

Below is an updated feature screenplay beat sheet for Greatrex, a crime biopic / period pursuit story, with Greatrex as the antihero and Superintendent McCall as the lawman antagonist and agent of justice.

Beat Sheet: Greatrex

Beat	Approx. Page	Story Function	What Happens
Opening Image	1	Introduce Greatrex as a survivor and opportunist	John Henry Greatrex arrives at Port Phillip as a 19-year-old convict: filthy, shackled, but alert and calculating. By claiming he is an actor, he establishes performance, reinvention and deception as the tools of his survival.
Theme Stated	3-5	The moral question	Greatrex insists he is smart, not merely criminal. The story asks whether intelligence without conscience is talent or corruption. His conviction that he can outthink consequence becomes both his gift and fatal flaw.
Set-Up	1-12	Establish ambition, charm and fraud	Assigned to the Queen's Theatre, Greatrex manoeuvres himself onstage, gains status, and uses charm, forged documents and false cheques to fund another reinvention. Photography is seeded as the technology that may unlock his future.
Catalyst	12-14	His first major collapse	The McEnroe brothers confront Greatrex over a forged cheque. A violent shop altercation leads to court, exposing his fraud and sending him back into hard labour. Rather than reform, he learns he must become more skilful.
Debate	14-20	Can Greatrex endure punishment, or escape by cunning?	On the road gang, Greatrex refuses to accept his fate. He arranges for Keeler to injure his foot, gains clerical prison work, steals paperwork and engineers his removal from prison duty.
Break into Two	20-23	A larger life of reinvention	Greatrex escapes the convict trap and tells Henrién his fortune will not be realised there. Their exchange confirms he is still a fugitive. He meets Jessie in a mutually flirtatious encounter, while McCall is introduced in Glasgow as the emerging force of law.
B Story	23-33	Domestic respectability versus hidden criminality	The 1854 Garston sequence confirms Greatrex has returned from abroad. He builds the appearance of a family man and photographer, but lies about debts, sells equipment behind Jessie's back, abandons Hicks and moves the family from London to Glasgow.
Fun and Games	33-50	The promise of the premise: Greatrex as charismatic fraudster	In Glasgow, Greatrex becomes photographer, preacher, adulterer, debtor and manipulator. McCall is framed as a modern detective who believes crime changes and the law must adapt. Greatrex meets the Grimshaws, whose printing skills offer a far larger criminal opportunity.
Midpoint	50-60	Greatrex commits to the great forgery	Greatrex reveals the plan to use photography and printing to forge Union Bank of Scotland notes. The Grimshaws agree and the first successful note is produced. What began as survival and petty fraud becomes a national counterfeiting conspiracy.
Bad Guys Close In - Phase 1	60-66	The secret starts leaking	Elizabeth grows suspicious after hearing Greatrex and the Grimshaws in the basement, then finds the banknote image. Greatrex dismisses her with a cheque, removing a potential witness while creating another person harmed by his deception.
Bad Guys Close In - Phase 2	66-72	Private betrayals become pressure	The forged notes are divided. Greatrex sells up and prepares to leave with Jane, who presses him on Jessie. The Grimshaws test a note in Helensburgh as Greatrex's domestic and criminal lies begin to converge.
Bad Guys Close In - Phase 3	72-76	Criminal success becomes public danger	The forged notes enter circulation. At Pritchard's hanging, Greatrex preaches scripture among the crowd while McCall watches him, creating an early visual crossing between criminal performer and lawman before the case fully connects them.
Bad Guys Close In - Phase 4	76-82	The conspiracy cracks open	The Grimshaw brothers pass forged notes too visibly in Dalkeith and are caught with forged currency and gold. What Greatrex meant to be a controlled operation becomes a national police matter.
All Is Lost	82-90	Greatrex's network collapses	McCall takes charge, identifies a sophisticated conspiracy, and confronts political pressure to end it. Neilson's earlier Union Bank visit points toward Greatrex. Jessie gives McCall Jane's details and the Grimshaws' connection, then chooses her children over protecting John: 'We will survive.' Agnes confirms the copper plate evidence.
Dark Night of the Soul	90-96	Flight over accountability	Greatrex flees with Jane while the money bags become vulnerable. In London, he reveals the gold and forces an emotional choice: stay with him or abandon him. Jane chooses him, and Greatrex chooses America rather than accountability.
Break into Three	96-103	The pursuit becomes international	McCall follows the trail from Scotland to London and Southampton. He misses Greatrex, discovers the bags are bound for New York, secures cooperation from American authorities and turns the investigation into an international manhunt.
Finale - Phase 1: False Victory	103-110	Greatrex believes he has escaped	Greatrex reaches New York, adopts clerical respectability and tells Jane they are beyond the reach of the law. He believes distance, disguise and reinvention have beaten McCall.
Finale - Phase 2: McCall Finds Him	110-112	Justice closes in	McCall uses advertisements to draw out a photographer and a young assistant, then follows the lead to Jane. With Neilson's help, he spots Greatrex and Jane watching a parade from a first-floor window above Canal Street.
Finale - Phase 3: Physical Confrontation	112-117	Charm fails; only brute survival remains	McCall raids the apartment. Greatrex attacks Thomson, escapes into Canal Street, steals a cart and triggers a New York chase. McCall pursues on horseback, leaps onto the cart and finally subdues Greatrex in an alley.
Final Image	117-120	The mask is stripped away - but the compulsion remains	Greatrex emerges in irons, bloodied and exposed. Back in Glasgow he is placed in a cell opposite the Grimshaw brothers. Even defeated, he grins and says he has a plan, proving that punishment has not cured the conman's compulsion to reinvent himself.

One-sentence structural summary

Greatrex tracks a charismatic ex-convict who repeatedly reinvents himself through charm, fraud, religion, business and romance, until an ambitious banknote-forgery scheme draws Superintendent McCall into an international pursuit that ends in New York.

Logline

After arriving in Australia as a convicted thief, a brilliant and unscrupulous conman reinvents himself through lies, fraud and forgery, but when his ambitions expand across continents, a relentless Scottish detective closes in, forcing him to confront the human cost of a life built on deception.