SCREENPLAY GURUS

ANALYSIS

TITLE: **X**
LOCALE: City of the Angels: Los Anglelees, California
WRITER(S): X
PERIOD: Present
FORM: Feature Screenplay
GENRE: Drama, Cop, Mystery, Horror, Science Fiction
BUDGET: Moderate
PAGES: 99
DRAFT DATE: 11/05/24
COVERAGE DATE: 1/29/25
PREPARED BY: TA

COMMENTS
OVERALL

This multilayered story fires on all cylinders.

X is an entertaining and frightening cautionary tale where an AI program that's evolving murders smartphone users en route infecting everything else.

There are nods to THE TERMINATOR films and 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY among others projecting the promise and horror of AI. This story offers a unique and fun spin. Deaths, twists, turns, scares, stakes, and surprises keep things lively.

The climax is nail-biting as the protagonists learn the truth and shut down Apollo. Or do they? The ambiguity is just the right note if not a bleak one.

The main characters are determined to solve the mysteries. Their stakes rise from solving murders to saving humanity.

However, the script needs to be cleaned up, and the writing pumped up. Tweaks to formatting are also needed. The structure's track is a bit lopsided.

Let's Facetime and shine light on shadows in the story.

STORY

Excellent work. This script moves fast, fast, fast. There are a few lulls in Act Two, but as a whole the script works exceedingly well. The writing, while economical, could use trims and a few minor cuts.

This is a successful mashup of Cop, Mystery, Horror and Science Fiction with two leads who dig into mysterious murders caused by a computer program. The use of two protagonists opens the story up to possibilities the writer deftly exploits.

There is important context for writing in this genre. There are necessary elements.

Scares: Horror stories generally stem from the writer's experience. How else are the characters' fears depicted? Writing horror screenplays is about exploring those fears. That others likely share them is a bonus.

Through personal filters, every angle of a fear is explored. Given a doom-and-gloom zeitgeist about AI and its uses, the fear of human losing out to machine is on many people's minds. Countries are proposing legislation to rein in AI. Now, put a murderer in ubiquitous smartphones. It's terrifying.

Then there's fear of others. For example, a lovesick INCEL co-worker. The type of neighbor who is a serial killer. Of which, when interviewed, neighbors say, "He was a nice, quiet guy. Never bothered anyone." The clever writer draws parallels between a human who murders and murderous AI then entwines them. An uroboros. It leaves no haven for Daphne – or anyone. Very well done.

Then there's basements and the loss of a loved one. Universal fears.

Tricks Of The Trade: They're here. Basement. Paranoia. Tension. Loss. Unstoppable monster. Jealousy and hate. Perverse love. Blooming love. Twists. Turns. Surprises.

The writer spun old tricks into their own gold.

Empathy Is The Key: The key to successful horror is how we feel toward characters in dire scenarios. Audiences seek a feeling they're experiencing fears through the characters' eyes and hearts.

There's little sense in crafting a horror (or any other genre) story with characters that do not elicit our empathy. Even unlikeable characters. On antagonists, the more interesting they are, the better. Villains are the heroes of their own story.

Take Fred. We can feel empathy for him despite the horror he unleashed. "If I can't live in a world with love, then let me destroy it." He's sick and wholly misguided. There will be few who have not experienced the sting of unrequited love or know someone who has. Some have been confronted by a man or woman who puppy-dog them in pursuit of affection. These are universal experiences.

However, Fred's attraction is the toxic masculinity of an INCEL in disguise.

The writer wisely has scenes that add cement to strengthen the blocks that build characters. Jordan suffers loss and steps in to foster Lily. Daphne lost her mother and likely was never close to dear ol'

bible thumping dad. Losses leave big holes in people. The writer portrays their pain with kindness. It's a great idea for Daphne and Jordan to both suffer losses. It's instant common ground.

Horror movies allow audiences to feel their deepest and darkest fears through the safety nets of characters. At the end, they know (maybe) that they're not going to be subsumed by their phone, but they can't fully step into horror avatars without having empathy for the characters. Comparing reality with the story world, there's subsumed and *subsumed*. It's meaningful commentary.

A wager is offered that after watching a film from this script that audiences who take out their phones momentarily recoil at first glimpse. Should that occur, the writer's job is complete.

Steven Spielberg said of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS… (paraphrase); "We haven't done our job If the audience leaves the theater and looks at their car keys instead of the sky."

Intelligence and Emotions: An odd couple because emotions often overrule thought processes. It's a writer's job to pluck the emotional chords of the audience through intellectually finding a way to map out a series of emotive experiences, i.e. scaring the guano out of people.

The writer does just this with tension and the menace of an unkillable monster that metes out death. The necessary technical subtext buoys the script. Without it, the story falls in on itself.

Though some of the tech talk is a tad awkward, ultimately it makes sense. It plays even better because Daphne birthed part of the menace. It's like Frankenstein's Monster turning on the good doctor. And in the end, it still exists.

There are effective jump scares. The reveal of imprisoned Helena shocks.

The corporate maneuvering and backbiting as context for the software creation adds a grain of realism and a mirror for the audience to gaze into. It's an ugly reflection that looks back. The inspired 'Daphne Wall' is beyond creepy. It's fascinating both Helena and Fred are obsessed with Daphne. Fred believes he's in love. Helena is insanely consumed.

Excellent work. The story is well considered. The complex themes are compelling.

Atmosphere: It's what horror is all about. Horror writers set the stage for the audience to anticipate each scare. One can hear audiences' say, "DON'T go in that basement." This is the nature of the 'Monster In The House' horror subset that is the foundation of this story.

The writer reverses this. Don't be afraid to go into that house. It's a nice house. Yet, there's a killer loose. Anywhere with an internet connection. The writer scares us in mundane spots. Like a Cop's Car. What safer place could there be especially when a Cop drives? We find out as a group of Cops are attacked. Even in their home.

Paranoia. We never expect an attack in Jordan's car. Then, BANG! It's spreading. Getting smarter.

The Whys: "Why are they answering the door?" "Why are they running up the stairs instead of out the front door screaming?" "Why are they hiding in a closet?" "Why don't they just move out of the haunted house?"

Horror is the only genre that affords a large amount of slack with illogic. To a degree, the 'Whys' can be forgotten. A script cannot be completely illogical, though some films do bend credulity well past breaking. There is a school of horror that offers no explanation. Q. Why is this happening? A. Because it does. It's a bit of a cheat that subverts audience expectation.

Audiences are far more forgiving to horror movies. They seek out the rush. They want to be scared, scream, and grab their companions. Catharsis is the audiences' bottom line. That's it.

The writer nails this. As noted, some of the tech is misnamed and not entirely accurate but it's obvious the writer made an earnest effort at getting it right. In part, this is due to the success of a mash up that ladles on a police investigation to dive deep into exposition. It's organic because we're chasing down a murderer. Questions must be asked. Mysteries solved.

While the core story is solid, an element to rethink is Jordan acting too independently. We don't see him interfacing enough with the department, and it feels like he gloms onto Daphne. While the partnership works, Jordan must pursue the case with the professionalism of a public servant, not as a handmaiden to Daphne.

The suggestion is to find a way for Jordan to receive a blessing (or not) from his commander to work this case exclusively once he's convinced. It's a one-page scene. He could be burned out and take a leave of absence or is forced to take one. He could quit. Jordan could be a private detective. Or something far cleverer the writer discovers.

The bottom line is how Jordan joins the partnership needs to be tweaked. Too, despite the short scene with other Cops, adding a bit more of Jordan's life on the force bolsters his characterization beyond what plays like a loose cannon.

Structural issues are highlighted in that section. Overall, outstanding work on this compelling story.

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STRUCTURE

The script is about five to nine pages too long. Trims and cuts easily bring the script down to that length. The writer is encouraged to thoroughly read the markup where suggested trims and cuts, among other issues, are flagged.

Though the structure works with a quick pace, action and stakes that rise to an exciting climax, the story lacks a turn to Act Two which causes a general imbalance.

HOOK
Pages 1 - 9

Intriguing start; sets tone and theme.

Something's amiss: good intro of "Shadowy Figure" who we see again on page four along with the bassy sound – what's going on? Tension is built in a common place during everyday activity. Effective use of juxtaposition and sound.

Good reveal of the Shadow ensconced in the digital world. It's exciting. The writer is making the best use of the first pages to capture the audiences' attention.

We learn the rules of the Shadow: screen only; can't be photographed; threatening.

The "real" world and the "Shadow" world converge. Good. The pace is fast.

More rules: Shadow materializes at will. It's evolving.

By page seven we appear to be in a chase to the death.

The Writer adds tension at every step, i.e. bobbling the gate remote. Good. The shit has surely hit the fan. The horror rises to a crescendo.

Carolina attacked and killed, the –

INCITING INCIDENT
Page 9

Excellent work on the Hook. In an absorbing and effective first nine, we learn the rules of the game, meet our protagonist and antagonist.

Tone and theme are set. The promise of the premise is effectively anchored. We want to, need to learn more. We all constantly have smartphones in our paws. Is this a danger to me? Us all? Will I be the next victim? Creepy.

ACT ONE
Pages 10 – 32

Now the writer gives us a breather. We're back a little later.

Good crumbs about Daphne's state, i.e. pills, fretting.

Need an intro for Williams earlier.

We dig into the aftermath. In a straightforward way, we learn the result of the police investigation.

The writer has something in mind with the exposition that's not entirely clear: tech executive criticizes OneWorld hegemony: Big tech in turmoil. The correlation between the two ideas lacks connective tissue – the cause-and-effect. Think real newspaper headlines. They must immediately sell the story.

Suggestions:
-   Former Executive's Criticism Of OneWorld's Dominance Triggers Turmoil In Big Tech

- Former OneWorld Executive's Criticism Of The Company's Dominance Creates Turmoil In Big Tech
- OneWorld Executive's Criticism Of The Company's Dominance Causes Turmoil In Big Tech
- Big Tech In Turmoil After OneWorld Executive Criticizes The Company's Dominance

The Kitchen (Break Room) conversation needs a minor change. Characters don't always have self-knowledge. It's flat characterization when they know their issues. To discover is the characters' journey to reach an Inner Goal. Secondary characters who have an objective eye advise main characters. Consider an alcoholic. A friend advises, "You're an alcoholic. You gotta stop drinking." If an active alcoholic could, they would. They cannot… until the time they learn themselves and do.

In this scene, Chan should ask something like "Is that Miller woman still calling you?" Jordan, "Yeah. I'm at a loss about what to do." The scene continues as written with changes to fit.

As noted in Story, Jordan needs a professional mechanism to work this case.

Page 12: Yikes! Daphne is not the only victim. Good.

Drop a crumb before this: `No...I actually hate computers`. Something like Jordan asking Chan to bring up the CFO headline. Show, don't tell.

Avoid throwaway exposition like Nate's thanks for the job. It feels like TV writing.

If empathy for the soon-to-be-departed Nate, and making Jordan likeable, are the writer's aim, find clever ways to show it. As written, it's a tad too trivial and a "who cares" in a feature. Though not recommended, the reverse is really digging into their backstory if it's important. Doing this comes at the expense of pace. There is a middle ground to make their interaction short yet more memorable.

We see how it happens to the hapless Nate. Is this an epidemic? Terror spreads. Great pacing.

Jordan starts investigating. More backstory about Daphne. Why she left OneWorld.

…**warp** `through phones`… A recommendation to find another verb: materializes [appears] [travels] [crosses over] through a phone screen.

Jordan's daughter Lily and babysitter Olivia introed. Dread rises. Oh no! Not the kid.

Boo! Great jump scare with Lily behind the refrigerator.

`INTERCUT – OLIVIA / RICKY (VIDEO CALL)` This is not an Intercut. They require brief scenes at the first and second locations then INTERCUT. See Craft.

The attack on Olivia is scary and well done. At nine plus pages, these scenes are a little too long. A suggestion to trim and cut. Olivia could just want a glass of water, for example. No story.

The Facetime sex is a bold writing move that works well in context and feels real. It might move the story from PG13 to R, and some will find it offensive. Writers should write as they wish. No recommendation to cut except to maintain pace.

A pattern forms as secondary characters Nate and Olivia are eliminated. While a horror staple is secondary characters in a story to die, the expectation is Lily would be the victim. Lily's death would radically change the story from this point onward. It's worthy of consideration. The current victims are disposable. Dropped into the story to simply be dead. Lily would be a different story.

There's no discernible turn to Act Two. Olivia's death does not change story trajectory. No rule dictates turns are absolutely necessary for a story to be winning. However, changes and catalysts enliven stories by forcing them in different directions. It keeps audiences off-balance and engaged. Otherwise, the story arc stays flat.

A recommendation to restructure pages ten to 32. The story bogs down a bit on page 32. Have something occur in a rewritten First Act around page 25 that flips the story on its head and really sends the script into overdrive. Consider Lily disappearing instead of dying. Like Helena. This change creates opportunities:

- Jordan really has a nail in his head to solve the case and find Lily. It does not change the investigatory track but makes it more desperate.
- Jordan and Daphne are more sympathetic. We'll really root for them.
- A rationalization for Jordan to take a leave of absence/quit/be assigned.
- The stakes and tension are raised to the sky.
- Fred kidnaps Lily to hurt Jordan who he sees as a romantic rival for Daphne's attention.
- A kid in jeopardy sells.

ACT TWO A
Pages 33 - 47

We learn Kevin, Daphne's dad, is a bible thumper. Good backstory. The silver bat pays off in junking Olivia's phone. The writer does clever work with set ups/payoffs.

Several pages between Jordan and Daphne investigating the nature of the phone and how the "Virus" spreads. This works well with the "Meanwhile" of Lily threatened upstairs. Economical work.

A suggestion to trim the investigation. The audience knows all this.

Tense with Lily. All three now have firsthand knowledge of Shadow. And that it survives gunfire. Now what? The bat! Destroyed phone means disappeared Shadow. Good.

Jordan and Daphne isolate their phones. See Plot Logic.

Daphne has a nightmare about the basement she abruptly awakens from: two horror staples. Good jump scare to –

MIDPOINT
Pages 47 – 48

ACT TWO B
Pages 48 – 81

As noted, Act One is a tad too long and lacks a turn into Act Two A which, at 14 pages, is a tad too short. Therefore, the structure is a bit skewed.

In general: Act One is 25%, Act Two is 50%, Act Three is 25%.

Note: Though plot points are a bit off or lacking, the story is not static. Action and stakes rise.

Cut the dialogue on page 48. No new ground is plowed. It feels like filler.

Helena Moore disappears. Jordan checks in with Daphne. It's a bit odd he depends on her so much. The writer inserts an expository "Tell" to answer the audiences' same question. A known story trick:

```
DAPHNE
How come you're here? You don't work from the precinct?
```

In horror, these things do not matter as much. It's "get butts in seats to exploit the terror in the audiences' souls." So, okay. It's a fair question. As noted, his actions should be somehow tempered.

Besides telling the story, Act Two explores themes and adds depth to characterizations. The writer does this plus keeps the story moving right along.

We're at Helena's on page 54 knowing more about Jordan and Daphne. The mystery deepens. Pieces of the puzzle are being picked up.

Great, fun twist at the "Wall of Daphne." As she says, `This is insane`. Deeper down the rabbit hole we go.

We learn the cause of death – irradiation. Fascinating.

The flashback fills in the gaps of the genesis and nature of Shadow (BlackMass). A suggestion to research how cell systems work to write with greater clarity. There are misnomers in the lines.

Mumbo-jumbo in horror and science fiction serves the scares but using correct terms about RF energy is to the story's advantage. https://network-telecom.com/how-does-a-phone-work/

Daphne grabs data on two color-coded flash drives.

Yikes! Shadow in the back seat of Jordan's car. A scary surprise. Not only that, but five Officers under assault. Clever work. Exciting and a unique spin – a large attack.

The Officers' massacre needs closure/investigation. The suggestion is a very brief scene at the Station with Jordan filling in his boss. This can be taken anywhere, from complete incredulity and you're off the case to greater support of solving the crimes. This is amplified with Lily missing.

Daphne is there as well. Jordan arranges the ride home in a patrol car.

Calm after the storm. Good pacing allows the audience a respite before the exciting conclusion we're galloping towards.

Jordan making the connection via pizza delivery is smart writing.

Daphne and Jordan learn Helena's EMP plan is coupled with AI. We finally learn exactly what is the Shadow, and Ash is complicit in some way. Good. It's all falling into place – and it sounds good.

The NSA reference works well. It's always the government or corporation to blame! The realization the AI evolves means danger to humanity. It's almost a joke. Our devices will kill us all.

Crosscutting between Jordan at Ash's and Daphne at Fred's is effective. It really ramps things up as we head for the rip-roaring climax.

ACT THREE
Pages 82 to 99

Fred is the culprit who meshed AI with BlackMass to create the DAP. An Ah-Hah moment.

It leads to a tense showdown between Fred and Jordan with Daphne is the middle.

Jordan is wounded. Fred disappears. It's up to Daphne. Clever work as she tracks Fred down.

Daphne finds Helena imprisoned. Imaginative twist.

Jordan arrives to stop Fred. Daphne took the bullets from his gun. Cunning.

The door is left open for a Jordan/Daphne romance. Yay!

At this point, the story is essentially complete. However, the writer takes us a step further in a tag where Apollo threatens Daphne. She makes her best effort yet...

The end is ambiguous. What happens after the router reboots? Excellent end. But dark. Sequel?

As noted, strong story. All the elements are firmly in place. The recommendation is cuts and trims, shuffling of scenes and a big moment around page 25 to turn the show in an unexpected direction.
_____

PLOT LOGIC

```
DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Putting a phone in a microwave without turning it on is the BEST
way to block any potential hack. It acts like an anti-magnetic vault. No
signal can get in or out.
```

This is essentially true but to become a Faraday Cage the microwave must be on. That of course would fry the phones. Rethink. Remove the batteries? (Not so easy on contemporary phones.)

```
JORDAN
Someone tried to steal their car. Her husband refused...and in an
instant...Lily's parents were gone... That's when I decided to become a cop,
but I ain't John McClane.
```

The timeline seems a bit short. Lily is nine. That means she must have been orphaned at a very young age. Changing careers, Jordan would attend a police academy, spend time as a uniform officer and work his way up the ranks to detective. It's a stretch but could happen in eight or so years. No change recommended. Just a heads up.

Watch the cultural references. Will everyone know McClane, DIE HARD and what it means in context? It's a tad lazy. "I ain't no supercop." "...but I've been a detective for less than a year."

In a heartbeat, Daphne takes off THE CAR FUSES and takes away THE SIM CARD of the car, and THROWS it out the window. She pulls fuses from a fuse block and SIM card from an under-dash modem. Cinematically, this is active and trickier, especially under duress. She would have to reach across Jordan to get to the fuse block.

_____

CHARACTERS

The character work is solid. Any shortfalls derive from the Dialogue. The "Scooby Doo" references are fun. Right down to a character named for a female star of the animated show. Daphne and Jordan do skulk around a bit like the Scooby Gang.

A suggestion for a little more about Jordan's dislike of computers. At some point, Daphne asks why, and he answers with something clever the writer cooks up.

DAPHNE (30s)**, pretty and smart,** Descriptors are unnecessary.

_____

DIALOGUE

While lines are generally serviceable, there are a few issues to tackle. Check markup.

The writer includes filler words and phrases that can be cut:

```
NATE
Why don't you FaceTime her phone from yours?
```

```
JORDAN (CONT'D)
(staring intently)
I don't see anything strange... But I mean, I don't even know what I'm
looking for.
```

On a few occasions, the character does not speak from their station in life. The following does not sound like it comes from a highly educated person.

```
DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Got that at the Web 3 event I saw her at. I even filmed our "meeting" that
day. I can show you, it was...
```

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
She gave me that when I ran into her at a Web 3 event. I filmed our meeting. Care to see it…?

Lines need to be boosted above mundane conversation which is not the function of Dialogue. As there's history between Dad and Daphne, make the most of it, and all lines, with subtext. No one can guilt a child better than a parent. Also, supplant (beat) with an action.

```
KEVIN
It's great seeing you tonight.
(beat)
How's work? Have you started writing again?
```

KEVIN
Guess it's nice seeing you. [I prayed to see you more often like when your mother was alive.]
(looks away)
I suppose you're writing again.

The recommendation is a pass on the lines to pump them up, add subtext, cut and trim, drop filler words and phrases.

_____

CRAFT

This is an area in need of a bit of work. Check markup for flagged issues.

- The writer "keyboard directs": `SLOW ZOOM toward the dashboard`. Tell us a story. A director and editor make these decisions. Actions like this will be dismissed/cut by the director anyway.

- The writer uses brands and vehicle specifics. `She reads "Good Night, Sleep Tight, Don't Let the Dragons Bite." Fiji, Charger and Spindrift.` Manufacturers grant permission for the use of their copyrighted and perhaps trademarked names/logos. The book and ringtones like "Call Me" have copyrights. As used, they do not fall into "Fair Use." Potentially very costly.

While it's a cool car, consider the effort and cost to procure a '70 Cuda. Then there's insurance to cover its use in the film – if the owner allows it. The Charger might be purchased – a big expense – then sold at a loss after production ends.

We love Mopar too, but it better serves the script to use "Seventies' Muscle Car." It allows the producer leeway in finding a car to fit the bill. Writers should not write to budget but must have a sense about keeping costs down with small changes.

•

The script suffers Parentheticalitis and Ellipsesitis. There are 178 ellipses, nearly two per page. They're not used properly. Ellipses illustrate an omission of words, a pause, or something left unsaid. They are confused with Em Dashes (--) which indicates interruption by another character in a screenplay. Bloated Dialogue like the following is difficult to read:

```
DAPHNE
Mom...it's there...it's behind --

The Shadow creeps toward Carolina.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
...you.
```

DAPHNE
Mom! It's there.

The Shadow creeps toward Carolina.

DAPHNE
It's behind you.

Parentheticals are overused and incorrectly used. This is Action text: `(Jordan notices a smart speaker next to the bookshelf)` Parentheticals are limited to a few words as reference (to Jordan), simple emotion or action. Anything else should be an Action line. Markup flags cuts, and which parentheticals should be Actions.

An actor under direction will know how to spin the lines. This many parens in a script is "Keyboard Directing." Parentheticals conveying emotion indicate the dialogue lacks it. Work the dialogue.

Use ellipses and parentheticals sparingly. A strong recommendation to clear all except those that enhance writing or for grammatical correctness. Clutter slows reads. Treasure white. Think in "shots." Think clean.

•

Avoid temporal qualifiers like starts, begins and suddenly.

```
Olivia starts rubbing herself faster.
Suddenly, we hear a SONIC BOOM.
```

Olivia rubs herself. Faster.
We hear a SONIC BOOM.

•

Once in a location, use Mini Slugs or POV:

ENTRYWAY
Daphne looks through the peephole.

JORDAN (O.S.)
Miss Miller, it's Detective Williams. Can I come in?

Daphne unhooks two chain bolts to let Jordan into the --

LIVING ROOM

Messy, etc.

JORDAN

takes a seat across from Daphne.

●

`She puts some sort of electronic blanket around the pod.`

This is equivocation and overwriting of a kind. Write directly with clarity and confidence.

She wraps an electronic blanket around the pod.

●

Writing should be Active Voice, Present Tense without mixed verb forms.

Passive Voice: `A barely perceptible shadow is in the reflection of the window.`
Active Voice: An indistinct shadow reflects in the window.

`She waves` (Present) `hello and heads` (Present) `to the kitchen, blending` (Present
Participle) `a drink.` Note the sentence lies a bit odd. The blending takes place in the kitchen,
which is not critical to the story.

Tiffany waves hello as she passes through to the --

KITCHEN

to blend a drink.

It could also be:

Tiffany waves hello as she passes through.

We hear a BLENDER in the kitchen.

●

`Jordan and Daphne get out of the car in shock.` Watch the placement of Modifying
Clauses. What's in shock, car or people?

In shock, Jordan and Daphne stumble from the car.

●

Action text is too detailed. Simplify. We don't need every step. It's clutter and lacks energy. As
noted, drop descriptors. What does "lovely" mean? Show character through actions and lines.

`Jordan parks and gets out of his car.`

```
He heads toward a STUDIO WAREHOUSE, and with his badge in hand, he BUZZES the
intercom. He notices a SECURITY CAMERA above him and waves hi.

The door opens slightly to reveal FRED RICHARDS (50s), shy, English, and a
lovely assistant.
```

Badge in hand, Jordan BUZZES the intercom. He waves at a security camera.

Helena's English assistant, FRED RICHARDS (50s), opens the gate.

- BOLD and Underline, particularly in dialogue, are overused. It's clutter that distracts from the read. So too for fonts other than FD Courier in script body. CAPS are also overused.

The recommendation is to cut all Caps, bold and underlines. Revert all fonts to FD Courier 12pt. (Except for the excellent title font.)

- A period is missing on page numbers. "12." is right. A period was deleted in FD – Document, Header and Footer, Header. Add a period after the Page # icon. Also, numbers don't look right. Fix this.

- Scene Headings are inconsistent. They read largest to smallest, left to right.

```
INT. HALLWAY 25TH FLOOR, DOWNTOWN SKYSCRAPER
EXT. PARKING LOT, HELENA MOORE'S STUDIO – NIGHT
```

INT. DOWNTOWN LA - SKYSCRAPER - 25TH FLOOR HALLWAY
EXT. HELENA MOORE'S STUDIO – PARKING LOT – NIGHT

- The writer is encouraged to use *The Screenwriters Bible* as a formatting reference. Among other issues: Screen displays should be INSERT; SERIES OF SHOTS is not properly labelled; FLASHBACK format is off.

The recommendation is a page one rewrite to: pump up the text; cut bold, Caps, underline, ellipses, parentheticals and non-FD Courier fonts; clean up the page for a silky-smooth read.

_____

TONE

The script could use a few notes of humor to leaven the horror. This is usually a character or characters to provide comic relief.

_____

TITLE

Good. Great title font.

_____

MARKETABILITY and CONCLUSION

This is a script for a medium budget film in the $10M to $15M range. Lots of CGI, set pieces, a few locations, night shoots, child actor.

However, the script is not ready for industry scrutiny. While the story is effectively told, the execution is clunky. Structural tweaks are needed along with a page one polish to bring the script to professional levels.

Without polish and clean pages, readers will pass on the script before the story sets its hooks into them. It's the vagaries of a marketplace overflowing with scripts. Competition is fierce and readers have little patience. That's the downside.

The upside is the story is a winner. It's harrowing on levels beyond the Shadow and all it wreaks. There's a strong woman – a real plus as female lead stories are currently in vogue. Within are currents and eddies, multiple layers of complexity and meaning. A lot is packed into the script's 99 pages. All that and it's scary too.

A film from this story would do well with younger demographics.

The writer is encouraged to continue development.

Thanks for the opportunity to analyze the script.
- Ted

SCREENPLAY GURUS' 11 POINT SCORING MATRIX

Scores: 0 – 10 points for each element, 110 total possible points

Pass: 0 – 75
Weak Consider: [1] 76 – 80
Consider: 81 – 90
Strong Consider: 91 – 100
Recommend: 101 – 110

Statistical Scores of Submitted
Screenplays
Pass: 80%
Weak Consider: [1] 10%
Consider: 5%
Strong Consider: 3%
Recommend: 2%

PRESENTATION	4
THEME	9
STORYTELLING	9
ORGINALITY	7
STRUCTURE	6
PLOT	9
CHARACTERIZATION	8
DIALOGUE	7
STYLE	3
CONCEPT	8
MARKETABILITY/COMMERCIAL APPEAL	8
TOTAL POINTS	78

SCRIPT: WEAK CONSIDER
WRITER: RECOMMEND

Presentation:
Is the script properly formatted, free of typos and misspellings? Does the writing use standard English conventions? Is the cover page attached with the author's name and contact information only? Is there white space? Are there lengthy blocks of dialogue and action?

Theme:
Is the theme stated and does the screenplay reinforce it throughout? Is the theme relevant or unique?

Storytelling:
How effectively has the author crafted the timeline of events? Is the story interesting or compelling? Is it relevant? Does the script serve the genre in which it's written? Does the story have a through line and respect it without unnecessary departures?

Originality:
Does the story twist well-worn conventions, or create a new one, without straining credibility? Where does the story fit into the four degrees: Totally Familiar; Familiar, Yet Different; Different, Yet Familiar; Totally Different (Familiar, Yet Different and Different, Yet Familiar are preferred).

Structure:
Does the script have and an Inciting Incident, proper Act Breaks, Rising Action, Complications and Obstacles, a well- identified Protagonist and Antagonist?

Plot:
How well has the author informed the audience why the story's events belong in the script, and what the story is meant to communicate?

Characterization:
Do the characters have dimension beyond cliché and trope? Are they real or relatable? Do they have flaws? Do the characters elicit empathy or sympathy?

Style:
Is the writing clear, economical, free of bloat and unnecessary description? Does the writer "Show, don't tell?" Are the descriptions visual and intriguing? Does the writer use Active Voice and Present Tense?

Concept:
Is it sound, interesting, or compelling? Do Plot, Storytelling and Structure reinforce the concept?

Marketability/Commercial Appeal:
Where does the script fit in the marketplace? How likely is it to be made? How does it compare to similar films? How will audiences react?

1. AKA Consider With Revisions.

Thanks for submitting your script to Screenplay Gurus! We hope the analysis gives you the info you need to make the script as good as it can be.

www.screenplaygurus.com

guru@screenplaygurus.com