

*The following document consists of script coverage that I performed for two films while working as an intern at New Horizons Pictures, the production company of independent movie producer Roger Corman.

New Horizons Picture Corp Coverage

TITLE: Death Games 2084	DATE: March 3, 2020
AUTHOR: Maria Haras	SUB TO:
DRAFT:	SUB BY:
LENGTH:	READER: Carl Hatch, Intern
GENRE:	ELEMENTS:
CIRCA:	SUB AS:

LOGLINE:

After an act of betrayal, the previous face of the Death Games, America's favorite automobile-based murder chase, becomes its guinea pig, forced to confront his old ways if he wants to avoid death at the hands of his ex-partner and corporate greed.

COMMENTS:

See below.

SCRIPT RECOMMENDATION: (Recommend, Consider, Pass)

WRITER RECOMMENDATION: (Recommend, Consider, Pass)

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
STORY:		x		
PLOT:			x	
STRUCTURE:	x			
CHARACTERS:		x		
DIALOGUE:		x		
SETTING/VISUAL:		x		

SYNOPSIS: (3/4 Page)

In an America where brands dominate the media more than even in the present day, and extreme chauvinism runs through the blood of the people, the citizens are further united in their watching of the Death Games, an extreme car chase that results in certain death. The premise is simple: enemies of the state are given vehicles and a minute head start to leave the arena and flee to Mexico, while their hunters, called Reavers, chase them with an arsenal of weapons. Of course, the entire bloodbath is televised for the public to watch, with abundant advertisements and product promotion.

Winston is the golden-boy of the Death Games. He is the most prolific Reaver and has a fan base to show for it, with some of the audience sporting tattoos of his face. In this most recent Death Games, he and his partner Fisk kill a couple, and return to the arena with its deafening cheers. However, their partnership is under strain, though neither of them know it yet. Fisk, son of a Death Games hero, is overly violent and struggling to live up to his father's legacy with Winston around, and Winston worries about his image in regard to his age. In his depression, the man even declines sex and drugs to wallow about.

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Disgruntled at losing a brand deal to Wintson, Fisk and his agent plant evidence in Winston's locker to turn the Death Games's golden-boy into an enemy of the state. Soon, after a struggle, Winston finds himself in the Death Games arena, only this time he's the one being pursued. He is partnered with Kara, a mechanic previously caught planting explosives in a Reaver vehicle, and leaves the arena with two other cars. The first one contains Trevor, a "dangerous" info-spreading professor, and Tilda, the grandma cannibal, while the other car contains Carlo, the Bitcoin communist, and Cameron, the sexy husband-killer.

As the pursued leave, the pursuants prepare to chase, and Fisk becomes more distressed, snapping and worrying about his appearance. When the chase finally ensues, Winston makes unorthodox maneuvers, much to Kara's chagrin, Tilda has a strange attraction to the anxious Trevor, and Carlo is enamored with Cameron. Fisk struggles, and to maintain the Reavers' image, commercial breaks occur to keep the killing spirit alive.

It is learned that Kara knew the woman Winston killed in his introductory Reaver scene, and because of this is skeptical of Winston's motives, insisting he's brainwashed by the government. He insists he isn't, but a seed of doubt is planted. Meanwhile, he lets Kara know that the Death Games are more orchestrated than the chaos lets on, and of his desire to become America's golden-boy again.

The other cars give a glimpse at the craziness in the world, their adventures featuring giant alligators and corrupt toll roads, until all the cars meet up "coincidentally" at Pig Slaughter Canyon. Trevor is the first to die, until Taytay, a Reaver, kills Cameron. Then, in convincing Winston to bring Carlo to safety after Cameron's death, Winston realizes Kara is his friend, and that the system is his enemy. A pit stop at a neutral-ground mansion confirms this, as Kara and Winston spend the night together, ultimately confirming Winston's new goal of freedom in Mexico. Their morning is interrupted, though, when Fisk breaks protocol and takes Carlo as his hostage, leaving Kara and Winston to get him back.

Tilda and Taytay blow each other up in spectacular fashion, and the other chase finds its way to a junkyard, exacerbated by Open Season, a part of the Death Games timeline, when normal citizens can get in the action of killing the pursued. The junkyard seems to be a turning point: Fisk, aided by the Death Games committee, kills the rednecks to maintain his image, only to be flattened and burned by Kara, who escapes with Winston and Carlo.

They stumble upon the corpse of Winston and Fisk's initial kill, also Kara's friend, and she pulls out a USB drive with the power to halt all the electronic communication that their society, and the Death Games, thrives on. However, Fisk emerges for one final brawl, only to be thwarted by his own weapon. Winston invites him to join the escape, but this move is to the distaste of CEO Jeff and the Death Games committee, and they kill Fisk with a swarm of drones.

The crew is offered stardom back at home, but Winston declines. The drones are turned onto them, but luckily, Winston is able to use Fisk's Solar Rocket Launcher to destroy the drones and achieve freedom in Mexico. In a final sequence of events, the USB drive dismantles the Death Games, leaving Kara, Winston, and Carlo to later soak up the Mexican sun.

COMMENTS: (Half Page)

The beginning of the script moves kind of fast, hard to keep track of all the different locations: chase scenes, commercials, the announcers, the arena, the helicopter. Maybe some of these could be condensed, with the announcers being in the arena itself, or Winston and Fisk being projected rather than flown in.

I like the consistent corporate mentions in the beginning, although I think that it could be included with more variation. Often it comes as an aside by the announcers at the end of their dialogue before a location change. That being said, I like how playful it all is.

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Other than old age, I feel that there should be more reasons for Winston's disenchantment with his career as a Reaver. Is he missing out on love, or something else? Why doesn't he want to do drugs and have sex with the women? Winston's eventual transformation needs to have more of a hold in the beginning.

I think there should be more info about who Fisk's father is. The legacy angle provides good motivation for Fisk, but his father isn't even named. Maybe some posters and lore could help with this. Also, if in the initial chase there was rubbing elbows between Fisk and Winston, Fisk's eventual betrayal would make even more sense, beyond his getting snubbed for the brand deal.

The reference to "ghosting" on page 36 is a bit gimmicky. Given that it's slang today, I'm not sure if it makes sense for it to exist in 2084, and I think its use is devoid from the renegade nature of a New Horizons film. Something along the lines of "did he kill your family," but contemporary to 2084, would work better maybe.

I like Trevor and Tilda's interactions, although there should be more of his reaction to her being a cannibal. It would provide a lot of opportunity for jokes. Likewise, Carlo coming onto Cameron comes out of left field, especially with Carlo not necessarily being the most confident, like when he admits his phobia of cannibals on page 53. If he comes onto her in the arena, or with other dialogue, it would have more context. Overall, these characters are good vessels of action and worldbuilding.

Who is the goon with Fisk on page 60?

The Texas mansion scene is very abrupt and slows the momentum of the film, especially because it's not mentioned until three-quarters of the way through the script. Maybe an animated map scene of landmarks (canyon, toll roads, mansion, junkyard) or a debrief by the announcers at the onset of the Death Games could make this scene and others more organic, helping to ground the viewer. That being said, the neutral-zone does serve as a well-constructed turning point in the script, particularly when Fisk breaks protocol and takes Carlo hostage.

The argument about using "gay" on page 87 is outdated, overplayed.

The flashdrive-induced Y3K, along with Kara's relationship to the woman at the beginning and the Resistance movement as a whole, needs more of an introduction. Knowing that a flash drive on the corpse unlocks the ability to dismantle society shouldn't be left to this point, at least not without a hint, like some hesitation, or worrying about being on course to the corpse.

The solar-power and wifi problems are cliches to me, along with "god mode" on the launcher. They took me out of the dystopia in which a Death Race, fitted with drones and holograms and explosive cars, could exist. And "god mode" is childish, not renegade. Something sleeker or more outrageous would be more fitting.

Lastly, I don't exactly know how Carlo fits into the relationship of Kara and Winston at the end of the script. Is he acting as their son? Maybe Carlo should be at a computer, doing what he does best at the end, while Kara and Winston finally get their alone time. They could all live together, but to have him bouncing a ball at the end seems odd.

The ending should have a bit more of a conclusion. Has Winston come to terms with his age? Is Kara satisfied? Given that Winston's initial problem was with his age rather than his allegiance to being a Reaver, I think the question of if he's comfortable with himself should be answered.

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TITLE: Crime City	DATE: 2/18/2020
AUTHOR: Mike MacLean	SUB TO:
DRAFT:	SUB BY:
LENGTH:	READER: Carl Hatch, Intern
GENRE:	ELEMENTS:
CIRCA:	SUB AS:

LOGLINE:

In a post-apocalyptic world marked by natural disaster and a totalitarian republic, former rebel Maxi gets back to her roots and makes her way through ruin and lawlessness to reach Crime City, in search of freedom and the past love that accompanied it.

COMMENTS:

See below.

SCRIPT RECOMMENDATION: (Recommend, Consider, Pass)

WRITER RECOMMENDATION: (Recommend, Consider, Pass)

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
STORY:			x	
PLOT:		x		
STRUCTURE:			x	
CHARACTERS:			x	
DIALOGUE:			x	
SETTING/VISUAL:		x		

SYNOPSIS: (3/4 Page)

Maxi is a pole dancer, working at a strip club run by a man who goes by Briggs. The clientele are rowdy, and when a drunkard makes his move to touch her, Maxi quickly brings him down with a kick and knocks him unconscious. It's clear from this point on that Maxi has experience with fighting, and in a larger sense, danger.

She retires to her dressing room, a revelatory moment, as the television reveals that there exists a totalitarian government, the Peaceful Republic. Also, a photo she keeps unveils that there is a small group of people in her past whom she is close to. However, the tender moment is ruined when Briggs tries to rape her. An altercation follows, and Maxi kills Briggs, but not until he mentions she had a stint in prison. Maxi

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takes his car only after being seen by a fellow stripper, and leaves the strip club in search of a better future and an old love.

Her getaway is guided by her final words exchanged with Duke, her lover, who she learned from the T.V. just got out of prison. They agreed to meet at Crime City, a city so rife with crime law enforcement decided it would be best for it to run itself. The trip there is rough, and Maxi fights off scavengers and a pilot, but she eventually makes it to her destination.

Crime City is little better than the outside: Maxi's car is stolen, she is pressured for sex, and she gets into fights, all during her search for Duke. She eventually steals a car and finds Duke's beach hideout, but is taken prisoner by a man, Fox, whom she hid from on the way over. However, she and Duke eventually reunite, with Maxi under the impression that they will begin the Revolution again with their compatriots from before.

To fund the revolution, Duke suggests they rob a drug lord, El Mundo, purveyor of Red Death. The robbery is stoked by the fact that Pris, a worker of El Mundo, was one of the people that stole Maxi's car. Yet, the raid is successful, and the money is stolen.

But after a night of celebration, Maxi learns that not only money, but drugs, were taken from the raid. She questions this, but Duke assures her that it's for the good of the resistance. He then proposes that they take down a group of human traffickers, former members of the Peaceful Republic.

Duke tells Maxi to stay away from the warehouse, but after seeing the bloodbath, she refuses. Joining the fight, she kills members of the opposition, but as she loots the deceased, she uncovers the body of Banks, a former member of the Resistance, who was in the photograph. It becomes clear to her that Duke is not who he says he is, and after prying, he states that he was offered freedom if he worked for the Republic to squash the Resistance from the outside. They fight, and Maxi kills Duke, against his tries to manipulate her. When Athena, Maxi's friend and former partner who worked with Banks, asks Maxi what her plans are, Maxi can only reflect on her dissatisfaction with groups in power.

COMMENTS: (Half Page)

I feel like some of the action could be helped by a bit more context. For instance, the initial chase scene with government cars characterizes the regime, and the interactions with Pris demonstrate the cruel nature of Crime City, and these two action-packed scenes help move the plot forward. However, the fight with scavengers and attack by the plane in the Forbidden Zone seem distracting, as the desolation and unruliness of the times is already apparent. Perhaps this could be a place in the script to develop old relationships and introduce more dialogue.

The script is action driven, but past relationships could be built up to make present interactions between Maxi and Duke more believable. How they were before they were both imprisoned, and what the events were leading up to their imprisonment, would all help give background to their relationship and why Maxi is so quick to show feelings toward Duke again: why is he the only man she has ever loved? Why is she out before him, and why did she become a stripper instead of rejoining the Resistance? Overall, I think that building up the past would make their initial reconnection more heartwarming, and the betrayal more devastating, whether it's through flashbacks or mentions of their past by other people. They wouldn't have to actually meet earlier, just have their relationship touched on earlier.

Crime City is not well described in the first part of the script, and the lawlessness, or lack of government intervention, is never touched on explicitly, even if it may be implied. I think the first mention of it is on a sign Maxi sees when crossing the Forbidden Zone. This being the case, I feel that a viewer, not having read the treatment, would be confused as to what Crime City is, and whether or not the initial city is Crime City or not. Perhaps more exposition building up the lore behind Crime City would be beneficial to clearing up the setting.

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The Peaceful Republic has no emotional weight, and how it is oppressive is not detailed. Is there a figurehead, or is it an abstract draconian power? What does it do to the people that makes living under it unbearable? All we know is that it has a fleet of cars willing to chase Maxi after killing Briggs.

Athena and Banks should be developed more. They come in at a critical part of the plot, and that they weren't talked about or remembered in the multiple times Maxi pulls out the photograph is an issue. I think that more of them would help develop the relationship of Maxi and Duke too.

Why does Duke turn? I think an explicit mention of the power he has been given as a new member of the Peaceful Republic should be mentioned. He was a leader of the Resistance, so something significant, even more than freedom, had to turn him. Maybe this is a chance for romantic betrayal?

I understand that Crime City is rife with crime, and stemming from this, prostitution, but its presentation in the script feels forced and illogical. After Maxi is chased by Pris and the Goon, she is approached by Sleazy Pete, and rejects him. However, right after, she is solicited for sex by Dixon, and she decides to entertain it, even if it's to steal his money and find out where Duke is. Why doesn't she just steal the money and get the info from Sleazy Pete? Perhaps the pimp scene could be edited, or another scene could happen between the two that would show that Maxi needs money and assistance in finding Duke. This would make a scene where she fakes being a prostitute to rob someone more natural.

In a similar vein, the presence of El Mundo and drugs is not necessarily bad, but the fact that Pris and the Goon are connected to the drug trade comes out of left field. I think that both elements are good as they each moved the plot along separately, and connecting them is an opportunity for Crime City to be fleshed out more. I think Pris and the Goon should mention that they work for the drug trade in the initial interaction with Maxi, which would add to the characterization of Crime City in the beginning along with prostitution occurrences. This would help the eventual drug raid find its place in the script, and be a nice place to develop a woman versus woman rivalry.

Given that the film is action packed, it would be nice if Maxi's fighting ability was given a past. It's not clear how or why she has the skills that she does. While it is made clear that she worked with Duke, Athena, and Banks in the Resistance, I think it would help if past missions or work were discussed. For instance, they could have been on a special combat team together, or trained with a certain group, that would indicate why Maxi is able to disarm all of her foes.

I found the ending illogical too. If Maxi was fighting with the Resistance before, what was she aiming toward then? Given that Athena is the Resistance, wouldn't this be an opportunity to regain her past mission? Maxi, the strongest character, doesn't want anyone in power, yet fought to take down Duke and the Peaceful Republic, only for nothing to take its place? Her ambivalence to establishments of power seems forced.

CH