

THE BLUEPRINT

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SCOTTY'S CASTLE - DAY

A limo pulls up to what looks like a California Mission - buildings, arches, towers with adobe walls, red tile roofs.

Low hills and palm trees surround the complex.

At the front entrance a huge archway is protected by a spike-topped gate. All that's missing is a moat and drawbridge.

SARAH, a cute, harried yuppie housewife, exits the limo. She stares at her temporary lodging, smiles, looks thrilled.

INT. THE MAIN HOUSE

Inside, the Entry Way ceiling soars to over 30 feet. An ornate chandelier dangles on a chain.

The Entry Way opens to The Great Room - Mexican tile floor, area rugs, heavy beamed ceiling, massive fireplace. Couches and overstuffed chairs are arranged around low tables.

A dark, cold interior. Dracula would be at home here.

Sarah wanders in and surveys the interior. The LIMO DRIVER sets her luggage down in the Entry Way.

Past The Great Room, the Dining Room, with a table long enough to seat thirty. Beyond, a gourmet Kitchen.

Multiple stairways lead to the second story, where six bedrooms are spaced around a balcony that surrounds it and looks down on the Great Room.

The Limo Driver approaches Sarah. He has a dark complexion, beard. Not a local. He has a trace of a foreign accent - like he was educated abroad.

LIMO DRIVER

Pick one of the bedrooms. There's a laptop computer there...

SARAH

I brought my own.

LIMO DRIVER

Please use the one in your room.

(beat)

So your host can access your writing and check on your progress.

Sarah walks to the Dining Room table and runs her hand across the smooth wooden surface.

LIMO DRIVER (CONT'D)  
There is a land line, but no cell phone reception.

Sarah enters the kitchen, the Limo Driver close behind.

SARAH  
So - I'm isolated from the outside world. But, I may need access to the Internet for research.

LIMO DRIVER  
Use the computer in your room to message your host - or others in the house. He can do the Internet searches for you.

Sarah stops, turns to the Limo Driver.

SARAH  
Others?

LIMO DRIVER  
And you can't e-mail anyone outside the house.

Sarah opens the large two door refrigerator, checks inside.

LIMO DRIVER (CONT'D)  
You'll have all the food you need. You'll have to prepare it and clean up after.

Sarah closes the refrigerator, then back to the Driver.

SARAH  
Great! Sounds like fun. Lets do this.

Sarah strides out of the kitchen.

INT. A BEDROOM

A king bed, seating area, en suite bathroom, closet. Next to a glass door that looks out to the hills, a spacious desk.

The in-house computer rests on the desk.

Sarah opens the glass door and steps onto a wide patio. She leans on the railing, looks down to the Olympic sized pool.

INT. A HALLWAY

Sarah saunters down the hall, exploring. A ball BOUNCING startles her. She heads in the direction of the noise.

INT. INDOOR BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

KAREEM dribbles a basketball on the court - pauses, fakes - then launches himself at the basket - for a slam dunk!

Kareem is Afro-American, twenties. Bald, tatoos. Looks like an escapee from inner city gang life.

Sarah approaches Kareem. He holds the ball, checks her out.

KAREEM

Hey.

SARAH

Hey yourself. I'm Sarah.

KAREEM

Kareem.

SARAH

Kareem? I'm Sarah Silverman.  
Bet we'll get along just great.

KAREEM

You a writer?

SARAH

Wanna-be. I know we're here to write a silly Horror story, but I hope it'll become a cult classic, a narrative everyone will remember.

KAREEM

Like Saw, Nightmare on Elm Street.

Sarah takes the basketball from Kareem, aims a shot at the far basket. Misses the rim. Just screwing around.

SARAH

You're in great shape.

KAREEM

Yeah, but I got hurt, lost my college scholarship.

SARAH

My husband - he's an airline pilot - he use to be fit.

Sarah turns to leave. Smiles at Kareem.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
See you later. I gotta get organized.

KAREEM  
Hey. For dinner, I'm thinkin' you could whip us up some steaks...

SARAH  
Yeah, right. I'll get right on it. How you like your steak?

Kareem approaches Sarah, laughing. He touches her shoulder.

KAREEM  
I'm just messin' with you.

SARAH  
Listen. I came here to get away from playin' house.

KAREEM  
Tell you what. I'll grill up some burgers, home fries. Few beers...

SARAH  
Sounds good. See you later.

Sarah leaves the court. Kareem follows her with his eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kareem sits at a table, making notes on a pad. A stack of crumpled pages from the pad are scattered on the floor.

Sarah enters, observes him writing.

SARAH  
What's your process?

KAREEM  
Process?

SARAH  
I mean - do you make an outline?  
Do you think in terms of scenes?  
Do you follow the three act structure? Do you start with plot or character?

Kareem looks confounded by the inquisition.

KAREEM

What?

SARAH

And why don't you use the computer in your room. Much easier to make additions and corrections, to edit.

Kareem looks down at the floor, embarrassed.

KAREEM

I don't know how to use it.

Sarah stares at Kareem, thinking. Then she stands.

SARAH

I'll show you how. Wait here.

Kareem watches Sarah jog up the stairs toward the bedrooms. He collects the pages on the floor, arranges them.

Sarah returns with a laptop computer.

SARAH (CONT'D)

This is the computer from your room.

Sarah sets the laptop on table in front of them, boots it up. But then... the front door CREAKS open - and in sneaks TOM.

Tom, sixties, is overweight, tired looking. He enters the Great Room. Sarah and Kareem greet him.

Introductions are made, hands are shaken. Then they all sit.

Kareem looks at Tom, a little concerned.

KAREEM

You look like a cop.

TOM

I look like a cancer survivor.

(beat)

Why? Is being a cop a problem?

KAREEM

Nah. You just had - that look - that cop look. Or ex-military. Clean shaven, crew cut, neat.

TOM

Now I'm just an amateur writer - like the rest of you.

SARAH  
Pick yourself a bedroom.

Sarah points to the balcony at the top of the stairs.

INT. SCOTTY'S CASTLE, GREAT ROOM - DAY

Four writers-in-training relax in the Great Room. JENNY has been added to the mix. Coffee cups all around.

Jenny is in her thirties, Asian - the take charge type. She looks over to her room mates.

JENNY  
Let's see. A cancer survivor, a cook, a housewife...

SARAH  
Hey! I was a journalist...

JENNY  
No offense, but I'm actually in show business...

SARAH  
So - why are you here? I mean, if you're in show business.

No love lost between these two women.

JENNY  
I'm a low level Assistant Director - I do the grunt work on a set. I have an agent, want to be a writer, but haven't sold a script yet.

SARAH  
Then you're not better off than the rest of us. Welcome to the battle.

The front door BANGS open, and KIM and GINO enter. He's carrying her two large suitcases.

KIM, fifties, was probably stunning in her youth, still looks great for her age. GINO, thirties, looks like her bodyguard.

Kim pauses, looks into the Great Room where the other four writers watch them. She turns to Gino.

KIM  
Just set them down here. Let's get acquainted.

Kim struts into the room like a model on a runway. Gino follows like a big overgrown puppy dog.

INT. SCOTTY'S CASTLE, GREAT ROOM - DAY

The six writers relax in the Great Room, stare at a huge TV screen attached to a wall over the fireplace.

And the TV screen powers up.

CLOSE ON THE TV SCREEN

A grotesque FACE appears on the screen. It's the Guy Fawkes mask from the movie "V for Vendetta." Audible groans and reactions rise up in the background.

FACE  
(voice modulated)  
Good morning writers. Welcome to  
my humble abode.

RETURN TO SCENE - THE GREAT ROOM

The writers have recovered from their initial shock.

KAREEM  
What's with the disguise?

FACE  
Just setting the theme - Terror.

SARAH  
Bullshit. You don't want us to  
know who you are.

The Face is silent for a beat - then...

FACE  
Feel free to discuss writing, in  
general, with each other, and you  
can even share your particular  
plots if you want.  
(beat)  
What I'm looking for is a unique  
take on a Horror script, something  
we haven't seen before.

SARAH  
But man-made. Not from some  
natural disaster. And no scary  
monsters?

FACE

Like Black Sunday or Sum of All Fears. The same - but different.

SARAH

Shit! You sound like all the other Hollywood producers out there.

FACE

I'll review what you write each day. And don't forget - the devil's in the details.

KAREEM

Say what?

FACE

The details. Don't just tell me, for example, a group of crackpots attacked a city, but how they trained, what weapons they used, how they closed off the area, how they handled the authorities, what was their motivation, how they escaped, etc., etc.

SARAH

We got it.

FACE

You'll each get a modest stipend, room and board for the time you spend here, and any screenplay I love I'll buy for at least five figures...

Cheers from the writers.

FACE (CONT'D)

Well! We've got an eclectic group of writers here. You were selected for this competition because of the strengths of the scripts you sent in. I'm excited to see how you expand and refine your plots.

The group looks at each other - some high fives, some self congratulations. They seem pleased at the compliment.

FACE (CONT'D)

And don't avoid special effects due to production costs. Enjoy!

And the screen goes blank.

LATER

Tom walks around the Great Room, coffee cup in hand. He investigates each table lamp, wall-mounted picture.

KAREEM  
What you doin'?

TOM  
Nothin' in particular. I'm curious  
by nature.

KAREEM  
Shit! You was a fuckin' cop.

Tom turns, hits Kareem with a "you got me" smile, then scans a massive bookcase with particular attention.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

An electronics rack with multiple TV monitors. Scenes of various areas of Scotty's Castle - including the Great Room.

CLOSE ON A TV MONITOR.

Tom continues his Great Room investigation. He sticks his face directly at a hidden camera.

SARAH (O.S.)  
You think our host will spy on us?

TOM (O.S.)  
No, not really. Just gettin' the  
lay of the land.

A hand reaches out and adjusts one of the TV feeds.

RETURN TO SCENE - GREAT ROOM

KAREEM  
Why would he do that?

TOM  
If he did snoop, it's just to watch  
us interact. Maybe he's hoping  
we'll get on each other's nerves -  
then kill each other.

SARAH  
So he can write his own horror  
story.

KAREEM

Hey. He can skip the screenplay contest and just record us messin' with each other.

TOM

Cut out the middle man.

Tom sits down, concentrates on Kareem.

TOM (CONT'D)

Kareem. You a Muslim?

KAREEM

Yeah. Now it's my time to ask if you got a problem with that?

TOM

Well now. Muslim extremists have caused lots of problems lately.

KAREEM

That ain't me. Just here to write.

Sarah decides to be the peacekeeper.

SARAH

So - Kareem. You want to tell us something about your plot?

Kareem waits a beat - still simmering. Then...

KAREEM

It's about two gangs, one black, one Latino...

TOM

(interrupting)

I bet you know a lot about gangs.

KAREEM

Hey, man. Write what you know.

SARAH

Two gangs. Then what?

KAREEM

Two gangs, they take over this mall, say they'll kill everyone inside unless the police give them a zone where they can operate without being harassed.

TOM

Shit, boy. You got a lot to do to flesh out that scenario.

KAREEM

Who you callin' boy?

Again, Sarah the peacemaker takes over.

SARAH

Gentlemen. I left my family to come here. I don't need you two dipshits to spoil this for me.

No response from either Tom or Kareem. They continue to stare at each other.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jenny walks in holding her wine glass, looks around, takes stock.

GREAT ROOM

Jenny returns, takes a seat on the couch, removes her cell phone from her jeans, starts to type.

JENNY

We need to get organized - who's gonna make dinner, clean up...

SARAH

(to Jenny)

Who died and left you in charge?

Jenny stares at Sarah, puts her phone away.

JENNY

Fine! Then you do it.

TOM

No - wait. That's a good idea. It'd be more efficient, leave us more time to be creative.

KAREEM

I don't mind doin' the cookin'.

TOM

And I can be first on cleanup. Then we can take turns.

JENNY

I'll post a chart in the kitchen.

Silence. Then Jenny stands, heads for the kitchen.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The six writers have just finished dinner. Jenny picks up her wine glass, turns to Kim.

JENNY

Say - you're Kim Stanley. You used to be a famous movie star.

KIM

At least I was famous.

JENNY

Sorry. That didn't come out right.

KAREEM

Kim. You must be loaded. Why you here competing with us peons?

KIM

Because - it's hard in this year of our Lord 2,000...

JENNY

Y-2-K. And the world didn't end.

KIM

... for an actress my age to get any meaty parts, so I thought I'd write one for myself.

JENNY

You know we're suppose to write a Horror movie...

KIM

My life has been a Horror movie.

Tom pushes back his chair, starts to clear the table.

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

The writers relax together, sip cocktails.

GINO

I'd like to run my story line by the group, get some feedback.

The others pause, give Gino their attention.

GINO (CONT'D)  
Being a football guy, I thought I'd  
set a disaster at a Superbowl.

KAREEM  
Like your last game there?

Veins pop out in Gino's neck as he stares at Kareem.

GINO  
And I've also taken Jesus to be my  
personal Savior...

Moans from the group.

GINO (CONT'D)  
So I want to write about when he  
comes to take us...

KIM  
Take us to the glorious place above  
the clouds...

TOM  
The Apocalypse - the End of Times.

GINO  
But - he only take the believers.  
The rest will be left behind.

SARAH  
What's this have to do with the  
Super Bowl?

GINO  
That's when it will happen.  
Suddenly, some fans wouldn't be  
there. Poof! Gone. Live, on TV.

KAREEM  
At least it wouldn't affect the  
players and the game.

SARAH  
That's not a man-made disaster.

GINO  
It is - kind of. Man's straying  
from the Lord got us here.

An uneasy silence settles over Gino, then he takes a seat.  
That's when Tom stands, takes center stage.

TOM

So - my brother is a New York City fireman, and he suggested this man-made horror.

Tom has the group's attention, pauses for a sip of his drink.

TOM (CONT'D)

The City of Los Angeles is surrounded by mountains with millions of trees just waiting to explode in a fire storm - because of years of drought. So a group of terrorists set fires all around the city at the same time...

KAREEM

Hey, that's great! There's no way they have the resources to fight all the fires at once...

TOM

...even if they brought in outside help. Citizens couldn't get out - there would be panic - LA would burn to the ground.

KAREEM

Hey man. That's my home.

KIM

And mine.

Tom, looking somewhat abash, takes his seat.

JENNY

How about you Sarah?

SARAH

I got my idea from my husband.

JENNY

And so?

SARAH

I'd rather not discuss it.

The group lets that sink in, look at each other.

JENNY

Mine will happen during the filming of a major motion picture. An epic, with a cast of thousands.

TOM  
So - Kim. That leaves you.

KIM  
My soon-to-be-ex husband is one of those computer geeks, started his own company, got filthy rich...

TOM  
Computers.

KIM  
The Internet. I'm gonna cause a world-wide disruption...

KAREEM  
How you gonna do that?

KIM  
Like mister back liner...

GINO/TOM/KAREEM  
Line backer.

KIM  
Whatever. Like the Hulk, I haven't worked out the details yet.

Sarah stands, starts to collect drink glasses.

INT. SCOTTY'S CASTLE, GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

The contestants in the Great Room. The big screen TV comes to life. The FACE appears on the screen.

FACE  
Good evening writers.

WRITERS  
(together)  
Evening.

FACE  
You six have been hard at it for three weeks. Based on my review of your writing, I can see where this is going.

Nervous movement from the writers.

FACE (CONT'D)  
I've selected Sarah's story to concentrate on.

Some of the writers stand, start to pace the room. Other stay seated, look dejected. Lots of grumbling, yelling.

FACE (CONT'D)

But. I'd like you all to stay and work, as a team, to make this the best story you can. Lots of gory details. Flesh out the characters. Dramatic climax. The works.

Kareem, really upset, faces the TV.

KAREEM

That ain't what we signed up for.

The others chime in to agree with Kareem.

FACE

I'll award Sarah half the winners amount, and split the other half equally among the rest of you.

More unrest in the Great Room.

FACE (CONT'D)

And I'll give you each a stipend to continue the work on Sarah's play. You can stay here, room and board provided - and I'll see that each of you who participate get writing credit when the film is produced.

This quiets the writers down a tad. Consider the offer.

INT. SCOTTY'S CASTLE, GREAT ROOM - DAY

The six writers gather in the Great Room. Jenny stands up.

JENNY

We need to establish some kind of organization...

SARAH

You know, this is my story.

JENNY

Yeah, sorry. In my business someone has to take a strong lead or time and money gets pissed away.

SARAH

It's fine. Just so you're aware of your tendency. Go ahead.

JENNY

Sarah has created a workable three-act structure. We should stick with it.

SARAH

(sarcastic)

Thanks.

KAREEM

I agree. I really like the story. But I got some issues...

Sarah stands. She seems upset by the impromptu meeting.

KAREEM (CONT'D)

My biggest problem with Sarah's play is the nature of the characters she selected to carry out the plot...

KIM

"The nature of the characters..."

KAREEM

Yeah. They're - homogeneous - all alike, all from the same area, all with the same background...

GINO

You could be a homo, but you're definitely not a genius.

Kareem takes a playful swing at Gino.

JENNY

So - they're alike. What's wrong with that.

SARAH

The ones I've selected are the most logical to commit the required action. What changes would you suggest - any why?

KAREEM

Your guys are too alike. We need diversity, different types of characters.

SARAH

Diversity. Like who? Like in the NFL or NBA?

KAREEM

Boys in the hood. Mexican gang bangers, motorcycle gang members, dudes in the slammer, bad asses.

SARAH

You understand why I chose these recruits - and their singular reason to engage in this plot?

KAREEM

Yeah, but...

SARAH

Oh - wait. I get it. I know why Kareem is the one leading this rewrite choice.

GINO

I think we all know.

Silence in the room.

INT. GREAT ROOM - DAY

The writers assemble in front of the flat screen. Then - it lights up and the Face appears.

FACE

Good morning writers. How are you?

The writers all mumble their good mornings.

FACE (CONT'D)

I've read your final draft, and I must say it is brilliant. Congratulations, well done.

The writers smile, high five each other.

FACE (CONT'D)

You have crafted a realistic scenario, defined strong characters that audiences may not love, but will follow with interest. I've prepared checks for each of you. They'll be available when you leave. I'll be in touch when the financing and casting is in place. You'll all be welcome to visit the set during shooting.

The writers acknowledge this promise.

FACE (CONT'D)

Thanks again. It's been great working with you.

JENNY

And we all would like to thank you for the opportunity to participate in this project. It's been a valuable experience for a screenwriter.

The Face nods - and the TV screen goes blank.

Jenny stands, faces the writers.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I think starting with Sarah's play we did something remarkable here, something that we'll celebrate later. Even though it's just a movie, people will remember our contribution. We should be proud.

KIM

Group hug.

The writers stand, hug and high five each other.

KAREEM

I'll break out the champagne.

Kareem locates a bottle, pops the cork. Glasses are raised, champagne poured. More celebration.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

A lavish party is in place. Scores of guests circulate around the huge area. Liquor flows freely.

Kim hugs a lady friend, accepts a refill of her champagne glass.

INT. EXERCISE ROOM - DAY

Gino strains doing bench presses. He clanks the bar on the holders, takes a break.

He sits up, looks around. The gym is filled with big, athletic men, sweating, working out.

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

A model jet fighter aircraft zooms overhead, up into the clear blue sky. Loud - fast.

Tom stands in the landing strip, pilots the flight with a hand-held control box.

INT. GYM - DAY

Junior high boys race up and down a basketball court - speed drills. Kareem watches, a whistle in his hands.

EXT. MOVIE SET - DAY

An exterior scene is set up. Jenny goes over a script with an actor during a break.

INT. SARAH'S KITCHEN - DAY

Toast in the toaster, eggs frying on the stove. A small TV on the counter runs while Sarah prepares breakfast.

Suddenly, her attention is drawn to the TV. It shows an airliner hit the World Trade Center North Tower in New York.

CLOSE ON THE TV SCREEN

A massive explosion jets out from the original crash. Then another plane slams into the South Tower.

ANNOUNCER

(on TV)

Two other airline attacks have been reported - one in Pennsylvania and one at the Pentagon.

RETURN TO SCENE - SARAH'S KITCHEN

Sarah looks up, crestfallen, lost in thought. The kitchen smoke alarm goes off as eggs burn on the stove.

SARAH

That monster-faced motherfucker!

Sarah collapses in a chair, puts her head in her hands.

FADE TO BLACK.

