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The Great Diamond Heist Cross-up

by

Dennis F. Stevens

Contest: The Orb Media China-Hollywood Screenwriting Fellowship (Winter 2017)

Package: China-Hollywood contest entry plus feedback (English Language)

Date: 02/10/2017

Page Count: 125

Genre: Unknown

Analyst: 7E512

Rating: N/A

Score 6.6

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Category Score**

 Dialogue 6.0/10

 Structure 6.0/10

 Originality 7.0/10

 Concept 7.0/10

 Characterization 6.0/10

 Plot 7.0/10

 Format 9.0/10

 Co-Production Elements 7.0/10

 Conflict 6.0/10

 Pacing 7.0/10

 Theme 6.0/10

 Tone 6.0/10

 Catharsis 6.0/10

 Commercial Appeal 7.0/10

 Current Market Potential 7.0/10

 Casting Potential 6.0/10

 Voice 6.0/10

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**The Great Diamond Heist Cross-up**

**Page Two**

***Logline / Synopsis:*** *A group of professional thieves attempt to recover stolen diamonds*

*for an insurance company in exchange for a percent of their net worth, but run into complications along the way, such as a member of the crew falling in love with an*

*important contact who may know more than he’s letting on.*

***FEEDBACK***

*The Great Diamond Heist Cross-up* is an engaging script in the vein of such films as

*Ocean’s 11, Thomas Crown Affair, Italian Job* and more. The heist aspect of the plot

succeeds because the writer has familiarized himself with the original story, which adds

a layer of authenticity most scripts don’t usually achieve. The way in which our heroes

go about uncovering the truth and infiltrating Van Gent’s business is wildly entertaining.

It’s always fun to watch a movie or television show where the characters are great at

what they do, and *The Great Diamond Heist Cross-up* is no exception. Further, the

premise – which centers on a group of thieves having to solve a previous heist – offers a

nice twist to the genre. Overall, the script has potential to be a really fun feature film.

However, there are several areas of the script the writer may want to revisit in the

future, Right now, the first half of the script gets bogged down in too much exposition.

For example, the first act features a briefing on Jonathan, a briefing on his crew, and

finally, the briefing on Leonardo and his group. Also, much of the information

Chardonnay provides on page 32 (i.e. the individuals involved in the heist) has already

been presented by Moore. Perhaps these scenes can be combined and/or condensed.

Further, the script lacks the necessary emotional component to keep the reader

invested from start to finish. Instead of showing the relationship between Chardonnay

and Paul Venter develop, we simply hear about how they are in love. For example, at

one point the script reads, *“At first their lips touch softly…then with much more passion.*

*One thing is obvious. Chardonnay is no longer just doing her job.”* The problem here is

that if Chardonnay is a professional thief, her feelings for Paul may not be so obvious on

screen. Instead, we need to learn more about them and see their relationship grow.

Unlike the movie *Ocean’s 11* where George Clooney’s ultimate goal is to will back Julia Roberts’ character, *The Great Diamond Heist* spends too much time on the mechanics of

the heist, and not enough time developing the characters and their flaws. One area that

might be worth exploring could be the charities that our heroes are interested in

funding. Perhaps one of them is a grieving parent who wants to devote his life to finding

 a cure for a disease. Of course, that’s just one area to explore, but the point is that

simply mentioning the charities doesn’t automatically provide these characters with

depth and/or make the mission highly personal.

**The Great Diamond Heist Cross-up**

**Page Three**

Also, the writer will want to avoid referring to the leads as “characters” or including

lines such as, *“To establish the tourist attraction a 7 Coen Steytler Avenue.”* The

aforementioned examples have unintended effect of taking the reader out of the

story. Further, the writer will want to avoid using bold font for the entire script. In

addition, at times it can be difficult to figure out who the protagonist is supposed to be.

It’s probably Chardonnay because she’s often on the front lines, but the script doesn’t

always make it obvious.

That said, the script features some solid dialogue (although it does get a bit exposition

heavy) and well-crafted action sequences. Also, the script’s subject matter, as well as

the various international locations, gives it potential to be a co-production. The writer

should be proud of the work accomplished thus far. Good job!

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**NOTE:**

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**Screenplay is currently being rewritten.**

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The Bordeaux Cross-up

by

Dennis F. Stevens

Contest: The Orb Media China-Hollywood Screenwriting Fellowship (Winter 2017)

Package: China-Hollywood contest entry plus feedback (English Language)

Date: 02/03/2017

Page Count: 133

Genre: Unknown

Analyst: B7473

Rating: N/A

Score 6.0

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Category Score**

 Dialogue 6.0/10

 Structure 6.0/10

 Originality 6.0/10

 Concept 6.0/10

 Characterization 6.0/10

 Plot 6.0/10

 Format 7.0/10

 Co-Production Elements 7.0/10

 Conflict 6.0/10

 Pacing 6.0/10

 Theme 6.0/10

 Tone 5.0/10

 Catharsis 6.0/10

 Commercial Appeal 5.0/10

 Current Market Potential 5.0/10

 Casting Potential 7.0/10

 Voice 6.0/10

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**The Bordeaux Cross-up**

**Page Two**

***Logline / Synopsis:***

A San Francisco detective becomes the heir to a French winery when his uncle is killed

in Bordeaux. But there’s a deeper mystery for him to unravel once he arrives.

***FEEDBACK***

There’s an inherently cinematic concept at the core of this script and a setting and

atmosphere that give this narrative a strong noir vibe. You have a strong and

motivated central protagonist who serves as the classic “fish out of water” protagonist

here in the same way as we would have seen Cary Grant in any number of Hitchcock

films back in the day. The setting is rich, the scale is epic, and the action (once it picks

up, which it takes a while to do) is compelling.

One major area of concern in the script is the fact that you rely very heavily on

exposition to inform the reader, develop characters, and advance the story. Exposition

is a scourge on a screenplay because it tends to break the fourth wall in a very direct

manner – a character typically will speak in a manner that lacks authenticity, a manner

intended to educate the reader and move things along without having to dabble in

visuals or any real contextualized setup. In the noir genre, be it classic or modern, it can

often be difficult to avoid writing in exposition because there’s simply too much going

on, too many characters, and too much required back-story to figure out how to

introduce.

Thus, it’s easier to try to work that information in through conversations and random

dialogue between characters in order to get the central conflict in your story. However,

this leads to underdeveloped characters and “on the nose” dialogue that simply would

never arise in reality. For example, when Morgan ventures to France to meet his uncle,

their initial conversation goes as follows: *“My sister, Nancy – your mother – once told*

*me that she believed the only reason you joined the police department was out of some frustration that your father was taken from you at such an early age by a driver*

*under the influence of drugs.”* Now when I read that, my first thought is my Morgan’s

uncle would feel it necessary to remind him of what his mother’s name is – he would

know this of course, but the reader wouldn’t. Thus, the character states her name and

gives us direct back-story on Morgan. It takes readers out of the story and ultimately

makes the plot feel rather contrived.

**The Bordeaux Cross-up**

**Page Three**

Lastly, from a production standpoint this is certainly prime territory from a strong

international co-production given the use of multiple settings and characters of

different nationalities. While the production budget will be high, it’s not impossible to

 see a widespread, older demographic for this film (35-55, male and female) and strong

casting potential across the board.

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**NOTE:**

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**Screenplay is currently being rewritten.**

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Eagle in the Sky

by

Dennis F. Stevens

Contest: The Orb Media China-Hollywood Screenwriting Fellowship (Winter 2017)

Package: China-Hollywood contest entry plus feedback (English Language)

Date: 02/03/2017

Page Count: 130

Genre: Unknown

Analyst: B7473

Rating: N/A

Score 6.6

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Category Score**

 Dialogue 6.0/10

 Structure 7.0/10

 Originality 6.0/10

 Concept 7.0/10

 Characterization 6.0/10

 Plot 6.0/10

 Format 8.0/10

 Co-Production Elements 8.0/10

 Conflict 7.0/10

 Pacing 7.0/10

 Theme 6.0/10

 Tone 6.0/10

 Catharsis 6.0/10

 Commercial Appeal 7.0/10

 Current Market Potential 6.0/10

 Casting Potential 7.0/10

 Voice 6.0/10

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Eagle in the Sky**

**Page Two**

***Logline / Synopsis:***

A hotshot Top Gun pilot foils a hijacking attempt en route to Israel to compete in an

international training program, however when he arrives he discovers the would-be

terrorist’s family isn’t ready to concede.

***FEEDBACK***

There’s an action-packed and certainly a highly cinematic narrative in place in this

script, which could make for an engaging and fun feature film that has the ability to

appeal to a wide-ranging audience but naturally targets a younger make demographic

(18-35) in the same way that a hit film like the BOURNE franchise or TOP GUN (which

you don’t necessarily reference in the script, but let’s be honest that’s obviously going

to be the natural comparison here) did so successfully and will likely continue to do

when the sequel is released next year. I love the exotic settings, the high-flying action sequences, and the intense fight scenes.

The plotting is inspired and follows a linear trajectory but it does feel as though you’re

trying to do too much at times and the story tends to veer towards melodrama and

contrivance more often than not. That said, you demonstrate strong storytelling ability

and the action rises with precision, grabbing the reader while also developing the

characters through action more often than through dialogue. As the writer realizes, the

best way (really the only way) to develop character is through action – that’s certainly

the case here, be it with David being ready and willing to defend himself, his love Debra,

and his country (not to mention his Jewish heritage at the drop of a hat.

The writer clearly understands that the concept cannot outweigh the characters in these

types of stories. That is to say, if you stripped the hook out of the narrative, would the

story still be interesting if it focused solely on the characters? The answer in this case,

quite fortunately, is yes. So there’s certainly potential to continue developing this

engaging concept in the hopes of landing a sale in the near future – the material

warrants it and it’s in your best interest to continue to develop the material and ensure

the script is as polished as possible.

From a production standpoint, this is certainly a pricey story to realize on the big screen.

It’s going to require elaborate set pieces, exotic locations, heavy VFX work (which can

be done in Asia – that’s where the strong co-production potential comes in here), and a

**Eagle in the Sky**

**Page Three**

really expansive budget in order to bring this story to life in a manner it currently

demands. In my opinion, that’s going to be incredibly difficult to do and I would

encourage you to consider scaling the story down as best you can, perhaps veering away

from the high-flying jet sequences in order to keep the story more grounded (literally and figuratively) and really focus in on character as best you can.

All in all, the script warrants further development. Keep writing and look to bring the

narrative into today’s political climate (which is certainly interesting) to see if you can contextualize it for a modern audience and draw upon real-life events in a more

dynamic way.

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**Screenplay is currently being rewritten.**

**NOTE #2: Analyst B7473 was not aware** that *“****Eagle in the Sky”* has the tenta-tive cooperation and assistance of the DoD/Navy and the IDF/AF. Such coopera-tion and assistance would allow the aerial team to film real training missions in the latest military aircraft at cost (use and fuel at a rate of approximately $7,500 to $10,000 per hour) which would be a fraction of the cost of doing it by CGI and look a lot more real.**

**NOTE #3: Additionally, much of the filming will take place in Israel, a country with both sound stages and very skilled crews – where crew costs are approxi-mately half that of the U.S. and Canada.**

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Gunfire Reef

by

Dennis F. Stevens

Contest: The Orb Media China-Hollywood Screenwriting Fellowship (Winter 2017)

Package: China-Hollywood contest entry plus feedback (English Language)

Date: 02/03/2017

Page Count: 133

Genre: Unknown

Analyst: B7473

Rating: N/A

Score 7.7

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Category Score**

 Dialogue 7.0/10

 Structure 8.0/10

 Originality 8.0/10

 Concept 7.0/10

 Characterization 8.0/10

 Plot 8.0/10

 Format 8.0/10

 Co-Production Elements 9.0/10

 Conflict 8.0/10

 Pacing 8.0/10

 Theme 8.0/10

 Tone 7.0/10

 Catharsis 7.0/10

 Commercial Appeal 7.0/10

 Current Market Potential 7.0/10

 Casting Potential 7.0/10

 Voice 7.0/10

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Gunfire Reef**

**Page Two**

**Logline / Synopsis:**

A charter fisherman finds himself in a a high stakes game of international intrigue after a

private charter mission goes horribly awry and he’s nearly killed. In this game of cat and

mouse, no one is who they appear to be and an old treasure is more valuable than it first

appears.

**FEEDBACK**

There’s an inherently cinematic concept at the core of this script and a setting and

atmosphere that gives this narrative both a mysterious and Bond-like tone that’s rather

infectious. This is a well-written thriller that tells a loosely original tale akin to the

classics in the genre like the aforementioned 007 franchise, albeit much more grounded

in style. While it’s not the most unique story we’ve ever seen, it’s got strong potential to

appeal to a mainstream demographic if the script can be shaped and honed in order to

update it for a modern audience (it was written in 1991 after all, but the material could

lend itself well with a modern flare – or you could do it as a period piece of course).

The plotting in the script is quite smart and flows at a really steady rate. While the

characters are rich and feel largely authentic and unique, I’d still like to see more of

Harry’s personal life explored in the story, especially in Act 1 as the story unfolds in

rapid succession. It’s always good to enter a story later as opposed to too early, and

that’s certainly the case here. But more focus on Harry’s personal life up front (outside

of the business) ideally presented in a manner that tells us everything he truly wants in

life and hints at what he’s ultimately capable of) will go a long way towards fleshing his character out to a greater extent and making him all the more likeable as the classic

onscreen hero.

The dialogue in the story is rich and layered – while there’s a tendency towards

exposition in Act 1, it feels somewhat veiled in a clever manner given the context of the

plot and the writer understands that dialogue only adds to a character, it does not

define or develop it. No, that is done through action because, as the writer knows,

action equals character when it comes to screenwriting. Once the action shifts into Act

2 after Harry awakens in the hospital and is able to meet the imposter Miss. West,

things really hit their stride and the mystery only grows deeper and more fascinating.

From a production standpoint this is certainly prime territory for a strong international

co-production given the use of multiple settings and characters of different

nationalities. With a higher production budget, it’s going to be key (as stated at the end

of the script) to make use of a tax incentive to bring this story to life with the post being

**Gunfire Reef**

**Page Three**

done in China. It’s not impossible to see a widespread, younger demographic for this

film (18-35, skewing male) and strong casting potential across the board. There’s

potential for international box office success here. Please continue to develop this

script and best of luck with landing a sale – I’d love to see this come to life.

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**NOTE:**

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**Screenplay is currently undergoing rewrites.**

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Robin and the Las Vegas Cross-up

by

Dennis F. Stevens

Package: Full Feedback

Date: 02/21/2017

Page Count: 123

Genre: Unknown

Analyst: B7473

Rating: Consider

Score 6.7

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Category Score**

Casting Potential 6.0/10

 Current Market Potential 6.0/10

Commercial Appeal 6.0/10

Catharsis 6.0/10

 Characterization 6.0/10

 Tone 6.0/10

 Theme 7.0/10

 Pacing 7.0/10

 Conflict 7.0/10

 Dialogue 6.0/10

Structure 7.0/10

 Voice 6.0/10

 Originality 7.0/10

 Format 5.0/10

 Concept 7.0/10

 Characterization l 6.0/10

 Plot 6.0/10

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Robin & the Las Vegas Cross-up**

**Page One**

**Logline / Synopsis:**

A ragtag group of covert, professional thieves who serve society and themselves as

modern day Robin Hoods, perform what should be a fairly routine heist outside a dog

track only to discover the track is laundering funds.

***FEEDBACK***

There’s a highly cinematic and certainly a rather compelling screen story in place here,

one which tips its hat to classics in the heist genre kike OCEAN’S 11 while still standing

on its own two feet as a compelling, original creation. The central characters are active,

and while they tend to speak far too often (typically in exposition – constantly stating

what they’re going to do, why they need to do it, and when they’re going to do it), they’re

each interesting in their own unique way.

Robin is obviously our protagonist here – fearless leader of his merry band, who go

around bringing down corruption in clever and original ways. The most important

aspect of this narrative is the fact that they’re a likable group, despite first impressions

that would make us think otherwise. Robin’s a highly active figure in the story, which is

key because action develops characters as opposed to dialogue. While the action in the

narrative is both highly visual and, occasionally, rather immediate, I was distracted by

the heavy reliance on dialogue to set up and contextualize the plot, be it the initial heist

on the armored car or the proceeding investigation that inevitable follows once the

stolen Taurus vanishes into thin air. I also found the narrator’s presence in the story

distracting and tonally at odds with the rest of the story – it felt old fashioned in a way I

can’t see modern audiences relating to (a 70’s style, DUKES OF HAZZARD type).

Though engaging and on point with a riveting plot that builds steadily over the course of

the script until the rousing climax, I found the execution of the narrative rather

disappoint and needlessly busy. The descriptions are quite often over-long and attempt

to offer too much information for the reader, information that typically can’t be

visualized on screen thus the viewer won’t have the superior positioning that the reader inevitable does. Trying to be much more efficient in the action lines while reducing the

heavy reliance on exposition-laced dialogue throughout, will go a long way towards

making this a much more readable script that is also more filmable. It will also cut down

a rather extensive page count that, in the reader’s opinion, is much too high at present.

Finally, from a co-production standpoint, the script certainly has strong potential. The

action takes place in Las Vegas, though as the writer points out; it can easily be moved

to China (or perhaps another exotic locale). With a bevy of post-production work and

VFX required, it not hard to the action being shot Stateside with the post in China.

**Robin & the Las Vegas Cross-up**

**Page Three**

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