ZERO SUM

Evaluation

Overall	Premise	Plot	Character	Dialogue	Setting
3	4	4	3	3	5

Genre	Drama,Political Drama
Logline	In London, an independent MP and former soldier must go up against a vast system to uncover who is behind critical decisions that determine who receives essential services.
Pages	124

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Strengths

We get a strong sense of Jack's determination to achieve justice at any cost from the very beginning. The theme of justice for victims, particularly the most vulnerable, is highly resonant. Jack's steadfastness and his commitment to ethics is an engaging character trait. His willingness to admit his part in the system, own up to and correct his mistakes, and apologize for them to those he affected make him an admirable protagonist throughout. There is plenty of suspense in the two mysteries that Jack pursues, particularly regarding who is ultimately responsible for the decisions that affect lives. There are several great twists and turns as we find out that characters like Eleanor Vale aren't the villains we think they're going to be. Seeing the impact of the fuel crisis at the hospital is a wonderful illustration of the human cost of the lack of fuel. The reveal that Ward can't turn off continuity without prioritized distribution presents an interesting ethical dilemma for Jack.

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Weaknesses

Although the Amie Carter case is compelling, and it introduces us to the stakes of the story and the system Jack is up against, it remains rather vague. It's a bit confusing that Amie's story takes up nearly a third of the story but is then dropped in favor of the continuity-contribution storyline. Generally, this script tends to favor plot over character development. We get a strong sense of Jack's character, but often miss out on his emotional journey, and how he feels about the events of the plot. Although there are some great lines of dialogue, it often reads as unnatural and vague, which leaves things a bit confusing. The individual character voices also sound very similar to each other, making it difficult to distinguish between them. The plot starts to feel a bit repetitive as Jack continually runs into dead ends. The structure could use some firming up. The encounter with Ward happens rather late in the script. It feels like a bit of a letdown that we don't see the fallout of Jack's intervention with Ward. The non-standard spacing and smaller font on page 124 makes it difficult to estimate the script's true runtime.

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Prospects

Political thrillers are a classic, reliable genre, with built-in stakes and intrigue. However, this script, as written, would likely require at least a medium budget due to its large cast of speaking roles and many locations in London. Its structure is currently not what we would traditionally expect for the genre, which may make it difficult to pursue this project at a major studio, who generally look for more conventional structures. The required budget may also make it more challenging to pursue this project as an independent production. However, Jack could be a great protagonist for a novel or even a series of novels, as an unconventional, highly-ethical, independent MP willing to stand up to the system to seek truth and justice. This project could potentially find an easier path to success as a novel first, which would also allow for a deeper exploration of the characters. As a film project, significant development may be required to garner interest.

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