

SCREENPLAY TITLE: LITTLE GIRL LOST

NUMBER OF PAGES: 45

GENRE: Fiction, THRILLER

DATE: 10/12/2017

**1. LOGLINE:**

A smart female detective probes the mysterious disappearance of a former movie star's son shortly after his father's death.

**2. SYNOPSIS:**

The pilot starts with a teaser. ALICE FORMANO is shown as a young girl whose mother is about to go out with her boyfriend, PAUL MATTHEWS. Alice is apprehensive about her mom going out and leaving her alone in the house with her soon-to-be step-siblings. Her mother allays her fears and she still goes out with Paul anyway. Soon after their departure, LUCAS MATTHEWS, a 15-year-old boy enters her room and he sexually molests her. She is shown defending herself by jabbing a pencil into Lucas' eye.

After this, ROBYN CARTER is introduced into the play. She is a detective and she is shown following a potential lead on a case she is working on. Then, the THORNES are introduced

with JACKSON the husband telling his wife, ABIGAIL that he has the day off and Abigail replies that she has other plans for her day. Later, Abigail dresses up to go out with her daughter, IZZY. She receives a disturbing text message which she deletes.

An older Paul Matthews is introduced as he jogs through a lonely park. He is murdered by an unknown person. ROSS, Robyn's boss is introduced. He laments over a boring case he is working on and he tells Robyn about a new case. It's about a woman who called about her missing husband. Her missing husband is Lucas Matthews and Robyn agrees to take on the case. She interviews MARY MATTHEWS, Lucas' much older wife about her husband's disappearance. From the interview, she is able to learn that Lucas is in the habit of traveling to Thailand on holidays. He actually told Mary that he is going to Thailand only for Mary to find his international passport in the house. She also tells Robyn that she recently discovers that her husband has a thing for young immature girls.

Then, there is a flashback of Alice eavesdropping on a conversation which her mother is having with her paternal grandparents. Here, it is revealed that Alice's mother resents her destroying the relationship she had with Paul Matthews with her allegations against his son, Lucas.

Mary names a colleague of Lucas at the music school where he teaches. He is NICK PEARSON FIRTH. Robyn interviews him and the interview reveals that Lucas resigned from his job a while back and that Nick once saw him in a compromising situation with a Katoey. Then, the pilot ends with Abigail having a meet-up with her friends in a coffee shop. She receives a disturbing phone call from an unknown person while still in the coffee shop with the caller threatening her and talking about her husband's (Jackson's) new lover.

### **3. COMMENTS**

The screenplay is pretty well written. It has a very good premise, the opening of the pilot is gripping, and the structure of the story is well laid out. Majority of the shortfalls found in the pilot episode are in terms of formatting, punctuations, and other several minor issues which will be highlighted below.

#### **1. PUNCTUATION:**

##### **a. A screenplay usually starts with a FADE IN:**

The colon after the "FADE IN" is absent.

##### **b. Remember to use a comma with direct addresses such as:**

➤ See you in the morning, sweetie.

- Good night, sweetheart.

These two sentences are on the first page. There are other punctuation errors which are present in the screenplay.

## 2. WRONG FORMATTING OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS:

On pages 6-7 of the screenplay,

- Immediately beneath Robyn's character name, write "into phone" in parenthesis.
- There is no need to keep writing "from dashboard phone" in parenthesis. The information about the dashboard phone should be kept in the "action component" of the screenplay. Since, Ross won't be seen, include "V.O." after the character name to show that only his voice will be heard.

This also applies to the telephone conversation on page 9 and any other phone conversations in the screenplay. Also, indicate when the call is disconnected.

## 3. PROPER NAMES OF SETTINGS SHOULD BE ENCLOSED WITH QUOTES

Some examples of this oversight in this pilot episode screenplay are:

- "MUCKY DUCK" PUB (PAGE 8)
- "BLINKLEY MANOR" PREP SCHOOL (Page 29)

➤ "THORNE" HOUSE (PAGE 9)

4. SOME SPELLING ERRORS:

These are some of the spelling errors observed:

- Her mother "bust" / burst into the room (page 1)
- Will I have to see it through before I start work "fro"/  
for the police? (page 16).
- I know I have been getting in at "all" / odd hours. (page 11)
- I may not have any other family, and thanks for  
"brining"/ bringing that up (page 27).

5. SOME ERRORS IN INTRODUCING THE CHARACTERS:

- A character can't be given a name and dialogue without introducing him/her in action first. On page 25, you didn't introduce the grandparents in action first before they speak.
- On page 3, the character Paul is introduced. However, the surname "Matthews" is not included. This should be included as this may cause confusion with the older Paul Matthews that is on page 12.
- On page 10, Jackson, Alice husband is introduced without his surname, Thorne.
- The character name "Alice" on page 39 should be Abigail?

- Alice's surname is "Formano" in the treatment. This should be included in Alice name when she is introduced on the first page of the screenplay.

#### 6. SOME PARAPHRASING SUGGESTIONS:

These are some sentences in the action and dialogue categories which can be rewritten:

- Tries to calm her nerves and shaking (page 24)  
Suggestion: She takes a pause to calm down her nerves. She is visibly shaking/ trembling.
- I was furious. Still am. (page 24)  
Suggestion: Still is.
- Robyn hands her a business card.  
Suggestion: Robyn hands her her identification card.  
(page 18).
- Jo and Stuart Devlin invited both Lucas and me to their home in Thailand on a holiday as a thank you. (page 33)  
Suggestion: - to show their appreciation/ gratitude.
- They shake. (page 29)  
Suggestion: They shake hands.

#### 7. ERROR IN A SCENE HEADING:

EXT. "MARY AND LUCAS" HOUSE - DAY (page 18)

Since Mary is cleaning the living room, then the setting can't be exterior.

#### 8. PAGES 30 - 31

There is a complete absence of any form of action, just long blocks of conversation. This is not the only pages where this is happening. However, this is a suggestion on how to include some action lines on the specified pages.

- Let Robyn show some reactions when Nick gives her the news of Lucas' resignation, Paul's death, and his wife being a popular pianist and an accomplished singer.

#### 9. FLASHBACK:

Indicate that the flashback ends on page 28.

#### 10. BACKSTORY OF ROBYN CARTER:

In the treatment for the first episode, there is the reference to the fact that Detective Robyn Carter recently lost her husband and has a miscarriage. There is a complete absence of this in the screenplay. The only reference made about this is when Robyn is talking to Ross about "training harder than usual so as to numb the pain". What pain? This backstory should be incorporated into the screenplay somehow.

This will make the final viewers of the TV series care more about this major character.

#### 11. MORE ON THE CHARACTER PAUL MATTHEWS:

In the treatment for the pilot, Paul is an actor whose career is on the rise. The writer only introduced Paul briefly while he is about to go out with Alice's mother and he is speaking with his daughter, Natasha. In the screenplay, there is only a brief reference to Paul's career as an actor when Alice's mom is speaking with Alice on the first page of the screenplay. Do not tell the audience about Paul being a movie star. This is an important component of the story. Show; do not tell the audience this. For instance, a scene showing the outing between Paul and Alice's mother should be incorporated into the screenplay, a scene that will depict Paul as a successful actor. Show the viewers the red carpet event he is attending with Alice's mother, the press, the adulating fans, and everything associated with the glitz and glamour of being a movie star.

#### 12. ALICE'S MOTHER:

Alice's mom is only given the character name, "MOTHER". This shouldn't be so. She is a character that will appear



often enough in the TV series. Hence, an actual name should be given to her.

#### 13. TWO EPISODES ARE MERGED TOGETHER:

After going through the treatment and the screenplay, it is quite obvious that two episodes are merged into one to form the pilot. Is this intentional or is it an oversight? If the former is the case, then the pilot is incomplete. This is because according to the summary of the episode in the treatment, the last paragraph talks about Paul's killer not being satisfied with the media coverage of the murder. This is not included in the pilot.

#### 14. THE TALKING STUFFED RABBIT:

In the screenplay, the inanimate toy of Alice, "MR BIG EARS" speaks to her. Should this be part of the screenplay? Is there anywhere in the treatment where speaking rabbit toys moves the story forward in any way? Or is it just to portray that Alice hears voices and this accounts for her antisocial behavior as she grows older? If the latter is the case, then this should be made clearer as the story progresses.

#### 15. ROSS IS ROBYN'S COUSIN:

In the treatment, Ross is Robyn's cousin. This fact is not mentioned in the screenplay. The only indication of this is just the familiarity or closeness between the two.

#### 16. ALICE AND HER MOTHER:

There should be a scene that shows Alice's mom reaction when she and Paul return home from their outing and they meet Lucas with injured eyes. What happens when Alice tells her mother about Lucas' sexual assault on her?

#### 17. ALICE AND NATASHA:

A scene that will show a brief interaction between Alice and Natasha should be included in the screenplay. For instance, she can join Alice in the living room as she watches the TV.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

There is really a lot of great stuff in "Little Girl Lost". The characters are interesting, the subject matter compelling, and the setting is strong. There is no doubt that the writer's skill set is good. It is just a matter of minor fine-tuning to make Little Girl Lost pilot episode a compelling and in-demand screenplay.

