Running Head: ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

Arrested Development: An Analysis of the Pilot Episode

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For my analysis, I chose the Arrested Development pilot script. I have watched a few episodes from the series and enjoyed it much more than Heroes, and that’s pretty much the only reason I chose to break it down. It was a quality program, and it sucks that it was cancelled. Anyway, on to the questions:

1. Michael Bluth is the protagonist of the series and I say this because his actions seem to move the story forward and everything is introduced in reference to him. An example of his actions moving things forward is on page 13-14, scene 24, where Michael confronts his family about their reckless spending. Also, on pages 2-8, everyone is introduced as Michael’s mother, sister, brother, etc. That’s a pretty good sign he’s the focal point of the story.
2. The goal for Michael seems to change from wanting to take over his father’s company to wanting to get as far away as possible. I bring this up, because his family is his obstacle. On page 6, scene 12, Michael reveals his belief through his talk with George Michael that he will take over the company once his father retires. At first glance, this seems strange, because earlier, on page 4, scene 9, it states through voiceover “he’s decided never to speak to these people again.” His family stands in the way of both of his goals in a variety of ways. George Sr. seems the biggest culprit, unexpectedly giving the company to his wife, Lucille, on page 17, scene 30. Then, after she decides to let Buster run the company, Michael is upset and decides to leave. He gets a new job lined up, but the family stands in his way again in scenes 44 and 45. The family convinces Michael to visit his father in jail in scene 44, pages 25-27, during their intervention. George Sr. stands in the way by not standing in the way in scene 45, pages 28-28A. He tells Michael that the reason he gave Lucille the company was to protect Michael, because he knew the SEC was coming and he had gotten some shoddy legal advice. I will discuss this more when I get to the theme of the show.
3. The show doesn’t have a linear format, which is interesting, but if you were to take everything and lay it out in a straight line, Michael changes from someone who wants to take over, a hero of sorts, to someone who wants to flee to an actualized hero. On page 6, scene 12, through his discussion with George Michael, we learn that he believes he will take over the family company when his father retires. Page 4, scene 9, as stated earlier, he vows to never speak to his family again. We know he has made the change to hero at the very end on page 31, scene 48, when Michael decides to stay and help out his displaced family and telling George Michael, “These guys are going to be staying for a while.”
4. The theme of family first is explained in three scenes, two with Michael and George Michael (page 5, scene 10 and page 31, scene 48), but the most powerful scene is 27-28A, scene 45, when George Sr. reveals to Michael that the reason he didn’t give his son the company was to save him and his other kids from going down with him when the SEC kicked the door him. If Michael is a hero, he inherited it from his father, who is a flawed hero.
5. The inciting incident is when George Sr. named his wife as his successor on page 17, scene 30. The non-linear nature of the script made this a tough choice, but I figured that for Michael, everything is set in motion the moment he learns that he will not be taking over the company.
6. The format is different in that the scenes are numbered. The examples are on every page. Also, the term “chyron” appears a number of times throughout the script and there are breaks where the commercial breaks should be.