

RISEING STAR III

FEATURE FILM TREATMENT

Written by Stephen Hall

Crime Thriller | 1980s New York

Project Overview

FORMAT: Full-length feature

GENRE: Crime thriller / police-conspiracy drama

SETTING: Brooklyn and New York City, 1986

TONE: Gritty, tense and character-led, combining police corruption, organised crime, domestic threat and fugitive-thriller elements.

Logline

When a mob warehouse massacre points to a crew of corrupt New York police officers, detectives Logan Ford and Malik Edwards stage a dangerous split to infiltrate the conspiracy. But their deception turns personal when Malik is hunted and framed, a surviving disciple of the Puppet Master targets Logan's family, and the corruption is revealed to reach the highest levels of their own precinct.

Treatment

A littered Brooklyn lane lies beneath a bruised night sky. Eleven-year-old BILLY ROBERTS searches a dumpster for bottles when two cars glide to the rear of a warehouse. Six men in balaclavas emerge carrying shotguns. Inside, LORENZO BIANCHI supervises six members of CARLO BERETTI'S organisation as they unload crates from a truck. The masked men move with military confidence. Their leader, detective RONNIE JACKSON, orders the mobsters against a wall. When Bianchi protests, Jackson beats him down, then gives the signal. The warehouse erupts in gunfire. Jackson personally executes the pleading Bianchi and sets fire to the truck before leaving. Outside, he removes his mask beneath a streetlight and catches Billy watching. Their eyes meet before the cars race away and the warehouse explodes. A police radio inside the getaway car crackles with a hostage call. The killers are cops.

At a pawn shop on Delancey Street, veteran detective LOGAN FORD and his younger partner MALIK EDWARDS are trying to talk down armed kidnapper MAURICE AINSLEY. Malik's calm approach is beginning to work when Jackson enters through the rear and shoots Maurice dead, claiming self-defence. Logan is furious, but CAPTAIN WALLIS HANLEY accepts that Internal Affairs will make the decision. Before the anger can settle, Hanley assigns Logan and Malik to the Kent Avenue warehouse massacre: seven men dead, a burned truck and the appearance of a mob war.

The crime scene carries the signature of organised violence. Forensic officer CHARLIE REED recovers twelve-gauge shells from six different shotguns and finds melted packets of Rising Star tablets among the damaged cargo. Logan identifies the dead as Beretti's men. Across the street, Beretti watches the investigation from his Cadillac and vows revenge. The massacre threatens to reignite the criminal network surrounding the drug that has haunted Logan and Malik through their previous cases.

Elsewhere, TILLY FOSTER arrives in Brooklyn and rents a room from ABIGAIL MELCHER. She appears polite, self-contained and harmless. Once alone, she unpacks a map marked with a red X, a photograph of Logan with his wife AUDREY and their children CHRISTINA and CALLUM, and a handgun. Tilly survived the destruction of Peter Denton's terrorist cell. She has not abandoned his mission. Her target is no longer an institution. It is Logan's family.

Logan is already close to collapse. The house next door, destroyed by Denton's booby trap, has been rebuilt, but its presence triggers flashbacks. He drinks heavily, flinches at sudden noises and avoids the therapist Audrey has urged him to see. Audrey wants to return to teaching and plans to hire someone to help with the children. Logan agrees distractedly, failing to recognise how far he has withdrawn from his family. Malik, meanwhile, is trying to build a future with GEOFFREY RISLER. Geoffrey wants their

relationship to exist beyond private rooms and quiet bars. Malik cares for him, but the job remains the centre of his life.

The investigation begins to shift away from a straightforward mob feud. Ballistics link the warehouse shells to an earlier attack on Beretti's Capri Lounge, a case originally handled by Jackson. At the damaged bar, the owner insists the masked gunmen were not mobsters he recognised. Logan returns to the warehouse at the hour of the shooting and finds Billy collecting bottles. For a handful of notes, the boy describes six attackers and identifies their leader as a thin man in his thirties with neat dark hair and a pencil moustache. He also remembers the first three digits of a licence plate: 579. Logan has his first solid lead.

The pursuit comes at a cost. Logan forgets to collect Callum from school, leaving the boy waiting for an hour and pushing Audrey's patience toward breaking point. At the same time, Malik and Geoffrey visit the Pulse Club. Jackson and his crew storm the venue under the pretence of a drugs raid, brutalising customers and smashing the bar. Jackson recognises Malik, publicly outs him to the other officers and subjects him to a deliberately humiliating search. Todd Sims taunts Geoffrey while Jackson makes it clear that Malik's private life can be used against him.

The following morning, Logan sees Jackson arrive at the precinct in a car bearing the registration 579-DNC. He now knows Jackson is tied to the warehouse. In the bullpen, Jackson continues his homophobic harassment of Malik. Logan appears indifferent and tells Malik not to look to him for support. Once Malik leaves, Logan approaches Jackson and presents himself as bitter, underpaid and ready to profit from the badge. Jackson senses a potential recruit. Logan has begun an undercover operation without telling his partner.

Malik follows another route. He confronts ALFONSO CONTI at his restaurant, warning that a war with Beretti will consume everyone involved. Conti denies responsibility and tells Malik that mavericks cannot defeat the system. Behind the denial, Conti is the beneficiary of Jackson's violence. Beretti stopped supplying Rising Star to him, and Jackson's corrupt crew is being paid to destroy Beretti's operation and protect Conti's growing control of Brooklyn.

Audrey advertises for a childminder and cleaner. Tilly arrives for the interview with a carefully prepared history, claiming she has been accepted to study child psychology. She is warm, observant and convincing. Audrey is impressed and invites her into the Ford household. Tilly begins learning the rhythms of the family, winning Callum's trust, tolerating Christina's teenage suspicion and quietly examining the rebuilt house next door. The danger Logan fears is already inside his home.

Under pressure from Audrey, Logan finally attends therapy with psychiatrist EVELYN TIAGO. He treats the appointment with scepticism, but admits to drinking and recurrent memories of violence. Evelyn identifies traumatic stress and prescribes short-term Valium, warning him not to mix it with alcohol. Logan begins to understand that he has survived his previous cases without truly escaping them. For the first time, he tries to stop drinking. Audrey, encouraged by the change, tells him she has secured a teaching position and hired Tilly.

Malik's suspicion of Jackson deepens when he overhears Jackson's crew in a gym changing room. Jackson discusses an expected Beretti attack on Conti and invites Logan to prove his loyalty. Malik realises his partner may be crossing a line. At the precinct, Logan and Malik stage a vicious confrontation within Jackson's hearing. Logan withholds forensic evidence and appears to reject Malik after the club humiliation. Malik punches him and declares that Logan had better not need his support. To Jackson, the partnership appears broken. In reality, the fracture creates the cover Logan needs, although Malik still does not know the full plan and the deception wounds their trust.

Forensics supplies two crucial details: a partial bloody boot print with a puncture in the heel tread, and beige corduroy fibres found on Bianchi's collar. The fibres match the jacket Jackson wore when he shot

Maurice. The evidence is circumstantial, but it points in the same direction as Billy's description and the car registration. Before Malik can bring the pieces together safely, Jackson puts his next move into action.

Jackson feeds Malik false intelligence that Beretti plans to attack Conti. Malik goes to Beretti's bar, hoping to prevent a massacre, but he has been manoeuvred into the kill zone. That night, Jackson's crew attacks. Gunfire tears through the bar as Beretti's men are slaughtered. Malik is shot and left vulnerable. To maintain his cover, Logan raises his weapon toward his partner. He deliberately misses, then tells Jackson that Malik is dead. The lie saves Malik's life, but it forces him to disappear while Logan remains embedded among men who will kill him the moment the truth emerges.

Jackson's crew celebrates the successful hit. Conti pays them, while Jackson refers to an unseen superior as "The Piper." Logan recognises that the conspiracy reaches beyond Jackson, but he has no name and no safe route to report what he knows. He secretly finds Malik, tends to his wound and explains enough of the strategy to keep him alive. The partners are now operating in separate worlds: Logan surrounded by corrupt officers, Malik hidden from both the criminals and his own department.

Malik takes refuge with Geoffrey, who offers care without fully understanding the scale of the threat. Jackson soon learns Malik survived and searches his apartment with Logan and Todd. Finding it empty, Jackson recalls seeing Geoffrey at the club and orders Todd to trace him. Todd uses police records to locate Geoffrey's flat. The institution itself supplies the information that places an innocent man in danger.

At the precinct, Hanley appears increasingly concerned by the chaos, but his concern masks control. He questions Logan and Jackson together, watching their movements and managing what reaches the wider department. Logan notices a tack embedded in the heel of Jackson's boot, matching the distinctive print at the warehouse. The physical evidence is now almost complete, yet acting too soon would expose Logan and leave the senior figure untouched.

Todd follows Geoffrey and forces his way into the flat. Geoffrey is murdered before Malik can protect him. Malik returns and confronts Todd in the apartment. Todd has already killed Geoffrey and tries to kill Malik; Malik fires in self-defence and kills him. He is not an innocent bystander, but neither is he Geoffrey's murderer. He is now a lawful suspect who must explain a shooting while the people controlling the narrative are part of the conspiracy. Jackson and Hanley exploit the circumstances, presenting Malik as armed, unstable and wanted in connection with both deaths.

The public manhunt closes around Malik. His photograph appears on television and officers are warned to approach him with caution. Grief-stricken and furious, he cannot trust the station, the evidence chain or the officers sent to find him. Geoffrey's death destroys the private future he had begun to imagine. Malik blames himself for involving him, but the loss also strips away any hesitation about bringing Jackson's crew down.

At the Ford home, Tilly's patient infiltration reaches its end. She drugs Audrey and the children, binds them and waits for Logan. When he arrives, he finds his family helpless at gunpoint. Tilly reveals her devotion to Peter Denton and her belief that Logan stole the future they were meant to have. She wants him to experience the same helplessness and loss. Logan, who has spent the film trying to protect his family by keeping them outside his work, is forced to watch the consequences enter his living room.

Malik arrives before Tilly can complete her revenge. He shoots her and saves Audrey, Christina and Callum. The moment reunites the partners emotionally as well as strategically. Malik has every reason to abandon Logan after being kept in the dark, but he again protects the people Logan loves. Logan can no longer deny what the job has demanded of both men. Together they turn to the conspiracy that remains.

The detectives assemble the chain: Billy's eyewitness account, the 579 registration, the corduroy fibres, the punctured boot print, Jackson's false intelligence and the payments moving through the operation. They also understand that Jackson answers to "The Piper." Malik contacts Hanley and asks for a private

meeting at the warehouse, believing the captain is the one senior officer he can trust. Logan, however, has recognised a clue in Hanley's office: the photograph of Hanley in Highland dress playing bagpipes. Logan contacts Commissioner FREDERICKSON and arranges backup without telling Malik, fearing any further leak will destroy their only chance.

Late at night, Malik enters the dark warehouse alone. Hanley steps from the shadows and initially appears reassuring. Malik tells him Todd murdered Geoffrey and would have killed him. Hanley says he has nothing to fear and claims never to have trusted Jackson. Malik begins to relax. Then Jackson's voice emerges from the darkness. His crew surrounds Malik. Hanley reveals himself as the Piper, the senior officer who has protected, directed and profited from the corrupt cell. He repeats the language once used to praise Malik: a rising star, burning brightly before fading away. Malik is ordered to surrender his gun.

Logan enters beside Hanley, apparently confirming the final betrayal. But as the corrupt officers focus on Malik, Logan moves into position, draws two weapons and opens fire. Malik dives for cover and joins him. Mulroy, Santini, Hitchins and Garcia fall in the exchange. Hanley is shot in the thigh and collapses. Sirens approach, summoned by Frederickson, but Jackson escapes through the rear of the warehouse.

Logan and Malik pursue him through the city. Jackson's car crashes, but he continues on foot into the subway. The chase moves through stations and onto a moving train, where terrified passengers scatter as gunfire cracks through the carriages. Jackson shoots out the lights, turning the train into a sequence of darkness, sparks and tunnel flashes. Logan and Malik advance from carriage to carriage. Jackson fires until his weapon clicks empty, then draws another gun. Malik is faster. He shoots Jackson twice. The corrupt detective falls as the train screeches into a station. Standing over the man responsible for Geoffrey's death, Malik says only that he had it coming.

Back at the precinct, reporters crowd the entrance as Hanley is brought in wounded and handcuffed. The conspiracy has finally become public. Frederickson confirms that substantial deposits were made into Hanley's accounts. Logan explains the Piper clue. Conti cannot yet be charged and walks free, but Jackson's police crew is dead or arrested, Malik's actions against Todd are understood as self-defence, and the institutional protection around the conspiracy has broken.

Frederickson offers Logan and Malik commendations. He expresses his condolences for Geoffrey, while Logan reminds Malik that the death was not his fault. Logan then takes out his badge and hands it to the Commissioner. He has spent the trilogy believing endurance was the same as duty. Now he chooses Audrey and the children. The police work has entered his home too many times, and he will not allow it to consume what remains.

Malik is stunned by the decision, but accepts it. The partners acknowledge that they made a good team, disguising their affection beneath the familiar insults that have always defined them. Logan tells Malik he will go far and invites him to a Sunday barbecue. As Logan walks out of the station, Malik remains behind: no longer the guarded rookie, but a proven detective capable of carrying the responsibility forward. Logan leaves the badge, but not the friendship. For the first time, he walks toward a life beyond the job.

Principal Character Arcs

Logan Ford: Begins traumatised, drinking and emotionally absent after surviving Peter Denton. His undercover role requires him to appear disloyal to Malik and brings the danger into his home. By the end, he recognises that merely functioning is not recovery and chooses his family over the badge.

Malik Edwards: Attempts to balance police work with a genuine relationship, but faces institutional homophobia and targeted intimidation. After Geoffrey is murdered and Malik kills Todd in self-defence, he

becomes a hunted suspect. He nevertheless remains disciplined, saves Logan's family and emerges as the detective able to carry the work forward.

Ronnie Jackson: Uses police authority as a criminal weapon. He believes every officer has a price and that Malik can be broken through humiliation and fear. His confidence in Logan's corruption blinds him to the strength of the detectives' partnership.

Wallis Hanley: Appears to be a pressured captain managing an unruly precinct, but is revealed as the Piper, the senior officer directing and protecting Jackson's crew. His betrayal transforms the case from a rogue-cop story into an institutional conspiracy.

Tilly Foster: Returns as the surviving carrier of Peter Denton's legacy. Rather than attacking the state, she turns Denton's ideology into intimate revenge, entering Logan's home through trust and care before threatening his family.

Audrey Ford: Reclaims part of her independent life by returning to teaching, but is forced to confront the danger created by Logan's career. Her insistence that the family cannot continue living this way ultimately drives Logan's decision to resign.

Themes and Dramatic Focus

Rising Star III explores loyalty, institutional corruption, trauma and the cost of living behind a professional identity. The central question is not simply whether Logan and Malik can expose corrupt officers, but where their loyalty belongs when the badge itself has been compromised. Logan must choose between the institution and his family; Malik must decide whether his commitment to justice can survive betrayal by fellow officers and devastating personal loss. The screenplay also examines how prejudice becomes a tool of power, how police systems can be manipulated to isolate an individual, and how friendship can endure even when trust is deliberately strained.