



SCRIPT READER PRO

REGULAR SCRIPT COVERAGE

TITLE	XXXXXX	GENRE	Comedy
WRITER(S)	XXXXXX	CIRCA	Present
SUBMITTED BY	XXXXXX	LOCATION	US
FORM / PAGES	Screenplay / 101	BUDGET	Med
DATE	XXXXXX	ANALYST	XXXXXX

LOGLINE

Removed for writer confidentiality.

COMMENTS

Thank you, XXXXXX, for submitting your script for review — you have the makings of a great story on your hands. There's much to love here: your characters, dialogue, writing style and much of your scene work, and overall I found the script to be amusing and a really good effort. However, the script needs a bit of work in order to help it fulfill its true potential. My notes will focus on doing this by enhancing the protagonist, pushing the comedy further, straightening out the core concept and plot. Once these different troubled zones have been addressed, though, XXXXXX will take a big step forward toward becoming a solid spec. So let's get to it!

I was impressed by your set up. Pages 1 to 12 fly by as we're introduced to Ronnie, his job problems, wife and kids, and Jason and his friends. While there's room in these opening pages to elevate the comedy (while I'll get to later) they do a good job of introducing us to the protagonist and his world.

Ronnie's speech to the the graduates for example was a highlight. The title, XXXXXX, and these opening pages meant I was excited to find out what the camp was all about, embark on a journey with Ronnie and watch how he overcomes his flaws, bonds with his friends, grows up as a man, rediscovers what life's all about and so on. However, in this current draft, a couple of things happen that are holding it back right now: 1. the script goes from being a comedy about four guys at a Man Camp, to being an action comedy about drug smuggling and kidnapping, and 2. Ronnie kind of steps aside in the narrative and lets Herbie take over.

Let's start by taking a look at the first problem. The premise isn't making the most of the interesting ideas hinted at and so we have a protagonist who's overshadowed by another character and a story that shies away from having anything to actually do with a Man Camp, preferring instead to focus on drug cartels and kidnapping. As I've already mentioned, the title and opening pages set this script up as a comedy about Ronnie and co. going to a Man Camp, which is a great premise, but then once they get there we hardly see them involved with any of the activities we'd expect in such a setting. We have a montage, an archery and a Marco Polo scene, but that's about it. We only meet Dave the camp leader once, before drug smuggling, cartels, DEA, and kidnap scenes take over — all of which are ones that could take place anywhere. This is resulting in the script feeling underwhelming at the moment as events become consumed by generic action, rather than delivering on the initial Man Camp set up from pages 1 to 39.

Firstly, I think you need to ask yourself: do I want this be a comedy about a Man Camp, or an action comedy about guys getting sucked into drugs smuggling and kidnap? I guess you could combine the two as you've attempted here, but these are two different concepts. Let's take a look at the action comedy option. If you want to go down this route, I would not set the action in a Man Camp but in somewhere more generic so as to avoid what Blake Snyder calls "double mumbo-jumbo". At the moment, we have four guys going to a Man Camp, which is a high-concept idea in itself, but then on top of this we have drugs, cartels, undercover DEA, kidnappings, which is adding another concept on top. So I would remove the Man Camp aspect and make this a story about four guys who go somewhere a bit more ordinary like a meditation retreat, or camping in the woods or something, and then they meet Marcus, Chase and Brooks and get sucked into the world of drug smuggling.

The story reminded me in some respects to *Keeping Up With the Joneses*, but in that film the way Jeff and Karen get involved with undercover agents and set on their action comedy adventure is layered in gradually throughout Act 1.

Karen begins to suspect there's something fishy going on with the Joneses next door, and then they find a bug in their house and realize they're being spied on and actively take steps to find out what's going on. The big turning point comes when the Joneses realize Jeff and Karen have been in their house and have to tell their boss about them. From this moment on, the protagonists are locked in and out of their depth. So I think if you want to keep the action elements to this screenplay a more organic and intriguing way needs to be found to put Ronnie and co. into the extraordinary world of Act 2 cocaine smuggling.

At the moment, Ronnie and co. get pulled in simply by seeing Marcus and Brooks enter a tunnel, and so they go inside later and find a room full of cocaine. The next day they're shot with tranquilizers and Marcus explains that they're undercover DEA investigating the camp and trying to figure out who the supplier is. Marcus threatens them saying they should act normal, but then they see Chase carrying cocaine. Chase tells them he stole it to sell so he can buy a house with his wife and beats them up. Next morning, they realize Herbie's missing, and so on. The result of these scenes is that things are just kind of falling into their laps as other characters explain everything that's going on and they see them entering tunnels and walking around with cocaine. Everything's feeling quite on-the-nose and arbitrary. So I would rework this to give Ronnie and co. a more believable and interesting way into the drugs world. Maybe they arrive at a camp of some kind and befriend Marcus and co. And then start to suspect there's something off about them and they get pulled in that way.

Personally, I think you have a great premise here with the Man Camp itself, and so I would rewrite this script to focus on exploiting this idea and lose the action comedy elements. It would mean a great deal of rewriting but, for me, the ensuing action comedy is making the script less interesting than it could be because it's replacing the emotional character elements set up in Act 1. Comedy is character, and I think you have a great opportunity here to rework this story into one about Ronnie overcoming his flaw, growing up, becoming a man, getting over his past, changing his life, reconnecting with his friends or whatever you wish, while at Man Camp. I would exploit this concept to its fullest and really go to town showing us how out of his comfort zone Ronnie is in this place.

At the moment, Ronnie and the guys just kind of decide to go there for Jason's bachelor party, but maybe they could be forced to go there, or find themselves there accidentally, a bit like the way George and Linda in *Wanderlust* stumble upon the commune. In general, we need to see these guys, and Ronnie in particular if he's your protagonist, under much more pressure than we do at the moment.

And the way to do that is to make sure that they're somewhere they don't feel comfortable being, and experience events that change their outlook on life. Whatever Ronnie's flawed outlook on the world is at the start of the script, should be challenged by the people he meets and the things he struggles to achieve while at Man Camp.

I also think the Man Camp itself could be made a little more "high concept" as its name suggests. On page 14, Ronnie says of the camp: "They've got fishing, archery, kayaking. All the stuff we did when we went there. We'd get to stay in the cabins we used to stay in. Roast marshmallows. Stay up late. We need this". This is all fine, but does sound a little "small", especially when we don't then see Ronnie and his friends, say, revert to being kids and all their old insecurities, jealousies, and bullying comes out. Or they meet other kids at another camp nearby and get schooled in all the old games they used to play and it turns into all out war. In other words, there's no connection at the moment between the premise as described by Ronnie here and what actually happens during the story.

On page 13, we see Ronnie and Tate gazing at a picture of themselves as kids at the camp which I thought was a great little moment, but again it set me up for a whole different kind of story in which we see these guys reconnect with their childhood, or as friends or something. There are other options here that could be explored too. Man Camp could be a bootcamp run by dissatisfied wives who want to whip their men into shape, for example. They'd then be more opportunity for comedy as we see these guys be put through their paces, having to learn how to talk about their feelings, remember to put the toilet seat down and so on. Or Man Camp could be where guys go to learn "How to be a man" and we could see them being taught by a super confident instructor in the art of manliness: how to survive in the wild, seduce a woman, grow the perfect beard, etc. These are just ideas off the top of my head, but I think something a bit "bigger" along these lines would give this script the chance to really come alive.

I would also really try to explore the emotional lives of these guys more in the next draft. What are their flaws, fears, wants and needs? How do they grow and change, individually and in their relationships with each other? Give us some real emotion on the page rather than relying on comical action scenes. We also could do with some real romance at the camp to give the story some more heart. Herbie meets Misty and Tate meets Lillian right at the end but these scenes are very slight and also have nothing to do with your protagonist, Ronnie. Herbie is a great character but I think he's overshadowing everyone else so easily right now because the others are much less interesting. Jason, for example, is more or less superfluous to this story even though it's his bachelor party they're supposed to be on.

Ronnie is set up as our protagonist and as I said I think you do a pretty good job of this in the opening twelve or so pages, but then we meet Herbie. At first I thought he was a fantastic character — and he is — but right now he's overshadowing Ronnie and everyone else to the extent that the whole script feels like it's revolving around him. I would start by going through the script and noting just how much of the plot (and comedy) is being driven by Herbie at the moment. For example, he says they should do the camp, causes mayhem at the airport and on the plane, wants to be in the guys' frat, packs a gun, meets a woman, falls unconscious in the pool, says they all need to bond, gets kidnapped and so on. Herbie dominates practically every scene he's in right now, while Ronnie is tending to go missing in action. A good example of this is on page 32, when the guys wake up tied to their beds and Ronnie only has one line — the last one in the scene. Whether you decide to refine this script into a regular comedy or action comedy, I think you need to really have a go at refocusing Ronnie as the protagonist with a clear flaw, want, and need. Then I would make sure that the action in every scene is being driven by Ronnie's goal and what's at stake for him in the overall movie.

Finally I'd like to take a moment to discuss elevating the comedy. I think you have some great ideas going on in here, but at the moment the comedy's not really being exploited and taken as far as it can go. Many of the scenes are amusing without being really funny, but this is crucial if you want this script to stand out head and shoulders above all the other spec comedies out there. For example, on page 32 the guys wake up to find they're tied to their beds and then Herbie somehow pulls out a knife from under his pillow and cuts them free. This lack of conflict means things are feeling a bit flat right now, so try to come up with the funniest, most embarrassing situation they could find themselves in here and in other scenes.

Overall, this is a great effort, though, XXXXXX. I really think you're on to something with the idea of a Man Camp and I would encourage you to develop this further in this direction. Personally, I would cut the action comedy aspect to the script and focus on coming up with a story about a protagonist or protagonists who find themselves out of their depth at a Man Camp so we can really see how it changes their lives and they leave different guys from those who went in. Make sure you squeeze all the comedy juice you possibly can out of every scene and also have a go at reworking Ronnie so he's much more up front and center and active as a classic straight-laced comedy protagonist. I wish you all the best with the rewrite and thanks again for sending in for script coverage at Script Reader Pro!

RATINGS GRID

	1ST CLASS	SOLID	NOT BAD	WEAK
Concept			X	
Story				
Structure			X	
Protagonist			X	
Antagonist			X	
Stakes Character				X
Minor Characters			X	
Dialogue		X		
Scenes			X	
Pacing		X		
Theme				X
Tone			X	
Writing Style		X		
Marketability		X		
Formatting	X			
Grammar	X			
Title	X			

SCRIPT RECOMMENDATION: PASS

WRITER RECOMMENDATION: N/A

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We look forward to working with you,

The Script Reader Pro team