

STEVE CLEARY

Screenwriting & Script Consulting

SCREENPLAY EVALUATION

Script Title: Weed Man

Script Author: *(withheld)*

Date: 08/24/17

Grade: (pass, consider, recommend) Pass

Genre: Action, Comedy

Logline: When a young man gains an uncanny superpower of making people high after a nuclear-strain pot brownie baking explosion, he must stop the head of a pharmaceutical company from illegally interfering with weed-friendly legislation

Basic Synopsis:

JIMMY leads a dull life working in a copy shop. His dream, encouraged by his ailing grandmother, is to be a world-class baker with his own bakery. She dies and Jimmy's friend, weed-dealer HECTOR, has him over to cook some pot brownies, with a strain of weed that was grown in the fallout of Fukushima. The brownies explode, sending Jimmy to the hospital.

Taking out the trash after being discharged, he encounters an attempted mugging and while trying to thwart it, discovers he has an ability to release a THC mist from his wrists. This disarms the mugger who floats off in a zonked stupor. Jimmy shares this discovery with Hector who laughs him off.

Picking up his grandmother's things at the hospital, Jimmy uses his new power to assuage the pain of his grandmothers old hospital roommate, HELEN. Jimmy then resolves to help all the ailing people who could benefit from the medicinal effects of THC, incognito in a luchador mask.

MATTHEW, head of a pharmaceutical corporation, hears about Jimmy's activities and resolves to find him as orders for his pain medication have dropped. Matthew dispatches henchman CARTER to track him down, but is only able to confirm that nurse KATRINA knows WeedMan, as she encounters him while administering to Helen one night. Carter sneaks in to Helen's room and chokes her with a Twinkie to frame Jimmy.

On the run, Jimmy learns Matthew was behind Helen's killing, and has taken Katrina hostage as a warning to stop helping people. Jimmy turns to Hector for support. They bake another batch of nuclear pot brownies to give Hector the same powers.

They show up at Matthew's office and after taking down an army of heavies, Jimmy has a final battle with Matthew on the penthouse balcony. Matthew gains the upper hand, but Jimmy ultimately disarms him with his THC mist, knocking him out. Police come, arrest Matthew and Carter, and with reward money from Helen's family, Jimmy starts his own bakery.

Overall

The script promised an interesting take on a superhero origin story, but ultimately fell short in the comedy department due to lack of laughs, and in the action department due to lack of thrills.

STEVE CLEARY

Screenwriting & Script Consulting

Concept / Premise

The idea of a "Weed Man" isn't entirely original as undoubtedly thousands of stoners throughout history have imagined a superhero with super powers centered around marijuana, though very few have actually seen an idea like this through to execution.

Taking on a pharmaceutical giant gives the story it's requisite high conflict, but at no time has the villain enacted any of his schemes (besides sabotaging a hospital in order to have them sign it over to him) so the stakes remained relatively low.

The mythology of this superhero needs a little work also. The logic of a THC mist shooting out his wrists isn't explained, and in its similarity with Spiderman slinging his webs through his wrists, no comparison to that was even brought up for a laugh. i.e. "Instead of webs... you sling WEED, homie!!". Otherwise, another means of dispatching the mist that makes sense in the context of this world might need to be contrived. Perhaps he has an internal mechanism of vaporizing a visceral supply of dabs and simply puffs it out of his own mouth at his intended target.

Same goes for his fighting powers. How was he suddenly able to fight-off armed henchmen like Neo without any training? A little exposition in this area would go a long way, and again garner a nice laugh i.e. "You mean all of those hours playing Tekken got released into your muscle memory? That's so dope, homie!!"

It was also unclear if Jimmy wore a whole costume or just did his work in street clothes wearing the mask. The origin of Hector obtaining an X-Men style battle suit could potentially offer a big laugh.

Finally, with no other super powers as written, Jimmy simply walks in and out of hospital rooms and, at no time, risks being stopped by an orderly to usher him off to a psych ward.

Characters

Jimmy is introduced as having a shy demeanor, yet throughout the story his actions and words do not convey him as such. Perhaps if he were deferential to his boss, more yielding to Hector, awkward around Katrina, etc up to the midpoint where he finds his mojo, we'd experience a bit more of an arc in him. Also, his big dream is to open a bakery, but that was only alluded to initially in his conversation with his grandmother. Perhaps being caught on the job reading a Bon Appetite magazine in his first scene would provide a laugh ("no, it's not porn") and drive that dream home better.

Hector, as the sex-crazed, porn-obsessed best friend archetype, is sufficiently portrayed. It might have been satisfying, however, if he were to perform a "rescue from without" for Jimmy in the final battle. Also, his own journey with the acquired superpower is glossed over. That being said, the gag with the glob of semen flinging from his hand was perhaps the biggest laugh in the script, as logistically unrealistic as that may be (given the sheer amount of time between him masturbating, letting Jimmy in, cooking a batch of pot brownies, the explosion, etc).

Katrina was pretty standard as far as the damsel-in-distress archetype goes. As the object of Jimmy's affection, his grandmother could have mentioned her, how he should ask her out, etc and build some anticipation to where he actually does encounter her. This was a missed opportunity for him to say or

STEVE CLEARY

Screenwriting & Script Consulting

Characters - Katrina (continued)

physically do something to drive home his shyness and awkwardness. Instead, the grandmother simply asks him to fetch a puta for her.

Matthew, obviously modeled after Martin Shkreli, is introduced primarily to deliver exposition but doesn't really perform any sinister action to make us boo and hiss at him. The initial boardroom scene would be the optimal spot to show just how vile he is.

Carter, as the standard henchman, served his one-dimensional purpose and offers nothing notably new or original to the archetype.

The **Reverend** and his cursing at the funeral was way over-the-top. Also, not sure who the Henry guy was or why it was necessary to even introduce him.

Dialogue

For the most part, the dialogue was adequate and not overly on-the-nose. In the case of the boardroom scene where Matthew is introduced, as stated above, his lines are almost entirely expositional without any type of suspense or revelation of character interwoven within them. The exposition would be a lot more palatable if cloaked by some form of build-up to a sinister act by the villain.

Another issue is with several long strings of dialogue that neither advance the narrative nor really reveal character (for example, the scene where Jimmy wakes up to Katrina at the hospital, among others). The point of these scenes could be gotten to much more crisply and efficiently, leaving more room for what I see is the biggest concern of the dialogue: the jokes.

Some of the jokes were pretty funny, but they were few and far between. Where there were jokes, most simply fell flat. A prime example is delivered by Katrina's friend: "You keep holding out for this Mr. Perfect bullshit, your eggs are gonna go bad the same way the ones in the store do - just remember that." Or in this Jimmy soliloquy: "Jesus Christ, when the hell did Hector become the voice of reason in my life? Damn, I need to get some new friends. "

The script would benefit greatly from a couple of passes of dialogue punch-up, perhaps even sharp-shot by a comedy specialist or professional joke writer who could who could identify lines to turn into jokes.

Structure / Plot

As origin films go, the narrative follows a natural sequence of events, though for an action movie, the set pieces were few and far between. Jimmy disarms a mugger, then goes onto simply administer his medicine throughout the second act, and then there's the long block of action leading to the climax. It would be good to see perhaps a chase sequence leading to an "all is lost" moment before he resolves to prepare for the final battle. Also a little more bumbling early in the second act as he navigates his new-found abilities and gains capacities could be effectively portrayed comically and with a bit of this desired action.

As mentioned before, the stakes are relatively low in this script for a superhero movie, which usually requires a ticking clock for the hero to race against. Sure, Matthew has Katrina held captive and he must rescue her, but the story would be a lot more exciting if he not only had to save the girl and vanquish

STEVE CLEARY

Screenwriting & Script Consulting

Structure / Plot (continued)

the villain, but also destroy whatever scheme the villain set in motion as a final cathartic moment. Perhaps Matthew could have set up a pharmaceutical bomb in the city's water supply that would have deployed a drug that could only be counteracted by one of his products. Or something to that effect.

Another big issue with the action is the fight scenes, which are presented without much detail. While the full choreography of each combat sequence would be overkill, some indication as to what the combatants gain or lose in each beat, as well what they're actually doing to gain or lose their position, would be helpful to visualize how the fight plays out.

Marketability

A film like this would obviously appeal to legions of young, Latino stoners, however big that market may be, as well as young stoners in general. Given it's subject matter, as legal as it may be in several states, as well as the volume of cursing contained therein, this superhero movie would miss out on a larger youth audience typically targeted by the genre.

Closing Notes

While this script is given a pass, it could potentially be improved with a re-write that addresses the following issues:

- Exposition cloaked by the build-up of a villain's sinister act
- More of a character arc for Jimmy
- Explanation for new-found powers and origin of cool costume
- More action set-pieces and gaining of hero's capacities
- A polish round to punch up/sharpen the jokes
- Another round to tighten up dialogue
- Stage directions for fight sequences
- A ticking clock for hero to race against