

## SENTIENT UK PILOT REVIEW BY DAVID NERLICH JAN 2020

Note this is my first reading of any draft of this story and these notes were made as I read.

p1 Ugh self cutting an armpit, this better be for a good reason. Also, we've all heard of self harm but don't know all about the how or why. Will we understand that's what we're watching?

p2 Sgt rock? sounded familiar but I had to look him up.

"automated ice cream dispenser". Don't they have some abbreviation for this favourite device?

p3 Partnership offer feels a bit like a bunch of key dramatic events all happening at once, but okay.

Good juxtaposition with door opening.

p4 Not clear who's related to who and how - are they Amy or Marley's kids? Must be Amy's.

p5 Seems odd that a family suicide murderer would behave more like a hired assassin. No dialogue or described emotion? Oh wait.. its not that? Ok he IS an assassin?

p6 Sandhurst? Cadet? Ok she's ex military with a problematic independent streak.

p9 Oh, Dillon is a girl. A lot of readers won't get that.

p10 Bit of a 'bloke' That's more a character trait we'd decide for ourselves later?

p11 Gavin takes a handkerchief from the pocket of a nearby corpse - lucky find. First go? Why not his own? Hygiene?

p12 Maybe lose the anticlimactic shuffle off and cut from bodies to Dillon screaming

p13 Jack's office -who the hell IS Jack? Surely not actually the Dad? She addressed him as Dad on p5 but without a glimmer of him being anything like the dad that seemed like mistaken identity, didn't he see him in the shadows or something.

p14 Discards razor, is this the point? An emergency has cured my neuroses? Or will they return in a thematic way in later episodes?

Draw a funny face at such a time? PS your slaughtered kids are inside.

p18 - Lots of awards. She's been awesome her whole life. Is Marley seeming a little too good to be true?

p20 - Ok here we get that the self harm is self harm, if not before.

27 alien events revealed slowly and clearly

p28 cat feeding nice - most heroic moment

p32 Why does Piers know nothing about nothing that's going on? Where's he been?

Jack Winsers daughter. So Jack IS the father. No idea why he turned murderous. Is this linked to Fitz's wild behaviour? (sorry im not clear on all the Sentient rules as I read this). Ebuka's review assumes Jack is murderous because he's a sentient. This crossed my mind but I never really thought that was it.

p33 Piers sp despicable he's borderline comical but it could all work if handled well.

p38 Fitz's reaction to his mates being dead could be done with an expression. Tone and naturalism. He's very non-covert about his criminality. Exposition.

p40 Het everyone, Marley is a killer. Pow - does Dillon really think so? Are the drawings about Marley or just about recording trauma? Or just a thinking aloud thing? If a warning it changes whole relationship. Dillon is a threat.

p42 Is Marley, under the circumstances, too unmotivatedly caring about people she shouldn't like? Can there be a reason why she needs Fitz rather than just being kind to him when thees death all around? The audience may not be sure they care that much about him either, even if he's entertaining. Ok she thinks he's dead. She wont need her coat?

This isnt a strong context for Bock to again evaluate Dillons drawings of dead bodies, given there's death all around at the moment. The first time worked as a surprise, almost a joke, but now youre making it an issue. Maybe later?

p45 Charlie seems like a very American character and an overfamiliar one at that. Ok you address this on p50 not entirely convincingly. Maybe if they were a little more against type/convention, eg theyre upper class eccentric weirdos not ignorant plebs, or magical-thinking pagans not christians.

p46 this EMP effect is also very familiar, i forget if its in the series bible. Ok.

p57 We've got another religious here, reacting to the disaster with the old

testament - is that at least one too many? I think keep this one because its driving the powerful drama of the scene and linking the parallel action at the reactor, and as mentioned before change the style of the bunker preppers

p64. Good, the loose end of Jack is tied up, or is soon going to be, but seems an unlikely coincidence that he's at this location. If its some kind of funnel that made eveyone go that way that should be clearer. But no its a time restricted thing. So how did Jack get there anyway?

Good that the pilot ends reopening the biggest mystery though.

OVERALL I'd give this a solid 4/5 with the potential for a 5.

STRENGTHS - We know who everyone is and why, after some initial confusion for the reader (would be less a problem for viewers). Structurally the journey is very clear and there is obvious tension rising to high drama at the end.

WEAKNESSES Tone and credibility of character behaviour at some points. Some of the character intro-descriptions could be better.