

THERE WAS A LITTLE GIRL

Horror/Thriller

Logline: After witnessing the murder of her daddy, nine-year-old Becky and her dog set out to teach the scumbags responsible that Hell hath no fury like a pissed-off little girl with nothing to lose.

NOTES/THOUGHTS/QUESTIONS/SUGGESTIONS

p1 = SCOTTY (30)

p1 = is clip used correctly here? Isn't the term "magazine"? I'm not certain.

p1 = I don't know this is Scotty's car by the way this is set up - I don't even truly know this is Scotty's cottage - but I'm willing to assume on the cottage, not the car :)

p2 = DOMINICK (30) - how's he dressed?

**maybe set up this opening scene a bit better. Place us in the cottage but give us the audio from outside. Car skidding to a halt in the gravel. Footsteps fast approaching - then the door bursts open - then I will believe it's Scotty's car.

p2 = There's an unfinished front deck? We would've seen this by now based on the other actions

p4 = APEX (28)

p6 = ...nail into tip... = into the tip

p7 = DEPUTY GORMAN (45)

**this opening scene needs to be done much better if you are going to keep it. It's too generic and mystery for mystery's sake -- and if you don't keep it, you've just cut 7 pages from an already lean script.

p7 = BECKY HOOPER (9)

p8 = BECKY replies to her father with "Yes" = For the tale you are about to tell...this is your first opportunity/moment to introduce us to Becky, and "Yes" as a reply is too plain. There's no personality whatsoever

p8 = this 9 year old girl is sitting in the back seat of the car with two dog carriers housing

Dobermans (DIEGO and DORA - no ages given)? That's got to be crowded.

p8 = Becky says "bullshit" = So this is the moment where you decided to show her personality. Now it feels forced and still not quite effective. But I do like that you are showing us that she isn't a smartass, but direct.

p8 = I'm confused by the action line = we turn to the rear of the vehicle. Aren't we in the rear?

p8 = Here you've utilized a common "We Need This" story beat = I'm not sure if there's ever been a time in a script where I've seen this beat stated outright and it working for me in the story.

The reason I believe it is placed in stories is to be used as an AUDIENCE BEAT, but what should really be happening here is a "TRUE TO THEIR RELATIONSHIP" beat.

Jeff has to freaking know better = that this appeal to Becky won't land - I mean, shit...she's still kicking the back of his seat and they've had this conversation obviously more than once - she also curses in front of him - and you even end the moment with a "KICK" - so there's no way Becky's even going to meet him halfway on this.

Many people could make many arguments for why this interaction is okay to set up the fact that she's not going to be on board. You could say, "Mike...that's the point of this scene." And I would argue that I agree, and that in order for it to be effective for the overall intention...it needs to be done better.

(after having the read the entire script now - I feel part of this conversation should be the one they have at the cottage - the "Did you have to invite them?" conversation)

p9 = Continuing the previous note with what takes place here: Jeff asks Becky "Don't you think?" -- But he just made the observation himself "Whether you realize it or not." -- Which is parent speak for "You don't understand now, but you will" -- which means he already knows she doesn't/won't/can't

p9 = not sure about this "Daddy" business = mostly b/c I don't feel the characters have earned this moment. Even if it is to show her growing up/pulling away/or just being spiteful.

p9 = JEFF (34)

p9 = if the car is a hatchback, which explains my previous confusion, you should note it in the scene heading when we first learn they are in a car.

p13 = KELLY (30)

p14 = TY (5)

p17 = I can't recall a script/story where a character pulls out a joint and I think "Oh...this is getting good."

p19 = Becky shoots a 5 year old in the face with a water gun? She's an asshole

p19 = I feel Ty should be older. Like 7 or about to turn 7 = I also feel like Becky is too over-the-top here. I feel like her simply not helping him into the tree house would be dickish enough to upset him. Especially if he did climb up but she wouldn't open the hatch and let him in. Taunting is fine here. Shooting him in the face is not.

**I'm having issues with how the relationship dynamics are serving the narrative - meaning, they aren't effective for me in what it feels like you are trying to create - or rather, I'm not buying them in order to feel that way.

**I think you should've used a 10 YEARS LATER title card earlier as well

p23/34 = not feeling this exchange between the Gormans...and especially not feeling this setup up if it's for the bad men.

p27 = Do Kelly and Ty have no reaction to the gunshot whatsoever?

p27 = Snowflake? really?

p29 = Becky wrote underneath the deck that this is her hideout? Hmm...I think I'd be more okay with this if the story leading me to this point had me invested. But I get it for the reveal regarding Becky not being the dog...potentially.

(after having read the script - because I don't buy this misdirection overall...I don't have strong feelings about this moment)

**I was convinced Diego had one of the escapee's in a tree. He did not.

p30 = So when did the guys escape? Where were they in regards to here? Seems awful coincidental. Which is allowable...but still caused me to pause and think about it.

p36 = You have an action line end with "...focused on Jeff's well being, or lack thereof." = is this meant to be funny. Why not just end with "...focused on Jeff."?

p36 = I'm not buying this "Becky is the dog" misdirection because there's a very pink girl's room in the house and there is no little girl present. They could put those pieces together

p40 = nice exchange between Cole and Hammond = feel it should've ended simply on Hammond's line.

p42 = KELLY asks "And if I refuse?"

DOMINICK = "Don't"

No. no. no. no. = If you're going to set up dramatic questions, you gotta have an effective, character driven reply (or action).

"Do you know what happens to a toad when it's struck by lightning?"

p42 = the moment with the hat is nice - but ineffective and unearned for the turn this story is about to take.

p42-44 = this scene should be earlier in the script in order to set up what Dominick is capable of - except we already know from the opening scene - and where this scene takes place, we already know because we've seen what he's capable of.

p44 = This line is inconsistent: "They could be hundreds of miles away by now. I brought 'em in before. Let me do it again." = First off, he didn't do it without Scotty and a set up - Secondly, if they are 100s of miles away, what's he going to do. His skills had nothing to do with their apprehension.

p45 = Why no ticking clock? Why don't they act like people are looking for them?

p45 = single tear (which shows up again later - I'm assuming you're embracing the trope for style reasons)

p48 = where has the shotgun been this whole time?

p49 = Becky tears something from a book called Classic Rhymes and Poems for Children.

**I think she should've been reading from this to Ty while she was not letting him into the tree house.

p49 = Where has Dominick been since he said "Don't"?

p52 = The stakes in this story don't feel right. With this set up, why not just give them the key. Seriously.

**I'm betting the stakes don't feel right because of aforementioned relationship dynamics

p56 = Hammond knows the girl killed Cole - why is he trusting her at all

p58 = Kelly is now comfortable enough to threaten them with painting the place with their brains? not earned. not her character. not this situation.

p59 = the note Becky slips under the door, which is actually the rhyme brought this to mind:

"Now I have a machine gun too. Ho - Ho - Ho"

**I love this moment and yet it is unearned. I love it because if done effectively, I know what you are doing. But, didn't she get this specific page BEFORE the ten minute warning? Even if she did get it after, the point of her actively tearing it out is to slip it under the door and essentially PLAY with them. Like she's in control. It doesn't feel consistent.

p60 = She got Hammond stuck...in order to mow him down?

p71 = I knew Gorman was toast because of that majorly saccharin convo he had with his wife on the phone.

**Too often writers switch TONE when they are attempting to create an effect later - and it didn't work for me - Again, unless you are going for a style choice akin to previous fanfare - and if so, you can't do it in pinches and dashes. It's got to fit the overall tone.

p72 = Now the phone becomes a priority?

**and now Becky is perched in a tree...not really in control anymore? but sort of?

p90 = A final showdown between Becky and Apex doesn't feel right at all. Nor does her literally going for the jugular.

SUMMARY:

I love the audacity of this story and your intention, but as you can tell by my notes, it just doesn't deliver for me. I think this one still needs quite a bit of TLC. Especially if you choose to keep it a "revenge" story. Which I certainly think you can, but I think a lot more work needs to be put into Becky's transition.

The showdown between her and Apex felt off to me at the end because I didn't feel like Apex was her true enemy. Physically he would be, but the story has Dominick being the one to actually kill her father. So, for me, her primary vendetta should be towards Dominick. Which, by the time she has the showdown with Apex, Dominick is already dead.

As I've already mentioned to you, I think you should really consider Brett's note about switching the parental roles. Or even if you don't switch the roles, perhaps switching who actually dies. But...you can't really have Kelly dying either because of Ty. Damn...it's tricky.

Lots of stuff to consider here. Maybe the revenge route is the way to go, but like I said, I'd need more story-solid details to buy into her revenge-driven takeover.

Your script is lean as far as page count goes and so you've definitely got the real estate with

which to work. I think if you wish to keep that opening prologue scene, you gotta tell a much better mini-story in there. And if you don't keep it, then I feel we got to get you an opening scene to really engage the audience. Something that shows what Becky is capable of. Not from a "bad girl" perspective, but just smarts and ability.

And I think you may want to consider her having rage and anger issues that stem from her mother's death...perhaps. Something where if one more major thing goes wrong in her life...she would snap. But in this case, she be snapping for a good reason. Me covering this right now just falls in line with my belief that her transition is ineffective and I'd need it to be in order to invest and buy in.

The great news is that you already have producers reaching out to you and it will ultimately be their notes you will really need to implement if this thing is going to move further along.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me once you've worked out your plan of attack for the rewriter and I will certainly discuss your plan with you.

Thanks for coming on the show and sharing your work and your story. I wish you much luck!