

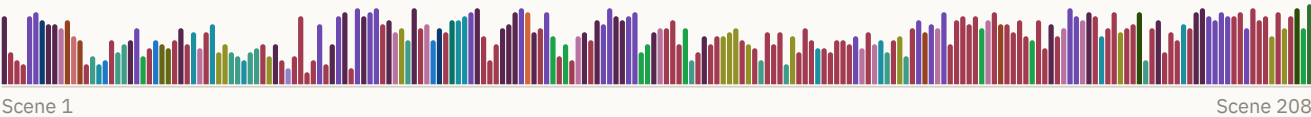
Screenplay diagnostic report

Nope (2022)

Detected genre: Sci-fi horror. Genre drift at scenes 38, 48 and 129.

Dread builds from a traumatic flashback through a slow-burn mystery on a horse ranch, then breaks into sci-fi horror when a predator in the sky swallows a theme-park crowd. OJ and Em's plan to film it leads to a showdown in which they reclaim the family legacy. It ends in exhausted triumph and wonder: OJ alive on Lucky, the photo of Jean Jacket developing.

At a glance: audience emotion, scene by scene



Tier

Feature

Instrument

1

Generated

21 July 2026

Instruments in this report

02  **Structure of Sympathy** Who the audience recognises, follows and roots for.

Example analysis of Nope (2022), screenplay by Jordan Peele. Shown for demonstration and commentary. It reads a finished film to show the format, so anything it flags may well be deliberate; on your own draft, treat each flag as a question.

Produced by The Narrative Laboratory, by Many Monkeys: manymonkeys.ai. The measures are the model's estimates, so they are given as bands (strong, moderate or weak; a fit reads strong, partial or weak fit) rather than scores. Scene numbers and counts are exact. An ochre rule in the margin marks what is worth a second look, an ochre underline a line the analysis flags; the notes for the next draft sit behind the same rule.

02 | Murray Smith | Interpretive

Structure of Sympathy

Is my protagonist compelling? Is the audience rooting for the people I want them to root for?

The audience roots most for OJ Haywood, Emerald Haywood and Angel Torres, least for Ricky 'Jupe' Park

Murray Smith's three levels of engagement. Recognition: the audience can pick the character out and remember them. Alignment: we follow the story at their side and get into their head. Allegiance: we are on their side. Each level is the model's estimate, given as a band.

Character	Recognition	Alignment	Allegiance	Knowledge
OJ Haywood Main point of view	■■■ Strong	■■■ Strong	■■■ Strong	Knows what we know
Emerald Haywood	■■■ Strong	■■■ Strong	■■■ Strong	Knows what we know
Ricky 'Jupe' Park	■■■ Strong	■■ Moderate	■ Weak	Knows less than us
Angel Torres	■■■ Moderate	■■■ Moderate	■■■ Strong	Knows what we know
Antlers Holst	■■■ Strong	■ Weak	■■ Moderate	Knows more than us

OJ is in more than two scenes in five and stays emotionally opaque throughout. The audience has to lean in to read him.

Sc. 76

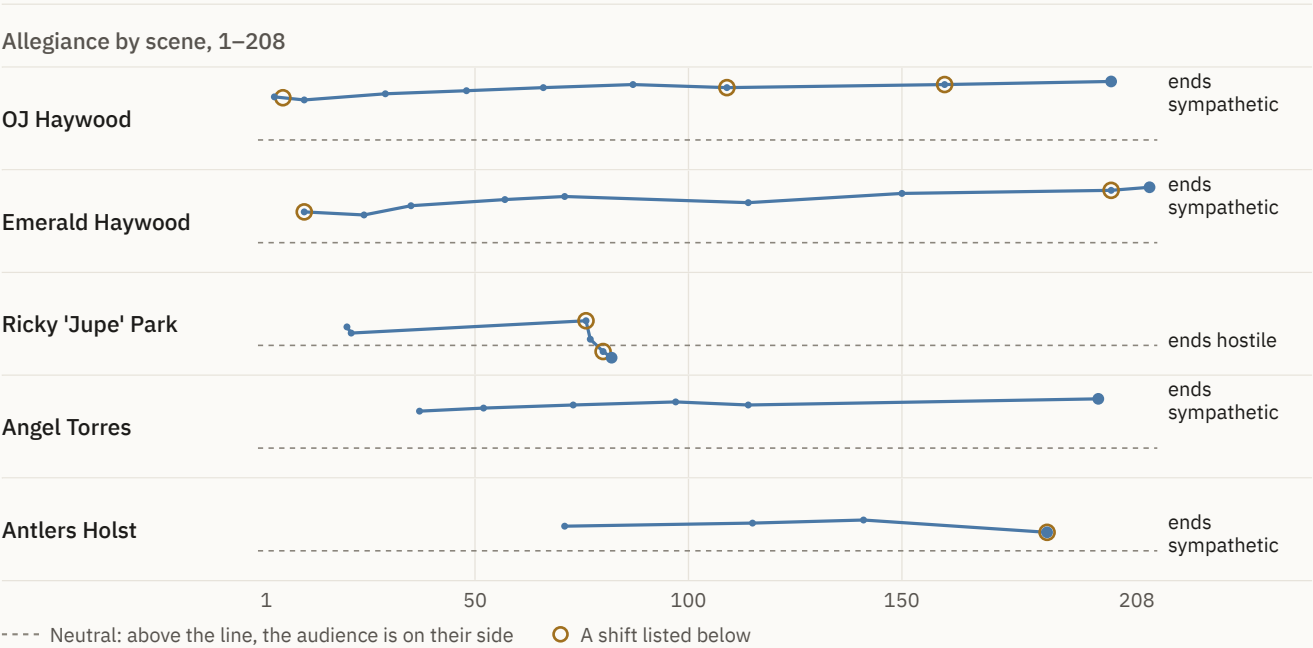
Sympathy for Jupe is never higher than in his flashback in scene 76, which is why his hubris four scenes later lands as tragedy.

Sc. 10

Allegiance moves from Emerald (scene 10) to OJ (109, 160) and back to her at 199. Their skills and flaws fit together, and the film runs on both.

Holst is the cautionary tale. His death follows directly from the film's central theme: spectacle destroys the people who chase it.

Emerald Haywood gains the most sympathy by the end; the audience turns against Ricky 'Jupe' Park



Sc. 5

OJ Haywood: sympathy rises sharply when a nickel falls from the sky and kills his father.

Sc. 10	Emerald Haywood: sympathy rises with her proud speech about her family's uncredited legacy. There is more to her than the flakiness.
Sc. 76	Sympathy for Jupe is highest in the Gordy flashback, where we see him as a traumatised child survivor.
Sc. 80	Ricky 'Jupe' Park: sympathy drops when the Star Lasso show turns deadly. Horses and people pay for his hubris.
Sc. 109	Sympathy surges when OJ works out the 'don't look' rule and saves Em and Angel.
Sc. 160	Sympathy rises again as OJ risks his life for the despicable TMZ reporter.
Sc. 184	Sympathy for Holst drops when he abandons the team for a suicidal pursuit of the 'impossible shot.'
Sc. 199	Sympathy for Emerald climbs highest when she gets past her fear and beats the creature with her own plan. Her arc from hustler to hero is complete.

Antlers Holst is seen only from the outside

OJ Haywood

OJ Haywood knows what the audience knows. Sympathy rises and ends sympathetic.

Presence **■■■ Strong** Point of view **■■■ Strong** Inner life **■■■ Moderate**

Recognition. Introduced with a quiet, stoic demeanour and one specific skill, horse training, that sets him apart from the start. His catchphrase 'Nope' and his stillness under pressure are what the audience remembers him by. The 'Scorpion King' hoodie, and later the reflective safety gear, give him a silhouette that is easy to pick out.

Alignment. We experience the father's death and the first UFO encounter almost entirely through his perspective. We learn that Jean Jacket is an animal, not a ship, at the moment he works it out, so our knowledge keeps pace with his. We never get inside his grief over Otis Sr. We see only the outward signs: selling the horses, the stoicism.

Allegiance. His father's sudden death, and then his struggle to keep the family ranch, settle the rooting interest early. His protective instincts toward Emerald, despite their friction, and his bravery in saving the Ryder cement his moral standing. At the end he gives up his own escape to draw Jean Jacket away from Em, the most selfless act in the film.

Six moral cues that shape how we judge OJ Haywood

- Tries to save his father after the nickel strike.
- Refuses to sell the ranch to Jupe despite financial ruin.
- Rushes to Jupiter's Claim to save Lucky.
- Risks his life to try and rescue the TMZ reporter (Ryder).
- Uses his knowledge of animal behaviour to outsmart Jean Jacket without violence.
- Sacrifices his own safety to draw the creature away from Emerald.

Emerald Haywood

Emerald Haywood knows what the audience knows. Sympathy rises and ends sympathetic.

Presence **■■■ Strong** Point of view **■■■ Moderate** Inner life **■■■ Moderate**

Recognition. She bursts in with a rapid-fire safety-meeting monologue. By the end of it we know she is a fast-talking hustler. Her eclectic skill set ('act, write, direct, internet, fashion, VFX, motorcycles') and the green sweater set her apart in look and behaviour. Her vape pen and slang sit hard against OJ's old-school stoicism.

Alignment. She tells her backstory with her father and Jean Jacket the horse in her own dialogue. That is how we reach her childhood trauma. We are aligned with her plan to get 'the Oprah shot,' and we understand what she wants from it: fame, and a way out. We share her fear and resolve in the final confrontation. Her move from self-interest to family loyalty, though, is shown in what she does, with no internal monologue.

Allegiance. Allegiance starts mixed because she is self-centred and flaky. Her love for her brother and for her father's legacy is what builds rooting interest. Her resourcefulness (stealing the decoy horse, sewing the parachute) makes

her capable and easy to like. At Jupiter's Claim she uses the well camera to defeat the creature, which completes her arc from talker to doer.

Six moral cues that shape how we judge Emerald Haywood

- Delivers a proud speech about her family's uncredited legacy in cinema.
- Returns to the ranch and stays to help OJ despite her initial desire to leave.
- Tries to save the TMZ reporter's life by warning him not to go into the valley.
- Devises the whole plan to capture proof of the creature. The victims take charge.
- Defeats Jean Jacket with her wits and the park's attractions.
- With the news crews arriving, her last act is to look for her brother.

Ricky 'Jupe' Park

Ricky 'Jupe' Park knows less than the audience. Sympathy falls and ends hostile.

Presence ■■■ Moderate Point of view ■■■ Weak Inner life ■■■ Moderate

Recognition. A former child star, recognisable at once, whose identity rests on one traumatic pop-culture moment ('Gordy's Home!'). His office, the 'Gordy Room,' is a shrine to his own spectacle. That one room makes him both memorable and tragic. His sales-pitch cadence and the 'finger gun' wink recur often enough to become signatures.

Alignment. Flashbacks put us inside his traumatic childhood memory, but the adult Jupe stays opaque and performed. The audience knows far more than he does about what the 'Viewers' really are. That is dramatic irony, and it puts us above him. His belief that he has a special, tameable relationship with the alien is never explained from his point of view. He comes across as deluded rather than sympathetic.

Allegiance. Early sympathy comes from what we know: as a child he survived Gordy's attack. Allegiance erodes as he sells that trauma, then drops further when he starts feeding horses to a creature he doesn't understand. By the Star Lasso Experience he is leading dozens of people to their deaths out of hubris. By the end the audience is against him.

Five moral cues that shape how we judge Ricky 'Jupe' Park

- Survives a horrific animal attack as a child.
- Exploits his own trauma by charging fans to sleep in his 'Gordy Room'.
- Buys OJ's horses under the pretense of a good home, then feeds them to the creature.
- Endangers his wife and children by involving them in the Star Lasso Experience.
- Ignores clear warning signs during the show and puts the spectacle ahead of his audience's safety.

Angel Torres

Angel Torres knows what the audience knows. Sympathy rises and ends sympathetic.

Presence ■■■ Moderate Point of view ■■■ Moderate Inner life ■■■ Moderate

Recognition. A heartbroken, slightly conspiracy-minded Fry's employee. His earnestness and tech skills make him stand out. His unrequited crush on Emerald and his 'Ancient Aliens' rants are specific and endearing. He is the 'civilian' tech support who gets in over his head, a type the audience knows on sight.

Alignment. His recent breakup and his beliefs about UFOs come out in direct dialogue, which is how we get to know him. We go through the blood rain scene inside his terror, and it is a fear anyone would share. Beyond his immediate reactions and dialogue, we see little of what he thinks.

Allegiance. He is likeable from the start: an underdog, helpful and curious, with no malice in him. His decision to spy on the cameras is a minor violation, but his quick commitment to helping the Haywoods solidifies him as a loyal ally. He survives attack after attack, and the audience wants him to make it out alive.

Five moral cues that shape how we judge Angel Torres

- Provides tech support and installation far beyond his job description.
- Warns Em when the camera goes down.
- Stays with Em through the blood rain attack and comforts her, though he is terrified himself.

- Helps execute the dangerous plan to capture Jean Jacket on film.
- Survives being pulled into the creature and lives to witness the finale.

Antlers Holst

Antlers Holst knows more than the audience. Sympathy holds until scene 141, then falls, but still ends sympathetic.

Presence ■■■ Moderate Point of view ■■■ Weak Inner life ■■■ Weak

Recognition. A famous, reclusive cinematographer with a custom hand-cranked film camera named 'Dorothy.' His cynical, poetic dialogue ('This dream you're chasing... that's the one you don't wake up from') sets him apart as a sage-like figure. He cares more about the 'impossible shot' than about staying alive, and that obsession defines him.

Alignment. He is almost entirely opaque; his motivations are only guessed at through his actions and cryptic pronouncements. The audience is aligned with the Haywoods' confusion and frustration at his final, suicidal decision. We have no access to his inner life: why he takes the pills, or what he wants beyond 'the shot'.

Allegiance. His expertise, and his willingness to join a dangerous mission, earn him early respect and some allegiance. Allegiance gets complicated when his suicidal pursuit of the shot puts the team and the mission at risk. His death is awe and frustration more than tragedy. He chooses the spectacle over his comrades.

Four moral cues that shape how we judge Antlers Holst

- Agrees to help the Haywoods with their project despite the danger.
- Brings his non-electrical camera, which the plan depends on.
- Abandons his post and the team's safety to get a closer shot for his own artistic satisfaction.
- His last choice serves his artistic ambition. It saves neither himself nor the team.

For the next draft

From Holst's death in scene 190 the story runs straight into the final action, and OJ and Em never stop long enough for the loss to register. Is that as much weight as you want his death to carry?

Jupe goes from trauma survivor to feeding horses to the creature, and the script never shows how he got there. Would his first encounter with it, on screen, make the turn feel earned?

Theory and terms

Recognition: How distinctly a character registers as an individuated person, with memorable traits and clear wants.

Alignment: How much the narration attaches us to a character: time spent with them and access to what they know and feel.

Allegiance: The audience's moral rooting: sympathy earned (or lost) through what the character does.

Knowledge position: Whether the audience knows the same as the character (aligned), more (superior, which gives suspense), or less (inferior, which gives mystery).

Further reading

[Murray Smith - Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema \(2nd ed.\)](#)

[Cohen \(2001\) Defining Identification: Audiences and Media Characters](#)

Where to look next

Other instruments in the lab.

Emotional Rhythm Strip

€8

What the audience feels, scene by scene.

Reads every scene for the emotions it gives the audience, and shows where the intensity builds, flattens or drifts from your genre.

manymonkeys.ai/tools/emotional-rhythm-strip

Character Topology

€17

Who actually holds your cast together.

Maps who shares scenes with whom, to show who holds the cast together and who sits at the edge.

manymonkeys.ai/tools/character-topology

Narrative Transportation

€7

Where the reader is pulled in, and where attention drifts.

Reads how firmly the script holds a reader, and flags the scenes where attention is likely to slip.

manymonkeys.ai/tools/narrative-transportation

Every instrument has a free example report on its tool page. The full gallery is at manymonkeys.ai.