



Feature Screenplay Scores & Executive Notes

Analyst: [REDACTED]

Screenplay Title: [REDACTED]

Genre: Drama

Category: Feature

The following scores and comments are objectively presented and intended to be illustrative, instructive, and helpful in guiding the writer along a professional path. Scores and comments are in accordance with current professional film and television industry standards.

Scores/Comments:

Concept/Originality: 6

The mockumentary style has been done before with with great success in movies like *A Mighty Wind* and *Spinal Tap*, but both of those are fairly dated and this script feels fresh in that regard. It also brings a more female focus to the genre, which is traditionally male dominated, although that has changed as well more recently as movies like *The Runaways* and *Vox Lux* brought female movie stars to the big screen in a serious dramatic way.

This script differentiates itself from those, however, with its focus on “adult” rock and a kind of generational conflict between different types of bands. Unfortunately, it’s not

entirely clear what “adult rock,” is supposed to mean in the script, or how it fits into the larger rock landscape, and that’s a bit of a problem for the script because of how often it comes up. Is it supposed to just refer to older bands?

Taking place in the early 90s, adults would have grown up listening to 60s and 70s bands like The Beatles and Led Zeppelin – are they not adult rock? What prevents kids from listening to adult radio stations? Bands known for their more mature or intellectual approaches, like R.E.M. or, more recently, the Decemberists, have always found audiences among college students or even younger audiences.

The script needs to better clarify what this means, and its use of many either obscure or entirely fictional bands don’t provide viable points of reference for readers or audiences, who’ll need either more mainstream touchstones or a clear image of a band in the story-world to get a sense of what “adult” rock really means.

Structure: 3

The structure of this script is not particularly effective, as it uses far too many flashbacks for the mockumentary style to work and for the sections of characters speaking more or less directly to the camera to be effective. For this format to work, the script needs to stick to it more consistently; it doesn’t really work in combination with the heavy flashbacks the script employs.

These flashbacks are also too numerous, and the script doesn’t seem to gain value from telling its story out of order; a more continuous structure would be easier for audiences to follow and provide a clearer sense of development for the characters. The way the flashbacks are written create additional issues, as it’s not always clear to the reader or audience, who doesn’t have the benefit of scene slugs, whether certain scenes come before or after others, and this lack of clarity makes it significantly more difficult to absorb the story.

Beyond that, this script has the issue of employing a lot of montage type sequences, some of which work better than others and some of which don't really present clear story pieces. But the use of these segments is too frequent regardless, as movies don't usually have more than a couple of montage sequences and there are far more than that here. Writing out shots in the form of A) B) C) is unnecessary and makes the sequences feel longer and more repetitive, especially given how many of them go as far as L or O.

Plot/Story: 4

The plot in this script is fairly conventional for a musical story, with a band rising to prominence and then coming into conflict with each other over their goals and relationships.

The larger issue with the story here is that it lacks unity; there doesn't seem to be a single large goal or large conflict that holds everything together. The band finds success relatively quickly and relatively easily, so their quest to make it does not serve as an anchor for the story.

Likewise, the script doesn't really focus on one band-mate more than others, so the script can't really use a single person's relationships or journey as its center, either, in the way that a Beatles movie could in actuality focus on a relationship between John Lennon and Yoko Ono. As a result, the story too often seems to lack direction and doesn't really give itself a lot of interesting places to go; an example for this is when Rhonda talks about her and Claudia having an "even more open" relationship. Since they were already in an open relationship to begin with, this isn't really a meaningful development.

Pacing: 5

The writing consistently slows the pace of the read in this script, especially since the writer often specifies shot focuses and close-ups – these are all the prerogative of the director, and the writer should focus more on telling the story and less on the specific

look of different shots and angles. The writing also gives a lot of character description – none of this can show up on screen or be communicated to the film’s visual audience, and the writer needs to do more to show these character traits instead of just telling readers about them. However, on another level, the writer does a good job getting in and out of scenes before they run too long, although the dialogue can run a little long at times.

Characters: 4

This script has a lot of characters relative to its length, between all the band members of Great Big Something as well as characters it introduces from other bands. Additionally, the characters aren’t particularly well-distinguished from each other; they’re all rock and rollers who like to party, they’re lesbians in open relationships, and all seem to have pretty much identical viewpoints on both music and politics and what kind of band they want to be. This greatly limits the amount of conflict that can happen between the characters and becomes monotonous for the audience, if not confusing.

Problematically, none of the characters emerges as a clear lead who the audience really identifies with and whose point of view they will see the story through. These characters need clearer goals and conflicts as individuals, and those things should be different for each of them, giving them all greater senses of individuality.

Dialogue: 4

With the characters being so similar, the dialogue loses a lot of potential as characters often sound very similar to each other instead of having unique voices. They often sound like they’re repeating each other and finishing each other’s sentences, sounding like a single person instead of a group of people. The writer is also far over-reliant on parentheticals and action lines to add nuance or emotion to the dialogue, and these things should be clear from the dialogue itself; parentheticals, especially, should be minimally used.

The dialogue is also often on the nose, especially when the band makes statements about their own music or politics; the script would do well to show the audience what they believe in terms of music or politics instead of telling them directly and specifically. Too often, it feels dry to the extent of being a lecture instead of like real people talking.

Tone: 5

The tone of this script is about what's expected for the genre, but it does get a little preachy in many of its interview moments, especially a longer one near the end, as characters try a little bit too hard to make sure their messages get across. There's also more room to vary the tone, especially to get a sense of different venues or musical scenes that the band may be a part of or travel through. This would be beneficial in terms of distinguishing different types of bands that they compare themselves to.

Conflict: 4

This script is light on conflict, and the conflicts that do come into the story don't drive the story forward in a single coherent way. Within the first 15-20 pages, the script needs a more pressing single conflict that drives the action forward and forces the characters to adapt and change.

There's not a singular conflict that occupies this role within the script, as instead there are numerous relationship conflicts between different band members and their lovers, but these seem to come and go a little bit, and none of them really seem significant enough to threaten to break up the band.

The result is that too often, the script seems to drift forward, and it's not clear what the audience should be rooting for – what will they want to see these characters overcome? The script badly needs a single larger conflict that provides greater focus to the story.

Emotional Response/Investment: 4

With the action split across so many characters that feel so similar and the lack of a conflict that really seems to immanently threaten the status quo for them, this script doesn't do a good job of quickly and deeply engaging the audience's emotions. The best ways to do this are to present characters with a single clear goal and an obstacle preventing them from achieving it early on, as well as making the characters' motivations clear, and why they want to achieve that goal.

What the characters want here isn't particularly clear from the beginning. They're already in a band that seems fairly successful, and nothing seems to threaten that success, so the audience doesn't really perceive a strong sense of stakes to this story.

Marketplace Potential: 5

The 90s rock scene is not the most commercial landscape in which to set a movie, and this script doesn't really make use of known music figures in a significant way or receive any kind of marketability boost from that. However, the script does offer a female-centric and politically informed look into that world, which is unique and befitting of the current zeitgeist. As a result, it has a certain degree of marketability, although is likely more niche than mainstream.

Strengths:

Familiar but still compelling concept, unique look at a familiar subject.

Weaknesses:

Characters and dialogue feel too similar.

Too much telling and not enough showing.

Final Comments:

Cleaning up the writing and structure would do a lot for this script, as currently, the writing too often gets bogged down describing characters invisible emotions, specifying shots or angles, or listing long shot sequences that have varying degrees of effectiveness. This script would also likely benefit from being told more clearly in straightforward chronological fashion, as the flashbacks and forwards currently aren't adding anything meaningful and the interview/commentary to the camera sections likewise feel more like awkward interludes than a natural part of the story.

The interview/mockumentary format, while made popular by TV series like *The Office* and *Modern Family*, is nevertheless something that's difficult to use and often a tool that backfires on new and aspiring writers.