

TITLE: INTO THE DARK

GENRE Military thriller / character-driven action drama

LOGLINE Haunted by a disastrous mission in Bosnia and written off as expendable, an Army sniper is pulled from Special Forces Selection and thrown into a deniable operation in Colombia to recover two kidnapped American students—only to realize the rescue is cover for a deeper objective, and the only way to reclaim his life is to go alone into the dark and drag back the man behind the violence.

TOPE & STYLE

Gritty, grounded, and procedural, with a strong emotional spine.

INTO THE DARK combines:

- **Authentic military detail** (Selection at Fort Bragg, JSOC/CIA interplay, jungle ops, urban tradecraft)
- **Slow-burn, high-tension set pieces** in tunnels, jungle, and city environments
- **Character-first drama** about guilt, loyalty, and second chances

The style favors **tight, subjective camera work** and immersive sound design. Violence is realistic and fast, always rooted in clear stakes and geography. Dialogue is lean and loaded; much of the story lives in behavior, silence, and choice.

Comparables: *Sicario*, *13 Hours*, *The Hurt Locker* - but focused on one broken operator trying to find purpose in the gray zone between war and espionage.

PROTAGONIST

SHANE ALEXANDER (mid 20s)

Army sniper, Bosnia veteran, and ex-inmate who did time in Leavenworth after a court-martial. Smart, controlled, carrying a deep load of guilt and anger. Physically tough, psychologically frayed but functional.

- **Wound:** Bosnia - an op gone wrong, civilians dead, command abandoning him. He carries the stigma and self-loathing. Leavenworth reinforced his belief that he's expendable.
- **Mask:** Stoic professionalism, dark humor, "I'm fine." He presents as calm under fire, emotionally closed, ruthlessly competent.
- **Need:** To believe he can matter without needing redemption; to accept connection and trust a team again.
- **Arc:** From *self-condemned, isolated asset* to *purposeful operative who chooses to stay in the fight, on his terms, as part of a team.*

KEY SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

JOEY BENNETT (40s)

Civilian clothes, CIA team lead. Calm, analytical, carries quiet authority. Not a cheerleader—he cares about outcomes and the welfare of his people but won't sugarcoat risk.

- **Function:** Field mentor and mirror for Shane. Shows a version of what Shane could become if he learns to integrate his damage into a functional life.

- **Conflict:** Must balance mission demands with the moral weight of using "expendable" assets.

RANDY WHITE (40s)

Intel specialist. Wry, sharp, skeptical. He sees patterns in chaos and reads people well. A human lie detector with just enough cynicism to be useful.

- **Function:** Voice of strategic realism. Backs Shane's instincts when they're grounded; calls him out when they're not.

PRESLEY (30s)

Comms/signals. Awkward, technical, and obsessive about clean signal and logs. A quiet nerve center.

- **Function:** Tech backbone of the ops. His work turns Shane's physical risk into something that matters in broader intelligence terms.

RENE WILLIAMS & REGAN OWENS (early-mid 20s)

Two American college students were snatched in Colombia. Rene's father is a key engineer on a classified F-35 program, making her a strategic target as well as a hostage.

- **Function:** Human stakes. Their ordeal and recovery measure the mission's success beyond intel and HVT capture.

JESUS GONZALEZ (30s-40s)

Local fixer/asset in Colombia. Former low-level cartel facilitator now playing all sides to survive.

- **Function:** Ambiguous ally. Helps the team navigate terrain, gangs, and intel; also withholds information and uses it when it's in his interest.

MONTOYA (50s)

Cartel doctor/broker, sadistic but controlled. Not a cartoon monster—he's a businessman of human misery.

- **Function:** Embodiment of the "traffic" worldview: people as cargo, pain as leverage. Capturing him is strategically huge and morally ambiguous.

COLONEL CHRIS CAMPBELL (50s)

JSOC/Army liaison. Strategic thinker caught between policy, politics, and the reality on the ground.

- **Function:** Institutional voice. Offers Shane both judgment and opportunity.

MIKE CHISHOLM (40s)

Civilian lawyer, Shane's friend from Leavenworth days. Smart, grounded, and not afraid to tell Shane hard truths.

- **Function:** Civilian anchor and moral support. Represents a life outside the military and a witness to Shane's growth.

SHANNON (mid-20s)

Civilian, art/gallery world, meets Shane in a bar. Not a manic pixie dream figure—sane, perceptive, with her own life.

- **Function:** Glimpse of normalcy and connection. Shows that Shane's world doesn't have to be only war, guilt, and missions.

ACT I - THE PULL & THE PITCH

Escorted off the training grounds to an unmarked building with blacked-out windows, Shane meets an anonymous **Agency-linked officer** who lays out a bare-bones brief:

- Two Americans, **Regan Owens** and **Rene Williams**, were taken near Colombia's Magdalena River Valley.
- Official story: wrong place, wrong time on a trip.
- Unofficially: they are **high priority**, and the mission is "failure is not an option."

Shane is told he'll join a **small, deniable team**:

- **Joey Bennett** - calm, civilian-clothed CIA team lead
- **Randy White** - seasoned intel specialist
- **Presley** - comms and signals
- Other operators to round out the assault element

Their job: locate the hostages in cartel territory, pull them out **without a paper trail**, and avoid open war. Rules of engagement are deliberately murky; they want **leverage, not body count**.

Shane's past is not hidden. These people know about Bosnia and Leavenworth. They don't want to redeem him—they want a sniper who can function in chaos and disappear when told.

He accepts. He's not chasing a medal. He just wants a mission where his pain has a point.

ACT II - INTO COLOMBIA & REALITY CHECK

The team deploys via a gray-zone pipeline into Colombia. On the ground, they're handed off to **Jesus Gonzalez**, a charismatic local fixer who has one foot in the cartel world and one in survival.

From a safehouse outside Cali, they build a working picture:

- Cartels are active in and around **Tulua** and the **Magdalena valley**.
- A sadistic cartel doctor, **Montoya**, is known for "making examples" of captives.
- Recent drone footage and satellite passes suggest a **compound** that could be a holding site.

They infiltrate through jungle to recon the site. From a ridge, they watch a patched-together compound that looks active but staged-guard rotations feel theatrical, the place a little too quiet.

At night, they slip in to confirm. Gunfire erupts elsewhere on the perimeter. It's a controlled reaction. During the confusion, a terrified teen, **Nico**, bolts from the brush. Shane breaks cover to grab him and drags him into the trees under fire.

Nico reveals he was held with **two American women**, one with a half-moon tattoo (Regan). They were beaten and kept in darkness to blaring salsa music-until they were **suddenly moved**.

Back at an abandoned shack, Shane radios Jesus. The truth surfaces: this hit on the Tulua compound was never a clean

rescue play. It was a **probe** designed to force cartel movement and generate intel.

The hostages were probably already gone.

Shane realizes he and the team were used as **bait**.

Bogotá - Hunting in the City

With no time to sulk, they pivot. Jesus steers them into Bogotá to chase the **movement pattern**: trucks and a box rig seen near an **abandoned meat plant**, then toward a dead **textile warehouse**.

We move into a tense urban chapter:

- Low-key stakeouts from cafés and side streets.
- Vehicle swaps and plate changes to stay ahead of watchers.
- Reading body language on guards, measuring confidence vs. caution.

The meat plant looks like a **stage**—guards and structure, but no clear sign of hostages. A secondary warehouse nearby has all the subtle tells of an **active staging site**: clean sidewalks, regular guard rhythms, small duffels moving in and out.

They set up a **makeshift op center** in a derelict warehouse on the outskirts: Presley runs an encrypted uplink to Langley; Randy maps thermal anomalies and convoy routes; Shane cleans weapons and studies potential ingress.

Time pressure is relentless. Overhead assets can only be retasked for **one more meaningful pass**. Patrols sniff dangerously

close. Jesus smooth-talks a search team off the property—but everyone knows the window is closing.

Joey makes the call: "**We move.**"

ACT III - THE VALLEY, THE GIRLS, AND THE TUNNELS

Back in the jungle near the valley, the team infiltrates a new, more fortified compound. They work off layered intel—patterns from Bogotá, Nico's descriptions, and the latest thermal imagery.

A night breach brings them inside. Shane and Joey clear the upper floor and find a locked door. Behind it: **Rene and Regan**—badly beaten, dehydrated, but alive. For the first time, the mission feels straightforward: get them out and go home.

Then the building **erupts**.

A patrol slams into the south side. Gunfire and shouted Spanish echo through the hallways. The compound is waking up.

In a narrow stairwell, the team faces a brutal choice:

- **Option A:** Focus solely on exfiltrating the hostages.
- **Option B:** Use the chaos to go after **Montoya**, who is almost certainly on-site, along with his ledgers and comms—a chance to rip out a command node instead of just trimming a branch.

With Rene and Regan in motion toward the rally point, Shane volunteers to **go after Montoya alone**, via rumored tunnels beneath the house. Joey gives him a one-use jammer and a

conditional green light: if it turns bad, he has to walk away and live.

Up top, Joey, Randy, and Presley begin a desperate, improvised extraction of the two women through jungle washes under fire.

Down below, Shane descends into **the dark**.

Underground - Facing the Past

The tunnel network is cramped, unstable, and disorienting—an echo of Bosnia and everything that broke Shane the first time.

He stalks through in NVG green:

- Silent takedowns of tunnel guards.
- Quick grabs of intel: a hand-drawn map, a callsign ledger.
- Ducking into recesses as patrols rush past.

At the deepest chamber, he finds **Montoya** seated at a rough command table, walls covered in routes, contacts, and payoff records. Montoya is disturbingly calm. In his world, he is just a **broker of human traffic**.

He offers Shane money, freedom, and a nihilistic lecture: killing him changes nothing; someone else will sit in the chair.

Shane wants to put a bullet through his head. Instead, he makes the harder, more strategic choice: he **captures** Montoya alive and grabs the notebook that maps his network.

Now he's deep underground, under pursuit, carrying a man the cartel—and maybe some governments—would be happy to see disappear.

Extraction - Two Successes, One Price

Intercut:

- **Topside:** Joey's element hustles Rene and Regan through the jungle to a clearing. A helicopter drops in under fire. They fight their way aboard, and the bird rips away from the valley. The women are alive. Primary objective: achieved.
- **Below and beyond:** Shane drags Montoya through tunnels and out into the night, using chaos in the compound to slip through the yard maze, then commits to a **long, brutal march** through the jungle. No backup. No guarantee the bird will even wait.

He evades patrols with dogs, reads terrain by instinct, and hauls Montoya toward a scrub LZ as the rotors of a second helicopter build on the horizon.

With seconds to spare, he staggers into the clearing, pushes Montoya toward the crew, and collapses into the aircraft.

The mission has become more than a rescue. They've yanked two hostages out of hell and dragged back the man and the ledger that made their kidnapping possible.

ACT IV - DEBRIEFS, CONSEQUENCES, AND A NEW WAR

Back on U.S. soil, the outcomes are split into **two worlds**:

1. **Human:** Rene and Regan are reunited with their parents at Langley. There's relief, guilt, and the clear knowledge that recovery will be long. Shane watches from the margin, ghost-like, then slips away.
2. **Institutional:** Montoya is rolled into a secure van. Ledgers and drives move into evidence lockers. Agency and JSOC staff argue about **risk and protocols**.

In an After Action Review, a senior Ops Officer challenges the wisdom of letting Shane break off alone underground after the hostages were secured. Randy and Joey defend the call as a **calculated risk** that delivered a strategic coup.

Shane confronts his commanders: he was never fully briefed that **Rene's father** works on a classified F-35 program. That changes the moral frame. Were they saving two young women, or a piece of national leverage?

Campbell insists the priority wouldn't have changed. Joey admits they withheld the detail to keep Shane from carrying extra emotional weight. Trust is dented but not broken.

Outside the classified bubble, Shane meets **Mike Chisholm**, the lawyer who helped him survive Leavenworth, at a worn bar called Big Harry's. Mike sees the difference in him: still damaged, but with purpose.

At the same bar, Shane meets **Shannon**, a young woman in the arts world. Their quiet, understated connection hints at a life beyond ops and guilt—gallery shows, coffee, small talk instead of debriefs.

Finally, Shane is called back into a conference room at Special Warfare Command. Colonel Campbell lays out his options:

- Start **Selection from day one** again.
- Take a conventional unit posting under the shadow of Bosnia.
- Or accept a long-term TDY assignment as a **liaison operator** with Joey's CIA station in Falls Church, Virginia.

The job is messy: joint ops, human intel, legal hand-offs, missions in the gray. He'll still be under UCMJ, but his chain of action will run through a team that judged him by what he did in Colombia, not by what happened in Bosnia.

There's one non-negotiable: he must complete **SERE** and other advanced training.

Shane accepts.

In his small apartment, he packs his duffel and studies an old photo of himself and his best friend Loran, long dead, grinning in early uniforms. He thanks Mike for being the friend who showed up when everything fell apart.

Then he looks out the window at the quiet evening, picks up his orders, and walks out.

The door closes with a solid, final click.

He isn't done with the dark. But for the first time, he's choosing how—and with whom—he walks into it.