

## WEST HARTFORD SCREENWRITERS GROUP / MINUTES

**Meeting of:** 5/30/07

**Moderator:** Tessa O'Sullivan (subbing for Rita Isaacson)

**Snacks:** Cindy Drozd

**Scribe:** Denning Powell

### ATTENDEES:

Geoff Saunders

Denning Powell

Tessa O'Sullivan

Joe Cadieux

Tom Murphy

Cindy Drozd

Jacque Devlin

Jed Backus

Ella Maydon

### INTROS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(1) Proud astonished mama Tessa announced that son Jack O'Sullivan (2nd grade) may get flown to LA to do his Pop-Tart show on nationwide TV next week. (2) Joe noted a good article on storyboarding software in the recent issue of *VideoMaker*, and that (funding permitting) the Library will buy a 3-CCD video camera next year. (3) Cindy raved about being mentored by Jean Scott Stawarz (who did *Pow-Wow Highway* and *Henry in Berlin*) -- she got very valuable feedback on her partial screenplay draft. (4) Jed reported that the new website [www.zoobody.com](http://www.zoobody.com) (primarily a casting resource to get actors) is looking for scripts for horror movies.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:** Brief review of the new process for evaluating scripts against the structure suggested in Blake Snyder's screenwriting text *Save the Cat* (STC).

### REVIEW: *LACA LOCO*, full script, by Jed Backus.

**Logline:** Fired small-town newspaper reporter seeks a new life as a Hollywood actor, but runs up against unforeseen consequences of his actions.

**Why writing it:** Visited buddies in LA and had to write something to reflect that craziness.

**Theme:** In the fish-out-of-water area; protagonist must adapt to a big city that is radically different than his small-town background.

**Genre:** Comedy action thriller.

**Wants from review:** Comparison of the script against the 15 major benchmark "beats" in STC. Does the story work as a whole? Where are the major glitches?

**Synopsis of group review:** General agreement on: (1) The script hit most of the 15 beats suggested in STC, except that 2 of the 15 beats were not particularly clear, and 3 others of the 15 appeared significantly later than the recommended location; (2) the script was applauded as a significant achievement since it had not been developed based on STC and since it was written before the group decided to test STC as an evaluation tool; (3) the pacing was fine and the dialog excellent (Smitty's especially); (4) Dannon is not totally responsible for changing his situation, it's more like things happen to him, rather than him ultimately gaining control over his fate; (5) having Beso not talk is a nice touch.

Mixed opinions on: (1) The *Dark-Night-of-the-Soul* beat and the *Debate* beat seem too fuzzily defined as to exactly when they occurred; (2) the switch of the quest's goal from actor to screenwriter.

Suggestions for going forward: (1) Consider starting the story on Dannon's arrival in LA rather than in

Colorado, and (rather than doing his history as voiceover) recap it as flashback or dialog with Carmina in their first car ride (which would introduce Carmina and Smitty earlier and more in line with STC; (2) try to smooth out the suddenness of Dannon's transition from wannabe actor to actual screenwriter with some hints in the previous 110 pages (he is a writer by previous profession, after all) about the upcoming *satori* moment; (3) cut down the length of the longer description blocks to four lines or fewer.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Wednesday June 27, 2007, 7:00 PM, West Hartford Senior Center. Nothing offered for the queue at this point. However, the moon will be beneath Jupiter all night; this may be meaningful to prolific Geoff.

**Moderator:** Rita Isaacson (by group acclamation, since Tessa substituted for her this time)

**Snacks:** Jed Backus

~DSP 5/31/07 :-)