
Los Angeles, CA 90036  
(323) 857-6977

[References Required]

Stars, The Agency  
23 Grant Ave, 4th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
(415) 421-6272

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Starwil Productions  
433 N Camden Dr, 4th Floor  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210  
(818) 761-3213

[No Unsolicited Material]

Stein Agency, The  
5125 Oakdale Ave  
Woodland Hills, CA 91364  
(818) 594-8990

[References Required]

Stone Manners Agency  
 6500 Wilshire Blvd #550  
 Los Angeles, CA 90048  
 (323) 655-1313

[Letter of Inquiry Required]

Stuart M. Miller Co, The  
 11684 Ventura Blvd #225  
 Studio City, CA 91604  
 (818) 506-6067

[References Required]

Summit Talent & Literary Agency  
 9454 Wilshire Blvd #203  
 Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
 (310) 205-9730

[References Required  
 Letter of Inquiry Required]

Susan Smith Company, The  
 121A N. San Vicente Blvd  
 Beverly Hills, CA 90211  
 (323) 852-4777

[No Unsolicited Material]

Triumph Literary Agency  
 415 Washington Blvd #1004  
 Marina Del Rey, CA 90292  
 (310) 264-3959

[No Unsolicited Material]

United Talent Agency, Inc.  
 9560 Wilshire Blvd  
 5th Floor  
 Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
 (310) 273-6700

[References Required]

Vision Art Management  
 9200 Sunset Blvd  
 Penthouse 1  
 Los Angeles, CA 90069  
 (310) 888-3288

[References Required]

**Colorado**

Carolyn Hodges Agency  
 1980 Glenwood Dr  
 Boulder, CO 80304  
 (303) 443-4636

[References Required]

Jeffrey T. Wendland Agency  
 265 South 38th St  
 Boulder, CO 80303  
 (303) 499-2018

[References Required]

**Connecticut**

Don Gastwirth & Associates  
 265 College Street #10-N  
 New Haven, CT 06510

[References Required]