

WEST HARTFORD SCREENWRITERS GROUP / MINUTES

Meeting of: 2/27/08

Moderator: Liz Cipollina

Snacks: Tom Murphy

Scribe: Denning Powell

ATTENDEES:

Liz Cipollina

Tessa O'Sullivan

Geoff Saunders

Tom Murphy

Denning Powell

Jacque Devlin

Darryl Johnson

Valerie Utton

Doug Johnson

Manda Perrotti

Steve Olechna

Eric Fleischmann (new/visitor)

John Mason (new/visitor)

Owen McLaughlin (new/visitor)

Howard Meyerowitz (new/visitor)

INTROS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS: (1) Four visitors/prospective new members participated. (2) All those who brought a 1-page script for the amusement/consternation/edification of the WHScreenwriters holiday party need to get it to Steve Olechna for compilation and possibly bronzing.

OPEN DISCUSSION: (1) Queue submission quota was discussed; the consensus was to make it an informal guideline rather than a firm requirement. (2) Membership into group was discussed; the consensus was to change the Constitution to indicate attendance at two meetings (rather than three) as a pre-requisite for being put on the yahogroupmail list. (3) The nature of submissions into the queue was discussed; the consensus was to keep it very flexible so that concepts, plots, storyline ideas and other such would be acceptable for the queue(i.e., in addition to accepting the usual stuff (screenplays, parts of screenplays, screenplay treatment and synopses)). (4) Jacque provided a handout from Inktip.com on character development.

REVIEW#1: Geoff's *A Sunday Drive*

Logline: A tired former middle school teacher looks back on the ups and downs of his life and spirituality as he embarks on one last Sunday drive with his faithful companion.

Why writing it: Relating a story conceived by Howard Meyerowitz.

Theme: Who says you can't beat death and taxes.

Genre: Drama.

Wants from review: All comments, except no interest in comparisons to common structure formats.

Synopsis of group review:

General agreement on: (1) There's an appealing universality and poignancy to the idea that lack of (or withholding of) love at a young age comes back later with a karmic consequence. (2) A valiant attempt -- the concept is a very tough one to portray successfully in a movie (particularly for a US audience, Europe might be more receptive). (3) The relationships among the players were drawn well. (4) Some of the dialog bogs down in narration. (5) Insufficient tension and conflict exist to challenge the protagonist, or explain his decision to suicide (appears to be the consensus main issue) to solve his problems. (6) Related issue -- such a momentous decision could be driven by clinical depression or the down part of a bipolar cycle, but there wasn't enough basis to support that.

Mixed opinions on: (1) Whether David is a sad-sack who doesn't deserve any empathy. (2) Some of the flashbacks seem a bit contrived. (3) The reasonableness of some of the set pieces: first sexual experience, kiss in the cafeteria, encounter in bikers bar.

Suggestions for going forward: (1) Stick with the concept, but imbue David with more agony and conflict, so his character builds/transforms (story arc) and some rooting interests are developed. (2) Deepen the early childhood lack of love and domineering mother issues accordingly. (3) Have David define what success means to him: what does he want, what are the obstacles. (4) Make the decision point (to suicide) later in the story, preceded by an appropriate catalyst and internal debate, so that tension is preserved. (5) Break up longer sections of dialog into shorter sentences (particularly David's soliloquies to the dog).

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, March 26, 2008, 7:00 PM, West Hartford Public Library Main Branch, Meeting Room (on lower level). Nothing in the queue as yet; Manda may submit a short story to seek the group's feedback on whether it's got potential for a screenplay.

Moderator: Tom Murphy

Snacks: Doug Johnson

~DSP 3/1/08 :-)