As promised it's time to break down our winning script: Hero Island.

Now, because it's really hard to talk about an entire script, page by page, in a weekly column, I'm going to have to skip around… give kind of an overview of things that were done right and things that weren't.

Okay… on to the script…

The strongest thing this script has to offer is the intro. Right off the bat this script gets rolling. It's so simple too; all it takes is a page.

Yacht. In the middle of a storm. Girl bursts out screaming with a waterproof digital camera. She scrambles to find a hiding spot. She finds one just as the bad guys burst out the door. They look for her and go the other way. She takes a moment to record a short video about what's happening to her. She gets up to run for her life. The boat hits a wave. She goes flying. Hits her head. Boom, overboard her and the camera.

Dead.

Last look of the bad guys staring at her body sink to the bottom of the sea. They have problems.

CUT TO:

Overview of a beautiful island. A ferry boat. Meet the protagonists. A family. Teen daughter does her regular "whatever" routine. The son does his "everything is cool, this is so neat routine." Dad is on the cell phone doing his "I'm too busy routine." And the mom is annoyed at the husband because she doesn't have any help.

There you go folks. THAT'S how you fucking open a movie. There's excitement. There's intrigue. We know NOTHING about this girl. We know NOTHING about the bad guys. But we know their bad and we can assume she didn't deserve the death she got. She was SCARED of these guys and we should be too.

We wanted MORE. More importantly, I wanted more. I'm the reader right? You want me to keep turning the pages, right?

Quick. Simple. Says everything you need to know.

Then we get to the family. The best part about the introduction to our protagonists is that we understand who they are and what's going on between them by their ACTIONS, not they're dialog. So many times I see people tell you what the problems are instead of showing them.

Film is a visual medium people. Show us.

Now, can't be blowing this script entirely. It's always polite to service the rear from time to time.

On the sixth page, the teenager girl says, "Dad, you're so whacked."

Okay peeps… I get it. Some of you MIGHT not be able to relate to the tween generation and you don't give a shit about team Jacob or Team Edward or any of that useless bullshit, BUT if you're going to write a teenager, you HAVE to know what the fuck is going on in their world.

And yes, it changes on a daily basis, but at least be in the ball park. If not, you date yourself. The first question I asked the screenwriter after we got over our initial pleasantries was how old they were. After hearing the age, I said: "Oh. That explains a lot of things."

I read something like this and I can only think of South Park. Season 3: Chinpokemon episode.

Kyle is always behind the 8 ball with trends. In one scene he leaves the guys by saying "A'ight?"

Stan: Dude! Did you just say a'ight?

Kyle: Yeah, like Lauren Hill. A'ight?

Stan: Dude, nobody says a'ight anymore.

Klye: a'ight's not cool anymore either? When did that happen!?

Cartman: Like 8 days ago.

Kyle: Dammit!

Makes me chuckle every time. Hell, I totally had to pull up that episode and watch it while writing this. Good stuff.

Anyway, the point is. Don't be a Kyle.

It's not just language. It's also with technology. In this script the writer has the son playing with a Gameboy. Yeah, that's so 8 days ago. He'd be rocking a Sony PSP. The writer has sense tried to convince me that a Gameboy would be cool because it's "retro." Yeah, no…not for a kid HIS age. For me? Hell yeah. I used to lug that brick around all the time and still have a Gameboy Color SOMEWHERE. But I grew up with it. As technology grew, so did I. This kid didn't. He came in the middle. He wants the good shit.

I read a script once. It was set in modern day and it had this crime/detective element. Here are some of the things the writer used throughout the script: An analog answering machine. A reel-to-reel player. A typewriter. A car phone (not a cell phone, but the old built in car phone) and a dot matrix printer.

For the record, none of them were character related (i.e. a writer that HAS to write on a typewriter) they were all just devices in the script.

I read this stuff and I think one of two things: either A) this person lives in a cave and has no fucking clue what those "metal beasts that pass by their house" are or B) the writer wrote this script in the 80's and was too fucking lazy to update the thing. Again… not a period piece and they claimed they wrote it in 2010.

Bullshit. Lazy.

Now on to the biggest problem at all and the biggest lesson for you to learn.

That's the video game aspect of this script. So many people wrote in and dug that part the most. The thing is? It doesn't work and takes the script into the absurd. I mean REALLY absurd.

The script itself is really great. You have that opening. You introduce the family. The family ends up having dinner with the bad guys who are looking for the camera. The kid finds the camera. The bad guys find out the kid has the camera. They attempt to get the camera in a "nice way." It doesn't happen… all hell breaks loose and the family goes on the run into the jungle to survive.

Got it. Love it. Up to this point, I'm ready to take this script and run up the ladder to the top of my company.

But then…

Video game shit happens. This script SHOULD had been the dad, stepping up to the plate and eliminating the bad guys. The family working together to take them out one by one Rambo style. But no. Video game aspect.   Basically we discover that the island is wired with cameras and the family is being digitized as they're on the run into this video game… blah blah blah. It's really a "Wait? Whaaaaat?!" Moment.

After talking to the writer, I found out that the family going Rambo was his original idea but then some "industry fucktard" told him that he needed to make his script "more marketable" and when the writer mentioned video games, the dude was like….YES! GO WITH THAT!

God I hate people so much.

People, have some common sense. EVERYONE loves Indiana Jones but only geeks like my dumbass like Mortal Kombat. Everyone LOVES a blockbuster like Independence Day but it's rare to find 2 people in a room of 50 that like Max Payne. And let's face it… no one liked Super Mario Bros.

So why would adding a video game aspect make your script MORE marketable. It makes it LESS marketable because the video game population, when compared to the world population, is small. So who are you aiming for? Everyone… or some of everyone?

You don't have to listen to every person that reads your script. Something we're going to talk about coming up in a couple of weeks. Criticism and notes…they don't ALWAYS have to be suppositories.

I'll be working with this writer to get the script back to its grassroots and hopefully get it out there! We'll see.

Thank you to EVERYONE that participated in this little contest and I look forward to doing it again. I built some great relationships with a few of you and look forward to keeping them afloat.

As always, please send any questions or comments to weekendread@gmail.com and I will respond as quickly as I can.

Till next week…