

Below is a **feature screenplay beat sheet** for ***Rising Star***, an 1980s New York crime thriller with two linked engines: the “Rising Star” drug investigation and a ritualistic vigilante/serial-killer thread that exposes corruption around cops, organised crime, and politics.

Beat Sheet: *Rising Star*

Beat	Approx. Page	Story Function	What Happens
Opening Image	1–2	Introduce Logan as a worn-down old-school cop	Detective Logan Ford chases a suspect through 1986 New York but is mocked by uniformed officers for being out of shape. He still gets results, but the image is of a tough cop whose methods and body are both fraying.
Set-Up	2–17	Establish Logan’s world and flaws	Logan is disorganised, aggressive, mocked by colleagues, and brutal in interrogation. At home, Audrey is tired of his drinking and absence. He meets new neighbour Peter Denton, who has moved from Philadelphia. At work, Logan is assigned a new partner, Malik Edwards, a well-educated “rising star” Logan instinctively resents.
Catalyst	6–8	The drug enters the story	Darren tells Logan about a new party drug called Rising Star , describing it as euphoric and popular. He gives up the name Giacomo Pulcinella, linking the drug to organised crime.
Theme Stated	15–17	Old instincts versus new methods	Logan dismisses Malik as a college boy who thinks the badge is a stepping stone. Malik pushes back, making the central professional conflict clear: street experience versus intelligence, ego versus partnership.
Parallel Set-Up	17–31	Reveal the corruption network	Politician Robert Sanderson is tied to Pulcinella and development corruption. Dirty cops Hillcroft and Kershaw shake down a street dealer, seize Rising Star pills, and pass them back to Pulcinella. Pulcinella later supplies Sanderson with Lucia Blinkley at the Chelmsford Hotel, where Lucia dies after taking pills. Pulcinella covers it up and dumps the body.
Break into Two	32–38	Logan and Malik take the Lucia case	Lucia’s body is found near the waterfront. Logan notes she was cleaned and dumped elsewhere. Agnes Blinkley reports her daughter missing, identifying Lucia by her mole and flower tattoo. The case becomes personal and procedural rather than just another drug death.
B Story	32–76	Logan and Malik become partners	Malik is initially treated as a burden, but he proves sharp and emotionally grounded. The two bond through the Lucia case, the death of Malik’s former partner from AIDS, and a dinner at Logan’s home, where Audrey recognises Malik as a good influence.
Fun and Games	39–52	The investigation opens the city’s rot	The coroner identifies PMMA/PMA as the likely cause of Lucia’s death and notes she was pregnant. Logan and Malik find Lucia’s diary entry, “CH. Eight p.m.,” and a Chelmsford Hotel card. At the hotel, staff deny knowing her while Hillcroft and Kershaw appear too conveniently, confirming something is wrong.
Midpoint	52–59	A second crime reframes the story	Hillcroft is murdered in a grotesque staged killing: throat cut, eyes removed, “LITTLE PIGGY” sprayed on the wall, and Rising Star pills placed in his mouth. Logan connects the staging to unsolved Philadelphia murders, making this bigger than Lucia’s death.

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Bad Guys Close In	59–76	The conspiracy and killer both tighten	Logan follows Kershaw to Pulcinella, proving the dead cop was tied to the mob. Malik interviews Lucia’s social worker, Richard Evans, and then checks her ex, Michael Reardon, who is too broken by heroin to be the killer. The investigation keeps circling back to Chelmsford, Pulcinella, Rising Star, and the hidden client who was with Lucia.
All Is Lost	76–101	The body count escalates	The killer continues moving through the corrupt chain. Pulcinella is attacked and dies, but before death he gives Malik the clue “Blinkley... revenge.” Logan realises they are not simply chasing a drug ring; someone is punishing everyone connected to Lucia’s death and cover-up.
Dark Night of the Soul	101–106	Logan follows the wrong instinct	Under pressure and seeing the Philadelphia connection, Logan suspects his neighbour Peter Denton. But Denton mentions watching Sanderson on TV, which makes Logan rethink the case. Logan checks Christina’s recorded tape and notices Sanderson’s diamond American flag pin — the same kind of pin Harvey found after cleaning the Chelmsford suite.
Break into Three	104–106	Malik finds the real killer’s trail	Malik gets the DNA result identifying Lucia’s unborn child’s father. He searches Richard Evans’s apartment and finds research, Philadelphia murder material, photos from the Chelmsford Hotel, and evidence pointing to Sanderson and Lucia. The social worker is revealed as the avenger/killer, not Denton.
Finale — Phase 1: Sanderson is cornered	106–112	The political mask collapses	Sanderson panics after Pulcinella’s death and tries to flee. Logan and Malik converge on Sanderson’s home, where the truth of Lucia’s death, pregnancy, and the cover-up finally reaches the politician’s doorstep.
Finale — Phase 2: Logan confronts Evans	112–114	The avenger turns on the last target	Evans, dressed as the killer, attacks inside Sanderson’s house. Logan is wounded during the struggle and asks why Evans is doing it. Evans answers with one word: “Retribution.” Malik arrives and shoots Evans before he can kill Logan.
Finale — Phase 3: Public reckoning	114	The corrupt are exposed	Sanderson and Veronica are escorted away as police lights flash. Logan survives, badly injured, and Malik gets him to medical help. The case has broken open the link between politics, Pulcinella, dirty cops, Rising Star, Lucia, and the cover-up.
Final Image	115–116	The real darkness remains next door	Logan, Audrey, Christina, and Malik watch Callum play baseball, suggesting Logan is trying to return to family life. But the script cuts to Peter Denton’s bedroom, where he hides a jar containing human eyes behind a Philadelphia Orchestra poster. Denton was not the Lucia killer — but he may be the true Philadelphia killer after all.

One-sentence structural summary

Rising Star follows battered NYPD detective Logan Ford and ambitious new partner Malik Edwards as the death of a pregnant escort from a lethal party drug exposes a chain of mob corruption, dirty cops, political scandal, and a revenge killer — while hinting that an even darker murderer has been living next door.

Logline

When a young escort dies after taking a dangerous new drug called Rising Star, a washed-up NYPD detective and his sharp new partner uncover a conspiracy linking a mob boss, corrupt cops, and a mayoral hopeful — only to realise a ritualistic killer is executing everyone involved.

Core character arcs

Logan Ford begins as a hard-drinking, out-of-shape, brutal old-school detective who distrusts change and resents being partnered. Across the case, he learns to respect Malik, recognises the limits of instinct, and reconnects with his family, though his mistake over Denton shows his judgement is still imperfect.

Malik Edwards begins as the polished “rising star” Logan dismisses. He proves himself through discipline, empathy, and intelligence, ultimately saving Logan and cracking the Evans/Sanderson connection.

Richard Evans appears to be a social worker orbiting Lucia’s life, but is revealed as the revenge killer. His killings are morally targeted but monstrous in execution, turning grief and outrage into ritualised punishment.

Robert Sanderson presents himself as a family-values reformer while secretly tied to Pulcinella, corruption, sex, and the Rising Star scandal. His public image collapses once Lucia’s death and pregnancy lead back to him.

Giacomo Pulcinella is the mob engine behind the hotel, corrupt cops, Rising Star supply, and political development deals. He believes money and fear can control everything, until the revenge killings move beyond his control.

Peter Denton functions as the delayed threat. He is a red herring in the Lucia case, but the final image reveals he is likely connected to the earlier Philadelphia eye-removal murders, leaving a sequel-style sting.

Overall tone

The script plays as a **gritty 1980s police thriller** with serial-killer horror elements, political corruption, mob crime, and buddy-cop friction. Its strongest structural hook is that the “Rising Star” drug case appears to be the main mystery, but gradually reveals a larger moral infection: everyone who profited from Lucia Blinkley’s exploitation becomes part of the body count.