



STUDIO-STYLE COVERAGE

TYPE OF MATERIAL: TV "Pilot" Script

TITLE: [REDACTED]

NUMBER OF PAGES: 28

AUTHOR: [REDACTED]

SUBMITTED BY:

CATEGORY: Sitcom

SUBMITTED TO:

CIRCA: Present Day

ANALYST: Jeff Lutz (TheComedyConsultant.com) LOCATION: Sunnyvale Town, USA

DATE: 5/23/19

COMMENTS SUMMARY: [REDACTED] flips the typical construct of students vs. faculty. In this case, it's faculty vs. students or even administrators vs. teachers. It's like we're suddenly rooting for Edward Rooney against Ferris Bueller or Mr. Belding over Zach Morris instead of the other way around. In some ways, it's similar to getting an inside look at the restaurant business and seeing what the waiters, waitresses, and cooks have to go through. Then, applauding them as they mess with the food. As it stands, however, we only see the faculty and we just have to take their word for it that the students, parents, and everyone else sucks. The script currently is all about one interesting character, Vernon, and a bunch of others. And many of these others sound a bit too similar. Furthermore, Vernon is not active because there is no story to be active in. It's just a collection of individual introductory scenes pushed together without any coherent structure. Once the stakes are raised and a real, forward moving storyline or multiple storylines are implemented, the character of Vernon alone will get this script an A on the midterms.

| | EXCELLENT | GOOD | FAIR | POOR |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|------|---------|
| Idea: | | X-----X | | |
| Storyline: | | | | X-----X |
| Structure: | | | | X-----X |
| Characterization: | | X-----X | | |
| Dialogue: | | X-----X | | |

BUDGET: Low

PROJECT RECOMMENDATION: PASS

WRITER RECOMMENDATION: CONSIDER



PAGE-by-PAGE NOTES

Pg. 1 – Typically, you wouldn’t start with **CUT FROM BLACK**. It would either be **FADE IN:** on the left hand side above the slugline or in a TV Script, you’d usually have your ACT heading – **ACT I** underlined or **TEASER** underlined. Some of this would also depend on whether this is a Multi-Cam or Single Cam show – as there are different formats for both. You can find samples of each online. For example, “The Office” and “Modern Family” is single cam while “Seinfeld” and “Big Bang Theory” are multi-cam shows mostly filmed in front of a live studio audience.

Even before we get to Page 1, obviously you want to add a Title Page. I’ve attached a sample of what this should look like in general. You’ll also my act heading on Page 1.

If you haven’t already, at some point you will want to register this script with the Writers Guild of America and/or Library of Congress. Here is the WGA link again:
<https://www.wgawregistry.org/registration.asp>.

Here is the link for Library of Congress registration:
<https://www.copyright.gov/registration/>

Pg. 1 – Sunnyvale Town... Is this a real place or made up? It doesn’t matter. It just would be nice to have a little more detail on the first slugline. What state is this in? Are we in the US? What time of day? Day or Night? You actually want to include Day or Night on every slugline. They will have to do that for production anyway.

Pg. 1 – There’s different thoughts on this. If possible, I think it’s usually better not to use the word “we” in your description lines. It takes you out of the read. But, that’s more of a stylistic thing. And you can get away with it a bit in the beginning here.

You do want to keep the descriptions as short as possible. In this first paragraph you say the word “summer” twice. Just cut everything that’s unnecessary and redundant. With screenwriting, you’re more painting a general sense of what’s going on as opposed to a novel where you have time to say everything.

Pg. 1 – CAPITALIZE NEW CHARACTERS... “PEOPLE are out mowing their lawns, KIDS are frolicking in the streets...”

Pg. 1 – Character description for VERNON... this is your main character of the script. We need more than a name, he’s the principal, and he lives in a big house.

You also want to give his introduction on actually seeing him, not on seeing his house. What does he look like? What or one or two character/personality traits about him, etc.?

This is the 2nd in 3 paragraphs you've mentioned [REDACTED] in the description. Again, cut everything that's unnecessary and repetitive. Once you have a Title Page saying this is the name of the script, you really shouldn't have to mention it by full name that often. All we need to know, this is the town high school. So, you could just say... "VERNON, **whatever other description you add**, the school principal."

Pg. 1 – Add Day or Night into slugline... "INT. VERNON'S BEDROOM – DAY"

Pg. 1 – You could write the parenthetical more active... VERNON (shouts to be heard over music) OR VERNON (shouts)

Pg. 1 – CAPITALIZE SOUNDS EFFECTS... "... the rest of the line is SCREAMED into silence."

So, right away there is a disconnect between seeing a high school in a small town or suburban area, learning Vernon is the principal of that school, and then hearing him shout vile profanities. The sooner we understand why and how that can be, the faster we'll be on board with this script. Don't get me wrong, I like twisting the Principal character from what we usually expect. This guy is not Ed Rooney in "Ferris Bueller" or Mr. Belding. But, my first question – how did he ever get hired in the first place? Even if he is a loudmouth asshole, does he bring qualities to the principal role that make him appealing? We will need to see some of that to relate and root for this guy. Again, this is your main character – he doesn't have to necessarily be likeable but we should at least have some idea of where he's coming from.

Like if you see a cook in a TV show, you get why he's such a dick because he's constantly bombarded with bullshit from waitresses, customers, managers, etc. This is where it might be nice to see the students first and get an idea of what little asshole they are. That way, we can take Vernon's side immediately.

Pg. 1 – More active parenthetical bottom of page... VERNON (cover his face). Anytime you can cut the INGs, it makes the read better.

Pg. 2 – You don't necessarily need the title here once you have a title page. But, it does work as a nice transition.

The title is too long. How are you going to do a 30 second pitch with that title? What about just Terrence Sterling High? OR Bad Principal? Bad Faculty? I know there have been a lot of titles with the word "Bad" in it. However, Bad Teacher is a much better title than the name of some random school. You immediately have an idea of what the show or movie is about. I would just brainstorm other ideas.

Pg. 2 – In reality, it seems like above the title here was the TEASER of the episode and now we're starting ACT I. You want to figure out a structure. Is it classic television with 3 acts? Is it 2 acts with Teaser and Tag? Some combo? This should all be part of the script.

Pg. 2 – CAPITALIZE SOUND EFFECTS... "Vernon ROARS in his Porsche convertible..."

The way you've set up this character – big house, expensive car, swearing and shouting to no one, shows up to his job late – we already dislike and resent him. And nothing's even happened! There's got to be a more effective introduction for your main guy. Unless you want him disliked so you can flip that around throughout the course of the story? Maybe this guy is a complete prick but we like how he gets things done?

Pg. 2 – It's weird to introduce characters - VICE PRINCIPAL LOU PATTERSON and SECRETARY HELEN MICHAELS - when we're not seeing them. For one, it allows no place to add their descriptions. As a reader, nothing stands out about them because all we're reading is a name and job title.

Again, with Helen swearing here that she has a “fucking migraine” – it just feels disconnected. The kids aren't even there. Why are these people so angry, tired, and pissed off? Who or what is the antagonist of this story?

Personally, I think you should look at setting it up as Faculty vs. Kids. And we're rooting for the Faculty in this case. Administration vs. Teachers – doesn't feel as strong. And it's hard to distinguish what the real difference is between a secretary in the office and a teacher. They both work in the school - both are underpaid, overworked, underappreciated, etc. The teachers have to deal with the kids so I am naturally more sympathetic to them.

Pg. 2 – Cut unnecessary description... “To emphasize her point” that's something for a novel. How do we see that on screen?

Okay, so Helen's pissed off because of her home life. But, this should be the easy time of year. What is she like when we're in the midst of a school year? Is she bringing in a fucking bazooka? That seems way more interesting to me.

Pg. 2 – CAPITALIZE ANY CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS... “... featuring HAPPY PEOPLE doing activities...”

Pg. 3 – It says Clarence Dumont is in Minnesota in the ad... Is that where this takes place? When I hear Sunnyvale I think the area in California near Silicon Valley. Of course, big difference between the two! Ha You want to put that in the initial slugline.

Pg. 3 – So, we go out of the campaign ad back to Vernon. The way I would do this...

V.O. ... “providing a protected and secure environment for all precious educators.”

BACK TO SHOT

VERNON (watches advertisement) “Fucking bastard.”

Vernon walks into the...

CONFERENCE ROOM

ANGLE ON: TELEVISION SET

V.O. “When you go out to the polls...”

Pg. 3 – I think I would consistently call him in description and dialogue Clarence Dumont through the script. It makes him sound more official and more of a prick. As a reader, it also makes it easier to keep track of him. If I see the name Clarence later, it’s like who the fuck is Clarence?

Pg. 3 – Here’s another question and this is my second time reading this... What is the point of setting up the mayoral campaign in this episode? If this is going to be the “Pilot” episode, we need to set up a story line and plot that carries us through the next 20-25 pages and actually pays off at the end. I realize that may be a season plotline but this episode also needs its own plotline.

Pg. 3 – Just capitalize first letter of a character already introduced... Lou Patterson - his true introduction the way you have it now was his name in the parking lot. Again, that’s not a great introduction. But, once we see his name all CAPS, you don’t need to do that again.

Pg. 3 – The slugline wouldn’t be Continuous since we were just watching the campaign video. You could either use the full slugline with MOMENTS LATER or just BACK TO SHOT.

Pg. 3 – Nice, detailed character description of Lou here.

Pg. 4 – Cut parenthetical... VERNON (perpetually pissed that Lou always knows better). You get this through the dialogue. You only want to use the parenthetical when you absolutely have to.

Pg. 4 – You could move rooms here with a heading like this...

This monologue washes over Lou, who doesn’t respond. He turns and heads for the...

CONFERENCE ROOM

Helen looks up at Vernon and...

Pg. 4 – It’s hard to get behind this administration vs. teachers thing you’re setting up. There has to be some really strong setup as to why we shoot root for one vs. the other.

Pg. 4 – You might also want to consider calling Lou or Vernon or both by their full names through the entire script. Vernon might be good because he holds the highest position of power. It just starts to get confusing when there’s a bunch of first names floating around and the characters aren’t that distinguished yet.

Pg. 4 – In Vernon’s speech at the bottom of the page, it sounds like you’re setting up an episode or a season of Vernon saving the school? If this is true, you want to set that major action in motion at some point.

Pg. 5 – Capitalize first word of sentence OR continue it with ellipsis... “You know, of course, and **it’s**...” Its should be it’s for it is.

Pg. 5 – Show don’t Tell... So, you just set up something interesting earlier – Vernon’s going to have to save the school. And then a few paragraphs later, it’s just a passing thought through the voice of some character we never see or meet. Aren’t things more interesting if he HAS to save the school and we watch him succeed or fail?

There’s a lot of this going on in the first few pages. Telling of a bunch of stuff but not really showing anything.

Pg. 6 – Add some kind of character description for STAN EUCLID. CAPITALIZE GIRL for a new character intro. You can write it more active... “STAN EUCLID, red-faced and spit flying, berates a GIRL who sobs at her desk.” I think you get the point on that, just check the descriptions through the entire script.

Pg. 6 – CAPITALIZE NEW CHARACTERS... “TWO BIG GUYS beat up a LITTLE GUY...” Check this through entire script.

Pg. 6 – More active, show don’t tell moment... Try and put the audience in Rose Guerra’s shoes so this is more interesting and impactful. Something like... “Rose Guerra, **some kind of character description other than she’s female**, walks in, stops and looks horrified as Stan masturbates in the back of the room.”

Pg. 7 – I don’t think you need to see the masturbation scene again here. Ha

I would cut the thing about shadowing Mrs. Meeker. Adding the extra name there gets confusing. I would just say, “... apologize to you for what happened at the end of last year.” We all know what she’s talking about since we just saw the clip and then she shifts uncomfortably.

Pg. 7 – ELLIPSIS. It should be like this “... it was just a... a misunderstanding.”

Pg. 8 – At this point, it sounds like firing Stan is the main action of the episode.

Pg. 8 – **POSSIBLE PUNCH-UP**... I think Vernon should jump in with an inappropriate but funny metaphor “... that was just the... **final squirt/finishing touch/load that broke the camel’s back**, so to speak.”

Pg. 8 – **POSSIBLE PUNCH-UP**... You could have Vernon assume she’s the Spanish teacher. Lou shakes his head. Portuguese? German/Japanese? Italian? Lou nods and Vernon keeps going with the speech as if nothing happened.

-----Notes like this continue until end of full ██████████ script