

**Title:** “The Getaway Conspiracy”  
**Author:** Kristian Michael McKenna & K.A. Plouffe  
**Medium:** Feature screenplay  
**Pages:** 100  
**Reader:** KT  
**Genre:** Crime thriller  
**Circa/Locale:** Present / Rural Texas  
**Target Audience:** Adults, Men

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

	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Comment</u>
<b>Concept</b>	4	Compelling but overdone at this point, it’s a solid hook but nothing new.
<b>Story</b>	5	Twists in last act make up for routine plot; again, solid and classically compelling but oft-treaded territory.
<b>Characterization</b>	6	Hard to empathize with, but well-drawn and dirty characters that fit their world; nothing new but solidly written, and ultimately given some dimensionality.
<b>Dialogue</b>	7	Character-specific and attuned to the characterization (Southern and Southwestern dialects), expressive and not too heavy-handed except in places.
<b>Commercial Viability</b>	6	Relatively low budget requirements and marketable elements (crime/violence/sex) give it some commercial promise, depending on execution since it takes a cue from so many older films and ultimately feels a bit “old fashioned” in its sensibility.
<b>Writer</b>	7	Smart, well paced and effective writing that keeps interest and conveys a sense of authority and credibility, bringing to life this hard-nosed, masculine Southwestern culture – consistent tone and style.

#### **LOGLINE**

The transport of a prisoner who can incriminate a major drug-running operation draws a cast of criminals and law enforcement into a web of mystery and violence that intensifies as the stakes rise and getaway seems increasingly difficult in this gritty thriller.

## COMMENTS

Like a more testosterone-fueled version of *Fargo* or *Red Rock West*, this is a crime-thriller that focuses on big-time crime in a seemingly small-time town. It has all of the genre conventions that we've come to expect, in a writing style that effectively conveys a consistently grim yet wryly intelligent tone. The characters feel well-drawn, albeit slight stereotypes of the cops and robbers we've come to know in this genre – but their generic qualities are a bit compensated for by smart dialog, detail and nuance. Most notable among the stereotypes of this genre is its consistent marginalization of women, relegating all to the roles of strippers, wives or prostitutes, but again that's par for the course in this genre that has its roots in '40s noir. Sure, this script leaves much to be desired in terms of originality, intelligence, and innovation, but it gets the job done – and the writing is compelling. If it weren't for the effective writing style, this relatively routine story wouldn't warrant a whole mess of attention, but it's worth considering if only because its tone and style suggest that it could be pulled off with a bit of freshness, to elevate what is otherwise a rehashing of '80s and '90s neo-noir thrillers.

Although on the whole the plot works well and is cohesive, there are a few points that stand out as uneven or confounding. First, the script is littered with spelling and grammar mistakes, which detract a bit from the otherwise compelling writing. Then, there's the title, which right off the bat is a tip-off that this is going to be a generic rather than unique script. "The Getaway Conspiracy" sounds like pure straight-to-video fodder – but perhaps that's exactly the type of production this script needs. After all, its strong suit is its relatively intimate, character-based story that can be produced cheaply, but with high-concept elements, which promises solid ROI for even a smaller home-video release. [While discussing the title, I can't ignore the cheesy title inscription ("*Perfect plans are accidental opportunities*") – it's definitely on the vague, seemingly-wise-but-ultimately-nonsensical side. When you stop and think about this initially thoughtful phrase, it makes no sense.]

One example of why the script feels outdated and "tired", despite being well-written and internally cohesive, comes right in the opening of the film – which is a flash-forward of the action-packed car chase that comes later. This is a tired and hackneyed narrative device that by now feels cheap – not only are there lots of similar films that have used this cheap shot to grab instant attention, it's also just noticeably ineffective here because there's no important information that comes in that opening sequence that is given deeper meaning later. "Reservoir Dogs" was certainly not the first to use this device, and it seems that so many films – especially crime thrillers – use this flash-forward bracketing technique to the point where it's patently exhausted. In my humble opinion, this works only if there's some truly effective or informative plot purpose to showing us the opening scene out of

chronology – otherwise, it’s just obviously a way to start the script with a more compelling sequence, and that fact remains paper-thin.

I have to say that the plot overall is coherent and solid. There are a few points where I got confused or felt it wavered. On pages 22/23 – It’s totally confusing and odd that U.S. Marshal Wesley shows up to visit the local cops and then, after a long setup to this scene, it ends suddenly, just before he can explain why he’s here, as Marx and Handle rush out to respond to something. Beyond the internal logic (wouldn’t he just quickly describe his situation as they’re walking out the door?), it’s dramatically awkward. This chance interruption turns out to be more for the sake of the plot (a coincidence) as we soon learn that Wesley would have been telling them that he’s here investigating drug-running (the raid), and it’s fortunate for him that he didn’t since they’re in on it. This just feels a bit convenient in its handling of timing. Another moment that feels odd and unrealistic comes on page 26, when Wesley’s superior prays with him. This scene also feels like a didactic, heavy-handed way of expressing Wesley’s character flaws and backstory, as well as his strife with God and his presumably faltering faith. Moreover, this moment feels especially odd because the character trait implied by this otherwise extraneous moment is never revisited or address later.

Another scene that feels heavily expository comes on Page 38. Dexter tells “us” all of his troubles and thus this backstory by way of a prostitute – it’s a thinly veiled way to have the character tell us everything we need to know (not to mention the fact that this is how Mr. Black and Mr. White will learn this information too). It’s not impossible, but it does seem like a mighty convenient way for this information to come out, more for the convenience of the writers than from narrative logic.

Bottom line – this is a lean, gritty, masculine crime thriller that takes a cue from the rich body of similar material produced in the last three decades, like John Dahl fused with Quentin Tarantino and David Mamet but without quite the same wittiness. That said, this is a solid piece of work, and its twist ending really works – despite its somewhat generic and oft-tread territory, it’s not predictable or boring at all, and I can really see this finding success with the right production company, even outside of theatrical distribution.

**Similar Films (theatrical box office)**

	BUDGET	U.S. BOX	FOREIGN BOX
<b>U-Turn (1997)</b>	N/A	\$7M	N/A
<b>True Romance (1993)</b>	N/A	\$12M	N/A
<b>A Simple Plan (1998)</b>	\$30M	\$16M	N/A

Figures from [www.boxofficemojo.com](http://www.boxofficemojo.com), unless noted