

## Overall assessment

**Yes. The principal characters in *Rising Star* generally have distinct voices—particularly Logan and Malik, whose contrasting speech is one of the screenplay’s strongest features.**

I would score the overall voice differentiation at about **8/10**. The characters do not simply differ because one is a cop, politician or gangster; most also have identifiable rhythms, attitudes and verbal habits.

The screenplay’s strongest test is this: remove the character names from many Logan–Malik exchanges, and it would still be clear who is speaking.

### Logan Ford

Logan has the strongest and most consistent voice.

His dialogue is:

- blunt;
- economical;
- cynical;
- working-class;
- confrontational;
- darkly humorous;
- emotionally evasive.

He rarely explains himself at length. He favours short challenges and dismissive reactions:

“You reckon?”

“Talk English.”

“Get used to it.”

“Then spill it.”

Even his humour is abrasive. After seeing a coroner surrounded by organs, he says:

“Quite a collection, Ernie. You should open a museum.”

Logan expresses intelligence through instinct rather than formal analysis. He reduces situations to practical conclusions: the body is fresh, the crime scene is staged, a driver with muscle means money. When faced with technical language, he demands plain English.

His interrogation voice is especially distinctive. He does not merely threaten Darren; he builds a personal, psychologically targeted threat around Darren’s mother:

“Now either you’re gonna talk or start thinking about a eulogy for your old dear.”

That combination of menace, street language and emotional manipulation belongs specifically to Logan.

His voice also reveals his emotional limitations. He can handle a corpse but struggles with vulnerability. When the conversation with Malik becomes personal, Logan’s language becomes simpler and more hesitant. That is effective because the change feels like the same guarded man being forced into unfamiliar territory.

### Voice strength: 9/10

### Malik Edwards

Malik is clearly differentiated from Logan.

His dialogue is:

- more articulate;
- more measured;
- more formally structured;
- socially conscious;
- analytical;
- emotionally perceptive;
- quietly dry.

When Logan insults his suit, Malik replies:

“Wrong colour?”

When Logan warns him not to expect hand-holding:

“Wouldn’t ask for it.”

Malik does not compete with Logan’s aggression. His weapon is controlled irony. He lets Logan expose his own prejudice, then responds calmly.

His education is reflected naturally in his vocabulary. He talks about healthcare, agriculture and carbon emissions when discussing food, and draws on literary knowledge when identifying *The Sandman*. Logan calls him “a walking encyclopedia,” while Malik gives the title, date and quotation.

The fast-food scene is an excellent display of their contrasting voices:

**Malik:** “Healthcare. Agriculture. Carbon emissions.”

**Logan:** “You should’ve joined a cult.”

**Malik:** “You’re already in one of the biggest.”

That exchange works because Malik is intelligent without being humourless, while Logan is dismissive without being stupid.

Malik also speaks more openly about emotional consequences:

“You never get over it. You just learn to carry it.”

Logan feels deeply but suppresses it; Malik articulates feelings carefully and then withdraws when the subject becomes too personal.

One slight issue is that Malik occasionally becomes the designated expositional voice. His education gives you a legitimate reason for this, but some of his investigative questions—“Random or targeted?”, “How dangerous?”, “Any thoughts on the cause of death?”—are functional rather than character-specific. This is normal in a procedural, but a few could carry more of his individual perspective.

**Voice strength: 8.5/10**

### **Logan and Malik as a pairing**

Their dialogue relationship is the script’s greatest voice achievement.

Logan speaks from experience:

“The streets teach more than a classroom.”

Malik speaks from education but refuses to be reduced to it:

“Don’t mistake me for some frat boy fresh out of class.”

Logan uses slang, fragments and insults. Malik generally uses complete sentences and understatement. Logan instinctively establishes hierarchy; Malik calmly refuses to accept inferiority.

Their early car exchange demonstrates this immediately:

**Malik:** “You always this cheerful, or is it just me?”

**Logan:** “Only with passengers. And I’m not one to carry them.”

**Malik:** “This partnership wasn’t exactly my idea either.”

The lines could not easily be exchanged without changing both characters.

As their relationship develops, their voices do not merge completely. Malik becomes more confident around Logan, and Logan becomes slightly more emotionally available, but they remain recognisably themselves. That is exactly what a strong partnership arc should do.

### **Audrey Ford**

Audrey’s voice is grounded, controlled and emotionally precise.

She does not engage Logan with his streetwise bravado. Instead, she punctures his excuses through practical observation:

“Instead of reaching for a beer, like you always do...how about setting the table?”

“Now that’d be trying.”

Audrey rarely wastes words. Her dialogue often takes something Logan has said and turns it back against him. When he claims to be trying, she defines what “trying” would actually look like.

She also has a dry, weary sarcasm:

“Why break the habits of a lifetime now?”

“The world according to Logan Ford?”

“We can’t all be you.”

Her voice carries years of disappointment rather than momentary anger. That makes her distinct from the more openly aggressive characters.

Audrey is also one of the few people who can speak directly to Logan without either fearing him or competing with him. Her sentences are measured because she knows precisely where his weaknesses lie.

**Voice strength: 8/10**

### **Captain Hanley**

Hanley has an authoritative, economical police-command voice.

He tends to speak in decisions:

“Two days.”

“Keep it quiet.”

“You two stick with the girl.”

His dialogue is direct, operational and concerned with institutional consequences, particularly the press and the reputation of the department:

“A serial killer and now a cop killer. The press will have a field day.”

That distinguishes him from Logan, who focuses on solving the case regardless of institutional embarrassment.

Hanley's voice is effective, although it is more role-based than psychologically individual. He sounds convincingly like a police captain, but some of his lines could potentially be spoken by another senior officer.

A small personal verbal trait—gallows humour, paternal irritation, bureaucratic euphemism or a repeated habit of minimising disasters—could make him even more identifiable.

**Voice strength: 7/10**

### **Giacomo Pulcinella**

Pulcinella has a controlled gangster voice built around casual authority.

He rarely sounds hurried. Even when arranging a cover-up, he talks as though managing an ordinary business inconvenience:

"Fill the bath, wash her down and bag everything."

"Relax. No one's gonna know."

"Tomorrow will look like any other day."

That calmness is more threatening than shouting would be.

His voice combines:

- business language;
- street phrasing;
- social charm;
- casual menace;
- traditional courtesy.

He can ask after someone's mother, discuss a narcotics shipment and dismiss a murdered corrupt cop within the same conversational register:

"There's more where he came from."

His exchanges with Sanderson also establish the difference between them. Pulcinella talks about favours, envelopes and friends; Sanderson uses political and corporate language such as "authorised," "shareholder" and "Development Authority."

At times Pulcinella risks sounding like a familiar screen gangster, but the understated humour and transactional worldview give him sufficient individuality.

**Voice strength: 8/10**

### **Robert Sanderson**

Sanderson has two voices, which suits the character.

His public voice is polished, abstract and slogan-driven:

"The people want change."

"Family values, home ownership and community policing."

His private voice is clipped, entitled and increasingly panicked. In his dealings with Pulcinella, he retains formal business language:

"Your seat on the Development Authority has been authorised."

When exposed or frightened, that verbal control collapses:

"I didn't do anything."

“I’m telling you I’m next. I know it.”

“My life is in danger.”

The movement from public certainty to private panic is effective.

He is distinct from Pulcinella because Pulcinella becomes calmer under pressure, while Sanderson becomes more fragmented. Pulcinella controls rooms through presence; Sanderson controls them through status, and loses control when status no longer protects him.

However, some of Sanderson’s criminal-conspiracy dialogue is fairly functional. His most distinctive voice comes from the contrast between his campaign rhetoric and private cowardice. Strengthening that hypocrisy—perhaps allowing public-relations language to creep into private conversations—would sharpen him further.

**Voice strength: 7.5/10**

#### **Veronica Sanderson**

Veronica’s dialogue is restrained, intelligent and cutting.

Rather than openly accusing Robert, she lets implication do the work:

“That’s quite an aftershave he’s wearing these days.”

“Maybe Cathy liked that too?”

She uses polished irony where Audrey uses weary domestic bluntness. Both women challenge their husbands, but they do not sound identical. Audrey talks about work, drinking and fatherhood directly; Veronica tests Robert through insinuation and social intelligence.

She has relatively little dialogue, but what she has is character-specific.

**Voice strength: 7.5/10**

#### **Lucia Blinkley**

Lucia has a lively, defensive, street-smart voice.

Her first response to “How’s things?” is simply:

“Surviving.”

She uses humour to retain dignity in a situation where she is being assessed:

“How about...‘Extra-curricular care ongoing’?”

“Baby steps. Yeah?” also gives her dialogue a casual, self-aware rhythm.

Her seductive dialogue with Sanderson is simpler and more performative:

“I hear you’ve been a good boy.”

“I guess we have something to celebrate.”

This is appropriate because she is adopting a role for a client. The difference between her social-services dialogue and hotel dialogue suggests performance rather than inconsistency.

Lucia appears briefly, so her voice cannot develop as fully as Logan’s or Malik’s, but she becomes a person rather than merely “the victim.” That matters.

**Voice strength: 7.5/10**

#### **Ernst Becker**

Becker has a recognisable dry, clinical voice.

He uses medical terminology without apology:

“Paramethoxymethamphetamine.”

When Logan asks for English, Becker gives him the abbreviation rather than simplifying fully. He is sardonic, comfortable around death and mildly contemptuous of detectives:

“It might teach you people a few things.”

“What sins did you commit to get stuck with him?”

His humour is drier and more educated than Logan’s. Logan jokes to provoke; Becker jokes from detached superiority.

**Voice strength: 8/10**

### **Hillcroft and Kershaw**

The corrupt officers have a coarse, bullying conversational style. Their discussion about Kershaw’s dog becomes an extended metaphor for control, obedience and domination before they abuse Joshua.

This gives the scene an ugly but effective verbal theme:

“They gotta know who’s boss.”

“Otherwise they start wandering off...pissing everywhere.”

Their shared voice works because they function as a pair. Individually, however, Hillcroft and Kershaw are less differentiated from one another. Both use similar language, cruelty and humour.

That is not necessarily a major problem because their interchangeability reflects institutional corruption, but one could be made more recognisable—perhaps Hillcroft more falsely paternal and Kershaw more casually mercenary.

**Individual voice strength: 6.5/10**

**Voice as a pair: 8/10**

### **Supporting family characters**

Callum and Christina are lightly drawn through dialogue, which is appropriate given their screen time. Their voices primarily establish age and family dynamics rather than full individuality.

Audrey carries most of the domestic voice differentiation. Logan’s language at home remains recognisably Logan, but becomes less performatively tough. His simple “Good” to Callum and his awkward conversation with Denton show how emotionally limited he is outside police work.

The important point is that Logan does not suddenly become eloquent at home. His professional and domestic voices belong to the same man.

### **Where voices occasionally flatten**

The screenplay contains procedural exchanges that are necessarily functional:

“What’ve we got?”

“Any ID?”

“How dangerous?”

“Who was his partner?”

“Random or targeted?”

These lines move the investigation efficiently but are not strongly character-specific. Because there are many crime-scene and briefing scenes, stretches of dialogue can temporarily become interchangeable.

The main characters recover their individuality through reaction:

- Logan simplifies, challenges or swears.

- Malik analyses and contextualises.
- Hanley thinks about command and consequences.
- Becker answers clinically and sarcastically.

A final dialogue pass could make some of the functional questions slightly more character-shaped, but they should not become so stylised that the police work feels unnatural.

### Character voice scorecard

| Character                      | Voice distinction |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Logan Ford                     | 9/10              |
| Malik Edwards                  | 8.5/10            |
| Giacomo Pulcinella             | 8/10              |
| Audrey Ford                    | 8/10              |
| Ernst Becker                   | 8/10              |
| Robert Sanderson               | 7.5/10            |
| Veronica Sanderson             | 7.5/10            |
| Lucia Blinkley                 | 7.5/10            |
| Captain Hanley                 | 7/10              |
| Hillcroft/Kershaw individually | 6.5/10            |

### Verdict

The screenplay does **not** have an “everyone sounds like the writer” problem.

Its strongest voices are built around clear contrasts:

- **Logan:** instinct, aggression and cynical shorthand.
- **Malik:** education, restraint and analytical wit.
- **Audrey:** practical emotional truth.
- **Pulcinella:** calm transactional menace.
- **Sanderson:** polished public rhetoric hiding private fear.
- **Becker:** clinical detachment and dry sarcasm.
- **Lucia:** survival humour and streetwise self-possession.

The clearest area for improvement is not the two leads. **Logan and Malik already sound convincingly individual.** A targeted pass would be more useful for Hanley, Hillcroft, Kershaw and a few secondary officers, whose dialogue is sometimes defined more by their function than by an unmistakable personal voice.