

THE ALBUM

NOTES/THOUGHTS/QUESTIONS/SUGGESTIONS

I would say from the beginning the my confidence in the writing was uncertain, and confirmed by page 6. If I hadn't been reading this script to be featured, I most likely would've stopped reading somewhere between pages 12-19.

The fact that Phil has showed no real threat might be one of the reasons. I didn't get invested in these characters from the start so I'm less concerned about the situation that they are in.

I am intrigued by the concept of kidnapping people and forcing them to record an album. However, what's at stake? Who really has the leverage? I mean...what's to keep the kidnapped from holding the kidnapper hostage by this set up. How do you force people to play an instrument. if you injure them, or the person they care about, who is also in the band, they can't really perform as required, nor at the level in which you desire. Lose/lose for all involved.

p1 = This is PRUDENCE (26). Years of gigging have made her lean and tough, but she still retains the striking look of a romantic artist.

p1 = JAMES (26), thin and frail with a boyish quality, leans against the bonnet. Drumsticks poke out of his back pocket.

*not a huge fan of these character intros - I can picture James more than I can picture Prudence.

p1 = MC (40's) = good character description. I know exactly what I'm looking at.

When he asks "Ready to rock?" - I was confused. Wasn't sure if he was talking to the audience or her.

Clarity is important. Even in small moments like this. Sure I realize in the

next line he's talking to her, and if I was in the theater it would be obvious, but here...it is not. Because that's a line an MC would say to the crowd. Since there are few patrons there and he is aging, I thought he was just being underwhelmed when speaking to the crowd.

*Honestly, if you just changed his line to "Where's your drummer?" - the rest works. Because he would know they aren't ready when he got on stage.

Or just make sure he's speaking to her -- and you may want to have him speak her name, so the audience will know her name before the pendant reveal.

p1 = James nods without looking up, ~~listless and dejected~~. = James nods without looking up. = this is a preference thing for me. I'm assuming by his simple reaction, or muted reaction, that things are askew. listless and dejected is too much. Based on the dynamic between he and Prudence, these characteristics will play out in their actions. As far as I'm concerned, you are showing me he is listless and dejected in character action -- and then tell me immediately after which is redundant.

I do also think it's fair to say that there are a few ways one could nod without looking up and that you are putting this here for clarity (or for the actor). But based on her actions/reactions thus far, him not being on stage, him obviously not tending to some emergency or other business, informs me that he is indifferent.

p1 = James grasps the PENDANT NECKLACE hanging from his neck, looks at it contemplatively -- an inscription reads "TO JAMES, DROPOUTS FOREVER, LOVE PRUDENCE".

This doesn't work for me as is - If I'm in the audience and this movie plays as it is written, I don't know his name is James, I don't know her name is Prudence and I don't know the name of their band.

Sure I can assume that he is James and she is Prudence and in another

minute we will learn the band name...but these aren't mysteries of importance or consequence. So the reveal is ineffective for me anyway. Thus, I recommend making these details clear and straightforward. Especially because it appears this relationship will be the core of this entire story/premise.

p2 = James trudges onto the stage and plonks down at the drums -- clearly, he doesn't want to be here. = See, here you have James being dejected -- you are in fact showing it. I think it's a bit over dramatic, but you do have it.

p2 = things I think would help set up the story - especially the tone - what type of pub? what type of band are they? what type of music? -- They are obviously not a popular band. Especially so since they've been gigging for years. -- Did they used to be popular? Hopefully I will find out.

**THE GREEN ROOM gives us the info that they are a punk band. Not only by stating it in the action line, but with the descriptions of the characters' clothing and overall look.

So how James and Prudence look inform the story visuals, thus enhancing it overall.

p3-4 = This exchange doesn't work for me. It's too direct and a bit melodramatic. I could make the argument that these two have known each other a long time and they are past speaking in nuance and subtext, but it feels like what this opening scene needs in their relationship.

For dramatic purposes, withhold their stances or craft them in a manner that is less than direct. James saying he'd take the job is the direct thing he can say. But instead of Prudence saying "You wouldn't do that to me." her words should be subtext - so they are about her, but the actual words say something else: "But this is our dream?" or "You'd break up the band?" - so she's disguising her actual feelings by portraying a disposition of unity, manipulation, and blaming him for it as well. and have the rest of the argument play that out.

(**After reading the whole thing, it turns out that Prudence is just this selfish. I mean, to an absurd and extremely dislikable degree)

I like that it leads to a relationship ultimatum at the end. That's a great story moment for their dynamic, argument.

I would've suggested the argument about the band actually being an argument about their relationship, but Prudence directly calls it out as well. That it will be a casualty of his choice. Thus she's holding him hostage. So have the whole conversation lead to that, but nuanced.

We are about to spend an entire movie with these two - and the dichotomy of chasing dreams versus making stable life choices is something the majority of people can relate to.

I'm of the opinion that characters in movies don't have the leeway to say what they want to say until the 2nd or 3rd act. Even though the characters may be ready to speak this way when we meet them, the audience is not. We've only spent a few minutes with them, thus the exchange doesn't feel authentic.

The exception would be if the directness is what sets the STORY in motion. In this case, it does not. The kidnapping does.

(*I had made a note here that I wondered if James quitting the band would be better utilized somewhere later in the script - based on how things played out, it would not - this moment is used to set up specific character actions/consequences/depth later in the story)

p5 = I like that you created a situation for Prudence to display what type of person she is. This type of scene feels familiar and I didn't think her merely hanging up his phone call would cause him to acquiesce -- I feel like this is one of those moments/opportunities for her to make a declaration that sums up the dramatic question/declaration for the film as well.

p5-6 = I'm not sure showing what happened to James is necessary. I get it

for the usage of the flash and the crackle - but I feel it's more engaging for Prudence to come out and not find James. Then what happens to her, we would then know what happened to him.

Plus we are coming from the feeling of her small victory with the money transitioning to thriller aspect of the journey we are about to go on.

p6 = This is PHIL (40's). His goofy, innocent manner masks a deepseated anger bubbling just beneath the surface.

**This next note could be unique to my preferences, but you certainly don't need the second half of the description. In fact, I think you should get rid of it. I have a feeling we are about to spend a lot of time with him. It's going to come out during the story. LET IT EMERGE naturally. This is your villain. Let him be mysterious.

If you want his innocent manner to show, have him apologize to Prudence when he tasers her. And maybe he that he promises it's for a good thing.

p7 = not sure what a Spartan cell is = I'm assuming it's a bare bones type cell.

p7-8 = there's video of a radio interview? So were they popular? Prob not...it's community radio

p8 = I like learning about Prudence's POV regarding their music

p10 = Phil states the purpose of the kidnapping

p10 = so there is a window in the cell, it's just covered up -- p7 stated there were no windows.

p11 = You've set up Prudence thus far to handle situations but right after she busts the light...she hands it to James? James hasn't struck me thus far as a guy who handles things.

p12 = minus the extra person, this scene is a lot like 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE

p12 = PHIL (CONT'D) - I'm dying to get going today. I could hardly sleep last night I was so excited. = I liked this

p17 = Phil even mentions that he doesn't know how the band got started and that there isn't much about them online - then how does he know about them and why did he choose them?

(*I'm curious to know what James and Prudence's goal(s) was/were before they were kidnapped - perhaps that is what they could've been arguing about)

p19 = and now we are in the studio recording (*I find out later that they are playing -- NOT recording) -- I'm not into this moment because of the opening relationship dynamic and how it is portrayed. Because now it just feels like guy/girl in a situation -- needs more depth.

p21 = an attempt to escalate w/ Prudence's refusal (selfishness) and Phil with a shotgun = ineffective for me based on previous pages

p22 = everyone feels too settled too quick

p23 = Phil hasn't even stated his thoughts about the band or Prudence/James - or how he knows them -- or why he even chose them -- no monologue about what it was about them that made him do this

p24 = does no one sing in this band?

p28 = over usage of the verb "pads" (this continues throughout the script)

For example, "He pads to the main door..." = "He returns to the main door..."

p28 = Phil gets his feelings hurt by listening to J & P talk? why not directly?

p29 = They haven't even been recording yet?!?!?!?

**making an audience aware that Phil is making them rehearse and must earn the ability to record would be a good pacing/expectation setting device I feel you should include

p30 = Yeah...you don't need to show Phil overhearing their conversation that hurts his feelings. There's no need to justify his reaction. You may not even need to show them talking shit about him at all. We can all agree that they aren't going to be fans of his. So if we see them acting like they are friends, we are going to know it's insincere -- and Phil lashing out of them is perfectly acceptable given the set up/parameters. It doesn't even need to be justified in the script - he kidnapped people to make an album - he's allowed to act crazy

p32 = very much liked the dialogue and manner in which Prudence reconciled with Phil

p34 = c'mon guys, milk this tension more

p34 = I believe this is an opportunity for POV and reveal to bolster character strength. Have us watching from Phil's perspective so we can appreciate the awareness and cleverness when they emerge half naked.

p36 = this thing really needs some better scene set-up/tension/execution

p36 = PHIL - You act like animals, you'll be treated like animals. = nice line/character choice

p36 = I like the addition of the pit

p40 = first mention of lyrics/singing - I was beginning to think all she did was count "One, two, three, four..."

p40 = They meld together musically for once

*I feel Phil really needs to push the psychology more. And not directly like he knows what he is doing. I'm really speaking to you guys, the writers, here. With his basic disposition if he at one point stated "You will want what I want." would even enhance this. Because his tone would sound sincere, but it's really an unintentional threat.

p47 = PRUDENCE: What's out there for me? = no lie, I want to punch this selfish bitch in the face. Seriously. -- And I really have tried to figure out if it's good writing because I feel this way, or is it because it's such a momentum killer - and I know it's the latter - there are some character moments that are unredeemable and I think this choice is it for me.

I know it's wired into the base of her character and the spine of the narrative. I'm not saying you must change it because I said it, but I feel strongly about this. Definitely get more feedback or just dismiss mine completely.

p49 = Phil had a talk with James about not getting Prudence pregnant and gave him a condom. Which tells James and the audience that Phil plans on keeping them there a long time. But James withholds this reason from Prudence why? It's really important information. This feels counterintuitive to me.

p53-54 = good writing/set up here = with the house/Phil/ignoring them/showing he has control (even if indirect) -- not willing to record, etc.

p55 = how come nobody has asked, or been told, how many songs they'd have to record? And why isn't anyone asking what happens to them after the album is recorded? Phil doesn't have to tell the truth, but I feel it's questions these hostages would be asking/crying about

**The other issue I have with Prudence's "what's out there for me" BS, which I'm still hung up on, is that she has no idea what the outcome is after the recording. Sure she's focused on the fact that she will have recorded an album, but there's been no talk or promises about what will become of them or the album. So are you selling her as just be so focused that it

makes her naive?

p57 = Are they recording new music? I thought they'd be recording stuff they've already done -- because I assume if they are gigging for years, they have plenty of material and new material seems like it would take a long while

p61 = James wasn't even in the band when he dropped out?!?!? Then how would he be on the tour?

p64 = great use of choices and consequences

p76 = You guys did an excellent job of setting up this moment with the mother's dialogue and talking about her son - very organic, natural in both scenes. Awesome work.

p77 = "...concentrate on you feet..." = your

SUMMARY:

I'm always a story first guy and I'm more in favor of this concept than the story as it is delivered. Your first 30 pages are its weakest, in my opinion, and the most important. If I wasn't doing a review I wouldn't have made it even to page 30. Which would've been a shame. Here's why:

This has got to be the first script I read where it got stronger as it moved along. Now that could be because I felt the opening was so weak, but I don't truly think so.

It's true, I had to do a lot of forgiving and letting go of the things about the characters, especially Prudence, that I didn't like. But again, that problem originates in the opening pages of the script.

There were a lot of things I did like and could see the potential in. I may not be entirely sold on the music/recording an album aspect, but I love the challenge that you issue with this concept. It's most likely my inability to

appreciate that music portion in here -- which again -- I feel is failed to be set up proper in the opening.

This is like "What if that guy in Whiplash just kidnapped the kid straight up to mold him?"

I feel this is more GREEN ROOM meets WHIPLASH with a lot less depth and effective tension. It's a bold statement I know, but there is hope. You've got a premise and structure that can get there if you can nail those things.

From top to bottom I'm not suggesting a huge overhaul. You've got the page length to utilize since yours comes in at 86 pages. You may think that you wanted to keep it small, but if you do some cutting and more adding, you're still going to come in under 100 and I think that will work great for this.

I did feel as if there was a lack of a dramatic question or a promise that is made early that if I read/watch this movie, I will be rewarded. I don't have the solution for that. And if I overlooked it, then that's on me.

The character of Phil's mother is amazing and handled splendidly. Not too much and not too over the top. Excellent job with her character.

Hopefully you can make enough sense of my notes/ramblings that you can get something useful out of this experience. And if not from me, hopefully from some others.

Good luck to you, gentlemen.