

**SCRIPTCRAWLER**  
**Extended Comments Coverage**

TITLE: ZERO GRAVITY  
AUTHOR: \*\*\*\* \*  
FROM/PAGES: SP, 129  
ANALYST: NT  
COVERAGE DATE: 1/19/08

LOCALE: Space Station  
PERIOD: 2097  
GENRE: Science Fiction  
BUDGET: High

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LOGLINE: Earth's resources are dwindling, and a young astronaut must stop a plot to destroy the spacecraft carrying hundreds of people to a new planet.

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OVERALL RATINGS:

**Script**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Premise		X		
Structure			X	
Characterization			X	
Dialogue			X	
Pacing			X	

**Writer**

Writing Style			X	
Tone			X	
Visual Elements		X		
Description			X	
Strength of Voice			X	

**COMMENTS:**

ZERO GRAVITY is an action-packed, futuristic sci-fi romance with strong potential as a marketable feature. While some elements of the script are interesting and well-developed, it fails to gain momentum and deliver a satisfying conclusion. The characters and plot feel generic, and despite some promising setups, the script does not follow through on many of its dramatic choices. There's clearly a strong intent to combine riveting action with compelling characters, but the script feels splintered between the two, and the absence of a strong focus leaves the script feeling less-memorable than it certainly can be.

The script's concept is great: Earth's future is bleak enough to colonize a faraway planet. Orson's involvement with Paxton's evil plan is also a strong setup, but the script never unites the two interesting ideas. These two concepts could come together in a meaningful, cinematic way, but the script never fully addresses the stakes that it has set up. How does Orson's knowledge of the plan impact him emotionally, and how does it influence his arc? Fleshing out this inner conflict could provide some potent subtext, and also

add some flavor to the otherwise bland dialogue. This "secret" offers the script a strong reveal in the third act: how would Gloria react if she discovered Orson's involvement? The script could certainly get more mileage from its set-ups. Seeds of promising action, drama, and romance are peppered throughout the first and second acts, but the climax falls flat because these elements do not noticeably progress as the story unfolds.

Characterization is bland and stagnant, particularly with Orson, who lacks specificity: he evokes the drone-like "everyman" of 1984 and Brave New World, but without a real purpose or meaning. As a result, Orson is distant, and never evokes empathy. His behavior is often inexplicable: The script paints him as a patriotic do-gooder, yet he agrees to work for Paxton, who he *knows* is evil. Was he paid off, blackmailed, or converted to the dark side? Whatever his motivation for working with Paxton, it's important that we see what drives him to act. Further, even though he's aware that the ship will be destroyed, he boards it: if getting to the new planet is a risk-worthy goal for Orson, it's not at all apparent in the first act. Perhaps if someone/something he cared about was on board, he'd be propelled to risk his life for it.

Backstory between the Orson and Paxton is never dramatized: it's clear that they have a past, but the specifics are never hinted at. Perhaps Orson's inactivity prevents the script from dramatizing key elements. If he had a more distinct goal at the end of the first act (like boarding the ship to rescue someone), then every action he takes would carry more dramatic weight. As of now, he seems a bit inactive, even when it comes to *reacting*: in one scene, he discovers Paxton's human slaves, yet in the next, he's flirting with Gloria with no mention of the previous scene. It's difficult to understand Orson when his emotional reactions are so minimal. His actions in the climax lack conflict and an emotional push: since Paxton has already been killed, there's no real antagonist to stand in Orson's way. Paxton's absence in the third act lessens the sense of confrontation and struggle, leaving only extra-personal obstacles for Orson. The protagonist's lack of an emotional core is especially evident in the culmination of the third act. By adding in the reveal of the "hidden bombs," the script seems to tack on a generic ticking clock, instead of sticking with the antagonist who has complicated the story throughout. Keep Paxton around longer, to drive the conflict through to its climax.

Paxton is similarly unclear as an antagonist. The script doesn't identify what he *does*: he's a salesman, but how does that connect to his evil plot? He makes a deal with Orson, but the risk is vague: why must Orson be involved, and if Paxton is so aware that Orson is a "good guy at heart" (p. 26), then why wouldn't he just recruit someone with lower moral standards? What is this computer virus really doing? And ultimately, what does the virus have to do with the human cargo he plans to enslave? Is his goal to smuggle humans or destroy the ship? In Act II, Paxton's plan to cash in on the slaves' life insurance surfaces with no setup or context to

rationalize it. What's more confusing, he plans to blow up the ship - which is clearly stated to have no escape pods. How does Paxton plan to escape? His plan is severely undercut by his apparent lack of planning and logic. The stakes are murky throughout the story, and the lack of clarity in Paxton's plan severely limits dramatic tension and suspense. Much like the other characters, Paxton's motives and inner emotions are not properly dramatized.

The script's scene-by-scene construction feels arbitrary, and could be smoothed out to improve the flow of the story. The subplot of Orson helping Gloria find her mother is resolved in three back-to-back scenes, when it could be more effective as a running issue. If the stakes were higher, the pressure to find Gloria's mother could act as another ticking clock to layer the script's tension. Even more important, these scenes could visualize the progression of the romantic subplot. As it stands, Gloria tells Orson she loves him after three short scenes: they've known each other less than an hour. The lack of credibility here severely limits their dynamic, and paints Gloria as a one-dimensional, love-happy romantic. The script could spread these scenes out throughout the second act, and develop a gradual, more effective subplot. For instance, with one "searching" scene at the start of Act II, Orson and Gloria's romance could be sparked - but his struggle to stop Paxton could pull him away from her, putting tension on their blooming romance. By pulling him in and out of her story, the script could more effectively build their relationship, and span these three effective scenes throughout the second act, into a more compelling, fleshed out subplot.

Other scenes in Act II suffer a similar symptom, losing effectiveness due to "back-to-back" construction. In other words, the placement of scenes eliminates dramatic tension, resolving potent drama before it even has a chance to sink in. Adding to Orson's pressure and slowly building the conflict over many scenes (and through subtext) could give the script a stronger momentum, and smooth out some toxic pacing issues. This draft feels clunky in its execution, and a less-episodic structure could provide some much-needed streamlining.

The absence of subtext is another issue that slows the script's pace: most dialogue is blatant exposition, or on-the-surface emotions. For instance, Gloria says, "Although we met only moments ago, I feel a love for you that I can't really verbalize" (p. 31), which is a pretty direct way of conveying her feelings. Try to smooth it out a bit, and imply her feelings without her literally saying what she's thinking. Typically, subtext is a great way of subtly conveying these kinds of issues, without being on-the-nose about them. Since this scene deals with Gloria being grateful to Orson for helping her find her mother, she might use *that* to convey her romantic feelings for him. Again, they've not known each other for a believable amount of time that she would actually use the word "love," and even if it is love at first sight, their chemistry hasn't been fully-realized in this draft. The use of subtext might

provide a more cinematic expression of her feelings. Try having the characters talk about anything other than the topic at hand, like SIDEWAYS: the characters reveal their inner emotions through talking about wine. This scene sparks with vivid subtext, and pushes the two characters closer together.

While the first act does a great job setting up the status quo on Earth, it meanders quite a bit before the Inciting Incident. The script struggles to find the top of the second act - which doesn't begin until page 39 - and uses the bulk of its top-heavy first act to set up subplots that are never revisited. By trimming out these unnecessary beats that add little to the story (Orson's dream sequence, his one-night stand, his trip to his childhood home), the script could certainly ignite the action sooner. The script's opening lacks a solid punch, and the blocks of description in the first few pages get the script off to a leaden start. Perhaps the script could open on Orson's intense chase from Paxton's men: this is a strong piece of action writing, and would begin the story at an appropriate and intriguing moment.

Overall, ZERO GRAVITY presents some interesting ideas that never gain momentum. However, there are some intriguing elements at play. A movie like SUPERNOVA comes to mind: the concept is intriguing, but the third act abandons what initially worked well, in pursuit of a disconnected tone and sensibility. With deeper characters and a focused narrative through-line, this could be a terrific script.

**SCRIPT OVERALL: PASS**

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SCRIPTCRAWLER BREAKDOWN GRIDS

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Professionalism of script presentation	X			
Spelling & Grammar	X			
Title			X	
Opening Image/Hook				
First 10 Pages			X	
Narrative Through-Line			X	
Subplots			X	
Levels of Conflict			X	
Reversals, Complications & Twists			X	
Tension & Suspense			X	
Act I			X	
Act II			X	
Act III				X
Conclusion/Resolution				X

Revision/Marketing Strategy	YES	NO	N/A
This script suggests strong potential as a commercially viable feature.	X		
This script is ready to be seen by agents, executives, and readers.		X	
This script has desirable roles for actors.		X	
This script has a distinct cinematic flavor that could attract directors.		X	
The trailer/preview for this film is easy to visualize.		X	
The title is intriguing and fitting.		X	
The characters are unique and empathetic.		X	
The story is believable within its context.		X	
It's easy to visualize the action through the line-by-line writing.	X		
Dialogue rings true, and feels fresh.		X	
This concept is interesting and compelling.	X		
The script is distinctly cinematic.		X	
The writing is concise yet vivid.		X	