

PATSY - Historical Political Thriller – 1 Hour TV

Logline

A young CIA operative, duped into becoming a pawn in a conspiracy he helped set in motion, realizes too late that his greatest act of patriotism has made him history's most infamous villain.

Accolades

Quarter-Finalist in: 2026 Emerging Screenwriters Drama Screenplay Competition, 2026 Emerging Screenwriters Drama Screenplay Competition, and 2026 Creative Screenwriting Short Screenplay Competition

Tone

Grounded, tense, investigative, and historically detailed — in the vein of *JFK*, *The Parallax View*, *Zodiac*, and *All the President's Men*.

Story

Before Lee Harvey Oswald became one of the most infamous names in American history, he was a young Marine stationed at Atsugi Naval Air Facility in Japan, where he was exposed to classified U-2 spy-plane operations and the secrecy of Cold War intelligence work. Ambitious, insecure, and eager to matter, Oswald becomes fascinated with communism, covert operations, and the possibility of serving his country in ways no one else will ever see.

After a manipulated path leads him to defect to the Soviet Union, Oswald marries Marina, grows frustrated with life in Minsk, and eventually returns to the United States with no clear future and a damaged reputation. Back in Texas, he struggles with work, marriage, money, and his own sense of importance. He uses aliases, orders weapons, and becomes increasingly useful to people who understand exactly how disposable he is.

The screenplay follows a detailed chronology of events leading to November 22, 1963, including Oswald's connection to the failed attempt on General Edwin Walker, Jack Ruby's financial desperation, organized crime interests, the Chicago threat against Kennedy, the "curtain rods" package, the Texas School Book Depository, the shooting in Dealey Plaza, Officer Tippit's murder, Oswald's arrest at the Texas Theatre, and his televised claim that he is "just a patsy."

As the assassination unfolds, Oswald realizes the circumstances around him have trapped him. His rifle, his workplace, his aliases, his political history, and his erratic behavior all point directly at him. Whether guilty of some acts or manipulated into others, he becomes the perfect suspect — recognizable, unstable, and unable to defend himself.

Main Characters

Lee Harvey Oswald — A flawed, arrogant, volatile former Marine who believes he is smarter than the people using him, until he realizes too late that he is expendable.

Jack Ruby — A desperate Dallas nightclub owner under financial pressure, drawn into events that end with him killing Oswald on live television.

Carol Addison — A seductive intelligence-connected operative who helps set Oswald on a dangerous path.

The Tall Man — A handler figure who pushes Oswald toward violence while keeping the larger operation hidden.

Calogero Minacore, a.k.a. Carlos Marcello — A powerful organized crime figure who recognizes how useful unstable men can be.

Why *This* Story, Now

The assassination of President Kennedy remains one of America's most debated historical events. *Patsy* gives audiences a dramatic, fact-driven version of the events surrounding Oswald, not as a hero or an innocent victim, but as a reckless and compromised man whose flaws made him easy to frame, control, and discard.

The Hook

This is not the story of a mastermind. It is the story of a man who thought he was part of the plan — until he realized he was the plan.