

The Conjuring

Written by Hayes Brothers

FIRST-LOOK SCORE: 8.3 / 10

Genre: Horror, Supernatural Thriller, True Story

Comparable Titles: The Exorcist, Insidious, Paranormal Activity, The Amityville Horror

Tags: Chilling, Intense, Dramatic, True Story, Superpowers, Investigative, Thrill ride, Dark comedy, Heartfelt, Courage, Conflict, Character-driven, Edge of your seat, Scandal, Survival

Logline

Based on true events, paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren confront a malevolent demonic force terrorizing the Perron family in their haunted farmhouse, risking everything to save them from a deadly supernatural possession.

Summary

The Conjuring follows the Warrens, a married couple who are renowned demonologists, as they investigate the terrifying haunting experienced by the Perron family. The story unfolds through a mix of interviews, supernatural encounters, and escalating horror as the Warrens uncover the dark history of the Perron house, including a witch's suicide and a series of tragic deaths. The Warrens' faith, expertise, and courage are tested as they battle a powerful demonic entity that possesses Carolyn Perron, threatening the lives of her children and family.

The screenplay balances chilling supernatural horror with heartfelt family drama, emphasizing the Warrens' determination and the Perrons' vulnerability. The narrative builds tension through atmospheric scenes such as the cellar confrontations, the possession sequences, and the exorcism preparations, culminating in a harrowing climax that blends faith and fear. The script also includes moments of levity and human connection, particularly in the Warrens' interactions and the family dynamics, grounding the horror in emotional reality.

1. STORY STRUCTURE — 8.1 / 10

Strengths:

- The screenplay follows a clear three-act structure with a strong setup, escalating conflict, and a climactic resolution centered on the exorcism and family salvation.
- Effective use of pacing, with tension rising steadily through supernatural incidents and investigative discoveries, such as the cellar exploration and the possession scenes.
- Interweaving of interview-style flashbacks and present-day action provides narrative variety and deepens the mystery.

Areas for Improvement:

- Some scenes, like the lecture hall Q&A and technical setup sequences, slow the momentum and could be tightened to maintain suspense.
- The transition between the Warrens' investigation and the Perron family's ordeal occasionally feels episodic rather than seamlessly integrated.

Suggested Improvements:

- Condense the university lecture scene by focusing on key exposition to keep the pace brisk and maintain tension.
- Enhance transitions by linking the Warrens' discoveries more directly to the Perrons' escalating terror, perhaps through parallel editing or stronger cause-effect sequences.

2. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT — 8.2 / 10

Strengths:

- Ed and Lorraine Warren are well-drawn as a devoted, complementary team balancing faith and skepticism, with Lorraine's clairvoyance adding depth.
- Carolyn Perron's gradual possession arc is compelling, showing vulnerability and terror that evoke empathy.
- Supporting characters like Roger and the Perron children have distinct traits that enrich the family dynamic.

Areas for Improvement:

- Some secondary characters, such as the medium and Father Jordon, feel underdeveloped and serve mostly as plot devices.
- The emotional stakes for the Perron children could be heightened with more individual moments to personalize their fear and resilience.

Suggested Improvements:

- Expand brief scenes with Father Jordon and the medium to reveal their motivations or doubts, adding complexity.
- Add intimate scenes focusing on one or two Perron children's reactions to the haunting to deepen audience connection.

3. DIALOGUE QUALITY — 7.9 / 10

Strengths:

- Dialogue is naturalistic and often reveals character, especially in the Warrens' exchanges and family interactions.
- Expository dialogue is generally handled well, avoiding heavy-handedness by embedding information in character-driven conversations.

Areas for Improvement:

- Some lines, particularly in technical or investigative scenes (e.g., Ed explaining equipment), can feel a bit on-the-nose or overly explanatory.
- Occasional clichés in horror dialogue, such as "You did good" or "Still feel like quitting?" could be freshened for originality.

Suggested Improvements:

- Rewrite technical dialogue to be more succinct and character-specific, perhaps using subtext or visual storytelling to reduce exposition.
- Replace cliché lines with more nuanced or emotionally resonant alternatives that reflect character growth or tension.

4. INNOVATION & ORIGINALITY — 7.8 / 10

Strengths:

- The script's grounding in true events and the Warrens' real-life investigations adds authenticity and intrigue.
- Use of documentary-style interviews and super-8 footage is a creative narrative device that enhances realism.

Areas for Improvement:

- The haunted house and possession tropes are familiar; the script could push originality by deepening the mythology or exploring less conventional supernatural elements.

Suggested Improvements:

- Introduce unique lore or symbolic motifs related to the witch's history or the demonic entity to differentiate from typical possession stories.
- Experiment with non-linear storytelling or unreliable perspectives to heighten mystery and originality.

5. PLOT CLARITY — 8.4 / 10

Strengths:

- The narrative is generally clear, with well-defined goals and stakes: the Warrens must save the Perron family from demonic possession.
- Supernatural rules and the Warrens' investigative process are explained logically, aiding audience understanding.

Areas for Improvement:

- Some sequences, such as the cellar rope incident and the witch's backstory, could be more explicitly connected to the main plot to avoid confusion.

Suggested Improvements:

- Clarify the significance of the witch's suicide and its link to the haunting through dialogue or visual flashbacks.
 - Use recurring symbols or motifs to reinforce plot points and maintain narrative cohesion.
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6. EMOTIONAL RESONANCE — 8.1 / 10

Strengths:

- The family's terror and the Warrens' dedication create a strong emotional core that grounds the horror.
- Moments of vulnerability, such as Carolyn's possession and the children's fear, evoke genuine empathy.

Standout Moment: The cellar confrontation where Carolyn's possession manifests physically, and the family's desperate struggle to save her, is a powerful emotional and suspenseful highlight.

Areas for Improvement:

- Some emotional beats could be deepened, especially the Warrens' personal stakes and fears.

Suggested Improvements:

- Include brief scenes or dialogue revealing the Warrens' internal conflicts or past losses to heighten emotional investment.
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7. THEMATIC DEPTH — 7.7 / 10

Strengths:

- The screenplay explores themes of faith versus evil, the power of belief, and the resilience of family under supernatural threat.
- The Warrens' reliance on faith and knowledge contrasts with the darkness they confront, adding thematic weight.

Areas for Improvement:

- The script could more explicitly engage with themes of trauma, forgiveness, or the nature of evil beyond the surface level.

Suggested Improvements:

- Develop Carolyn's character arc to include themes of maternal sacrifice and redemption.
 - Use symbolic imagery or dialogue to deepen the exploration of faith and doubt.
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8. CINEMATIC EXECUTION — 8.5 / 10

Strengths:

- Strong visual descriptions create a vivid, atmospheric setting, especially in the cellar, haunted house, and possession scenes.
- Effective use of sound cues, lighting, and supernatural effects enhance the cinematic tension.

Areas for Improvement:

- Some action sequences could benefit from tighter choreography and clearer spatial orientation.

Suggested Improvements:

- Refine action descriptions during possession struggles to ensure clarity and impact on screen.
- Incorporate more sensory details (smells, tactile sensations) to heighten immersion.

9. COMPARISON TO SIMILAR PROJECTS

TITLE	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	SCORE
The Exorcist	Groundbreaking horror, deep thematic exploration, iconic characters	Some pacing issues in middle act	9.5
Insidious	Strong atmosphere, innovative supernatural elements, emotional family story	Occasional plot convenience	8.7
Paranormal Activity	Minimalist style, effective tension, found footage realism	Limited character development	7.9
The Conjuring (this script)	True story basis, strong character work, cinematic tension	Some pacing and originality issues	8.3

10. SWOT ANALYSIS

- **Strengths:** Authentic true story foundation; compelling lead characters; strong atmospheric horror; emotional family stakes.
- **Weaknesses:** Some pacing lulls; familiar horror tropes; underdeveloped secondary characters; occasional exposition-heavy dialogue.
- **Opportunities:** Potential for franchise expansion; appeal to horror and true crime audiences; strong visual and thematic material for cinematic adaptation.
- **Threats:** Saturated haunted house genre; risk of cliché; audience fatigue with possession narratives.

11. MARKETABILITY

The Conjuring screenplay has strong commercial appeal due to its basis on well-known paranormal investigations and the popularity of supernatural horror. The Warrens as characters have proven audience recognition and franchise potential. The script’s blend of true story elements with intense horror makes it attractive for both mainstream and genre fans.

Comparable Successes: The Conjuring film series, Insidious franchise, Paranormal Activity series, The Exorcist (classic).

12. FRANCHISE & IP POTENTIAL

The Warrens' ongoing investigations provide a rich universe for sequels, spin-offs, and expanded media. The script's true story foundation and recurring characters offer strong IP value. Developing unique supernatural cases and deepening character backstories could support a lasting franchise.

Character Breakdown

Ed Warren: Experienced demonologist, pragmatic and faithful, husband to Lorraine.

Lorraine Warren: Clairvoyant and spiritual medium, deeply intuitive and emotionally strong.

Carolyn Perron: Mother possessed by a demonic force, central to the haunting's emotional impact.

Roger Perron: Patriarch, protective and determined to save his family.

Andrea, Christine, Nancy, April, Cindy: Perron children, each with distinct personalities and reactions to the haunting.

Jerome Davis: Technical assistant to the Warrens, handles equipment and recordings.

Father Jordon: Church liaison, cautious and bureaucratic.

Father O'Malley (Archbishop): Authority figure reluctant to intervene.

Medium: Mysterious woman who initially contacts the Perrons about the spirit.

Location Breakdown

Perron Family House: Large farmhouse with cellar, main site of haunting and possession.

University Lecture Hall: Where the Warrens present their findings and interact with students.

Church and Archbishop's Office: Site of ecclesiastical authority and exorcism discussions.

Various interiors: Including living room, kitchen, bedrooms, cellar, and barn.

Woods and Cemetery: Nearby outdoor locations revealing the witch's grave and supernatural history.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Tighten pacing by condensing or trimming scenes with heavy exposition, such as the university lecture and technical setup, to maintain suspense.
2. Deepen secondary characters like Father Jordon and the medium with brief moments revealing their doubts or personal stakes.
3. Enhance emotional resonance by adding intimate scenes focusing on individual Perron children's experiences and fears.
4. Refresh dialogue by replacing clichés with more nuanced, character-driven lines, especially during key emotional beats.
5. Introduce unique supernatural lore or symbolic motifs connected to the witch's history to elevate originality.
6. Clarify plot connections by explicitly linking the witch's backstory and cellar incidents to the main possession narrative.
7. Expand the Warrens' personal stakes with brief scenes or dialogue revealing their internal conflicts or past losses.

8. Refine cinematic action descriptions for clarity and impact, particularly during possession struggles and exorcism sequences.

9. Utilize sensory details beyond visuals and sound to immerse the audience more fully in the haunted environment.

This screenplay demonstrates strong professional quality with a compelling true story foundation and effective horror elements. With focused refinement in pacing, character depth, and originality, it is well-positioned for market success and franchise potential.

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