

Lauren Goodman

Independent Study & Mentorship

Mr. Speice 4A

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Product Progress Assessment #4

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Subject: The Pilot... Again

Assessment:

After nearly a month and half of writing my pilot screenplay for the series I created, I finished with my final product! Just kidding, I wish it were that simple, but if it were then this field wouldn't be nearly as challenging. I've put the pitch book on the back-burner for now in order to focus the entirety of my time on working on this screenplay. And, it still has a while to go until it is ready for final product. However, from story bible to beat sheet to outline to first draft to second, I can see my show taking a life on its own as it is evolving into something that I had not completely envisioned, but is a pleasant surprise. In this product progress assessment, I will be discussing the feedback I received from my mentor and a complete mental breakdown in both my first and second drafts.

First Draft: Of course, in the previous assessment I mentioned that there were slight differences between the first draft and the outline, yet the vision stayed pretty much intact. However, after going on a mentor's visit last week, I decided I may need to veer more off into the unexpected for my next draft (which we will get too later). As for now, I will talk about some of the criticism I received after the first draft was reviewed by my mentor. Overall, it was not as bad as expected. However, his comments opened my eyes to more possible things I could

change. One of his critiques was in the characters himself, as some felt more developed than others, and some were not introduced till nearly halfway through act one. This seemed to be the biggest error in my script as the show is meant to be an ensemble, but only focuses and cares about a few characters. A possible explanation for this is that maybe subconsciously I may have a personal preference for what characters are my favorites since I am able to think of their character beats and punchlines easily. As a consequence though, other characters are pushed to the sidelines as a supporting character, which is not what I want at all. Because of this, I really had to rethink the story beats within the episode, leading to changes within the second draft. Another critique of my mentor's is that there are a couple of situations that feel clumsy, meaning that the situations are sometimes illogical but are only present as plot devices. In particular, one situation which is the highlight of act 3 has a few holes, where it doesn't quite match up to the realisticness of that situation. Again this lead to make the situations tighter and less as an excuse to be a plot device. Lastly, and this is mostly my personal critique, is that some of the speaking lines are superfluous. While, of course there are many punchlines I would like to include, unfortunately sometimes I need to dial it down in order to keep the writing from dragging. I could comprise this with more banter and more character dynamics. Using this feedback, I went on to create the...

Second Draft: Sometimes editing your working is harder than beginning in my opinion. This is because sometimes I'm unsure how to make it better and still make it fit with my vision. I couldn't even start revising right on the online script program, I actually had to write out my revisions and then transfer them to the script as I wrote. Despite this, I made a lot of changes in this draft, so much so it added an extra ten pages to the screenplay, which I know I'll need to cut down later. But that's a battle for another day. Anyways I digress, I immediately started tackling two birds with one stone with introducing characters, making them more prominent, and adding

character dynamic when I added nearly four scenes intersped within the first act. I feel like this fills in some of the blanks of the characters, and while it doesn't explicitly announce who they are until halfway through act 1, the audience gets an idea of their personalities through the additional scenes. And, I should mention I used every glittering idea I had such as banter about auditions and callbacks and a stage fight that results in real injury. I feel like both of these situations is what makes the show so fun and it is what hooks the viewer immediately. I went on to completely change a story beat and even add another beat between two different characters, this way none of the characters would be on the bench. By revising a story beat, I was able to exploit some of the characters traits and have it make more sense. Finally, in the third act, I revised the climax so it had more shock-value and seemed to intertwine all of the beats together. It was refreshing to change it into something that you can really see happening, yet still contained a sort of wackiness which is present in all sitcoms.

There will be more drafts and corrections to make, but for now I should savor the moment for a few days before going once again to the drawing board. I will say that the second draft is different from the first draft, meaning what I show on final presentation night will most likely very different from the story bible. Yet, this is the natural course of a show, a course that could soon be on the path to actually airing on primetime TV.