

## WEST HARTFORD SCREEN WRITERS GROUP / MINUTES

**Meeting of:** 8/31/05

**Moderator:** Liz Cipollina

**Scribe:** Denning Powell

**Snacks:** Steve Consolatti

### ATTENDEES:

Liz Cipollina

Denning Powell

Steve Consolatti

Steve Wass

Joe Vojt

Geoffrey Saunders

Darryl Johnson

Tessa O'Sullivan

Steve Olechna

Patrick Lee

Rita Isaacson

Jacque Devlin

June Neal

Tom Murphy

### INTROS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Phil Hall will speak about his book "The Encyclopedia of Underground Movies" Monday 9/26/05, 7:30 PM Webster Hall. This will be preceded by a showing of the underground movie "Superguy" at 6:00 PM. (*Your scribe can't help but note the synchronicity of that with the two meeting handouts--excerpts from recent issues of New Yorker and Newsweek about directions and driving forces and economics in the movie industry-- if you missed the meeting, e-mail me and I'll send you an e-copy*).
2. Jacque's "500-Pound March" script made the semifinals at the Moondance screenwriting contest ([www.moondancefilmfestival.com](http://www.moondancefilmfestival.com)). She subsequently listed the logline at InkTip on the internet and got two hits right away. Cost is \$40 for a 6-month listing. Look at that website ([www.InkTip.com](http://www.InkTip.com)) for details.
3. Tessa wrote a short ghost scene for the Noah Webster project, which has partial funding and seems like it will go forward.
4. Geoff's "Rising Darkness" script made the quarterfinals at the ScriptaPalooza screenwriting contest ([www.scriptapalooza.com](http://www.scriptapalooza.com)).
5. June passed around the book she edited "Why I Left the Jihad".
6. Denning is speaking at the Bloomfield Public Library Thursday 9/15/05 6:30 PM Community Room on "Playing at the Edges of Science and Fiction", and signing copies of "Monkey Trap".
7. Liz handed out a draft screenplay "June Weddings" as an example of a short script (1 room, 1 scene, 3 people) that's very contained and easily produceable.
8. New attendee Patrick Lee is an accomplished writer, has written screenplays and also develops websites for small business. Liz digs the accent.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION:**

1. Brief discussion re possible invitation to a script doctor to address the group or run a workshop (for a fee). Consensus: table it for further consideration when the queue is not so full.
  2. Brief discussion and consensus re operating the queue:
    - (a) Deadline for scripts getting into the queue is two weeks in advance of a meeting (unless there's a dire emergency need for group feedback – e.g., upcoming script sale and it has a fatal flaw – but noted that anyone in that situation is welcome to ask individual members for consideration in exchange for beers, reciprocal favors, whatever).
    - (b) Minimum attendance at two meetings before a writer can submit anything to the queue.
    - (c) First submitted is first reviewed, with moderator for the upcoming meeting setting the review agenda. This means that some submissions meeting the deadline occasionally may be deferred to a following meeting.
  3. Discussion re running meetings. No clear consensus... but subjects to be further considered at next meeting are:
    - (a) Limit scripts to 30 pgs±, especially for first draft material.
    - (b) Review one script and no more than two shorts (concepts, treatments, pitches, etc) per meeting.
    - (c) Reviewers should speak to major points, and leave minor stuff (syntax, formatting) for their markups or written comments.
    - (d) Reviewers should always provide written markups or comments to writer (impossible for writer to absorb/process/remember too much stuff, especially subtleties).
    - (e) Reviewers should not repeat what other reviewers previously said (except to note where they strongly agree or disagree with it, or have a significantly different slant on it, which is important info for the writer).
- Liz invited thoughts/preferences to be emailed to her in the interim.

## **REVIEW 1: Rising Darkness, by Geoff Saunders (full script).**

**Logline:** Ex-military biker's good triumphs over vampire's evil assault on American freedoms.

**Why writing it:** To overcome boredom, and to express lifelong affection for horror/vampire flicks – not many good vampire flicks being made anymore.

**Theme:** Violent struggle of individual to preserve cherished values, against overwhelming evil.

**Genre:** Horror; expected audience is horror/vampire movie aficionados.

**Wants from review:** Critique and honest feedback on both concept and writing.

**Synopsis of group review:** Concept is very viable, generally follows the template of somebody kissed or killed every 8 minutes. Pacing is excellent, script is very readable, dialog is good, opening scenes are especially compelling. Main hero (Fr John) doesn't go through enough self-agony, and heroine (Leah) is not developed enough – suggest less time on the team activities (bikers going to war) and more on these two individuals (or see the war more through their eyes). The antihero (Kron) and his sidekicks could maybe use more air time to develop his evilness. Reconsider the ending: (1) unsatisfying that Kron not whacked, (2) story is ripe with better possibilities such as Romeo/Juliet or Rosemary's Baby type endings. Suggest minimizing tech notes on camera angles, and adding more whitespace in script. Looks like a high cost (\$100M) special effects movie, so script should be good enough to make it past that initial (produceability) criterion.

**REVIEW 2: Hot Ice, by Darryl Johnson (treatment plus first draft section).**

**Logline:** Building a team as a way to build character.

**Why writing it:** To counter the negativity of the current view of sports created by the wrong sports icons and behaviors, and to show the value of hard work, honesty, character, integrity.

**Theme:** Passionate drama with humor, using the building of a winning team as a metaphor for raising youth with character and a good perspective on sports.

**Genre:** Drama, with light moments.

**Wants from review:** Reaction to concept, is the treatment headed in the right direction.

**Synopsis of group review:** Great concept – could be a story that a sizeable audience is really wanting to see – a counter to all the sports bad news. A good morality play, on a subject that arguably needs it. The hero (coach Johnson) doesn't have enough suffering/internal obstacles to overcome along with building a team. The team could be building him at the same time (i.e., reciprocity as in "The Longest Yard" (the first one) – that's a possibility to consider. The antihero (presumably the principal) is not clearly-drawn, nor is the set of problems/obstacles he puts in the way of the coach (presumably along the lines of winning at any cost). Suggest a little more explanatory narrative – the script is mostly dialog.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Wednesday, September 28, 7:00 PM, Webster Hall.

**Moderator:** Tessa O'Sullivan

**Snacks:** Rita Isaacson

~DSP 9/2/05