

Sin & Redemption: The Pink Elephant Connection  
by  
James McCarthy

Contest: WeScreenplay Feature Contest (2017)

Package: Feature Competition 2017 Entry plus Full Coverage

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Page Count: 100

Genre: Action

Analyst: KJL6

Rating: Pass

Score: 6.20/10

Category	Score	Percentile
Overall Impression	6.00/10	(72 percentile)
Plot	6.00/10	(72 percentile)
Characterization	6.00/10	(72 percentile)
Concept	7.00/10	(99 percentile)
Originality	7.00/10	(99 percentile)
Style	6.00/10	(71 percentile)
Structure	6.00/10	(72 percentile)
Dialogue	6.00/10	(72 percentile)
<b>Overall Weighted Percentile</b>	<b>82</b>	

*Note: Percentiles are based on historical data of scores given out by this analyst.*

### About Analyst KJL6

Reader has an MFA in Screenwriting from the New York Film Academy and has provided pilot and feature film script coverage for Valhalla Entertainment and Blumhouse Productions; including notes on novels, web series, graphic novels and plays.

Favorite Book: It by Stephen King

One Fun Fact: Originally from the town of Manchester by the Sea, but unfortunately did not write the Oscar winning screenplay

## **LOGLINE**

In 1974, the son of a mobster gets involved in a large scale heroin operation after spending time in West Germany for the war.

## **SYNOPSIS**

In a casino in 1973, JOE STEGNER plays poker but is promptly thrown out. At his home, he sits with his wife STELLA and daughter DORIS as his son LEO enters, and they chastise him for getting in a fight. The next morning Leo goes to MARTIN's auto shop for work, but he guides him to the ring-eye gang, where Martin introduces him to TED MORGAN, who offers to test him tomorrow to see if he's worthy of being in the gang. At home, Leo types out Stella's poem as former pro football player TOM SCALLI enters and greets Joe, and Joe then asks for help. The next day, Martin, Ted and Leo steal a car, and Ted invites Leo into the gang. The family goes to Tom's house, where he introduces Leo to his cousin GUYDA, and she pretends to drown in the pool for Tom to save her.

Joe gets five grand from Tom, then meets RUDY to pay off his debts before he is murdered by a HITMAN. At the funeral service, Stella's brother OFFICER JAMES ANDERSON tells him that mob boss Sam Capelli is responsible. Leo tells Tom he is going to kill Sam. Leo and Martin steal another car, and Leo then takes Guyda on a date. Later, Ted Morgan gets involved in a police chase and is killed in an accident. Police break into the chop shop and two DETECTIVES interrogate Leo, who gives away no information and is subsequently arrested. James tries to get the DISTRICT ATTORNEY to let Leo and Martin out on the condition they join the army. They go to basic training, and Leo discovers they are going to West Germany.

They arrive and take a bus through the dilapidated city to the army base. At the DEA headquarters, agents PAUL UNDERWAGGER and ROBERT MILLER are ordered to West Germany. Leo and Martin meet their superior SERGEANT STRIKER, and he shows them around. They get weekend passes, and Leo spots Striker doing a drug deal with an MP. He and his girlfriend EVA take Leo and Martin to a club, where they play poker with owner JERRY PRENTICE. Jerry expresses concern about

the drugs Striker is bringing in and the arrival of DEA agents as Leo meets ELFI DRESCHSLER. They all smoke hash together, and Leo tells Striker about his desire to murder Sam. He and Eva have sex, and later Striker takes him back to the military base.

At the base, COLONEL BRONSON passes Leo a message regarding an impending Russian military exercise and has him pass the news about taking their own action. The troops prepare as a MAN and WOMAN from the Russian BADDER-MEINHOF gang study them and report their movements. As the convoy rolls out they are ambushed by the Gang, and Leo escapes as Martin is killed. They go to his military funeral, and later Leo plans an attack on the Russian Embassy. That night, Eva drives them to the embassy, and Leo sneaks by guards and plants C4. Leo stabs a guard and they blow up the embassy garage. Striker expresses concern about not being able to run heroin with the base on lockdown, and Leo reveals that Paul, who has arrived at the base, works for the DEA. Leo overhears Bronson telling the COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR that they found the Badder-Meinhof base, and he tells Striker and RICKY. Eva drives them and DARWUD to the hideout and they engage in a shootout that kills Ricky. Striker and Leo blow up the base, and Striker offers Leo Ricky's position as his number two.

Leo and Striker drive into Amsterdam and meet ROCKO, where they buy very pure heroin and take it back to Jerry's club. He tells them about an upcoming deal and they drive to a bunker, where MAX and his men fire at them. Striker and Elfi are killed as they escape. Leo returns and kills Jerry, and at the base Bronson informs him that they are returning home. Leo meets Rocky and suggests he expand his business to Orlando. Tom informs Leo that Sam has been arrested for six months, and Leo travels to Hong Kong, where he is greeted by Rocko's assistant WONG LEE. He takes him to GENERAL FU, and Leo sets up a shipment of tons of heroin. Leo buys a canning facility to distribute the heroin, and he shows it to Tom as it is set up. Leo's operation begins, and he looks at buying a mansion with Guyda. Robert and Paul ambush an operation and arrest Leo. He is sentenced to nine years in prison, where he murders Sam. Guyda visits Leo and tells him she is pregnant. They get married, and Leo receives his degree after he gets out and begins working as a private investigator.

## **COMMENTS**

### **OPENING THOUGHTS**

*Sin & Redemption: The Pink Elephant Connection* is a sprawling and wildly entertaining thriller about a young man's integration and expansion of the international drug trade after serving time with the U.S. military in West Germany. Wildly ambitious, the pages here are tense, fun, and oftentimes frenetic, and the script effectively creates a unique perspective on the classic organized crime genre. Although the script could have a little more fun exploring some of its unique locales, such as West Germany or Hong Kong, the script does a good job establishing how far reaching this drug trade is and how pervasive its scope is around the globe.

Ultimately, that scope and sprawling reach ultimately serves to undercut *Sin & Redemption*. The script attempts to cover so much ground that it ultimately does not provide an opportunity to develop any of the intriguing narrative or character elements it introduces. Everything feels barely touched upon before the script moves quickly ahead to the next location or plot point, and it deprives the script of an opportunity to generate some depth or explore its more intriguing elements. This is most overtly manifested in the script's final page, which offers a quick montage of some very pivotal moments in Leo's life, including graduating from college and starting work as a private detective. This may be where the script has an excellent opportunity to flesh out the world and develop some more unique touches, but as it stands now the script attempts to cover far too much in its story.

The overarching issue with *Sin & Redemption* may lie in its format. The story here has so many fascinating and intriguing elements that it may be more appropriate to try to adapt into a television series or a miniseries. That will give the script much more time to flesh out and explore all of the elements provided in the script and do justice to this fascinating story. For example, the idea of following Leo as he works as a private investigator is very intriguing. The script may simply have too much content here, which at the end of the day is never a bad problem to have for a writer.

## CHARACTERS:

This superficiality issue also affects the character development in *Sin & Redemption*. The script has a wealth of intriguing characters that are established throughout its pages, but because of how many are introduced and how many have integral roles in the plot, the script deprives itself of the chance to really explore who these characters are. This prevents the script from developing a serious emotional ore or pathos into the script, and it makes moments such as Leo finding out about Martin's death not resonate nearly as much as it should.

Speaking of Leo, as a main character he feels a bit too thin in these pages. He has a clear motivation, but the script does not really explore how the events of the pages make him feel or change him as a character. He has emotions with certain events such as anger at Joe's death or sadness at Elfi's death, but the script does not really manifest how they transform him. As such, his arc is entirely superficial, and it is unclear how he has transformed internally. The script also does not establish a solid character flaw for Leo to overcome as the pages progress. For instance, what if he had an anger problem that he needs to control in order to become successful in the drug trade?

The ancillary characters here also feel a bit thin and give the impression they are more here to push plot forward than operate as rounded characters. As his mentor, Striker has a cocky swagger that is a lot of fun, but he does not develop much beyond that bravado. Although their rapport is nice, Martin seems to be here to ask Leo questions to give him an opportunity to reveal story information. Love interest Elfi has no real depth, which makes her murder feel much less impactful.

The same goes for Guyda, and the script has more scenes with these female characters having sex with Leo than having conversations and exploring their characters. The same issue affecting Strike affects Tom, and although the pages do a nice job setting up Tom's history with Leo's dad Joe, it does not really pay off emotionally. Finally, the family is underutilized here, and the opportunity to throw the immoral nature of Leo's job in his face by Stella is missed with a scene that is too short.

### PLOT:

Plot is another issue to explore in the pages of *Sin & Redemption*, mainly due to the lack of a solid and clear goal for a protagonist to complete. The script starts out with a very solid option of having Leo determined to kill Sam, but the pages then send him to West Germany, which distracts Leo from this goal and forces him into an entirely new plot. This creates a disjointed feeling in the narrative, and it prevents any plot from unfurling in a natural way.

This also hurts Leo's activeness in his role as protagonist. Leo is very active in pushing plot forward and moving the narrative along, but the big question comes from an unclear direction in which he is pushing. The script needs to establish a clear goal for him from the start, and have him work toward that throughout the entire narrative. It is okay if this takes him on a detour through West Germany and the drug trade, but the script needs to make it clear that Leo still has his sights set on murdering Sam. Additionally, the script also needs to incorporate scenes that display him working toward accomplishing that goal.

### STRUCTURE:

This juggling of plots also hurts the structure of the pages. As mentioned earlier, the introduction of the script's second plot stalls the development of the first one and prevents a natural start for the second one, which disrupts the rhythm of the narrative. As mentioned above the pacing is much too brisk due to the ground that needs to be covered, and it ultimately results in a rushed story. *Sin & Redemption* also does not hit the structural beats necessary for the proper ebb and flow of the narrative.

This stems mainly from the lack of a solid goal, but assuming that it is to murder Sam and avenge his father, the inciting incident will be Joe's death, as it will thrust him out of his ordinary world. The first act break then will be his travels to West Germany, but with an element that it will somehow help him get to Sam - what if his aim is to disrupt Sam's drug operation in Amsterdam?

The midpoint will then be a plot or tonal shift in the script, such as him becoming Striker's right hand man. This will start his integration into the drug trade, and it can bring about the low point of his arrest. The script can have Leo realize that he is about to be housed in the same prison as Sam, and accept the deal that lands him in prison in an attempt to complete the objective.

#### FORMAT/GRAMMAR/SPELLING:

For a detailed look through your script for grammar / spelling / formatting errors, consider upgrading to a PREMIUM COVERAGE.

#### DIALOGUE:

Dialogue is another area to explore in *Sin & Redemption*. The main issue comes from a lack of character development in the lines that they speak. The script has a lot of opportunities to explore this element, but instead the dialogue here is overly expository and superficial. Although it is imbued with a nice cynical tone that accompanies the organized crime element of the narrative, it would be much more effective if the script allowed characters an opportunity to talk about how they are feeling or how the events of the narrative are changing them. A very notable example comes with Elfi and Guyda, two characters who do not develop much emotional depth in their dialogue and ultimately feel too thin to develop any empathy.

#### CONCEPT:

The concept of *Sin & Redemption* is incredibly intriguing. The script's depiction of the drug trade feels fresh and original, which is hard to do considering the glut of these stories that have been told. What works really well here is the underlying theme of revenge that powers Leo and the narrative forward, and it adds pathos to the events here. Additionally, the script incorporates different elements such as drug smuggling during war and establishing an international empire that continues to make the narrative here feel unique.

MARKETABILITY: LOW / MEDIUM / HIGH

This also immensely helps the salability of *Sin & Redemption*. The script has a wealth of very popular elements working to its advantage. To start, the script's organized crime plot is always captivating and has a steadfast audience that will always flock to it. Additionally, the script's setting of the 1970s will attract fans of period pieces, and it will imbue a fresh personality into the narrative. The script also has scenes that take place during war, which will additionally attract fans of war time dramas. Most importantly, there is plenty of gunplay, explosions, and action, which always draws a large audience.

OVERALL: PASS / CONSIDER / RECOMMEND

Overall, there is a lot working for the pages of *Sin & Redemption*. The script has a very intriguing narrative and introduces a lot of compelling and marketable elements. However, the script struggles with execution, and it attempts to cover too much ground over the course of its story. This prevents any of them from properly developing, which particularly hampers the plot and characters. Ultimately, this narrative may need another medium, and the writer is encouraged to see how this fits into a television series.