

## WEST HARTFORD SCREENWRITERS GROUP / MINUTES

**Meeting of:** 1/30/08

**Moderator:** Geoff Saunders

**Snacks:** Darryl Johnson

**Scribe:** Denning Powell

### ATTENDEES:

Tessa O'Sullivan

Geoff Saunders

Denning Powell

Jacque Devlin

Darryl Johnson

Valerie Utton

Doug Johnson

Parnell Jackson (new/visitor)

Manda Perrotti (new/visitor)

Vito Souza (new/visitor)

Aaron Briggs (new/visitor)

Lauren Trichler (new/visitor)

Ron Becks (visitor)

**INTROS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** (1) Six visitors/prospective new members participated, drawn primarily by the Library's postings about the meeting. (2) Ron Becks, a documentary film-maker visiting from the west coast, stopped in to observe, and offered some personal insights into the screenwriting art and business. (3) Jacque is presently working on a romantic comedy script.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:** (1) Scheduled discussion of queue submission quotas deferred until next meeting when more members are present. (2) Parnell (student at Kingswood-Oxford) has written and is directing *A Voice*, a stage play about a cancer survivor, scheduled for April 11 and 12 at KO, and all are invited (more info available on [www.avoice08.blogspot.com](http://www.avoice08.blogspot.com)).

**REVIEW#1:** Tessa's *Scene 2: Jonathan Gillette, Jr.* (3-pg short).

**Logline:** N/A

**Why writing it:** Written (and produced) as part of a West Hartford stage play about the Revolutionary War.

**Theme:** N/A.

**Genre:** War story/historical.

**Wants from review:** One question: is this short extendable into a longer work or full script?

### Synopsis of group review:

General agreement on: (1) Parts of the stage play script as written are too wordy for a film format, but possibly could be re-cast as extended dialog between two parties (instead of the present one-person soliloquy. (2) Clear potential exists for a movie script, either historical/documentary (if information is available) or as a drama (if additional storylines are brought in -- war stories about POWs need more than just the protagonist).

Mixed opinions on: N/A

Suggestions for going forward: (1) Think about what kind of story it should be. (2) If decide to proceed, edit down dialog to the recommended 4-line max. (3) Look at scripts for some similar prisoner sagas -- maybe *Pappillion* -- and study those as templates).

**REVIEW#2:** Doug's *Gateway*:

**Logline:** Underachiever loses job but develops a project to solve the world's problems.

**Why writing it:** Recapping interesting personal/professional experience.

**Theme:** If ya wanna save the world, ya gotta have a plan.

**Genre:** Drama.

**Wants from review:** All comments, but especially: does this make a good story?

**Synopsis of group review:**

General agreement on: (1) The concept of a project to design projects (cities) is a fascinating idea. (2) The concept is very philosophical and thus can't itself be the story; the story has to be wound around it. (3) There are too many characters; portions of the script read more like a novel than a screenplay. (4) A lot of the dialogue could be condensed without losing meaning. (5) Insufficient tension and conflict exist to challenge the protagonist (appears to be the consensus main issue).

Mixed opinions on: (1) Whether the John/Marty identity should be held until the end (as written) or disclosed earlier in the story. (2) The level of the project's technical details appealed to some, but others thought it detracted from the story.

Suggestions for going forward: (1) Stick with the fascinating concept, but imbue the story with much more conflict. (2) Work John into much deeper holes that rip him up emotionally and are much more difficult to dig his way out of, so his character builds/transforms (story arc). (3) Prune the technical descriptions and trim the number of characters.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Wednesday, February 27, 2008, 7:00 PM, West Hartford Public Library Main Branch, Meeting Room (on lower level). Nothing in the queue as yet, but Geoff likely will offer his latest script *A Sunday Drive*.

**Moderator:** Liz

**Snacks:** Tom

~DSP 2/4/08 :-)