

**OVERWHELMING  
DARKNESS**

**WHO REALLY DESERVES TO DIE?**

**A FEATURE FILM WRITTEN BY  
STEVEN A HART**

# LOGLINE

After accidentally killing a child murderer, a jaded crime reporter goes on a violent, bloody journey to rid her city of the criminals she's always despised. But what price must she pay as she starts to become the very thing she hates?



# SYNOPSIS

Jaded crime reporter JANE ABEL (30s) flees the scene after accidentally killing ADRIAN CAIN (30s), a sleazy biker who gets off with murdering a young girl. Days later, as Abel tries to tell her fiancée MIKE KENNEDY (30s) what she's done, they're attacked by a hitman, sent by CAESAR (40s), a powerful biker gang boss, and Cain's cousin. Mike's left fighting for his life. The hitman lies dead, his head smashed in by a crazed Abel. These incidents push Abel into a violent crusade to rid her city of the criminals she's written stories on, but never done anything else about. After killing Cain and the hitman, Abel goes after a PEDOPHILE (30s) connected to Caesar, believing she's finally doing the right thing, after killing the man and saving two young girls.

Abel's killing spree grabs the attention of the media, the public and the police. DETECTIVE HARRY POWELL (50s), an arrogant, sadistic cop, working the vigilante case, accidentally kills a prostitute, MARIA ESPOSITO (40s), then tries to cover it up by blaming the vigilante at a Police Press Conference. DETECTIVE JOSEPHINE HENDRY (30s), Powell's new rookie partner (and Abel's high-school friend) is convinced Powell is connected to the prostitute murder. Hendry investigates Powell's relationship with the prostitute, finding that she was more than just his snitch. As Powell gets more determined to catch the vigilante, Hendry starts to close in on Powell for the murder. Abel hears Mike has come out of his coma and rushes to the hospital. Riddled with guilt, Abel tells him what she's done. Horrified, Mike tells Abel to turn herself in, 'cause if she doesn't, he will. Abel leaves, feeling she's got nothing left to lose now. Caesar walks into Mike's room and executes him to send Abel a message.

Hendry tells her friend the terrible news about Mike and later when Abel's alone she holds her father's gun to her head. Seeing a MAN (40s) beating up his WIFE (40s) in the window of the building across the street, Abel drops the gun and rushes out to help the woman. She gains access to their building and quickly finds the couple's apartment. She pushes her way in, looking for the woman and is attacked by the man. They fight and Abel kills him, piercing his throat with a kitchen knife. Abel calls an ambulance and flees the scene yet again.

Hendry's pressured into meeting Caesar, who now holds all her gambling debts and is using them to extort information from her. She assures him Abel won't do anything about his execution of Mike, as Caesar now has all the power and control, as he knows that Abel killed Cain, the Hitman and his pedophile human trafficker.

Abel decides to go after Caesar, knowing he killed Mike. Powell goes to the scene of the wife beater's murder to question the wife. He looks out the window, and seeing Abel in the apartment opposite, finally clicks to what's gone on. Powell rushes to his car, just in time to see Abel driving off. He drives after her, as Detective Hendry follows him. When Abel gets to Caesar's bar to confront him, she takes a bloody beating. Luckily, she manages to get herself together just in time to catch the biker off guard and kill him with a large knife. Afterwards, Abel sees her blood covered face in the bar mirror and realises that she's gone too far and become the very thing she hates. As Abel flees the scene, Powell chases her into old freight train yards. Not far behind, Hendry follows Powell, now equipped with enough evidence to arrest him.

In the final confrontation, as Abel stands between two freight cars, Powell shoots her in the back. As Abel falls her gun goes off, shooting Powell in the chest. The train shudders to life, rolling down rusty tracks. Abel lies bleeding but smiles as her eyes close on the rising sun. Hendry goes to Powell now, thinking about killing him for murdering the prostitute and shooting Abel. But her conscience kicks in and she just can't do it. As uniformed COPS and EMTs arrive, Hendry holds up her shield, waving them over to attend to Powell.

# LOCATION



# LOCATION 1

Taking viewers on an emotional rollercoaster ride through careful location scouting that will bring out the intensity and grittiness of the story and also the city as a character in itself.





## LOCATION 2

Utilizing the dark, depraved and run down areas of a big nameless city will give the story the right atmosphere of loss and despair that is synonymous with a noir crime thriller.

# CHARACTER

## JANE ABEL - CRIME REPORTER

ACTORS:

**NICOLE BEHARIE**

ANTONIA THOMAS

JESSICA PARKER KENNEDY

Abel's passion for justice emanates out of the harrowing stories that she writes for the City Herald. But recently, she's been struggling to find anything positive or redeeming to say about the world. She's hit a huge turning point in her life and knows that she needs to act and do more than just write stories about the crime and depravity that ravages her city. But, she doesn't have a clue what that action looks like. Until she accidentally kills Adrian Cain, a child killer who got off with the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl, because his cousin, Caesar, the boss of a notorious biker gang, didn't give the jury and witnesses any other choice. Abel now believes that she finally has a chance to do the right thing and make a positive difference in this crime infested world. She sets off on a violent, bloody journey that takes her to terrible dark places, making her do things that she never thought she'd do. But will she be able to deal with the darkness starting to overwhelm her soul, or will this darkness be the thing that finally threatens her very existence.



GRAPHIC NOVEL CHARACTER DESIGN

# CHARACTER

## DETECTIVE HARRY POWELL

ACTORS:

**JOHN HAMM**

JEFFREY DEAN MORGAN

NATHAN FILLION

Powell is a big, intimidating cop with a real nasty side. He's the Law, so he believes he's untouchable. And this gives him the right to do anything he wants, no matter how bad. He's an authoritarian from the school of, 'Do as I say, not as I do!' He doesn't suffer fools and wouldn't think twice about beating the crap out of someone just because they looked at him the wrong way. He had an upbringing from hell, with a sadistic, disciplinarian mother and an absent father. They made him the man he is today. The poster boy for everything that's wrong with white America. He's rotten to the core and as 'Old School' as they come. He's a misogynist through and through, and his hatred towards strong women is focused on Abel, with just a shard left over for his new rookie partner, Detective Hendry. He's had several run-ins with Abel, mainly about her stories on police brutality and corruption, and his part in it, and he relishes the chance to bad mouth her and push her buttons whenever he can. He'd dearly like to do so much more, if he could get away with it. And, perhaps this time he will.



GRAPHIC NOVEL CHARACTER DESIGN

# CHARACTER

## CAESAR - BIKER GANG LEADER

ACTORS:

**JOE MANGANIELLO**

JASON MOMOA

KEVIN DURAND

The crime boss of a notorious biker gang, Caesar gives the Mob, the Colombians and the Russians a real run for their money, dealing in drugs, guns and prostitutes, and trafficking underage children into sexual slavery. This narcissistic sociopath rules by fear and intimidation and doesn't care who knows it. He has judges in his back pocket, and several rats on the police force, which makes him almost bullet proof, and always one step ahead of the law. He would do absolutely anything to increase his power and control in the city, and keep his lucrative crime empire safe and thriving. He also has a warped sense of loyalty to his family and a need to protect them, including his sleazy cousin, Adrian Cain. They've been thick as thieves since they were children, and Cain's death at the hands of Abel sparks a violent need for revenge, making her his number one target.



GRAPHIC NOVEL CHARACTER DESIGN

# CHARACTER

## DETECTIVE JOSEPHINE HENDRY

ACTORS:

**AJA NAOMI KING**

NAOMI SCOTT

NICOLE BEHARIE

Hendry's a strong, professional cop with an unquenchable thirst for justice and ambition emanating from every pore. Her grandfather was one of the first African American judges to be appointed in the South and was a significant player in the Civil Rights movement. So, he fundamentally shaped her beliefs when it comes to right and wrong. She's always done things by the book, well as much as is possible in such a corrupt and broken system. She has her flaws, but buries them deep to keep them as far away as possible from the job she loves. She's a rookie Detective who has Powell as her new partner, not through choice of course, so she does her utmost to make the best of this bad situation. She's been friends with Abel and her family for years, and cares deeply about her. But recently they've grown apart, for no apparent reason, though it's most likely because of Abel's scathing reports about police brutality and corruption on the force. Hendry would do just about anything for Abel, and this time she might just have to.



GRAPHIC NOVEL CHARACTER DESIGN

# CHARACTER

## ADRIAN CAIN - BIKER/PEDOPHILE

ACTORS:

**NICO TORTORELLA**

NOAH CENTINEO

DAVID HENRIE

Sleaze personified is one way to describe Adrian Cain, but there's so many other layers of depravity to this nasty biker, that this is just scratching the surface. He has an Andrew Tate attitude, so misogyny and arrogance are just a couple of his proudest characteristics. He loves to flash all the cash that he makes from selling drugs, running prostitutes and sex trafficking children, and is always eager to show off in his expensive clothes and powerful American muscle cars. He has an unquenchable appetite for young girls, and for him, the younger the better. So it's only a matter of time before he's going to get himself into some serious trouble. But hey, he's got his powerful cousin Caesar to look out for him, so he's always happy to walk that very slippery tightrope.



GRAPHIC NOVEL CHARACTER DESIGN

# CHARACTER

## MARIA ESPOSITO - WORKING GIRL

ACTORS:

**NATALIE MARTINEZ**

MORENA BACCARIN

DIANE GUERRERO

Maria Esposito is in her early 40's and is a sexy Latino Working Girl with dyed black/red hair and make-up on overload. She's known for wearing a red dress that's far too tight and far too short. Think Salma Hayek, cranked right up to 11. Unfortunately for Maria, she reminds Detective Powell of his sadistic, religious disciplinarian mother. And, because of his childhood trauma at the hands of his mother, Powell can't stop himself from taking his maternal hatred out on Maria whenever he gets the chance. She hates Powell and feels trapped by the horrendous situation that he's forced her in to, and would do just about anything to get out of it. Maria also had a loving relationship/affair with Abel's father, before he died of cancer, and this would tear Abel apart if she ever found out about it.



GRAPHIC NOVEL CHARACTER DESIGN

# **TONE: GENRE & THEMES**

**Overwhelming Darkness dives head first into the perennial theme of 'Good versus Evil,' examining what brings out the dark side buried deep within us all. Ultimately, we all secretly fantasize about being the Vigilante, taking a violent stance against the heinous criminals and scumbags in our society. But, we almost never do, unless it's in a video game, or vicariously through the characters up on the big screen.**

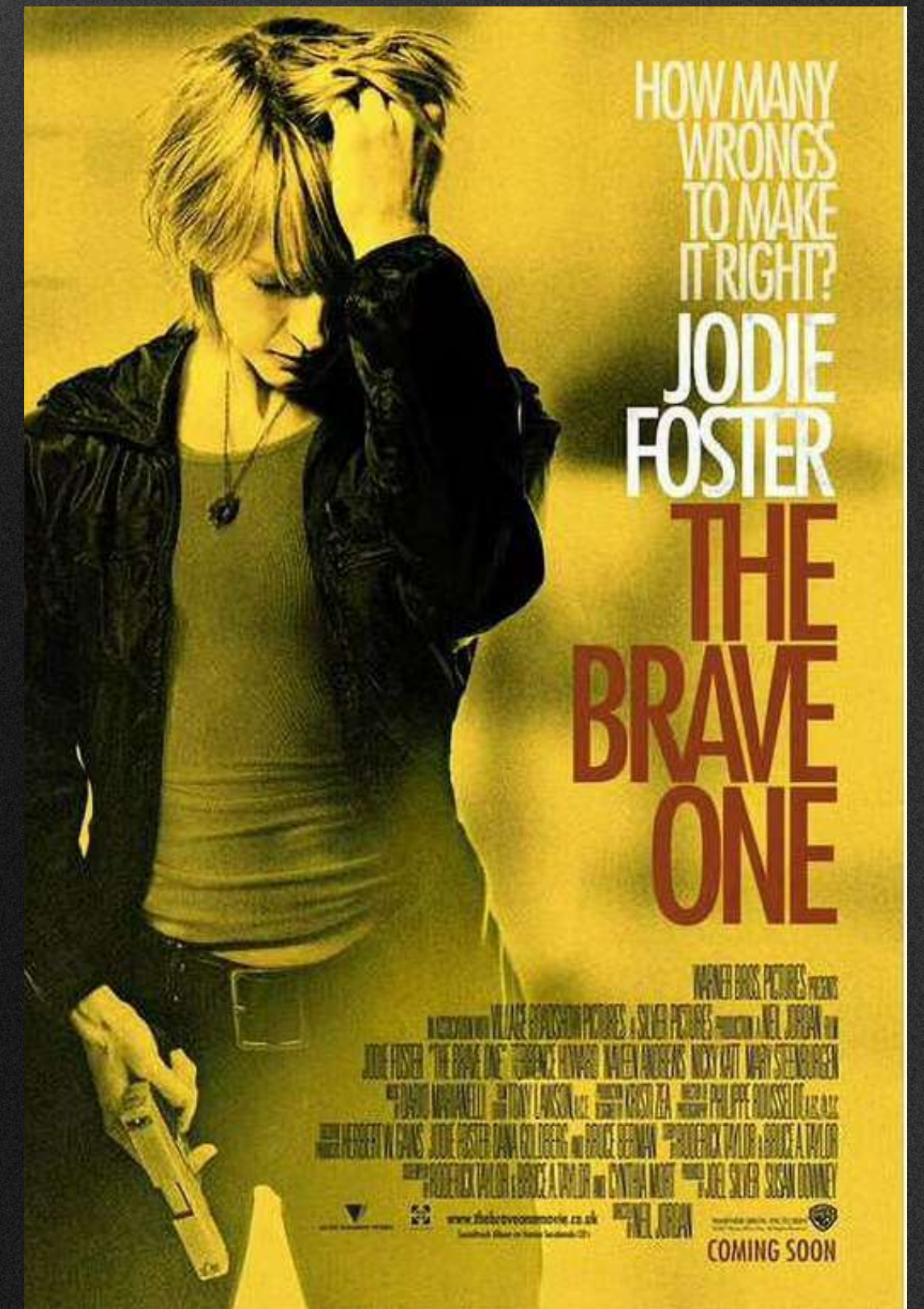
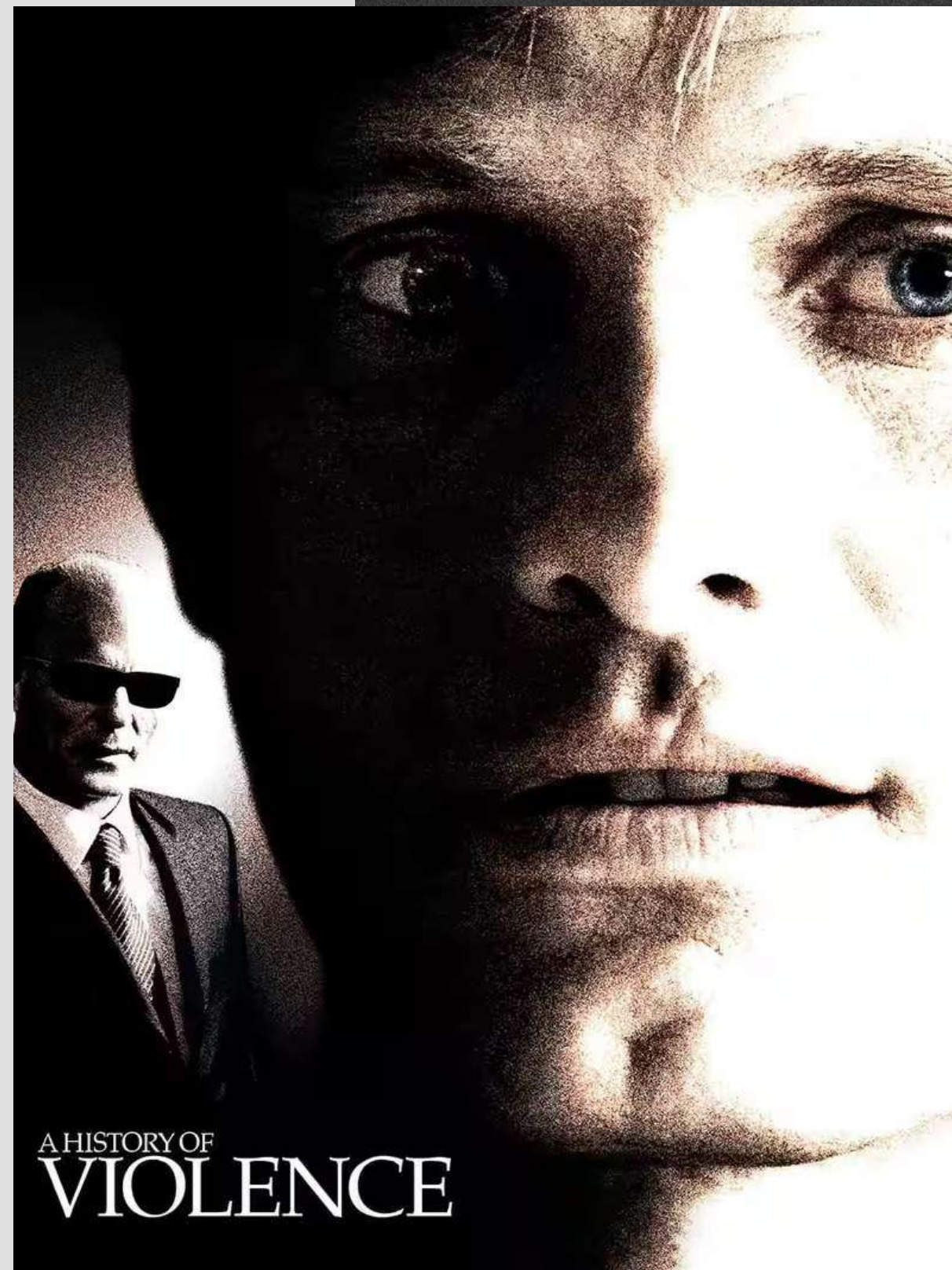
**Our protagonist Jane Abel, the wayward daughter of one of the last 'good cops', feels that her life and career as a crime reporter is stagnant and going nowhere. Until that is, she accidentally kills a child murderer who beats the system and gets off with his abhorrent crime. This dash of cruel fate pushes Abel over the edge into a violent crusade to clean up her city, convincing her that she's finally making a positive difference in the world, and doing the right thing.**

**The eternal and internal struggle playing out in Abel's tortured mind happens under the watchful eye of a cold, faceless metropolis, sagging under the weight of unchecked advancement and broken dreams. Corruption is everywhere and Gangsters, Femme Fatales, and Crooked Cops only ever look out for themselves. Innocence well and truly lost, OVERWHELMING DARKNESS pays absolute homage to the fundamental themes of classic Film Noir and the Vigilante movie, but takes them into the modern realm, ramping up the violence, sex and tension times a gazillion, so you could cut it with a large, serrated hunting knife!**

**We also have an inward look at the broken justice system and how it gets manipulated by hands, both outside and inside that very system. A telling reflection of our modern society, where cops abuse power and seekers of justice almost never get it. So it begs the question, does a broken system push good people over the edge to take matters into their own hands?**

# SIMILAR MOVIES

As part of this pitch, I've included a list of comparable titles in the crime thriller genre to give you a sense of the market for my film. I've included the posters of two films that I feel share similarities with my story and vision. I was also influenced and inspired by Taxi Driver, You Were Never Really Here, Promising Young Woman, Se7en, Falling Down, 8MM, The Departed, Sin City, Carlito's Way, LA Confidential, Man on Fire, Gran Torino and Harry Brown while writing Overwhelming Darkness.



# DIRECTOR WISH LIST

**DAVID FINCHER: SEVEN, ZODIAC, THE KILLER, GONE GIRL, THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO.**

**LYNNE RAMSAY: YOU WERE NEVER REALLY HERE, WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT KEVIN.**

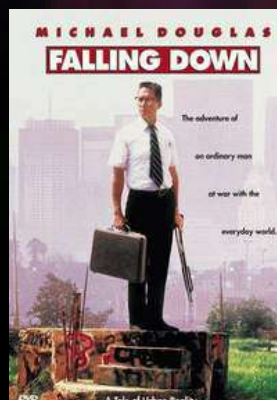
**DAVID CRONENBERG: A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE, CRASH, EASTERN PROMISES.**

**MARTIN SCORSESE: TAXI DRIVER, THE DEPARTED, CAPE FEAR, GOODFELLAS, SHUTTER ISLAND.**

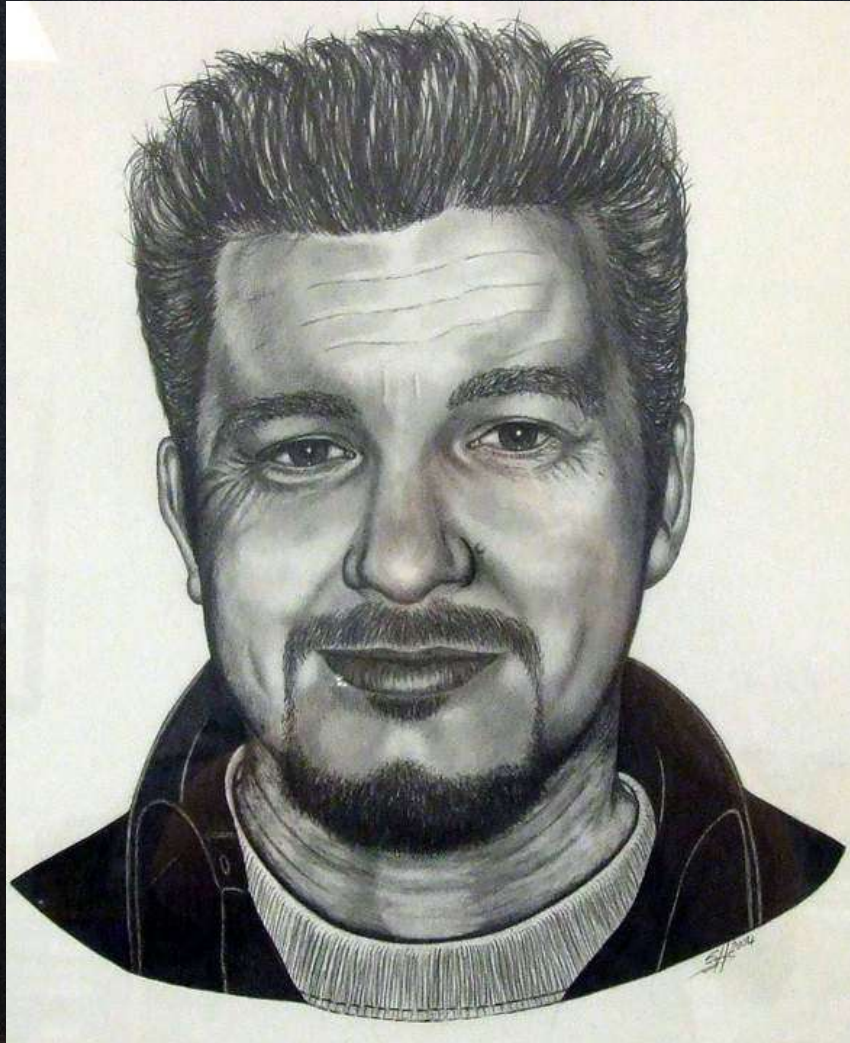
**CLINT EASTWOOD: GRAN TORINO, MYSTIC RIVER, THE MULE, RICHARD JEWELL, MILLION DOLLAR BABY.**

**QUENTIN TARANTINO: RESERVOIR DOGS, TRUE ROMANCE, ONCE UPON A TIME IN HOLLYWOOD.**

**JOEL SCHUMACHER: FALLING DOWN, 8MM, PHONE BOOTH, A TIME TO KILL.**



# WRITER'S STATEMENT/BIO



Steven originally started honing his writing and visual skills in Advertising in Scotland as a Copywriter/Art Director in the 1990s, winning several awards for his creative work. He went on to teach Art, Design and Illustration in Scottish colleges for many years (and still does) before deciding to have a go at writing a screenplay, as he has been a lifelong movie fan, since his mother took him to see all of the Disney films in his childhood.

Overwhelming Darkness has won 25 screenplay competitions this year so far, including first place in the Thriller Screenplay contest at the Best Script Awards, London, Best Thriller Screenplay at the Berlin International Screenwriting Festival, Best Thriller Screenplay at the Prague Screenplay Awards, Best International Feature Script at the Miami Film Critic Award and Best International Screenplay at the Indie Vegas Film Festival. It has been a semi-finalist in the Page Turner Feature Screenplay Competition and has also been a quarter finalist in the Emerging Screenwriters Suspense Screenplay Competition, the Table Read My Screenplay Competition – Hollywood, and the Filmmatic Drama Screenplay Awards Feature Length Script Competition. And is currently in the second round of the ISA Fast Track Fellowship.

In 2023 Steven completely rewrote the script, to really tighten it up and make it the best commercial version possible. He is currently turning Overwhelming Darkness into a Graphic Novel with a digital illustration company in Torino, Italy, and writing it as a novella/film novel as well.

He has also been working on another screenplay, Elsewhere Toronto, with a writer/director/editor friend from Toronto and this collaboration is still ongoing, in between all the other creative projects that they are both working on individually.

Steven is also an artist/illustrator and has produced many commissioned works for private clients throughout the world. His Pop Art style portraits focus on Rock Stars, Movie Idols and Sports Heroes.



# THE WORLD AND ATMOSPHERE OF OVERWHELMING DARKNESS



# FILM POSTER CONCEPTS

