



SCREENPLAY READERS

SCRIPT NOTES * SCRIPT COVERAGE * CONSULTATION

HORROR FILM-O-RAMA

Submitted Writer: G. Writerpants

122 pages

Genre: Action / Supernatural Horror

Circa: Present Day

Estimated Budget: HIGH

Location(s): suburban house, office, various

Script Reader: RI

7/26/2030

DEVELOPMENT NOTES

Horror/action isn't easy. Horror/action with an original core is rare. XXXXXXXX is both original and entertaining, even in this rough draft. A tale told with classic supernatural elements, but with a very important, very fresh distinction: It's all framed within a Thai and/or Buddhist framework that gives the piece an incredible air of originality and newness.

That being said, there are a few key things that the script could use in order to be even more marketable and entertaining.

First up, the script's opening - having the words of the epigram swap out for different once ("They are, etc.") is unique and a fresh take on epigrams in general. That is, I've never seen that in a film before. But upon finishing the script, it was hard for me to see how the words of the epigram (aka opening quote) tie in to the horror themes of the story.

The quote itself is great, and I can see that you're trying to tie the "they" in "they are awake" to the supernatural creatures you present later, but it's not quite as clear as it could be. Further, the use of "In Tonight's" (swapping out "Buddha") is unclear to me. That being said, it may be perfectly clear to someone more familiar with Buddhism, so please feel free to ignore this particular note.

The joke on p2 could be funnier by reversing: Opal go call Mameow out of the toilet, she's gotta do her lines now. - "Where's Mameow?" "She's in the toilet." Or something similar. If it's not intended to be a joke, ignore this note as well. I know there may be some language differences and nuances that aren't getting translated perfectly, so if I suspect there's a joke where you wrote a serious moment, or a serious moment where you intended a joke, please ignore.

p4 in silent - in silence

p4 conflict right off the bat - good. "...your grandma is a bloody murderer!" Further, we're at a funeral, and these guys are trying to document it on videotape. That alone puts the audience ill at ease right out of the gate, and that's a good thing.

p5 Opal's hand reaches INTO FRAME and goes for her shoulder. - Watch out for camera directions. I'll briefly revisit this note several places throughout these script notes, but I'll go into detail here in this first instance.

What you've put together here is an extremely fun, extremely horrific action film. And what helps both the action and the horror is your use of the videocamera as the sort of "first person narrator." So I understand the need for the camera directions throughout the script within that context.

If you're planning to shoot this film yourself, then by all means, keep all the camera directions you like. But if you're planning on submitting this screenplay as a spec script to studios and agencies and/or production companies, you'll be better off minimizing the camera directions as much as possible.

To be clear, using the camera within the scene, whether Opal or Na or anyone else is holding it, is fine. But describing specific, detailed camera moves works against you if you're submitting this script to studios, who will invariably put this script in front of a director who will want to piece together the visual elements in his or her own mind, without your help.

But like I said, much of the strength of both your action and your horror is derived from using the videocamera as the central narrative device, so eliminating the camera direction entirely, even for a potential third-party director, may be counterproductive in that doing so may not enable said director to visualize the narrative pieces you've assembled. That is, without your detailed camera directions, you might lose some of the magnitude of the horror and action you're presenting.

But on the other hand, with too much of it, you may turn off a studio or director, who may feel the script is too heavy-handed in presenting the visual composition.

Bottom line, my advice is, if you're shooting this yourself, keep all the camera direction you like,

but pare it down and make it cleaner, clearer, and more brief, so that you and your crew can more readily visualize each beat without having to slow down in the read or stop completely to re-read. But, if you're sending this script out as a spec, my advice is to remove all camera direction and angles completely, and instead replace them with a more generic description that gives us the "vibe" that you, the screenwriter are shooting for, but which leaves it open for a third-party director to visualize it more readily. Something like this:

THE CAMERA'S POV

Such and such happens. Mameow's face fills the screen as she screams.

Not only will it be more presentable and more readable, it will let readers visualize that action for themselves, which is always a better strategic choice when trying to keep a reader turning each page of your script. If you're holding their hand from shot to shot, and they're not allowed more leeway in visualizing what you've presented because you've larded it up with overly-specific camera directions, in many cases, there's a greater chance they'll disengage.

CUT TO: is not necessary and takes up line space. Whenever you have a new scene heading, it's obvious that we're cutting to it, so CUT TO: is redundant. Use them sparingly and only when it's absolutely vital to let the reader know that the transition you're making is a hard cut, and only when it's not obvious.

p9 (these are considered flowers of the dead and you NEVER pass them around but to let each guest pick one up from the tray themselves.) 1) but to let should just be but let, 2) The information in this line needs to be conveyed visually or aurally.

Throughout your script, you've included a lot of these "asides," or moments where you, the writer, are stopping the flow of the narrative in order to tell us something flat out, in order to augment or emphasize what you've written. Try to avoid these moments, as they disrupt the narrative flow and can be viewed by some as fluff, or filler, or overly "cute" authorial moments.

The best way to present a scene is to be as simple and as brief as possible, without any authorial commentary or asides.

So if the aforementioned flowers of the dead are never to be handed out, but instead intended for guests to pick up from the tray themselves, do something like this:

Opal takes a flower off the tray and hands it to a mourner.

The mourner looks horrified at his action.

Opal hands out another flower. A WOMAN waves it away, horrified.

The mourners grumble at his breach of etiquette.

Na sees it, runs over.

NA

Dude! You're doing it wrong! Don't hand them out! Let them take one!

Or something like that. You get the idea.

p11 ~~Haven't~~ my son told you? Hasn't

p11 Just who ~~cremate~~ - Just who cremates

p12 Yes, ~~he means the Deceased, who was Na's Grandmother's NANNY!~~ - not sure why there's so much emphasis here. These types of asides should be removed as well. Be as clear as possible with your action and description and these sort of authorial comments and asides won't be necessary.

p13 ~~Na's father too is staring at the vehicle at a loss.~~ - Na's father stares at the vehicle, bewildered. Keep it in active tense "stares" instead of "is staring" whenever possible to keep the script moving.

p14 the emphasis on A TANKER TRUCK COMINE THROUGH THE ENTRANCE GATE! and A MYSTIFIED MAMEOW EXITS THE VEHICLE!

Seems out of place. Things like this don't seem like so huge of dramatic moments that they require underlining, all caps, and exclamation points. Save these sorts of emphasis for very big, big moments. For example, Opal dying, or a reveal of a new creature. The reader will quickly develop "emphasis fatigue" if you're capitalizing, underlining, and exclamation marking so many moments. Pick your emphasized moments more carefully, and those emphases will be far more powerful, and you'll impress a lot more readers with your narrative prowess. ;0

p14 Opal saying he's been worried sick about Mameow. It's unclear why he says this. It seems like only a few moments ago that they parted ways, and he hasn't seemed too worried in that span of time, as he's been focused on the camera work/flowers, etc. Perhaps clarify so that readers will be more up to speed with what you're intending to communicate.

p15 Just now, Mameow becomes aware... "Just now" is unnecessary.

p15 I'm gonna go get some footages - footage

p16 THE CORPSE OF THE DECEASED! another moment where the emphasis is probably too much. Again, emphasize less and the things you emphasize will stand out more effectively.

p16 ~~Her skin now darkened~~ - Her skin is now darkened

p18 ~~valuable footages~~ - valuable footage

p18 Reveal of the bite mark. This is a good moment, but page 18 seems far too late for it to happen. Consider moving it up to around 12 or 15 and you'll get the audience in on the horror faster. Any opportunity you can take to get the reader up to speed on what you're going for, take it. Clarity and intent is key in grabbing a reader right off the bat. The sooner you can let them know what kind of story you're telling, the sooner they can get into it.

p22 ~~Where does this blood comes from~~ - Where did this blood come from

p24 Hey asshole! ~~Right after Opal lets loose the "a" word, Na stops and turns to him with eyes like ice.~~ Should just be something like this:

OPAL
"Hey asshole!"

Opal stops, turns, eyes like ice.

In general, you have a lot of moments where the dialogue/description can be pared down significantly while still retaining your intent. If you can say the same thing with fewer words and sentences, you can make the script far more readable.

Also, I'll take a quick moment to comment on your use of (O.S.) - I know you're using it in many cases due to the fact that whoever's talking may be a person behind the camera, or out of the camera's current frame, and that's good.

However, your script is unique in that it's quite clear to the reader that your narrative is unfolding within a camera POV context. Therefore, you probably don't need to include so many (O.S.) descriptors. That being said, keep them for key moments where it's vital that the reader understand that the dialogue is coming from off screen.

p25 ~~And not even him~~ And not even he ~~But what would be better would be simply this:~~

He fights back tears.

p25 ~~We then hear the Toyota IGNITING once...~~ Igniting sounds like it's catching fire. Consider using something like:

The Toyota's ignition whinnies, struggling to start.

It fires up.

p26 ~~life even exist around here~~ - life even exists around here

p28-30 Grandmother's house - Suspense is built very well here. Great job. Especially with the camera use/first person documentary style, but it could be pared down a bit more. Less talking would make for even more suspense and/or chills up the spine.

p30 ~~various stuff are also scattered~~ - various stuff is also scattered Also, what is the "stuff?" Personal belongings? CDs? Car registration?

p31 Yes, it's a chicken massacre! - again, avoid these types of asides. Your beats, when pared down to their essentials and tweaked to their maximum brevity and clarity, simply won't require such authorial commentary.

p32 ~~run pass the camera~~ - run past the camera

p34 good suspense with the flashlight as they're entering the kitchen

p35 ~~walks pass a staircase~~ - walks past a staircase

p35 ~~does a 180 turn with the camera~~ - What's better:

Does a 180.

p35 ~~The room in its entirety. Plain and furnitureless, almost as if abandoned~~ - What's better:

The room, empty. No furniture.

p35 A headless body wearing black propped up in a chair - this is the first moment where caps and underline are necessary. No exclamation is necessary, however. Also, awesome moment. Very creepy. Good stuff.

p36 He needs not to see more to identify the corpse before him. All of a sudden -- What's better:

It's his father.

OPAL AND MAMEOW

Na! Na! Look out!

p36-37 Grandaunt with head - great surprise and very horrifying. Good stuff. Call her THE GRANDAUNT instead of CRAZY LOOKING ELDERLY WOMAN. Again, it's all about clarity and brevity.

p37 ~~Pinning Na to the floor, the Grandaunt attempts to take his life with the lethal kitchen ware by delivering several blows, but he fends them off with one hand.~~ - Better:

She pins Na. She stabs at him. He fends off the stabs.

In the above example, I've taken your three lines and made them into one. The same exact action happens, with the same exact intensity as you intended, but it's easier and quicker for a reader to digest.

See if you can do that to every line in your screenplay. If you can say it more briefly, your script stands a much better chance of getting people to stay with it. Or, if you're planning to shoot it yourself, being brief helps you, the producer or director, and your crew, digest the important beats of each scene more quickly and effectively.

p37 ~~Thai's rum~~ - Thai rum

p37 ~~Growling aggressively~~ - There's no other way to growl. Just say growling.

p38 ~~strengths~~ - strength

p38 ~~Flame!~~ - Flames!

p38 Na's sleeve catches fire too, but he quickly puts it out. Then they all step aside and watch in horror as the human torch staggers to the living room, SCREAMING in agony... before sagging to the floor.

Better:

Na's sleeve catches fire. He flaps it out.

On fire, the Grandaunt staggers into the living room, screaming. She drops to the floor.

p39 ... And put out the blaze.

As the last of the flame is extinguished, we can see that the Grandaunt is NO LONGER MOVING --

SHE IS DEAD.

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The trio stand, feet mounted to the floor and staring at the partially roasted corpse before them, shocked and not sure how to react. All are exhausted and panting heavily as they cry and let time flies... Until --

Better:

The trio stamp out the fire.

The Grandaunt is dead, smoldering.

The trio stares, panting. Mameow sobs.

p40 ~~several poundings on the chest~~ - several socks to the chest

p40 ~~they both share tears-~~ they both sob

p40 It's ten times more intense and scarier than "Grudge" and "Exorcist" combined! - Don't tell us.

Instead, show us. Creep us out. It's way more effective to simply write:

Na's Grandmother's corpse steps out of the darkness. Her neck hanging limp. (!)

Opal can't breathe. He's frozen with terror.

The (!) I used above is used when you want to convey a horrific, surprising moment, but when you want to acknowledge to the reader that yes, this may seem like a new reveal or something out of left field, but it's indeed what you're intending.

In this case, we haven't seen the dead walk thus far in the script. So by showing us the dead walking here, you're revealing a new bit of surprising info that the reader may think is coming out of left field. So the (!) lets them know "Yes, this may seem weird and shocking, but it's exactly what I'm intending."

In an ironic way, that (!) may seem sort of like of one of those "authorial asides" that I've railed against earlier on in these notes. The difference is, 9 times out of 10, using the (!) is far more acceptable (as well as brief) than using a clever writerly aside.

p40 ~~Unbeknown~~ - unbeknownst

p41 The Krasue descending, etc. - Very scary stuff! Good! But pare down the description. Leave the reader with fewer words and you'll scare them more.

p43 ~~no where~~ - nowhere

p43 growling aggressively than ever - growling.

p44 ~~drop~~ to the ground - drop to the ground

p44 ~~the trio's speeds are second to none, cheetah, etc.~~ - The trio rockets across the field.

p44 and other pages - ~~the bamboos~~ - the bamboo

p48 AN ASSEMBLY OF BUDDHIST MONKS, armed with all the arsenal the world could offer. Almost like they're ready to battle Yama's army or something! And from the look of it, they're the same Monks from the ceremony! -

Better and more brief:

SEVERAL ROWS OF BUDDHIST MONKS - armed, ready for battle. They're the same monks from the ceremony.

p49 - perverted monks - this is distracting from your main story. No need for perverted monks. You're telling a much more interesting story without them.

p51 ~~nothing compare~~ to - nothing compared to

p54 Tonight is the night hell comes to earth. This information needs to be revealed way sooner than p54.

p58 the rape scene - doesn't feel necessary to your story. Now I see why you introduced the perverted monks, but this entire scene can be excised. Perhaps it would work better if they're not monks, but thieves instead? Maybe they've broken into the monk's compound to steal, and then got locked in. As soon as Mameow's abducted by them, we know these guys are going to meet a terrible fate at the hands of the supernatural.

p60 The Krahang - good, but this new creature doesn't seem to escalate in intensity from the previous creature. Can you ramp up its potency, its danger a bit more? And do the same for each. Perhaps you have, but it's not coming across as escalation.

If you're having trouble ramping the horror up from monster to monster, try the "Volume Knob" approach.

That is, treat each creature's reveal as a number on a volume knob, like on a radio.

If all your creatures and their reveals are set to 10 out of 10 in "volume," then there's no real escalation in tension or conflict.

But, if you can go back to your earlier creatures and set them to "5," and then the next one to "6," and then the next one to "8," etc., then your final creature/conflict can be a "10" and the audience will feel that the conflict and tension is escalating, and they'll have a more enjoyable time.

p 60-63 some really fun action and horror here. The action needs to be clarified and pared down a bit more.

p68 A MONSTROUS SERPENT TRACK! Save the emphasis for the creature's reveal.

p70 Shitting bricks and leaving Na behind. Try to avoid things like "Shitting bricks." It's extra verbiage. Be as literal as possible and as brief and as visual as possible when writing your action.

p70 ~~at a lost~~ - at a loss.

p72 deja vu

p75 If there's a tenth circle of hell, this is definitely it - again, lose the asides and cutesy descriptions

p76 ~~risk my neck~~ - risked my neck

p84 Opal dying - Good! Super fun. This comes as a surprise. I didn't see this coming. Your script does this well, and could use more of these fun twists.

p88 ~~fuckin' die~~ - fuckin' died

p88 ~~he'd already gone~~ - he's already gone

p92 Yes, for the first time the Temple Boy is presented with some fear in his face.

Better:

Temple Boy's face registers fear. For the first time.

p101 ~~its foods inside the cabin~~ - its food inside the cabin

p102 ~~ahold of him~~ - a hold of him

p103 gnaws on Temple Boy's head, killing him.

More clear and intense:

Takes a huge bite of Temple Boy's head.

Blood sprays.

Temple Boy dies.

Mameow dying is a great surprise as well! Awesome. Didn't see this one coming either.

Okay that's it for the line-by-line notes. Let me close with a few words in general.

First up, you've written a very original, very fun action-horror movie with a quite unique setting and situation. The Buddhist compound, the religious trappings, the funerary idiom, tying in Halloween and the supernatural - all of these things are super original, and I'm very impressed

with the freshness of the situations.

It's a very fun ride, and one that I can see being quite successful in the international market, as well as in the North American market.

The script's greatest strength is how it blends the freshness of the Buddhist tradition/trappings with the horror/action elements. That simply hasn't been done before, to my knowledge.

The script's greatest weakness right now can be found in two major spots: Character and causality.

First, character. All of your characters are fun to watch, but could be a lot more fun. They're given a tiny bit of backstory, but what could be more interesting is if they're given more unique character traits/quirks. Backstory is nice, but quirks are almost always more important. Go back and give each one a major flaw or fear. Do away with backstory wherever possible.

Second, causality. Now, take that flaw or fear you've created for each major character tie those flaws and fears to the scenes themselves. That is, see if you can set up your scenes like dominos. Then have a character's flaws or fears set those dominos in motion. When the dominos threaten to stop falling at some point, ramp it up by having another characters' flaws or fears dig the characters in deeper, knocking more dominos down.

That is, right now you've got events unfolding on their own, and the characters are just stuck experiencing them. But what would be far more entertaining is if the characters themselves caused the events to unfold, either purposefully or inadvertently.

By tying the characters' traits, fears, weaknesses, strengths, quirks, etc. to the conflict, you'll invest the audience more in the characters themselves. By doing that, the audience will be more concerned for their safety, and therefore more horrified when bad things happen to them.

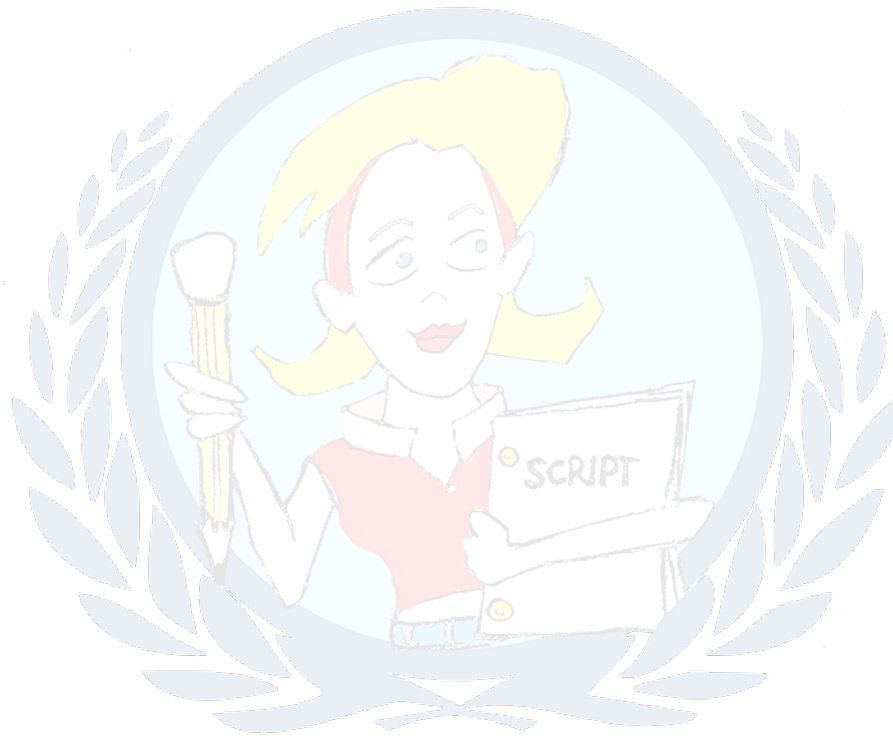
Bottom line, you've crafted a very fun, very horrifying, very original story here. Now what you need to work on is the following:

- 1) Pare down the action and description so that it's more clear and easier to read. Brevity is always better. Always.
- 2) Eliminate authorial asides and comments that are intended to assist the reader in understanding what's going on. If you need such things, your scene isn't clear yet. Rewrite the scene until such comments are rendered redundant.
- 3) Remove as many specific camera directions as possible, unless you plan on shooting this yourself, and even in that case, you don't need to include so many specific camera directions.

4) Eliminate backstory and replace it with character. Quirks, choices they make, flaws, cowardice, pride, you name it.

5) Tie those character traits to the action itself, by having those character traits cause the action to unfold, whenever possible.

All in all, a good draft, and a very marketable, very original horror/action film. Great work, and good luck with future drafts.



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SCRIPT READER'S SCORESHEET

The concept is strong and/or script has a buzzworthy hook	77
Script's first 10 pages are compelling	82
Script's theme is well-executed/interweaved well	86
Story/plot/story logic is clear and easy to follow	88
Every story element feels essential	76.5
Setting/world is easy to understand/follow	66
The script is not bogged down by exposition	65
Scenes and moments cause/impact later scenes and moments	55
Stakes are clear/conflict is strong and/or compelling	79
Tension builds/escalates throughout	76
Characters are interesting/entertaining/fun to watch	65
Characters' choices and actions drive the story forward	63
Characters' motivations/wants/obstacles are clearly defined	61
It's easy to tell who's who – Characters are different from one another	66
Antagonistic forces are difficult for the protagonist/s to overcome	67
Dialogue is strong/colorful/entertaining/impactful	79
Action/description text is visual/concise/vivid	67
Climax/resolution is entertaining/satisfying	59
The script feels as if it's as strong/funny/dramatic/entertaining as it can be	78
The script's target audience/demographic is clear	89
The content/subject matter is likely to be strategically appealing to buyers	78
The script's format/spelling/presentation isn't distracting	98
Average Score	73.7
Recommendation	PASS
Please note: There is no formal mathematical correlation between scores and Recommendation.	

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THE BECHDEL TEST AND DIVERSITY RATING:

It is absolutely not Screenplay Readers' place to tell anyone that their work needs stronger female roles or more diversity, but because the film and tv market is shifting, perhaps slowly, but undeniably, towards more diversity in casting, we feel we owe it to our clients to provide this metric so they can decide for themselves whether or not it's even applicable and/or something they'd like to consider when determining their project's submission strategy.

BECHDEL TEST

YOUR SCRIPT'S RESULT: **No**

[Bechdel Test Explained](#)

The Bechdel Test is a non-scientific, shorthand "litmus test" that many readers, agents, producers, and executives apply to a potential project when looking for material with strong roles for women. The Bechdel Test asks the question: *Does the work feature (a) at least two women, (b) who talk to each other, (c) about something other than a man?*

DIVERSITY RATING

YOUR SCRIPT'S RESULT: **Diverse**

[Diversity Rating Explained](#)

We define a "diverse" script as one possessing a significant number of characters from diverse backgrounds. That is to say, characters who are other than white, male, cisgender, etc. Diversity rating has no direct correlation to your script's overall Script Reader Score or Recommendation. It is here as a metric for you to use if you find it helpful. If we rate your script other than "Diverse," it absolutely does not mean your script is necessarily "bad" or "racist" or "sexist" or not worthy of consideration. We include this rating only so you can determine for yourself if our opinion with regards to this rating is something you'd like to consider when determining your project's submission strategy.