

Screenplay Review

Defective Detective

Written by Jason Wright.

SYNOPSIS

Stephanie Worthington, daughter of multi-millionaire Richard Worthington, Sr., is kidnapped. Ritchie her angst-ridden teenage brother, loses the cell phone the ransom call was received on and it winds up in the hands of Gavin Bonds, an opportunistic, self-centered barber. After receiving ransom demands, totaling \$30 million dollars, Gavin cooks up a half-baked scheme passing himself off as a private detective willing to rescue Stephanie for nothing more than a finders fee.

REVIEW

Dysfunctional rich white family, poor African-American folks, an Asian stereotype, a Car Chase or two, a Mexican Stand-off and explosions. The only thing missing is Eddy Murphy's guffaw. I have to admit, this script has all the elements which I personally dislike about American film. But -

The material has no pretense other than being a solid piece of entertainment and in that sense it is pretty good. It's brilliantly written and visualized. The dialogue is smart and funny. Gavin and Ritchie make a great team. But – it's a formula we've all seen so many times that it held no surprises or real interest. It seemed to me some how dated.

Questionable plot points – Stephanie staying with the kidnappers? I've seen worse. The script is slightly farcical but an arranged kidnapping so that Stephanie could spend time with her real father? (p. 89). A bit of a stretch. Also I wasn't therefore sure when the family get together became a real kidnapping. Or was Bryne fooling Worthington all along? But then why would Worthington pay up? Surely he new Bryne would not actually kill his own daughter?

Personally, I don't think the plot needs those complications. The characters, pace and dialogue carry it well enough. This is a great piece of writing and ultimately it's not so much about what I think of the genre but more about whether or not it has commercial potential. After all, it is an Entertainment Industry. On that point I think with reservations the answer is – probably.