

OPEN HOUSE: A Thriller

Writer- Steve Hartman

LOGLINE:

After her golden-child twin sister disappears from a local open house, Gaby, a down-on-her-luck dancer enlists a wheel-chair bound athlete and a skeptical detective to rescue her from black market organ traffickers before her sister's organs are harvested for wealthy international customers, willing to buy life at any price.

SYNOPSIS:

"Tension is built up and sustained throughout. It begins right from the beginning where we see Marge through the cracked open door of the closet and continues with Gaby and Miguel being kidnapped at the house, Gaby and Kelly's foiled escape and when the police are outside the clinic but are initially forced to turn back.

The use of intercut scenes adds to the tension. For example, when the surgeon and attendant stand by Kelly's bedside and says "they need a heart," the action then immediately cuts back to Henry and Gaby and leaves the audience still thinking about Kelly and what may be about to happen to her.

The fact that the audience sees through Kelly's eyes is an excellent inclusion; putting the audience in her position they connect with the character more and it adds to the sense of realism and urgency. Similarly, the sound of her breathing and ventilator at the same time increases the audience's involvement.

Initially the police do not take Gaby's description of Marcos seriously as it is only in her head and this increases the pressure on her to make them believe her. She is already under an incredible amount of pressure and this adds to it, thus increasing tension.

The introduction of a time constraint is excellent as it adds a sense of hope whilst increasing the sense of urgency, as Henry says "they have to keep her alive until they need her organs.... we just have to find her first".

The script is well structured and well-paced. By the end of act one the scene has been well established and the race has begun to find Kelly. By the end of act two Gaby and Henry are well on their way to finding her and there is increased hope for her staying alive as Annabel is tries to help them. Act three provides a satisfactory resolution with Kelly being found alive.

There are several good twists in the plot, for example when Gaby finds Annabel in the hospital under a blanket, there are also several occasions when it appears that there is hope for Kelly, only for those hopes to be dashed at the last minute, which helps the script to remain fast paced and interesting as a result of these twists.

Despite the serious nature of the script, there are some humorous incidences of dialogue and good comic timing, for example when Miguel says "I need a break from angry women" and then Gaby bursts through the door."

SORRY IT'S A BOY: Sci-Fi

Writer- Steve Hartman

LOGLINE:

Female births, decreasing rapidly, empower women, as countries compete for the cure to populate the world. Craig compromises his values to find the cure while McBrian seeks to exploit this existential threat for money and power. There is little time before the last generation of humans are all male.

Time is running out, society is breaking down, there is barely one girl in each elementary classroom. Decreasing Female Births (DFB) will reach Zero Female Births (ZFB) in less than two years, worldwide. Countries compete for the solution to DFB in a "uterine war." The country that solves the problem will populate the world.

Craig, a research scientist is ignited by his fatherly concerns for two sons who may never have a girlfriend, wife or family. And his daughter who may be drawn into the very prestigious, and extremely profitable sex services profession.

Women are given jobs and promotions before men as they are so highly desired to attract customers, even when they are not sex professionals. Protests by huge crowds of men demand equal pay and opportunity with women. All are cognizant of a final human generation made up of all men, as the species barrels toward extinct.

Craig's nemesis is McBrian, a brilliant, selfish, egotistical scientist working to develop an artificial uterus to produce females, making him and his political investors wealthy with enormous global power. If he succeeds, funding will be cut off to Craig's research.

SYNOPSIS:

This story takes place more than thirty years in the future, which is pretty awesome! Setting a narrative in a realm outside of the present day provides an author excellent opportunity to show imaginative creativity, as the future is still somewhat of a blank slate. This piece offers an original concept that is both compelling and thought-provoking. It tackles the terrifying thought of a world where female births are rapidly on the decline, threatening the survival of the human race. It also considers the social and political consequences of such a predicament, all while maintaining a light, even comedic tone. Although the tone is light, the story still functions well as a piece of suspenseful science fiction.

The audience is introduced at a very critical moment in history. As the story begins, we learn that the United States estimates a mere twenty-three months until the annual number of female births reaches zero. Setting a strict timeline at the outset helps not only to convey a sense of urgency, but also to give some weight to the issue, which really helps readers to feel like they are along for the ride of this once-in-lifetime experience. Additionally, it helps to give readers a frame of reference for the allotment of time over which the plot might unfold.

McBrian is a well-developed antagonist. His views and objectives are clearly distinct from Craig's. Even though he believes the work at his facility is for the greater good, he reads as sinister from his introduction, creating a sense of foreboding, giving readers pause as well as a cause for concern. Just how far might a doctor go to "save" the world? Especially with someone like McBrian on the loose, who ensures so boldly that his supporters will bow to any request he demands.

“CHARIOTEER” Action Adventure

Writers- Steve Hartman and Martin Fisher

LOGLINE: Gladiator on Wheels

A champion’s rise from slavery brings an empire to its feet and an emperor to his knees. The epic true story of Gaius Diocles, the world's first million-dollar, celebrity-athlete.

SYNOPSIS:

GAUIS DIOCLES was the most famous and highly paid charioteer in Roman history. For twenty-four years he dominates a sport few survived past their teens or early twenties, and was among the first athletes in history to profit on merchandise and endorsements.

Taken as a slave from his native Spain, GAUIS DIOCLES rises from stable boy to champion with fearless determination. But in second-century Rome chariot racing is more than a sport, it is a vital revenue stream. EMPEROR HADRIAN and his confidant PREFECT QUINTUS TURBO, fixes races at CIRCUS MAXIMUS to finance the army and secure his power. With over fourteen hundred recorded victories, Diocles’ success defies them and threatens the empire’s economic stability. To the senators, citizens and slaves who worship his audacity and shield him from retaliation, Diocles is their champion. He wields his fame like a sword and even the love of his life, who carries his child, ELENA AREILUS, suffers his empowerment of celebrity. Only his countryman, VASSO, understands it is not glory that drives him, but a reckless obsession to avenge his sister CASSIA’s death. Diocles’ life is filled with triumphs and tragedies, corruption and courage, depravity and love. Even when he discovers his sister is alive, and the world turns against him, he never surrenders. Forced again to choose between Cassia’s life and his family’s freedom, in a moment of truth, in a time of doubt, against impossible odds, Diocles summons the inner strength to defeat Turbo and the Emperor and regain his honor on the track of Circus Maximus.

COVERAGE

There are comparisons to Gladiator to be sure. The screenplay is well-written and if you read, say, the first three pages you'll see what I mean. These writers have a real gift for putting you in the action. It reads like a page-turner of a novel in that the language is very artfully chosen. Any film executive who has trouble conceptualizing between the page and the screen wouldn't have difficulty with this script. When reading it, you feel like you're watching it. Rather than retype some examples of what I mean, I suggest you read the first two or three pages to get a sense of how well the writers say what they have to say.

- Jonathan Lomma, William Morris

This adventure screenplay is based on Diocles, an intriguing historical character, who not only survives but thrives, despite enormous odds. He is a heroic character, who does not shy away from any challenge, large or small. Because of these traits, throughout the story, we care about him, and we want to see him defeat anyone who gets in his way, especially Emperor Hadrian’s evil Prefect Turbo. You effectively give Diocles nearly insurmountable obstacles, and you allow him the strength and wit and determination to crash through each one, on his way to freedom and glory. By the end we care that Diocles, Sophia and their son, and Marcelo and Cassia are safe and happy, and even though Emperor Hadrian isn’t defeated in the story, Diocles has diminished his ability to impact the lives of him and his family.

The story is told in a clear and lean style and the description works to move the action along. It is not overwritten, and it does not interfere with the reading of the script. Throughout the story, you keep us clearly positioned in the story, and we know who we are to root for and who we are to despise. And you make the brutality of Circus Maximus rather real, and you help us to realize how pervasive this brutality was to the culture of Rome, and how easily accepted it was at the time.

“BARRETT’S REVENGE” Action Thriller

Writer- Steve Hartman

LOGLINE:

Barrett gets in the way of an Iraqi National terror team planning a US attack. In an attempt to eliminate him, they kill his brother. Anger, hate and revenge propel FBI Agent, Jack Barrett and Aziz Abodeem to a final battle in Washington DC, over a portable nuclear bomb.

Abodeem captures two tactical Nukes with defective trigger mechanisms, planted by allied forces to confirm allegations that Saddam possessed WMD’s.

Jack Barrett busts two arms shipments bound for the Middle East to support the Iraqi National Liberation Army headed by Aziz Abodeem, who despises Saddam Hussein and his trusted officer, Narif Fattah. These unlikely partners, frustrated by little success in Iraq to expel the US and British, plan a nuclear attack in Washington, D.C. to convince the US to change their Iraqi policy.

Fattah tired of Abodeem’s carefully planned approach to change US policy in Iraq, takes one of the Nukes to exact pure revenge upon the American people. This sets them against each other in the final hours before Fattah’s bomb explodes in Washington.

SYNOPSIS:

“Barrett’s Revenge” is a highly topical script that deals with terrorism in the Middle East and US relations. The story is personalized by the protagonist Barrett who is on a personal vendetta to destroy those who killed his brother. He is also only days away from retirement and initially wants nothing to do with the details of the rising investigation. Yet he later has all the reason in the world to get involved.

The friction between Narif Fattah and Abodeem keeps the viewer engaged. They are supposed to be fighting on the same team for the same cause yet cannot agree on anything. They have differing views as to how their operation should be run. Yet in the end it is Abodeem who prevails and who actually ends up aiding Barrett in warding off a nuclear explosion that could have killed hundreds of thousands of people. This is a very rare and interesting situation- a known terrorist trying to aid the US in thwarting an attack on US soil; in the nation’s capital, nonetheless.”

“DEATH TOLL QUEENS SIDE” Political Thriller

Writer- Steve Hartman

LOGLINE:

Vic, a claustrophobic, trapped in a flooding tunnel with his pregnant wife, several other New Yorkers, and Secret Service Agents who devalue all other lives but President they have been sworn to protect, must triumph over conflicting loyalties to human life and certain death.

SYNOPSIS

Air Force One lands at JFK at 9:31 AM. Agent Hack, President Strong's secret service agent in charge, arranges for limousines to take the president and his staff to Manhattan; their helicopter is grounded due to extreme weather. Hack has one set of limousines head for the Midtown Tunnel with two motorcycle escorts and the others drive over the Tri-Borough Bridge with half dozen NYPD and motorcycle escorts to clear the way.

Traffic is moving into the tunnel as the limousines approach. A van full of children and a yellow Cadillac are followed in by Victor Duncan and his wife, in their van, returning to the city from a canoeing vacation on the Island. Two tollbooth guards hold up Jake's dump truck to let the limos into the tunnel. "Okay, Okay," yells Jake "I'm not gonna hit ya expensive friends." As Jake passes the guards he says, "Hey. I'll watch their delicate rear for ya." Other vehicles lineup and follow Jake into the westbound tube. Nobody at the toll plaza knows the President is in one of the limos.

We see the East River through the window of a hi-rise building in Manhattan as a faceless man says "Okay, we understand," on the telephone then presses a yellow button labeled transmit. Two explosions send plumes of water up from the river. Suspected to be a foreign terrorist plot clues begin to point the finger elsewhere with disclosure that the Vice-President has little respect for President Strong, and is unenthusiastic about the rescue.

President Strong, some of her security force, Press Secretary and Secretary of State, along with Victor, his wife, Jake and a number of other motorists are fortunate to be trapped in an air bubble created between the two explosions. Hack knows survival will depend on those who can stay alive the longest until help can arrive before the river does. He recognizes with fewer people using up the remaining oxygen the President's chance to be saved will increase. His job is to protect, and in desperate situations, save the President.

Victor, a black New York City science teacher and Jake the truck driver, team-up and use brains and brawn to deal with both Hack and the rising river to save the President and those who survived the explosions. In the wrong place at the wrong time, or in the right place at the right time, these New Yorkers work together in an attempt to triumph over almost insurmountable obstacles.

“THE BLUE PURSE” A love story

Writers- Steve Hartman and Jonathan Dillon

LOGLINE:

A young mid-western girl from a small-town struggle to leave her family farm and go to college. She meets a graduate student from the Middle East and over a couple of days they fall in love. He mysteriously disappears before she finds out she’s pregnant. Her daughter grows up and will use every resource she can manage to find her father nearly 50 years later.

SYNOPSIS:

After a young farm girl from rural Texas heads off to college, she meets a sophisticated graduate student from the Middle East. After barely a few days of romance they fall in love. He disappears due to some unknown circumstances leaving her with no way to find him.

Weeks later she gets the news from the college doctor she’s pregnant. She drops out of college, returns to her small-town home, gives birth to her daughter. She grows up, then as a middle-aged adult, obsessed to find her biological father, her search ends nearly fifty years after her birth.

This story follows a grandmother, mother, and granddaughter through three periods in time. They struggle to make their lives meaningful, only to discover how powerful their shared passions connect them together over this man.