



SAMPLE SCRIPT ANALYSIS

IPG script analysis assesses a script's readiness for serious development and/or production. The IPG report goes far beyond mere script formatting and addresses issues that affect both production viability and marketability.

It provides reasoned analysis and feedback of use to producers, writers and other parties integral to the filmmaking process.

For qualified producing, production management, writers and script doctor services, contact services@independentproducersguild.org.

IPG Script Analysis for CONDUIT

Date: June 21, 2026

A. Executive Summary & Development Perspective

What this analysis helps with: This section provides a high-level assessment of the project's commercial viability, thematic strength, and overall readiness for the marketplace from a producer's lens.

Conduit is an exceptionally sharp, emotionally bruising piece of elevated horror that perfectly captures the current zeitgeist of trauma-informed supernatural thrillers. The script uses a familiar "party game gone wrong" hook to explore the agonizing anatomy of grief, anchoring its supernatural terror in a raw, authentic teenage reality.

From a development perspective, this project is a highly lucrative opportunity for an independent financier. It boasts a highly contained, cost-effective physical footprint (primarily taking place across three residential locations) while delivering the kind of visceral, talk-about-it-on-the-drive-home horror set-pieces that drive viral word-of-mouth. The emotional core is devastatingly clear, and the central horror mechanic is brilliantly cinematic. It offers a premium canvas for an auteur director and a breakout young cast.

B. Synopsis & Genre

What this analysis helps with: This section establishes the project's precise market categorization and provides a concise narrative roadmap used for pitching and logline development.

- **Genre:** Elevated Horror
- **Subgenre:** Psychological Thriller
- **Logline:** A grieving teenager becomes hooked on a dangerous party game involving an ancient obsidian mirror that allows brief spiritual possession, only to unleash a malicious entity pretending to be her deceased mother.

Synopsis

Nineteen-year-old Maya is drowning in silent grief six months after her mother's sudden suicide. Seeking escape, she joins her best friend Chloe at an underground suburban party where the main attraction is a bizarre ritual. Using a fractured, antique obsidian mirror, participants allow wandering spirits to temporarily inhabit their bodies for exactly 60 seconds—a thrilling, addictive rush that has captured the local youth.

When Maya takes the mirror, the spirit that enters her claims to be her mother, whispering comforting secrets only they shared. Overwhelmed by longing, Maya breaks the rules and refuses to let go of the mirror, shattering the 60-second threshold. Though her friends pull her out, the door is left unlatched. Soon, Maya is plagued by horrific auditory and visual hallucinations, while a malevolent, shapeshifting entity begins systematically terrorizing her inner circle, feeding on her unresolved guilt and forcing her to choose between joining her mother in the void or saving the people she loves.

C. Detailed Narrative Treatment

What this analysis helps with: This section visualizes the cinematic execution, tone, and pacing implied by the script to align the creative team on visual style.

Act I: The Ritual of Release

The film opens with an oppressive, static visual style—long, quiet takes of Maya moving through her empty house. The camera feels heavy, mirroring her depression. The contrast hits sharply when Chloe drags Maya to a chaotic, neon-drenched house party. The camera transitions to an urgent, handheld, documentary-style energy.

We are introduced to the mirror game. It is treated like an illicit drug experience: teenagers filming on phones, cheering as a peer's eyes roll back into an inky black state. When Maya steps up, the audio drops out completely, replaced by a low, sub-bass drone. Her possession is not violent; it is eerily serene. The spirit speaks through her in her mother's soft cadence. The emotional shock causes Maya to clamp her hand onto the mirror past the time limit. When she is forcibly severed from it, the camera lingers on a hairline fracture spreading across the glass. The act ends with an unsettling atmosphere of lingering wrongness.

Act II: The Leak and the Fracture

The pacing accelerates into a tense, paranoid psychological thriller. Maya tries to return to normal life, but the visual language changes—the background focus becomes deeply shallow, making her feel isolated while blurred, distorted figures seem to lurk just out of focus behind her.

The horror peaks during a small gathering at Chloe's house. Chloe's younger brother, Toby, inadvertently touches the mirror, which Maya has stolen. Toby is instantly seized by a violent, hyper-aggressive entity. The blocking here is frantic and terrifying: Toby thrashes, violently self-harming by smashing his face against a glass table. The pacing jerks from slow-burn dread to a breathless, chaotic nightmare. Toby survives but slips into a catatonic state. Maya realizes that the entity is using her grief as an anchor, projecting illusions of her mother to trick her into letting it take full, permanent control of her body.

Act III: The Devouring Void

The final act is a relentless, surreal descent into madness where reality and hallucination bleed together. The lighting shifts from suburban realism to dark, void-like shadows. Maya, desperate to save Toby, attempts a reverse-possession ritual to pull his soul back from the mirror's "flip side."

The climax is a masterclass in subverted expectations. Maya believes she is conquering her demons and reconciling with her mother's spirit, but the script pulls the rug out: the entity has completely rewired her perception. In a horrifying, tragic final sequence, executed with elegant, unblinking wide shots, Maya tries to save her friends from a fire she thinks the demon set, only to realize *she* is the one causing the destruction. The film ends on a chilling, bleak note as Maya's consciousness is trapped behind the fractured obsidian glass, looking out helplessly at her own stolen body.

D. Character Dialog & Action Metrics

What this analysis helps with: This section evaluates the linguistic realism, readability, and the balance between dialogue and visual storytelling for the main cast.

Overall Metrics

The script operates at an **8th-grade reading level**, which is highly appropriate for a contemporary youth-focused thriller. The dialogue avoids overly expositional monologues, preferring realistic, fragmented teenage vernacular, stuttered phrases, and heavy subtext.

[===== DIALOGUE-TO-ACTION RATIO =====]

Maya		[40% Dialogue / 60% Action]
Chloe		[55% Dialogue / 45% Action]
Toby		[20% Dialogue / 80% Action]

Character Breakdowns

- **Maya:** Her dialogue is sparse, guarded, and emotionally flatlined in Act I, transitioning to panicked and breathless in Act II. Her high action metric (60%) reflects her internal isolation; she processes her grief through quiet actions or terrifying, silent hallucinations rather than talking it out.
- **Chloe:** Functions as the narrative's grounded anchor. Her dialogue-to-action ratio is a balanced 55:45. Her speech is fast-paced, defensive, and fiercely protective. She speaks

in the naturalistic, slang-heavy cadence of a modern nineteen-year-old, providing a strong contrast to Maya's haunting withdrawal.

- **Toby:** His metrics drastically shift after Page 50. Post-possession, his dialogue drops to near zero, replaced entirely by intense, physically demanding action metrics (80%) involving bodily contortions, vacant stares, and erratic, dangerous movements.

E. Structural Analysis & Pacing

What this analysis helps with: This section tracks the narrative's structural landmarks to ensure optimal pacing, tension building, and market-standard runtimes.

Page 1 Page 15 Page 50 Page 75 Page 95
[-- Act I: Isolation --|-- Inciting Inc. --|-- Midpoint Crisis --|-- Dark Night --|-- Act III: Climax --]

Structural Landmarks

- **Inciting Incident (Page 15):** Maya breaks the 60-second boundary during her first mirror session. This falls perfectly within the standard 10–15 page industry window, instantly kicking off the supernatural stakes.
- **Midpoint (Page 50):** Toby's violent possession and subsequent hospitalization. This perfectly splits the script, shifting the narrative from an eerie "haunting" to an active, life-or-death struggle against a predatory force.
- **Dark Night of the Soul (Page 75):** Maya realizes her mother's spirit was an illusion created by the entity to weaken her defenses. She is utterly isolated, as Chloe blames her for Toby's condition.

Structural Framework Comparison

- **The Hero's Journey:** The script subverts this framework brilliantly. Instead of an elevation of the hero, it operates as a *Tragic Descent*. Maya crosses the threshold into the special world but fails to integrate her shadow self, leading to her eventual consumption by the abyss.
- **Save the Cat:** Aligns surprisingly well with this beat sheet. The "Fun and Games" section (Pages 20–45) features the thrill of the mirror parties before the "All is Lost" hit at Page 75.
- **3-Act Structure:** The standard 25-50-25 percentage distribution is flawlessly maintained over a tight 95-page runtime, ensuring zero narrative sag in the second act. Pacing velocity starts at a slow, heavy stroll and accelerates into a chaotic sprint post-midpoint.

F. Production & Technical Challenges

What this analysis helps with: This section flags potential budgetary, logistical, and safety hurdles during physical production to assist line producers and department heads.

- **Special Effects (SFX Makeup):** High demand. Toby's self-harm sequence requires meticulous prosthetic work, breakaway glass coordination, and highly realistic blood FX that must look convincing under harsh, close-up lighting.
- **Visual Effects (VFX):** The script relies heavily on subtle, unsettling visual trickery rather than massive green-screen environments. Key challenges include seamless mirror-surface replacements, reality-bending tracking shots where a room morphs behind a character, and digital eye-color manipulation for the possession sequences.
- **Blocking & Stunts:** The possession scenes require stunt performers or actors with exceptional physical contortion skills. The violent thrashing and a late-stage staircase fall demand rigorous safety rigging and a dedicated stunt coordinator.
- **Camera & Lighting:** Implied use of specialized lenses to capture ultra-shallow depth of field. The lighting department will face challenges managing deep, rich blacks in low-light environments without introducing digital noise, requiring premium camera packages (e.g., ARRI Alexa LF or Sony Venice).

G. Bechdel Test

What this analysis helps with: This section evaluates gender representation, character autonomy, and demographic inclusivity.

The script **passes the Bechdel Test with flying colors**. Maya and Chloe are the primary drivers of the narrative. Their relationship is complex, nuanced, and entirely independent of any romantic or male-driven motivations.

They have multiple, lengthy conversations regarding Maya's maternal trauma, Chloe's anxiety over her family's safety, and the historical origin of the mirror itself. Male characters exist in the script but occupy supporting roles, reversing traditional genre tropes.

H. Profanity & Dialog Cleanliness

What this Analysis helps with: This section profiles the script's linguistic choices to forecast censorship issues and broadcast adaptation requirements.

The dialogue features a **high volume of profanity**, including frequent use of the "F-bomb," "shit," and various aggressive colloquialisms common among modern teenagers.

The language feels entirely organic to the high-stress, terrifying situations the characters endure; cleaning it up would severely compromise the authenticity of the performances.

However, standard syndication or basic cable broadcast will require a dedicated "clean" audio pass for television compliance.

I. Prospective Ratings

What this analysis helps with: This section forecasts the regulatory ratings to determine theatrical placement and streaming distribution pipelines.

Theatrical Rating: R

- **Reasons:** The intense psychological terror, graphic depictions of teenage self-harm (Toby's glass-smashing scene), underage substance use at parties, and pervasive coarse language make a PG-13 rating impossible. An R-rating is highly beneficial here, as target audiences for elevated horror demand unfiltered, visceral stakes.

TV Rating: TV-MA

- **Reasons:** Due to the heavy thematic focus on suicide and the disturbing nature of the psychological manipulation sequences, the project sits squarely in the mature audience bracket for streaming platforms (Netflix, HBO Max, or Shudder).

J. Audience & Market Accessibility

What this analysis helps with: This section helps marketing and distribution teams identify and rank their target consumer segments to optimize promotional spending.

Conduit is custom-built for the contemporary horror landscape. While its uncompromising bleakness might alienate the casual, popcorn-munching multiplex crowd looking for cheap jump-scares, it is a goldmine for audiences who championed films like *Hereditary*, *Talk to Me*, and *Smile*.

Audience Accessibility Scorecard

- **Genre/Subgenre Audience (Horror/Thriller Fans): 10/10** – Delivers fresh, terrifying mechanics anchored by genuine stakes.
- **Elevated Horror Audience: 9.5/10** – The heavy focus on grief as a supernatural vector aligns perfectly with the A24/Neon demographic.
- **Art-House Audience: 8/10** – Visually ambitious enough to command respect at prestigious festivals.
- **General/Mainstream Audience: 5/10** – The tragic, deeply unhappy ending will likely polarize casual moviegoers.

Strongest Audience Segments

1. Elevated Horror Enthusiasts (A24/Neon/MUBI core)

2. Gen Z/Millennial Indie Thriller Fans
3. International Genre Festival Crowds (Sundance Midnight / SXSW / Fantasia)

K. Cultural & Market Sensitivity

What this analysis helps with: This section flags potential public relations risks, trigger warnings, or international censorship hurdles that could impact global distribution.

- **(a) Offensive Elements:** The script's unflinching portrayal of maternal suicide and the subsequent manipulation of that trauma by a demon could be highly triggering for audiences sensitive to mental health issues.
- **(b) Controversial Elements:** The graphic nature of Toby's self-harm under possession must be handled with immense directorial tact. To avoid accusations of exploiting teenage mental health crises, the visual emphasis must remain firmly on the supernatural horror element rather than realistic self-harm aesthetics. Some conservative international territories (e.g., parts of East Asia or the Middle East) may require cuts to the occult/possession mechanics for theatrical release.

L. Merchandising & Licensing Potential

What this analysis helps with: This section identifies secondary revenue streams and ancillary branding opportunities to expand the film's financial footprint.

Obvious Ideas

- **Replica Obsidian Mirrors:** High-end, stylized prop replicas sold through boutique outlets like A24's web store.
- **Apparel Line:** Streetwear utilizing the distinct, minimalist occult iconography carved into the back of the mirror frame.
- **Vinyl Soundtrack:** A release of the film's moody, atmospheric electronic/sub-bass score, complete with custom gatefold artwork of the fractured mirror.

Unusual Ideas

- **"The 60-Second Challenge" Party Card Game:** A safely packaged, psychological party game themed around urban legends and secrets, leaning into the viral nature of the script's core hook.
- **AR Mobile App Filter:** A promotional social media filter that mimics the terrifying, inky-black eye distortion and background reality-warping experienced by the possessed characters in the film.

M. Strategic Sponsorship

What this analysis helps with: This section identifies organic, non-intrusive brand integration opportunities to offset production costs without breaking audience immersion.

In-Scene Integration

- **Smartphones & Tech:** The characters constantly film their mirror sessions. Partnering with a premium mobile brand (e.g., Apple or Google Pixel) to feature their latest hardware showcases high-quality, low-light video capabilities organically.
- **Lifestyle & Streetwear:** The teenagers' wardrobe presents a prime opportunity for placements from trendy, youth-centric brands (e.g., Carhartt WIP, Supreme, or Stüssy).
- **Beverages:** Organic inclusion of popular energy drinks, hard seltzers, or craft sodas at the house party scenes.

Ideal Sponsors

Boutique hardware manufacturers, trendy clothing labels, and beverage brands looking to align themselves with an edgy, counter-cultural, and highly stylized piece of cinema.

N. Formatting & Technical Structure

What this analysis helps with: This section ensures the script meets professional industry presentation standards before being sent to talent, agents, or underwriters.

- **Format & Layout:** Industry standard. Sluglines are crisp, action blocks are kept under four lines for rapid readability, and page margins are perfectly calibrated.
- **Consistency:** Character names and locations remain absolutely consistent throughout the text. There are no dangling threads or orphaned scene headings.
- **Page Count: 95 pages.** This is the absolute sweet spot for an independent psychological horror film, implying a tight, efficient 95-minute theatrical runtime that maximizes theater turnover.
- **Grammar & Spelling:** Exceptional. Action verbs are sharp and evocative. The dialogue includes deliberate, colloquial text-speak and slang ("gonna," "finna," "ghosted"), which are clearly intentional idioms reflecting contemporary youth culture, not technical errors.

O. Greenlight Assessment

What this analysis helps with: This section delivers the final, definitive executive decision regarding financial investment and production viability at this development stage.

Studio Budget: DO NOT RECOMMEND

Legacy major studios require broad, four-quadrant appeal, franchise potential, and crowd-pleasing, optimistic resolutions to justify their massive overhead and marketing expenditures. *Conduit* refuses to compromise its bleak, psychological trajectory; its tragic ending and heavy themes of suicide make it a massive risk for a traditional studio model.

Note: This "Do Not Recommend" is strictly a reflection of legacy studio risk aversion and does not imply any negative judgment about the exceptional artistic quality, concept, or execution of the script.

Independent Budget: RECOMMEND

This script is an absolute dream for an independent production company specializing in premium genre content. It is a tightly wound, highly contained, emotionally explosive thriller that delivers maximum cinematic impact for a modest, controlled budget. The market demand for elevated horror has never been higher, making this an incredibly viable project to package, finance, and sell on the festival circuit. The narrative requires no structural re-writes—only a light creative polish to prepare for director attachment.

Further Suggestions

Given the immense strength of this draft, the writer is highly encouraged to consult with an IPG Producer or Script Consultant to transition this project into active pre-production.

Because the script is structurally sound and ready for casting, a development consultation would be best utilized to build a comprehensive **Proof-of-Concept Strategy**. A consultant can assist in selecting a key 3-page sequence (ideally the initial mirror party scene) to shoot as a short, which will serve as an undeniable visual calling card for financiers. Furthermore, collaborating with an IPG Line Producer at this stage will allow for the creation of a realistic line-item budget and a specialized practical SFX breakdown, ensuring that when the script is pitched to premier indie distributors, it is presented as a fully realized, turn-key package ready for greenlight.

Produced by the Independent Producers Guild, and contact:
services@independentproducersguild.org