

So the time has come to announce the winner of this little contest, but first let's talk about the pitches that were submitted.

Your first choice was:

1. *Archaeologist Susan finds a gold bowl, a possible ancient Atlantean artifact. Reporter Mac hears of mysterious deaths from a secret military base in Alaska. Mac's editor doesn't believe him and assigns him to a climate conference. He reluctantly goes and meets Susan. Susan shows slides to prove a comet hit earth thousands of years ago. Astronomers predict the imminent arrival of a threatening comet. NASA will launch a missile to destroy it. Susan convinces the President that she can find the key to human survival in the Yucatan, then persuades Mac to help her. General Ruckus tells the President the Alaskan antennas will find more oil, while hiding his use of the antennas as weapons.*

The next two acts follow Susan and Mac as they search for Atlantis in the Yucatan. Ruckus sends men to stop them. Susan and Mac combat snakes, grave robbers, and the henchmen, while enduring dangerous river rapids and high waterfalls. Ruckus and his girlfriend target Beijing on the high tide, solar eclipse, full moon day of the comet's arrival. Mac knocks out Ruckus, blows up the antennas, crashes a bulldozer, and is left for dead. Susan survives a deathly hot crystal cave, but eventually finds an artifact. After she opens a box, a laser beam shoots upward into space, hits the Face on Mars, then bounces back to Earth, hitting the Sphinx. Atlanteans appear. Nuclear weapons soar into space and explode the comet. Ruckus is jailed. Susan is awarded the Nobel Peace prize. Mac posthumously gets the Pulitzer Prize. In the end, Mac realizes that he has had amnesia after hitting his head on the dozer windshield. Susan places the box and the gold bowl in the Metropolitan Museum. Susan leaves the museum, then picks up a newspaper. Date on paper is 12-21-2012. Mac finds Susan. He kisses her and tells her, "You're my biggest story". A happy ending keeps them together, ready for another adventure.

So before I tackle the pitch itself, I want to share a little something. NO DISRESPECT TO THE SCREENWRITER, but these are the lessons you learn from, right?

In the logline contest, it was this idea that had the most votes.

In the pitch contest... it got like... 2. Why? Ya'll fucking loved it the first time around, so why not the second.

It's simple...

It's not exciting. There's no thrill to it. It's very "...and then this..." which is boring.

Now, for the record, I have exchanged emails with this writer and they were confused on what I wanted. Did I want a pitch? Or a short summary?

I explained that there was no difference.

Listen people... anytime... and I mean ANYTIME... you send anyone ANYTHING about your script, it has to have life. It has to breath. Think. Feel.

When you write a pitch, don't mindfuck yourself out of it. It's YOUR story. YOU wrote it. YOU'RE excited about it! Show us at all times. So next time you sit down and write out a summary or a pitch, imagine you're at the bar, had a couple of tequila shots in ya and you're telling your best friend the story.

"OH MY GOD! GUESS WHAT I THOUGHT OF!"

There was a guy I went to film school with... we had screenwriting together. The night before we had to pitch our ideas in class, we were at the bar. As we always did, we started talking about class.

ME: So what did you come up with for class?

HIM: Oh MY God, dude...yadda yadda yadda!

CUT TO: The next day in class...

HIM: (like fucking Ben Stein or Steven Wright) ...and then, um, this guy, wait... so, then... um... he does this... and then...he goes there... um, meets a girl... does some shit...

WHAT HAPPENED?!?

You have to have life in your pitch, even on paper. The logline for this idea was awesome! Many of you thought so...again, highest votes...

'Twas the pitch that killed the beast...

NEXT!

2. *Troubled by his vices, Professional screenwriter Richard Elkhart, creates a screenplay about a screenwriter, Alan, who has problems with his lack of imagination. But, just as Richard manipulates Allan's world, he soon finds all is not as it seems in his own. His daughter Jenny disappears, and his only communication with her is via his computer -- in screenplay format -- and cell phone.*

From the opening scenes we see that we're in for a mind bending ride as we follow this trio and offbeat supporting characters while they work through their dilemmas, through three interconnected plot lines, in this PG 13 rated, multi-genred story based on the craft of screenwriting.

Okay, another one that didn't get a lot of love the second time around. I've also exchanged emails with the writer on this one and they felt that they didn't put their best foot forward.

Lesson on this one? Get it right the first time! All of you knew the deal. All of you knew that your shit was going to get published.

So what happened? I was worried in the logline portion of the contest that this idea was a little... complicated. And the pitch only strengthens that. I have no idea what this script is... which lead me to my next point...

IF YOU HAVE TO TELL ME WHAT YOUR SCRIPT IS, THEN YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH YOUR SCRIPT!

See what the writer does in that second paragraph? They consciously know they can't explain their idea and then this happens:

WRITER: You know I'm not explaining it well, but trust me...there's some cool dialog, some groovy characters...lots of good times and hey, it's PG-13! Isn't that great...so, um...where do you want me to sign and can I have a check now?

Market your script with your idea, with your description, with your passion...don't just market your script like I'm a fucking reject without an education.

You write it right, I'll get it. And if you find yourself telling me to "not worry cause I'll have a good time" then it's not right and you need to go back to the drawing board.

One last thing, and this is why we do this, but if your logline is complicated, and your pitch is complicated... then I highly doubt I'm going to read your script and a light bulb is going to go off. There are warning signs people. See them before you commit to 120 pages!

And now...ladies and gentlemen...I give you, your winner:

3. *Hero Island is a family survival thriller in the vein of "Deliverance." It focuses on a work-obsessed dad, his unappreciated wife and their two headstrong kids as they try to save their marriage by spending a week long vacation reconnecting on a remote tropical island. A vacation won by their son in a video game contest. Problems occur when the son finds a waterproof digital camera with incriminating photos of a kidnapped young woman, floating off shore. To the family's shock; a billionaire yachtsman appears who wants the camera back and the family dead.*

The family must now run for their lives only to discover that the camera and billionaire were all a set up for a new interactive game. But they soon find out that real military pirates are on the island. The family pulls together as a team until the wife, daughter and son get kidnapped. Now the dad can no longer out-manuever the pirates but must confront them head-on to rescue his family. Yet, little does the family know... there is one final twist.

Okay, so right off the bat, not the biggest fan of people telling me what it is. And in all honesty (because I've read the script already) it's NOTHING like Deliverance. So MAJOR fail there.

Other than that, the first paragraph is good. Sets up the story, the characters, the location...good, got it.

The family must now run for their lives...

I would take a guess that THIS is the line that grabbed most of you who voted for this pitch. It's so simple, but so fucking pulls you in. It's full of action. See how sometimes less is more?

I'm going to get into it next week, but I just want to say this upfront...the video game aspect is the biggest problem with this script...it ruins the entire script.

I've already chatted with the author and I found out some VERY interesting things that led to them putting that storyline in. I'll share those stories and much more next week!

As always you can send in questions or comments to weekendread@gmail.com I welcome any feedback you have. I genuinely appreciate all of the compliments you've sent and wickedly adore all of the negative ones.

Till next week...