

## GOING UNDERGROUND

### Film Bible

**Format:** Feature Film

**Genre:** Fantasy Comedy / Psychedelic Time-Slip Adventure

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### Logline

Three sixty-year-old Edinburgh friends descend into a tourist tunnel beneath the Royal Mile and emerge in a vivid, heightened 1984 version of the city, where they meet their younger selves, tumble through clubs, chases, pop-cultural absurdity and criminal chaos, and discover that their wild return to youth may have unfolded in the space of a single half-hour trip.

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### Short Pitch

*Going Underground* is a comic Edinburgh time-slip fantasy that doubles as a psychedelic nostalgia trip. Danny, Peter and Ricky are three older friends who go below the city on a historical tour, drink a mysterious **Elixir 1328**, step through a tunnel door and find themselves in a stylised 1984 where Buddy the dog can talk, punk nights still matter, and the city feels like memory, hallucination and pop culture all at once. As they spend one increasingly chaotic day and night with their twenty-one-year-old selves, they are pulled into a comic caper involving stolen jewels hidden in a stuffed panda, a biker gang, police pursuit, football-fan mobs, lyric-driven dialogue, and a race to reach the right tunnel before the portal home closes.

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### Project Overview

At its most immediate level, *Going Underground* is a fantasy comedy about three older men who accidentally travel back to 1984 Edinburgh and get to encounter the city, culture and versions of themselves they thought they had left behind. It has a crowd-pleasing engine: a mysterious underground tour, a talking dog, a student flat, an alternative club, a biker gang, a stuffed panda full of stolen jewels, and a desperate scramble to get back before noon.

But the film is deliberately more layered than that. It is designed to function simultaneously as:

- a **literal comic time-slip**
- a **psychedelic altered-state adventure**
- a **pop-cultural memoryscape**
- a **caricature-rich comic fantasia**
- and a **chase-driven farce**

The psychedelic undertone is built into the project's DNA. The attraction is called **Living Scottish Discoveries** — a clear wink toward **LSD**. The men are served a strange **Elixir 1328** before entering the tunnel. Later they smoke joints with their younger selves, drink **magic mushroom wine**, hallucinate vividly in the club, and move through a world whose logic becomes increasingly dreamlike and chemically suggestive. In the final moments, Danny says, "**That was some trip,**" and the clock reveals it is only **midday**. They entered at **11:30am**. Barely half an hour has passed. That reveal does not cancel the fantasy. It reframes it, letting the audience hold the story as magical event, collective hallucination, or some joyous hybrid of both.

The title is central to the design. **Going Underground** works on multiple levels:

- the men literally go **underground** into the tunnels where the adventure begins
- they descend into **The Underground** club and the subcultural nightlife of 1984

- they must return **underground** again via the **Scotland Street Tunnel**
- and psychologically they go underground into memory, instinct, youth and buried parts of themselves

The title therefore does plot work, tonal work and thematic work all at once.

The film also embraces a knowingly heightened comic world built from **caricature, homage, parody and musical reference**. The 1984 Edinburgh of the story is not meant to feel like strict documentary reconstruction. It is a **remembered, remixed, chemically heightened pop-version** of the past. The fantasy-writing young woman in the Elephant House clearly echoes **J.K. Rowling. Lenny**, the church-hall biker-convenor spreading the “Word of Zep,” functions as a priest-like comic echo of  **Lemmy. Buddy on the bicycle with the panda in the basket** knowingly evokes **E.T. Dame Conceitayda Lott** is herself a walking pun and comic emblem. These are not stray gags. They are evidence that the film treats 1984 as a place filtered through memory, records, movies, celebrity ghosts and altered consciousness.

Finally, the story’s momentum is driven by increasingly extravagant **chase chaos**. Once the panda becomes the accidental carrier of the Blood Stones, the film accelerates into overlapping pursuit: by bikers, by aggrieved skinheads, by football fans, and eventually by police. These chases are essential, not incidental. They express the manic escalation of the trip. The deeper the men go into 1984, the more the city itself becomes an obstacle course of adrenaline, farce and barely containable motion.

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## Why This Film

*Going Underground* offers a rare blend of comic accessibility and tonal distinctiveness. It has the clear hook of a time-slip comedy, the repeat-viewing pleasures of a reference-rich cult film, and the emotional spine of a story about aging, male friendship and rediscovering what has been buried under adult life. It is funny, kinetic, musically saturated and emotionally honest without becoming sentimental.

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## Story Engine

### Core Premise

Three Edinburgh men in later life descend into a tourist tunnel, drink a strange elixir and emerge into a heightened 1984, where they meet their younger selves, revisit the underground culture they once belonged to, and get swept into a jewel-chase caper before trying to find the tunnel home.

### Narrative Shape

The film unfolds in four movements.

#### 1. Descent

The men separate from their wives, enter **Living Scottish Discoveries**, drink the **Elixir**, and descend into the tunnels beneath the Royal Mile.

#### 2. Emergence

They step through the cavern door and emerge into a stylised 1984 Edinburgh where Buddy can talk and the world feels animated, heightened and unstable. They visit their old student flat and meet their younger selves.

#### 3. Immersion and Escalation

They throw themselves into the pleasures of 1984 — the club, the music, the drugs, the girlfriends, the student-life energy — while the Blood Stones subplot turns the panda into a comic chase magnet.

#### 4. Return and Reframe

The altered map points them toward the **Scotland Street Tunnel** and a noon portal. They race through the city, outrunning bikers, fans and police, and when they finally return they discover only half an hour has passed.

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## Main Characters

## **Danny Albright**

Danny is the most impulsive and appetite-driven of the trio. He rediscovers youth as release: movement, noise, risk, attitude and fun. He is the man most intoxicated by the return and least interested in over-explaining it. Danny supplies the film's rebellious energy and its closing tone. His "That was some trip" line lands because he is the one most willing to accept the experience emotionally before analysing it intellectually.

## **Peter Wright**

Peter is anxious, physically cautious and permanently self-managing. He worries about dust, breathing, his back and consequences, which makes him both one of the film's funniest contrasts to the madness around him and one of its most touching. 1984 briefly seems to release him from bodily decline, but it also exposes how much of his adult identity has been built around control.

## **Ricky Newman**

Ricky is the warmest and most open-hearted of the trio, the one who still likes the idea of adventure and keeps trying to hold the group together. As Buddy's owner, he also inherits much of the practical chaos, because the dog and panda keep detonating events around them. Ricky's relationship to the past is more tender than Danny's and less fearful than Peter's. He is the emotional centre of the group.

## **Buddy**

Buddy is the film's secret weapon. Once in 1984, he can speak — sharply, intelligently and often with more common sense than the humans, though he is also ruled by appetite, instinct and mischief. He is both commentator and accelerant. His attachment to the panda keeps the chase alive; his willingness to chase footballs, steal bicycles and ignore instructions keeps the story moving. Buddy is the unleashed id of the group.

## **Young Danny, Young Peter and Young Ricky**

The younger trio are not just mirrors; they are confrontations. They embody the age at which all three men still felt open to possibility, style, romance, friendship and drift. Their presence keeps the film from becoming one-way nostalgia. The older men see what they lost; the younger men glimpse what they become.

## **Angel, Beth and Eloise**

The younger women ground the 1984 world in emotional life and social texture. They are not decorative nostalgia figures. They remind the older men that the past was made of real relationships, not just stylised atmosphere. Their reactions also help sell the talking dog and older-selves premise with comic force.

## **Baba Fatt**

Baba Fatt is the grand comic antagonist: melodramatic, vain, flamboyant and far less competent than he imagines. He steals the Blood Stones, hides them in the panda, loses them through absurd incompetence, then launches an increasingly ridiculous campaign to recover them. He brings threat, but always in a register suited to farce.

## **Dame Conceitayda Lott**

Conceitayda is one of the clearest markers of the film's comic register. Her name is itself a punning caricature, signalling that the world allows figures to exist at the level of emblem and comic flourish as much as naturalism. She operates as both fussy landlady and grand aristocratic villainess, helping the film hover between student-memory comedy and fairy-tale caper.

## **Lenny**

Lenny, the church-hall biker convenor spreading the "Word of Zep," is a priest-like comic caricature of **Lemmy**. He deepens the sense that this 1984 is not literal history but pop-cultural recollection filtered through music, mythology and absurdity.

## **The Young Woman in the Elephant House**

This figure functions as a comic caricature of **J.K. Rowling** before fame, writing fantasy in a café while Buddy casually advises her against it. The scene is a perfect example of the script's referential logic: affectionate, heightened and woven naturally into the dreamlike 1984 tapestry.

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## Supporting Characters of Note

### Mrs Tillyworth

The bikers' elderly landlady is one of the film's great comic mechanisms. By cleaning their flat and throwing out the panda, she accidentally launches the entire chase plot. She is domestic tidiness as chaos trigger.

### The Old Man / The Rastafarian

These two figures govern the tunnel logic. The old guide provides the Elixir and first map; the Rastafarian later reorients the route home through the altered map and Scotland Street Tunnel. Both feel folkloric, sly and gently psychedelic rather than explained.

### Baba Noob / PC Clutterbuck

The novice biker who is secretly an undercover cop adds another comic pressure point to the caper. His walkie-talkie updates reinforce the sense that everyone is pursuing everyone else from slightly ridiculous angles.

### The Mynah Bird / Gowan / Boldie / The Skinheads

These figures thicken the comic world and give the 1984 city extra texture — surreal, subcultural, theatrical and unstable in exactly the right way.

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## Tone

### What It Feels Like

The tone is playful, anarchic, referential, nostalgic and progressively more breathless. The film should feel like a comic descent into a city-sized bad idea that somehow becomes emotionally useful. It is funny first, but never empty. Beneath the mayhem is the ache of older men rediscovering the selves they thought had vanished.

### Psychedelic Undertone

The psychedelic layer is built into the film's architecture. **Living Scottish Discoveries**, **Elixir 1328**, "enjoy your trip," joints, mushroom wine, visual distortions, Buddy talking and the half-hour time reveal all cue the audience to treat the experience as chemically and psychologically charged. The film should preserve the ambiguity: maybe it is magic, maybe it is a trip, maybe both.

### Caricature / Celebrity Layer

The film knowingly uses caricature and celebrity echo as part of its comic grammar. The Elephant House writer, Lenny, Conceitayda and even the biker names all signal that this 1984 is not strict realism but a **pop-cultural, psychedelic memoryscape**. Real-world associations are filtered through affectionate satire and heightened comic logic.

### Parody / Homage Layer

The script openly embraces homage and near-parody. The clearest example is the **E.T.-like image** of Buddy cycling with the panda in the basket and soaring across the cityscape. These references help define the world as one where memory is not only personal but cinematic. The men are revisiting the past through the films, songs and imagery that helped form how that past is remembered.

### Chase / Adrenaline Structure

The second-half rhythm is built around escalating pursuit. Once the panda becomes the container for the Blood Stones, the story accelerates through overlapping chases by bikers, skinheads, football fans and police. These sequences are not

decorative. They are how the film expresses the manic acceleration of the trip. The deeper the men go into 1984, the faster, louder and less controllable the city becomes.

### **Music as World, Not Decoration**

Music is central to the film's identity. It shapes the atmosphere, the subcultural world and even the comic language. Songs do not simply accompany the story; they permeate it. The script uses records, club tracks and lyric consciousness to make 1984 feel like a city partly built from music. That reaches an especially playful expression in the comic exchange between **Baba Fatt** and **Julius Featheringham**, which knowingly riffs through "**I Heard It Through the Grapevine**" lyrics. That scene makes clear that pop songs are part of the storytelling grammar, not just the soundtrack.

### **Needle-Drop Note**

As a tonal capstone, **The Jam's "Going Underground"** feels like the ideal opening or end-credits needle drop. At the opening, it announces the film's attitude and velocity. At the end, it pays off the title's layered meaning after the audience has experienced the tunnel, the club, the return route and the "trip." My instinct is that it may be strongest over the **final credits**.

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## **Comps**

### **Comparable Films / Lanes**

The film sits in a blended lane:

- **Back to the Future** for time-slip encounter with younger selves
- **Withnail and I** for British intoxicated absurdism
- **Human Traffic** for chemically heightened social euphoria
- **Yellow Submarine** or psychedelic fantasy for visual and referential elasticity
- broad British caper farce for the biker / fan / police chase escalation

### **Positioning Statement**

*Going Underground* is a **comic Edinburgh time-slip fantasy that doubles as a psychedelic, pop-cultural nostalgia trip**, blending youth-memory, caricature, homage, musical language and escalating chase farce into one exuberant ride.

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## **World of the Film**

### **Edinburgh as Portal City**

The story depends on Edinburgh being layered, buried and unstable in the right way. The Royal Mile, closes, underground passages, student flats, clubs, football grounds and tunnels all make the city feel like a place where different eras are stacked beneath one another. Edinburgh is not backdrop; it is the perfect portal city.

### **1984 as Pop-Memory, Not Documentary**

The film's 1984 is stylised, heightened and culturally remixed. It is not meant to feel like exact reconstruction. It is the past as remembered through records, subculture, films, celebrity ghosts and intoxicated exaggeration. That is why caricatures, lyric-play and cinematic homage belong naturally in the piece.

### **The Underground Spaces**

The tunnel, the club and the Scotland Street Tunnel are linked ritual spaces. Each descent takes the men further beneath ordinary life and deeper into another state — historical, emotional, chemical or all three.

### **The City as Obstacle Course**

By the second half, Edinburgh becomes a kinetic playground of pursuit. Streets, stairways, stadium aisles, pubs, flats and tunnels all feed the film's comic momentum. The geography should feel tangible enough for the chases to matter and heightened enough for them to become exhilarating set pieces.

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## Thematic Positioning

### Nostalgia as Intoxication

The film treats nostalgia as a kind of high. The men do not simply remember youth; they become immersed in it. It is euphoric, seductive, chemically suggestive and impossible to sustain.

### Buried Youth

The younger selves are not ghosts. They are dormant versions of the men still living underneath routine, marriage, physical decline and habit. Going underground is therefore also a return to buried vitality and possibility.

### Memory as Cultural Remix

The past here is not neutral recall. It is filtered through subculture, songs, movies, caricature and comic exaggeration. That is why celebrity echoes, lyric riffs and homage belong in the story: memory is already referential. The film simply makes that visible.

### Chaos as Awakening

The escalating chases are more than comic spectacle. They are the physical expression of the men's reanimation. What begins as nostalgic indulgence becomes a city-wide surge of adrenaline that forces them to feel present, panicked and alive again.

### Real Time vs Experienced Time

The final reveal that only half an hour has passed is one of the film's central thematic moves. It suggests that emotional reckoning, intoxication, fantasy and memory can stretch inner experience far beyond clock time.

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## Future-Facing Positioning

*Going Underground* works best as a **self-contained feature** with a complete emotional arc and a delightfully open final interpretation. The title pays off on multiple levels, the journey resolves, and the midday reveal sends the audience out debating what really happened without requiring continuation.

Its strongest future-facing value is as a **cult, repeat-viewing fantasy comedy**. The film invites rewatching because of its clue structure, references, lyric jokes, caricatures and layered final meaning. It is the kind of project that can build affection because audiences enjoy both the ride and the decoding.

The cleanest market positioning is:

- a standalone fantasy comedy
  - a music-rich Edinburgh cult film
  - and a project with enough reference density and tonal flair to reward repeat viewing
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## Closing Statement

*Going Underground* is a funny, heartfelt and formally playful film about what happens when three older men descend beneath the city and find the selves they thought they had left behind still alive underground. It works as time-slip fantasy, psychedelic trip, pop-cultural memoryscape, musical comedy and chase farce all at once. Most importantly, it earns its final ambiguity: after all the tunnels, clubs, drugs, bikers, football fans, police, pandas, lyric gags and younger

selves, the revelation that only thirty minutes have passed transforms the whole film into one perfect question — was it magic, was it chemical, or was it simply the only way these men could remember how to feel alive again?