

THE GRAMMAR KILLER

FATAL AMBIGUITY

A slasher screenplay where a buried warning turns institutional language into a weapon.

INSIDE THE SAMPLE

01 THE WARNING

Opening and first classroom escalation / source PDF pages 3-6

02 THE CORRECTION

Mara and Calvin face the cost of their methods / pages 14-18

THE SCRIPT

BLACK SCREEN

A projector coughs awake. Film scratches breathe across black. A mechanical HUM rises like an old school building remembering every bad thing it ever filed away.

A red pen CLICKS.

THE MARGINALIA

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED CLARITY

TRAINING MODULE 001: FATAL AMBIGUITY

INSTRUCTOR CANDIDATE: CALVIN MARKS

WARNING:

DO NOT CONFUSE CORRECTION WITH MERCY.

BEGIN OBSERVATION.

INT. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PAPER OFFICE - NIGHT

No windows. Bad carpet. A printer that sounds like it has student debt. Stacks of papers lean like exhausted tombstones. At a cramped desk sits CALVIN MARKS, 40s, pale, precise, tired in the special way invisible workers get tired.

CALVIN MARKS

RESEARCH PAPER SPECIALIST

Someone has taped a joke below his nameplate: THE COMMA GUY. Calvin does not remove it. He has removed it before. It always returns. He reads a printed medical research report. A sentence is highlighted:

NO SIGNIFICANT HARM WAS OBSERVED.

Calvin circles the sentence in red.

OBSERVED BY WHOM?

OVER WHAT PERIOD?

WHAT DATA WAS EXCLUDED?

WHO BENEFITS FROM THIS AMBIGUITY?

He underlines WHO BENEFITS three times. The red ink shines wet. A second page is clipped beneath it.

INCIDENT SUMMARY

STUDENT PARTICIPANT: ELI REYES

FOLLOW-UP CARE: DENIED

RATIONALE: NO SIGNIFICANT HARM WAS OBSERVED

Calvin touches the name ELI REYES with the end of the pen, gentle as a pulse check.

The office door opens. DR. BLAKE SORE, 50s, cardigan, tenure-shaped ego, enters with coffee and a smile that has fired people before.

Frank Questionmark / Frank D. Piccolella

DR. SORE

Calvin. Still here?

CALVIN

The language is dangerous.

DR. SORE

The language is peer-reviewed.

CALVIN

That sentence removes responsibility.

DR. SORE

Calvin, you are here for commas, not consequences.

Calvin finally looks at him.

CALVIN

This is not polish.

He lifts the page.

CALVIN

This is a locked door with a body behind it.

Dr. Sore laughs once. Small. Deadly.

DR. SORE

It is a sentence.

CALVIN

Sentences open things.

DR. SORE

And yours just closed your performance review.

The printer behind Calvin wakes. Neither man moves. One blank page slides out. Red text appears without ink.

FATAL AMBIGUITY

Calvin turns. For the first time all night, something in the room understands him.

DR. SORE

Go home, Calvin. Before you correct yourself into unemployment.

Dr. Sore exits. Calvin stares at the page. The red text pulses.

A red pen CLICKS from nowhere.

INT. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PAPER OFFICE - LATER

Morning light never comes into this room.

Calvin sits alone. A TERMINATION LETTER rests before him.

DUE TO REPEATED CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR COMMUNICATION STYLE...

CREATING WORKFLOW FRICTION...

FAILURE TO COLLABORATE WITH INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES...

Calvin crosses out COMMUNICATION STYLE and writes ACCURACY.

He crosses out WORKFLOW FRICTION and writes WARNING.

He crosses out INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES and writes LIABILITY.

A forgotten student paper sits in the file stack. Calvin pulls it free.

MARGIN NOTE:

THIS IDEA IS WORTH SAVING.

DO NOT LET WEAK STRUCTURE BURY A GOOD THOUGHT.

He stares at his own kindness as if it came from someone dead.

On the back of the termination letter, he writes:

RED INK WAS THE WARNING.

A red drop lands on the page. Maybe ink. Maybe not.

CUT TO BLACK.

The red pen CLICKS.

TITLE CARD

THE GRAMMAR KILLER: FATAL AMBIGUITY

The projector stutters. For one frame, we see masked people sitting in an underground classroom. Then gone.

INT. UNIVERSITY WRITING LAB / CLASSROOM - NIGHT

A familiar academic box. Whiteboard. Cheap desks. Posters that try very hard.

COMMAS SAVE LIVES.

CLARITY IS KINDNESS.

REVISION IS NOT FAILURE.

Dr. Sore stands at the board with a few STUDENTS seated before him. This is a late workshop. Everyone wants the clock to die.

On the board, he writes:

LETS EAT STUDENTS

DR. SORE

This is why I say grammar anxiety is bad pedagogy. Meaning is contextual. The message is clear enough.

STUDENT

It kind of says we're eating students.

DR. SORE

And yet, no one is confused.

A red pen rolls off a desk. Hits the floor. Stops. Then rolls uphill.

The room quiets. The fluorescent lights buzz harder.

DR. SORE

Cute.

The pen CLICKS. The whiteboard changes by itself.

Frank Questionmark / Frank D. Piccolella

LET'S EAT, STUDENTS.

The apostrophe bleeds. The comma drips.

STUDENT

Professor?

The door SLAMS shut.

At the back of the room stands THE GRAMMAR KILLER.

Black academic robe. Butcher apron. Red gloves. Cracked pale mask marked with proofreading symbols. A backward university ID. A red pen chained to his wrist.

DR. SORE

Calvin?

The Grammar Killer tilts his head.

THE GRAMMAR KILLER

Your final editor.

The overhead projector clicks on by itself.

WITNESS LEARNING ASSESSMENT 001

LESSON: FATAL AMBIGUITY

The students start to panic. The door will not open.

THE GRAMMAR KILLER

Missing apostrophe.

THE GRAMMAR KILLER

Missing comma.

THE GRAMMAR KILLER

Fatal ambiguity.

DR. SORE

This is insane.

A terrified STUDENT raises a shaking hand from beneath a desk.

SECOND STUDENT

I used the wrong there in my essay.

The Grammar Killer turns. A long beat. Then he places a worksheet gently on the student's desk and moves past.

He is not hunting ignorance. He is hunting arrogance.

Dr. Sore grabs a stapler.

DR. SORE

Stay back.

The Grammar Killer looks disappointed. A teacher watching a student fail open-book.

THE GRAMMAR KILLER

Show your work.

He moves FAST. The room becomes screams, red light, and academic furniture turned into weather.

Dark. Waiting. The printer rests in the corner like a sleeping animal.

Mara enters with Calvin's termination letter, the medical report, the Eli Reyes file, and a red pen.

The Weird Twins follow.

MARA

Stay by the door.

TWIN 1

Doors are suggestions in places like this.

MARA

This is not a movie.

TWIN 2

Then why does it know where we're standing?

The projector turns on. The whiteboard glows.

FINAL EXAM:

CORRECTION OR COMPLICITY

The Grammar Killer steps from the darkness.

MARA

Calvin.

The mask tilts.

MARA

Take it off.

He does not.

MARA

Eli Reyes deserved the truth.

THE GRAMMAR KILLER

Eli Reyes deserved witnesses.

Mara holds up the report.

MARA

That sentence was dangerous. Sore knew it. Janice processed it. Caldwell buried it. You saw the lie before anyone else wanted to.

MARA

You were right about the sentence.

A beat.

MARA

You were wrong about the body.

The red gloves tighten around the pen.

THE GRAMMAR KILLER

They had warnings.

MARA

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Yes.

THE GRAMMAR KILLER

They had drafts.

MARA

Yes.

THE GRAMMAR KILLER

They had chances.

MARA

And you started enjoying pain.

That cuts. The mask twitches.

TWIN 1

Thesis challenged.

TWIN 2

Instructor unstable.

The Grammar Killer turns toward them. Mara steps between.

MARA

No. Look at me.

She holds up his termination letter.

MARA

They made you invisible. I know.

MARA

I heard them call you the comma guy.

A beat.

MARA

I laughed once.

Calvin goes still.

MARA

Not because it was funny. Because it was
easier than being next.

For one second, Calvin is under there. A wounded man in a monster suit
built from office supplies and grief.

MARA

You wanted them to listen. Now all they
hear is screaming.

The printer wakes. Pages shoot out.

INCORRECT.

INCORRECT.

INCORRECT.

The Grammar Killer attacks. Mara ducks behind a table. The paper cutter
blade slams into the tabletop. The twins scatter.

Mara grabs a marker and writes on the whiteboard:

YOUR A MONSTER

The Grammar Killer freezes. His breath changes. He cannot resist. He corrects it:

YOU'RE A MONSTER

Mara slams the projector cart into him. The mask cracks. Red ink leaks. Then blood. Both.

He rips off part of the mask. We glimpse Calvin's mouth. Human. Ruined by purpose.

CALVIN

Red ink... was mercy.

Mara grabs the red pen chained to his wrist and pins the termination letter to the desk.

MARA

No. Red ink was a chance.

She writes across the letter:

CALVIN MARKS WAS RIGHT.

THE GRAMMAR KILLER WAS WRONG.

The words hit the room harder than the cart did.

The projector skips. The worksheets curl. The red ink on the walls runs backward. For the first time, the lesson does not know how to grade itself.

The Grammar Killer screams, not from pain, from contradiction.

Mara picks up the giant red pencil from his tool belt. He lunges. She drives it into his chest with a brutal, practical, close-frame impact.

Blood and red ink pump from the wound. He looks down. Then at her.

CALVIN

Strong... revision.

He collapses. Red spreads beneath him. It forms a period.

Silence.

A trapdoor opens beneath the body. Not supernatural. Mechanical. Old. Planned.

Red-gloved hands grab Calvin. Mara lunges and catches his wrist.

MARA

No!

Calvin looks at her. For the first time, he looks afraid.

Then he hears it. Polite applause. Academic applause. Tiny. Controlled. Horrifying.

Calvin is pulled down.

INT. UNDERGROUND LECTURE HALL - CONTINUOUS

A hidden classroom beneath the university. Old desks. Pipes. Chalk dust. Projector light. Annotated legal files. Medical forms pinned like insects.

Masked figures sit in rows. All wearing red gloves.

At the front stands THE DEAN. Elegant. Calm. A nightmare with tenure.

Frank Questionmark / Frank D. Piccolella

CALVIN MARKS

FINAL EXAM: REVIEWED

PLACEMENT: PENDING

Calvin lies bleeding on the floor.

THE DEAN

Candidate Marks demonstrates unstable methodology, high retention value, and exceptional symbolic coherence.

A beat.

THE DEAN

Remediation recommended.

Calvin looks devastated.

THE DEAN

Enrollment approved.

The Dean kneels and places a fresh red pen in Calvin's hand.

THE DEAN

Incomplete is not failure.

The Dean clicks the pen.

THE DEAN

It is enrollment.

Above, Mara stares down through the trapdoor.

THE DEAN

Ms. Voss.

Mara freezes.

THE DEAN

Your objection has been noted in the margin.

The trapdoor SLAMS shut.

INT. UNIVERSITY WRITING LAB - NIGHT

Silence. Mara kneels beside the closed trapdoor. The Weird Twins stand behind her.

Twin 2's camera is still recording.

MARA

Delete it.

Twin 2 looks at the camera. Twin 1 looks at the worksheet. A long beat.

Twin 2 lowers the camera. Not off. Just lowered.

The printer spits one last page. Mara takes it.

WITNESS LEARNING ASSESSMENT 004

QUESTION:

WHEN WARNINGS ARE IGNORED, WHO WRITES THE NEXT DRAFT?

Mara crumples it. Stops. Smooths it back out. Writes:

Frank Questionmark / Frank D. Piccolella

PEOPLE WHO REFUSE TO LOOK AWAY.

The red pen CLICKS from below.

CUT TO BLACK.

END CARD

THE MARGIN REMEMBERS WHAT THE MAIN TEXT DENIES.

A beat.

END OF MODULE 001

A final red click.

ENROLLMENT REMAINS OPEN.

FADE OUT.

END.