

NOBODY
LOVES YOU
LIKE YOUR
MOTHER.



Black Angel

A NEW
SUSPENSE
SCREENPLAY

BLACK ANGEL

SYNOPSIS

1939. New York City. The city that never sleeps.

Our hero, CONRAD WORTHINGTON, is in his 30s. His manner is light and delicate, but you can tell he's holding back a dark passion, a desire for something more—a trapped animal who has locked his own cage.

Conrad's a celebrated suspense writer of gripping, pulpy short stories — two of them adapted for the silver screen starring Jean Harlow, Barbara Stanwyck, and James Stewart — but no breakthrough novel yet. His stunning, high society mother is at his arm at all of the premieres.

Enter CORA WORTHINGTON (late 60s/early 70s). She's breathtaking, all grace, but underneath the refined exterior is a malevolent and seductive darkness- fragile and terrifying. She's his date, muse, and housemate in their massive Upper West Side apartment.

From the outside, the Worthingtons appear to have it all: money, fame, success — perhaps too much love. But they also harbor a secret: They're broke.

Conrad's father (Cora's husband) died in a mysterious boating accident a year prior. He left behind a sizable estate, but the money is gone. And Conrad? Hasn't been able to write a word in months.

Soon, fate delivers to Conrad a new mysterious suitor. His name is MANNING OWENSTON. He's a handsome British man in his late 40s/early 50s—tall, dark, witty, and wry.

Manning is immune to the shame of being with another man. He's a fan of Conrad's writing, endeared by Conrad's timidity and encouraged by the challenge of Conrad's disinterest...

What begins as a one-night stand slowly grows into something neither one expected. Conrad can now write.

Their romance — and Conrad's writing — hurtle at breakneck speed. That is until Conrad notices a tiny detail at a secret weekend away.

Conrad begins to unravel the truth before he finds himself tangled in Manning's deadly web... only to discover that Manning isn't a spider at all...

He's a marionette in an even more sickening reality.

It isn't Conrad who's been hiding the truth about Manning from Cora; it's Cora who has kept Conrad in the dark.

And part of the problem – for everyone – is that Manning, an escort Cora had known intimately first, has stopped following the script. In the midst of it all, by accident and to his great surprise, he's fallen in love with Conrad.

But could Manning – or anyone – ever love Conrad as much as Cora? And if they did, would they survive to tell the tale?

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"BATES MOTEL"

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BATES MOTEL

THE WORLD

Black Angel is a neo-noir love story, so style is the name of the game.

The world is drenched in shadows, dark streets – chocolate, burgundy, blood reds – rich, opulent...money everywhere.

Think of Lurhmann's The Great Gatsby.

DePalma's Dressed to Kill.

Hanson's L.A. Confidential.

Wilder's Sunset Boulevard.

Del Toro's Nightmare Alley.

It's a movie-style rooted in a past that made this town – one that's pushing through the San Andreas fault, waiting to be reborn.

Black Angel lives on multiple levels. It's a gourmet meal for mother and son, Oedipus and Jocasta, intimate love, family relationships, abuse of self and power...money, affluence, and deliciously toxic codependence.

It's a shocking mother and son tale to rival Bates Motel, a somersault of hedonistic style on par with Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, and a decadent love story that has the cinematic DNA of Chinatown.





RENAISSANCE CASINO, 1938 NYC



THE PLAYERS

CONRAD WORTHINGTON, the son, 30s. Cora, his mother, has been his entire life since moment one. She whisked him away from his father in Mexico at eight; they've been inseparable ever since. Together, they've tripped the light fantastic. New York City is their town. From holding hands at Madame Butterfly to opulent dinner parties and late-night soirees – she is his all, his Omega. Without her, he doesn't exist...until he meets Manning. Then it all cracks open. His desire to make his mark as a serious artist. To live his life on his own terms...away from his mother. Something he'd never considered before. Burdened with crippling self-doubt, he knew he could never make it alone, but now that he's found love, maybe... maybe he can live without his mother by his side. But he knows if she finds that his heart belongs to another...the thought makes him shudder. She'll do anything to keep him by her side. Anything.

CORA WORTHINGTON, Conrad's mother, is timeless. It's impossible to tell her age. Maybe mid-60s, perhaps early-70s. She became pregnant with Conrad when she was young. Swimming in her veins is upper-class WASP blood. Museums, the opera, theater – Cora was intent on forming Conrad with the best of everything. She fears that without her guidance, her son may falter. While she'd dare not say it aloud, she also fears her life would be empty without him. She knows the illusion of agency and independence will enhance his writing, so she's happy to give him the space. She is, after all, his biggest guardian angel, which is why she hires Manning to seduce her son to inspire him to write the goddamn book that'll save them. Time is of the essence, and they're broke. And if she has some fun with Manning on the side, what could be the harm? How terrible can those things be when they're in service of loving and protecting her magnificent child?

MANNING OWENSTON is the handsome grifter Cora hires to seduce Conrad. Late-40s/early-50s. Rugged. A man's man. Volatile. His sorrow is right on the surface. He tries to hide it, but look in his eye, and you'll see he's someone who's been in pain for years. Abused as a boy, he's overly sexual and desperate to be loved. He's a great con man. Loves to be in control. He has a violent temper he can't control. He hurts others and later wakes from the battering as if from a dream. But this job is different. This is some fucked up mommy and son shit. And then there's the problem of Conrad. He's fallen in love with him. The one thing he knows he's never supposed to do. This isn't going to end well. And he knows it. But maybe that's what he's wanted all along...

ADDISON LEFKOWITZ, early 60s, is Conrad's publisher and a long-time friend of Cora's. He's the city's greatest Kingmaker, but his sword cuts both ways. Blunt and caustic, he's the lone agent in town who can make or break writers. And right now, he's two seconds away from breaking Conrad if he doesn't deliver a best-selling book.

NATHAN POWERS, early-70s, is a man who holds the key to cracking the mystery of the devilish love triangle. He knows Cora's secrets, and if he lives to tell the tale, he'll spill the beans to Conrad, and the house of cards will all fall down.



CONRAD



THE WRITER OF THE SCREENPLAY

OR: WHY ME?

The author of the screenplay, Michael C. Bryan, finds it odd to be writing about himself in the third person, so he's gonna break the precious fourth wall.

Hi.

A producer once cornered me (I had that caterpillar under a magnifying glass feeling) and said, Why you? What makes you the only person who could write this?

There's the personal and the professional. On the personal side, let's say my mother made Joan Crawford look tame, and no, I'm not being funny.

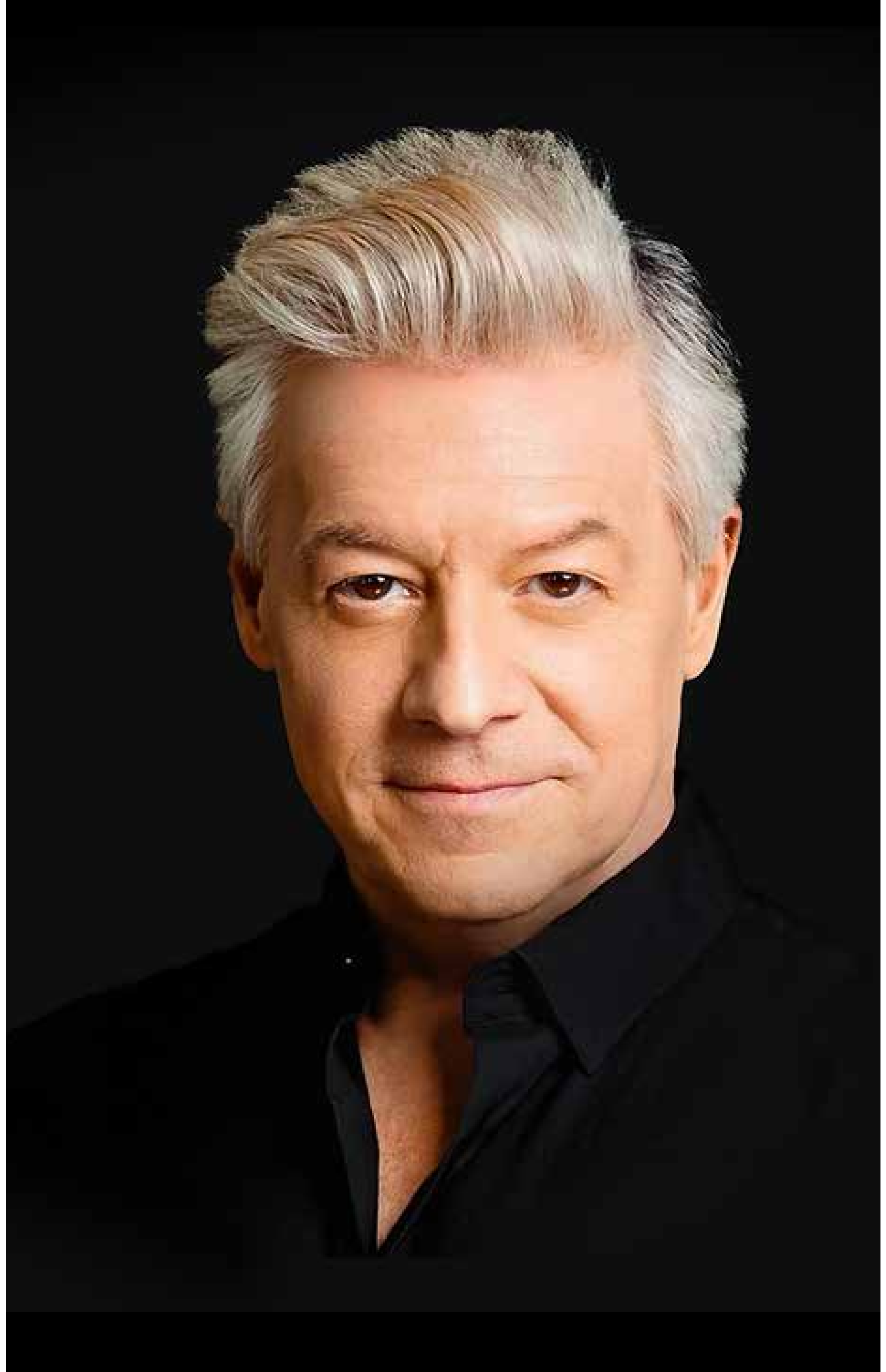
I'm the American Patrick Melrose.

Professionally, I spent considerable time at NBCUniversal and Time Warner, assisting celebrities and C-level executives. My job was to see all behind closed doors and not say a thing.

Working for celebrities – and reading scripts for them – trained me to find works that would entice talented actors. Great actors want complex characters who defy expectations. Since most scripts are tame and careful, celebrities are drawn to work that allows their wilder sides to come out and play. They want it to be a high-wire act. I knew the only kind of work that would rise to the top of the pile would be a profoundly character-driven drama...which is why I wrote *Black Angel*.

I'm from New York City—Irish, Scottish, and British. I wrote a movie about an evil mother and her gay son because my mother was evil, and I'm gay.

My TV pilot for my series based on my life, *Creepy Kid*, was a semi-finalist at the Austin Film Festival in 2019 as part of a program sponsored by ISA (now shuttered). It was based on my three-part memoir of the same name, which was placed in a national memoir of the year contest sponsored by Simon and Schuster.





MANNING





CORA



WELCOME TO THE NIGHT OR: WHY NOW?

We're drawn to film noir during times of moral decay. *Fellow Travelers* on Showtime from Ron Nyswaner is the perfect proof of concept. People are hungry for daring and bold content more than ever.

From the French 'black film', film noir pulls back the curtain and exposes the secret voyeur inside all of us. In the 80s, a rush of deliciously entertaining thrillers personified the genre and made a lot of dough.

Today, we call it neo-noir with award-winning films such as *Power of the Dog*, *Nightmare Alley*, and *The Outfit*.

I worked for years at CNN, TNT, Time Warner, and NBCUniversal. People gave me their pitches and scripts all day long. I had to answer why something was marketable, who it could be sold to, and if it would attract talent. I developed a discerning filter.

Projects are not simply about excellent scripts or art- they're about the bigger picture. This project's audience reaches the classic crowd who know the genre and the younger, dangerous, and fearless market.

Saltburn has made it clear we want stories that make psychological sense, are dangerous, and are sexual. We're not timid. We're bold, audacious, and loosening our moral panic.

I write with a clear thought to budget. I never sacrifice art, but I am always aware of the importance of keen business awareness.

Black Angel is the kind of script Hollywood was built on. It entertains and thrills. It's sensual, romantic, sexy, provocative, and eye-opening. The story holds, the psychology is iron-clad, and the parts will attract talent ready to dive into meaty and thrilling work.



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