

## **Sentient Australia – Draft Four – Review by David Nerlich**

I made these notes during my first read of this draft

p4 After the stand off tension about how unthinkably explosive a physical contest would be, we then have a simple “Hunt pins him against the wall.” from which Hunt walks away. Different characters but felt inconsistent.

p5 ‘Jamaal to Team Leader’. Using his his first name?

could lose SUPER : THREE MONTHS LATER. obviously its discontinuous so probably a flashback/forward and makes a nice jarring pseudo montage with the expectation of seeing the ‘dying father’

p8 Do you carry a body with cracked ribs? Also how will we know she has cracked ribs? Just from a sound effect?

Lots of action, good high energy start

p13 good to see Teicher back to his old self

p18 Action with the flying rods is rather elaborate and maybe improbable but could work if handled well

p20 A ‘security’ panel you can open with a screwdriver?

p22 Act2 is v short. The characters arent vaporised with the crowd? Are we supposed to think or fear so? Might be more comfortable for a reader to clarify what we’ll see happen to the characters, not just ‘the crowd’.

p27 Interesting interplay developing of ‘lock them up’ and ‘open the door’. Not clear if intended.

p30 I’ve missed why ‘the thing’ is the ‘Pied Piper’.

p31 Opening descriptions Act 4 a bit confusing. What are the shafts of light from? How does an ocean of life manifest? Also, where are they going?

p 35 wetsuits good!

p41 “Whats the plan?” I’d been wondering that myself, feeling a loss of direction since the bunker.

p43 “Pied Piper” explained but seems to imply a lot more knowledge about the alien than they should have from its one brief appearance (unless Ive missed something). Show it earning the name or save the name for later?

p44 Ooi?

47 Water bubbling hot but Dowd jumps in? The decision to shoot all the 'bodies' feels undermotivated. All they know is their former people are not in a normal state. Now they're going to kill them all.

## **SUMMARY**

Great work. Bar a few queries, this feels good enough to go (woah, I just read Ebuka said almost the same thing), however it could still go higher, so I'm still at 4/5.

It has improved a lot over previous drafts in terms of the action being understandable and maintaining tension with the focus kept on the Navy group. There's lots of action and enough character tension to feel like it'd be fun to watch.

What I think would take audience engagement to the next level is the taste of something interesting about the aliens. Great alien movies always have a great alien. Do we know we're getting one? They're going to be better than us and perhaps worthy of replacing us so I think a hint of something transcendent or surprisingly good or otherwise intriguing and inspiring about them that makes us want to view more episodes to find more about them could lift this out of the ordinary. The unusual elements like the singing bowl sounds and phones heating up do that to a degree but they are pure mystery, or purely physical phenomena, not engagingly suggestive of what the aliens are going to be about.

- I did have a further thought about Teicher. He's got his edge back, but does he keep it? He seems to unambiguously join the program from the bunker scenes onward, but what made him interesting was the sense that he might have some hidden agenda and/or is withholding something and there may be more to learn about him in future.