**COMPANY NAME**

Type of Material: Script Title: ARIZONA DREAMIN'

Number of Pages: 113 Author: B. Writer

Submitted By: Circa: Present Day

Submitted To: Location: Mexico / US

Analyst: TD Genre: Comedy / Action

Coverage Date: 1/22/16

**LOG LINE:** It's a dream come true when Mexican drug thug Juan takes an interest in producing Jerry' screenplay, but the production soon turns deadly.

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|  | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |  | Budget | |
| Idea |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |
| Story Line |  |  | X |  |  | High |  |
| Characterization |  |  | X |  |  | Medium | X |
| Dialogue |  |  | X |  |  | Low |  |
| Production Value |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |

**COMMENTS:**

With a concept revolving around a filmmaker's attempt to make a movie for a dangerous Mexican cartel leader, ARIZONA DREAMIN' promises to be a unique and entertaining story, quite different from other "behind-the-scene" movies. However, with a jumbled narrative and uneven tone, the script still needs a lot of work.

The plot, when boiled down to its basics, is quite promising: Jerry, a struggling filmmaker in Hollywood, is given a chance to turn one of his scripts into a movie with the "help" of Mexican cartel boss Juan Blanco, but it soon turns into a hostage situation where Jerry scrambles to finish the movie to save his life.

The main problem with the script is that, despite this fairly straightforward plot, the narrative isn't well-defined enough to move the story forward. The script has too many scenes with very little tension in them, or do not contribute to the overall conflict (all the scenes of Conrad Benjamin III performing Hamlet, for example), which slows down the entire script.

In a nutshell, the tone of the script keeps changing, the protagonist is unsympathetic, there are parts of the piece that are overdramatic, and the ending is unfulfilling.

But another reason the script reads as a bit all over the place is the fact that it never makes it explicit what Juan's threat toward Jerry and the cast is (is he going to kill them? Keep them prisoners forever?) so the stakes aren't clear enough. This also means that Jerry doesn't have a clear plan of action: how is he planning to escape? Does he want to escape at all? Is he trying to make the movie just to mollify Juan, or is he doing the best that he can for his art? This leads to a lack of direction in the plot development, making it rather clunky.

While there are comedic moments to this piece, Juan is too violent and dangerous. The kidnappings are harsh, but still darkly funny. Juan killing a bunch of his crew isn't humorous in any way. This takes away from the tone of the piece.

The sequence that follows, with Jonathan unable to act, could be amusing, if the massacre hadn't just happened. Juan killing the dog is way over the top. This gives the script a very ambiguous tone.

It's a bit coincidental that Jerry finds all the ingredients he finds and that he knows how to put them together to make gunpowder. This and his sudden transformation into a warrior who can make wolves walk away with their tails between their legs are extremely hard to buy. If they're intended to be over the top for the sake of humor, they don't come across that way.

The surprise ending that this was all a movie is a bit campy and predictable. It's not an original concept and it defeats the whole purpose of the story, since it was all just a movie anyway.

Also contributing to the script's muddled feel is that at times, it is not clear what genre it's meant to be. The opening scenes certainly have a comedic tone, but as the story progresses, it becomes more of a thriller, only to become slightly surreal toward the ending. It could certainly work as a comedy thriller or a spoof (especially with all the surrealist elements in the third act such as Jerry' battle with the wolves), but both the humor and the suspense need to be amped up a lot more and be consistent throughout the script.

In terms of characterization, the script could use more focus as well. Jerry is a sympathetic and identifiable protagonist, but as mentioned above, his character suffers from the script's lack of direction. He doesn't have a clear-cut, tangible goal, which may make it difficult for the audience to follow him on his journey. His character arc could also be clearer as well: does he start out as a man willing to sell his soul to the Devil just to get his movie made, and end up learning his lesson?

To wit, Jerry seems intended to be the protagonist, but what he should be striving for: getting himself and his cast free from Juan, he doesn't have any interest in.

Instead, all he cares about is getting his film made. This makes his goal one that the audience isn't going to be able to get behind. What's at stake for him if he doesn't make his film is he won't have a career. Considering what else is happening in this story, that's extremely trivial.

Instead of the stakes of "If he doesn't finish the film, he won't have a career," a more dramatic, more interesting situation would be "If he doesn't finish the film, he dies. Or someone he loves will die. Or his dog."

While this should be a story about Jerry trying to heroically free his friend and his kidnapped cast against extreme odds, that's not the story that's being told here.

This gives much of the script very little conflict, despite the extreme circumstances and violence. Until the end, Jerry simply wants to make his movie and he's making his movie.

When Jerry tries to kill himself, it's marginally comical. But ultimately, it just makes Jerry come off as weak, and uninteresting.

The dialogue is a bit flat and over the top, but it works for a zany comedy. However, since much of this script gets too serious to be a zany comedy, the dialogue sometimes feels out of place.

Juan's dialogue is especially unclear. At times he seems intended to be comical because he's so over the top, but at other times, he seems intended to be menacing.

For example, on p. 102, Juan says: "Who are you?! Geronimo!? You think I can't see the bloody tracks?! Huh?! Conjo! Move!" This could be intended to be humorous, but given what Juan has done and is doing, a comedic moment feels out of place.

The rest of the cast is serviceable to the plot, but they could be more well-rounded. Their relationships with each other and with Jerry would go a long way in making the characters more memorable and believable, but right now it's either all on the surface (such as the relationships between Jerry and Barry Conrad, or between Jerry and Al, while a lot of interesting parallels and contrasts could be drawn from them) or nearly non-existent. Juan himself could also be more effective as an antagonist, as he comes off as a one-dimensional psychopath, without any depth to his character.

In conclusion, there is a good idea behind the concept this screenplay, but it currently suffers most from an unfocused execution. The script needs to decide if it wants to tell a dramatic story (think *Sunset Boulevard*) or a comedic one (think *Bowfinger*), in order to appeal to the audience.

**SCRIPT: PASS**

**ANALYSIS CHART:**

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| **TITLE:** | ARIZONA DREAMIN' |
| **AUTHOR:** | B. Writer |
| **READER:** | TD |

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| **MECHANICS** | Excellent | Solid | **Needs Work** | **Re-Think** | N/A |
| Action lines clearly and concisely manifest visual action and literal context. |  |  | X |  |  |
| Scenes avoid the problem of continuing beyond optimal length. |  |  | X |  |  |
| Spelling, grammar, and proofreading. |  | X |  |  |  |
| Page count. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The script’s physical presentation. |  | X |  |  |  |
| Dialogue. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The script effectively manifests a compelling theme and adheres to it throughout the story. |  |  | X |  |  |

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| **CHARACTER** | Excellent | Solid | **Needs Work** | **Re-Think** | N/A |
| The protagonist clearly manifests both internal and external goals. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The protagonist has consistent opposition to his/her goals. |  | X |  |  |  |
| The protagonist is sympathetic and/or engages our emotional investment. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The protagonist clearly changes / has an arc. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The supporting characters are unique and add value to the story. |  |  | X |  |  |
| All of the characters are authentic to their backgrounds. |  | X |  |  |  |
| The script has an effective antagonistic force, direct or indirect. |  | X |  |  |  |

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| **STRUCTURE:** | Excellent | Solid | **Needs Work** | **Re-Think** | N/A |
| The script has a strong structural foundation that serves the story, classic three-act structure or otherwise. |  |  | X |  |  |
| Plots and subplots work together. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The set-up is concise, and effective. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The story has well-designed reversals. |  |  | X |  |  |
| Transitions are effective and appropriate to the story. |  |  | X |  |  |
| Every scene has relevance. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The story includes an effective dramatic climax / payoff. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The setup is resolved effectively. |  |  | X |  |  |
| A catalytic situation drives the plot. |  | X |  |  |  |
| Dramatic conflict and tension build across scenes, throughout the plot. |  |  | X |  |  |

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| **MARKET VALUE** | Excellent | Solid | **Needs Work** | **Re-Think** | N/A |
| Originality / freshness*.* |  |  | X |  |  |
| The story has a clearly defined target audience. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The story clearly has mass audience (universal) appeal. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The story includes a conceptual “hook” that could potentially be used to effectively market the film. |  | X |  |  |  |

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| **PRODUCTION VALUE** | Excellent | Solid | **Needs Work** | **Re-Think** | **N/A** |
| The lead character is castable / has star appeal. |  |  | X |  |  |
| The visual arena of the script is stimulating. |  | X |  |  |  |
| The project has International appeal. |  |  | X |  |  |