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Square One

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A thesis and exegesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Creative Writing

## ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of a full-length screenplay of a pilot for television. The summary of the screenplay is as follows:

After losing his job, high flying lawyer Eric Galloway packs up his family and moves back into his elderly mother's home in Highburn - the run down, rough part of town. Eric plans to open up his own firm and get the family back on its feet financially. However, his plans begin to fall apart when he becomes involved with the local gang leader, Jackal, and a group of middle class busybodies who are trying to gentrify the area. Eric tries to manage working with both sides to improve his family's situation, but gets stuck in the middle of class warfare, and only ends up neglecting his family in the process. This is a story about good intentions, gentrification, and community.

This Thesis is framed by an Exegesis which is a 6000 word essay on the subject of:

- (a) The genre of the Thesis
- (b) The emotional truth of the Thesis
- (c) The development process of the Thesis from synopsis to second draft

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Abstract.....	2
II. Attestation of Authorship.....	4
III. Part One: Genre Analysis	
1. Define the term “genre”.....	6
2. Identify the genre of your screenplay.....	7
3. Make a case that this genre is recognized by the industry.....	7
4. Summarize the history of that genre.....	9
5. Identify the key signifiers of this genre.....	10
6. Explain the expectations of this genre’s contemporary audience.....	11
7. Explain how your screenplay fulfils those expectations.....	12
8. Explain how your screenplay provides a fresh perspective.....	13
IV. Part Two: Script Development Process	
1. Emotional Truth.....	14
2. Initial concept to first draft	
a.) Synopsis: First Draft.....	15
b.) Development: First Draft.....	16
3. First Draft to Second Draft	
a.) Synopsis: Second Draft.....	19
b.) Development: Second Draft.....	20
4. Second Draft to Polished Second Draft	
a.) Synopsis: Polished Second Draft.....	21
b.) Development: Polished Second Draft.....	22
V. References.....	26
VI. Square One Script.....	28

## ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_, Christie Roberts.

## Exegesis

“Gentrification, Drama and Development.”

## Part One: Genre Analysis

### **1. Define the term 'genre.'**

'Genre,' refers to the particular group or wider set of films or television programs a single film or program can be paired with based on similar themes, tones, settings, and/or audiences. It is often used for marketing purposes, to attract a particular audience who are expected to enjoy it the most based on their pre-existing appreciation for other screen productions like it. Genre is in many ways the embodiment of analysing audience expectations, and establishing a set of repeated elements. These elements include, but are not limited to: story structure, ending, character types and actions, and audio-visual effects such as music choices, colour palettes, and shots. These varying elements come together, and through experimenting with form, evolves to incorporate new norms. In this way, genre is not static, which makes it hard for both academics and film makers alike to agree on a definition.

Genre can also be further broken down into subgenres, which is a more precise way of dividing up material by their elements. This is useful, as it allows a viewer to more easily label and therefore seek out their specific tastes, as well as marketers to find the correct audience. For example, an audience member who enjoys the broader genre of 'comedy,' because they enjoy films that make them laugh, may not necessarily enjoy 'mockumentary' style comedy - or at least not believe that they do based on previous encounters with such films - but may find 'romantic comedy' highly entertaining and prefer to view films that fall in this genre.

In many ways, the genre of a film is dependant on the films that have gone before it. A new 'horror' may be measured against all those that have gone before it: does it

have the slasher quality of *Psycho* or *Scream*? Or the creeping dread of psychological horrors like *The Black Swan* or *The Babadook*? Or can it be compared to another set of films? This is not to say that all films must be derivative of one another, but that they simply must share similarities in how they approach a story and how that story is portrayed on screen. Genre is also a tool which helps the film studio know how best to market the film and whom it needs to be marketed to. It also allows audiences to seek out and find films they will most enjoy.

## **2. Identify the genre of your screenplay.**

The genre of my screenplay is television crime drama.

For my three television programs, I have chosen the following:

– *Boardwalk Empire* (HBO)

– *Breaking Bad* (AMC)

– *The Wire* (HBO)

## **3. Make a case that this genre is recognized by the industry.**

Through looking at the opinions of critics and books dedicated to the subject, one can observe that ‘crime drama’ is indeed a genre that is recognized by the wider television industry. In order to justify the term, we will look at how several television programmes often grouped into this genre are described by academics and professionals.

First, we have HBO’s *Boardwalk Empire*, a premium cable show which focuses on criminal underbelly of Atlantic City. Radio Times news editor Suanna Lazarus described the show as a “award-winning 1920s crime drama,” in her article

announcing the end of the series, *Boardwalk Empire to end after five seasons*. In their book *Tony Soprano's America: Gangsters, Guns, and Money*, critics M. Keith Booker and Isra Daraiseh explore various shows inspired by *The Sopranos*, one of which is American show *Boardwalk Empire*, which they describe as “a lavish crime drama set during the Prohibition era of the 1920’s,” (14). Booker and Daraiseh go on to describe the series as “[narrating] the the twilight of American organized crime,” and dealing with the subject of “gangsterism,” reinforcing that this work, which is classed by critics as ‘crime drama’ deals with gangs and criminal underbellies.

AMC’s *Breaking Bad*, too, is often referred to as a crime drama. In his book *Sepinwall On Mad Men and Breaking Bad: An eShort from the Updated Revolution Was Televised*, Alan Sepinwall refers to *Breaking Bad* as “an epic crime drama” which is “dark, and graphic,” citing a conversation with showrunner Vince Gilligan himself, who described the show as the “metamorphosis of a guy transforming from a good, law-abiding citizen to a drug kingpin,” (67, 68). Even the shows creator clearly intended *Breaking Bad* to show two sides of the law, and follow a protagonist on a journey through both parts of society.

Finally, we have the criticality acclaimed HBO’s *The Wire*. In a review, New York Daily News entertainment writer, David Hinckley describes the show as a “prime crime drama,” praising the shows vastness and “huge ensemble cast of cops, journalists, politicians, criminals, hustlers and wary bystanders.” Hinckley also states that *The Wire* is a show that “rejects the easy notion that any parts of life, or any of the people in it, come in black and white,” which is consistent with the way criminals



and police are usually portrayed in crime drama - as flawed, well intentioned, and desperate, struggling people.

#### **4. Summarize the history of that genre.**

It is likely that crime drama is derived from early literary detective fiction arising in the late 1880's. This literary genre was born out of the Gothic genre, which often featured dark settings and undertones, favoured sexual sensuality over emotional romance, and most importantly, draped every element of the story in mystery. From gothic would come the detective novel - cosy mysteries in Britain like those of Agatha Christie's works, and hard boiled in the United States.

These popular genres carried through the mystery and allure of dark anti-heros and innocent maidens from the gothic, and on screen would morph to become the film noir in the 1940's. The medieval castles and candle light of the gothic would become steamy dark streets, and lamplights casting shadows through the Venetian blinds. In 1925, Alfred Hitchcock would direct his first film, and go on to change the landscape of the crime genre by the mid-century, to one more focused on psychological crime and thrills than shoot-outs and gangsters. Hitchcock worked to create suspense and dread in his mysteries, and studied the work of Freud to better understand how the human psyche worked (Sandis, 56). Characters and villains alike would become far more three dimensional and complex as a result of his work, and a new standard had been set.

By the mid-to-late-50's, a new set of rating systems had been put into place, relaxing standards and allowing for a new wave of more adult content (Dirk, "Crime

and Gangster Films”). Violence and drugs made their way onto the screen, and in the wake of this change came Kubrick’s 1971 screen adaptation of *A Clockwork Orange*. This film would spark outrage due to its depictions of graphic violence and corrupted youth, issuing forth new interest in how such acts could be eradicated in off-screen society. The film was blamed for real life crimes committed by youths, and outright banned along with its novel counterpart in various countries and states. Suddenly crime drama was less about mystery and a good chase scene, and more about crime in the real world.

This new focus and evermore laxening rules and censorship would eventually lead to the crime drama we see today: narratives which feature and often centre on drugs, such as *The Wire* or *Better Call Saul*; stories that attempt to showcase and appropriately quash crimes which are topical and/or known to be currently ailing society, with the protagonist/s being in a position to punish the wrongdoer, such as shows like *CSI*, *Homeland*, and even *Dexter*; and shows which are able to use depictions of, or allusions to, serious and violent crimes, to make the viewer fully appreciate the impact it is to have on others, thereby building empathy between viewer, victim, and hero.

## **5. Identify the key signifiers of this genre in story and screenplay.**

Crime drama shows are likely to have a protagonist who is in some way tied up in the law, whether it be through enforcing the law, or by being on the wrong side of it. The settings generally tend to be major cities, particularly the impoverished neighbourhoods or suburbs of it, where crime is presumed to be rife, characters are

under immense pressure, and it is dangerous for all characters concerned, whether they be for or against the law.

In many cases characters who are on the wrong side of the law tend to be underdogs and relatable, likeable, and noble. Audiences will often admire them and empathize with them, whilst even sometimes going so far as to rationalize or justify their illegal actions. In this way, you will often find that legality and morality are not one and the same in crime dramas, though they are expected to be in real life.

A black and white system is often abandoned in crime dramas, as while both sides of the law do what they need to do, and both have their own important motivations that the viewer can understand and accept each is doing their duty. The police, while almost always characters in this genre, are often the antagonists, or carry the threat of the worst thing that can possibly happen to the characters in the story - arrest, and possibly even jail time.

## **6. Explain the expectations of this genre's contemporary audience.**

The features of the crime drama genre provide the audience with many emotionally and psychologically satisfying aspects. The settings of impoverished, crime addled parts of cities takes the viewer into dangerous territory they wouldn't normally visit - a trip to an almost exotic and exciting place. Delving into this criminal world, and all the violence and seediness that it entails, sates the audience's morbid curiosity, and allows them to experience dark matters in a safe and thrilling way.

From the characters themselves, the audience also really goes in expecting to find an underdog to root for. Audiences love an underdog tale, because we love to see characters we can empathize with overcome the enormous odds stacked against them. The viewer can, on some level, identify with characters who are wrongly vilified or not expected to succeed by those around them. Everyone sees themselves as the underdog of their own story, so following a likeable rookie cop, a mobster, or a washed up criminal lawyer through their own climb to power and glory is incredibly satisfying for the audience.

Another expectation of the contemporary audience is to be introduced to characters and situations which are morally ambiguous. In crime drama, they will find their heroes in situations where the only solution is not necessarily the legal one. Seeing the character take risks they themselves wouldn't brave is not only exciting, it also feels like a transgressive act simply to cheer them on. In this way, crime drama allows the audience to feel strong and rebellious alongside the protagonist.

**7. Explain how your screenplay fulfils those expectations (why does it belong in this genre?).**

My screenplay provides the viewer entrance into a community and introduces them to characters that dwell in the criminal underbelly. Through my main character, the viewer moves through this world from the perspective of a fellow outsider, who himself has been knocked down to the position of an underdog. Through the themes of gentrification, and the threat introduced to the community from outsiders, in some ways Highburn itself is an underdog. Moral ambiguity is present, with the criminal street gang manufacturing and selling drugs, but in an admirable way, in that they do

so in an attempt to fund community based projects. I have also attempted to make the members of this gang likeable and funny, earthy and complex, and hope that they come across as lovable underdogs - particularly Jackal and Shani. I feel I have gone to great pains to humanize my criminal characters, to the point where hopefully the viewer will first see them as people, and secondarily as criminals, who are hopefully easy to empathize with and root for, as is common in the crime drama genre.

**8. Explain how your screenplay provides the audience for this genre a fresh perspective on the genre (why is it different from others in the same genre?)**

I feel that my screenplay is unique, in that in most other crime dramas it isn't always exactly clear what is at stake should the criminal element be allowed to continue uninterrupted, and/or should the police bust the criminals. Often times it is family, or it is moral-based and society at large is at risk, but these are very much in the background of the concerns, and the character's wants and future plans are more at the forefront. In most crime dramas, it is simply a matter of the law needing to be enforced or avoided, simply because the protagonist holds a certain job - drug dealer or police officer alike. In my screenplay, I have set out with the clear vision that it is the community itself and the suburb of Highburn who are at stake, and they are the one the war is being waged over, not unlike in an old wild west film. Class warfare is also a common theme in crime drama, but it is very much in the background and only used sparingly. In my script, class conflict is a driving force behind the narrative, and very much at the forefront of the story. I also feel the themes of gentrification are unique and provide an interesting fresh spin on this genre, as it is rarely a topic explored directly in television and cinema.

## Part Two: Script Development Process

### **Emotional truth**

The emotional truth in my script is that every person ultimately believes what they are doing is what is right, even when it isn't. This is how people set goals, and how they go about achieving them, as that their ambitions and how they perceive themselves and the world around them hinges upon this belief. One of the most profound pieces of writing advice I was ever given was years ago during a lecture from a film producer - 'every villain is the hero of their own story.' I've been obsessed with that concept ever since, and always consciously try to keep it in mind whenever I write a new character.

When we act and make decisions, particularly those that affect others, we do so with the faith and belief that what we are doing is right. We are guided only by our own perception, and what we predict the outcomes and risks as being. Through pursuing this 'right way,' we so often hurt those we care about despite the fact that it was them we were trying to protect in the first place. Every audience member has experienced this, and the painful feeling of 'doing what [we] thought best' backfiring is all too common. The truth is subjective, we all have our own version of it and can only navigate around our own perception of what is 'right,' and 'wrong.' The question 'why do we always hurt the ones we love?' is frequently posed by fictional characters and philosophers alike, and I propose that this is the reason why - because we believe we are doing what is right, and therefore fail to see our mistakes before we make them. We are always the hero of our own story, and never realise when we are becoming the villain of somebody else's.

In this particular text, this truth is explored through gentrification. Whether the characters are on the side of gentrification or opposed to it, they believe themselves to be in the right. For Eric, siding with the gentrifiers is about providing for his family and getting them back to their happy lives, which is seemingly a noble cause, but it means ruining the lives of other families. For Jackal, who heads the anti-gentrification side, it is about conservation and saving the community from eviction, but also about repairing and improving places in which the community is lacking. However, this means admitting that the community needs work, and opens it up to complete transformation. In pursuing the route of gentrification, and chasing after the investment scheme, Eric is doing what he believes best for his family, but in doing so he loses touch with and isolates his family in the process. The same applies for Jackal's relationship with Shani as he tries to alter the community, which eventually costs Shani her freedom.

I believe this concept of trying our best to do what we believe is right, and failing is something that resonates with all of us, and is the place from which all the character conflicts were written. Every villain is the hero of their own story, but rarely ever realises they are the villain.

### **How did your screenplay develop from initial concept to first draft?**

#### **Synopsis: First Draft**

*Square One* is the pilot episode of a New Zealand crime drama television series. After lawyer Eric Galloway's loses his job he relocates the family to the suburb of Highburn - the 'rough' part of town - to financially recuperate. Eldest daughter Iris is ripped out of her flat and brought home, only to force herself into the flat above the

family dairy next door to Nana's, much to the horror of the current occupant, Shani. Eric discovers that said dairy is also being leased to the local gang leader - Jackal. Youngest daughter Opal is devastated and tries to save face by telling everyone she's off to Italy for an exchange. This ends up backfiring when best friend Cara spills the beans.

Eric ends up becoming wrapped up in an investment scheme with a large group of fellow middle class folks, led by Tyler. They plan on building a mall in Highburn to up land value. Jackal makes his objections known and gets arrested. Eric jumps at the opportunity for a new client and ends up forming an uneasy professional relationship with Jackal behind Tyler's back. After Iris and Shani learn of the mall's impending construction, Shani organises a 'protest,' which becomes a riot, and the dead body of Jackal's missing son is unearthed in the hole dug by the investors.

The primary theme of *Square One* is gentrification, which is what is happening in Highburn during the story. Eric, as well as his daughters who are also point of view characters, are middle class and those they conflict with in the script are working class as well as upper class. I have attempted to set up a class-warfare situation in Highburn, as well as reflecting hues of the current housing crisis going on in New Zealand right now.

### Development: First Draft

The primary changes that occurred between my original synopsis and the first draft of my script focused on relations between the Highburn locals and the main cast of outsiders. Through workshopping, it became obvious that the working class locals



were giving in to the middle class invaders far too easily. This was not reflective of genuine real world class interactions, and served the characters who were at the top, who are already used to getting their own way in their own world, while the working class characters gained nothing from the relationships they chose to allow. Unfortunately, I had found myself romanticising these lower class characters in a way I feel is akin to the 'noble savage,' trope. Their presumed lack of materialism made me write them as highly empathetic, and forgiving characters, willing to blindly follow a stranger in dress shoes.

Between my first synopsis and first beat sheet, surprisingly few major changes were made. Eric and Jackal start off on the wrong foot, but this is quickly mended when Eric represents Jackal in court; Jackal is able to convert Eric easily over to the anti-gentrification team simply by 'bonding,' with him. At the end of both drafts, Eric turns on former business partner Tyler, and works with the gang to plant false historical relics on the construction site to halt the progress of the mall but it's a body that's found instead, though in my beat sheet it's emphasised that Eric is going so far as to 'endanger his legal career' for this cause - somewhat of a step back in terms of developing a more nuanced and realistic depiction of class interactions. It is unrealistic to expect Eric to put his career at risk for the sake of his home town, particularly when he abandoned Highburn and set out to raise his class status with a high paying job.

In the second beat sheet, major changes towards realism and a more honest and unbiased portrayal of gentrification and class interactions. Iris and Shani are now flatmates, and Iris moves into the flat because she feels entitled to do so, despite the

fact that Shani already lives there and doesn't want her to move in. In this draft, Iris is also now a political science major. Because she has an interest in social justice issues, she believes that she understands Shani and her class, and the issues facing them. She is of course wrong. When she realises that gentrification is going on in Highburn (and that she has effectively gentrified the flat) she tries to help and protest it the best way she knows how - by getting the media involved. This backfires, and she simply tells Shani she'll follow whatever she decides to do - in this case it's riot. In this draft Iris is politically motivated, and the intention was to show that one's education is not equal to genuine empathy. The purpose of this change is to reflect the nature of middle class entitlement present in gentrification, despite Iris' intentions being seemingly pure and helpful.

Few changes were made between second beat sheet and first draft script, but there were a few adjustments made during the writing process. In the final stages of act three, Shani flees after being told her father's body has been found, and Iris chases after her, eventually following her to a forest on the outskirts of town. Once Iris catches up to her, the two end up kissing. Another somewhat major change is that after Eric represents Jackal in court, he is brought over to Jackal's house that evening for a begrudging thank-you-drink, and asked to represent the entire gang in the future. Jackal tells Eric that he'll pass his business cards out to other locals, but only if Eric is willing to do pro-bono work - if Eric's going to stay in Highburn and set up shop there, he has to make himself useful, and providing free legal aid is the one thing he has to offer. Eric awkwardly agrees, but on the inside he's not happy. This will open up reluctant interactions with the gang and wider community in future episodes, and bring Eric into contact with those who are being put at risk by gentrification. Eric

needs the gang's business to start his own firm, but it comes with the heavy price of being forced to open himself up to the locals of Highburn in their most desperate moments - something which threatens to humanize them in Eric's eyes.

### **How did your screenplay develop from first draft to second draft?**

#### **Synopsis: Second Draft**

*Square One* is a New Zealand crime drama, which centres on lawyer Eric Galloway and his family, after they are forced to give up their middle class home and life, and move in with Eric's elderly mother in the bad part of town - Highburn. Things get off to a bad start, when Eric soon realises that the cul-de-sac opposite his new home is gang infested, and leader, Jackal, isn't pleased to see him. Neither man trusts the other not to pry into their business. What's worse, is that Jackal and his boys are great pals with Eric's mum, Irene, and they've even been looking after her while he's been gone. Meanwhile, eldest daughter Iris imposes herself upon the current resident of one of Eric's Highburn flats - Shani.

Younger daughter Opal struggles to fit in at her new school, especially after she's exposed as a now-poor fraud at her old posh school. Wife Ange is having a hard time fitting in too. She doesn't seem to mesh with the other middle-class women who've moved into the area to do it up and turn a profit. After Eric agrees to be a part of an investment scheme that could change the face and fate of Highburn forever, Jackal is arrested in a moment of protest. Seeing this as a business opportunity, Eric steps in to defend him, but it turns out Jackal's up for more than just trespassing. Things only worsen when a body is unearthed at a potential development site. Something is certainly amiss in Highburn. The story explores themes of community, family,

betrayal and class. The characters are compelled by their beliefs that what they are doing is ultimately right for their family or community, and these are the things that are ultimately at stake for them.

## Development: Second Draft

Many of the key areas which were worked on between this draft and the previous one were to do with character development. In the first draft, there were many characters who were severely under-developed, particularly Eric's wife Ange and his mother Irene. Ange was not able to have meaningful screen time in the first draft, and her character suffered as a result, becoming two dimensional and flimsy. In this new draft, she was allowed to actually interact with characters outside the home and have feelings about what was going on in Highburn, rather than being mostly absent. She now has opinions and even strikes up the beginnings of a hesitant friendship with Jackal. She finally has feelings, and ends up objecting to the gentrification side of things. This causes tensions between her and Eric. Both disagree on whether or not to invest in the shopping complex. Neither will relent, and Ange ends up giving up, and opting to flee Highburn altogether.

Another character who was less developed in the first draft was Irene, who was also largely absent in the first draft. In this draft she is more heavily connected to the gang, having been more dependant on them up until Eric's arrival. A new gang character, Bernard, has been introduced, and she and him have had a romantic relationship in the past, up until her dementia worsened to the point where she no longer remembered him, but he still loves and protects her vehemently. The gang now has a high-up member who is invested in Eric's household in a meaningful way.

In this draft, Eric also has more of an investment in Highburn, beyond the shopping complex, and now owns a rental house in Highburn he wants to sell in order to get his family back to Linden and improve their financial situation, but doing so will mean displacing the tenants and potentially making them homeless. Eric is now a less passive part of the gentrification issue in Highburn, as now he is personally putting others at risk. Jackal also has had his character worked on, as in the first draft he was perhaps a little too likeable and not meaningfully threatening enough for a gang leader. He lacked complexity, and wasn't particularly multifaceted. In this draft the gang turn out to be cooking and selling meth to the locals, in order to raise money to fund the projects designed to benefit the community. This adds hypocrisy to Jackal's character, as he is corrupting the community whilst trying to save it. He chooses to ignore the situation, preferring not to think about it. At some point, Jackal will need to figure out a better way to fund his projects, and may have to compromise and do things the way Eric and his middle class mates do - the capitalistic way.

### **How did your screenplay develop from second draft to polished second draft?**

#### **Synopsis: Polished Second Draft**

*Square One* is the pilot episode of a New Zealand crime drama series. After losing his job in a dramatic turn of events, Eric Galloway up and relocates his family to his childhood home in the rough part of town - Highburn - with intentions of starting his own law firm and financially recovering. Eldest daughter, Iris, is mortified to be ripped away from her university life, but promptly finds some independence when she forces herself into the flat above the family dairy next door, despite the protests of the current resident - Shani. Youngest daughter, Opal, copes with the

sudden change by formulating a cover story with best friend Cara - she's on exchange in Italy, and definitely not slumming it in Highburn, guys! Wife, Ange, sees Highburn as an interesting new opportunity, and is thrilled to be able to care for Eric's elderly mother, Irene. The family's plans quickly fall apart when they are introduced to the locals - a mix of gangsters and gentrifiers. Eric becomes involved with the resident gang leader, Jackal, and real estate agent, Tyler. Eric tiptoes along the line between two bitter enemies, trying in vain to secure a stable future for his family, but he only ends up pushing them away, neglecting them, and unearthing a dead body in the process.

At its core, *Square One* is a story about gentrification, and how both sides of the argument see it and justify it. I have attempted to create a balance between characters who come from both middle class and working class backgrounds, who have a varying array of opinions on change, and how much change is necessary when it comes to either managing or saving a community. The story also takes into consideration the current social climate, and the housing crisis going on in New Zealand right now, as well as homelessness, poverty, and drug culture.

### Development: Polished Second Draft

The primary changes that took place between my second draft, and final polished draft focused mainly on brevity, plot continuity, and readjusting the ending. While the second draft was a vast improvement over the first draft, it was also excessively over length. The suggested word length was set at 16,000 words, but my second draft was over 27,000 words. The first step was cutting away the unnecessary excess. Needless portions of dialogue, overly directive description, and in some cases minor scenes,

were removed. The script was stripped back to just over 15,000 words, which allowed me to better understand and locate plot flaws and redundancies in the script. Although the script is still over 100 pages due to heavy dialogue use, it is now under word count limit.

No longer bogged down in drawn out paragraphs and excessive banter, it became clear that the Iris-Shani relationship line was lacking. Between their first encounter and second encounter, roughly twenty scenes pass with no other beats on this line. When they next appear together, there is a jump in the story as a scene was accidentally removed during the writing of the second draft. This scene was then stitched back into the script to straighten the line, and heavily edited down to match the current editing state of the other scenes. This remedied, the line flows correctly, and will make sense to the audience and keep them on screen longer to preserve interest in their relationship.

With these minor adjustments out of the way, focus shifted to the final act. In the second draft, the ending was actually more focused on Jackal's loss of his son than Eric's story. While these scenes were poignant and would make great television on their own, in the grand scheme of the narrative, this was actually illogical and would be confusing and unsatisfying. Eric is obviously the main character in the story, and another character's emotional suffering should not override the pinnacle and most memorable moments in the episode. While this is a television drama, and requires multiple strong lines, Jackal's line becomes the main line in this act. This needed to be corrected, to juggle both men's suffering while also bringing the main character's storyline to the forefront.

Stripping away the emphasis on the Jackal scenes in the third act was painful, as the emotion in these scenes felt so real and meaningful to me, and I attempted to salvage what I could. The scene of Jackal grieving alone in his room while Scotty watches was kept, but two other scenes were removed, one being a long scene in which Jackal returns home and converses with the gang, and the final scene which was actually a beat on Jackal's storyline.

Originally, the end played out with Eric and Jackal parting ways in the cul-de-sac, Eric returning home to an empty house and sitting alone, miserable, with a stack of unpayable bills. Jackal returns home, and is debriefed on the raid, he retreats to his room, and weeps while Scotty watches through the window. The final scene is then a flashback to twenty years before, and lasts only a few seconds, serving as a cryptic piece of foreshadowing for future episodes - Scotty and Tris as children, in their father's car at night, while a mysterious person digs a hole at what is now the shopping complex land. This quick final scene was intended to hint at the fact that Jackal killed someone, and Scotty witnessed it, eventually killing Tris to get back at his father. This of course, would be revealed in later episodes. While it was an effective scene, it was not logical to end the pilot on a beat about Jackal and his family.

The scene was removed, and replaced with a scene which is a beat on Eric's overall storyline, and relates back to his struggle to keep his family happy and whole. The third act was refocused on the Eric-family dynamic, as in previous drafts no clear decision had been made as to whether the most important relationship in the text was



Eric-Jackal or Eric and his family. The family was chosen as it was consistent with Eric's motives and actions throughout the rest of the script, as his family are who he is driven by. Instead of Eric ending the story alone, inactive, and sulking in the dark, it was changed so that he takes action to try bring Iris home and remove her from harms way, as she was last seen chasing after a drug dealer with the police in tow.

Eric now makes a decision, and chooses his daughter's wellbeing over inactivity. The final scene now consists of Eric speeding along in search of Iris and attempting to call Ange. He becomes distracted at the wheel, attempting to juggle too many balls at once, he loses control of the car as it almost barrels into a gully. The final shot pulls out, drone style, to reveal him tiny and alone staring out at the near-crash scene and Highburn itself. Although in both drafts Eric ends up alone and miserable, in this draft the gesture carries gravity, as he had been actively attempting to remedy the situation, rather than simply giving in to it. His attempts spin out of control and nearly destroy him in the process, which is reflective of his emotional state and the state of his family as it crumbles around him despite all his efforts to keep them together and afloat throughout the rest of the script. While I did prefer the final scene in the second draft as a piece of writing, in the greater context, this new scene closes the main storyline, but in a way that is still open to future episodes and the sense that there is much more to come. This scene is what the audience needs to see, rather than a teasing abstract scene that will leave them confused, unsatisfied and distracted.

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