

# SHORE SCRIPTS

## SHORE SCRIPTS COVERAGE REPORT

**Title:** [REDACTED] **Location:** Philadelphia  
**Writers:** [REDACTED] **Circa:** 20<sup>th</sup> Century  
**Length:** 129 Pages **Budget:** High  
**Genre:** Historical **Coverage Date:** [REDACTED]

**Format:** Feature

### Logline:

The life of revolutionary and visionary [REDACTED], also known as [REDACTED], who built a cult following and tried to challenge the system and for that crime was ostracized and vilified, culminating in his violent death at the hands of the police.

### Industry Scorecard:

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	PROFICIENT	NEEDS ATTENTION
PREMISE	X			
STORY	X			
CHARACTERS	X			
STRUCTURE		X		
DIALOGUE	X			
MARKETABILITY		X		

### FEEDBACK:

#### Premise

**LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA** charts the slide of **John Africa** from an idealistic dreamer into an authoritarian bully through the eyes of those around him. The premise for this script deftly handles the obvious issue for cradle-to-grave stories by framing it through the point of view of the participants speaking to the MOVE commission. This does two things – it allows us to jump

forward in time seamlessly as different people give their accounts and allows the writer to show **John Africa** from an external perspective. The choice of this approach delivers a powerful and thought-provoking story centering on the themes of justice, freedom, and discrimination.

This approach follows a tradition in film of looking at particularly exceptional characters through the eyes of the participants in their story - AMADEUS springs immediately to mind. However, this does serve to somewhat romanticize the protagonist, and in some ways avoids coming to a difficult and definitive analysis of the motivations and character of the protagonist. These types of challenging characters mean many different things to many different people – to some **John** was a hero, to some a villain, and for many others, he’s somewhere in the middle. This approach allows all of that to be accounted for, for the audience to see his good and bad side. Telling the story from his point of view might prevent that and also make it almost too postposterous to believe – truth is stranger than fiction springs to mind.

### Marketability

The script is timely and touches on many of the concerns of our age. There are elements of justice, the environment, racism, and discrimination in there, all of which we are currently wrestling with through BLM, Covid, and time running out for the planet. It’s a good reminder that we are still fighting the same fight and that many people now question the efficacy of “the system.” What it doesn’t – and can’t - do is offer solutions to these issues, but it does offer a warning of not going down the path of violence, which is valuable. It’s a complex, though thankfully not complicated, take on an enigmatic man which maintains his paradoxes while looking at the effect he had on the world around him. It was a fascinating and great read.

Current Predicted Industry Outcome:

RECOMMEND	CONSIDER	PASS
	X	

### Character

As already stated, looking at **John Africa** from the outside was a good decision in that it allowed us to see the myriad of ways his actions could be interpreted. This was underlined by the voice-overs of characters at various moments saying, “He never did that.” or “I never said that.” Those moments were inspired and added a layer of complexity that raised the level of the script.

However, because of this choice, we didn’t see so much into **John** drive or vision, and as a result, his goals were quite vague - the story seemed at times to be a reaction to events rather than John leading the story by creating events. One way to overcome this might be to show or hint at the final police attack in the opening credits and then establishing the Commission is looking into the attack – what we just saw on the screen. Then the audience will know where the story is going and want to know how it got there.

I'm not sure how well-known this story is in the US. If it's as famous as the WACO massacre, and the outcome is widely known, then showing the attack in the opening may not be necessary. But if it's not widely known, then it could be a good move as it will give the film intention, direction, stakes, and purpose. In the opening there is one line in the beginning hinting at the attack – I think it needs to be expanded as I didn't get the meaning I needed to from it.

One other minor note – I found [redacted] motivation in planning and executing the final attack a bit vague and maybe not convincing enough. Was there a specific incident that provoked him?

### **Dialogue/Sound**

The dialogue was good for the most part and at times great. There were some fantastic lines and speeches. It's a great moment on page 23 when [redacted] voice really comes through. And his father's reaction to his writings - "Like you destroyed logic" – is a wonderful line. Towards the end, [redacted] does make a few speeches and some of them might go on a little. I don't know if the court ones are word for word, but some editing might be necessary.

### **Structure/Pace**

Other than the framing device, which worked very well, the structure was as simple as it was good. The first half was focused on [redacted] vision of peace and justice and freedom and building the group, while the eruption of force at the midpoint then put the story on a violence-ridden path in the second half culminating in the final attack.

More could be made of [redacted] son's death – that this moment could definitively be marked as the moment [redacted] changed from a defensive to offensive mindset. I'm not sure if that's already the case but think that his change in outlook should really be hammered home as that is when it starts to get really dark. Also, the first attack on the house seems to be the current low point and I wonder if his son's death might not work better as one. It's more personal and having both the low point and the climax as attacks on the house is bordering on a repeated beat, though admittedly [redacted] not there for the first attack.

Other than that, the turning points all hit their marks and the pace worked but might be improved if we had a sense of stakes and direction, which could be provided by showing the excessive final police attack on the opening. I do usually advise against these flash-forward openings, but in this case, I think it could work.

### **Conclusion**

[redacted] is a great, astonishing, and complex script. It takes an incredible story and transfers it brilliantly to the page. It was a fascinating read but could do with slightly more direction and purpose as at times it feels as if much of the story are events happening to him. But this is a minor issue, it's already very well developed, and an engrossing read.

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