

Agency

Coverage Program

A Brief Introduction to Coverage

*Excerpts from “Full Coverage: How to Analyze a Script (In the Real World)”
by M.J. Daugherty*

Many would-be Assistants begin their quest for Hollywood glory in that most noble of all academic institutions: film school. The professors often require their students to write essays analyzing films and screenplays from historical, psychological or even sociological standpoints, while striving to uncover the deeper symbolic meaning behind films sublime to ridiculous.

College essays are valuable tools in learning how to look at films and scripts analytically, but in Hollywood, the only symbol most people are concerned about is “\$” (or sometimes “%”). As an Assistant, there is *only one reason* that you will be asked to read a script – *to help your boss decide if it is worth his or her time*, and you will be expected to give that opinion clearly, confidently, and most importantly, concisely, often in the form of “coverage.”

For an Assistant with aspirations of moving up in the Hollywood pecking order, reading scripts is a great place to start. *Coverage is one of the few chances that most Assistants have to really have their opinions heard*, and it is one of the easiest ways for an Assistant to take some initiative for finding a new project or client. Yes, it can be a chore, especially given that the majority of undiscovered scripts out there are undiscovered for a reason. But if you can build a reputation as someone who shows intelligence and “good taste” (i.e. you have some sense of what might actually sell), then you will be on the path to success.

Every company will have a slightly different template for their coverage, but all coverage will contain the same basic information: a run-down of the elements: name of the writer, names of other attached elements (i.e. talent, director, producer, etc.), page count, draft date, genre, period, location, estimated budget (i.e. low, medium, high), who submitted the material and to whom, the name of the reader, and the date of the coverage.

Below that should be a logline of the project. Think of a logline as a blurb that you might get from the TV Guide. It should be a one or two sentence summary of the basic story. To give a better example, a logline for the original *Star Wars* movie might read “A farm boy who dreams of greatness as a pilot intercepts a distress signal from a rebel princess and goes on a quest to rescue her alongside a space pirate and an old knight to ultimately save the galaxy from the forces of evil.”

Before the synopsis, give your bottom line comments in a few sentences. Simply put, is this script worth pursuing or not? A check-box section will ask you to rate the material as “Recommend,” “Consider” or “Pass,” and a graph will ask you to rate various elements of the script, such as dialogue, character, plot, etc on a sliding scale from “Poor” to “Excellent.” This can be especially useful if the writing is solid, but the story is poor, as you may want to take a look at the writer’s other projects. For example: “FREE WILLY on ice, this sweet tale of friendship between a socially inept boy and his mission to return a penguin that has escaped from the zoo to Antarctica will surely find favor with a wide family audience and comedic talent alike.” Before you give your recommendation, make sure that you know why you are being asked to read it. Your boss may be considering the writer as a potential client, as a potential vehicle for a talent or literary client, or for packaging. You could read the same script multiple times and come to very different conclusions depending on which scenario applies.

A good summary should be as brief as possible, but should give a solid understanding of the story. Avoid getting into running commentary in the summary. Just tell the story as clearly as you can. Your boss should be able to talk knowledgeably about the plot based only on having read your coverage.

Following the summary is the section you’ve been waiting for, the Comments section. This is where you can hold forth on all of your opinions in detail. Keep it in the realm of useful information, and don’t get too “highfalutin” in your wording. These comments should be about a page. This is your chance to make a case for a good script and to argue against a bad one.

Be sure to read other scripts in addition to the ones that your boss gives you. Read what has sold to get a feel for good material, ask your industry contacts to send you their favorites. Make sure that you know your company’s policy on submissions before you start opening the door to new material. Any

submissions that aren't sent by a representative may need a submission release agreement.

This same process can also apply to material beyond scripts, too. Novels, short stories, graphic novels, existing films, magazine articles and even websites have all been fodder for Hollywood projects. There's no reason you can't strike gold with something that isn't a formal script yet.

If you can find the next great idea before someone else does, you will be on the road to superstar status before you know it. The trick is finding that elusive needle in the haystack of bad material, and that means you're going to have to go through a lot of it. So let's get covering!

Coverage Technique

COVERAGE DETAIL

The Coverage Detail page is a thumbnail sketch of your entire coverage. Be sure to fill out every blank so that all of the script's pertinent information can be evaluated at a glance, including the budget, genre, location, time period, logline, comments summary, and evaluation; as well as the overall rating of 1-10; 10 being the highest rating and one the lowest. The overall rating is specified as follows: 1-2 = pass, 3-4 = weak consider, 5-6 = consider, 7-8 = strong consider, and 9-10 = recommend. However, you do not have to follow this to the tee, please use your best judgement. This is a rating system to source **your** all around take on the material.

Make sure that your logline summarizes the arc of your synopsis in a single sentence. The hero should be the subject of the sentence and the action that takes place should paint a picture of the character's journey. Do not use characters' names or expressions like "this is a story about" in your logline. Although it is tempting, refrain from using such phrases as "hilarity ensues" since it is too vague to summarize the lessons learned by the hero at the script's end.

Your Comments Summary is the thesis paragraph to your comments which you will literally copy and paste into your comments as the opening paragraph. It should include one sentence with each of the following: comparison to other movies aka Hollywoodese, discussion of how this film is different from the comparisons, and if this script is a recommend, strong consider, consider, weak consider, or a pass

with two examples to support this statement.

In the Evaluation, most of what you read will be a pass. If you are ambivalent about the script, it's a pass or a weak consider (depending upon how ambivalent you are). If you like something, but it has a few flaws, it should be considered. If the script is nearly perfect, or if you love it so much that you would put up your own money to get it made, it should be a recommend. Don't strongly consider or recommend anything you can't defend, but don't be afraid to make a strong judgment.

Be sure that your comments are consistent with these markings. If you criticize the structure or title in your comments and then give them high marks here, it can be confusing. Please double check that this visual representation reflects your written one.

Do not use the poor and pass options just because you can. If a script is beyond the point of redemption it is not necessary to find a fix or a solution, but the coverage must still be well-written. Otherwise we ask that if something is not working, tell us why it's not working and how it can become better. We still want thoughtful coverage!

SYNOPSIS

While some thoughts about how to write your Synopsis appear in the Reading and Writing section, the following are a few more important things to keep in mind:

Your Synopsis should not be longer than a page, unless the script is incredibly convoluted or long. For a book, a two-page Synopsis is acceptable. By telling a linear short story about the script without recounting it beat for beat, you will hold your audience's interest longer (which is sometimes more than we can say for the screenwriters we read).

Always use the omniscient third person and present tense. Try to focus on the main plot and characters and avoid sub plots unless they have a direct bearing on the main story and move the plot forward. Avoid any phrases that

take the reader out of the story i.e.: “the story opens with,” “we cut to,” etc. Character names should appear in all caps the first time you introduce them (subsequently, they should be in regular case) and when introducing secondary characters, be sure to relate them to the protagonist.

Below is a brief breakdown of what should be included in your Synopsis. You can use it to build your Synopsis, and if you find that your synopses are too long, remember to whittle it to these essentials.

Catalyst (around pgs 10-15): Balance is upset. Desire, problem, need, goal, mission, something to do

Big Event (around pgs 20-30): Changes life in a big way

Pinch (about 1/2 way): Point of No Return. Full commitment where motivation becomes clear

Crisis: Forces crucial decision. Low point. All looks hopeless

Showdown: Climax. Antagonist and Protagonist go head to head

Realization: Central character grown, changed, or figured things out. Usually after showdown, but can come before

ROLES – CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

The Breakdown provides character descriptions which are crucial for casting purposes. It also allows you to elaborate on characteristics there is no room for in your synopsis. The more pivotal of a character, the more you should write about.

After listing the characters in order of importance / largest role to smallest (from Lead, to Support, to Cameo; , write a brief character description and more importantly their character arc / function in the script (4-6 sentences for Lead / Support and 2-3 sentences for Cameo). You should provide an answer to the

question of what journey the character takes during the course of the story. **Please do not rehash what's found in the synopsis here. Focus on explaining the character's traits rather than explaining what happens to the character in the story.** This description must always appear in complete sentences. Feel free to link fragments together to create longer sentences which economize space and still keep the description grammatically sound. For minor characters, indicate their relationship to the lead character or other important roles. In the "Type" column, list the importance of each character with only one of the following designations: Leading Male / Female, Support Male / Female, or Cameo Male / Female, as Scripts will not recognize any other designation. Since ethnicities are important in some scripts, please be as thorough as possible in this section if the script specifically references ethnicity, if not, use "any."

It is never appropriate to make casting suggestions in your coverage. Using a nebulous description such as "a comedic leading man" or "a talented young ingénue" will help the coverage fulfill as many needs as possible.

COMMENTS

The Comments section is where you as an individual get to shine, using your knowledge of the business, film history and your creativity to showcase the script and your opinion of it. **Because we strive to be as objective as possible in our coverage, please do not reference yourself in the first person in your comments.** Avoid the subjective, i.e.: "I think the script is boring," but instead speak generally, i.e.: "The injection of higher stakes could keep the audience's interest alive through the slow third act." **Write with conviction, as if you are speaking on behalf of the audience towards whom the story is targeted.**

It is important that each subsequent paragraph contains a topic sentence, support and conclusion. **Always back up your assertions.** Avoid simply saying that something isn't working; indicate why it isn't working. For example, if you say that a script is boring or tedious and that it doesn't engage you, please preface and / or follow that statement with some evidence. For example, you might say, "Due to the fact that the protagonist never has a clear goal that he or she sets

out to achieve, there is nothing for the antagonist to oppose and, as a result, there is no conflict in the story, which makes for a very tedious read and a story that will have a hard time finding a broad audience.”

Your ideas on how the script can be improved should be presented here. In fact, the phrase “with a rewrite” should appear in some variation in all coverage that you write, since the most awful scripts can be improved and even the best script ever could surely be polished in some way.

Your Comments should always be broken down as follows, and in fact, **using this guideline** (which has been copied into the Template) **will guarantee that your Comments are thorough. How thoughtful they are is up to you.**

• **Comments Summary**

- Comparison to other movies – Back up choices (one sentence)
- Originality – How is this film different from the above-mentioned movies? (one sentence)
- Is this script a recommend, strong consider, consider, weak consider, or a pass?* – Quickly support this statement with the two strongest examples be it writing / story / characters / dialogue / tone / plot / originality, etc (will expand below)

• **Writing / Execution**

- Writing – Does it serve the story? Is the script too long?
- Visuals – Is this cinematic? Are there special effects? Stunts?
- Characters – Are they well-developed? Could they attract major talent? Is there an awards role in this movie?
- Dialogue – Is it catchy, lifelike, funny, in need of a punch-up?

- Tone – What is it specifically? Does it suit the story's concept?

- **Structure**

- Structural tension – What is at stake? What keeps the reader engaged?
- Conflict – What are the internal and external obstacles?
- Plot holes – Are there any glaring ones?

- **Conclusion**

- What are the biggest strengths and weaknesses?
- Commerciality / Critical Potential – Blockbuster or Oscar winner?

CRITICISM

Always use thoughtful language and give honest constructive criticism in your comments as it's not unusual for coverage to wind up in the hands of the author(s) of the script and others involved with the project. For example, instead of saying something incendiary like, "The characters suck," or "the characters are one-dimensional" use more diplomatic language and expound upon your thoughts by saying, "The characters need a substantial amount of further development" or "with further development, the characters could be even better than they are presently." You're essentially saying the same thing but the latter sentence is much more objective and adds more clarity to your original opinion.

Another great way to be diplomatic is to first point out the things that you feel

work in the script before pointing out the things that don't. For example, say, "While the plot is well-crafted, engaging and momentous and the story cinematic, the characters could use a substantial amount of further development."

Constructive criticism is criticism that offers the writer suggestions designed to improve the material. Because you won't have time and space to offer detailed development notes in your comments, offer brief and general suggestions. For example, say "Despite a great plot and lots of exciting action, the characters would all be even more dimensional, dynamic and engaging if they received further development. This could be achieved by exploring and integrating their back-stories, coloring in their personalities, and defining their arcs."

GLOSSARY OF HELPFUL TERMS:

Action Along with Dialogue, Transitions and Scene Headings, this is another element of screenwriting found on every page of a script. It is the descriptions of everything that happen

onscreen.

Actions What a character does in the script, based on what he wants, or his objective / goal.

Adaptation A script which is based upon another work, a book, a play, an article, etc.

Antagonist The person or force that opposes the protagonist, or main character, in his struggles to achieve his goal.

Character Someone who embodies major actions or has a defined story arc. The main character is he whose actions drive the story.

Character Arc How the character changes from his introduction at the beginning of the script to what he has learned or become by script's end. (Also called character development.)

Climax A decisive moment of maximum intensity and a major turning point in the plot which leads the hero to ultimate victory or defeat.

Concept The story told in broadest terms. The concept in a refined single sentence is the logline.

Conflict The struggle or clash of opposing or contending characters in a story. There are traditionally 5 levels of classic conflict: Man vs. Self, Man, Society, Technology and Nature.

Dialogue Conversation between characters. Good dialogue consists of rapid and life-like back and forth exchange, advancing the action of the story and providing a quick glimpse into the minds and souls of the characters.

Discovery The revelation or unfolding of something previously

unrecognized or unknown, usually by the main character in the climax of a drama. Think pages 45 and 75 where the stakes are raised.

Execution The way in which the concept is written or interpreted in the current draft.

Exposition Technique by which critical elements of the plot, often involving the back stories of the characters, are not depicted directly but are instead elaborated in dialogue by one of the characters or by a narrator.

Goal / Objective The single driving force that motivates and pushes the main character forward.

High Concept A commercial idea or premise, as of a story or film, that lends itself easily to promotion and marketing (i.e. JAWS, STAR WARS).

Hook A striking incident or action at the opening of a story, the purpose of which is to capture the audience's attention, or the most commercially viable version of the script.

Inciting Incident An event from outside that causes the lead character to take action

Log Line The idea of the story told in a single sentence. The main character (using generic terms, not names) is the sentences' subject and what he / she has to overcome and perhaps the story's twist will follow. It should not include the outcome of the story, but hint at it.

Narration The events of a story that are not dramatized but related by a character or narrator.

Obstacles The events that stand in the way of a character achieving his or her goals.

Plot What the main characters, protagonists and antagonists, do in the story.

Premise The “what if” or “what happens when” situation that gives birth to a story.

Protagonist The main character of the story, characterized by his/her ability to evolve and change throughout the story.

Red Herring A false clue or lead that distracts or diverts from the original objective.

Reversal The turning point in the plot. Think page 60.

Sequence A group of relating scenes.

Stakes The compelling reason we agree to go on a journey with the character, this is a reflection of how badly they want something and what they are willing to risk in order to get it.

Storyline Main line or thrust of development of a story or plot.

Structure The order of what the main character does in the story, it is determined by the story’s genre. It should follow the “Basic Plot Outline / Beat Sheet.”

Subtext The content which is not announced explicitly by the characters (or author) but is implicit or becomes something understood as the story unfolds.

Suspense Tension created by uncertainty of the story’s outcome, creating worry and fear about what is going to happen next.

Theme The general meaning or idea of a story. Something that the main character (and / or the audience) learns or proves by

the end of the story.

Twist Because the protagonist (and / or the audience) has misread the facts, the plot takes this unforeseen turn.

Recommended Scripts

The following scripts from the recent past should be read as an example of outstanding writing.

1408 by Scott Alexander & Larry Karaszewski 21 aka BEAT THE HOUSE / BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE / BREAKING VEGAS by Peter Steinfeld 3:10 TO YUMA by James Mangold ABOUT A BOY by Peter Hedges and the Weitz Bros. ADAPTATION by Charlie Kaufman AGAINST ALL ENEMIES by Jamie Vanderbilt AGE OF ADALINE by J. Mills Goodloe & Sal Paskowitz ALONG CAME POLLY by John Hamburg ALPHA DOG by Nick Cassavetes AMERICAN CONTESSA by Andy Bellin AMERICAN GANGSTER by Terry George AMERICAN PRINCESS by Tom Abrams & Dennis Bartok ANALOG by Mike Million ANGEL OF VENGEANCE by Trevor Munson ANGELS IN THE ASYLUM by Rob Sorrenti ANNAPOLIS by Dave Collard APPASSIONATA by Felice Loncraine ARRANGEMENT, THE by Kevin Bisch APPOINTMENT IN SAMARRA by Robert Benton ART OF COOL, THE by Alex Sabeti ART SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL by Dan Clowes ATTICUS RUN by Michael Weston AWFUL END, THE by Matthew Huffman BABEL by Guillermo Arriaga BAD SANTA by John Requa & Glenn Ficarra BASIC by Jamie Vanderbilt BASKETCASE by Michael Tolkin BASTER by Allan Loeb BAY CITY by Eddie Richey BE REMEMBERED by Brett Goldstein BEAVER, THE by Kyle Killen BENJAMIN BUTTON by Eric Roth BIG DAWG by Nick Kurzon BIG FISH by John August BIG HOLE by Michael Gilio BILL by Melisa Wallack BLOCKHEAD by Emily Fox BOB THE MUSICAL by Mike Bender BODYGUARD OF LIES by William Wheeler BRIGHTON ROCK by Don Macpherson BRILLIANCE by David Koepp BROKEBACK MTN. by Diana Osana & Larry McMurtry BROKEN CITY by Brian Tucker BRONZE GODS by Pete Huyck and Alex Gregory BROTHERS SOLOMON by Will Forte BUTTER by Jason Micallef BY WAY OF HELENA by Matt Cook BYE BYE BROOKLYN by Jordan Roberts CALIFORNICATION by Tom Kapinos CASTLE, THE by David Scarpa CATCH ME IF YOU CAN by Jeff Nathanson CHAD SCHMIDT by Steve Conrad CHAPERONE, THE by Robbie Fox CHARLIE BARTLETT by Gustin Nash CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR by Aaron Sorkin CHASING THE WHALE by John Stockwell CHASING VERMEER by Matt Nix CHILDREN

OF MEN by Alfonso Cuaron & Tim Sexton CHIP ON THE OLD BLOCK by Michelle McGrath CLASS RACE AND ABORTION by Nicholas Kazan CLEAN BREAK by Herbert Ratner III & Trevor Sands CLEOPATRA by Michael Hirst COCK AND BULL by Matt Nix COLLATERAL by Frank Darabont and Stuart Beattie COMPANY, THE by Ken Nolan CONFESSIONS OF A ... MIND by Charlie Kaufman CONSPIRATOR, THE by James Solomon CORRECTIONS, THE by David Hare COUNTER TERRORIST, THE by John Lee Hancock COUNTING DOWN by Daniel Giat COUP DE TAT by Lisa Addario & Joe Syracuse CROWDED ROOM, THE by Lem Dobbs CURVE OF THE WORLD by Adam Brooks DARK FIELDS, THE by Leslie Dixon DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, THE by David Scarpa DEATH TO SMOOCHY by Adam Resnick DEPARTED, THE by William Monahan DERAILED by Stuart Beattie DESCENDANTS, THE by Alexander Payne DEVIL WEARS PRADA by Aline Brosh McKenna DEVIL'S CREW by Ravi Bains & Alex Harakis DIAMOND by Chuck Leavitt DIAMOND DOGS by Matthew Michaud DIRT, THE by Rich Wilkes DISSOCIATE, THE by Zach Helm DIVER by Diane Ademu-John DIVING BELL & BUTTERFLY, THE by Ron Harwood DOMINO by Richard Kelly ELECTION by Alexander Payne ELECTRIC LINES by Cory McCall ELYSIUM by Matt Cirulnick EMPEROR ZEHNDER by Daniel Bernstein & Ned Zeman ESCAPE OF THE PACIFIC CLIPPER by Stuart Beattie ETERNAL SUNSINE by Charlie Kaufman EVENING by Michael Cunningham EVERMERE by David Goyer EVERYTHING ON A WAFFLE by Mark Herman EWERT by Neil Alsip EXORCISM OF ANNELIESE MICHEL by S. Derrickson & P. Boardman EXTREMELY COMPLICATED WOMEN by Jodie Burke EYE, THE by Sebastian Gutierrez FAILURE TO LAUNCH by Matt Ember & Tom Astle FAMOUS LAST WORDS by Josh Schwartz FANBOYS by Adam Goldberg FARNSWORTH INVENTION, THE by Aaron Sorkin FARRAGUT NORTH by Beau Willimon FAT MAN by Mike Reiss FIGHT CLUB by Jim Uhls FIGHTING QUAKERS, THE by Tim Herlihy FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS by Paul Haggis FLYING

SMITHS, THE by George Wing FOCAL POINT by Craig Gerber FOOD OF LOVE, THE by Peter Chelsom FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS by Jesse Wigutow FOUR BROTHERS by David Elliot & Paul Lovett FRAUD PRINCE, THE by Paul Foley & Dan Forman FRIENDS W/ BENEFITS by K. Merryman & Dave Newman FROM HELL by Rafe Yglesias F*@KBUDDIES by Liz Meriwether FUNNIES, THE by E. Max Frye GARBO by Peter Moffat GENIUS by John Logan GIDEON FORCE by Jim Uhls GLASS CASTLE, THE by Anne Meredith GOOD LIFE, THE by Steve Berra GOOD SHEPARD, THE by Eric Roth GOOD WILL HUNTING by Matt Damon & Ben Affleck GREATEST, THE by Shana Feste GUARDIAN, THE by Jamie Vanderbilt HA-HA, THE by Chuck Leavitt HALL PASS by Pete Jones HARD CANDY by Brian Nelson HARDER THEY COME, THE by Bryan Goluboff

HARRY by Greg Pruss HATFIELDS & McCOYS, THE by Eric Roth HEAT VISION AND JACK by Pam Brady HELLO MY NAME IS JASON SCOTT by Don Handfield HENRY'S LIST OF WRONGS by Harley Peyton HERGATORY by Susan Brightbill HEROES by Tim Kring HIGH ROAD, THE by Ryan Jaffe HITCHCOCK: MAKING OF PSYCHO by John McLaughlin HOME by Adam Alleca HONEYMOON WITH HARRY by Paul Haggis HOT SPRINGS by Scott Marshall Smith HOW IT WAS WITH DOOMS by Karen Janszen HUNTING AND GATHERING by Matthew Huston & Melanie Gilligan I KNOW THIS MUCH IS TRUE by Richard Friedenberg ICE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD by Mark Richard ILLUSIONIST, THE by Neil Burger I'M WITH CANCER by Will Reiser IN BRUGES by Martin McDonagh IN NOMINE DEI by Laeta Kaolgridis IN THE BEDROOM by Todd Field IN THE HEART OF THE SEA by Charles Leavitt IN THE LAND OF WOMEN by Jonathan Kasdan INDIANAPOLIS by Tom Pabst INFILTRATOR by Joshua Zetumer INKHEART by David Lindsay-Abaire INTERNATIONAL, THE by Eric Warren Singer INTERPRETATION OF GHOSTS by Stephen Volk INVISIBLE SIGN OF MY OWN, AN by Pam Falk & Mike Ellis INVISIBLE WORLD, THE by Dana Stevens ISLAND, THE by Caspian Treadwell-Owen JACKET, THE by Massy Tadjedin JOE by David Berenbaum JOSIAH'S CANON by Henry Bean JOURNEY TO THE END OF THE NIGHT by Eric Eason JUAREZ by Cyrus Nowrasteh JUNE, JULY, AUGUST by Josh Schwartz JUNO by Diablo Cody KASHMIR by Dan Weiss KEYS TO THE STREET, THE by Michael Stokes KIDS IN AMERICA by Jackie & Jeff Filgo KILLING MARRIAGE by Tom Evans KILLING PABLO by Joe Carnahan KING OF CALIFORNIA by Michael Cahill KINGDOM, THE by Matthew Michael Carnahan KISSING J. STEIN by Jenn

Westfeldt & Heather Juergensen KITE-RUNNER, THE by David Benioff L.A. RIOTS aka LET IT FALL by John Ridley LAKE HOUSE by David Auburn LAND OF PLEASANT LIVING by Mark V. Lord LARS AND THE REAL GIRL by Nancy Oliver LAST MAN HOME by Jamie Moss LEGEND OF ZORRO by Alex Kurtzman & Roberto Orci LEMONY SNICKET by Daniel Handler LET'S GET HARRY by David Appelbaum & Andre Nemece LETTING GO by Jason Katims LIFE AS WE KNOW IT by Ian Deitchman & Kristin Rusk LIGHTNING ON THE SUN by Burr Steers LION MAN / BARTALI by Nathan Skulnik LIONS FOR LAMBS by Matthew Carnahan LIST OF SEVEN by Mark Frost LITTLE CHILDREN by Tom Perotta & Todd Field LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE by Michael Arndt LIVING OFF INTEREST by David Kalstein LLOYD: WHAT HAPPENED? by E Max Frye LONNY THE GREAT by Jay Reiss LOOKING FOR ALASKA by

Sarah Polley

LOST BOYS OF THE SUDAN, THE by Margaret Nagle LOST IN TRANSLATION by Sofia Coppola LOVE & DEATH AT TERRINGTON PREP by Nick Stoller LOW DWELLER by Brad Ingelsby LOWLIFES by Patty Sullivan LUCID by Brad Anderson LUST FOR LIFE by Jill Tohber MAN ABOUT TOWN by Mike Binder MAN ON A LEDGE by Pablo Fenjves MAN WHO SOLD THE EIFFEL

TOWER, THE by Chady Eli MAN WITHOUT A GUN by Stuart Beattie MANHUNT by Mike Rich MARGARET by Kenneth Lonergan MARRYING THE KRAVITZES by Sharon Hoffman MATCHSTICK MEN by Ted & Nick Griffin MAZAR E SHARIF by William Monahan ME & MY MONSTER by Dan Milano & Matt Huffman MEAN GIRLS by Tina Fey MEMENTO by Chris Nolan MESSAGE ... KING, A by O. Butcher & S. Cornwell MICHAEL CLAYTON by Tony Gilroy MIDLIFE PIRATES by Jordan Cahan MIGHTY HEART, A by John Orloff MILLION LITTLE PIECES, A by James Frey MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE, THE by Jeff Stockwell MISS PETTIGREW by David Magee MOIST By Mark Haskell Smith MOTORCYCLE DIARIES, THE by Jose Rivera MR. & MRS. SMITH by Simon Kinberg MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM by Zach Helm MY MOTHER'S BOYFRIEND by Holly Hester MYSTERIES OF PITTSBURGH by Rawson Marshall Thurber NAGASAKI DEADLINE by David & Peter Griffiths NECESSARY... CHARLIE COUNTRYMAN by Matt Drake NIGHT AND DAY YOU ARE THE ONE by Jon Bokenkamp NIGHT WATCHMAN by Kurt Wimmer NIGHTCRAWLER by Dan Gilroy NIGHTCRAWLERS by Brian Lynch NIGHTS IN RODANTHE by Ann Peacock NINE LIVES by Rodrigo Garcia NORMAN by Talton Wingate ON THE ONE by David Jacobson ONE PERCENT MORE HUMID by Liz Garcia ONLY LIVING BOY IN NEW YORK, THE by Allen Loeb ORANGES, THE by Jay Reiss & Ian Helfer ORPHAN'S DAWN by Josh Friedman OSTRICH INCIDENT by Glenn Gers OTHER BOLEYN GIRL, THE by Peter Morgan OUR

BRAND IS CRISIS by Peter Straughan OUTSOURCED
by Tim Dowling PAINTED VEIL by Ron Nyswaner
PAPER MAN by Michele & Kieran Mulrone
PASSENGERS (Focus) by Neil Burger PASSENGERS
(Mandate) by Ronnie Christensen PASSENGERS by Jon
Spaihts PASSION ... ARK by Bobby Florsheim & Josh
Stolberg PATHFINDER by Laeta Kalogridis PAYCHECK
by Dean Georganis PEACOCK by Michael Lander & Ryan
O'Roy PEEP WORLD by Peter Himmelstein PHARM
GIRL by John Requa & Glenn Ficarra PHOENIX, THE by
John Brownlow PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN by Stuart
Beattie POINT OF VIOLENCE by Tony Mosher
POSTHUMOUS by Gerald Olson PRE-ASTRONAUTS,
THE by Ken Hixon

PRESTIGE, THE by Jon & Chris Nolan PRIDE AND
GLORY by Gavin O'Connor & Joe Carnahan PURSUIT
OF HAPPYNESS by Steve Conrad QUAIL HOLLOW by
Jack Amiel & Michael Begler QUEEN & COUNTRY by
John Rogers RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS by Josh
Safran RAVENOUS by Ted Griffin RAW SHARK TEXTS,
THE by Simon Beaufoy RED BARON by Ted Kupper
REIGN O'ER ME by Mike Binder RENDITION by Kelley
Sane RESCUE DAWN by Werner Herzog & Zak Penn
RESERVATION ROAD by John Burnham Schwartz
REVOLUTIONARY ROAD by Justin Haythe REVOLVER
by Adam Sussman RIGHT AS RAIN by David Benioff
RIPLEY by Scott Alexander & Larry Karaszewski ROAD,
THE by Joe Penhall RODNEY ON THE ROQ by Jason
Hall RON BURGUNDY aka ANCHORMAN by Adam
McKay ROOKIE, THE by Mike Rich ROYAL
TENENBAUMS, THE by Wes Anderson RUNAWAY,
THE by Mark Bombback RUSHMORE by Wes Anderson
SCIENCE FAIR by Melisa Wallack SEASON OF THE
WITCH by Bragi Schut SENATOR'S WIFE, THE by
Katherine Fugate SENTINEL, THE by George Nolfi
SHANGHAI by Hossein Amini SHOCKPROOF SYDNEY
SKATE by Steve Kloves SHUTTER ISLAND by Laeta
Kalogridis SIDNEY HALL by Shawn Christensen and
Jason Dolan SIERRA BURGESS IS A LOSER by
Lindsey Beer SITUATION COMEDY by Cat Vasko
SLEEP TOWARD HEAVEN by Attica Locke SLEEPING
FATHER by Michele & Kieran Mulrone SLEEPY
HOLLOW by Andrew Kevin Walker SLEUTH by Harold
Pinter SMART PEOPLE by Mark Poirier SMOKER, THE
by Peter Tolan SMOKIN' ACES by Joe Carnahan
SMOTHER by Tim Rasmussen & Vince Di Meglio
SOLDIER FIELD by Matt Carnahan SOUTHBOUND by
Peter Craig SPECTACLE by Dan and Stacy Chariton
SPELL FOR CHAMELEON, A by Tim McCanlies
SPOOK'S APPRENTICE, THE by Matt Greenberg
SPORTS WIDOW by Liz Kruger & Craig Shapiro
STALKER by Michael Carnes & Josh Gilbert STARDUST

by Matthew Vaughn STARTER FOR TEN by David
Nicholls STATE BOYS REBELLION, THE by Jose
Rivera STATE OF PLAY by Matthew Carnahan STAY by
David Benioff STRAIGHT & NARROW by Joe Gazzam
STRANGER THAN FICTION by Zach Helm
STRONGMAN'S SON by David Iserson SUNSHINE by
Alex Garland SUNSHINE CLEANING by Megan Holley
SUPER BAD by Seth Rogen & Evan Goldberg
SUPERFLY / TRU BLU by Steven Zaillian TAKING
LIVES by Hillary Seitz TALES NOT TOLD by Colin Paolo
TALISMAN, THE by Ehren Kruger TALLADEGA NIGHTS
by Adam McKay & Will Ferrell TAXONOMY OF
BARNACLES, A by Amy Lippman TELEPATHY by
Stephen Volk TEN, THE by David Wain & Ken Marino

SMOKING by Jason Reitman THERE WILL BE BLOOD
by Paul Thomas Anderson THINGS WE LOST IN THE
FIRE by Allan Loeb THIS BILL SMITH by Ben
Brandstrader & Jon Sedowski THIS SIDE OF THE
TRUTH by Matt Robinson TICK TOCK by Anthony
Bagarozzi and Charles Mondry TICKET TO RIDE by
Kelly Freeman TIME AND AGAIN by David Magee TIME
TRAVELER'S WIFE, THE by Jeremy Leven TONIGHT
HE COMES by Vince Gilligan TOUCHBACK by Don
Handfield TOURIST, THE by Mark Bombback TOWN
CREEK by David Kajganich TRAINING DAY by David
Ayer TRIAGE by David Auburn TRIPOLI by Bill Monahan
TROUBLESHOOTER by John Hamburg TROY by David
Benioff TRUST by Robert Edwards TRUTH, JUSTICE &
THE AM. WAY by Paul Bernbaum TUCKER AMES AS
HIMSELF by A. Payne & Jim Taylor TUNNEL RATS by
W.W. Vought TV SET, THE by Jake Kasdan TWIST OF
FATE by Simon Beaufoy UNDERDOGS aka
DODGEBALL by Rawson Thurber UNDOMESTIC
GODDESS, THE by Aline Brosh McKenna UNFAITHFUL
by Alvin Sargent UNFINISHED COUNTRY, AN by Mark
Wheaton UNNATURAL, THE by Mark Haskell Smith
UNT. DAIRY PRODUCTS by Kim Barker UNT. GEORGE
HAMILTON by Charlie Peters UNTIL GWEN by Josh
Olson UNTOUCHABLES by Brian Koppleman & David
Levien UNTRACEABLE by Allison Burnett VENDETTA by
Siavash Farahani VERY PRIVATE GENTLEMAN, A by
Laura Harrington WAKE UP, SIR! by Jonathan Ames
WALK HARD by Jake Kasdan & Judd Apatow WALK IN
THE WOODS, A by Michael Arndt WANTED by Michael
Brandt & Derek Haas WAY BACK, THE by Nat Faxon &
Jim Rash WAY OF LIFE LIKE NO OTHER, A by
Jonathan Ames WE ARE MARSHALL by Cory Helms
WEATHERMAN, THE by Steve Conrad WEDDING
CRASHERS by Steve Faber & Bob Fisher
WEDDING...WINTERBOTTOMS by Pennekamp & Turpel
WE'RE THE MILLERS by Steve Faber & Bob Fisher
WHEN A MAN FALLS IN THE FOREST by Ryan Eslinger
WHEN DADS WERE MEN by Cinco Paul & Ken Daurio
WHISPER by Christopher Borrelli WHITE FLAG, THE by
Peter Morgan WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS, A by David

Scarpa WILL by Josh Cagan WILL SEBASTIAN by David Hubbard WINGED LIFE by Jeff Baena WINTER'S DISCONTENT by Paul
Fruchbom WORCESTER COLD STORAGE aka 3000 by Scott Silver WORLD TRADE CENTER aka 9/11 by Andrea Berloff
WORST CASE by Tom Schulman & Rafael Yglesias YOU ME AND

DUPREE by Mike Leseur YOU'RE AMAZING by Danny Comden YOUR LIFE IS NOW by Elisa Bell YOUR WORD AGAINST MINE
by M. Galvin & P. Speakman
ZAMPERINI by Neil Tolkin ZODIAC by James Vanderbilt
ZOMBIELAND by Rhett Reese & Paul Wernick

Sample Coverage

Title: GRAVITY Writer(s): Alfonso Cuarón; Jonás Cuarón Draft
Date: 11/2/09 Pages: 99

Genre: Action, Drama, Science Fiction, Suspense Period: Present Day
Setting: Various Locale: Outer Space Budget: High

Story: Good Structure: Good Dialogue:
Good Writing: Good Commercial: Good
Visual Elements: Excellent Title: Good
Characterization: Good

Studio: Warner Bros. Producer: Alfonso Cuarón; David Heyman
Director: Alfonso Cuarón

Consider for: Casting Writer: Strongly Consider
Project: Strongly Consider

Overall Rating: 9

Logline:

A stranded young Astronaut, who's the sole survivor of a satellite missile attack, struggles to make it home alive after all her fellow Astronauts perish when their space station explodes.

Comments Summary:

APOLLO 13 meets MOON (2009) meets SPACE STATION 3D in this similarly thrilling space suspense drama where a lone Astronaut must devise a strategy to return to Earth safely after her spacecraft is destroyed. GRAVITY transforms the genre through unique structuring and 3D visual effects, which is all the rage in current filmmaking. As a fictional space drama, this material differs from the aforementioned films because it could potentially corner a niche in this high-demand market with its stunning, never-before-seen visuals. GRAVITY is a strong consider as the essential concept of a sole Astronaut struggling to make it home alive is fundamentally primal in

its elegant simplicity. There is no greater drama than the will to live and arguably there is a no more threatening or alien environment imaginable than the cold expanse of Outer Space. The story is fairly original and the plot steady in its progress, and while it doesn't stretch the limits of the imagination or break new ground in philosophy, religious debate, or science-fiction like CONTACT does, it has sufficient appeal to keep a reader reading or an audience viewing. This will doubtlessly be an extremely expensive project to consider in an increasingly risk-averse

environ, but certainly a large commercial director eager to jump into the 3D craze and perhaps create revolutionary 3D technology would be intrigued by a project so aptly suited to this new digital era of filmmaking.

Synopsi

s:

In Outer Space, where the temperature fluctuates between 120 and -100 degrees Celsius and there is nothing to carry sound, no oxygen, and no air pressure, the Tiangong 8 Chinese Space Station orbits 300 km above sea level while the International Space Station, or ISS, orbits at a higher altitude of 500 km. Even higher, at 600 km, several Astronauts work tirelessly outside the Atlantis Space Shuttle to repair the famous Hubble Space Telescope. Their veteran leader MATT KOWALSKI, world record holder for hours spent spacewalking, is on his last mission with their cheerful Indian engineer SHARIFF DASARI and first-time medical engineer RYAN STONE. Matt mans his jet propulsion unit and communicates with TOP COMMAND ground control at Houston, while Shariff, wearing only a safety tether, sings a Bollywood tune after fixing Hubble's 'peacock' solar panels. Working from a slow-moving crane-like robotic arm, Ryan focuses intently on installing the brain scanning software she designed to see the universe and begs for more time to complete her repair mission, which Matt offers to assist her with.

Suddenly, Top Command orders an immediate return to the shuttle for a Procedure Code Red, as a Russian Satellite hit by a missile, is creating a giant cloud of debris that's destroying countless other satellites in its path, causing a chain reaction traveling at 30,000 km an hour towards them. Pieces of satellite fly by their heads and destroy the telescope as communication with Houston cuts out and a piece of debris shatters Shariff's helmet, killing him instantly. More debris hits Atlantis, breaking the robotic arm, which sends Ryan drifting into the vast dark expanse of Outer Space. Everything spins as she tries to swallow her panic, drill through her harness, and report her location, as a tiny rip in her suit leaks vital oxygen and air pressure, almost forcing her unconscious. Just as all seems lost, Matt comes propelling towards her, hooks her to a safety tether, and tows her back towards the shuttle, while Ryan realizes the debris is on an orbital trajectory and calculates they have 40 minutes until the next hit. They retrieve Shariff's frozen body only to discover a giant hole has punctured Atlantis, destroyed the cabins, and killed CAPTAIN ALRENE as well. Ryan duct tapes her punctured suit before the surviving pair of Astronauts set off for the ISS on Matt's miniature jet propulsion unit.

As he runs dangerously low on fuel, Matt jokes around to keep their spirits up and is relieved when a Soyuz emergency evacuation pod leaves the station, only it's heading to Earth, not to rescue them, and the second Soyuz's parachute has been deployed by debris, rendering it unusable for Earth re-entry. They time the last burst of jet fuel just right to reach the station, but

without fuel for breaking, they crash into the wall, snap the tether between them, and desperately roll against the wall clutching for handholds. Ryan grabs the last one but is jolted off by Matt, who hurtles towards space, arms outstretched. With her foot tangled in the parachute she reaches her arm out to grab him...and misses. Matt is lost. With his last breath, he instructs her to take the Soyuz to the Chinese Space Station, and terribly alone, she obeys. Pulling herself into the Airlock, she waits for the air pressure thermometer to rise, before yanking her helmet off and breathing deeply. But alarms scream a fire warning so she flings a water bag, fire extinguisher, and spare space suit in the Soyuz and launches out, just as the debris returns. Her attempt to fly away is halted by a sudden tug forcing her back, as she's anchored to the station by the Soyuz's parachute ropes, which she must drill off by hand before returning to her freezing makeshift lifeboat.

In the Control Cabin she steers towards the strangely low orbiting Chinese station, but an explosion forces her to dump the Airlock and Engine Modules, which explode behind her in a fiery blaze. Without a propulsion system, she can't correct the trajectory, and is destined to miss the station by a hundred miles. With half an hour to live, she resolves herself to death, but is cheered when a static radio transmission carries the foreign voice of ANINGANG, whose dog and babies she can hear barking and crying in the background before he hangs up. Suddenly inspired, she realizes she can use the Soyuz's Soft Landing Engine and braking system and with one final thrust, hurls herself closer to the station, though she'll still miss it by half a mile. Unbuckling herself, she leaps from the pod, fire extinguisher in tow, and blasts out human canon-ball style, banging her shoulder painfully on the way. The Soyuz plummets into the atmosphere and burns to a crisp as she stretches out her broken arm and just barely snags a solar panel rod, pulling herself into the airlock as once again the terrible debris returns and wreaks havoc. Jumping into the Shenzhou Escape Pod with a frog she finds floating in zero g, she can't read the Chinese symbols and starts randomly hitting buttons, which thankfully work to launch her into space. The gravitational force anchors her to her seat as the Chinese Station breaks in half, but her parachute mercifully releases, slowing her burning descent through Earth's lower atmosphere. A thick cloud of black fire smoke engulfs and chokes her as the pod crashes straight into a lake, where water pours into the open hatch, threatening to drown her. She barely shakes her heavy space suit off and, nearly out of breath, swims with all her might, following her frog towards the surface of the lake as the escape pod sinks below her. She breaks free and gulps her first amazing breath, as she uses the last of her strength to swim to shore, she stands up and laughs at the simple joy of being alive.

Character

Breakdown:

Name Role Ethnicity Age Description

RYAN STONE Leading Female Any 30-35 Uptight and regimented, she is a medical engineer. Ryan specializes in hospital scanning systems and is on her first mission to Outer Space to retrofit the Hubble Space Telescope with a brain scanning software program she designed to see the universe. Serious, overly cautious, and timid by nature, Ryan, over the course of her journey, goes from an Outer Space neophyte to a quasi-veteran. She comes to understand that her reserved disposition isn't serving her well in life – she needs to live more and laugh more.

MATT KOWALSKI Leading Male Any 40-45 Charismatic, he is an old dog veteran astronaut on

his last mission to the space station. He is a natural-born leader. Obviously a ladies' man back on Earth, his sense of humor and charm are his strengths. After the missile attack, he stays calm and rescues Ryan from death, but tragically dies himself, leaving Ryan the sole survivor.

SHARIFF DASARI Supporting Male East Indian 30-35 He is a cheerful Indian engineer on his second mission to Outer Space. He tragically dies when a piece of debris shatters his helmet like an expensive bullet. Matt attempts to rescue his dead body but is forced to abandon it in space. Shariff's death is the first indicator of how this all may go for the remaining crew.

TOP COMMAND Cameo Male Any 40-45 Top Command is only heard in voice-over. They are the scientists in Houston who give directions to the Astronauts in space.

CAPTAIN ARLENE Cameo Female Any 35-40 She is only heard in voice-over. Arlene is the Captain of the Atlantis who dies when debris pierces a hole in her ship, leaving her lifeless body to drift in zero gravity.

ANINGANG Cameo Male Asian 25-30 Heard only in voice-over, he is a jovial-sounding man on Earth who somehow manages to call Ryan when she is stranded in space. He speaks and sings to her in an unknown foreign language and she hears the sound of his dogs barking and his baby crying. He acts as a relief within her desperate circumstances.

Comments:

APOLLO 13 meets MOON (2009) meets SPACE STATION 3D in this similarly thrilling space suspense drama where a lone Astronaut must devise a strategy to return to Earth safely after her spacecraft is destroyed. GRAVITY transforms the genre through unique structuring and 3D visual effects, which is all the rage in current filmmaking. As a fictional space drama, this material differs from the aforementioned films because it could potentially corner a niche in this high-demand market with its stunning, never-before-seen visuals. GRAVITY is a strong contender as the essential concept of a sole Astronaut struggling to make it home alive is fundamentally primal in its elegant simplicity. There is no greater drama than the will to live and arguably there is no more threatening or alien environment imaginable than the cold expanse of Outer Space. The story is fairly original and the plot steady in its progress, and while it doesn't stretch the limits of the imagination or break new ground in philosophy, religious debate, or science-fiction like CONTACT does, it has sufficient appeal to keep a reader reading or an audience viewing. This will doubtlessly be an extremely expensive project to consider in an increasingly risk-averse environment, but certainly a large commercial director eager to jump into the 3D craze and perhaps create revolutionary 3D technology would be intrigued by a project so aptly suited to this new digital era of filmmaking.

As a whole, the writing is strongest in the greatly technical yet still accessible details, as the writers are clearly very knowledgeable about Outer Space, space programs, and science. Their reverent regard and awe for the beauty of the universe is abundant, though unfortunately, such well-written exposition can only be read in a script, and less easily rendered in visual formatting, which nonetheless promises to be stunning. It's easy to imagine pieces of debris breaking off from the ISS and hurling towards audience's faces, forcing gasps from movie-goers decked in 3D shades. Notably, both Matt and Shariff are fantastically well-developed, likable characters

considering the small roles they play, as even though Shariff only has a few lines, the choice for a cheerful ethnic Indian engineer fulfills both a need for diversity and a little color in this otherwise serious and intensely toned script, while Matt is saucy, rakish, and just plain sexy, as he jokes around, "Why don't the blind skydive? Because it scares the s**t out of the dog." At present, the protagonist, Ryan's characterization isn't quite strong enough to carry the film, and though there is little opportunity for dialogue with only one central character, her moments talking to herself, technically monologue, could be spiced up with even more growing fierceness in future drafts as well as a bit of humor. However, with only three characters, two of whom die in the first half of the film, this is essentially a one-woman-act, whose successful execution will rest entirely on the shoulders of a lead actress who will need to be meticulously casted. With that and the intensity this role requires, this could be a project for an actress vying for a well-deserved Oscar.

The structural tension in GRAVITY is rooted in the series of disasters which befall poor Ryan, who is never, ever, ever able to catch a break in warring to endure in this barren place. Indeed, the constant jarring impact of disaster after disaster leaves little room for the audience to stop and breathe, as even harrowing dramas like PRECIOUS manage to break up the tension with well-timed breaks. That being said, the average citizen can't possibly relate to the physical situation like they can in dramas about teen pregnancy or police chases, but as long as they can relate emotionally to the protagonist's plight they can achieve the necessary catharsis. Ryan is constantly battling the environment of space that is engulfing her, but what is truly her toughest adversary is her naivety and lack of preparedness for this disaster as her triumph becomes rooted more in the technical feat of making it home, and less in her emotional development as a hero. The story is visually rich and hits all of the major beats, but as mentioned earlier, GRAVITY is in desperate need of some reprieve for the audience. Adding this element would amp up the overall tension as the audience knows more survival-threatening situations are awaiting Ryan. If Ryan's frustrations were verbalized with more humor than more engaged combativeness as the story progresses, it would reflect her growth from an Outer Space neophyte to an Outer Space quasi-veteran (of course not by choice).

Ryan's character arc is not above criticism as she does need to experience a little more wailing angst, have a slightly clearer moment of profundity that sets her steel-will into motion, and then must demonstrate a determined grittiness that would make a hardened sea sailor look like a pansy, if her total characterization is to truly capture the hearts of her viewers. Just as CONTACT benefits from basing their strong-willed female protagonist Ellie Arroway on the real-life Dr. Jill Tarter, perhaps so could GRAVITY benefit from a real-life inspiration in the NASA program. The theme of self-preservation is so elemental in GRAVITY, and the 3D effects so potentially rich, this project is a strong consider and should certainly be considered by a director eager for a challenge. Overall, if the studio producing the film can get over the whopping price-tag, this could be a viable commercial piece under the right direction and talent, as the lead actress will need to be a veteran with true acting chops, not a mere sex symbol in-vogue People magazine hot topic of the week.