



SCRIPT REPORT – GOAT FILMS LTD.

TITLE: Waiting

READER: Mark Freeney

Writer(s): Tom Collins

LOCATION: East London

PERIOD: Modern

GENRE /FORMAT: Sitcom

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Concept		X			
Plot			X		
Character			X		
Dialogue			X		
Pace			X		
Structure			X		
Tone		X			
Marketability		X			

LOG LINE –

Set in an East London hipster café, struggling artists dream of their big break into stardom while serving customers organic coffee and vegan food to pay the bills.

SYNOPSIS –

GRADY LEE, a white twenty-nine-year-old Rada graduate, works as a waiter in Portrait, an east London Café characterized by just about every known hipster stereotype so far discovered. The staff, all of whom are aspiring albeit struggling artists, serve coffee and food by day before making way to cocktails and jazz for the night owls. Grady is not where he wants to be in life and daydreams about playing Hamlet on stage, even on the job, but is knocked back into reality by rude elitists customers unhappy with his service. As Grady works away on his shift, his friend DAISY, an outspoken proud comedian, sneaks in clearly late for work. Grady catches her and from experience knows she is late having slept with



someone from her gig last night. To his surprise she instead went with an obnoxious heckler, not the usual venue barman. The two share barbs over their perceived career failures, but their honesty clearly comes from a place of mutual respect. The two are interrupted by RILEY, a bright eyed posh young woman accompanied by MICK, the middle-aged Korean manager. Mick introduces Riley as the new staff member and aspiring actress (much to Daisy's delight, as she does not want the competition). Mick explains to Riley that all his staff are aspiring artists in their own right and that he is a strong supporter for all of them to follow their dreams, even at the expense of the café. Mick himself is not an artist but says he was a roadie for some thirty years, only having O.D.-ed once. Mick tells Riley that she should shadow Grady as he's one of the longest serving staff members at Portrait. Grady refutes this but is then horrified to learn that he has been working at Portrait for a year and his anniversary is coming up. Mick of course is sparing no expense in celebrating the occasion with top organic vegan prosecco specially put aside. Riley is convinced she knows Grady from something he may have acted in and asks him what school he went to. Impressed by his alma mater, she then asks him how old he is. Confused why she cares, Riley states her agent advised her that anyone over twenty-five will never make it into the industry if they haven't already. Grady lies and says he is twenty-four. Daisy expresses her hatred for Riley to Grady, claiming she is just like every drama schoolgirl that was nasty to her while studying. Grady is distracted and confides in Daisy that he cannot allow himself to have worked in the café for a year and determines he must get a part in something, anything, by the end of the day. Daisy does not think this is realistic. Outside, Grady desperately tries to speak with his agent, but is dismayed to discover he is not on their books and frustrated that he cannot get through to anyone past reception. Meanwhile, Riley meets the barista, IRWIN, a cocky, posh black man and part of a singer-songwriter duet with his Polish co-worker and girlfriend STEF. Irwin informs Riley that he essentially runs the café, in an assistant-manager capacity to Mick and that she should stick on his good side to get good shifts and perks. Irwin holds nothing but contempt for Grady, whom he believes flirts with Stef and holds secrets about his past. He convinces Riley to go undercover and spy on his behalf to get some dirt on Grady. Grady runs into Stef outside who's been tasked with setting up his anniversary party. She thinks



it's sweet that Mick has gone to this trouble. As they chat, Irwin confronts Grady and accuses him of flirting with his girlfriend, but Stef insists he not be jealous. While Grady and Daisy brainstorm ideas on how he can make something happen today, Riley speaks with some friends from Rada. She believes Grady never went there as none of them have heard of him before. She reports this back to Irwin as Grady walks over to them. He calls him out in front of his colleagues, stating he lied about going to Rada. However, they soon realise that Riley asked her twenty-four-year-old friends, discovering that Grady lied about his age. Irwin reprimands Riley for being sloppy on her mission and implores her to be better. Irwin accuses Grady of lying about his real name. Through this conversation it is revealed that Irwin's actual name is James Irwin, but he swapped them around as a stage name, while Daisy is actually Jewish and called Flora Finkelstein. Grady convinces Daisy to call one of her old flings THEO, a world-famous French arthouse director whom she met while a guest at Grady's Rada reunion. Stef starts to blow up balloons with industrial-strength helium in the storeroom. Theo arrives and despite Grady's best efforts to persuade him to cast him in a role, Theo is much more interested in flirting with and reconnecting with Daisy. Grady says he should focus his mind on a creative output, but Theo tells Grady that no one is interested in him because he is not diverse enough. Realising Daisy will not be sleeping with him again, Theo storms out. Stef tries to cheer Grady up and when Irwin again confronts him, Stef insists Irwin be nice to Grady. This gives Irwin an idea. He instructs Riley to contact her acting friends and inform her of any auditions coming up today. He gives Riley a work-break to do so. As she desperately types out messages to friends, she enters the storeroom in an attempt to hide from Irwin, only to discover it is full of balloons from floor to ceiling. She speaks with Stef and confides that she has moved to London to escape her overbearing controlling father, who uses money to manipulate her in doing what he determines is best for her future. Stef understands, having run away from home due to a similar situation. Riley gets a message from a friend and excitedly informs Irwin, who passes it on to Grady. Grady is mistrusting of his motivations, but Irwin insists he is just being nice like Stef said he should. Grady rushes off to go to the audition but is momentarily stopped by Mick, who tells him he's still on shift, before revealing he is joking and allowing him to leave. At the audition, Grady



makes a grand entrance and dramatically asks the casting team to audition him. However, he quickly realises that the part is for the lead role in *The Lenny Henry Story* and Irwin has set him up. Back in the office, Mick recruits Daisy's help in deciphering Riley's handwriting and asks her to type in her real name, Laetitia Agrippina Primrose Ekhart-Dacosta, into payroll as his dyslexia can't handle it. Here, Daisy discovers Grady's real name is Grady Lee Kane. Grady returns from his audition and angrily confronts Irwin for sabotaging his career. Daisy breaks up the conflict and speaks with Grady outside. She reveals she has discovered his real name and gleefully looking forward to googling him. Left with no choice; he reveals his secret. Ten years ago, Grady was originally cast to play Jon Snow in *Game of Thrones* and filmed a pilot but was rejected by HBO. Daisy empathises with his pain, realising he could have been rich and famous and asks how he can go on? Grady says he simply believes he will make it as an actor. Mick enters with a mop and asks him if he can unclog a toilet. Daisy confronts Irwin for his behaviour and then is confused when Riley calls him boss. She reveals to Riley that Irwin has been lying and has no real power to help Riley. Riley becomes annoyed with herself for allowing another man to control her life and storms off. Grady returns from his plumbing task and is met with a big surprise; Mick lied! His anniversary is today. As they celebrate, Daisy attempts to cheer him up and ensures him he'll figure something out. While drinking prosecco, Grady watches Riley, then gets the image in his head of Ophelia floating in the glass, reminiscent of the famous John Millais painting. His eyes light up. He finds Daisy and informs her he will stage *Hamlet* himself, as the lead, director and producer and offers Riley the part of Ophelia, but she quickly rejects it. In a post-credit scene, Stef struggles to put the balloons in the outside wheelie. After initially succeeding, the bin begins to float off into the night sky, much to her dismay.

COMMENT –

Waiting has the potential to be a sellable script with its astute insight into a world of misfits and multiple directions for stories to sustain a series. The strength lies in its fresh yet familiar concept and returnable location, but there is no question that every aspect of the script needs to be thoroughly revisited in order to stand out and shine. With solid



foundations the structure needs to be assessed, reworked and tightened into a more recognisable sitcom format. If done right, there is a real possibility this could be made into a returnable show. The writing itself is descriptive and flowing, keeping the pace moving. Even so, within each scene the conflict must be evident, as conflict will generate natural comedic situations. The characters in *Waiting* reflect the script in its current form; the essence of who they are is there, but there is more to unlock. Starting with Grady, the lead of the script, presently needs to be more likeable for the audience to route for him. That is not to say he is an unlikable character. The reader pities him when they should be cheering him on. He lacks gumption and drive. He's introduced daydreaming of playing Hamlet on stage before being put down by rude customers. Immediately we feel sorry for him, but he doesn't stand up for himself, he takes it with a self-pitying acceptance. It's hard to route for someone with that lack of fight in them. Lead sitcom characters are essentially likeable because they are either charming like Jeffrey Winger in *Community*, resilient like Leslie Knope in *Parks and Recreations* or the voice of reason type with a few issues of their own, surrounded my misfits and over-the-top quirky characters, like Liz Lemon in *30 Rock*. Grady does show some resilience in so much as he hasn't given up on his dream, as noted when he speaks with Daisy when revealing his secret, but the audience needs to see more desire within to want to follow him from the beginning; this has to happen from his introduction. His dialogue isn't overly witty and feels very much expositional. It doesn't reflect his character. Really think, what would Grady, a beaten down actor say and do in any situation. If he is to lead this sitcom, he needs to be the heart of a group, someone who can rally the team when things look down, even at his own expense, because ultimately, he needs to stay at the café for the show to go on. Grady has a solid arc and goes the full circle with a call to adventure, in wanting an audition to realising his own potential in making an opportunity for himself. This gives the reader belief that he can rise up into being a strong lead. The other lead appears to be Riley, whom, in her current state, feels like expositional tool rather than character in her own right, at least when introduced. Having a new employee start is a great way to introduce the world we're entering, but at the moment it's too piecemeal. There is a lot of introductions that takes up too many pages and drags scenes on, robbing us of action,



conflict and gags. This is problematic because, at forty-plus pages, it's too long to be a sitcom. One way around this is find a way Mick can introduce Riley to every character in one go, and for us to learn about the characters in one scene (then grow their characters then on organically, throughout the script). Think of a potential staff meeting, where Mick gathers everyone around, Irwin, Stef, Daisy and Grady to introduce Riley. The comedy could be played out if Mick were to make them do an introduction circle, with each character telling a fun fact about themselves. By doing so, we can meet every character then build on them throughout the script through the actions they take. Riley needs to be more dimensional. There needs to be stronger reasons behind her actions. Why is she so willing to help Irwin whom she just met and equally go after Grady? She was supposed to shadow Grady, but that disappears quickly. They don't really have a relationship in the script. Something needs to spurn her on to initially dislike Grady. Also, Riley is certain she has seen Grady before, but we never learn why she thought she did. There could be something there to ramp up the conflict between them. Riley's relationship with Irwin comes across as creepy. The dialogue he uses feels unsettling and strikes the wrong tone. She should be naiver and admire him. There's no real context as to why she later wants to hide from him, while still doing his work. Irwin comes across as overbearing, so perhaps this is the trait to push Riley away. We learn too late why Riley is in London working in a café; the seeds need to be planted earlier. Her reaction directly responding Irwin's lie should be stronger too. She should lose herself a bit in putting him in his place. Stef should react to his behaviour too. He should suffer for his actions and get his comeuppance. At the moment, there is no hint that Irwin's demanding behaviour is bothering her. Make her reactions more distinct. An exercise to help with this is picking a very common situation or phrase and putting each character in that situation. What would they say, how would they react? Character's need distinct voices and this can help you find hers. Daisy on the other hand, certainly has a voice. She is undoubtedly the strongest character in script with her unique voice and helps drive the comedy home. Sometimes her jokes don't land, however. For example, her Jewish Shower joke. It's just too dark for her and doesn't feel like an answer to what Grady initially asks her. Her response should be more focused on herself and maybe a bit tongue and cheek. Equally,



her assistant to the regional office manager joke doesn't really land. Daisy is a solid character because she has layers. She makes honestly brutal jokes at Grady's expense, but when he is truly down, she steps up as a friend. Just to note – on a few occasions Daisy's name appears as Daise in the script and should be rectified. Stef is another fun addition to the script. Her sweet nature and physical comedy in setting up the party add a layer of surrealism which can really amp up a sitcom. At the moment her potential to be a bit ditsier and quirkier remains to be seen and would be an interesting direction to take, all to add more comedy. Mick likewise is a fun and enjoyable character with the right level of screen time for this pilot. The focus on characters really should be Grady and Riley as they seem to be the lead characters in terms of having recognisable arcs. To note, with Theo there is a real relevance to the scene noting his commentary on diversity. As a character though he needs to be developed to maximise on his comedic potential. He doesn't strike as an arthouse French director. He should be fully utilised. In terms of the general structure and the plot, despite being too long for a sitcom, it's generally in good shape. There's a clear motivation for Grady to drive his story forward, as with Riley and Irwin countering this. There are, however, some scenes that serve no purpose or are repetitive. A prime example would be the first time Irwin confronts Grady and Stef. The audience is already aware of how he feels as he says it to Riley, and the scene repeats itself later on, only this time there's a consequence in which Stef asks Irwin to be nice and he comes up with an idea. Other scenes end at the wrong beat and should go out on a joke. A rule of thumb with sitcoms is every third to fourth line or beat should be a joke. An example would be when Mick pretends to not let Grady go. When Grady exits, lingering for a beat would add a comedic element. Mick could be standing there satisfied, and perhaps Daisy could also try to leave, only for him to not let her. Play around with the comedy and just have fun with it! On tone, the script is fairly consistent, but in terms of the world it could be more surreal. For example, it is unusual yet comedic that they would celebrate Grady's anniversary, so over the top, during service. That said, there should not be more unnamed staff working. The team of Grady, Daisy, Riley, Irwin and Stef should be it. There is potential to add more characters down the line, like regular customers, but the scene lands if customers are sitting lost and unsure what is happening.



In general, there's a lot of work to be done to bring out this script's true potential, because it really has something to it. An original fresh setting that can return time and again with a solid cast of conflicting characters is gold in the sitcom world. Ultimately, they need to be a type of family, that are in it together, thick and thin.

PASS /CONSIDER –

The Reader would consider this script for option on seeing another draft based on the notes provided. It has so many strong selling points to bring to market making worth the pursuit. While there is work to be done, there is no doubt that a solid effort was put in to this pilot and there is there hidden with these pages, ready to be unlocked and explored.