

CONCEPT EVALUATION

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| TITLE: | N/A | FORMAT: | Logline |
| WRITER: | XXXXX | GENRE: | Drama/Thriller |
| ANALYST: | The Script Connection | DATE: | October 2006 |

Concept:

The story is about a psychotherapist who begins treating a patient with a mysterious past. He doesn't know the truth of what happened to her. As things progress he begins to think there is more to her story. He tries different methods but can't seem to uncover the truth. Then, one day he receives a letter from the patient's "dead" sister, who warns him to stay away.

Evaluation:

Generally speaking, what you have could well provide a solid and intriguing basis for a feature, but there are several details about which you must be more specific before it can really take shape as a strong proposal for a film. What you describe above could apply to a number of potential movies that differ substantially in genre, content, style and theme.

The hook you provide (the warning from the patient's 'dead sister') is intriguing but you are not clear about how this warning throws well motivated opposing forces into conflict. Perhaps the warning is legitimate and the patient is a danger to the therapist. But is she a danger to everyone or just him? And why? Or maybe the person behind the 'dead' sister's letter is concerned that the therapist might uncover something buried in the patient's subconscious that they want to keep covered. Two plausible scenarios and two different movies – one in which the patient is a villain and one in which she is a victim. The motivation behind the warning is key, as is what motivates the therapist to ignore the warning. Basic professionalism? Pure intrigue? Suspicion of a crime? Attraction to the patient? Establishing what the conflict is about and what is at stake for both protagonist and antagonist is an absolutely vital part of the story design process. *Nb. Relatively few movies portray people in therapy as dangerous psychopaths as linking the two can be offensive to many viewers.*

You also provide few clues as to the emotional or inner journey your protagonist will make in this story – or even whether it is the psychotherapist or the patient that is the subject of this journey. The 'inauthentic' or flawed state your chosen character is in should be something we can all identify with and might be particularly significant for your target audience – the inner conflict at work in your story will offer insight into what the story is about on a deeper, human level.

You should perhaps also consider the story's setting or world (location, period, subculture) as you currently have a non-specific setting that on the face of it seems to offer little cinematic potential. Is it the world of psychotherapy you intend to explore or a world the patient belongs to or needs to break out of? This makes a very big difference to the type of story you are intending to tell.

Similarly, differences in genre, style and tone could take this idea in many different directions. What you propose for example could have been the starting point for **Analyze This**, **Final Analysis** or Hitchcock's **Spellbound**. It's always a good idea to use existing movies as reference points as this makes it easier to explain where you are coming from and what you want to avoid, as well as making what you envisage clearer in your own mind.

In summary, what you offer here has potential but is difficult to evaluate more thoroughly because it could still go in so many different directions. Take some time to think about what is fascinating and personal to you about this idea and then outline it in more specific terms. Then you will find yourself with a stronger, tighter concept from which you can create your screenplay.