

# MIDNITE'S JOURNEY

The background of the entire image is a dark, atmospheric landscape. A large, bright full moon is positioned in the upper left quadrant, partially obscured by dark, billowing clouds. Below the moon, a long, straight road with a white center line stretches from the bottom center towards the horizon. The road is flanked by dark, flat fields. The overall color palette is monochromatic, consisting of various shades of black, grey, and white, creating a somber and mysterious mood.

One Hour Dramatic Series Based on a True Story  
Adapted from the Novel by Dana L. Silkiss

# Introduction by Dana Silkiss a.k.a. "Midnite"

I have wanted my story known by the public since I had escaped the camp and events that had transpired. Unfortunately, due to legal reasons and fear for my life, I didn't publish Midnite's Journey until recently.

My nightmare was not mine alone, it was and still is a dark, mostly unknown, fabric of our society. Few people are aware of what, exactly, is going on in many of our penal institutions.

My goal is to not only expose the corruption but just as importantly, the deviant behavior, outright racism, and mindless torture bestowed on individuals, many not convicted, (or in the least, wrongly convicted), in order to fill beds for profit. My story is a precursor to our modern-day privatized correctional facilities. Presently, they may be more sophisticated but make no mistake, can be just as brutal and profitable.

To clarify, individuals profited from this unpaid labor, by billing individuals, Local, State, and Federal governments, as well as many large corporations. For instance, if we built a road, they got paid by the Local or State governments, dependent upon the particular contract. They never paid for our labor, creating huge profits.

# Introduction by Dana Silkiss a.k.a. "Midnite"

In my instance, we cleared and paved roads, built out-houses and swimming pools, as well as other sundry jobs. We were forced to do this up to 12 hours a day, in the harsh, hot humid weather. Sometimes in the rain.

The food was comparable to dog food. That is if we were "good" and behaved. We were at the mercy of the deranged, masochistic guards and those higher up. One lived in a constant state of fear. Fear of death, torture, meaningless jobs, ridicule, and humiliation. A few went insane. They couldn't believe their reality and never were able to cope with their unreality. Additionally, others were outright murdered. That's where the fear came from.

When the labor camp was finally discovered, why were the investigations and indictments suddenly squashed? It's not hard to understand. Many of our "duly elected" officials were, to various degrees, involved and enabled the camp to exist. Racism was rampant in the camp. The guards, Warden, and involved police promoted it.

The reasons listed above are why I want the American public's eyes to be opened, for them to be aware that, yes, this is a reality. When I do interviews, the question I am asked the most is, "Does this REALLY exist in America?" Sadly, the answer is yes.


Dana Silkiss  
Author Midnite's Journey

# LOGLINE

Midnite and others are abducted by corrupt police and taken to a forced labor camp. Some live to tell their stories.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 11, 1913

## The New York Times



**DUE TO CONVICT LEASING, PRISON LABORERS ARE PICKING PRODUCE AT A RATE NOT SEEN SINCE JIM CROW, FILLING A LABOR SHORTAGE CAUSED BY U.S. ANTI-IMMIGRATION POLICIES.**

CONVICT LEASING ALLOWS STATES TO SELL PRISON LABOR TO PRIVATE FARMS. THIS WAS PROHIBITED FOR MOST OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY UNTIL THE JUSTICE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1979.

PRISON LABOR TENDS TO BE MORE HIGHLY CONCENTRATED IN SOUTHERN STATES. THIS REFLECTS

### Prison Road Gangs Fading

## CHAIN GANGS

### THE CONVICT LEASE SYSTEM

During the Civil War and the reconstruction period the state of Florida foundered in debt. As a way to offset some of the state's expenditures, newly elected governor George F. French put into practice the convict leasing system in 1877.

Prisoners were leased out to individuals and large companies to do various jobs from building railroads to working in turpentine camps. The person leasing the prisoner would pay the state a fee of \$20 per prisoner per year. They were also obligated to provide clothing, shelter, food, and medical care for the prisoner. The price per prisoner quickly rose to \$150 per year.

The camps were very harsh. Prisoners were flogged for not getting work or other minor infractions. They slept chained together in wooden buildings where fires were a common occurrence, or in tents.


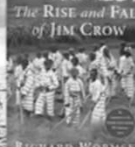

Many convicts were leased to work on plantations where they were often moved and equipped with hanks.

Leased prisoner labor was a lucrative business in the early 1900s. Many cultural enterprises, and road construction companies were in constant demand for their services.

whose offenses were more serious. Chain gangs were segregated according to race and also by whether or not the inmates had tuberculosis. Not all the prisoners were chained together while working. Those who were considered escape risks were chained together.

removed from the county office by were at large. This is the only justice.

#### THE VARIOUS PHASES OF SLAVERY

1ST PHASE SLAVERY	2ND PHASE SLAVERY	3RD PHASE SLAVERY
		
OUTRIGHT KIDNAPPING	CONVICT LEASE SYSTEM	INDUSTRIAL PRISON COMPLEX

**SLAVERY HAS NEVER ENDED**

INDUSTRIAL PRISON COMPLEX "PRISONS FOR PROFIT"

BEEN A TIME IN AMERICAN HISTORY WHERE SHE HAS EXISTED WITHOUT SLAVERY (FREE LABOR)!

Richard Wormser  
WWW.BEATTHEORYCAFE.COM

News

Hudson Bus Line  
Halted by a Strike;  
25,000 Affected

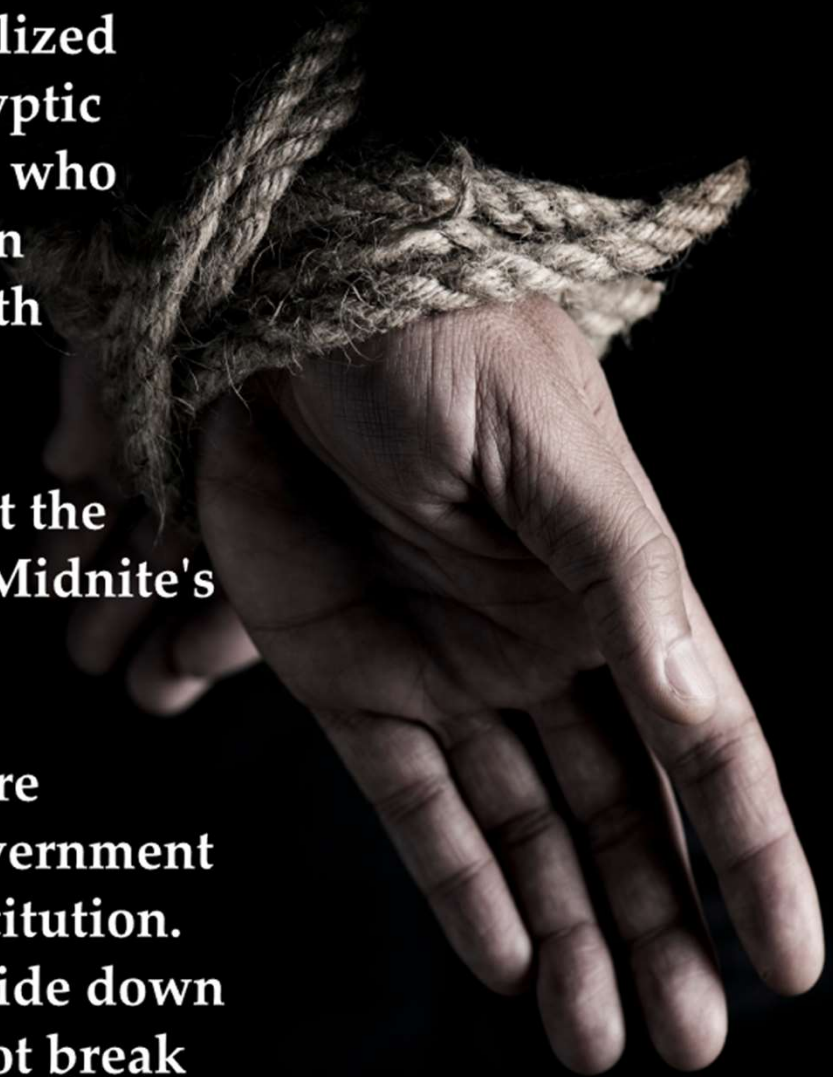
The Major Events of the Day

# SYNOPSIS

Emotional and rooted in character, this Limited Series is a Fictionalized version of a True-Life Drama that takes the audience on an apocalyptic odyssey. It follows the lives of gifted musician Midnite and others who experienced atrocities that have since been hidden by the American government. From innocence to insanity, this journey is not the path Midnite had chosen.

Each episode intertwines three storylines: Midnite's experiences at the labor camp, the activities of the friends he left behind and Young Midnite's development as a musician, entrepreneur, and martial artist.

1976. Midnite's musical career is interrupted when he and others are abducted and taken to a backwoods labor camp run by corrupt government officials. The men are forced into hard labor, the women into prostitution. When Midnite fights back he is thrown into a sweatbox, hung upside down by chains, guards extinguish cigarettes in his armpits. This does not break his spirit.



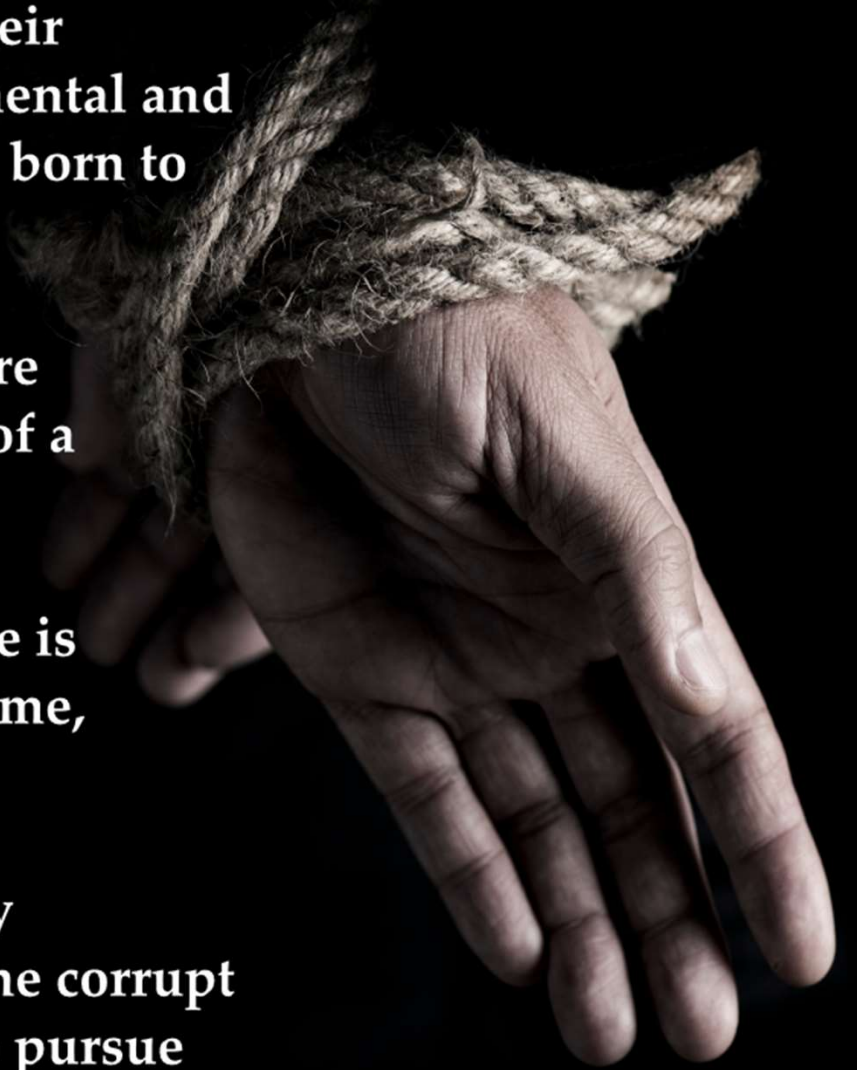
# SYNOPSIS

Each day at the camp presents a new hell as the guards increase their sadistic treatment of the Inmates. Some victims cannot bear the mental and physical torture and go insane, others are murdered. Midnite was born to be a survivor.

Midnite's friends vow to find him after his disappearance. They are repeatedly threatened by the local law enforcement. With the aid of a private eye and the FBI they locate the camp.

Young Midnite develops his musical talent at the age of twelve. He is determined to succeed in all he does. This earns him respect by some, resentment by others.

Midnite's Journey lends itself to additional seasons. The true story continues as Midnite vows to prosecute those responsible while the corrupt government entities will do anything to stop him. He continues to pursue his musical career amid threats to the lives of himself and others.



# TO NE

**Midnite's Journey is a complex story with good times, good friends, laughter, mayhem, evil, murder, and hope. Just a man trying to survive so he can pursue his dream; music. It is about outmaneuvering your opponent, much like a game of chess.**

**The horrific experience of being captive in a forced labor camp does not break Midnite. Instead, it strengthens his desire to bring about justice in an unjust America. While the series is certainly dark and even terrifying at times, it is ultimately an inspiring tale of hope and resilience.**



# SETTINGS

Set primarily in Florida and Georgia, we explore the spirit of the seventies. Picture political upheaval, hippies, Black Panthers, music festivals, sex, and love-ins. Midnite's childhood is portrayed on Long Island in the sixties. This was an era marked by protests, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War and political assassinations. Musical style emerges as rock and roll, jazz, pop, folk music, and soul.



## Daytona Beach, Florida

Midnite rents a cottage. Mark and Deanna, stay at the cottage while searching for Midnite. Deanna works in a diner. The offices of Pete Petrus and Mike O'Rourke are typical, with frosted glass windows and waiting areas. The waterfront bustles with activity. The Daytona Police station and maintenance shop are frequented.

## Georgia

The labor camp is in rural Georgia. It has a large pond, six barracks, two sweatboxes, various outbuildings, and a small house/office for the Warden. The women's camp is a mile away and has barracks, guard quarters, women's quarters, a restaurant/lounge, and a brothel. Midnite escapes and catches a bus in a small town to get out of the state.



## Long Island, New York

The story of Young Midnite takes place at his suburban family home, schoolyard, and neighborhood.

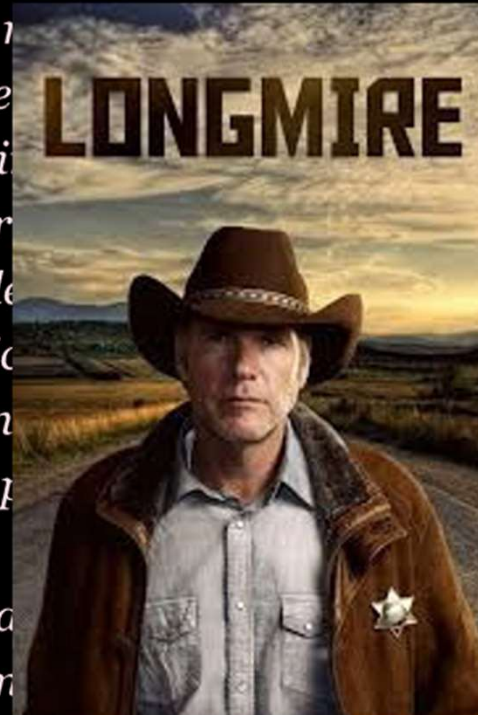
# COMPARABLES



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l surviving taken **music**  
r Based on **crime** drama  
n **truth** 1970s **sex** drugs  
ime **drama** charismatic



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ommitted life **servitude**  
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mined **survive** terrifying



## Episode One: "I'm Mr. Midnite"

1977 New York City. After calling the FBI, Midnite flees the city with the aid of several bodyguards. Their van is stopped inside the tunnel to Long Island. Midnite is apprehended by the NYPD.

Return to 1976. Midnite arrives in Daytona Beach to start his music career. There is a heavy police presence, Midnite has flashes of his past run-ins with law enforcement. He meets Deanna at a diner, then while exploring the town he finds Sergeant Scirelli's officers beating on Mark. Midnite convinces them to stop and takes Mark home to clean up. Midnite, Deanna, and Mark attend a concert where Midnite is invited on stage to play his guitar. Overnight a group of corrupt cops, led by Scirelli, raid a beach encampment. The next day the same cops abduct Midnite and others.

## **Episode Two: "The Nightmare Begins"**

Midnite, Duane, and Walter arrive at a forced labor camp. The Guards whistle at them and promise fun times, Walter is taunted by a guard, George, that promises to rape him. The food isn't fit for a dog. They begin their new jobs. Mark and Deanna begin their search to find Midnite. They go to the Daytona Police Department to report that Midnite is missing. Young Midnite witnesses the bigotry of the Monsignor of the Catholic church. He is astonished and runs home. On the way he hears the music of Jimi Hendrix, the guitarist inspires him.



## **Episode Three: "Promises Kept"**

Midnite vows to protect Walter from George, but to no avail. Other Inmates are enlisted to watch over Walter. Walter has a breakdown and yells at the guards. He is locked in the sweatbox without food or water. When Walter dies, Duane goes on a rampage and is put into the sweatbox. Midnite is forced to leave camp and work on the road. Deanna goes from hopeless to hopeful when Mark's family arrives to help investigate. They comb the beach asking for information and hand out flyers. Young Midnite enjoys a musical success then is attacked by Young Billy, the neighborhood bully.



### Episode Four: "Beware the Raven"

A raven watches from the trees as Midnite plots his escape and hides items under leaves in the woods. When Midnite returns to camp he finds Duane unconscious. Midnite pleads with the Warden to let Duane free. Instead, Duane is dragged to the woods and shot while Midnite is put in the box and hung upside down. The Warden is amazed when Midnite survives two days in the box. Midnite is given responsibilities on the road crew. Mark's family leaves and Deanna loses hope. After a scuffle at school Young Midnite and Young Billy meet with the principal and are enrolled into a school for martial arts.

### Episode Five: "Summer Showers"

Midnite sets out to revenge his friends' deaths. He deals with George in a thunder storm. When cornered, Midnite attacks Scirelli and takes him down. He earns the Warden's respect and is rewarded with new responsibilities. Mark gets information from vagrants at the beach. Deanna loses focus at work as thunder claps and lightning flashes. Mark and Deanna find a clue and hire private detective Mike O'Rourke. Following his father's advice, Young Midnite utilizes his new skills.

### Episode Six: "Hell hath Fury"

Midnite is put in charge of a Women's Camp where women are forced into prostitution. The clients include local and state bigwigs. Deanna reluctantly has a girl's night out where a co-worker comes on to her. O'Rourke and Mark examine a prison bus possibly used to transport the "inmates." Young Midnite tones down his talent at an audition for a band.

## Episode Seven: "A New Romance"

Lone Star and Midnite work together to revamp the procedures at the camp. There is chemistry between them that cannot be ignored. A bar fight starts and Midnite puts a stop to it. The Warden arrives and praises Midnite. O'Rourke brainstorms with Mark and Deanna after Bartowski opens up about Scirelli. While playing baseball at the church yard, Young Midnite learns a life lesson.



## Episode Eight: "Lifeline"

While preparing for a large VIP event at the camp, Midnite finds a hidden phone in the office. He dials the cottage but is interrupted before anyone answers. O'Rourke, Mark, and Deanna drive to Georgia to locate the camp compound. Young Midnite is invited to be on the track team.



## Episode Nine: "Escape Within"

Midnite is taken to a meeting with corrupt Government big wigs. They don't like his attitude. After tying up loose ends at the women's camp he is returned to the road crew to assess the progress, then is put into the sweatbox. Midnite hangs in the box for days and survives by meditating. O'Rourke gets cooperation from some cops and gets more details about the camp. He approaches the FBI with the information. Young Midnite is proud to receive the Presidential Fitness Award.



## Episode Ten: "The Dream Is Alive"

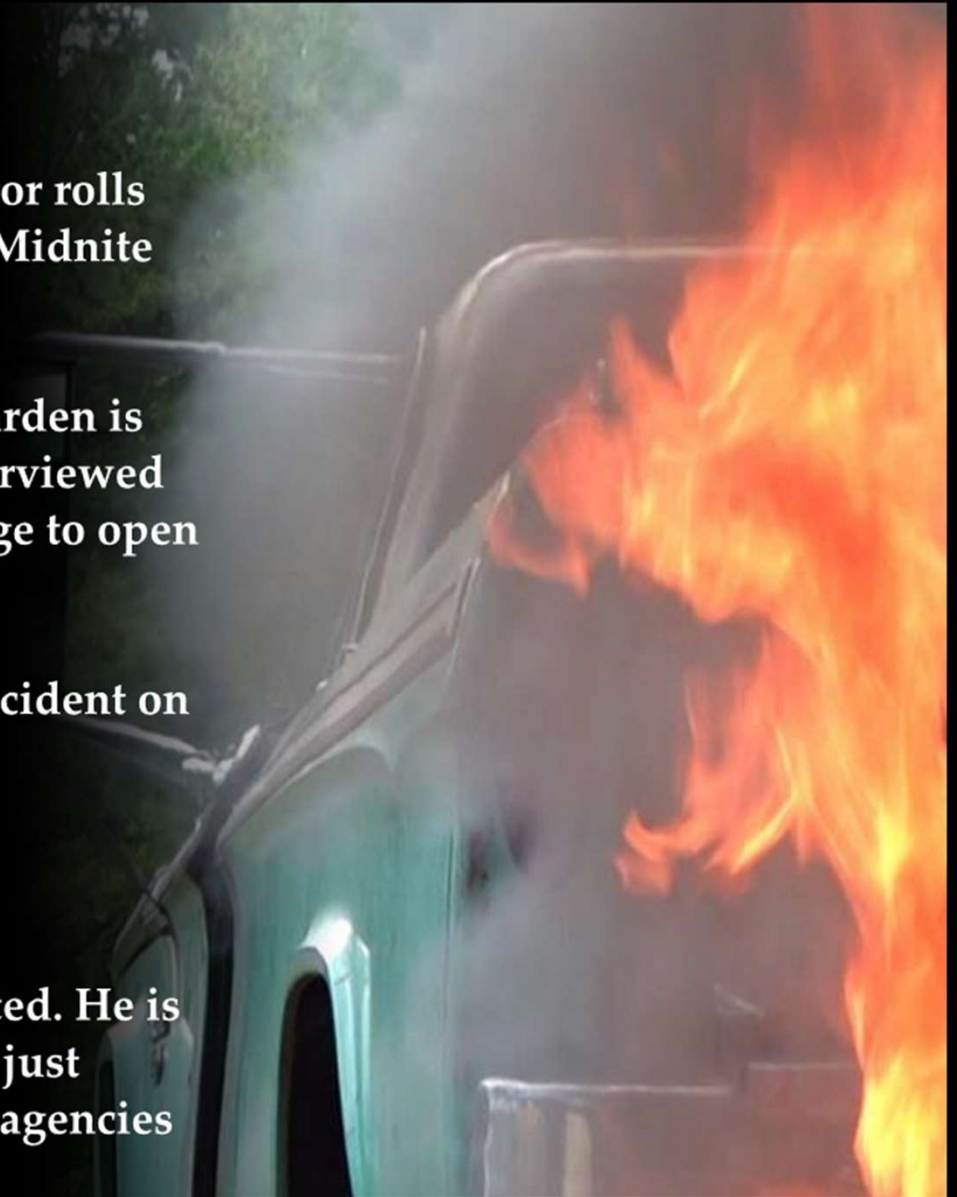
Midnite renews his efforts to escape and gathers his hidden items. A tractor rolls over onto an inmate causing instant chaos. To create a further distraction, Midnite blows up a work truck, then runs into the woods.

O'Rourke, Mark, Deanna and FBI agent Pete Petrus raid the camp. The Warden is stunned at the arrival of the law officers. The Inmates and Guards are interviewed then bussed to Daytona Beach for processing. Midnite returns to the cottage to open arms but is called by Pete Petrus to turn himself in immediately.

Young Midnite is inspired by the civil rights movement. He has a tragic accident on the way to school.

## The Continuing Story

Midnite persists in trying to bring justice to the wrongs that were committed. He is slow to realize that being on the side of what is right does not guarantee a just outcome. Anyone that helps him is threatened, or murdered. Government agencies sweep the event under the rug.



# CHARACTERS

**Midnite** 22 (eg. Blake Michael)



**Charismatic, idealistic; an activist with strong convictions. He's headstrong which often gets him in trouble. Confident, long-haired and very cultured. People take notice when he walks into a room.**

**MIDNITE is a gifted guitarist. He arrives in Daytona Beach to pursue his musical career. To his dismay, his plan is suddenly interrupted when he and others are abducted and taken to a backwoods labor camp run by corrupt government officials.**

**Each day brings new horrors and challenges. Midnite does not accept this fate and fights back. His intelligence and sheer will to survive enable him to endure the horrors of the camp and plan his escape. His spirit will not be broken.**

**" I try to bridge the abyss with my music, you know, bring people together. It's my way of righting the wrong."**

# CHARACTERS

**Young Midnite** 12-16 (eg. Noah Cameron Schnaap)

**As a child of immigrants, YOUNG MIDNITE witnesses discrimination and bigotry. He learns to defend himself from the neighborhood bully using martial arts but will not use his skills to attack. Young Midnite is an astute student and physically capable, although his stature is slight. He keeps a positive attitude.**

**Young Midnite could choose any profession; he excels in all he does. When given a guitar, he realizes it is his destiny and begins his musical career as a young teen. He is a musical marvel, and his talents are noticed in the industry. Music becomes his lifeblood.**

**"You never know 'til you try, right?"**



# CHARACTERS

**Mark** 26 (eg. Iseah Jelani)

**Very friendly and likeable, studies family law at NYU. MARK goes to Florida on spring break and is attacked by the police in Daytona Beach. His crime? Being Black.**



Midnite intervenes and they become good friends.

**Mark remains in Daytona Beach to search for Midnite. Mark's influence is put to the test in convincing a private detective and the FBI to take on the case.**

"I won't stop until we find Midnite!"

**Deanna** 20 (eg. Jaylen Barron)

**Innocent young waitress, orphaned suddenly at the age of eighteen. DEANNA moves to Daytona Beach to seek what's missing in her life and studies child development at her local college. She and**

Midnite form a close bond, they are soulmates.

**When Midnite disappears, she faithfully searches for him despite a corrupt vein of the local law trying to stop her. Deanna finds she is more resilient than she ever imagined and rises to each challenge.**

"You're different. Most guys are trying to get into my pants by now!"



# CHARACTERS

**Mike O'Rourke** 45 (eg. Hunter Emery)

Ex-cop turned private detective. MIKE suspects corruption in the Daytona Beach Police Department. His worst fears are confirmed when he's hired to find Midnite.



He's determined to solve the case and enlists the help of his old buddies at the Daytona Police Department and the FBI.

"I can tell you this, Scirelli is one sick puppy."

**Sargent Scirelli** 48 (eg. Mike Dopud)

A despicable Daytona Beach police officer that derives pleasure from the pain of others. SCIRELLI has a distaste for people of different races that leads him to clearing them out of his town along with all others he deems unworthy.

He is part of a multi-state corruption scheme and transports his captives to a work camp in Georgia. Midnite is one of his victims, then later an adversary that gets the best of him. of his town

"You ain't one o' dem commie nigger-lovers are you?"



# Beverly Gorman Horvath

## Screenwriter

My passion for the filmmaking process began while growing up in the suburbs surrounding MGM studios in Culver City, California. Now residing in North Carolina, I've written several original screenplays in a variety of genres and wrote the book for the musical/comedic stageplay Whiskey Flats. Working with local independent filmmakers has been rewarding.

When Dana asked me to adapt his novel to a script, he described parts of his story. Things so horrible it is hard to imagine they could be true. He wishes they weren't. After reading the novel, I know this is a story that needs to be told, and I must be a part of it.

The sheer cruelties that he endured would break most individuals. Instead, he's one of the most compassionate and positive people I have ever met. We had an instant connection even though we were raised on opposite coasts of the United States.



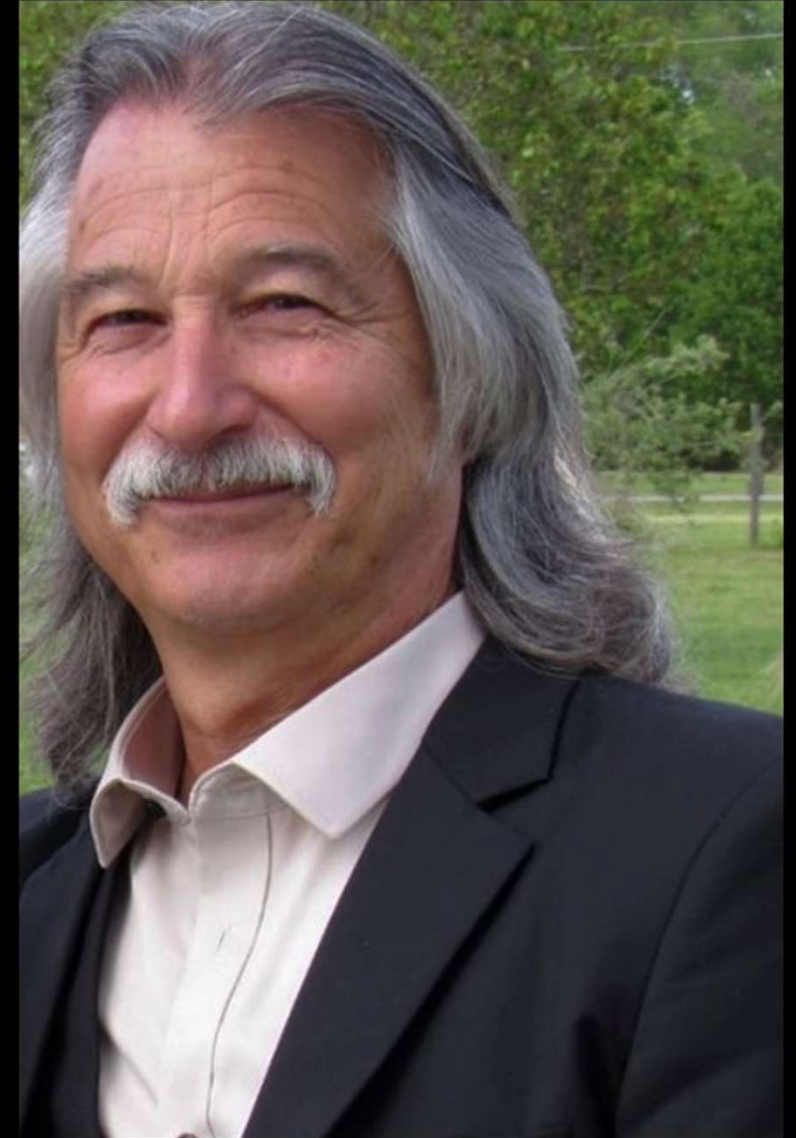
# Dana L. Silkiss

## Author

Dana L. Silkiss is an entrepreneur, professional musician, author, recording artist, martial artist, and horse trainer. In addition to *Midnite's Journey*, he has published poetry and written songs. Additionally, he has produced documentaries for PBS (WLIW), as well as having been involved in the film industry in various roles. He has spent much of his life traveling the world exploring many cultures and cuisines. His goal is always to educate people in order for them to see the world in a different light. A light of understanding and wisdom, not ignorance and misconceptions.

His book *Midnite's Journey* (Book of the Month, July 2018) tells his harrowing story at the age of 19 of being taken to a privatized correctional facility in rural Georgia on June 6th, 1976.

Dana was tortured and forced into slave labor. Escaping six months later, he collaborated with a private detective and (unofficially) the FBI to expose and shut down the facility.



**TURNAGE**  
**EUPHRATES FEATURING MIDNITE**



# 70's Scrapbook



# MIDNITE'S JOURNEY

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