

Title: "Rectified"
Author: Kristian McKenna
Medium: Feature screenplay
Pages: 110
Reader: KT
Genre: Supernatural thriller
Circa/Locale: Present / Detroit
Target Audience: Teens-Adults (17-50s)

RECOMMENDATION (pass/consider/recommend): CONSIDER
OVERALL RATING (1-10): 6

	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Concept	6	High-concept hook that's a bit generic but engaging, high stakes, commercial.
Story	5	Straightforward, simplistic structure, moves and keeps interest despite its routine and slow plotting.
Characterization	6	Generic but effective, solid arc, active protagonist.
Dialogue	4	Gets the job done, often very on-the-nose.
Commercial Viability	7	Relatively low budget but wide appeal in the wake of <i>Da Vinci Code</i> and other religious thrillers.
Writer	3	Clearly a beginning writer with a strong desire to tell this story, a thorough conception of the overall film, its tone and style, although the script is clunky, verbose, technically flawed. An enjoyable read even though its execution is redundant, inefficient.

LOGLINE

A detective with a painful past is set upon the trail of a frightening superhuman being known as the Rectifier who leaves behind a gruesome trail of dead religious leaders and other victims connected mysteriously in this tense supernatural thriller.

COMMENTS

Overall, this is a very enjoyable supernatural thriller that fuses religious mythology with a modern twist; in the spirit of *Constantine*, *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels and Demons* but with a darker, more graphic violence, it's sure to entice a lot of mainstream viewers and it does follow the standard genre rubric as far as its plot, protagonist, and structure are concerned. It's also reminiscent of the upcoming *Legion*. Of course, this fantasy-horror-procedural thriller doesn't have the franchise fanbase of the above-mentioned films, and a quick glance at this genre shows how rife it is with movie adaptations of books and graphic novels. Considering this, it is a tough call since the script itself has some hefty problems, even though most are issues with clarity and craft instead of content.

The plot itself is fine, although much of the mythological backstory is awkwardly conveyed through dialog and on-the-nose action description that is difficult to follow. Since it's so simple, though, the plot is clear enough, and a certain degree of heavy-handedness might be allowed in this genre.

Some of the action description aspires to be witty and revealing, but artful, wry character descriptions are only warranted if they actually convey something actionable to a reader (and ultimately an actor). Here, there are many evocative lines that break screenplay convention but not for a higher effectiveness. For example, on 26: "...with his back turned like someone just urinated in his already too bitter seventh cup of coffee." How is that supposed to be depicted? This might seem like a nitpicky note, but it's an example of the writer attempting to break from conventional screenwriting but failing to do so effectively; these moments stand out as uneven and jarring, distracting from the immediacy.

A lot of the exposition is redundant and we spend more than the first half of the script following two detectives "unraveling" the case of what killed two victims – when it's quite obvious to the audience what happened from the first scene. It's tiring, inefficient, and so much time is spent on single plot points that the reader (and ultimately the audience) is so much further along than the characters that it becomes boring. For example, on 35 we have the detectives interrogating the witnesses, who tell of the Rectifier's "fiery eyes". Then, when the two partners reunite as they leave the hospital, we have dialog in which they tell each other what the witnesses said (recapping something that we already know and is quite unnecessary to recap). This isn't a problem per se, but it is a good example of the script's redundancy. Either certain plot points aren't made clear enough, or other ones are made overwhelmingly clear, to the point of inefficiency.

The action description in general is exhaustive, inefficient, verbose. Many dense passages don't fully articulate what we're seeing on screen, even when the writer

uses repetitive and numerous sentences in pursuit of conveying the imagery. This is particularly important is a script that so heavily relies on fantastical and specific supernatural imagery. Despite this writing style, however, it is effective enough to convey the important parts, and we get the idea since we've seen this type of story plenty of times before – and this is an enjoyable new installment in its genre.

In short, we have a strange combination of too simplistic plotting (the murder investigation and the sluggish reveal of information) with a dense mythology that is too rushed and cluttered to understand clearly and effectively. Essentially, the plot itself is too simple, but the reveal of the backstory and the real stakes of the story are conveyed in a clumsy, dense way. On top of that, the exposition is conveyed in a somewhat unbelievable, on-the-nose way – through an exhaustive mural painted by the Rectifier that, once the reader finally wades through the dense and confusing description of what is being seen, is a somewhat cheesy way to get across this information.

Bottom line – very enjoyable read despite its length, redundant and clumsy writing style, and on-the-nose exposition and characterization. Thankfully, audiences for this genre are most interested in a good story rather than rich, fresh, unique characters... and this is enough of a compelling premise and payoff to keep interest. With more articulate and effective writing, and perhaps some work on the conclusion of the protagonist's arc and dimensionality, this story would be more compelling on the page and more expressive of the author's intentions and vision. To put it simply, I wish I fully grasped this story – but it's both too simple and too complex in different aspects.

Similar Films (theatrical box office)

	BUDGET	U.S. BOX	FOREIGN BOX
Lost Souls (2000)	\$50M	\$16.8M	\$14.5M
Stigmata (1999)	\$29M	\$50M	\$34.9M
The Order (2003)	N/A	\$7.6M	\$3.9M

Figures from www.boxofficemojo.com, unless noted