

WEST HARTFORD SCREENWRITERS GROUP / MINUTES

Meeting of: 11/28/07

Moderator: Jacque Devlin

Snacks: Doug Johnson

Scribe: Denning Powell

ATTENDEES:

Tessa O'Sullivan

Steve Olechna

Geoff Saunders

Denning Powell

Jacque Devlin

Darryl Johnson

Liz Cipollina

Valerie Utton

Tom Murphy

INTROS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS: (1) Annual holiday party agreed to be held at Angelo's-on-Main (Rockledge Golf Club), Monday, December 17, 7:00 pm. Reservations have been made for the bar, for 16 people, directions are attached. Entertainment will be provided by reading 1-page scripts, Steve to emcee. (2) Valerie recommends the book *Writing the TV Drama Script*, by Pamela Douglas.

OPEN DISCUSSION: (1) Of the screenwriter interview CDs: Jacque returned Susanne Grant, Tom returned Bruce Rubin, Tessa returned Ganz/Mandel. (2) Discussion of accepting playwrights into the group tabled until the January meeting.

REVIEW#1: Geoff's *Heart and Soul*.

Logline: Not finished yet.

Why writing it: Trying a different genre, mixing horror and drama.

Theme: World's most terrifying monster is man.

Genre: Thriller.

Wants from review: All comments.

Synopsis of group review:

General agreement on: (1) It's a really good read -- absorbing, fast-paced. (2) The pace picks up in the second half, and rockets along to the finale. (3) The plot lines are woven together seamlessly. (4) Condense the Amy-CJ competition/relationship down to just enough to support the story. (5) Having Taylor show up again at the ending is maybe a little over the top. (6) Lead off with Hurley rather than Savage, so there's no mistaking the protagonist in the story. (7) Need to cut down on the number of named characters.

Mixed opinions on: (1) Some material is cliched (e.g., victims taken to deserted farmhouse). (2) Eliminate the superimposed "the most terrifying monster... man", and let the audience decide that. (3) Clarify that Evan's (post-mortem) appearance is as an apparition, maybe by showing the fatal wound in his neck. (4) Taylor has more backstory (i.e., flashbacks) than needed to support the plot.

Suggestions for going forward: (1) Change “Collector” to something else -- that’s been overused in movies. (2) Make some outcomes better foreshadowed (e.g., why did Taylor whack CJ but not the driver -- does he operate on some sense of random mercy, does he play God, flip a coin? -- there could be some interesting character insight developed here). (3) To mix genres successfully, consider making the tone more uniform. (4) Clarify plausibility of some plot elements (e.g., why wouldn’t Amy know all about police scanners, is the Amy/CJ bet a likely event, what were Taylor’s methods for selecting victims?)

REVIEW#2: Val’s *Jimmy’s Last Ride* (first 13 pages).

Logline: A casket gets delivered to a wedding and things go downhill from there.

Why writing it: Wanted to show folks interacting with a dead person.

Theme: Not known yet.

Genre: Romantic comedy.

Wants from review: All comments

Synopsis of group review:

General agreement on: (1) Opening scene with the bimbo-wife fight in a funeral parlor is a promising start. (2) There being two Jimmy’s is a little confusing in these first pages. (3) Death by balls blown off in a riding mower accident is also a promising start. (4) These first few pages reasonably fit the STC structure.

Mixed opinions on: (1) The ‘looking-through-curtains’ scene has too much wordy narrative. (2) Need more backdrop/info on Angie between the opening funeral scene and 15 years later.

Suggestions for going forward: (1) Think about where “the gaze” should happen, to fit the typical structure of a romantic comedy. (2) Make the theme a bit more obvious in the first few pages.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, January 30, 2008, 7:00 PM, West Hartford Public Library Main Branch in (re-opened), Webster Room. Nothing in the queue as yet.

Moderator: Liz

Snacks: Tom

~DSP 12/1/07 :-)