



RISEING STAR

The Devil's Watch

Screenplay by Stephen Hall

The Story

Format: Crime

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Rising Star II is a tense neo-noir crime thriller that reunites veteran detective **Logan Ford** and his partner **Malik Edwards** when a devastating bombing destroys the home of Logan's neighbour and reopens a case he thought was long buried. The attack signals the return of **Peter Denton**, a dangerous killer previously suspected by Logan but never caught. Now Denton has resurfaced with a far more ambitious plan — manipulating public anger and political unrest to build a violent movement aimed at dismantling the system he believes has failed the people.

As bombings and targeted killings begin to spread across the city, Logan and Malik uncover a growing network of followers drawn to Denton's rhetoric of revolution. Among them are the volatile **Emily**, the calculated **Cheryl**, and the enigmatic **Tilly**, each playing a role in Denton's escalating campaign of violence. With institutions struggling to contain the chaos, Logan becomes determined to stop Denton before the uprising spirals out of control — even if doing so forces him to cross the line between justice and vengeance.

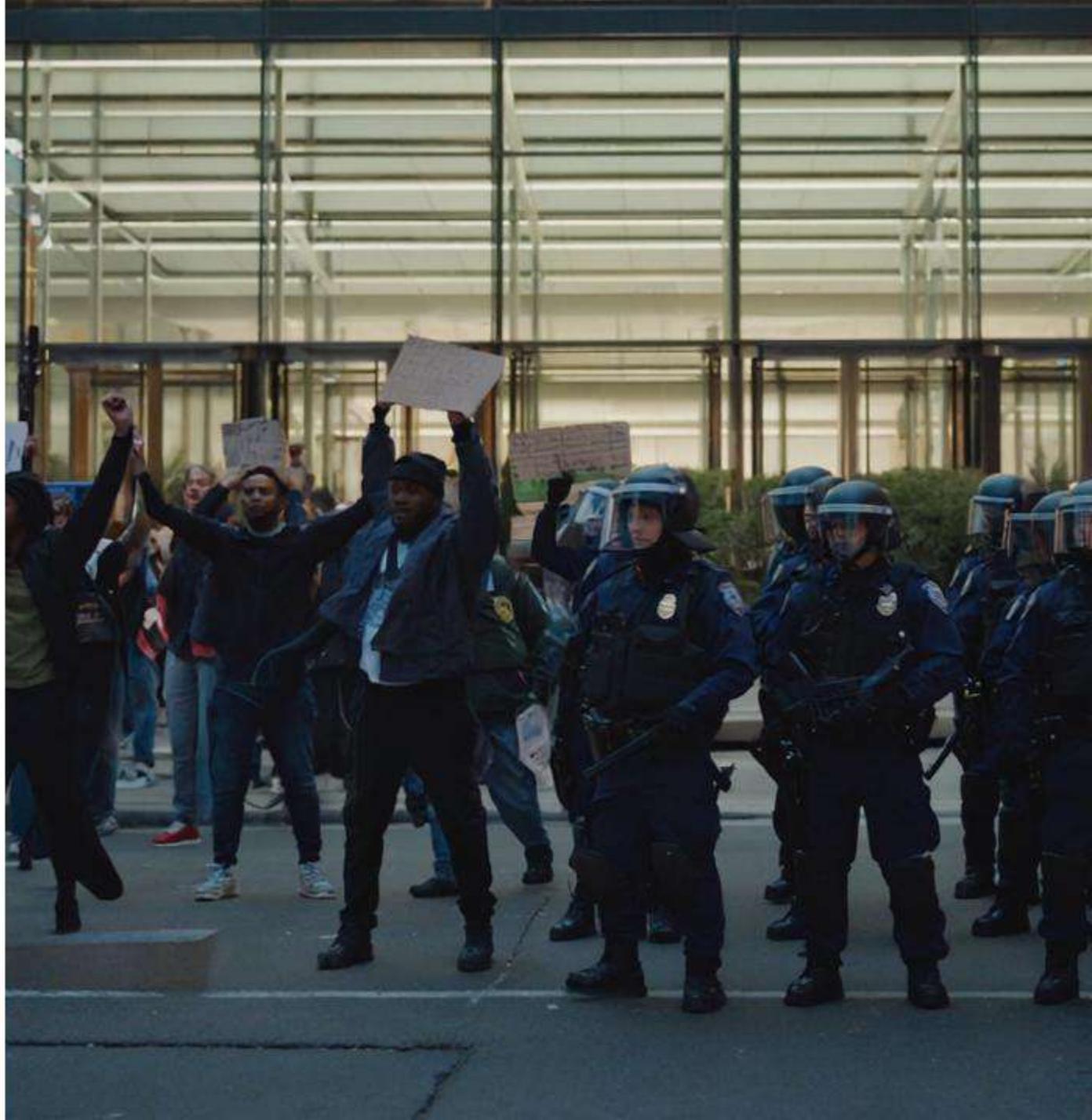
RIISING STAR II



Logline

When a deadly bombing shatters his neighbourhood, a weathered detective discovers a vengeful serial killer is inciting revolution across the city — forcing him to confront a rising body count, and a new generation ready to burn the system down.

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Tone, Genre and Style

Genre: Crime thriller / neo-noir political thriller

Tone: Dark, tense, and psychologically driven with escalating moral conflict and a sense of looming societal breakdown

Visual Style: 1980s urban realism expanding into political unrest — rain-soaked streets, protest crowds, smoky bars, and shadowy interiors contrasted with quiet suburban spaces suddenly ruptured by violence

Comparable Films: *Heat*, *Seven*, *The Conversation*, *JFK*

Rising Star II continues the neo-noir crime narrative through a darker and more volatile lens, shifting from a contained investigation into a broader conflict between law enforcement and an emerging extremist movement. The story remains grounded in psychological realism, following veteran detective Logan Ford and his partner Malik Edwards as they pursue Peter Denton — a charismatic and dangerous figure who transforms political frustration into a campaign of calculated violence. As bombings and targeted killings spread across the city, the investigation becomes less about solving individual crimes and more about preventing a movement from destabilising the institutions meant to hold society together.

Visually, the film retains the atmospheric grit of late-twentieth-century New York while expanding into a wider canvas of unrest and paranoia. Neon-lit bars, police precincts, and smoky apartments contrast with protest-filled streets, suburban neighbourhoods, and isolated rural hideouts where radicalisation takes root. The style emphasises tension over spectacle, using shadow, silence, and sudden bursts of violence to heighten unease. Rather than a conventional action thriller, the film unfolds as a slow tightening spiral — a story about ideology, manipulation, and the fragile boundary between justice and vengeance in a society beginning to fracture.

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Themes

- **Revolution and Manipulation** – What begins as political frustration is transformed into a violent movement, showing how charismatic figures can exploit genuine grievances to radicalise others and pursue personal vendettas.
- **Justice vs. Vengeance** – Logan Ford's pursuit of Peter Denton blurs the line between law enforcement and personal revenge, forcing him to confront how far he is willing to go to stop a man who has endangered his family and shaken his faith in the system.
- **Ideology and Radicalisation** – Denton's followers are drawn in through rhetoric, belonging, and anger, revealing how easily individuals searching for purpose can be pulled into extremist action.
- **Loyalty and Principle** – Malik Edwards must balance his loyalty to Logan with his own ethical boundaries, navigating a partnership where experience and instinct sometimes conflict with procedure and accountability.
- **The Fragility of Institutions** – As violence escalates and authorities struggle to respond, the film explores how quickly systems meant to maintain order can become overwhelmed by organised chaos and ideological extremism.
- **Charisma as Power** – Denton's calm intelligence and persuasive rhetoric allow him to command loyalty and obedience, demonstrating how influence and belief can be as dangerous as weapons.
- **Fear and Social Unrest** – Protests, public anger, and political tension create an atmosphere where fear spreads easily, allowing violence to hide within movements that claim to represent justice.
- **The Cycle of Violence** – Each act of retaliation fuels the next, suggesting that once violence becomes a political tool, it creates a chain reaction that is difficult to contain or reverse.

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The Characters

Logan Ford – A veteran New York detective worn down by years on the job, Logan Ford is tough, instinctive, and increasingly disillusioned with the institutions he once believed in. Beneath the gruff exterior lies a man struggling to balance duty, family, and the emotional toll of a career spent confronting violence and corruption. As Peter Denton’s campaign escalates and places Logan’s family in danger, his pursuit of justice begins to blur into something more personal. The further the system fails to contain Denton, the more Logan edges toward vigilantism — a dangerous path that threatens to consume the very principles he once fought to uphold.

Malik Edwards – Intelligent, composed, and increasingly confident in his role as a detective, Malik Edwards represents a new generation of policing shaped by education, discipline, and restraint. Working alongside Logan has hardened his instincts, but he remains deeply conscious of the ethical boundaries that define the badge. Privately, Malik lives with a secret that could threaten both his career and his relationship with Logan: his homosexuality, hidden in a department where masculinity and reputation carry real consequences. As the investigation deepens and tensions rise, Malik must navigate loyalty to his partner while confronting the personal truth he has long kept buried.

Captain Hanley – The seasoned captain of the precinct, Hanley is a pragmatic leader trying to maintain control in a department strained by politics, bureaucracy, and rising violence across the city. He understands the limits placed on policing by federal jurisdiction and public pressure, yet he also recognizes the value of Logan’s instincts and Malik’s discipline. Hanley often finds himself caught between protecting his detectives and enforcing the rules that keep the department intact. His leadership becomes a delicate balancing act as the Denton case escalates, forcing him to manage both the investigation and the volatile personalities pursuing it.

Peter Denton – Calm, intelligent, and quietly charismatic, Peter Denton is far more than a criminal mastermind; he is an ideologue who believes society itself is fundamentally corrupt. With a talent for persuasion and manipulation, he recruits followers drawn to his rhetoric of revolution and justice. Beneath his composed exterior lies a calculating strategist who sees violence not as chaos but as a necessary instrument of change. To Denton, every act of destruction is part of a broader design — dismantling the institutions he believes deserve to fall.

Emily Wishaw – Passionate, volatile, and fiercely loyal to Denton’s cause, Emily becomes one of the most committed members of his inner circle. Drawn in by Denton’s vision of rebellion and empowerment, she embraces the movement with an almost reckless intensity. Her actions reveal both the seductive power of radical ideology and the dangerous ease with which belief can turn into violence.

Cheryl Underwood – Calm, methodical, and quietly ruthless, Cheryl represents the operational backbone of Denton’s group. While others are motivated by anger or ideology, Cheryl approaches the movement with a cold practicality, carrying out actions with precision and discipline. Her loyalty appears unquestionable, yet her calculating nature suggests she may have motivations beyond simple devotion.

Tilly Foster – Quiet, perceptive, and unsettlingly composed, Tilly is perhaps the most enigmatic of Denton’s followers. Observing more than she speaks, she moves through the group with an almost eerie calm. Her presence hints at deeper motivations and hidden intelligence, making her both a trusted ally within the movement and an unpredictable wildcard within Denton’s plans.

Larry Drake – An ambitious FBI agent overseeing aspects of the Denton investigation, Larry Drake presents himself as cooperative while quietly pursuing his own agenda. Smooth, perceptive, and politically aware, he understands the value of information as leverage. His chance encounter with Malik in a gay bar reveals a shared secret life neither man can openly acknowledge, creating a subtle tension between them. Though Drake provides Logan and Malik with a list of names connected to Denton’s network, he deliberately withholds key details — manipulating the flow of information in order to maintain control of the case and advance his own position within the federal hierarchy.



3-Act Structure Summary

Act I – Return

A devastating explosion tears through a quiet suburban street, destroying the home of Logan Ford's neighbour and signalling the return of a ghost from his past — Peter Denton, a killer Logan once suspected but failed to stop. As protests erupt across the city and Denton begins quietly recruiting followers, Logan and Malik Edwards discover that the attack is only the beginning of a wider campaign. What initially appears to be an isolated act of revenge soon reveals the emergence of a radical movement preparing to challenge the system through violence.

Act II – Escalation

As targeted killings and bombings spread across the city, the investigation leads Logan and Malik into the heart of a growing extremist network built around Denton's ideology of revolution. His followers — Emily, Cheryl, and the enigmatic Tilly — carry out a series of calculated attacks designed to destabilise institutions and provoke public outrage. With jurisdictional tensions between local police and the FBI complicating the pursuit, Logan becomes increasingly obsessed with stopping Denton before the movement gathers unstoppable momentum.

Act III – Reckoning

With the city gripped by fear and Denton's campaign accelerating, Logan and Malik close in on the group's operations and the wider conspiracy driving it. As the investigation reaches its climax, the detectives must confront not only Denton but the consequences of the violent ideology he has unleashed. For Logan, the pursuit becomes deeply personal, forcing him to confront the thin line between justice and vengeance in a city where the fight to preserve order may require crossing the very boundaries meant to protect it.

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Mood Board



Denton sets out to cause destruction across the city



Emily plants a stolen gun to frame Terry Bridges



Denton and his followers spend a night camping before they murder Terry Bridges



Logan rises early to find a SWAT team about to raid Denton's house



Why This Film

Rising Star II explores a world where personal grievance, political frustration, and charismatic leadership collide to create a dangerous new form of extremism. Set against the tense atmosphere of 1980s New York, the film examines how anger and disillusionment can be weaponised by those willing to exploit them. What begins as a personal vendetta quickly evolves into something far more destabilising — a violent movement designed to challenge institutions and ignite public unrest. In a city already strained by distrust and inequality, the line between protest and revolution becomes increasingly fragile.

With its morally conflicted characters, escalating violence, and atmosphere of mounting paranoia, *Rising Star II* expands the neo-noir crime world of the original film into a broader political thriller. The story blends an intimate detective pursuit with the larger forces of ideology, manipulation, and social upheaval. At its core, the film is about how easily belief can be transformed into violence — and how the pursuit of justice can push those sworn to uphold the law dangerously close to becoming what they fight against.

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Status: Complete Feature Screenplay – Seeking Representation / Development

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“Rising Star II is an explosive, action-packed sequel where two determined detectives face their ultimate nemesis — a charismatic extremist manipulating revolutionary anger to deliver his own brutal version of justice”

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The Writer

Stephen Hall is a screenwriter based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Since December 2021, he has completed nine screenplays, including eight feature films and one television project, reflecting a strong commitment to long-form, character-driven storytelling.

His work has received international recognition, with awards from the Cannes World Film Festival, the RED Movie Awards, and the Austin International Film Festival. His scripts often explore moral tension, identity, and the psychological forces that shape human behaviour.

His genre interests include historical narratives, crime stories, and period drama, with a focus on textured worlds and thematically ambitious storytelling.

Alongside screenwriting, he spent over 25 years as a web developer, a background that informs a disciplined approach to structure and long-form creative development.

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