

A MOTIVATED MAN

BIOPIC/HISTORICAL DRAMA FEATURE LENGTH SCREENPLAY
(PG-13)

A MOTIVATED MAN is a biopic/historical drama about Fritz Haber, a brilliant chemist with a complex life and legacy. In his lifetime Fritz made two separate discoveries that had lasting impact on humanity. The first was a process that led to modern fertilizer, eradicating famines across the world. But Fritz's second "contribution" was the first modern chemical weapon: chlorine gas.

Fritz was also born Jewish but converted to Lutheranism at a young age. He actively avoided his Jewish heritage, driving him to extreme nationalism. The script explores how Fritz's love of country was closer to hatred for self -- something his wife, Clara, and close friend Albert Einstein tried to disabuse him of. Failing to do so is what led him to use his genius, helping Germany win World War I by any means necessary.

This scene takes place years after his work in WWI has made an aged Fritz a pariah living in Sweden. A rising political party that is actively restoring Germany's glory invites Fritz back to Berlin. Inspired by their mission, Fritz agrees to help them by fulfilling a simple request -- provide a list containing the names of his Jewish colleagues. However, a crushing reality dawns upon meeting the party's leader, Adolf Hitler.

This scene demonstrates my ability to write a dramatic, dialogue driven scene that initiates a three-act story structure's "Dark Night of the Soul".

NOTABLE AWARDS:

SLOAN SCIENCE & FILM SCREENWRITING GRANT

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL SCREENWRITING COMPETITION SEMI-FINALIST

MOTION PICTURE ACADEMY NICHOLL FELLOWSHIP SEMI-FINALIST

EXT. NATIONAL GERMAN WORKER'S PARTY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A Mercedes glides to a stop in front of an Alabaster building. The driver exits and helps Fritz out of the car.

Fritz is taken by the building's grandeur. It's objectively beautiful. Fritz takes a confident breath as proceeds to the headquarters' double doors.

PRELAP: The ECHO OF BOOTS walking across a wood panel floor.

INT. NATIONAL GERMAN WORKER'S PARTY HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Fritz walks down a hallway adorned with Nazi symbols of power: the eagle, the thunderbolt... Fritz's eyes wander from one to the next.

DIETRICH (O.S.)

Do you have the list?

Fritz is startled by Dietrich's approach. He chuckles as he digs it from his coat pocket.

FRITZ

Ah, Dietrich. Yes, of course. I apologize in advance for the poor penmanship. My fingers tend to ache when I write for too long.

Dietrich takes the folio from Fritz, leafs through the pages.

DIETRICH

No need for apologies, Herr Doctor. Instead, I ask that you follow me. My superior would like to personally thank you for your help.

FRITZ

Oh, I would be honored.

DIETRICH

(smiling)

It is. Come.

Dietrich leads Fritz down the hallway toward a closed office door Flanked by dual flags bearing Nazi swastikas.

Dietrich opens the door for Fritz, gently pushes the old man inside. Dietrich smirks as he shuts the door, leaving while inspecting the list.

INT. HEADQUARTERS OFFICE - LATER

Unlike the rest of the building, the office is a sore sight cramped by an enormous desk cluttered with boxes of documents. Fritz sits before it, gazing at a map of Germany.

The door opens. ADOLF Hitler, recognizable but barely in his 40's, walks in. Instead of immediately greeting Fritz, he stands in the doorway, silently grinning at Fritz -- taking in the old man's frail form.

Uncomfortable, Fritz rises from his seat and offers his hand.

FRITZ

Hello, I am --

ADOLF

Fritz Haber. I know. I am Adolf Hitler.

Adolf whisks past Fritz without shaking his hand. He stands across the desk from an embarrassed Fritz.

ADOLF (CONT'D)

Sit down, my brother.

The statement turns Fritz's embarrassment into confusion.

ADOLF (CONT'D)

(off Fritz's look)

Brothers in arms! Like you, I served in the Great War. I fought in Ypres, in fact. Not long after your great victory.

Fritz warms a little, finally sits.

FRITZ

Yes, Ypres. That was a hard place.

ADOLF

Hard but transmutative. Like a hot forge. We men the raw ingots, the fires of war turning us to iron.

FRITZ

That is well put but the war was hard fought. It took much from me.

Adolf folds his arms, amused.

ADOLF

It did. I know. From my understanding you also gave quite generously. I have seen the many patents you created throughout the war. You were rather prolific.

FRITZ

The Kaiser requested I head numerous projects.

ADOLF

Except for chlorine gas. No one requested that creation, correct?

FRITZ

Correct. It was made independent of the government. But they --

ADOLF

Why would a university professor wish to be involved in military conflict?

FRITZ

(suddenly flustered)

We were at war. It was my duty, to the fatherland. My home.

ADOLF

Is that why you agreed to help us? You felt it your duty?

FRITZ

Well, yes. Dietrich explained to me your party's goals and dedication to restoring its glory. Your views align with my own so when he asked for my help. I would do more than write a simple list should you need of it.

(joking)

Perhaps take to the field, once more.

Adolf's eyes narrow on Fritz -- *A conclusion has been drawn.*

ADOLF

Very good. Because I do have another request except this one concerns your place in my new Germany.

FRITZ
I beg your pardon?

ADOLF
The fatherland stands at the dawn
of a new era, one that The National
Socialist German Worker's Party
will herald. Like mighty Alexander,
I will lead the German people on
this new path. The true Germans.

FRITZ
This sounds... erm... wonderful.

ADOLF
It is! But, what role would a man
like you play in this new Germany?

FRITZ
I believe I could be of use as a
science advisor.

Adolf sneers.

ADOLF
No.

FRITZ
No?

ADOLF
No.

Fritz is startled by the surety of Adolf's response.

FRITZ
Then. Militarily, perhaps?

ADOLF
You have no place in Germany,
Haber. It is no longer your home. I
would have you leave it forever.

FRITZ
Preposterous. What sort of request
is that?

ADOLF
Request? No. That is an order.

The fire rises in Fritz. Shades of the proud, motivated man.

FRITZ

What right do you have to order me?
I am a veteran of the Great War. I
was the head of Chemistry at the
Wilhelm Institute. I am --

ADOLF

An opportunistic fiend too proud to
mourn his dead wife.

Fritz bristles, hands tighten into trembling fists.

FRITZ

How dare you? I mourn my wife every
day! Were I a younger man I would --

ADOLF

You would be a Jew doing a poor
impersonation of a true German
soldier.

Fritz stares, utterly stunned. A cruel grin curls across
Adolf's lips.

ADOLF (CONT'D)

I, too, felt it was my duty to
fight for Germany. It gave me
purpose. Then you took it away from
me.

FRITZ

What?

ADOLF

My battles were in the field; not a
laboratory or over dinner with men
of high office. I bled beside
fellow Germans each and every day.
I was proud of what the war made me
-- a German soldier fighting for
the fatherland. I thought myself
brave, strong. Then I fought in
Ypres and the wind brought your
yellow devil into my trench and
into my lungs. That was the day I
learned fear.

Fritz's mouth moves but no words come out.

ADOLF (CONT'D)

I could not fight, I could not
scream, all I could do was claw at
my throat as I choked on my own
blood.

(MORE)

ADOLF (CONT'D)

Unlike so many of my friends, I survived but I was a changed man. A coward. But that is where our similarities end. I did not run from my shame, I confronted it. I used my mind to strip this wretch's control over me and doing so gave me purpose. Like I did for myself, I would purge the fatherland of the vile cancers that broke it. Now I command an army of my own.

FRITZ

I... I answered Germany's call.

ADOLF

Germany only calls out for true Germans. That's why, when I learned a German was responsible for creating such a cowardly weapon, I refused to believe it. It drove me to discover the truth. Lo and behold I was right. A German did not deny me my birthright. A Jew did. The two can never be one..

Adolf places a pistol on the table. Fritz trembles.

ADOLF (CONT'D)

Are you afraid?

Fritz manages a nod.

ADOLF (CONT'D)

Good.

Adolf raises the gun, points it at Fritz.

ADOLF (CONT'D)

Because were it not for your recent Nobel and the attention it brought, you would be in the forest with crows picking at the bullet I put in your heart. Instead I must settle for this... You are not welcome in my Germany, Haber. Leave today, never return. Should you decide otherwise, I will bring you such pain -- such fear -- that you will wish you took your own life like your dearest Clara.