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Weeb-Con

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Weeb-Con

An Honors Thesis

Presented to

the Department of Film and Theatre Arts
of the University of New Orleans

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts, with University Honors
And Honors in Film and Theatre Arts

By

Rachel Williams

December 2014

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Acknowledgments

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Abstract

One of the most important parts in the development stage of filmmaking is writing a screenplay. *Weeb-Con* is a thirty-two-page action comedy screenplay. After an anime convention in Galveston, Texas, is forcefully taken over by armed robbers in creepy, badly-made fursuits, it is up to Dolores “Dolly” Lopez, a Lolita who must lead the convention attendees - including her family and her fat pitbull Butterball - and make them band together. Dolly is something of a perfectionist loner; but, with the help of her new friends Seymour, a cowardly nerd, and Boyd, a stoner who is smarter than he looks, she will be able to learn about the importance of friendship and working together and save everyone.

Note: Due to the format of Celtx, the screenwriting software used to create my thesis, the pages are numbered from one to thirty-two. The title page of the script is not the first page of the script. The references pages appear after the script, and are the last pages.

Keywords: action comedy, *Weeb-Con*, feminism, screenplay, anime convention, Rachel Williams

Introduction

My thesis work, entitled *Weeb-Con*, is the third draft of a short film screenplay, which has been written under the guidance of Erik Hansen and Laszlo Fulop. The current draft of this screenplay is at thirty pages.

There are seven important beats that a film must hit in order to achieve the traditional three-act narrative structure. These beats are, in order: the “Setup,” which introduces the protagonist and the world that they inhabit. Second comes the “Inciting Incident,” which is when a life-changing event happens to the protagonist that causes them to lose the safety of their current state. Third comes “Plot Point One,” when the protagonist is landed in the story which ends Act One and begins Act Two. Fourth comes the “Mid-point,” the point in which the stakes are raised, often featuring a false victory or defeat for the protagonist. Fifth is “Plot Point Two,” the lowest moment for the protagonist, when they lose what they want and Act Two ends. Sixth comes the “Climax,” when the protagonist wins by taking an action to become changed, typically in the form of a final confrontation between the protagonist and the antagonist. Finally comes the “Resolution”, which reveals the protagonist as changed.

It was decided that not only would I write a screenplay, I would analyze my own work through an essay, thus providing more insight into my development process. The analysis makes up the body of the thesis, and is part of my defense for my Honors Thesis.

Body of Thesis

When I was enrolled in Introduction To Screenwriting under Maria Hinterkoener in Fall 2012, our overarching assignment throughout the semester would be to write the first ten pages of a full-length screenplay. I had pitched *Weeb-Con* as “*Die Hard* in an anime convention”, an idea which piqued my classmates’ interest. I decided to further expand on and complete this storyline for my honors thesis. Prior to this script, the longest completed script I had ever written was eleven pages for the Writing the Short Film course under Erik Hansen. I decided to write a comedy because I wanted my film to be a breath of fresh air from the depressing, overly dramatic student films, and I doubted my writing abilities were up to par enough to write a properly compelling drama.

I had based the location of *Weeb-Con* on my experiences in Oni-Con 2011 in Galveston, Texas, and Anime Matsuri 2012 in The Woodlands, Texas. I chose an anime convention due to the fact that a convention based around intellectual properties is a setting that is rapidly becoming more popular within the public consciousness, thanks to the rising popularity of such conventions such as Comic-Con and E3. Based on my experiences, anime conventions are often set during a single weekend in one large building, typically a conference center or a hotel. Both the location and the time of the convention were perfect for the screenwriting principle of economy. I set it in Texas, because as a Texan I was tired of seeing my state only be portrayed in the media as a desert land of cowboys, barbecue, and football.

For my protagonist, I decided on a teenage girl named Dolores “Dolly” Lopez. I wanted a film with female protagonist, because women make up a little more than fifty percent of the population yet only “15% of protagonists, 29% of major characters, and 30% of all speaking characters” (Lauzen 1). Originally, I had chosen Dolly’s style on the sole basis of being an feminine style of fashion. Upon doing further research on Sweet Lolita, I had learned that Lolita fashion was conceived as a backlash against the growing exposure of skin, with an emphasis on cuteness and elegance as opposed to sex appeal (Stewart 1). Her style of dress became more meaningful when further research showed Hispanic women were more likely to be shown in sexually revealing attire or partially dressed or naked onscreen (Smith 6).

Her family was based on a booth at Oni-Con 2011 that also sold geeky-themed soap. I had decided to give Dolly both a younger brother and a dog in order to raise the stakes for my protagonist. In my first draft, Butterball was initially conceived as a Welsh Corgi; however, I changed him into a pit bull in order to challenge the stereotypical portrayal of pit bulls. Pit bulls are portrayed in media as vicious, junkyard dogs. I wrote Butterball in the same way one would write an Old English sheepdog - not very bright, but very happy and lovable. I know that audiences react more emotionally to animals getting hurt or dying in fiction than when people die, so much so that there exists a website - the aptly named doesthedogdie.com - solely devoted to whether or not animals are killed or injured within the film. I could not actually kill Butterball off because to do so would kill the mood of the script.

For my supporting characters, I had chosen Seymour and Boyd. I had chosen the name Seymour due to the fact that the name sounded sufficiently nerdy and I had initially based his

portrayal on his character from the musical film *Little Shop of Horrors*. Free Hugs Girl functions as sort of a one-woman comic relief/Greek Chorus figure, parodying common female fan reactions to romantic onscreen tensions.

For my antagonist, James Peruggia was initially conceived as little more than “Hans Gruber minus class.” The decision to make him a voice actor for the show *Sorcerer Nurse Takuma* came about after viewing Lawrence Shapiro’s 2013 documentary *I Know That Voice*. Being a voice actor would not only give him a reason for being at the convention, but also reframe the robbery as an inside job, allowing me to set up a plot twist by the midpoint. For his underlings, I had chosen Neo-Nazis, in the fine American tradition of fighting Nazis to function as ridiculous yet still creepy faceless minions, function as the Stormtroopers to James's Darth Vader.

Due to ongoing medical treatments after my hospitalization from the blood clots that were in my lungs, I had taken the time to use my first half of the Honors Thesis to focus more on doing research than actual writing. During my research, the issue of diversity in media was brought to my attention, particularly when it came to casting and representation. Representation in media is important because films are a reflection of how we see the world around us; likewise, films also affect how audiences think about the world and the people that inhabit it. I realized that it wouldn’t have been right for me to attend a university that prides itself on its diversity for three-and-a-half years, and hang out with my diverse group of friends in Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship, and then sit down and write a movie with all-white leads.

For my first draft, I had written twenty-four pages. My thesis advisor Erik Hansen

suggested that I emphasize Dolly as my protagonist as well as focusing more on her character arc. I decided to emphasize her friendlessness in order to make her character change at the resolution more concrete.

One of the biggest challenges with my thesis was condensing the three-act structure from traditionally one hundred and ten pages to thirty-two. After consulting with Erik Hanson on a basic outline, Blake Snyder's book *Save The Cat: The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need* and *Writing Movies for Fun and Profit!: How We Made a Billion Dollars at the Box Office and You Can, Too!* by Robert Ben Garant and Thomas Lennon, I was able to break down when each beat would happen on which page.

Given that I had originally pitched this film as *Die Hard* at an anime convention, I figured it would actually be a good thing to actually sit down and actually watch the film. *Die Hard* was released in 1988, a time when films reflected now-errant beliefs that Japan was going to take over the world if Russia didn't blow it up first. I would often ask myself throughout writing this script: in an age of Wi-fi and cellphones that double as miniature computers, how would have John McClane reacted if the plot of *Die Hard* happened in 2014? I was also influenced by director Tim Burton; one overarching motif throughout his work is the use of flashbacks to further characterization, most prominently his 2003 film *Big Fish*. For Dolly's feminine-but-not-weak characterization, I looked to the 1992 film *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, which featured Sarah Michelle Gellar as a feminine yet still formidable protagonist and overall strong female character.

Weeb-Con

By

Rachel Williams

Honors Thesis

FADE IN:

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

PAN DOWN from the sky to a large convention center across the street from the Gulf of Mexico. Tied to the balcony, a large banner with the words "17th Annual Weeb-Con."

EXT. CONVENTION ENTRANCE - DAY

A long line of people, some dressed in cosplay, waiting to get their passes goes out of the front doors to the convention center. A SECURITY GUARD stands next to the entrance.

DOLLY

Excuse us! Sorry! Very late vendors coming though!

DOLLY, teens, dressed in a pink Sweet Lolita outfit. She carries a heavy box and a heart-shaped purse in her arms. Her mother, BLINDA, early-mid 40s, wheels a cart filled with cardboard boxes of soap. Behind her is her son PABLO, 7, holding a leash attached to BUTTERBALL, a fat jolly pit bull waddling behind them.

The security guard looks at the cards, hands them back to Dolly and Blinda and lets all three of them through the entrance.

SECURITY GUARD #1

Proceed.

Butterball BARKS and follows them, wagging his tail.

INT. SOAP BOOTH - DAY

Blinda, Dolly, Pablo and Butterball walk past other booths in various states of readiness. Behind them, a sign in red block lettering reads "Silent Auction." In the back of the room between a booth filled with plushies and a weapons booth sits an empty table with a "Reserved" sign.

BLINDA

(puts down box)

Can't believe we finally got a booth in the dealer's room! And right next to the silent auction!

Dolly opens the box and begins to set up the soap displays.

DOLLY

Alright, bacon scent, I can understand. But why are the beer scented ones so popular?

BLINDA

I don't know, gag gifts, I guess.

Butterball sniffs the display of bacon soap and begins to lick one of the soap bars.

PABLO

No, Butterball, you dummy! It's not really bacon! It just smells like it!

BLINDA

Here they come!

INT. DEALERS ROOM ENTRANCE - DAY

The doors of the dealers' room open. A crowd of people walk through and start shopping.

Among them are two men. SEYMOUR, 16, wearing glasses, a blue oxford shirt and cargo shorts. Following him is BOYD, 15. He is wearing a top hat with gears hot-glued to the sideband, a t-shirt and jeans.

SEYMOUR

Woah...

Seymour gazes in astonishment at the amount of merchandise in the dealer's room: t-shirts, hats, messenger bags, etc.

SEYMOUR

Just look at everything.

BOYD

That's the dealers' room for you. Where your wallet goes to die. Everything can that be sold to a geek will be found here.

Seymour stops and looks around frantically.

SEYMOUR

Wait, where's your brother?!

BOYD

Calm your tits. Colin's upstairs in the arcade room getting his video game on. Worst case scenario he's gonna ragequit or forget to bathe. What's the worst that could possibly happen?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

A TEAL FOX FURRY, dressed in a creepy, shoddily-made, crawled-from-the-Uncanny-Valley teal fox suit walks down an empty hallway. He is clutching a body pillow featuring a provocatively posed half-naked anime schoolgirl. The furry stops and looks around. No sign of anyone save SECURITY GUARD #2, leaning next to a door with the sign reading "Staff Only."

The furry hits the security guard in the back of the head with the pillow with a THUNK. The security guard falls to the ground, knocked out.

Teal Fox zips open the pillow and pulls out a walkie-talkie.

TEAL FOX FURRY

Security incapacitated over here.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Good. Stick with the plan until the signal is given.

He kneels down beside the security guard and grabs the keys. He opens the door and goes inside.

INT. SOAP BOOTH - DAY

Blinda, Dolly and Pablo are sitting at their booth. Their sign reads "Lopez Soap-ez." Butterball is lying under the booth with his leash tied to a table leg. Dolly is still working on the soap display.

PABLO

Buy our soap and you'll be smelling
like a pony in no time!

DOLLY

I have friends. They're just...all
on the internet.

BLINDA

You need to make real friends. Why
don't you try 'swerving' or
'memeing' somebody here?

DOLLY

(mortified)

Ama, those words do not mean what
you think they mean.

BLINDA

What do they mean?

A beat. Awkward.

DOLLY

(changing the subject)

There's a panel with James Peruggia
from *Sorcerer Nurse Takuma* in 10
minutes!

BLINDA

Alright, remember, if a man tries
to look up your skirt -

DOLLY

Aim for his pressure points. Got
it.

Butterball YAWNS. Dolly gets out of her chair and walks
past the silent auction. She looks at the top item: a JADE
STATUE of a samurai warrior in repose. She walks towards
the entrance.

INT. DEALERS ROOM - DAY

Dolly walks past a nearby booth selling figurines. Her
attention is caught by a figurine of a busty, bikini-clad
anime character.

DOLLY

I feel kind of bad for this girl.
 She just wants to play volleyball,
 but her bikini can't support her
pechitos.

(looks at price tag)
 \$250?! Who even has that kind of
 money to spend?

A fat NERD, early 20s, wearing a trilby and a trench-coat
 hands over a large wad of bills to the salesman. The
 salesman hands over the figurine to the nerd.

TRIBLY NERD
 (walking away)
 My waifu and I, together at last...

INT. TOP OF ESCALATOR - DAY

Dolly rides on the escalator and looks down at the crowd
 below her. She looks at a group of friends laughing and
 taking pictures together.

Dolly bumps into FREE HUGS GIRL, teens, wearing a corset
 over a t-shirt and capris and holding a "Free Hugs" sign.

FREE HUGS GIRL
 (loudly)
 HUG ME!

DOLLY
 (backing away, uncomfortable)
 No, no thank you.

INT. PANEL ROOM - DAY

100 folding chairs have been set up with an aisle down the
 middle. Only Seymour and Boyd are sitting together at the
 front. She sits across the aisle on the other side, alone.
 Boyd is putting a plastic bag full of cookies in his hat.

BOYD
 Nobody suspects snicker-doodles,
 Seymour!

SEYMOUR

No! I am not going to have my first anime convention ruined because you want to get stoned!

BOYD

Chill. We're not going to get arrested.

SEYMOUR

No, you're not gonna get arrested. I'm probably going to get arrested just by association.

SEYMOUR

Says here voiced Kenji, Noriko-sempai, and Kazuya, the bad guy all the girls fangirl over.

DOLLY

Hey, you can't just make the villain attractive and then expect people to hate him. It's just not fair.

Cue JAMES PERUGGIA, late 30s/early 40s, attractive in a white tank top and black jeans. He walks across the stage to CHEERING from all three people before sitting down.

JAMES PERUGGIA

Okay! Welcome to the *Sorcerer Nurse Takuma* Q&A panel! Good to see all of my fans!

(disappointed, but hiding it)

All three of you...

(snap back to happy)

Any questions?

All three enthusiastically raise their hands.

JAMES PERUGGIA

You in the pink!

DOLLY

Um, if you and Kazuya got into a fight, who would win?

James moves to answer; but suddenly three men in furry costumes, Teal Fox, a YELLOW HEDGEHOG, and a PINK OTTER burst through the door.

JAMES PERUGGIA
What the hell?!

TEAL FOX FURRY
You're coming with me!

JAMES PERUGGIA
(struggling)
Let go of me! Help!

Dolly gets up to help but is stopped at gunpoint by Yellow Hedgehog. Dolly, Boyd, and Seymour are herded together.

The intercom CRACKLES. Dolly, Boyd and Seymour look up.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Alright, this is a robbery. Here's
how it's going to go down.

INT. DEALERS ROOM - DAY

Robbers begin ordering shopkeepers to fill up their pillowcases.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Give us anything valuable that you
have - money, jewelry, watches,
whatever. Real simple.

INT. SOAP BOOTH - DAY

Linda attempts to reach for her phone in her purse. A LILAC COW points a gun at her.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
If you try to call the police,
you're going to get shot.

Butterball GROWLS. Blinda puts an arm in front of Pablo protectively.

INT. DEALERS ROOM ENTRANCE - DAY

Trilby Nerd, shielding his statue, attempts to make a break for it before being stopped by a NEON GREEN CHIPMUNK.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

If you try to escape, you're going to get shot.

Trilby Nerd WHIMPERS as he goes to the ground.

INT. PANEL ROOM - DAY

Yellow Hedgehog and Pink Otter are pointing their guns at the three.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Just cooperate, and we don't have to turn this robbery into a homicide.

DOLLY

Where have I heard that voice?

BOYD

Alright. Just please, whatever you do, don't eat any of the snickerdoodles in my hat.

TIME CUT TO:

Yellow Hedgehog and Pink Otter are lying on the ground in front of the doorway with an empty plastic bag and crumbs.

YELLOW HEDGEHOG

Can you move?

PINK OTTER

Why, am I in the way?

BOYD

Alright, so they'll be baked as cakes for a few hours. We're safe.

All three hold up their cellphones in an effort to get a signal.

SEYMOUR

Yes!

DOLLY

You got a signal?

SEYMOUR

Better! Wi-fi!

Seymour types on his phone with RAPID CLICKING. He hits the send button.

Seymour has posted a tweet "Building has been taken over by heavily armed furrries. #SaveWeebCon".

BOYD

Are we seriously putting our lives in the hands of a hashtag?

SEYMOUR

It's worked before, kind of.

DOLLY

Look, we can either wait on the off-chance that tag goes viral for someone else to save us or put our lives into our own hands. Are y'all in?

SEYMOUR

I vote we wait here. It's safer and less likely to get me killed by white people.

BOYD

What makes you think they're white people?

Dolly pulls Pink Otter's costume head off, revealing a skinhead with a large swatsika tattooed on his forehead.

SEYMOUR

If Scooby Doo taught me anything, it's that when costumes are involved, it's usually white people trying to get money.

BOYD

Count me in. My little bro's out there too.

SEYMOUR

I don't have much of an option, do I?

DOLLY

Not really.

SEYMOUR

Fine. Smarter idea than staying in the room with Neo-Nazis anyhow.

Seymour puts the head on the ground.

SEYMOUR

Alright.

Yellow Hedgehog is sobbing.

PINK OTTER

What's wrong?

YELLOW HEDGEHOG

I just realized that centipedes don't have tails, because they are tails.

PINK OTTER

Does anyone else smell birthday cake?

SEYMOUR

So according to the blueprints of this building, this wall's only temporary

BOYD

So, um, girl..

DOLLY

Dolly.

BOYD

Dolly!

(Introducing)

Boyd and this is Seymour. Do you have a bobby pin to unlock this door.

DOLLY

My hair at this point is probably
60% bobby pin. Just can't pull out
the wrong one...

Dolly pulls out a bobby pin, and instantly her entire
hairdo deflates and falls apart. Dolly GRUMBLES IN SPANISH.

She picks the lock and tries to push open the door, but it
is blocked.

INT. ARCADE ROOM - DAY

Dolly, Seymour and Boyd stumble through the door into
a dark room illuminated only by the light of the multiple
TVs on the walls. Multiple guys are playing different video
games on T.V. screens.

RPG GUY

Damn it we were in the middle of a
battle!

Most everyone's eyes are still glued to the screens. Not a
single one of them has noticed the four heavily armed
furries.

COLIN, 12, short and fat sits in front of a large TV next
to another GAMER GUY. Both are completely engrossed in
their game.

COLIN

(screaming)

Stop doing the conga and push the
cart!

A WHITE DRAGON waves his hand in front of Colin's face, who
moves his head to see the screen.

WHITE DRAGON

Hello? Robbery here?

COLIN

Piss off! I'm trying to kill this
dumbass camping excuse of a sniper!

GAMER GUY

Yeah, blame the weirdo on the fact
that you suck, faggot.

COLIN

Bitch please! I'm straighter than
the pole your mom dances on!

Seymour begins unplugging wires and plugs. TV screens go off left and right. Like waking up from a trance, the gamers finally notice the situation at hand.

DOLLY

Alright, here's the situation:
we're up against heavily-armed,
violent and possibly crazy furies.
Who's with me?

Beat.

COLIN

Get back in the kitchen, Maria!

LAUGHTER erupts. Dolly is humiliated.

DOLLY

Someone hand me a hair tie!

Free Hugs Girl hands Dolly a 90s-style scrunchie. Dolly briefly hesitates in disgust before putting her hair up in a ponytail.

Dolly punches the White Dragon and grabs a plastic guitar controller and smashes it over the furry's head.

BOYD

Holy crap, that was awesome!

SEYMOUR

Where'd you learn all of that?

DOLLY

Self-defense classes. I've been in
them since I was younger. Creepers
everywhere at these places.

COLIN

I didn't know they taught self-
defense in the kitchen.

The other gamers beat down the other three furies with their video game controllers and everyone's combined

manpower.

BOYD

God, that was some Wonder Woman
shit.

FREE HUGS GIRL

(intense whisper)

I ship it.

SEYMOUR

Alright, so our weapons thus far
amount to plastic game controllers,
a Wazowski blade-

BOYD

Wazakashi!

SEYMOUR

And Dolly's asskicking.

Dolly holds the gun like one holds a dead animal.

DOLLY

Does anyone know how to fire a gun?

Blank stares from everyone. Some hands in the crowd go up.

BOYD

An actual gun?

Hands go back down.

SEYMOUR

(disappointed)

A room full of Texans and not one
of them can fire a gun.

CONNECTICUT MAN (O.S.)

I'm from Connecticut, actually.

SEYMOUR

A room full of Texans and a guy
from Connecticut and not one of
them can fire a gun.

Dolly looks down at her hand and sees black flecks of
paint.

DOLLY

Wait a minute...

Dolly closely examines the gun. There is a small label
indent reading "Knudatter."

DOLLY

Knuddater?

Dolly turns over her purse and reads a the label on the
back "Knudatter Props."

BOYD

(pushes gun away from Colin)
Woah, don't point that at my
brother! Jesus!

DOLLY

It's okay! Their weapons are no
more deadly than ours are!

COLIN

Have you ever been hit in the face
by a controller?

DOLLY

These guns are fake!

SEYMOUR

Yeah, these guns are fake. There's
always the chance somebody's out
there's got a real gun.

Dolly grabs the White Dragon.

DOLLY

Where is James Peruggia?

WHITE DRAGON

He's in the office on the top
floor!

COLIN

How far from the kitchen is that
for you?

BOYD

Colin, that's the third kitchen
joke you've uttered. Don't you have
any other material?

COLIN

Women...have...fallopian
tubes...somewhere?

Colin guesses and points at his elbow. Boyd shakes his
head.

DOLLY

Alright, everyone else, stay here
and I'll go up and find James
Peruggia.

BOYD

Why are we calling him by his full
name?

DOLLY

It feels weird just calling him
James, though.

Colin bends his torso forward, outstretches his arms behind
his back and begins to run.

BOYD

(laughing)
What are you doing?

COLIN

Doesn't this way make you run
faster?

BOYD

(laughing harder)
No, oh my god. Just go.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Boyd, Seymour and Dolly burst into the office.

BOYD

Oh, thank god we found you!

DOLLY

Come on, let's go! The guns are fake!

JAMES PERUGGIA

Good thing mine isn't.

James produces a large, imposing gun and points it at the three.

DOLLY

What's going on?

JAMES PERUGGIA

What's going on is one of the biggest heists in anime convention history.

SEYMOUR

That's an overly narrow superlative.

DOLLY

Wait, the other voice on the P.A.-

JAMES PERUGGIA

(Same voice as before)

Sound familiar?

DOLLY

But...why?

JAMES PERUGGIA

Think: what's the most famous painting in the world?

SEYMOUR

Starry Night?

JAMES PERUGGIA

What? No!

BOYD

The one where the pipe isn't a pipe or something?

DOLLY

The Mona Lisa?

JAMES PERUGGIA

Correct! And why is it famous?

BOYD

It just...kinda is.

JAMES PERUGGIA

No, it's famous because it was stolen. Over a hundred years ago, the Mona Lisa was stolen from the Louvre. After its image got plastered all over the newspapers, its fame and thus value went up.

James looks out the window over the dealers' room, down on the people below.

JAMES PERUGGIA

I broke my prison brothers out, hid them in plain sight throughout the convention until everyone was in place. I'm not leaving without the statue or the money.

DOLLY

What did we ever do to you?

JAMES PERUGGIA

Nothing. But where else am I gonna find a large group of weak, basement-dwelling nerds carrying around large amounts of money?

DOLLY

How dare you! Most of us don't even have basements!

BOYD

Let me get this straight. You somehow managed to get your entire gang to escape prison, put them in crappy furry suits from the internet, gave them fake guns also

(MORE)

Boyd (CONT'D)

from the internet, put those guns inside of body pillows with half-naked chicks on them, pretended to hold people hostage, faked your own kidnapping, and are now planning on stealing a statue in order to make the statue famous and thus more valuable?

JAMES PERUGGIA

Basically, yeah.

Beat.

BOYD

That is the weirdest, most overly complicated plot I have ever heard, and I've been watching Doctor Who for years.

JAMES PERUGGIA

Well, clearly it's working!

SEYMOUR

Not saying it's not working, it's just...convoluted.

JAMES PERUGGIA

If you have a better, easier way to steal from nerds, tell me.

SEYMOUR

...Kickstarter?

James briefly thinks it over.

JAMES PERUGGIA

Nahhh, I like this better. And the best part? My biggest fans are going to personally hand the statue over to me.

DOLLY

First of all, you're crazy. Second of all-

James fires a bullet at their feet. Everyone jumps back.

DOLLY

(more insistently)

Second of all, if you think that just because you were in a dub for an anime 20 years ago we're going to help you-

BOYD

Eggs and bacon, you're mistaken.

DOLLY

...What he said.

Dolly grabs Boyd's sword and swings it at the gun, only for the blade to SHATTER against the gun.

BOYD

I spent ninety dollars on that piece of crap?!

INT. DEALERS ROOM - DAY

Things are still tense in the dealers' room. Almost everything's cleaned out. James holds his gun at Dolly's back and leads her towards the statue. Butterball begins GROWLING at James.

BLINDA

Hija, what's going on? Why are you with this man?

Dolly grabs the statue, but then charges him and hits his chin with her skull. When he is reeling back, she knees him in the groin. As he is bent over, she knees him in the face. James grabs Pablo and points the gun at him.

JAMES PERUGGIA

The statue for the boy!

DOLLY

You leave Pablo out of this!

JAMES PERUGGIA

What's worth more: your family or a statue?

Butterball breaks free of his leash, charges at James and bites his arm. James callously shoots Butterball. People SCREAM and panic.

DOLLY
Butterball!

JAMES PERUGGIA
Nobody moves! Anyone moves, you're next!

James turns to Dolly.

JAMES PERUGGIA
The statue, please.

DOLLY
(terrified)
Just please don't hurt anyone else.

PABLO
No...Butterball.

James grabs some zipties from a box next and ties Dolly and Boyd's hands.

SEYMOUR
Screw this, I'm out! I don't want my cause of death to be "heavily armed white guy!"

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Dolly and Boyd get thrown into a closet.

JAMES PERUGGIA
I'll figure out what to do with y'all later.

He PUMPS his gun.

DOLLY
Did you see what he did to my dog? The man's a lunatic. Why didn't we just stay in that room? Why did I think I could save anyone?

Dolly slides down the wall to the floor.

DOLLY

(voice breaking)

Why do I keep trying when all I do
is fail?

BOYD

Look, it's like you said. We have
to take our lives into our own
hands.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

YOUNG BOYD, 10, is playing outside with a disinterested fat
old cat. He sees a baby wood pecker at the foot of the
tree. He moves the old cat inside the house.

Young Boyd looks frantically on the ground for the
woodpecker. At eye-level is the baby woodpecker on the
tree, climbing its way back up until it goes on a tree
branch.

The woodpecker falls off the tree branch, but almost
immediately gets back up and starts again.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Boyd and Dolly are facing each other.

DOLLY

That's confusing, yet weirdly
motivating.

They are interrupted by A DELIGHTED HIGH-PITCHED SQUEAL.
ZOOM OUT to Free Hugs Girl sitting a few feet away from
them.

DOLLY

(unsettled)

How...how did you even get in here?

FREE HUGS GIRL

Can I get a light?

Free Hugs Girl uses her fingernail to lift the locking bar of Dolly's zip tie. Dolly breaks out of her zip tie. She goes over to Boyd and helps him out of his.

Boyd pulls his phone out of his pocket. He picks it up and looks at the screen.

BOYD

You're kidding me. I can get bars in here?

DOLLY

Call 911! I can hear someone coming!

Dolly gears up, she's not going into that gentle goodnight. Pink Otter opens the door and takes off the head. It's Seymour! Dolly and Boyd SIGH in relief.

SEYMOUR

There you are! This suit smells like rotten wheat bread and hippo farts. I ran back to the room and the only thing there was this

BOYD

So there is a completely baked Neo-Nazi running around in what I hope is his underpants in this building?

DOLLY

Let's go!

Dolly gets up, but clutches her chest in pain and takes a SHARP INHALE.

SEYMOUR

You alright?

DOLLY

(pained breaths)
I'm fine. Let's go.

Boyd DIALS, the PHONE RINGS.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)

911, what's your emergency?

BOYD

God, where do I begin, man?

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Dolly walks into the room taking PAINED BREATHS. The room is guarded by a Purple Bunny suit.

SEYMOUR

You don't look so good, maybe you should sit this one out.

The PURPLE BUNNY does multiple intimidating elaborate kung-fu stances. Seymour kicks it in the nuts.

While Seymour fights the Purple Bunny, Dolly turns on the P.A. system and speaks into the microphone.

DOLLY

James is the only one with a real gun! All the others are plastic!

INT. DEALERS ROOM - NIGHT

The crowd rises up. Dealers are using their own merchandise to attack. Whatever people can get their hands on, they're fighting back with.

MERCHANT

(Throwing things)

That'll be fifty-six dollars.

(hits another)

Sixty-four dollars.

(another)

Seventy-one dollars.

FREE HUGS GIRL

(running past)

HUG ME!

Free Hugs Girl tackles a BLUE PEGASUS in a way that would make an NFL linebacker proud.

Blinda takes an empty sack, fills it with soap and whacks the furies left and right with it.

BLINDA

(punctuated hitting)

Not my children you *cabron!*

SEYMOUR
He's going up to the roof!

DOLLY
I'm going after him.

SEYMOUR
You sure?

DOLLY
He shot my dog.

FREE HUGS GIRL
It's dangerous to go alone!

Free Hugs Girl hands Dolly a large oar, with the word "YAOI" haphazardly painted on the blade of it in red letters.

FREE HUGS GIRL
Take this with you!

DOLLY
Aren't these illegal?

Free Hugs Girl SHRUGS. Dolly runs up the stopped escalator.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A sparse rooftop with boxes. James walks out of the stairwell. The wind BLOWS. He looks over the ledge of the building.

JAMES PERUGGIA
(muttering)
Crap. I did not think this escape part through.

DOLLY
Going somewhere?!

Dolly charges, swinging wildly at him.

DOLLY

You shoot my dog, you threaten my family, you threaten innocent people and you think you can just walk away?!

JAMES

Of course I can! I have the statue! This'll be more than enough to cover the money I've lost!

DOLLY

Are you sure about that?

James opens the bag and pulls out Trilby Nerd's waifu statue.

JAMES

What?! How?! Where's the real one?!

CUT TO:

INT. DEALERS ROOM - NIGHT

Trilby Nerd is fighting a fuchsia llama with a bo staff.

TRIBLY NERD

For m'lady!

Trilby Nerd feels through his bag and notices something's amiss.

TRIBLY NERD

M'lady? You're distinctly less curvy than I remember...

Trilby Nerd keeps hitting the llama.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

James throws the waifu statue over his shoulder and off the roof with a FAINT CRASH. He begins SHOOTING at her. Dolly keeps running and hiding behind boxes to avoid James' bullets.

DOLLY

Wait. If you're the only one with a real gun...

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. James squeezes the trigger but to no avail.

DOLLY

That means you're the only one with
real bullets.

Dolly runs and knocks the empty gun out of James's hands with the paddle and off the side of the building. He grabs the paddle, causing both to struggle.

DOLLY

You're as bad a fighter as you are
an actor!

JAMES PERUGGIA

Excuse me?!

DOLLY

You have no range! You just did the
same three voices over and over
again and hoped no one would
notice!

JAMES PERUGGIA

I'll kill you!

Dolly swings at James, misses and hits the concrete stairwell, shattering the paddle.

DOLLY

What is it with me and breaking
weapons?

They both fight each other, with Dolly using what's left of the paddle. James gains the upper hand and punches Dolly in the stomach.

JAMES PERUGGIA

(punctuated pounding)

Why?! Don't you?! Give up?!

James punches Dolly in the mouth, knocking out a tooth. Blood comes out of the side of Dolly's mouth. Dolly wipes her mouth and spits the blood into James's face.

DOLLY

I am a baby woodpecker!

JAMES PERUGGIA

(confused)

Wait, a baby what?

Dolly strikes his nose with the heel of her palm and gets back up. Both fight with intense ferocity. She is up against the ledge of the building. He lunges at her, but she dodges him at the last moment, causing James to lose his balance.

James YELLS and falls off the roof and lands with a SICKENING THUD. Dolly looks over the ledge and cringes.

Dolly strongly stands in triumph, silhouetted by the rising sun and the ocean behind her, until she falters in pain.

She weakly limps inside, using the broken paddle as a walking stick.

EXT. CONVENTION ENTRANCE - DAY

Police cars, a fire truck, and an ambulance are parked outside. Many are in blankets huddled together. Trilby Nerd is frantically attempting to give CPR to the statue.

A POLICE OFFICER, 40s, looks at the paddy wagon full of furries.

POLICE OFFICER

(closes wagon door)

Too goddamned early in the morning
for this weird crap.

James is getting wheeled to a hospital on a stretcher.

JAMES PERUGGIA

This isn't over!

SEYMOUR

Shut up! It's as good as over!

The ambulance doors SLAM on James.

SEYMOUR

Amazing how James managed to fall
over twenty feet onto solid
concrete and only break his coccyx.

COLIN
 (laughs)
 You said cocks.

BOYD
 I think him breaking his ass has
 been the least weird thing about
 the past few hours.

SEYMOUR
 Now I'll never be able to listen to
 that ferret thing's voice without
 wanting to punch it in the face.

BOYD
 That's a normal reaction to Kenji.

Dolly falters up. Seymour and Boyd run up and hug her.

Free Hugs Girl joyously HIGH-PITCHED SQUEALS, much to the
 dismay of the others next to her.

BOYD
 You okay?

DOLLY
 (dazed)
 Woodpeckers...

Dolly collapses to the ground.

SEYMOUR
 Dolly?! Dolly!

BOYD
 Oh shit! Medic!

FADE TO BLACK

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Dolly wakes up. She is in a hospital bed hooked up to an
 oxygen tank and an IV in her left arm. An old TV is in the
 corner of the room on the ceiling.

DOLLY
 What happened?

BLINDA

The doctors said you had a pulmonary embolism.

DOLLY

That's a bad thing, right?

BLINDA

Blood clots in your lungs, *hija*.
You almost died.

DOLLY

(shocked)

Jesus.

BLINDA

You weren't getting enough oxygen
in your lungs.

Seymour and Boyd walk into the room.

SEYMOUR

Hello, Dolly.

BOYD

You're on the news!

Blinda turns on the TV. It's a news station, but they're currently showing a little dog "dancing" on its hind legs.

PABLO

Puppy!

BOYD

I mean, you were on the news when
we were coming up.

Blinda repeatedly flips through the channels in an effort to find news on Dolly.

BLINDA

Why does the stupid remote for this
thing only go one way?

DOLLY

Wait! Butterball!

Pablo quickly hands Dolly Seymour's phone.

PABLO

He's fine!

She swipes to a photo of Butterball, alive but humiliated on a veterinary scale with gauze around his midsection and a plastic cone around his neck.

DOLLY

(begins to laugh, but then
sharp intake of breath)

Ah! Ah! Hurts to laugh!

Dolly lies down back on the bed.

SEYMOUR

I will admit, for my first con this was actually kinda fun. I mean, before everything went south, obviously.

BOYD AND DOLLY

Right, yeah, obviously.

BOYD

Maybe we should come back again next year.

DOLLY

Definitely next year.

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Definitely Next Year

PAN DOWN from the sky to a large convention center across the street from the Gulf of Mexico. Tied to the balcony, a large banner with the words "18th Annual Weeb-Con."

EXT. LONG LINE - DAY

A long line of people, some dressed in cosplay, waiting to get their passes goes out of the front doors to the convention center. MULTIPLE SECURITY GUARDS are scanning and patting down con-goers.

Dolly and Seymour each carry a heavy box in their arms.

DOLLY

Excuse us!

SEYMOUR

Sorry!

Blinda and Pablo wheel a cart filled with cardboard boxes of soap. Boyd holds a leash attached to Butterball.

BOYD

Very late vendors coming though!

SECURITY GUARD #3

Open the box, please.

Dolly opens the box. The security guard pokes around the inside of the box with a rod.

SECURITY GUARD #3

Proceed.

Butterball BARKS and follows them, waddling and wagging his tail.

INT. DEALERS' ROOM - DAY

Blinda, Dolly, Pablo, Butterball walk past other booths in various states of readiness. Behind them, a sign in red block lettering reads "Silent Auction." In the back of the room between a booth filled with plushies and a weapons booth sits an empty table with a "Reserved" sign.

Seymour looks at his phone and makes a "We have to go!" gesture. Seymour, Boyd and Dolly leave and head towards the entrance.

INT. PANEL ROOM - DAY

Dolly, Seymour, and Boyd walk through the door and onto the stage.

The room is packed with a WILDLY CHEERING AND APPLAUDING audience.

Dolly, Seymour, and Boyd walk across the stage and take their seats. The crowd sits down after them.

DOLLY

Okay, first question.

She scans the crowd. Many people put their hands up.

DOLLY
(pointing)
You in the front with the ears!

A MAN IN CAT EARS stands up.

MAN IN CAT EARS
If you and Takuma got into a fight,
who would win?

DOLLY
Good question!

ZOOM OUT from panel through the crowd, pan through the
convention and tilt up to the sky.

SUPERIMPOSE: THE END

ROLL END CREDITS

INT. RAVE - NIGHT

Everybody dances to UPBEAT MUSIC. Most of them awkwardly,
some not.

FADE TO BLACK

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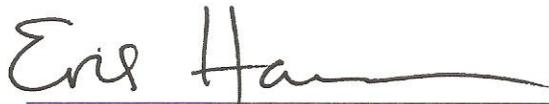
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APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that Rachel Elizabeth Williams has successfully completed
her Senior Honors Thesis, entitled:

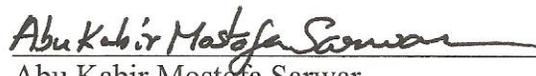
Weeb-Con



Erik Hansen Director of Thesis



Laszlo Fulop for the Department



Abu Kabir Mostofa Sarwar for the University
Honors Program

December 1, 2014

Date