Name

Intro to TV Writing

Drama Assignment

Date

Program Title: The Cure

Program One Liner: In the near future, a virus ravages humankind.

Series Synopsis: My program is an original concept for a sci-fi drama about a medical researcher who discovers the cure for a deadly disease but is threatened by a sinister pharmaceutical company that makes money selling expensive lifelong treatments.

The Epivirus is a deadly virus that is spreading throughout the world. Victims of the Epivirus suffer from a weakened immune system that causes them to slowly deteriorate and die. The virus has an extremely high mortality rate and the medicine to treat it is very expensive.

David is a medical researcher who works for Magna Pharmaceuticals, the leading pharmaceutical company in the world. David’s job is to research the Epivirus and to develop treatments for it. While doing this, David discovers what he believes could be a cure for the disease. After the company executives force David to terminate his findings and threaten him, David goes into hiding to finish his research in secret with the help of a journalist, Nora, and another Magna researcher, Steve.

Throughout the series, David must continue his research with stolen equipment while contracting the Epivirus himself. Meanwhile, Nora uncovers more secrets about Magna Pharmaceuticals. Steve helps both of them while simultaneously hiding his motives from the Magna executives.

Characters:

* David Martel: a gifted medical researcher at the Magna Pharmaceuticals Research Facility. He has spent the past 12 years researching the Epivirus. He is extremely passionate about his research, and he considers his research to be his life.
* Mark Hoffman: David’s research partner. Because he has spent so much time in the lab with David, Mark is also his best friend. Whereas David is motivated in his research by the thought of helping others, Mark is more focused on the fame and prestige that would come with finding a cure.
* Mr. Johnson: the CEO of Magna Pharmaceuticals. He has a business-first mentality.
* Leo: Mr. Johnson’s assistant. He is mysterious, stoic man who follows Mr. Johnson everywhere. Eventually it will be revealed that Leo made a deal with Mr. Johnson to work for him in exchange for treatment for his dying younger sister.
* Nora Diaz: A reporter for News Daily. Nora is stuck reporting celebrity news and feels unfulfilled because she became a journalist to report on important news. She approaches David for a story about the lab. Eventually, David will tell Nora about Johnson’s corruption and convinces her to help him continue and publish his research. Eventually, she becomes David’s love interest.
* Steve: Nora’s old acquaintance from college. He is hired at Magna Pharmaceuticals as a replacement researcher and acts as Nora’s inside source for her report. He helps David by stealing supplies. Steve is another possible love interest for Nora.

Pilot: Up in Flames

Episode One Liner: A researcher must go into hiding to fight a virus that ravages humankind.

Plot A: A medical research lab is mysteriously set ablaze after a researcher discovers a possible cure for the Epivirus.

Plot B: At News Daily, Nora struggles to convince her boss to let her cover non-celebrity news.

Act I

* News organizations from all over the world are reporting massive death tolls for victims of the Epivirus. More people are diagnosed with the disease every day. Meanwhile, the price of medicine is steadily increasing. After the reports on the Epivirus are over, Nora comes on with celebrity news.
* Meanwhile, David and Mark prepare for a meeting with the top executives at Magna Pharmaceuticals. They believe that they have discovered a possible cure for the Epivirus.
* David and Mark attend the meeting to unveil their breakthrough. During the presentation, David explains how their cure could save the lives of millions and completely eradicate the virus in future generations.
* After the presentation, Mr. Johnson approaches David to tell him that although his research is impressive, it would be better to ignore it due to the state of the pharmaceutical industry. Mr. Johnson assures David that it would be in his best interest to honor the nondisclosure agreement he signed and offers him a big promotion. Meanwhile, Mark leaves the meeting early to head back to the lab.
* Nora’s boss praises her for a great show and says that she is the #1 trusted source for all the latest celebrity news. Nora says that she would like to move on to bigger stories, but her boss insists that she stay with entertainment news, which is an important diversion for everyone who is in despair about the current world affairs.

Act II

* David heads back to the lab to meet with Mark, but when he drives up he sees that the building is on fire. The Fire Marshall tells David that Mark has died in the fire. David is crushed by this news.
* Nora goes to the scene of the fire in an effort to make a report on it. She tries to talk to various people at the scene such as policemen, firefighters, and workers but all of the other reporters got to them first. She overhears David talking to the Fire Marshall.

Act III- The Next Day

* David makes a meeting with Mr. Johnson and accuses him of ordering Leo to set the fire. Mr. Johnson does not admit that he set the fire, but he does not deny it either. Mr. Johnson repeats his offer for a promotion as supervisor. That way, David would be doing mostly paperwork instead of conducting active research. David declines and vows to tell the world about Johnson’s corruption.
* News reports say the fire was a freak accident caused by equipment that overheated.
* Nora goes back to her boss with the notes she collected from eavesdropping on David. Her notes are very vague since she only heard bits and pieces of the conversation. Her boss says that this is not enough of a story and tells her to go back to entertainment news.

Act IV

* David leaves Mr. Johnson’s office building and is stopped by Nora. Nora says that she wants to further investigate the fire. Nora tells him that she overheard what he told the Fire Marshall the night before and that she wants to help him find out the real reason the fire broke out.
* David tells Nora everything about Johnson’s corruption and about how the fire was likely rigged. Nora says that she needs to publish this story right away. David stops her, saying that if she publishes the story now, Johnson will kill both of them and the cure will never reach the public.
* Nora agrees to help David continue his research in order to find the cure. She also agrees because she believes that she can sell the story to a national news agency and become a real journalist.
* David begins to show symptoms of the Epivirus.

THE CURE

“Up in Flames”

Written by Gilda McCrann

Act One

Scene Five

INT. MAGNA PHARMACEUTICALS CONFERENCE ROOM

DAVID and MARK are alone in the conference room. A PowerPoint presentation is on the projector with the title card ‘Research Findings- A Possible Cure.’

DAVID

Johnson looked a little annoyed.

MARK

He’s always been hard to read.

MARK turns off the projector.

DAVID

Why don’t you head over to lab? I can finish packing up.

MARK

Alright. See you later.

MARK exits. As DAVID continues packing, MR. JOHNSON walks in.

DAVID

Oh, Mr. Johnson. What did you think of the presentation?

MR. JOHNSON

David, do you remember why I hired you at Magna Pharmaceuticals?

DAVID

Yes, sir. You hired me as a researcher to develop treatments for the Epivirus.

MR. JOHNSON

Exactly. Treatments. The board doesn’t believe that a complete cure is viable at this time.

DAVID

My research suggests otherwise.

MR. JOHNSON

Your research is expensive and is taking up resources that the board believes can be put to better use.

DAVID

Better use?

MR. JOHNSON

You know the U.S. economy right now relies mostly on pharmaceuticals. If this industry goes down, the whole country goes down with it.

DAVID

The world is already going down.

MR. JOHNSON

You’re not looking at the big picture. We’ve got to keep the country going economically…

DAVID

I don’t agree.

MR. JOHNSON

David, the board asked me to remind you that you signed a nondisclosure agreement. Also, and here’s the good news, you’re in line for a big promotion.

DAVID

But…

MR. JOHNSON

Be smart about this, David. Nice presentation, by the way.

MR. JOHNSON leaves DAVID in the conference room alone.