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Type of Material:	Treatment	Title:	CONFIDENTIAL
Number of Pages:	9	Author:	CONFIDENTIAL
Coverage type:	Treatment Review	Circa:	Present
Payment type:		Location:	Indeterminate small town, USA
Coverage Date:		Genre:	Horror
Story Analyst:			

LOG LINE: CONFIDENTIAL

	Excellent	Good	Needs Work	Rethink
Idea			X	
Overall execution	n/a			
Narrative/Structure			X	
Characters/Dialogue	n/a			
Effective Scene work	n/a			
Professional appearance: grammar, spelling, typos	X			
Commercial potential			X	
Readiness for Market	n/a			

Scouting Recommendation:	
Yes	n/a
Not at this time	

COMMENTS:

Sandra – I am impressed! Your treatment is very well fleshed out and you nailed exactly how a treatment should be laid out. As you get more experienced and have the chance to write a treatment for an agent, manager or executive you will add a layer of not just a blow-by-blow but all of the horror, comedy, action or whatever the genre is as well. A treatment can be a selling tool and – as here – a tool for developing your idea as well.

I have a few comments about the strength of this idea and most of them have to do with digging a little deeper into character and the nature and causality of the demon-worshipping girls. Two things came to mind immediately. One was it sure seems easy and simple to hypnotize people and two, **what exactly – aside from being Goth and worshipping the devil – are these girls up to?**

It's very important when writing horror that the antagonist has clear goals and motivations that are more complex than simply being devil worshipers who kill people. *Why* did the group need a human sacrifice, for example?

Chloe's group needs an infrastructure and a goal. What is the devil demanding of them? And if they don't supply that, what will the devil do? You need to further define this group, why they are there at that high school in that town and what their aims are.

While a treatment is broad strokes, it also contains a certain specificity because what we're looking for here is what sets this story of a powerful, manipulative clique of high school devil worshipers apart from other stories like it. You are using the high school milieu; that's not uncommon in a horror movie, but devil worshippers can be elaborated on to be made more unique. You have to strive very hard for some add-ons and specificity to set this story apart. So **be thinking about the bad guys, specifically what they want and how that relates both to the larger world of evilness and how it relates to the zeitgeist of our times.** Horror movies, no matter how campy or silly, always have an underlying fear that we all have. Fear of the other, fear of ourselves, fear of nature, fear of sin, fear of faceless randomness – of a lot of things. But that fear has to be rooted in something that really touches upon something very deep for audiences.

As writers, it is a very tough row to hoe that so many movies have already come before now – that means that literally every story has already been told. What writers who want a chance in the entertainment industry are faced with is finding a way to meet the conventions of their genre – and then surpass them. So I strongly encourage you to spend some time thinking about your underlying themes and zeitgeist so that you can take the bad guys up a notch and make their goals and modus operandi more unique.

But let's move on to your **main character, Kyle.** Something missing in your treatment is an indication of what his arc as a character is. He is described as having a fear of thunder but how does his overcoming of it really complete a dramatic arc for him? You have some seeds planted there but again, you've got to dig in and get more specific. When you stop to think about it, his fear of thunder could be replaced by a fear of just about anything else. Why did you choose thunder and why is Kyle's fear more outgrown than anyone else's? I really think you need something far more dramatic to have happened than that he was locked up so the thunder wouldn't scare him – something traumatic and causal – the thunderstorm was raging, Kyle saw some crazy killer trying to kill his father, but then the lightning struck the bad guy and ...well, that's a pretty out-there stab but you need to make sure there are strong dramatic and thematic links between your main character, his fear/ flaw and the bad guys and their motivation/agenda. The connection cannot merely be that coincidentally, there is a thunder storm. In TWISTER, the Helen Hunt character saw her family home destroyed in a tornado – she grows up and is determined to chase them down and learn how to control them and protect others from them. So this dangerous dance she does is very personal for her.

Can you **look for opportunities to make Kyle's fatal flaw deeper and more personal than a fear of a natural function of nature?** What exactly happened to this little boy? What does he feel responsible for? What cripples him to this day? Remember, in a character arc, the character has an inner need and an outer want. It is the intersection of these two things that result in the flaw. So what does Kyle want on the exterior and what does he need to gain on his interior to be able to achieve that outer goal? I often quote the Rolling Stones here because it is so helpful: You can't always get what you want – but if you try sometime, you might just find – you get what you need. And that is the classic signpost of a character arc, the character finally makes a choice, decision or sacrifice which addresses their inner need...and when and only when they do that – do they get what they want. And often it turns out that what they wanted was something completely different. Did you see RAIN MAN with Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise? At the beginning of the movie all Tom Cruise wants is the money his retarded brother inherited. But over the course of the movie, through the trials and challenges and frustrations, what he finds out he needs is a big brother. But he has to sacrifice Raymond and let him go so that Raymond can be well cared for. And when Tom Cruise makes that sacrifice, he finally becomes a complete human being and loses his selfishness.

You also should give thought to what is at stake and what the ticking clock is. What is ultimately at stake relates very much to the first comment I made earlier about what these devil-worshipping girls are up to. Yes it is true that Kyle's life and those of his parents are at stake but you need more than that – the fate of the world, of the town, of something larger than just Kyle and his family. If you watched the wonderful horror movie THE RING, you saw that as with most horror movies we had two levels of what was at stake and we also had a ticking clock. If you watch the video, the phone will ring and tell you that you have seven days to live. If any individual watches the video, that creepy girl will return and kill them – but the video also must be stopped because its spread has a viral effect – more and more people will die. So the stakes are both personal for Naomi Watts and more global – which is why the movie set itself up nicely for a sequel. But there was a real specificity to the threat. Evil goth girls who worship the devil is missing a layer of detail and specificity.

Another comment worth mentioning is that I think the material has a lot more room for horror set pieces; right now there are only about three events noted that involve any real horror taking place, Kyle's killing of his friend, his threatening of his parents and the showdown on the roof while the thunder storm rolls in. **In this genre, you really do need to have genre and thematically related set pieces occurring frequently.**