

**TITLE:** **Dead Weight**  
**AUTHOR:** ██████████  
**LOCALE:** Wisconsin, USA  
**CIRCA:** early 2000's  
**FORMAT:** Screenplay  
**GENRE:** Comedy  
**BUDGET:** Medium  
**DRAFT DATE:** XXXX  
**COVERAGE DATE:** XXXX  
**PREPARED BY:** Erinn Feltes

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### **LOGLINE**

A teen with muscular dystrophy and his loser best friend struggle to navigate high school and things go from bad to worse when they accidentally kill their bully. Now they find themselves hiding a body and attempting to cover up their crime.

### **SUMMARY**

MILO, a 15-year-old boy with muscular dystrophy and his best friend DANNY struggle to make it through the day at high school while avoiding the torments of their bully, the popular golden-boy, ERIK. Their attempts are unsuccessful, particularly when Erik humiliates Milo in front of Milo's crush, LEELA. Milo again suffers embarrassment at home while his parents need to help him with basic tasks.

The next day at school, Milo suffers Erik's bullying again when Erik knocks Milo's handheld urinal all over him. Erik laughs and takes a picture of the embarrassing situation.

Later, Milo and Danny go to their school's Video Game Club where Leela is president. It becomes clear that not only is Milo crushing on her, but Danny is too.

After the meeting, Milo and Danny walk home and run into Erik where he taunts them with the embarrassing photo of Milo. All three get into a fight and eventually as Erik chases Milo and Danny, he trips over Milo's wheelchair, falls, gets run over, and breaks his neck.

Milo and Danny panic. Convinced they'll go to jail, they decide to hide the body.

The next day at school as Danny and Milo become increasingly paranoid and guilty. Milo realize that Erik still has his phone at his house with the picture of Milo on it - a possible connection to his murder. Milo convinces Danny that they need to retrieve and delete the photo.

The police, Milo's parents and the local news only further increase Milo's guilt and paranoia over Erik's death and the dead body.

At a Super Smash Bros tournament at Leela's house Milo lets slip to Leela that he knows what happened to Erik. Later, against Danny's wishes Milo comes clean to Leela. Leela freaks out. Danny and Milo convince her not to call 911 as they explain the events of the accident. Leela eventually comes around to their side, especially as she never liked Erik. They tell her where the body is and she informs them that the police are searching that area and the body is likely to be found. They all panic.

Leela has the idea to frame the creepy school janitor, MR. MALLORY by burying Erik's body in his backyard. While transporting Erik's body, Milo and Leela share some cute moments. Danny isn't happy. Leela however is oblivious to both boy's attentions.

While burying the body in Mr. Mallory's backyard, Danny and Leela work well together while Milo is forced to watch on the sidelines. He gets jealous and fights with Danny. Danny calls Milo a cripple. Furious, Milo runs his wheelchair into Danny knocking him into the newly dug grave. They discover the decaying bones of people already buried there.

The next day Milo tips the police off about Mr. Mallory as Erik's murderer. The police arrest Mr. Mallory and find dozens of other bodies in his yard.

Back at school, Milo and Danny apologize for their fight. Milo goes to tell Leela he won't pursue her further but she stops him from further talking - she's a lesbian and wasn't interested in either him or Danny.

Milo and Danny testify in Mr. Mallory's trial and they are both hailed as local heroes. Their school life improves and

they are no longer treated as losers. At home, the same difficulties in everyday life carry on for Milo but he is now longer ashamed at his disability.

## COMMENTS

### OVERALL

While the story has potential, other movies about accidentally killing someone and having to hide the body have done it better. This script currently sits at "amusing" and as comedy it needs to work on its jokes and comedic situations to help it stand out and make it truly funny. Right now, the outline of the characters, the pacing, and the structure are fairly well developed and it is unique and interesting to see a leading character with muscular dystrophy. There are some good visual moments and a compelling dramatic narrative arc for the main character, however, the plot, dramatic tension, setting, and comedy could all use some work before this script would be ready for consideration.

### CHARACTERS

As the protagonist, the script does a good job of showing Milo's character arc. As the result of accidentally killing someone and hiding the body he ends up free of his bully, popular at school, and more at ease with his disability. However, there is more opportunity for dramatic tension between Milo and his friend through their shared interest in Leela. This conflict only seems comes into play at the climax and could use more set up. The stress of hiding a body seems like it should affect Milo and Danny's relationship more than it's written and seems like missed opportunity for potential dramatic tension. This conflict is particularly well written during Milo and Danny's climactic argument - while powerful, this scene could just use some more set up.

As an antagonist, Erik is fine. He doesn't need much more depth to him rather than his character of a typical high school bully. The contrast between Milo and Danny hating him while everyone else views him as a golden boy makes for good conflict but could be further escalated in more scenes after Erik has been killed.

Milo's father makes an excellent character for comic relief, but he seems to be the only wholly comedic character. The script would benefit from one or two more characters who exclusively bring the comedy to the forefront with their characterization.

Finally, for the role Mr. Mallory plays in wrapping up the story, he is hardly seen in any early scenes. His character could use more involvement in the plot to help lead to a more satisfying ending when he is found to be a serial killer.

#### PLOT

A huge flaw in this script is the missed opportunities for dramatic tension. It is Milo and Danny's guilt and paranoia over their killing of Erik that causes the most conflict in the story, but it's only until the very end that they risk actual discovery of his body. This story would benefit from higher stakes - if someone actually came close to finding Erik's body before they move him to Mr. Mallory's backyard. Otherwise a "hiding-the-body" story provides a good outline for plot and this script works well within that story type adding a few interesting elements such as a main character with muscular dystrophy. This script also does a good job of keeping the audience on the side of the main characters through the events of the story (and the characterization), even though the protagonists kill someone and hide their body. The story also wraps up with a satisfying twist (i.e. Mr. Mallory as a serial killer) that allows the characters to escape punishment.

#### STRUCTURE

The script is nicely broken up into three acts: killing Erik, hiding the body and any evidence of their crime, and Leela finding out about killing Erik and setting up Mr. Mallory as the murderer. In the first act, Milo's life at school is clearly set up and the first turning point comes with killing Erik which leads to the rest of the conflict of the script. There is a clear rise in dramatic tension that results to the climax of the film - finding the bones in Mr. Mallory's back yard. That scene (Danny and Milo's argument) is particularly well written - the emotion and tension is clearly shown and works well as part of the story's climax. The pacing is tight and the scenes don't

lag or feel overly long. It does a good job of naturally flowing scene to scene.

#### DIALOGUE

Overall the dialogue is well written but while there are some funny lines most the comedy plays out situationally and visually (mostly through their struggles hiding Erik's body). As mentioned before, this script could use some improvement on its comedy and punching up the dialogue is the perfect opportunity area to help with this.

#### SETTING

Besides the comedy, the setting is another area of this script that could use the most improvement. Although set in the early 2000's, there is a distinct lack of this shown through the script. Being set in the 2000s is not clearly displayed and doesn't seem to add anything to the story - this script could easily be changed to be set in the present without much of a difference. Otherwise, more elements will have to be added to the story for it being set in the 2000's to matter - in dialogue, setting, technology, costume, and characters. Besides the time period, the town itself makes very little impression in the story. While this doesn't need to be completely reworked, the description of scene's settings could be further expanded upon so there is a better sense of the town Milo and Danny live in.

#### CONCLUSION

While this script has commercial potential, right now it is not dramatically compelling enough of a story or funny enough to be a satisfying comedy. The dialogue is well written, the characters are well established and the structure is tight, but the 2000's setting is ineffective and the plot misses out on opportunities for dramatic tension. Moreover, this script is presented as a comedy but besides some funny lines, one truly comedic character, and some visually funny situations this element is lacking. The script could either shift completely in tone to more of a dark comedy and amp up the visually gruesome parts and questionable actions of the characters or work on its comedy to help it stand out from other stories of this genre.

**RATINGS GRID:**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Needs Work</u>
Artistic				X	
Premise			X		
Story				X	
Main Characters			X		
Minor Characters				X	
Dialogue			X		
Visual Elements			X		
Title					X

SCRIPT:

PASS

WRITER:

CONSIDER