

Script Coverage

Title

(TITLE ON FILE)

Author

(AUTHOR ON FILE)

Reader

DAVID SCHAPIRO

Pages

105

Genre

COMEDY

Location

HENDERSON NV, LAS VEGAS NV, BLUNT SD

Circa

PRESENT DAY

Budget

LOW TO MODERATE

Elements	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Premise	√			
Characters		√		
Plot Development			√	
Structure		√		
Dialogue			√	
Drama			√	
Resolution			√	
Box Office		√		

LOGLINE:

By forgetting everything, Tom Freeman discovers who he really is.

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

A fun premise filled with endless possibilities places the main character in an unusual position with the unique opportunity to reevaluate his life. Some clever moments and twists as we follow Tom Freeman, his best friends, and his fiancé, who are all searching for where the REAL Tom Freeman might have gone. The internal issue of searching for the real Tom Freeman is nicely embodied by the external problem of the amnesia. Compressing the timeframe to give the characters a timelock, and heightening the problems and drama throughout could give this script a great chance of becoming a highly sellable project with broad audience appeal.

CHARACTERS

TOM FREEMAN – We meet Tom at a crossroads in his life. Unhappy in his job and uncertain about an impending marriage, Tom is not sure of who he really is. Is he the nine-to-five, suit-and-tie kind of guy, or is he destined to be an artist? You might strengthen this internal struggle by playing up his uncertainty at the start, and allowing the experience of his new life to let him grow and become clearer about what is truly important to him. Perhaps at the start he is not the kind of person that CAN quit his job, but through this experience he BECOMES that person.

COLLETTE WALKER – When we meet Collette, Tom and her seem to be the perfect couple. They are in love and excited about the impending marriage (despite the normal pre-wedding jitters). She shares Tom's passion for art and they seem to be on the same page about their lives together. But when they meet again, post-amnesia, she has become much more of a shrew, trying to control and manipulate Tom and force him to live a life he never wanted. By keeping her consistently manipulative from beginning to end, you will strengthen her character and highlight more clearly the changes that Tom undergoes from start to finish.

KATIE – The girl that represents the path that Tom might have taken. When Tom becomes attracted to her, the audience knows that he is being pulled away from the life he had. By rounding her out and adding some depth and dimension to her, Katie can more clearly become the embodiment of the choices Tom didn't make. What if Katie loved Tom's art while Collette had derided it? What if she loved his little pranks while Collette thinks of them as immature? In little ways you can subtly show that as Tom falls more for Katie, he is distancing himself from his former life. And GIVE HER A LAST NAME!

PLOT AND PACING

The plot is quite clever and every scene that needs to be there is in place. Many of them can be tweaked to stay a few steps ahead of the audience. Be careful that your plot twists are not too convenient. That is, stay within the boundaries of logic in moving the story forward.

For instance, what reason do Tom's friends have for giving him a fake ID? Since Tom knows he ISN'T George Washington, the only reason a fake ID would be part of a prank or useful in anyway is if his friends somehow KNOW he will get amnesia, which they don't. On the other hand, suppose during the bachelor party, one of his friends pulls out an old fake ID with a random name and address from when Tom was 19, showing how much has changed since then, etc. Mindlessly, Tom slips it in his pocket. Now, when he gets amnesia, he happens upon the ID and assumes he is the person on the ID.

Likewise, Tom's friends and Collette initially underreact when Tom disappears for a week, then overreact in taking action (Tom's friends thinking that they'll be in trouble if they say anything to anyone, Collette hiring a private investigator instead of going to the police, etc). These problems all have simple solutions. What if one of Tom's friends had confessed his love for Collette, and now thinks that he would be the prime suspect if Tom disappeared? And what if Collette DID go to the police, and after immediately seeing her bitchy and stuck up nature, they jump to the conclusion that her groom had second thoughts and ran off.

STORY AND STRUCTURE

The story starts off right, giving some background on the characters and where they are in life. But think about what you're setting up. What does Tom need to learn? Right now, it seems like all he has to learn is that there's a better woman out there for him in Katie. If he's the kind of character that can decide to quit his job because it's not what he loves ("if you don't enjoy it, don't do it anymore" (p. 8), if he's the kind of character that loves his art in the face of his experience at the Expo Center (p. 9), then he doesn't have far to grow. On the other hand, if he's the person who's too scared to quit, if he is on the verge of giving up on his art because he has lost confidence in it, and if he can't stand up to Collette, who berates him, now you have a character that needs something to come along to show him where he's gone off-track.

The story becomes a bit unfocused after the accident. The problem here is that Tom does not actually have a goal. Yes he'd like to have his memory back, but he doesn't work to achieve that goal, other than brief moments at the therapist. Giving him a goal would help bring cohesion to the story. And if Katie helps with that goal, it would help scenes where Katie and Tom are together. It is tempting to have characters give their backstory to each other in order to show them falling in love. And that's usually how we do fall in love in the real world. But in a film, your goal should be to remain active. So then suppose while trying any method possible to jog something, Katie and Tom pass an art store. On a whim, Katie takes Tom inside. There's an area to do some doodling. And Tom starts. And he's GOOD. And he frantically grabs paintbrushes, and opens paints and grabs a canvas, and now instead of painting cheesy Elvises, he's painting scenery from Henderson. This solves THREE problems: One, it allows Katie and Tom to be ACTIVE as they get to know each other. Second, it offers a more creative way for Tom's memory to start to return. Third, it gives a hint that he was held back in his old life, that perhaps his shame about his art, and Collette's criticism of it, made him a worse artist. Without those chains, he's free, and he's actually a damn good artist!

Collette and Tom's friends do have a goal. However, you've expanded the timeline into months, so there's no real rush to find Tom. Consider compressing the timeline down so that the action takes place in the two weeks leading up to the wedding. Suddenly, with the need to find Tom before the wedding, everything becomes heightened and more imperative.

The pacing also gets hindered by a multitude of side stories that don't reflect the main character's struggle, and therefore lack resonance. Think about how Shelly's loneliness and longing for the spotlight can speak to the decisions that Tom needs to make. How can you give something to Tom to take from her struggle that will help him? Can Katie be going at a similar crossroads in her life so that her struggle can inform Tom's decisions? Think of your screenplay as an argument. Tom believes marriage and a steady job is the "responsible" path (although quitting the job at the start makes this inconsistent, so you might consider changing that, as suggested earlier). Now Tom has amnesia and he's going to have the chance to hear other philosophies. Shelly is going to tell him something about how life should be lived, Katie is going to have something to say about it. Probably even Nate will have something to say. Remember, they don't need to SPEAK these things. It's the way they live that will give Tom something to think about. You're on the right track when Nate and Tom talk about being proud of who you are and not try and be someone else (p. 28).

One other thing I'd suggest is that Nate not take Tom to the hospital. There are a few problems with the hospital visit. One is that they would not release an amnesia victim unless they tracked down friends or family. Another is that the amnesia is glossed over too quickly ("Don't panic – but you have amnesia..." (p. 25)). It might be a bit easier to swallow if Tom passes out, and Nate nurses him back to health at his home. Then he assists in getting Tom to Blunt, and perhaps sticks around longer to help Tom get on his feet and figure out who he is again.

DIALOGUE

The dialogue is generally light and conversational. Occasionally, characters speak too generally:

COLLETTE

Tom, we're not going to see
eye to eye on everything
100% of the time.

TOM

I know, but, we haven't
decided even where to live –
– you want the city, I want
the country.

City versus Country is fine, but do people actually SAY those words? When you get specific, things become more real:

COLLETTE

Linda was telling me about these gorgeous townhouses being built just off the Strip.

TOM

The Strip? It's so congested. You know the Middleton's farm over on Sandy Hollow Lane just went up for sale.

COLLETTE

Tom, we've talked about this. We're not going all "Green Acres". I need at least six shoe stores in a three mile radius...

Similarly, when Collette reveals that she's making her wedding her final project:

COLLETTE (CONT'D)

I can't wait for my professor to see the design I've created for this wedding.

TOM

Professor?

COLLETTE

Well yeah. I decided to make our wedding my final project before I get my interior decorating degree.

TOM

So, our wedding is a science project...

COLLETTE

No...more like show and tell.

It's a fine moment, but not written conversationally. Also, it's unusual that this is the first time it's being mentioned. And if it is the first time being mentioned, it's even more unusual that Collette would start talking about the professor as if Tom would have any idea what she's talking about. Instead, consider:

COLLETTE (CONT'D)

When I told my professor that our wedding would be my final project for my interior decorating degree, he was pretty hesitant.

TOM

Well so was I. I'm not sure I like our wedding being your science project.

COLLETTE

Every relationship is an experiment. But who knows. Maybe ours is the penicillin of relationships. Or the "cure for cancer" of relationships.

TOM

Or the nuclear bomb of relationships...

COLLETTE

(Sarcastic)
Boy, call Disneyland. Because the three foot radius around you is now officially "the happiest place on earth".

Similarly, you have the makings for some GREAT set pieces because of Tom's propensity towards pranks. But the prank he pulls at the start of the script is rather mundane. Think "Punk'd" rather than "America's Funniest Home Videos".

I'm not sure if you were aware when you hired me, but I've actually been staff writer for three prank shows. And I've pitched things like your tuxedo prank. The note the producers would give me is that it isn't a prank if we TELL them to do something and they do it. So think in terms of creating a prank that will place Tom's friends in an awkward position without being instructed.

For instance, the movie starts at the tuxedo rental place. An attractive girl comes in and sees Tom. She's thrilled. They're old friends. She confesses that she's always had a crush on Tom. His friends are blown away. This hot girl loved their friend?! Tom tells her that he's getting married in two weeks, and she says, "So you aren't married yet, then...." She takes him by the hand into a fitting room. Tom's friends are even more impressed that Tom's about to make it with this gorgeous girl. Suddenly, Collette walks through the

door of the Tux shop. She got out of work early and thought she'd see how the tux fitting was going. The friends are horrified. Tom is in the back making it with a girl and his fiancé is right there! They try and get Collette out, but she won't leave. Moans start coming from the fitting room, and Tom's friends try and speak loudly to cover it up. Collette starts to get suspicious and asks where Tom is. Tom's friends have no idea what to do. They're sweating, they're hemming and hawing, when Tom comes out with this girl, both half dressed. Collette is pissed, and Tom's friends are mortified. Collette screams that the wedding is off and storms out. Tom can't believe that his friends didn't warn him. They've ruined his whole life! His friends are speechless and feel terrible, when Collette returns, smiling. She kisses Tom, and Tom smiles at his friends. "GOTCHA!" Tom set the whole thing up, and Collette as well as the attractive girl was in on it. All to prank his friends. Truly Tom is the master!

SUGGESTIONS

ACT 1

You introduce a great premise.

You introduce the characters nicely.

You start with a humorous opening scene.

1. Show Tom to be at a crossroads in his life. He wants to quit his job, but can't. He wants to be an artist, but isn't that good.
2. Show Collette to be more of a controller and more manipulative. She has a plan for her life with Tom, and nothing will get in her way.
3. Set up a reason why Tom's friends will later be reluctant to go to the authorities when Tom goes missing. Perhaps one of them has confessed his love for Collette, and thus will be seen as the prime suspect in Tom's disappearance.
4. Justify the fake ID. Consider the idea of the ID being an old one Tom used before he turned 21
5. Write the dialogue using specifics rather than generalities

ACT 2

You create separate groups, each with their own clearly defined agendas (Collette and Gabe, Tom's Friends, Tom and Katie).

You move between stories (Collette, Tom's friends, Tom) smoothly.

You introduce a nice complication (Katie).

1. Work towards making each of the side stories somehow relate to Tom more directly, specifically Katie's and Shelly's.
2. Condense the timeline so that the wedding creates a neat timelock and the audience understands that there is a time limit for Tom to make his choices and Tom's friends/Collette to find Tom.

3. Give Tom a goal. How will he attempt to get his memory back? How will he find what job he will be good at? Be more creative about Tom's search for his identity than simply having him go to a therapist who jogs everything into place.
4. Give Tom an obstacle. Create more complications. Does someone that likes Katie find out about Tom's condition and who he really is? Could he think he's gay because of the dress he was found in and his artistic bent? Maybe he resists Katie's advances because of it, or generally is afraid to get close to Katie until he knows who he is.

ACT 3

1. Build suspense by giving Tom a moment where all seems lost. Tom remembers who he is, and goes to his wedding to marry Collette. But perhaps Katie shows up there, or something is said or done that makes him realize that he's not stuck being the person he was. The amnesia showed him that. It's now that Tom should realize that "if you don't enjoy it, don't do it anymore."
2. The ending should be "surprising, yet inevitable". Tom remembering who he is off-camera in therapy, then making an internal decision to stay with Katie, doesn't give the audience much to root for. Consider a reason why Tom's memory gets in the way of being with Katie. Even the memory that he's supposed to be married tomorrow may be enough.
3. Show what Tom learns. How do the character traits he was lacking at the start of the story now present themselves? Does he go into his office and quit his job? Is his painting now brilliant? Does he stand up to Collette?
4. If a friend of Tom's (Fred, for instance) confesses to loving Collette at the start, could that present an opportunity to bring closure to Collette's story by having she and Fred end up together?]

GRAMMAR

PAGE	Problem		Solution
7	Mayer Jim Gibson	should be	Mayor Jim Gibson
7	"What do you say we go dancing, the... "	should be	"What do you say we go dancing? The... "
8	"...when the passions gone..."	should be	"...when the passion's gone..."
8	"Even the good day's are bad..."	should be	"Even the good days are bad..."
8	fiancee'	should be	fiancé
9	"I'm at a changing stage in my life..."	should be	"I'm at a crossroads in my life..." (suggestion only)
9	His paintings for sell are of the...	should be	His paintings for sale are the...
12	" Because, were going to be family..."	should be	" Just because we're going to be family..."
42	"...fries, and a coke. "	should be	"...fries, and a Coke. "
44	Tom skims through the yellow pages..."	should be	Tom skims through the white pages..."
51	"Now your getting confrontational..."	should be	"Now you're getting confrontational..."
56	Collette: Sorry, I just thought maybe..." Gabe: Well, it didn't.	should be	Unclear what is meant by Gabe's response.
65	"Quick, Collette , run!"	should be	"Quick, Katie , run!"
65	"—Walter, he takes of the cabin for us."	should be	"—Walter, he takes care of the cabin for

			us.”
76	“I mean, I have aclass tomorrow...”	should be	“I mean, I have a class tomorrow...”
89	“A really need to use the bathroom.”	should be	“I really need to use the bathroom.”
93	Collette: No you hold on – we had planned our entire life out. Tom: No, you did. Collette: Excuse me?! Tom: You’re right, I did ask you....”	should be	Not sure how this exchange makes sense. I believe Tom might be referring to his job when he says, “You’re right, I did ask you.” In which case, it should be, “You’re right, I didn’t ask you.” But I don’t see where Collette accused Tom of quitting his job without asking her.
95	Collette: Are you saying the wedding is on hold? Tom: I think so, yes. Collette: Well, either you are or you aren’t.	should be	Not sure what Collette’s response means.
98	“ There’s no jobs around here.”	should be	“ There are no jobs around here.”
98	“I new there had to be a catch.”	should be	“I knew there had to be a catch.”
99	“I new it was a bad idea.”	should be	“I knew it was a bad idea.”
100	“Ah, You’re just saying that.”	should be	“Ah, you’re just saying that.”
103	He pulls the vale up...	should be	He pulls the veil up...

You have a great premise (and great title!), which I’d like to see you take advantage of by focusing on the basic questions about your main character:

- **Who is Tom at the start?**
- **What does he want?**
- **What is getting in his way of what he wants?**
- **What is at stake if Tom doesn’t succeed?**
- **What does he learn?**

I hope that this coverage offers you the direction and focus you are looking for as you proceed with your next draft.

MOTIVATION:

Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.

- **THOMAS EDISON, inventor**

It is not the critic who counts, nor the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena.

- **President THEODORE ROOSEVELT**

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PROJECT, AND THINK OF ME FOR FUTURE DRAFTS AND FUTURE PROJECTS.