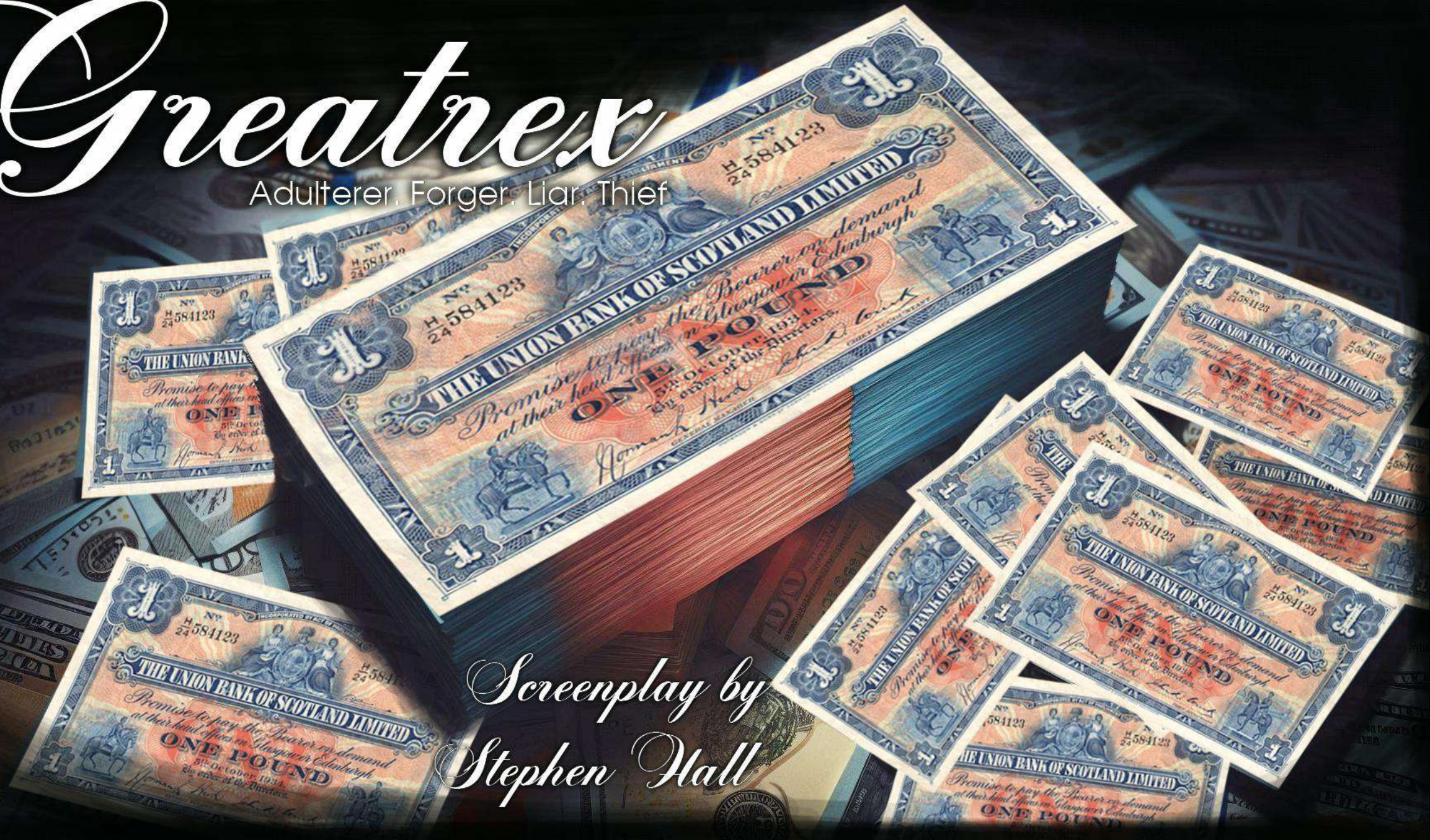


Greatrex

Adulterer, Forger, Liar, Thief

Screenplay by
Stephen Hall



Intro

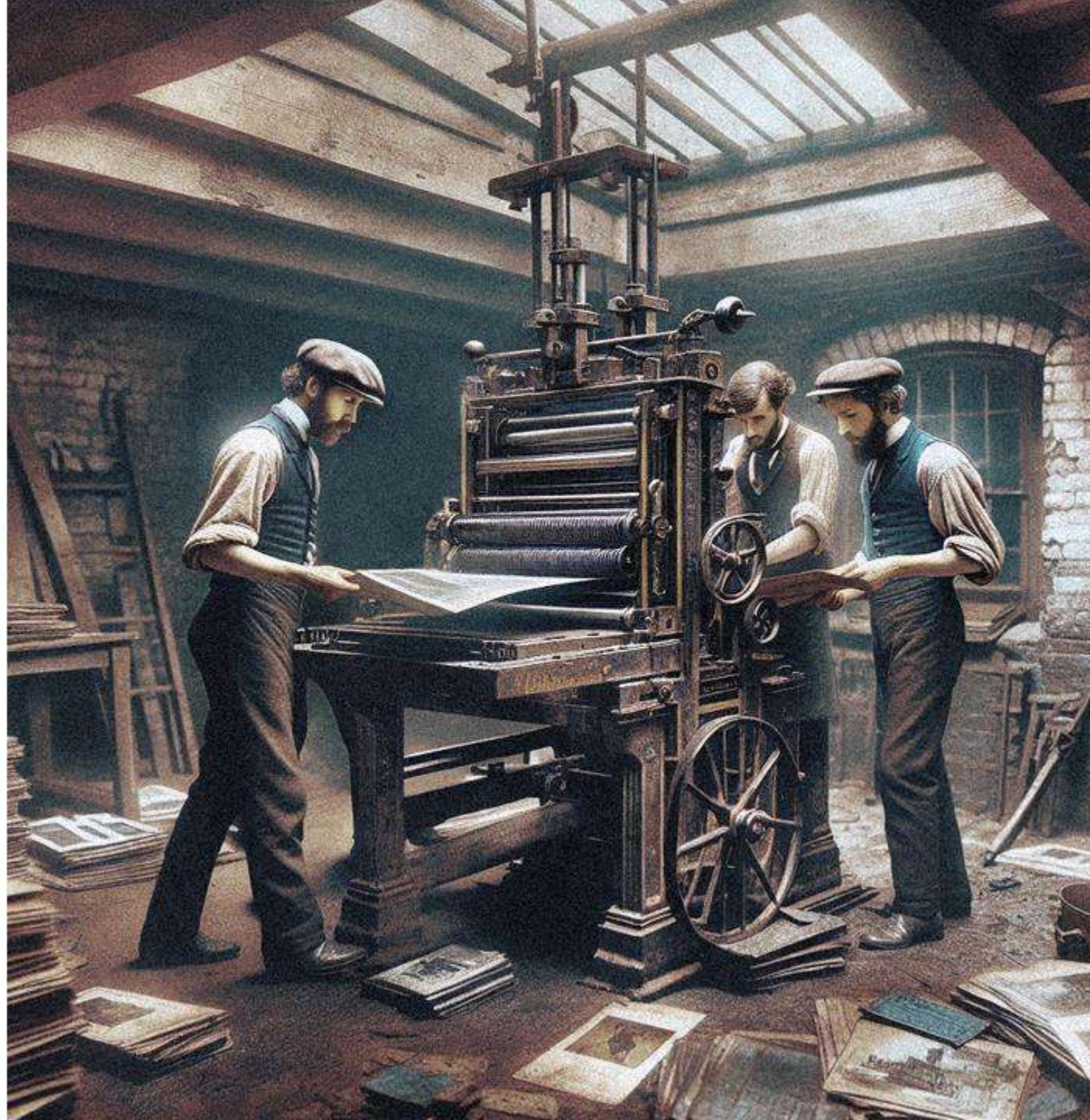
FORMAT: Full Length Feature

Pages: 109

Comp: Catch Me If You Can meets Sherlock Holmes

Logline: Liar, thief, and adulterer Greatrex devises a scheme to forge bank notes in 1866 with the help of the Grimshaw brothers, but detective McCall is on their trail in an adventure of love and greed that spans three continents before embroiling the president of the United States.

GREATREX



The Story

Nineteen-year-old convict John Greatrex arrives in Port Phillip, Australia in 1845 and is sent to work in the Queen's Theatre as an all-round dogsbody. On his first day, he steals a one-pound note. In time, he becomes an actor and opens a shop, but having passed a dud cheque for goods, he is visited during the night by two men. A violent fight ensues and he is convicted to work on the roads in the chain gang.

From there, he forges documents to have him released early and, on meeting Jessie, he returns to England. By the time of his return, Jessie has given birth to the first of their three children. Soon, he has set up a photographic studio but it is not long before he is racking up debts and philandering. With his family, he escapes to Glasgow where another studio is opened. Here, he hires Jane Weir and an affair begins.

Meanwhile, he meets the Grimshaw brothers who work in the linen trade as an engraver and printer, while during the same period a bank clerk, for the Union Bank of Scotland, produces a new one-pound note inquiring if the signature could be forged. This meeting sows the seeds of an idea for Greatrex to forge the notes and with the help of the Grimshaws they eventually produce £1500 in fake notes.

With the relationship with his wife deteriorating and the affair deepening while continuing to rack up debts, Greatrex plans to escape. With the fake notes split amongst the three perpetrators, the brothers begin spending the money but are captured in Dalkeith, while Greatrex heads for Aberdeen where he has arranged to meet Jane where two travel bags have been despatched. On his arrival, the bags have not been delivered but Greatrex has other problems as he discovers the arrest of the brothers and now the police are on his tail in the form of Superintendent Alexander McCall, a rising officer in the force.



The Story

Greatrex and Jane head to London, requesting the undelivered bags be despatched to the hotel where they are staying. After spending a couple of days in London, and the bags still not delivered, the fugitive buys tickets for New York. It is arranged that he will leave first and Jane will follow two days later on the chance the bags will be delivered.

By now, McCall is in Aberdeen and with the knowledge that London was their destination. By the time McCall and his assistant arrive in London, the police just miss Jane by minutes as she sails to meet her lover.

But the bags are still in London and due to be sent in the coming days.

The police make arrangements to sail with the bags and, on their arrival, McCall is required to meet President Andrew Johnson to have the warrant signed for the arrest of Greatrex while a sting is concocted to draw out the perpetrator by placing adverts in the papers for a photographer and a photographer's assistant.

Sure enough, Jane responds to one of the adverts and the police stake out their location.

As a large crowd watches a brass band, the couple are spotted watching the band from a window and the police force their way into the flat. A struggle ensues and Greatrex escapes, chased by McCall through the streets where he is eventually captured.

McCall returns to Glasgow and is celebrated as a victorious figure in crime fighting.



GREATREX



The Characters

John Greatrex

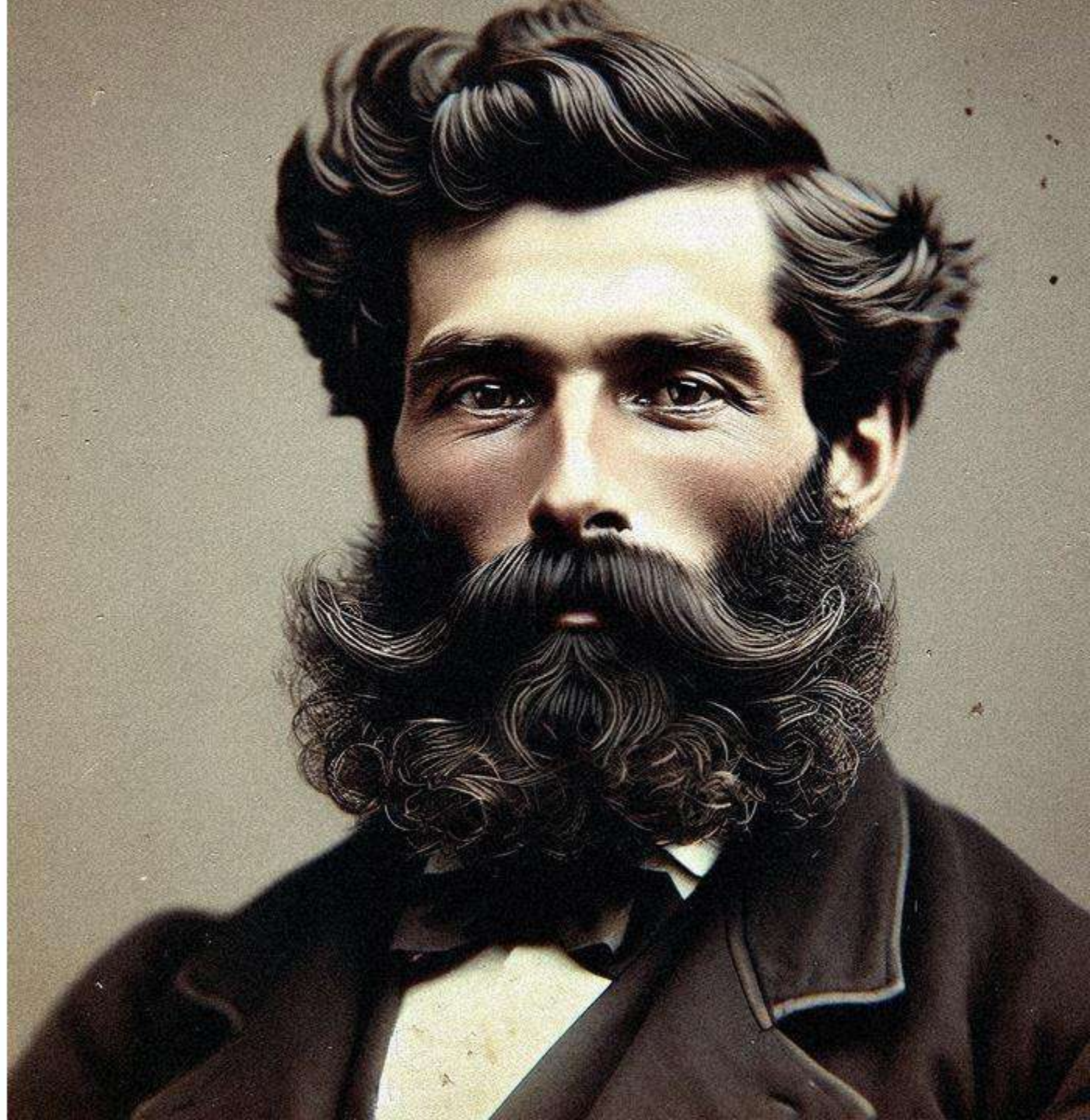
Greatrex possesses all the attributes of a man not to be trusted. A thief, adulterer, liar and forger, he is driven by his own sense of greed and self-preservation.

A great orator, he blends in seamlessly on both stage and at the pulpit with the ability to instil a misconceived trust by others in him.

At six feet in height, he stands out among the crowd and with his good looks and the gift of conversation, he attracts the attention of the opposite sex.

Yet for all his indiscretions and criminality, he is a very clever and intelligent man.

GREATREX



The Characters

Jessie Greatrex

Suffering wife of Greatrex, Jessie is a quiet soul dedicated to the raising of her children and keeping a good home.

The fact that she gives birth to a child while at sea suggests there is an inner strength, which comes to the fore later in the story when her husband's indiscretions, failed ventures and criminal enterprises catch up with him.

Even for the downtrodden there comes a moment when enough is enough and she becomes the catalyst in capturing her fugitive husband.

GREATREX



The Characters

Jane Weir

Jane Weir is twenty-one years of age and both in love and in awe with Greatrex. Overcome by his powers of persuasion, she succumbs to his desires and is willing to follow him blindly on his ventures.

Vulnerable and insecure about her relationship with her older lover, she tries hard to please him as she follows his instructions without question, even if that means breaking the law.

Pretty and innocent in looks, she is either stupid or ignorant of what Greatrex is up to.

GREATREX



The Characters

Sewell Grimshaw

Thirty-two-year-old Sewell, like his brother Thomas, is from Rochdale. A die cutter in the linen trade where he produces engravings for the patterns on the materials, he is a skilled worker, but hard times leave him vulnerable to the plan devised by Greatrex.

Overcome by greed, he takes little persuasion to contribute to the creation of the forged notes which will ultimately send him to prison risking a secure future for his wife and child.

There is irony in that it is his Christian beliefs that introduce him to Greatrex.

GREATREX



The Characters

Thomas Grimshaw

Thomas at thirty-six years of age is the older of the two brothers and works as a cylinder printer, so his skills are useful for the plan that unfolds.

Single, he has no worries about breaking the law but his indiscretions at spending money ultimately bring about the capture of both him and his brother.

When confronted by his sister-in-law he is prepared to lie to ensure the plan is fulfilled, thus emphasising his willingness to participate rather than allow rationality to see sense.



The Characters

Superintendent Alexander McCall

McCall is a new breed of detective. With a degree in law, he is an extremely clever individual and just who is required to capture Greatrex.

Dogged, confident and driven, he will not be put off by obstacles such as distance in his desire to capture his fugitive.

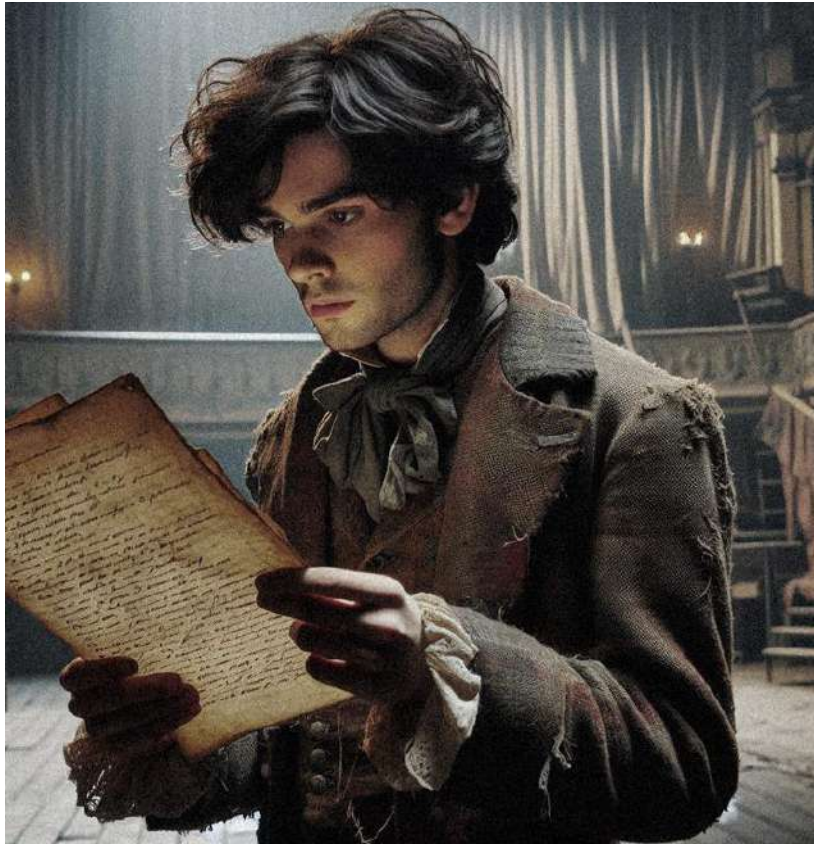
There is also an element of cunning in his approach when faced with trying to find Greatrex in New York.

Introduced to the story when he receives an award, he is a man in the right place at the right time.

GREATREX



Scenes



Greatrex is convicted and sent to Australia where he works as a dogsbody in the Queen's Theatre, but an incident occurs that offers him the opportunity to act on stage.



Greatrex is convicted of a second crime and sent to work on the roads.



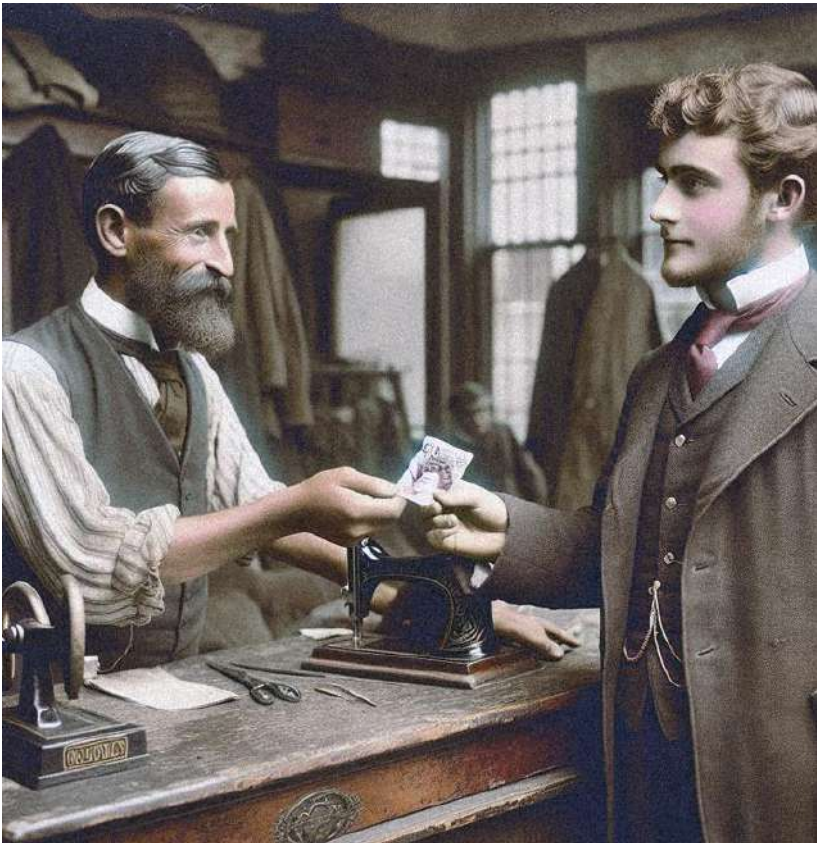
We are introduced to Superintendent Alexander McCall when he receives an award. Soon he will be on the trail of Greatrex.



Scenes



Greatrex, on escaping London and a series of debts, arrives in Glasgow with Jessie to open a new photographic studio.



The Grimshaw brothers visit Dalkeith where they pass fake notes.



Greatrex is on the run as the law begins to catch up with him.

The Writer

I started writing my first screenplay in December 2021 based on the true story: Burke and Hare – The West Port Murders then in September 2023, I began the first draft of Inside Reach, a story and genre very different from my first piece of work.

By August 2024 I was ready to return to this second screenplay and complete the first draft. These two projects and the awards culminated from the first, encouraged me to continue with my third screenplay, Greatrex.

I have three other projects lined up for in the future.

Stephen Hall

www.hereandback.co.uk/screenplays

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INSIDE
reach

