

UNCERTAIN EYES

Genre: Survival Drama • Coming-of-Age • True Story Setting: Fort Worth, Texas – 1975

Format: One Hour TV Screenplay

Logline:

After a catastrophic bicycle accident embeds a steel axle into a 15-year-old boy's skull, he endures a surreal, often darkly comic fight for survival through seizures and medical chaos — until one unexpected moment of clarity proves his mind is still intact.

Synopsis:

Fifteen-year-old Gary is a fearless daredevil whose world revolves around dirt-bike stunts with his friends. But a mechanical failure sends him flipping over the handlebars — and the bike's back axle penetrates his skull, embedding itself deep. Conscious, dazed, and bleeding, Gary is walked to a payphone where he calls for help.

What follows is a harrowing, darkly humorous true story that exposes the fragility of the human brain and the absurdity of 1970s emergency care. Taking him home first, Gary's mother sees the severity of the wound and goes into shock for days. At the ER, Doctors discover a piece of his brain tissue stuck to the Band-Aid she applied. He's left alone for hours, ordered to lie perfectly still so "the brains you have left won't leak out."

Hours later, renowned neurosurgeon Dr. Wheeler abandons an east coast vacation with his family to save him with emergency surgery. Gary wakes up *during* the operation, gurgling through an endotracheal tube and struggling during the delicate operation. They are forced to hold him still while they put him back under.

Recovery is worse. Gary suffers violent convulsions, double vision, gibberish speech, and repeated neurological crashes. Dr. Nogan gives his mother a brutal prognosis: less than a 10% chance of survival. Days pass with Gary in incoherent confusion — until a nurse's aide asks if he wants "orange juice," and Gary suddenly responds. It's the first clear sign his cognition is returning.

As he stabilizes, Gary learns the truth: part of his skull is gone forever, as is part of his brain, which is protected only by skin. He must wear a helmet at all times, sleep only on his right side, and never go underwater deeper than fifteen feet. A permanent PMMA cranial plate will be installed after months of healing. Without telling anyone why, he chooses a bright orange motorcycle helmet — because the moment he understood the words "orange juice," he knew he was going to live.

Why It's a Compelling Show:

- True story with extraordinary stakes.
- Tonally rich — balances terror, humanity, and dark humor without ever losing emotional grounding.
- Character-driven — Gary's perspective is intimate, cinematic, and deeply sympathetic.
- Awards-friendly — medical survival dramas with strong emotional arcs consistently resonate with audiences and festivals.
- Commercial appeal — blends *Stand By Me* innocence with *127 Hours* intensity, anchored by a unique, unforgettable hook.