



COVERAGE, INK. COVERAGE

TITLE:
LOCALE: AmGaroan Suburb
AUTHOR:
PERIOD: 1995, Present Day
FORM: Teleplay
GENRE: Sitcom Pilot
BUDGET: Low
DRAFT DATE: N/A
COVERAGE DATE: 12/09/09
PREPARED BY: AP

LOGLINE:

Three old high school friends try to impress former classmates at their high school reunion.

SYNOPSIS:

Cold Opening. Teens Garo, Ellis, and Marv play around in Marv's basement, as Ellis forecasts a wealth of sex in high school. When Ellis wins at air hockey, he humps the table and Marv laughs.

Act One. Marv and Garo, now 27, play air hockey in Marv's basement, when Ellis shows up carrying his high school year book and a stack of folders. He predicts a ton of sexual opportunities at their upcoming reunion, hoping to prey on the desperation of aging women and impress them with false identities he has crafted for himself and his friends. Ellis will pretend to be a helicopter pilot, while Garo will be a Korean game show host and Marv a mystery shopper.

Garo's in his bedroom when his mother comes in to tell him his reunion ticket has arrived but worries that Garo will freak out if old obsession Natalie is there. She asks him to see sister Suzy's homecoming dress but Garo refuses, not wanting to see his sister's cleavage. When Mrs. Chang leaves, Garo clicks on Natalie's facebook page. Meanwhile, Marv reads his own facebook blog and smiles at the thought of going to the reunion.

Reunion Night. Suzy prepares for homecoming, Garo views a slide show of Natalie's pictures while drinking heavily, and Ellis arrives at the hotel where the reunion is being held, dressed in military blues. Garo loads up a camelback with booze and takes off for the reunion on his bike, while Ellis insults everyone he meets at the hotel. Marv arrives at the reunion but Garo crashes his bike into a parked car.

Act Two. Marv is admired by a fan of his blog, the two discussing Marv's dream of being a writer, while Garo shows up at his old high school, searching for Natalie and calling the high school kids hobbits. Marv meets up with old high school friend Brittany Barnes and the two decide to hang out rather than go snort cocaine with a garbage man. Ellis hits on girls at the reunion but sees trouble when an actual veteran arrives with a prosthetic arm.

At the high school gym, Garo storms the stage to protest a teen's winning Homecoming Queen, professing the crown to belong to Natalie. After his drunken scene, teacher drag him out while students pelt him with cups. Marv finds out that Brittany now lives with her parents on the same block that he lives on and Ellis shows up angry that his military persona has been one-upped by an actual veteran. As Ellis walks off, he catches the eye of the Sandpaper Monster, a harsh-handed girl who gave him his first handjob in high school, and Ellis decides to lower his standards for the night.

Garo tries to get back into the high school but instead gets invited to a high school party when he agrees to score booze for the teens. Marv and Brittany walk home together, flirting and getting to know one another anew, though Marv is demoralized when Brittany wants to keep their relationship platonic. Garo pisses on the floor at the high school party and his own sister screams at him to get out.

The next morning, Ellis and Marv eat breakfast and Marv tells Ellis about Brittany, while Ellis admits to having slept with the Sandpaper Monster last night. Garo wakes up on the floor of the high school kid's house with a penis drawn on his cheek, pointing toward his mouth.

COMMENTS:

OVERALL – (TITLE) is a funny comedy pilot, using a trio of old high school buddies now in their twenties as a way of looking at how a generation finds itself stuck in between the fun and games of youth and the demands of adulthood. It's over-the-top approach to raunch comedy is to be commended, as it has the feel of actual "guy relationship" and gives the script its unique voice. The trip to the high school reunion is a great way to introduce the characters' place in the world as adults and Garo's misadventures at his old high school offer a funny B-story. There are a few loose ends still with this script, though, as there's not quite as much contrast between the protagonists and the other guys from their old high school class on display, there's an unsatisfying feeling coming from the way Garo's night ends, and Ellis, while good for a laugh, is a bit hard to take, coming off as mean-spirited more than sexually driven, making it tough to spend as much time with him as we do. Cleaning up these issues will help tighten this script but even in its current form, the script is a good read. It just needs a little work to become bulletproof.

STRUCTURE/PLOT – The structure of this episode is fairly strong, although Garo's story feels a bit too disconnected from Marv and Ellis's and the ending, while okay for a regular episode, doesn't give us the "this is where we'll be going from here..." direction a pilot episode demands. Tying the stories together a bit more, giving us a direction forward, and addressing the less-than-satisfying way Marv's night with Brittany ends will go a long way toward making this fun and funny script sharp and resonant.

MARV AND BRITTANY – The most enjoyable part of this script is Marv's story, as he goes to his high school reunion and, unlike his two friends, actually finds someone he can connect to on a human level. We get the sense that this is the one character who is in transition, the person on the verge of true adulthood who might actually find his way past the petty adventures of youth and into a more meaningful purpose down the road. While that is all great, there is also a disconnect here, as Marv's journey down this path ends prematurely. We get a little flirtation between Marv and Brittany but she cuts off any talk of a relationship right away. Does this mean a relationship won't develop? Or is it just a bump in the road that Marv will overcome in future episodes? It's hard to tell. Though not every question has to be answered in the pilot, we do need a way forward. The prospect of Marv finding a loving relationship with Brittany is a good thing. It's what sets him apart from his goof-off friends. It's the thing that takes this story a step past the simplicity of a "guy humor" riff and gives it a little heart. It would be great to see more of a relationship develop between these characters in the end, rather than ending it abruptly.

GARO'S NIGHT – Garo's scenes are the funniest part of this script. They are laugh-out-loud funny. They even wrap around well when we see that Garo has

not only ended up getting wasted and foolish with real high schoolers rather than his old high school class but in doing so, he has put himself in the same social circle as his own sister. Very funny stuff! But there's one problem... Garo is isolated too much from Marv and Ellis. We see them together in the beginning but after that, Garo's on his own. Again, in a regular episode this would be fine. But in a pilot episode, it feels off, as we need a better look at the dynamic of the three main characters together. Maybe Garo should actually start the night at the reunion and then wander off when he gets way too drunk, ultimately heading off to the old high school when he can't find the girl he pined over at the reunion. Another choice – and one that ties a couple things together well – would be to have Garo go to the wrong place as he currently does but then have him brought back into the fold by Marv. Marv could be off with Brittany, on the verge of creating a romantic relationship we will be seeing in the future, maybe even about to kiss, when he gets a call from Garo's sister, telling him Garo's at a high school party, passed out, and telling Marv to come get him. Marv's night with Brittany would be cut short but at least we'd get a sense of what it could become. Marv could then pick up Ellis on his way to find Garo, bringing the three old high school friends back together at the end of the night and establishing the idea that no matter where they go while they're out, these three will always end up together in some form.

THE REUNION – This is a great setting for this script to take place. It really ties in well with what the characters are all about. Ellis's attempts to impress girls by putting on a fake identity is also great, stepping things up a notch and offering several strong comedic beats. But there does seem to be a missing element here, which is contrast. The protagonists don't really stand out as being all that different from their old classmates. The people they run into at the reunion are garbage men and fans of Marv's writing, perpetual partiers who seem more interested in doing blow than building careers. But isn't that fairly close to what the protagonists are? It would be better to see the old classmates as the protags' opposites. They should be successful, grown up, past the slacker life that our main characters haven't dug their way out of, so that the audience will get the chance to see that these people, no matter how successful they may be, are not necessarily better people than our good guys. But they at least need the superficial appearance of success and happiness to stand in contrast to the lot in life the protagonists have found for themselves.

THE SANDPAPER MONSTER – At one point Ellis talks about getting a rough handjob from a girl referred to only as "the Sandpaper Monster." Then, at the reunion, Ellis ends up hooking up with that very same girl. This bit just doesn't quite work as well as the rest of the script. It feels shoehorned into the narrative and, what's more, it actually feels like a victory for Ellis even when the audience isn't going to want him to get one. Yes, he complains after the fact but in reality, the guy got laid. That's what he wanted. That's considered a victory here. But after being such a jerk all night long, it's hard to really get behind this victory, rough as it may be. But what if Ellis picked up a hot girl at the reunion, someone

who he vaguely remembered but just really couldn't place, only to go to a motel with her and find out that she was a transvestite, a former football star turned drag queen lounge singer, a reversal that sends Ellis running and screaming away from the bed? That feels like a more appropriate end to the night for this rather unlikable character than actually getting a little action from the Sandpaper Monster.

CHARACTERS – The main characters here are pretty good. Marv is a likeable window character for the audience to relate to, Garo has some of the script's funniest moments, and Ellis's self-centered approach to life and perpetual quest for sexual satisfaction make him a useful comedic device. With each of these characters, though, there is a concern, as Marv's piece of this story ends too abruptly to offer the promise of change in future episodes, Garo's story separates him from his friends for too much of the script, and Ellis, while funny, is just too mean-spirited for the audience to enjoy as much as they might. The secondary characters are a mixed bag, with Garo's little sister Suzy really hitting the right note and tying in well, the reunion classmates never really stepping up and adding the contrast they need to, and Brittany landing somewhere in the middle, at first offering the promise of a compelling female counterpart to the main characters but abruptly cutting off the promise of a close relationship when she should do precisely the opposite. Fortunately, it is only Ellis and the reunion classmates that have core character problems, as the rest of the issues are related more to the way the characters fit into the story than the character traits themselves. Addressing all of these concerns, whether character or narrative related, though, will help make this script stronger.

MARV – A very good character. This guy is the audience's way in. It's easy to see the world through his eyes, being the one character among the protagonist trio that appears to find himself at a crossroads between wasted youth and some form of personally acceptable adult future. He's likable and fun and easy to relate to. That said, he gets cut off too quickly in this pilot episode. We need to get the sense that he is moving on with his life, accepting change, and the fact that Brittany simply sees him as harmless rather than a potential romantic interest means that we don't get a view of Marv as a character capable of relating to women in a meaningful way going forward. We don't need to see these two characters hook up in the pilot episode but we should get the feeling that they might. That's the signal that Marv's world is on the verge of change and it is the pursuit of that change that makes Marv an accessible character for the audience.

GARO – This is the funniest role in the script. He has the best moments and every scene he's in is funny as the result of his drunken antics. Beyond being a drunken nut, he's also a guy with some emotional depth, as we learn from the fact that he still obsesses over a girl he was in love with a decade ago. There's nothing that really needs to change with Garo on a character level, although it does feel like he is too disconnected from the rest of the characters to fit into the dynamic a pilot episode is expected to establish. Tying his B-story into the A-

story and physically putting him in the same place as his friends would be a wise move.

ELLIS – It's tough to really like this guy, no matter how funny he is. And to be clear, he's very funny. His self-centered outlook on life, his willingness to veer toward the absurd in pursuit of sexual satisfaction, and his disconnected view of the world that allows him to believe that great things are always around the corner lead to some very, very funny moments. But while selfishness and silliness and sexual pursuits offer a lot of laughs, they are tempered too much by the fact that Ellis is not only looking for a good time, he's also being a jerk. He's mean to the people he encounters, whether they deserve it or not, and his moments of cruelty rarely do anything to make the scene funnier. Quite the opposite, in fact. They take away from the power of the joke. Ellis's comedy should come from his selfishness and his drive for sex. That doesn't have to be mean-spirited or cruel to be funny. It just has to be selfish on a level that audiences can connect to, whether they'd admit to it or not.

BRITTANY – Brittany's issues relate directly to Marv's, as it is their relationship that gives the script heart but which also give it an unfinished feeling in the end. She's easy to like and it's easy to root for her and Marv to get together. That being the case, why destroy the prospect of such a thing happening right there in the pilot episode? We need to see that Brittany sees something Marv and vice versa. We need to see them connecting on a level that neither connects to the other people around them on. This is the undercurrent of what is already there but it's not pronounced enough. We should get the feeling that Brittany is the thing that might steer Marv forward in life, offering him a relationship with someone who won't judge him the way adults do but who might also help him find a world outside of the childish antics of his buddies. Since she squashes any thought of a romantic relationship at the end of this episode, though, it's hard to see those things developing. A better choice would be to keep Brittany as an attainable goal for Marv, someone worth his spending time with but giving him the prospect of romance with her. And it's all a matter of changing the things she says to Marv on page 26. Give them hope of a relationship and the audience will want to watch episode two, if only for a glimpse at what might develop between them.

SUZY – A great character used well. We get just enough of her to find it funny when her older brother ends up at the same party she does. Very nice work with this character!

ADULTS – We need more adult characters, not necessarily meaning people of a certain age but people who have established some traditional career and family goals in life, so that we can see the contrast between the hero trio and the rest of the world. We should see them in the form of reunion characters and other adults the protags meet in the course of their day. Garo's mother gives us a glimpse of this but that's the only place we get it. We need more.

DIALOGUE – The dialogue here is pretty funny. It has the feel of guy talk, the way that young adult men relate to one another when not forced to act differently for the sake of employers or parents. The dialogue also works well to establish a past history between Garo, Marv, and Ellis, as well as offering quite a few laughs along the way. Great work here! The concerns here have already been documented in these notes. Ellis comes off as too much of a mean-spirited jerk, thanks largely to things he says to people he doesn't like, and there's not enough contrast found by way or dialogue with "adult" characters. Overall, the dialogue here is very strong but making Ellis self-centered more than mean and offering a little contrast would only make it stronger.

SUMMARY – (TITLE) is a funny script. No question about it. It's also the kind of script that will speak to a very specific demographic and it does so with a sharply defined voice. The characters are pretty good, the dialogue funny, and the high school reunion setting a great place to put these characters' lives on display. There are a few things that should be addressed in a future draft though and they all relate to the fact that this is not just a television episode but a pilot episode in particular. It needs to set up future episodes by showing us a glimpse of how things are going to change for the main characters. That's where it comes up a little short but by tweaking what happens to Marv in the end, along with getting Garo back into the same story as his two buddies, and cleaning up a characterization issue with Ellis, this story could be well on its way to a positive reception from a cable network like Showtime or FX.



	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>So-So</u>	<u>Not Good</u>
Artistically			X		
Commercial				X	
Premise			X		
Story			X		
Main Characters			X		
Minor Characters			X		
Dialogue			X		
Visual Elements				X	
Title				X	

SCRIPT:
WRITER:

CONSIDER WITH RESERVATIONS
CONSIDER