

George's Homemade Storm Room

Critical Analysis

★★★★★

The American Dream cannot be without the threat of disaster. There are outside forces that prevent us from achieving the so-called 'American Dream.' For working-class people, such as the ones in *George's Homemade Storm Room*, it can seem nearly impossible. The best many of us can do is ensure the safety of our families.

If there is no dependable protection given from those in power, the American Dream becomes one of survival. Protection is not easy, as we know from *George's Homemade Storm Room* that George has "fortified" the bunker with only the best materials to protect his family, mostly by impressing his mother-in-law.

The idea of protecting his family, which includes his wife and children, is important to George. So is winning a woman's trust and admiration, which can be his hardest challenge. His dream is a happy family. There is an innate male desire to be a savior.

George's
Homemade
Storm Room

Kurt St. Angelo

A short screenplay

Men dream of the day they have the opportunity to become the hero, John McClain protecting his estranged wife at the Nakatomi Plaza on Christmas Eve. This is not only a hail mary for respect from the family unit– as often we see our father figures of working-class families as the butt of most jokes in fiction and in real life– but to solidify the dream of achieving peak masculinity. Men have never been able to properly mourn and move on from the evolutionary disaster of the male=hunter woman=gatherer concept.

Shirley represents not only the feminine, but the traditional mother who does her best to keep everyone together and provide encouragement to her husband. Shirley is rarely negative or too scared regarding the potential horrors at hand.

Perhaps she loves her husband so much because she feels nothing awful can ever really happen to them. Shirley appears to have a classic, old-fashioned love and respect for her husband; she is the kind of "loving wife" who doesn't complain too much and does what she can to make life easy for her devoted husband.

It's almost unusual to see a couple act like Shirley and George do, many couples in film (and in real life) seldom get along half as well as the Van Winkles do. It provides comfort for the family despite the tense content. The family seems harmless, a bit unorthodox, but frankly, it's better. Some of us would sooner gnaw on rocks than watch a film about a perfect family that is ordinary and has just basic, uninteresting eccentricities that scarcely add to the story's flair.

The mean grandma who only ever complained and was the bearer of truth as she added the flair to the story. The screenplay wouldn't

be nearly as compelling without the working class background of the family and the setting supplied. This snippet worked for the most part. It was a character analysis, laying down just enough groundwork for the reader to understand what this family is all about. It filled in the reader's knowledge gaps and left them wanting more.

Today, it's hard to find a movie about a real family that isn't super rich going through some conflict that is only familiar to audiences because it's been beaten to death so many times or the "normal family" going through something traumatic but has also been beaten to death one hundred times.

It's refreshing to read something that is funny, yet layered with reality. This family is doing its best for their own reasons, mostly for each other. They are alone in the bunker and likely, even in the world. Seclusion can drive you crazy or closer, isolating the characters gives us the most prominent look into what these characters truly are.

They are beautiful because they are real, and they are real because they are quirky; they are not superheroes, they are not rich and petulant, and they are not anything in between that would earn some major franchise a lot of money. The feeling of terror due to a disaster not caused by man, but a force of nature, is something everyone has encountered at least once.

Nowhere is perfect, from sea to sea there is a looming threat of a big natural disaster that threatens to harm all forms of life as we know it. It is no more preventable than conflict between people, even though that should be more preventable. The issue with conflict like

that is we don't know if we really want all conflict to end. Grandma might rest from her complaints about George, but they will arise again when she feels it must. It is what keeps life going, almost.

Love nurtures life but without any sort of conflict, nothing moves forward. We end with the natural disaster. The sun comes out, the people emerge, recover, and reconcile. *George's Homemade Storm Room*, in its 30 pages, manages to give us this disaster genre in its most virile form.

LOS ANGELES / NEW YORK CITY

MACOPROJECT

FILM FESTIVAL
