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Intro to Television and Film Arts

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The Grand Budapest Hotel Script Coverage

Script Coverage Example for Development Executives and Producers

TITLE: The Grand Budapest Hotel

AUTHOR: Wes Anderson

SUBMITTED TO: XXXXXX
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AGENCY/CO: XXXXXX

READER: Abby Wisz

DATE: 09.07.23

FORM/LENGTH: SP/117

DRAFT DATE/ 03.28.14

PUB: LOCATION: Small town
CIRCA: America 2006
GENRE: Adventure/Comedy

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
PREMISE		X		
PLOT		X		
CHARACTERS		X		
DIALOGUE		X		
SETTING	X			
	RECOMMEND	CONSIDER	PASS	
SCRIPT		X		
WRITER		X		

LOGLINE:

Within this comedy-adventure, a hotel concierge and his trusted lobby boy embark on a long journey in Gortliz, Germany involving stolen art, romance, and death.

SYNOPSIS:

In the first act viewers are introduced to the AUTHOR, one of the narrators of the story, as he explains how writers can get their inspiration and material anywhere. We are then sent back in time to see a younger version of the author as he is staying at the Grand Budapest Hotel, the setting of his book. It is quite dead with a max of 10 guests. During his stay, he becomes close with the front concierge who seems to be tired of his job.. The author becomes amazed by a certain guest, soon finding out it is the hotel's current owner. Once introduced to the owner, ZERO MOUSTAFA, he finds out that Zero does not truly have “ownership” over the hotel. The two men sit down for dinner as Zero tells the author about his experience and life working at the hotel as a young lobby boy. The film once again goes back in time to Zero’s first day on the job as we see the hotel alive and thriving under the head concierge M. GUSTAVE. Gustave, the protagonist, is quite calculated and wealth-focused. He wants his legacy to live on within the hotel and takes in older guests to provide them with a service that only he can give. He believes it can further his dreams of creating a legacy. If his legacy is unable to be made, Gustave fears he will lose his dignity and all the effort and work he has put into the hotel would be for nothing, and the world that he romanticizes and pursues would forget him.

Act two introduces the main plot of the film. Gustave’s best guest, MADAME D, has tragically died in a mysterious way. Gustave brings Zero with him to the will reading, to say his goodbyes and pay respect, but instead finds out she has left him her most prized possession, The Boy With Apple painting. Her son, DMITRI, immediately goes against it, believing Gustave was coercing his mother with false love into leaving her money to him. As Gustave and Zero flee with the painting, they unknowingly have Madame D’s newest will with them, stating she leaves her whole estate to Gustave and how she fears for her life. On the train home, Gustave is falsely arrested for the murder of Madame D. Believing he will not get a fair trial, Gustave decides to break out of prison with the help of Zero, fellow prisoners, and AGATHA. During the B-plot, Zero falls in love with a poor baker named Agatha and they soon plan to marry. Madame D’s son sends his henchman, JOPLING, to find and kill anyone who knows about his mother's other will. This puts Agatha and Zero in danger.

In the third act, we see Zero and Gustave find their way back home after Gustave breaks out and their getaway car leaves without them. On the run, they are chased by Jopling but soon get away after he falls off a cliff to his death. They instruct Agatha to bring them the painting to reveal the will, yet she is followed and hunted by Dmitri. As they finally meet up once more, the will reveals that Madame D. was murdered by her son and leaves her entire fortune and estate to M. Gustave. Dmitri is arrested for multiple murders, all those committed by him and Jopling, and Gustave keeps his promise to marry Agatha and Zero. After gaining Madame D’s fortune, Gustave ultimately gained the legacy he had always wanted. On the train home, he is shot by soldiers, leaving Zero to inherit the hotel. Zero keeps Gustave’s legacy going as he runs the hotel by himself.

COMMENTS:

Character:

It's hard to come by any changes within the characters and their motivations. The writing doesn't allow the characters to fully change throughout the film, yet readers and viewers are still able to relate to them in some aspects.

M. Gustave has clear intentions within the first meeting of the character. We can get a sense of how calculated and cunning he is. Gustave sets his goals high and creates his whole life around the hotel, the staff, and the guests. He has traits that allow him to know how to treat people the way they want to be treated and is loyal to them. Gustave passes his values down to his staff which helps him take Zero under his wing. At the beginning of the film, we see Gustave heavily focused on the hotel and guests alone. His goals are clear with creating a legacy for himself and knows what he has to do to get his dreams made. Near the end of the film, there is not much development within the character. His goals are the same, still focused on the hotel and a soon-to-be legacy, but now he has someone to pass it down to, Zero. Gustave has become somewhat of a father figure to Zero during the long journey and adventures they have had together. Immediately after going to jail, the only one he calls is Zero. He trusts and believes in Zero, allowing his character to grow as much as it can. Gustave has clear motivations within the film, creating a legacy, and he will do anything to do so, even gaining old lovers who will be loyal to the hotel. He is witty and knows exactly what he wants and how to get it.

Zero, an orphan trying to find purpose in life, wants someone to help lead him to greatness. He was able to find this through Gustave. Zero had not gotten many opportunities in life and is very proud of his new job as a lobby boy. He is a hard worker who will do anything asked of him, even breaking Gustave out of prison to show his loyalty. Zero is a devoted, subservient, and clever character. His character grows through the guidance of M. Gustave. He starts this job as a poor and unknown boy who is just trying to find his purpose in the world and ends up with a new father figure and guide. Zero is able to prove himself at his new job by securing a spot as Gustave's right-hand man. He is motivated by the guidance of Gustave, knowing it will help him find his purpose of helping people and by doing everything asked of him, he is able to get that purpose. Risking his own life to break out a man he had just met recently shows how trusting Zero can be. He has no more family, but by working at this prestigious hotel, he is able to not only find new motivations but find love with Agatha.

The main antagonist of the film has clear and brutal motivations. Dmitri, Madame D's son, will do anything and everything to get her fortune. He is a power and money-hungry man who will not let anything get in his way. During the will reading he makes his motivations for wanting the fortune clear after yelling at Gustave and calling him names, believing Gustave had coerced his mother into giving him her fortune. After not being able to get what he wants, Dmitiri resorts to murder and crime. Sending his henchman, Jopling, off to find anyone who knows the secret of his mother's untimely death. He has no real character arc or

change due to the fact he never stopped trying to get what he wants. Dmitri shows no remorse for his actions and is so greed-focused that he will destroy anything that gets in his way of the fortune. Even after getting arrested, Dmitri does not regret any of his actions. He truly believes he is the rightful owner of the fortune and will continue to think that until he is able to get his hands on the money.

Comparison:

Wes Anderson's films contain the same formula throughout the story. He follows a three-act structure: the setup, confrontation, and resolution. Though his stories are quite simple, he is able to tell them through his visual and audio components. Anderson utilizes symmetrically framed shots, color theory, and deadpan-delivered dialogue.

This film is quite different from his others by telling a story within a story, within a story. This can also be seen in Wes Anderson's 2021 film, *The French Dispatch*. The film centers around four stories, all pertaining to the same premise, and is told by different 'authors'. *The Grand Budapest Hotel*'s story is told in a similar way, a memory within a memory, within a memory. Though *The Grand Budapest Hotel* is going back in time following two different characters in the same location, *The French Dispatch* follows characters telling their stories that don't really connect. Since this film was made by the same director, they share the same visual storytelling. The symmetrical shots and long takes are used often to emphasize a scene or moment within the film to help resonate with the viewer. Though they are different genres, these two Wes Anderson films are comparable in storytelling.

This kind of storytelling can also be seen in Christopher Nolan's 2010 film, *Inception*. The film follows a dream within a dream within a dream, similar to *The Grand Budapest*'s way of telling a story. *Inception*'s story has layers of emotions and meanings within the multiple dream sequences. By having a dream within a dream within a dream, Nolan is able to allow his viewers to dissect the story in a new way each time. Wes Anderson's film has a more set storyline, just told within each other by different characters. The two films do not share the same genre, but the way the timelines and stories are told follow the same pattern.

The 2019 film, *Knives Out*, directed by Rian Johnson follows the same genre as *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. It follows a murder mystery involving a fortune and false accusations. The main protagonist in *Knives Out* is falsely accused of a murder she did not commit all because she inherited a fortune from an older man she cared for. The old man's family did not believe she deserved it, first trying to suck up to her so she would give them the fortune and then falsely accusing her of killing the old man. Gustave went through the same exact situation in *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. *Knives Out* is also similar in the energetic and witty comedy that can be seen in *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.

Theme:

This film can be summed up in two themes that are similar to each other: the passing of time and nostalgia. Throughout the film, we see three different time eras starting from the most present to the oldest. Wes Anderson distinguishes these by using three different film types and aspect ratios to represent the three different eras we see throughout the film. The hotel was once glorious and luxurious housing many guests and important people to a partially empty place that seems to no longer exist to the outside world. Anderson is telling his audience that even wonderful things are slowly dying and destroyed by time. Not only can the locations be changed drastically, but so can people. When we are in the oldest time period, Zero is this bright and excited young boy with wonder for the world, yet later when we are first introduced to him, Zero no longer shares the same passion he once had. He tries to keep the wonders of the hotel the same as they were when Gustave was running it, but the outside world no longer appreciates it.

Nostalgia plays a big role in the theme of this film. Gustave keeps up traditions from the past as he is on the job, accommodating the older and wealthy guests. All the older guests seem so happy to be there because they are being reminded of a time when they were younger. Zero tries to keep the hotel the same as when Gustave ran it, keeping the uniforms the same, yet he fails to do so. He isn't able to provide the experience that was once so wanted because the people who would appreciate it are no longer visiting that hotel. The world has moved on quickly as Zero and the hotel is still living in the past.

Wes Anderson wants his viewers to appreciate the past and the era of extravagance, yet he wants them to know that not everything can exist forever. Time will always catch up to you in the end, leaving you far behind. Aging is inevitable, yet you can hold off as best as you can like Zero tries his best to.

Dialogue:

Wes Anderson's characters have always been more two-dimensional and seem more like video game characters rather than someone a viewer can relate to. They are just incredibly dressed dolls in one giant toyhouse that Anderson is controlling. You can see the characters walk in horizontal straight lines and never diagonally, having them stuck to the x and y lines of the screen.

Gustave is the only character that really shines in a three-dimensional way as all the other characters are more flat letting him shine. The dialogue is always performed in a deadpan manner, not allowing the actors to give any real emotions throughout their performances. Though this has become a part of Anderson's formula, it is not always the most enjoyable. It can get repetitive as we see in Wes Anderson's newest films, but this film somehow works best with the deadpan dialogue.

Since the story is so complex and there is so much going on, a little different from

Anderson's other films, the more deadpan dialogue there is the better. The dialogue given in an emotionless way allows for the story to be more surprising and interesting. You aren't able to know what traits a character has unless it's from their actions. This allows the viewers to focus on the main characters and how they interact with the story rather than getting caught up with any of the unimportant characters. Though it is not to have all the characters three-dimensional no matter how small the significance they are to the story, Anderson's films and stories focus heavily on how the characters relate to the plot. You can't get swept into the little things when watching one of his films.

Story:

The whole premise of the film is quite basic, but the way it is told makes it more unique. Wes Anderson jumps through time by telling a story within a story within a story. This gives the viewers something to look out for like little easter eggs that show up in the beginning that could relate to the past. The first concierge we see while Zero has control over the hotel wears the same outfit that Zero was made to wear when he worked there as a lobby boy.

The whole conflict of the story comes when Gustave is falsely accused of murder. There are no signs that we would see any parts of the crime and it seems like it would just be a cat-and-mouse chase with Gustave, Zero, and Dmitri. Gustave being falsely accused sets up another storyline while Jopling finding the letter travels on its own. The story splits up into two plots allowing the viewers to have two different stories to follow.

By splitting the storylines, each sequence and scene is able to contribute to the overall story and allow it to move forward smoothly. There were no real slow parts of the film since it's quite fast-paced for a Wes Anderson film, so viewers cannot get bored with the story as a whole. It may be simple, but the way it was executed helped the film in a greater aspect.

RECOMMENDATION: RECOMMEND