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LOGLINE

A popular high-school jock seeks to win his girlfriend back before he has to join the military.

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SYNOPSIS

We open in WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, where a voice over from JANA tells us about its unique hierarchy. We see groups of JOCKS, CHEERLEADERS, NERDS, MARCHING BAND, THUGS, etc. Jana (17) - plain-looking - plays flute for the band. JOEY HOLLISTER (17) is the "perfect jock." We see his household routine, where his parents worships him while his sister MONA (14) is unimpressed. FREDDY and BERKOWITZ are Joey's good buddies and BETTY is his girlfriend. Homecoming approaches.

Nervous MR. BRISCO (40) gets life advice from Jana. Joey and Jana have a class together, where he constantly teases her. She retaliates, saying he wouldn't have an opinion of himself if other people weren't always praising him. This idea bothers Joey. Joey is up for a big college scholarship should he win the next big game. However, Jana's accusations ring in his ears.

We see Joey wake up again in his usual routine, but now he seems off. His friends notice it, but aren't concerned. In class

Joey suddenly gets an inspiration to become his true self. He begs Jana to help him figure things out. However, Jana isn't impressed and ignores him. Joey visits Jana after school and tries to explain his new train of thought, but she's understandably suspicious.

The next day Joey starts treating everyone as distinct people. He apologizes to every one for treating them badly, which irritates his "true friends." The people Joey used to terrorize now can't handle their new independence, which makes Jana have to show them that they have their own paths. Joey's friend Freddy starts going into withdrawals from his usual routine. Even Betty can't handle the change in Joey.

That night Joey plays in a game against a neighboring high school. He tries getting back into his old killer self, but can't bring himself to hurt anyone. Even Jana prefers the old "winning" Joey to this new one. Joey's indecision loses the game. Jana finally believes Joey's change, but thinks the school would be better with the old Joey. She says that although he doesn't need the school to define him, the school still needs to be defined BY him. She wants to find a way for him to find the balance before the homecoming Game in four days.

Joey introduces her to his family, skipping a day from school. Jana interviews Joey's Mom and Mona but can't find Joey's identity. All the students panic because of Joey's absence. Betty becomes jealous of Jana. WILBUR the Nerd gains self-confidence and asks Betty out. Jana focuses in on Joey's deceased father, who was a policeman. Joey says that a new neighbor TERRENCE GLADIOLA was a surrogate father to him. She thinks a meeting with Terrence will return Joey to "normal."

They drive to meet Terrence, but are shocked that the grown man now lives in his parent's basement. Terrence says that his high school days were the best of his life. Jana has to find a new way to help Joey. Jana admits that despite hating what Joey stands for, she still always wanted to be his friend. Jana decides to apply reverse psychology by exposing Joey to more and more existential concepts, hoping his true self will emerge to fight it off. However, Joey instead "gets it."

The day of the Rally arrives, and the school's carefully established cultural lines have become blurred. The cheerleaders aren't in good form, and the various cliques are in disarray. Jana pleads with Joey to join the team and win the

game, but Joey is unsure. He accuses Jana of being the one who is really afraid of intimacy. The two fall in love.

However, Wilbur tells Jana that she really created the jock Joey when, as children, she rejected his offer of being a boyfriend. Jana decides to reject Joey again to bring normalcy back to the school and to make sure Joey goes to college on a football scholarship. Joey goes back to his old ways, and the school returns to what it was. Joey plays the Homecoming game, watched by two RECRUITERS. However, Joey is conflicted and plays badly. He suddenly finds his balance and plays as never before. He lets Jake score the winning touchdown. Although the Georgia scouts had left, MAX GERGEN (50s) from Harvard is impressed with Joey and offers him a scholarship. The school returns to normal, but now with Jake as the King.

COMMENTS

High school life has provided a wealth of material for films over the years, ranging from comedy to tragedy. With the vast variety of personality types present in any school there is plenty of material to draw from. This script tells the story of a young man suddenly confronting the very question of his existence, and what his personality means to the school. Although the script is played primarily for laughs, there are some very engaging ideas raised that would be sure to challenge an audience's perceptions.

I liked that the script started out as a typical high-school comedy but veered off into a different but interesting direction. However, I felt that the script was a little longer than the material could support. Some scenes, although well-written, could be trimmed, and I think there are some crucial concepts that could be re-examined.

I liked how the various cliques present in high school were so quickly and yet precisely presented. Some specific cliques might come and go over the years, but there is an ever-present divide in personality types.

I found the central concept of what identity meant not only to an individual but to that person's environment very engaging. It's obvious that a lot of thought went into exploring this idea and I liked the permutations that were presented. On the other hand, I almost felt like the script rushed into the conflict too

quickly. I think we could have explored the various cliques interacting with one another a little more before Joey was faced with his self-doubt. That way, even though these are familiar to people, there would be more contrast when the lines became blurred later in the script.

Joey's first personality could be given a little more screen time. As much as I like the dilemma he's placed in, I think he was almost more a character type instead of a real character. I'd like to see a little more of how his presence influenced other people around him in other ways. The scenes that are present are great, but they're all a bit too big too often. I wanted to see a little more of how the community followed him.

Jana could use a little more exploration as well. I liked what she did, but I think we could see her own home life (which doesn't seem to exist in this draft). I didn't quite understand who "Mr. Daily" was in the beginning, or how she was in the position to counsel him.

I think we spent a little too much time trying to solve Joey's "problem." It might work better to show more examples of how the cliques started to change in the day-to-day activities in the school. We see Wilbur and Matthew, and some there's the montage during the big game, but I think there's more material here to be mined.

As much as I liked the idea of Joey's having to confront what makes him HIM, the script stumbled just a bit here and there in solving it.

To side-step for a moment, I didn't quite get what time-frame everything took place in. We see a countdown of days until the Homecoming Game, but Joey's possible absence from the game doesn't sit well. Even though this is a comedy, the Coach would have to know one way or the other if Joey is showing up. Even if he showed up late he could still be in the game, but the script makes it seem like once the game starts then that's it. Additionally, once the cliques start changing, it didn't seem like they should care if Joey is around anymore. I understand the meaning behind this sequence, but it isn't entirely pulled off. The impending importance of the game could be somewhat stronger to necessitate Joey's presence.

Getting back to Joey's dilemma, the script avoids the idea that possibly Joey simply doesn't want to play football anymore. I didn't quite believe that Jana would really care if the high

school ever won a game, or what she thought the importance of this particular game was. What if Joey decided to pursue English or Science in college? Why does Joey HAVE to be a football player. We see him give the glory up to Jake, but why is Jana convinced that Joey *needs* to play the game?

There were some spelling or grammatical errors throughout the script. These weren't too numerous but should be fixed on the next draft. On page 17 brother was spelled bother. On 39 Buddhism was spelled Buddism. On 412 your was spelled you're. On 69 "Pray tell" was spelled "Prey tell." On 88 the sentence "lets go the library" is odd. On 91 Principle was spelled Principal. On 93 faint was spelled feint. On 125 the sentence with "and if I would real hard" is missing a word or two. There were a few times effected was used instead of affected.

In the end I think there's the potential for a fun but thoughtful story here. However, I think it's just a bit too long to maintain an audience's interest throughout. I think it's a little too long in the middle, and rushes through the set-up. The script could be trimmed by ten or so pages easily which would help streamline the narrative. A couple basic ideas could get a little more exploration (what's *wrong* with the cliques changing their status quo?). With just a little editing and extra depth I think this script could easily find an appreciative audience.

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