

Notes on HORIZON IN HIS EYES

1 - I wouldn't run Roberto at age 5. Needless backstory.

2-3 The Sewell scene: the exposition is too obvious.

'Copse of trees' is showing off.

3 Hit first, then the horse crashes to ground.

7 Roberto takes a drink and looks out over the encampment. He doesn't see what Lenny sees. He sees excitement, Camaraderie, danger, and opportunity.

Pretty novelistic.

8 the Michael intro scene is just that. Just intro. My guess is you don't need it.

9 He didn't realize that everybody
Who's anybody in 1900 would be here, at this party

"Realizing" is an unfilmable internal process.

10 Her heart skips, her breath gone. Who is that?

Okay, your writing is too novelistic. THIS IS A GLOBAL NOTE meaning your job is to go through this draft and pull out all the writing like the top of eleven which is, frankly, maddening.

Script readers, rightfully so, don't have time for this kind of writing. This isn't a style choice. This kind of writing for a screenplay is simply wrong.

At 165 pages...my guess at this point is you're starting the story too early. I know your protagonist at five yrs old and the next age are definitely wrong. As is the Michaels' scene....my hope is you'll chop off your first act (if you've structured this classic three act structure) probably 40 pages and that plus taking out the novelistic writing will help your script enormously

10-21 at least...feels like Downton Abbey or Masterpiece theatre or something. Is that what you want? Who is the market for this movie?

25 YOU COULD START THE SCRIPT HERE.

26 You don't need to set up the Canadians. You don't need any set up ever.

29 all the introductions are deadly.

Your log line.

During the turbulent peak of the Civil War, Roberto, a soldier of fortune in General Micheals' Brigade, finds himself caught between his quest for adventure, his honor, and his yearning for the girl he fell in love with.

The turbulent peak hasn't happened yet. We know he wants adventure; his honor hasn't been put in question yet and hasn't begun a relationship with Hazel...

...meaning to me that none of the pages I've read so far are part of the 'A' story and therefore should probably be cut.

34 You could start the script right here. You don't need the disappointment about the horse, or the rebuilding of the town, because, that's not part of the 'a' story of your movie.

35 this should be subtext.

36 I BELIEVE THIS IS THE PLACE TO START YOUR SCRIPT....with the Canadian attacks, but don't montage them...which distances us from the material.

It's the most action you have and you've written it with the least impact. A half a page of action and ten pages of Downton Abbey. Is that the movie you want to write?

40 You don't need to comment on Roberto' actions. You did it once at the tail of the scene.

43 the Canadian attack seems too quick after the troops left...particularly after having set it up a couple times.

44 the word description is much better than the actual footage. That can't be right.

54 Roberto seems to have disappeared from the script. It's more about Michael and Conrad and Edwards than Roberto.

Why didn't we see the signing of the deal? That would've been great.

67 though overwritten, I like the meeting with and dancing in the cold with Hazel and Roberto. It should be the first scene with them...and should be about page ten before Roberto leaves.

We don't care about Stephanie's marriage.

70 All he can think about????

Wondering???? All internal processes that unfilmable.

Underline everything we read on the screen.

70-71 so much novelistic writing....

I don't think we care about Vanessa and the dog...and to have Roberto tied up with a bad arm promises little or no action.

76-77 I'd lose the tour of the house. Your story has ground to a halt.

78 reading quotes is deadly.

79 Roberto settling in is not what this movie should be.

85 As much as I like the dead uncle sequence, you could take it out and not affect the story you want to be writing about. So, for me, it's a cut.

86 With Emil saying he'll always have his bags packed...not sure about it. I'd rather have the hope Roberto will return to she'll go to him.

87 I miss a Roberto returns to the men/action/fort scene.

88 Micheal's sentence reduction is just thrown away. It should be a triumph for Micheal's but is now off screen throw away.

92 Our hero is left behind. This, after being laid up with a broken bone, and being in the wrong place during the big Canadian raid earlier, makes me worried that the main character is out of the most interesting parts of this story.

97 again, Roberto is a way from the main action: of Micheal's leaving troops to die.

100 too bad Hazel suggests she and Roberto see each other. He should be driving the story and he's not.

105 "What if he doesn't ask me to stay?" Too on the nose.

106. Where's the tension, the evolving rising action, the drama, the humor, the conflict, the jeopardy?

111 Pomegranates...turning book pages. What genre is this movie?

113 another nice scene between Hazel and Roberto...

THIS THREAD OF SCENES SHOULD BE EXPANDED DRAMATICALLY. ALL THE FILLER SCENES POMEGRANATES, MUSIC, DINNER, ALL THAT STUFF, MINIMIZED. THE DRAMA OF THE WAR EXPANDED...THE 'A' STORY IDENTIFIED AND EMPHASIZED.

126 THIS SCRIPT WOULD BE VERY DIFFERENT IF ROBERTO WAS AT THE BATTLE WHERE MICHEALS BROKE THE TREATY AND MASSACRED THE CANADIANS. THEN OUR HERO WOULD BE IN THE CENTER OF THE ACTION AND MORAL DILEMMA.

HAVE YOU SEEN A MOVIE CALLED 'SOLDIER BLUE?' RENT IT IF YOU CAN.

I THINK THIS SCRIPT HAS TO BE RE-WEIGHTED...I.E. WEIGHTING THE IMPORTANT 'A' STORY SCENES AND DE-WEIGHTING THE LESSER IMPORTANT SCENES.

128 it's taken them this long to kiss...not sure that's right.

130-3 I think it's a mistake to cut away from the fighting to the sewing. Vitiates any excitement you have. Saps the momentum.

And it doesn't help to put voice over over it.

132 then you cut a way with RANCID FACE before he fires...and we miss the action. So the most dramatic moment so far, you cut away from. I don't think that's right.

134-5 Hazel and Roberto say exactly what they're feeling. It's too on the nose. This should be subtext.

136-140 Why are we following Hazel's story when we want to be with Roberto?

Really nice, touching ending. I think you have to service the Hazel/Roberto story more. Much more.

I THINK THAT THE ROBERTO/HAZEL STORY, WHICH IS THE 'A' STORY...HAS TO BE MIGHTILY EXPANDED. ONCE YOU CUT THROUGH ALL THE REST THAT'S WHAT HAS TO BE THE FOCUS OF THE SCRIPT.

ONCE YOU FINISH CREATING YOUR SCENE LIST...YOU'LL WANT TO LABEL ALL OF THEIR SCENES...AND SEE WHAT YOU HAVE. IF MEMORY SERVES, HE KISSES HER THE FIRST TIME AT 128, IT HAS TO BE MUCH SOONER. HIS GOING TO WART SHOULD SEPARATE THE HEAT OF THEM.

YOUR LOGLINE IS TOTALLY ABOUT ROBERTO AND SHOULD BE ABOUT BOTH OF THEM. IT'S THEIR STORY, RIGHT?