

RIISING STAR

The Last Hope

Screenplay by Stephen Hall



The Story

Format: Crime

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In 1987 Brooklyn, a warehouse massacre is staged to look like a Mafia turf war. Detectives **Logan Ford** and **Malik Edwards** follow the evidence into a conspiracy that reaches inside their own station.

What begins as a case about a drug supply becomes a battle for survival when corrupt detective Ronnie Jackson turns Malik into bait, Logan is forced to play both sides, and Captain Hanley emerges as the hidden power protecting the operation.

As the Rising Star trade expands, the past returns home: Logan's unresolved trauma and family strain are weaponised by Tilly Foster, forcing both men to confront what the job has taken from them — and what loyalty still costs.

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Logline

In 1987 Brooklyn, two NYPD detectives investigating a warehouse massacre uncover a corrupt police crew working with organized crime, forcing them to confront betrayal inside the badge while a returning threat quietly infiltrates one detective's home.

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Tone, Genre and Style

Genre: Crime thriller / police-corruption drama / 1980s urban noir.

Tone: Dark, tense and emotionally grounded, with sudden violence and dry partner humour cutting through the pressure.

Visual Style: Fluorescent precincts, smoky bars, anonymous balaclavas, red-brick streets, domestic shadows and subway flashes of light.

Comparable Films: *Serpico*, *The French Connection*, *Training Day*, *Cop Land*

The film keeps the neo-noir crime texture of the trilogy while shifting the threat from external killers to the police institution itself. The investigation begins in the underworld, then tightens around the detectives as evidence, prejudice, loyalty and public perception are turned against them.

Its style favours pressure over spectacle: a warehouse attack, a bar ambush, a home invasion, and a subway confrontation each land because they change what the characters can still believe about each other.

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Themes

- **The Badge as Cover** – Jackson and Hanley exploit police authority to protect drug money, redirect suspicion and manufacture the official truth.
- **Loyalty and Betrayal** – Logan must appear to abandon Malik to survive undercover, while Malik is forced to decide whether trust can outlive visible betrayal.
- **Rising Star as Metaphor** – The drug fuels the conspiracy, but the title also describes Malik: a gifted detective the system tries to extinguish.
- **Home as the Final Battlefield** – Logan's domestic fracture comes full circle when Tilly brings Denton's legacy through the Ford front door.
- **Masculinity and Humiliation** – Jackson uses homophobia, hierarchy and physical intimidation to enforce control; Malik's resilience becomes an act of defiance.
- **The Past Returning** – The rebuilt house next door, Logan's flashbacks, Tilly's revenge and the recurring balaclava make the trilogy's history present.

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The Characters

Logan Ford – A veteran New York detective carrying the psychological debris of the previous films. Logan is sharp, instinctive and morally exhausted, but his trauma has left him drinking, detached and increasingly unreliable at home. Jackson sees his disillusionment as an opportunity. Logan uses that assumption to infiltrate the corrupt crew, but the cost is letting Malik believe he has been abandoned. By the end, Logan chooses Audrey and the children over the badge, while leaving open the possibility of a life beyond the department.

Malik Edwards – Intelligent, disciplined and emotionally contained, Malik is the trilogy's rising protégé. In this film, Jackson targets both his professionalism and his sexuality, using humiliation to isolate him and Geoffrey to make him vulnerable. Malik is not framed for Todd's death; he kills Todd in self-defence after Geoffrey is murdered, making him a legitimate suspect in a corrupt system. His arc is survival through grief: he is vindicated, but not untouched, and remains to carry the work forward.

Ronnie Jackson – A charismatic, brutal corrupt detective who leads the masked hit crew. Jackson is dangerous because he understands people as well as violence: he humiliates Malik, recruits Logan through resentment, manipulates the Beretti war, and keeps his crew bonded through money and swagger.

Tilly Foster – Returning from the Denton storyline, Tilly weaponises innocence. She embeds herself as the Ford family's childminder, using warmth, cookies and helpfulness to earn access before revealing that Denton's death has become her personal reason for revenge.

Captain Wallis Hanley/The Piper – The senior protector hidden in plain sight. Hanley knows how to control procedure, delay scrutiny and shape a public narrative. His office photograph becomes the clue that links his identity to Jackson's name for him: The Piper.

Alfonso Conti – A Mafia operator who understands that the Rising Star supply is business before blood. Conti pays for protection, wants Beretti removed and lets Jackson's crew do the work while he remains insulated.

Carlo Beretti – The rival drug figure who believes he is preparing to answer Conti's aggression, only to be assembled for Jackson's ambush. His death clears the territory while exposing Malik to public suspicion.

Todd Sims – Jackson's most openly cruel lieutenant. He helps locate Geoffrey through Records, murders him, then dies when Malik returns and acts in self-defence.

Geoffrey Risler – Malik's partner, warm and patient, asking Malik for a life beyond secrecy. His death does not function as plot decoration; it is the emotional wound Malik carries into the finale and the reason victory cannot feel clean.

Audrey Ford – Logan's wife, and the emotional measure of what the job has taken. Audrey is not simply worried at home; she wants her own life back, pushes Logan toward treatment, and creates the practical opening that allows Tilly into the household. Her hostage ordeal makes Logan's choice unavoidable.



3-Act Structure Summary

Act I – The Manufactured War

A masked crew led by Ronnie Jackson murders Beretti's men in a warehouse and stages the aftermath as a Mafia turf war. Logan and Malik investigate, but the evidence refuses to sit neatly: Rising Star tablets, a repeated shotgun pattern, an empty dumpster run and Billy Roberts' partial plate all point beyond the obvious gang feud.

Act II – Betrayal and Survival

Jackson publicly humiliates Malik and lures Logan into his corrupt orbit. Malik's forensic lead — boot tread, heel puncture and corduroy fibres — begins to close on Jackson, but the crew turns Malik's initiative against him. False intelligence sends him to Beretti, triggering a massacre. Logan secretly saves Malik, who later kills Todd in self-defence after Geoffrey's murder and becomes a wanted suspect.

Act III – Reckoning

Tilly brings the Denton legacy into Logan's home, drugging the family and forcing the past into the present. Malik saves them and turns to Logan as his last hope. At the warehouse, Hanley is exposed as The Piper, Jackson's crew collapses, and Jackson flees into a car-and-subway chase. Malik kills him after Jackson draws another weapon. Hanley is booked, Malik stays on the job, and Logan moves on from the badge.

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Mood Board



Jackson's gang approach warehouse to kill.



Malik on chase through subway for Jackson.



Car chase through city



Logan, Jackson and gang hide the evidence.



Why This Film

Rising Star III completes the trilogy by turning its recurring motifs into emotional consequences. The Rising Star drug is no longer only street product: it becomes the business engine behind police corruption and the metaphor for Malik's career trajectory.

The story also brings the series full circle. Logan and Audrey's domestic tension, the rebuilt house next door, Denton's lingering shadow, the balaclava image and Tilly's return all converge in a home invasion that makes Logan's final choice unavoidable.

Commercially, it offers the engine of a corrupt-cop thriller while retaining the intimate hook of a partnership drama. The action escalates from warehouse to bar to apartment to home to subway, but each set piece is tied to character consequence.

The ending gives the audience both release and continuation: Hanley falls, Jackson dies, Malik carries the badge forward, and Logan finally moves on.

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Rising Star

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Status: Complete Feature Screenplay – Seeking Representation / Development

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“A corrupt-cop thriller where loyalty, grief and institutional rot collide - bringing the Rising Star trilogy full circle.”

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The Writer

Stephen Hall is a screenwriter based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Since December 2021, he has completed nine screenplays, including eight feature films and one television project, reflecting a strong commitment to long-form, character-driven storytelling.

His work has received international recognition, with awards from the Cannes World Film Festival, the RED Movie Awards, and the Austin International Film Festival. His scripts often explore moral tension, identity, and the psychological forces that shape human behaviour.

His genre interests include historical narratives, crime stories, and period drama, with a focus on textured worlds and thematically ambitious storytelling.

Alongside screenwriting, he spent over 25 years as a web developer, a background that informs a disciplined approach to structure and long-form creative development.

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