

# TB WALT DISNEY/TOUCHSTONE PICTURES

Type of Material: Screenplay  
 Number of Pages: 116  
 Publisher/Year: .

Title: SAVING PRIVATE RYAN  
 Author: RODAT, ROBERT

Submitted by: MAYBANK, BAYARD

Draft:  
 Circa: 1944  
 Location: Occupied France  
 Genre: ACTION/DRAMA  
 Sub-Genre: WAR

Submitted to: ROS, JORDI

Analyst: MACLEOD, DON  
 Coverage Date: May 13, 1996

Elements:

**LOG LINE:**

A small squad of American soldiers venture into German held territory in order to rescue a young private. Inspired by a true story.

**SYNOPSIS:**

June 6, 1944. As American troops storm the beaches of Normandy, CAPTAIN JOHN MILLER, a hard-driving, tough-as-nails soldier who has won the Medal of Honor leads a daring assault against a German machine gun nest. At the very moment he and his men secure the beach, officials at the War Department in Washington learn that the Ryan family of Iowa have recently lost three sons, all of whom were killed in action. Realizing what a devastating impact this will have on the family, the brass issue an order stating that the fourth brother, PRIVATE JAMES RYAN, is to be given an honorary discharge and sent home. When it's learned that Ryan is serving with paratroopers who have dropped into the small town of Ramele, deep inside German held territory, Miller is ordered to retrieve him. Though less than pleased with this assignment, Miller nevertheless does as he is told and soon assembles a crack team of his best men. Much to his chagrin, however, his usual translator has been killed, so he is forced to enlist a bookish and hopelessly inexperienced Corporal by the name of UPHAM. With Upham fumbling along, Miller and his crew next commandeers a Jeep and head into the countryside. Surviving a mortar attack on the road to St. Mere, Miller radios in the location of a German artillery company, then orders his favorite sniper, a likeable country boy from Tennessee named JACKSON, to take out the German "spotter" who is causing the Allies so much trouble. Incredibly, Jackson manages to kill the spotter from a distance of 4200 yards. Ditching their Jeep, Miller and his men proceed on foot, then next attack a German machine gun nest. Sadly, their most optimistic comrade, WADE, is killed during the assault. Coldly putting Wade's death behind him, Miller refuses to let fear or grief dampen morale and orders his men to carry on. After spending a night in St. Mere, where the men while away the hours trying to guess what Miller did before the war -- Miller has never told anyone anything about his personal life -- the men proceed to Ramele. Passing a German tank company along the way, they make their way onto a bridge which is being held by Private Ryan and a handful of frightened paratroopers. When Miller passes on the bad news to Ryan and orders Ryan to accompany his squad back to the coast, however, Ryan flatly refuses. To leave now, he argues, would be to dishonor the memory of his fallen brothers. Moved, Miller and his men realize the kid is right, then decide to fight by his side. After launching a daring raid against a German position and making off with a heavy 88mm antitank gun, Miller and his men next fight off the first attack from the Germans. Sadly, Miller's trusted friend, SARGE, dies in the attack. Profoundly shaken, Miller opens up to his men and, for the first time, describes his home and family back in Pennsylvania. Come morning, he and his men brave a second attack. Though they manage to destroy four Tiger tanks, they pay a terrible price as Upham, Jackson and several paratroopers are killed. Just when it appears all is lost, however, they are saved by the arrival of a reinforcements. Determined to see their mission through, Miller and the surviving men in his squad escort Ryan back to the coast.

BUDGET      High      Medium      Low

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Idea			▲	
Story Line			▲	
Characterization			▲	
Dialogue			▲	
Setting/Production Values				

# TB

Analyst: MACLEOD, DON  
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Title: SAYING PRIVATE RYAN  
Author: RODAT, ROBERT

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COMMENT:

This is a professionally written but rather dated war story, the likes of which we haven't seen made in probably forty years. It's not often you find a script filled with such good old-fashioned heroism and larger-than-life derring-do. It's well done, for what it is, but it also seems jarringly out of synch with the times. Despite a few sobering moments in which key characters are killed, it still manages to glorify war and present it like some kind of grand adventure. The battle sequences are written with skill, but are fairly tame by today's standards. What's more, they're repetitious and predictable. By the time Miller and his men have survived their first few skirmishes, we've pretty much seen all there is to see. The same holds true for the characters, who are more than a little cliché. In fairness, some attempt is made to give them added dimension (before the climactic battle sequence, for example, Miller finally reveals a side to his character which is frightened and doubtful), but it's a case of too little, too late. These folks are quite simplistic, and never really amount to more than familiar clichés: the sassy New Yorker, the likeable country boy, the ever faithful Sergeant, the bookish egghead, etc.. The dialogue is often snappy, but aside from the profanity, it still sounds like an old-fashioned war flick. In short, the writing is competent, but anachronistic. It's a respectable script, but it's also a good thirty years too late.

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Script: PASS  
Writer: PASS

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