**Copy of Megan Huntsman - Senior Editor Review**

**Parameter Analysis**

**1. Suspense Building**

**Extraction:**

• What he found would send shockwaves through the quiet community and unravel a dark secret that had been hidden for years.

• But this was just the beginning of a nightmare that would expose a mother’s unspeakable acts and leave a community grappling with unimaginable horror.

• What they found next would turn a single tragedy into a mass horror.

• The sheer number of victims was staggering, and the question loomed: How could one woman commit such atrocities, and how had she kept it a secret for so long?

• Her calm demeanor in the face of such horrific accusations only deepened the mystery.

• But was this the full truth, or was there a darker motive lurking beneath the surface?

• This raised another chilling question: How could a husband not notice his wife’s multiple pregnancies?

• No one suspected the monstrous secret she harbored.

• But for many, this explanation felt hollow, failing to account for the sheer number of victims and the cold, calculated nature of her actions.

**Score:** 8/10

**Explanation:** The script does a very good job of building suspense, particularly in the early acts. It consistently uses unanswered questions, hints at escalating horror, and introduces contradictions (like Megan's calm demeanor or the husband's unawareness) to keep the audience curious. The reveal of multiple bodies is handled effectively to maximize shock. The script also does well to question the stated motive, preventing the story from feeling too resolved too early.

**Weakness:** While strong, the suspense slightly dips in the middle when discussing the psychological evaluations and the general phenomenon of neonaticide. While informative, these sections are less about active 'what happens next?' and more about 'understanding what happened.'

**Suggestion:** Integrate the psychological insights more directly into the unfolding mystery of Megan's mind, perhaps by framing them as 'unsettling revelations' rather than just explanations. For example, 'Experts grappled with a mind so fractured, it allowed her to...'

**2. Language/Tone**

**Extraction:**

• a chilling discovery

• unravel a dark secret

• nightmare

• unspeakable acts

• unimaginable horror

• mass horror

• staggering

• atrocities

• shrouded in deception and unimaginable cruelty

• Her calm demeanor in the face of such horrific accusations only deepened the mystery.

• chillingly detached

• horrifying truth

• cold, calculated nature

• felt hollow

• profound sense of shame or fear

• stark, horrifying example

• profound horror

• agonizing details

• chilling reminder

• silent screams of those who never had a chance to live.

**Score:** 9/10

**Explanation:** The script's language and tone are consistently strong. It uses vivid descriptions, emotionally charged vocabulary, and impactful phrasing throughout. It successfully avoids being robotic or generic, instead feeling like a gripping story told by a human. The tone matches the horrific nature of the story, evoking dread, empathy, and shock where appropriate. This is a significant strength of the script.

**3. Intro (First 1 Min)**

**Extraction:**

• On April 12, 2014, in Pleasant Grove, Utah, a chilling discovery was made.

• Darren West, recently released from prison, was cleaning out the garage of his former home, a property he shared with his estranged wife, Megan Huntsman.

• What he found would send shockwaves through the quiet community and unravel a dark secret that had been hidden for years.

• Inside a cardboard box, among old belongings, Darren stumbled upon something unimaginable: the tiny, lifeless body of a newborn infant.

• Horrified, he immediately called the police.

• But this was just the beginning of a nightmare that would expose a mother’s unspeakable acts and leave a community grappling with unimaginable horror.

**Score:** 9/10

**Explanation:** The intro is exceptionally strong. It immediately drops the viewer into the action with a shocking discovery, clearly sets up the main hook (the dead infant), and establishes the dark, intense tone of the story. It avoids unnecessary background information, focusing instead on immediate impact and curiosity. This intro is highly effective at grabbing attention and ensuring viewer retention.

**4. Main Hook/Cliffhanger**

**Extraction:**

• Inside a cardboard box, among old belongings, Darren stumbled upon something unimaginable: the tiny, lifeless body of a newborn infant.

• What they found next would turn a single tragedy into a mass horror. Hidden in other boxes, meticulously wrapped and concealed, were six more infant bodies.

**Score:** 9/10

**Explanation:** The script delivers a powerful main hook right in the intro: the discovery of a dead newborn. This is immediately followed by the even more shocking revelation of six additional bodies, which amplifies the horror and sets the stage for the entire investigation. This dual-layered hook is incredibly strong, instantly creating 'must keep watching' tension and providing ample material for a compelling thumbnail or episode headline.

**5. Story Structure**

**Extraction:**

• On April 12, 2014... Darren West... stumbled upon something unimaginable: the tiny, lifeless body of a newborn infant... Horrified, he immediately called the police. As officers arrived, the scene quickly escalated... Hidden in other boxes... were six more infant bodies... Megan Huntsman... was immediately taken into custody.

• As the investigation unfolded... The police had to determine if Darren West... was truly unaware... Investigators meticulously searched the home... The community of Pleasant Grove was reeling... The autopsies of the seven infants revealed a horrifying truth: six of them were born alive... Megan’s confession was chillingly detached... Her explanation remained consistent: fear of her husband’s reaction.

• Psychological evaluations attempted to unravel the complexities of her mind... The case brought to light the tragic phenomenon of neonaticide... On April 20, 2015, Megan Huntsman stood before the court... She pleaded guilty to six counts of murder... Megan Huntsman was sentenced to six consecutive life sentences... The community of Pleasant Grove slowly began to heal...

**Score:** 8/10

**Explanation:** The script follows a clear and logical story structure, moving chronologically from the initial discovery to the investigation, the perpetrator's confession, the psychological context, and finally, the legal resolution. Each act builds upon the previous one, and there are no confusing flashbacks or random details. The narrative unfolds like a true crime investigation, which is effective.

**Weakness:** While logical, the transition into the 'psychological evaluations' and 'neonaticide' explanation in Act 3 feels slightly more like an informational segment than a direct continuation of the 'unfolding mystery' narrative. It's relevant, but the connection could be more seamlessly woven into the ongoing tension.

**Suggestion:** Frame the psychological insights as further attempts to understand the \*unfathomable\* nature of Megan's crimes, rather than just an explanation. For example, 'As investigators struggled to comprehend such depravity, experts offered a chilling glimpse into the mind capable of such acts...'

**6. Flow**

**Extraction:**

• On April 12, 2014... Darren West... stumbled upon... Horrified, he immediately called the police. As officers arrived, the scene quickly escalated...

• What they found next would turn a single tragedy into a mass horror. Hidden in other boxes...

• As the investigation unfolded, a disturbing pattern emerged...

• This raised another chilling question: How could a husband not notice his wife’s multiple pregnancies? The community of Pleasant Grove was reeling.

• The autopsies of the seven infants revealed a horrifying truth... This confirmed the police’s suspicions... Megan’s confession was chillingly detached.

• Psychological evaluations attempted to unravel the complexities of her mind. The case brought to light the tragic phenomenon of neonaticide...

• On April 20, 2015, Megan Huntsman stood before the court...

**Score:** 8/10

**Explanation:** The script generally maintains a smooth and seamless flow between scenes and acts. The narrative progresses logically, and transitions are mostly clear, using phrases like 'As officers arrived' or 'As the investigation unfolded' to guide the viewer. There are no abrupt jumps that would confuse a first-time viewer.

**Weakness:** The shift from the investigation of Darren and Megan's confession to the broader discussion of neonaticide and psychological evaluations, while relevant, could be integrated with slightly more narrative urgency or a stronger transitional hook to maintain the 'unfolding mystery' feel.

**Suggestion:** Ensure that even informational segments are framed as part of the ongoing effort to understand the \*unfathomable\* nature of the crime, rather than just a factual explanation. For example, 'To truly grasp the horror, investigators turned to experts, who revealed the chilling patterns of neonaticide...'

**7. Pacing**

**Extraction:**

• Inside a cardboard box... the tiny, lifeless body... Horrified, he immediately called the police. As officers arrived... six more infant bodies.

• The police had to determine if Darren West... His story was consistent... The community of Pleasant Grove was reeling.

• The autopsies... revealed a horrifying truth: six of them were born alive... Megan’s confession was chillingly detached.

• Psychological evaluations attempted to unravel... The case brought to light the tragic phenomenon of neonaticide...

• On April 20, 2015, Megan Huntsman stood before the court... sentenced to six consecutive life sentences.

**Score:** 7/10

**Explanation:** The script's pacing is generally good, starting with a strong, fast-paced opening that immediately hooks the viewer. It balances moments of intense revelation with necessary pauses for investigation details, character context, and psychological insights. It doesn't feel overly rushed or excessively slow for long periods.

**Weakness:** While balanced, some sections, particularly the detailed explanation of neonaticide and the repeated emphasis on Megan's 'fear of husband' motive, could feel slightly less dynamic. The pacing could be tightened in these areas to maintain a more consistent sense of forward momentum and discovery.

**Suggestion:** Review sections where information is presented without a new 'hook' or direct narrative progression. Can these be condensed, or can a new question or surprising detail be introduced to re-engage the viewer? For example, instead of just explaining neonaticide, frame it as 'The chilling patterns of neonaticide, a phenomenon rarely seen on this scale, began to emerge in Megan's case...'

**8. Mini-Hooks (30–60s)**

**Extraction:**

• What he found would send shockwaves...

• the tiny, lifeless body of a newborn infant.

• six more infant bodies.

• Her calm demeanor in the face of such horrific accusations only deepened the mystery.

• But was this the full truth, or was there a darker motive lurking beneath the surface?

• How could a husband not notice his wife’s multiple pregnancies?

• No one suspected the monstrous secret she harbored.

• six of them were born alive and died shortly after birth.

• Megan’s confession was chillingly detached.

• But for many, this explanation felt hollow...

• Experts suggested she suffered from a severe form of denial...

• He stated, 'These were not stillborn babies. These were babies that were born alive and then killed. That is the horror of this case.'

**Score:** 7/10

**Explanation:** The script includes a good number of mini-hooks, particularly in the first two acts, which effectively introduce new information, questions, or emotional beats. These moments are crucial for maintaining viewer curiosity. However, they are not consistently present every 30-60 seconds throughout the entire script. There are paragraphs or short sections, particularly in the latter half (e.g., the detailed explanation of neonaticide or the repeated emphasis on the 'fear of husband' motive), where a new, surprising detail or question is missing, leading to a slight dip in constant engagement.

**Weakness:** Inconsistent frequency of mini-hooks, especially in the mid-to-late sections. Some information is presented without a new twist or question to re-engage the viewer immediately.

**Suggestion:** Review the script paragraph by paragraph. For any section longer than 30-45 seconds without a new revelation, contradiction, or compelling question, add one. This could be a surprising quote, a detail about the investigation, or a rhetorical question that deepens the mystery. For example, after explaining neonaticide, add: 'But even with this understanding, the sheer scale of Megan's crimes remained an unfathomable abyss.'

**9. Outro (Ending)**

**Extraction:**

• The community of Pleasant Grove slowly began to heal, but the scars of Megan Huntsman’s dark secret would forever remain.

• The case serves as a chilling reminder of the hidden darkness that can lurk beneath seemingly ordinary lives, and the silent screams of those who never had a chance to live.

**Score:** 9/10

**Explanation:** The outro is very strong. It avoids a tidy summary, instead opting for a haunting and emotionally resonant conclusion. The final lines effectively echo the horror of the case and leave the viewer with a chilling thought about hidden darkness and lost lives. This ending is impactful and memorable, fulfilling the criteria for a powerful true crime outro.

**Scoring Table**

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| --- | --- |
| Parameter | Score (1–10) |
| Suspense Building | 8 |
| Language/Tone | 9 |
| Intro (First 1 Min) | 9 |
| Main Hook/Cliffhanger | 9 |
| Story Structure | 8 |
| Flow | 8 |
| Pacing | 7 |
| Mini-Hooks (30–60s) | 7 |
| Outro (Ending) | 9 |

**Overall Rating: 8/10**

**Strengths**

• Exceptional Intro: Immediately hooks the viewer with a shocking discovery and promises escalating horror.

• Powerful Main Hook: The discovery of multiple infant bodies is a highly dramatic and attention-grabbing core mystery.

• Strong Language and Tone: Uses vivid, emotional, and appropriate language throughout, enhancing the story's impact and avoiding generic narration.

• Impactful Outro: Ends on a haunting and memorable note, leaving a lasting emotional impression.

• Clear Story Structure: Follows a logical and easy-to-follow chronological progression from discovery to resolution.

• Compelling Core Story: The inherent horror and mystery of the Megan Huntsman case are well-utilized.

**Weaknesses**

• Inconsistent Mini-Hook Frequency: While present, mini-hooks are not consistently delivered every 30-60 seconds, leading to potential minor dips in engagement in some sections.

• Pacing in Mid-Section: Some informational segments (e.g., detailed psychological explanations, repeated motive emphasis) slightly slow the narrative momentum, potentially feeling less like an 'unfolding mystery' and more like a factual report.

• Slight Dip in Suspense: While generally strong, the suspense slightly lessens when the script shifts to broader explanations rather than direct narrative progression or new revelations.

**Suggestions**

• Increase Mini-Hook Density: Review the script, especially in the mid-to-late sections, and actively insert a new question, surprising detail, or emotional beat every 30-45 seconds. For example, after explaining neonaticide, add a line like, 'But even with this understanding, the sheer scale of Megan's crimes remained an unfathomable abyss.'

• Tighten Informational Segments: Condense or rephrase sections that explain concepts (like neonaticide) to integrate them more seamlessly into the narrative. Frame them as discoveries or insights that further deepen the mystery of Megan's actions, rather than just explanations.

• Vary Motive Exploration: Instead of repeatedly stating 'fear of husband,' explore \*how\* this fear manifested or \*why\* it was deemed insufficient by investigators, adding more nuance and keeping the 'why' question fresh. Perhaps introduce a contradictory detail from her past that challenges this simple motive.

• Enhance Psychological Integration: Frame the psychological evaluations as a desperate attempt to understand the \*unfathomable\* nature of Megan's mind, making it feel more like a continuation of the investigation's struggle rather than a separate informational segment.

**Drop-off Risks**

• Mid-Act 2 (around the 'fear of husband' repetition): The script reiterates Megan's stated motive ('She claimed she was afraid of her husband... Her explanation remained consistent: fear of her husband’s reaction.') without adding new layers or contradictions for a few lines. This could feel repetitive. Fix: Introduce a new angle or a contrasting detail about Megan's personality or the husband's character that complicates this simple motive, or immediately follow with the 'felt hollow' line to maintain critical engagement.

• Act 3 (during the general explanation of neonaticide): While informative, the section explaining neonaticide ('The case brought to light the tragic phenomenon of neonaticide... These cases are often characterized by hidden pregnancies...') shifts from the specific case narrative to a more general, educational tone. This could cause a slight dip in the 'what happens next' curiosity. Fix: Reframe this section to directly connect it back to Megan's unique depravity or the shocking scale of her crimes. For example, 'While neonaticide is a known, tragic phenomenon, the sheer number of victims in Megan Huntsman's case set it apart, forcing experts to confront a level of denial rarely seen.'

**Viral Quotient**

This script has strong viral potential. The core story of a mother hiding and killing multiple newborns is inherently shocking and generates intense curiosity and horror. Shareable moments include the immediate discovery of the first infant followed by six more, the baffling question of how the husband didn't notice, the judge's powerful quote ('These were not stillborn babies. These were babies that were born alive and then killed. That is the horror of this case.'), and the haunting outro line ('The silent screams of those who never had a chance to live.'). These elements provide excellent material for viral titles, thumbnails, and discussion.

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