

CHARACTER/DIALOGUE INTENSIVE

The two main characters could use development in their relationship. At the moment their relationship is fairly one note, which is a shame because there is vast potential for their relationship to be a rollercoaster of emotions. They could start as strangers, get to know each other after the murder, which then leads them to being enemies. Then, after they butt heads in the second act, they could form an alliance because that's the only way either one is escaping. This would ultimately lead to the double cross when they turn on each other.

Because this story is focused almost solely on these two characters, it's their relationship, and its twists and turns, which will drive everything forward. Currently, their relationship changes very little until the 3rd act, and by that time the audience has become tired of their interactions. Even though horrible and dramatic events are happening around them (events we don't actually see on screen), they keep having the same conversation over and over again with different phrasing. There is the potential here for ups and downs, twists and turns, etc. Sometimes they should work together, sometimes they should fight, and sometimes they should only pretend to get along. This will provide your main characters with more depth, as characters disagreeing with each other provides more information than when they only agree.

The dialogue is already good, and is quite functional considering they don't do, or move around, a lot. This is one of the stronger aspects of the story and it's impressive that none of the dialogue felt forced considering how much of it there was. However, having said that, the dialogue only hints at what kind of people your characters are and doesn't really elevate higher than that. It's hard to add subtext when the characters feel single layered. When you have characters with no clear goals who are on the same team for the majority of the film, we don't get to see them try to manipulate each other enough to allow the dialogue to shine through. The dialogue that is there is strong, but still too repetitive in context and tone. Currently, the dialogue is as good as the story/characters allows it to be. This should not be the main focus of the initial rewrites. Get the other parts working, and the dialogue should fall into place naturally.

As mentioned earlier, the core of this story is the relationship between the two main characters. Therefore, they should clash in (at least) one major character trait. You could start by making them drastically different in regards to their pasts: a racist and a black man, a rapist and a father, a homosexual and a bigot, or something of that nature. Give them pasts that will automatically create conflict and half of the work will be done for you. Think of last two people on earth who would want to be cuffed together, and then use that as the jumping off point. This will not only give you conflict, drama, tension, and deep characters, but will also allow you to create character arcs as they should learn from each other as well. They start out as polar opposites, but through their trials and tribulations they rub off on each other and by the end of the story they've both become better people. Think of buddy-cop movies like LETHAL WEAPON. They didn't just

combine two random cops; they had the reckless, insane, suicidal cop teamed up with the tired old guy who plays it too safe to the point where he was afraid to live. By being paired up, and given a common goal, by the end of the story they've learned from each other and both become more well-rounded people.

There's not a lot to say about the minor characters because there aren't many. That's not a bad thing, but it does put more pressure on your main characters to carry the story. Prisoner #1 was good, and serves his purpose in the story. However, Prisoner #2 still needs work. It works great that we don't know their names, because their names are not important, but they are in the story just long enough that they could use more depth. Prisoner #2 never showed us who she really was, and she never showed us anything more than the obvious. She's a young woman who works with her father. That's uneventful. Like the main characters, give her some other traits. What are her interests, and how can those traits make this story more interesting? A crying young woman locked in the closet doing nothing is too easy on the main characters. Although it is true for most stories, it is especially true for a script of this nature: every character should offer a complication and/or an opportunity. At the moment she's barely a complication. If your main characters aren't going to try to save her, then it is tough to care about them. Instead of killing her, maybe the shot could go wide. At this point they could think she is going to help, but in fact she becomes another complication to the situation. She could have ulterior motives, or simply be so selfish that when she is offered the chance at freedom, she takes it, leaving them behind despite the fact that saving her cost them their own escape. That is a simple solution, but hopefully it gets you started down the right path.

Remember to never make things easy on your characters. If a complication could happen, it should happen. This will allow your audience to experience these characters in all different kinds of circumstances, which will in turn make them more three dimensional. A simple and clean story with a minimal number of characters is great, but it could use more complications. More depth to your characters will be a big step in the right direction.