

Title:	Looper
Author:	Rian Johnson
Type/pp:	SP/113
Genre:	Science Fiction
Locale:	Kansas; Paris
Circa:	Nearby Future
Budget:	Medium

Logline:

After letting his future self escape death, a Kansas Gangster must finish the job before his crew finds and tortures him.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Premise	X			
Storyline		X		
Characterizations			X	
Dialogue		X		
Plot/Structure			X	
Production Values		X		

RECOMMENDATION:	Project: CONSIDER
	Writer: CONSIDER

Summary:

JOE waits at the side of a Kansas cornfield, gun ready. A person appears in front of Joe, tied up with a sack over his face. Joe shoots him without hesitation, then disposes of the body. Joe explains, as all this happens, that he's a looper. His bosses are future gang leaders and they

send people back in time for him to kill. Later, Joe celebrates with a coworker after the coworker closes his loop. Closing a loop is when their bosses in the future zap a looper's older self back in time to be disposed of. Said looper then gets a huge payout and thirty years to enjoy their life. When Joe's best friend SETH lets his future self run away, he goes to Joe for help. KID BLUE follows Seth there and takes Joe to their supervisor ABE for questioning. Joe sells Seth out to protect the money he has saved up. Present Seth is slowly delimbed by Abe, which also delimbs Future Seth. Future Seth races to meet up with Abe and Kid Blue to stop them from delimbing him further.

Later at the edge of the cornfield, JOE'S FUTURE SELF appears exactly like Joe's other kills, but with his limbs untied and his face visible. Joe hesitates to shoot, giving his future self enough time to fight back. Future Joe knocks Present Joe out and Present Joe wakes up hours later to find his truck and Future Joe gone. Joe goes back to his apartment to find Kid Blue taking all his gold. Joe and Kid Blue fight as Joe promises to hunt down and kill his future self.

We cut to Joe at the edge of the cornfield. His future self appears like any other kill and Joe kills him like any other kill. This Joe, who will become Future Joe, takes his savings and goes to Paris. When he runs out of money a few years later, he joins a gang. A few more years later, Joe meets his future wife and gives up his life of crime. When 30 years have passed, gangsters kill his wife and send him back in time. Future Joe fights Present Joe and steals his truck.

Kid Blue hunts down both versions of Joe. Present Joe carves a message into his skin to get Future Joe to meet up with him. Future Joe explains that new memories appear in his mind when they happen to Present Joe. Future Joe wants to save his wife by killing a younger version of her murderer, the RAINMAKER. Future Joe has a list of who the Rainmaker could be. Blue Kid shows up and Present Joe helps him try to kill Future Joe. Future Joe escapes and Blue Kid turns on Present Joe, who runs away.

With coordinates that Present Joe stole from Future Joe's list, Present Joe ends up on SARA's farm. When Sara pressures him, Present Joe explains what loopers are and that he's going to kill Future Joe before Future Joe kills CID, Sara's son who might be the future Rainmaker. When Cid has a tantrum, Sara locks herself in a safe to protect herself from his damaging screams. JESSE, one of the gangsters who work for Abe, finds Joe at the farm. When Jesse scares Cid, Cid kills him with telekinesis. Future Joe, through Present Joe's memories, now knows Cid is the future Rainmaker.

Present Joe chases after Cid, who flees. Joe plans to kill him, but can't bring himself to. Future Joe kills Abe and all the gangsters, then goes to face off Sara, Cid, and Present Joe. Future Joe kills Sara to get to Cid, who escapes into the corn. Present Joe sees in his mind's eye Cid hop a train into the city, eyes full of hate, and knows he'll become like the future Rainmaker. Present Joe then kills himself before Future Joe can kill Sara, allowing Sara and Cid to live their lives.

Comments:

Though the story could use some tightening up to help with pacing and to keep the middle from dragging, Looper has a solid foundation for a compelling narrative. Putting time travel in the hands of gangsters provides an interesting twist. Juxtaposing the unsavory characters

with Kansas cornfields offers a nice change of pace from an overused city setting. The plot isn't too confusing and the sudden transition between the two possible timelines is well written.

Present Joe is an interesting character, though he isn't the most likable. This makes it hard for the audience to root for him, but also allows them to believe the actions of his future self. Present Joe starts out very self-centered as he only looks out for himself and sells his friend out for gold, but by the end of the script he's willing to kill himself to protect Sara and Cid. This transition in character development is too subtle and Present Joe should be seen bonding more with the characters to truly pull it off.

The story centers around being less selfish and considering your effect on others. Future Joe acts selfishly, killing everyone in his path to get what he wants. In the process, he also manages to lose his wife in memory. Present Joe watches his Future Self tear apart his life and several others and decides to break the cycle by putting other's lives before his own. Present Joe also gets attached to Sara and Cid.

In the future, Cid is the Rainmaker who takes over the future gang and is responsible for Future Joe's wife's death. Future Joe killing Sara is alluded to worsen Cid as a person and perhaps causes Future Cid to become the Rainmaker. When Present Joe kills himself to save Sara, allowing her to continue raising Cid, it's alluded to make Future Cid a better person, though this doesn't make much sense because the loopers of the future were still killed when they were. Though the ending could be left ambiguous and hopeful, it should be cleared up a bit to make more sense where the effects of time travel are concerned.

With a bit of polishing, especially where Joe's character is concerned, this script can be a compelling film.

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