

**Davin Eastley's short review of Sentient Pilot (Australia): Draft Three.**

**Written December 25, 2019.**

I like the flow of page 3, with the Chinese Premier commentary – I think this is quite effective in setting the scene. Additionally, the intertextual reference to a well-known dragon series works, and gives hints at what might yet come to be. I would slightly reorder the wording though, like so: "...will discover this dragon's resolve, at their peril". Perhaps 'this mighty [or ferocious] dragon's resolve' would strengthen it too? And maybe using emphasis on certain words there, to really hit it home. There are some minor grammatical mistakes and typos throughout the script which I would look out for, but in the below, I focus instead on the story and structure.

Page 7 – the power goes out at the navy base hospital, and an emergency light is used. Is this a battery-pack powered light? What kind of light system? Short-term backup power from a generator?

I like the lines between the Commodore and Dowd on page 8 about the consequences of living. The flashback works well, especially after witnessing the numerous dead bodies stacked up. This is nicely done.

On page 15, what is the 'tray space' Amiri is trapped in? This isn't quite clear, nor the gap she is clearly peering through. Is this between the tray and the wall behind as we see slightly later?

The end of Act Two – most particularly, pages 15 through 18 – reminds me of City 17 in the Half-Life game series, especially with the crowbar and the security camera. We then see vaporization in action, with the crowd broken down into streams of particles. Somewhat reminiscent of the Walking Dead series, perhaps – is this partially the aim? I think there's some good intertextual potential here, possibly, and that these series might serve to inspire.

I like the contentious nature of Act Three, and showing a villainous side to Dowd, but I'm surprised there isn't more decisive action taken against him. He seems to have won at least some trust from the others, despite what's alleged against him, and his threats with the Glock, safety-off. He heads down to a cell with Amiri (page 26), but it isn't clear from what follows that they are, indeed, in a cell. I think this part needs clarifying. Additionally, the following day, they, alongside Teicher, leave a bunker. How did they (Dowd and Amiri) get out of the cell? Were they released, or did they somehow escape? This, I think, needs addressing, because one day, they're in a cell with alleged serious crimes, and then, the very next day, not. Confuses the reader/viewer, I think.

On page 30, in the showers section, Dowd suggests "early release for good behavior" but that this is in relation to hyperbaric treatment. This is confusing, especially juxtaposed against his earlier time in a cell and given the medical nature of such. So, I'm not sure what this means, nor how it fits more broadly. Perhaps more needs to be developed earlier on in the script regarding conditions of his treatment suffering from decompression sickness? Is his treatment a living hell to him in some way? Or is this purely in terms of his pain and suffering that required treatment to begin with?

Act Five is my favourite. I'm left with suspense... a desire to know what happens after Dowd takes aim at these alien creatures, particularly after we see earlier that the bullets from Babic's M4 shatter mid-air. I like the transformation of bodies, and that we find them now in a pool of water – we are left asking how they got there from where they were before, and, additionally, how this transformation works and what this means for the characters we're following.

Overall, I think the characters are well done and that the script is written in an engaging fashion, drawing on some common and relatable themes from the sci-fi genre more broadly – again, noting my mention of Half-Life and The Walking Dead which might each serve as good inspiration here. I would give the pilot script a rating of 3.75/5 overall given all the above and think these minor points of confusion are easily fixable – but that the biggest hole, perhaps, is in Dowd leaving the cell somehow in Act Three. Well done; I'm looking forward to reading what comes next and will give the script a 4 rating on the Sentient WordPress website.