

MAY THE ROAD RISE (SERIES BIBLE)

By

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PITCH:

LOGLINE (SEASON): When a mobster who shies away from violence accidentally kills a member of his own gang, he must reconcile with his estranged brother -- the lead detective on the case -- to avoid his own demise.

Set in and around present-day Lower Manhattan's Chinatown, estranged brothers Michael and Brian Tracey were orphaned in youth after witnessing the murder of their mobster Irish father, Kieran, and previous death of their Chinese mother, Ai. They live on opposite sides of the law, with one choosing to join his father's former gang, the Golden Dragons, and the other choosing to fight crime with the NYPD.

Despite their affiliations with the divergent organizations, Michael and Brian never find a sense of belonging within them. Michael's aversion to increasingly violent undertakings and responsibilities within the Golden Dragons dissuades him of his romantic, Robin Hood notions of a life in crime, while Brian realizes the corruption within the NYPD conflicts with his desire and ability to fight for justice.

After a peaceful talk with the rival Black Snakes goes south, Michael proves his worth to the Golden Dragon ranks by killing many of them and taking control of the valuable fireworks racket. Later that evening, a fellow Golden Dragon, Ray Wang, tells Michael he'll always be seen as an outsider because he's of mixed ancestry and doesn't like violence. Michael leaves, gets drunk, and then returns to encounter Ray trying to take advantage of a woman. They fight, and in the struggle, Ray rips off Michael's necklace, and Michael pushes Ray into a cellar door that gives way, accidentally killing him. The woman sees all of this and tells the Golden Dragons, fearing for her life.

Early the next morning, Brian arrives to the scene of the crime, where he finds his brother's Irish Florin coin necklace clutched in Ray's dead hands. Brian's partner, Angelo Tognetti, collects a print at the scene, and believing to be Michael's, Brian calls Michael, who is hiding out at the near the brothers' old stomping grounds, Fort Greene Park.

The Black Snakes, seeking revenge on the Golden Dragons, tail a couple of members of their gang. The Golden Dragons, tipped off by Tognetti's masseuse about Michael and Brian's meet-up, head toward Fort Greene Park. Night falls, and the heavy-laden snow stacks higher. Brian finds Michael near the monument, looking into Manhattan. Brian hands Michael the missing necklace and tells him to leave New York and never look back. Michael is reluctant to flee his problems, and just as the Tracey Brothers embrace, the Golden Dragons and Black Snakes arrive at the park and begin shooting at Michael and Brian. Brian provides cover fire for Michael to escape, but Michael ultimately gets pinned down between the groups and shot to death.

CHARACTERS:

Michael Tracey: 28, Half-Chinese, half-Irish orphaned mobster son of a former member of the Golden Dragons; shies away from violence but is moving up rapidly within the Golden Dragons; ultimately wants family and a sense of home.

Brian Tracey: 31, Half-Chinese, half-Irish orphaned detective son of a former member of the Golden Dragons; keen observer and obsessive about details and solving puzzles; desperate to prove he's not bad like his father through his work and private life.

Ray Wang: 32, Chinese member of the Golden Dragons; hotheaded and loud-mouthed; feels like he doesn't get the respect he deserves within the organization.

Kaifu (Godfather): 60s, nondescript, mild-mannered, slightly overweight Chinese man; so focused on business that he doesn't realize the degree of his wealth or know how to use a smartphone.

Angelo Tognetti: 29, Italian-American bachelor; Brian Tracey's partner in the NYPD who partakes in some of the minor corruption but has his limits to let him fly below the radar.

Kieran Tracey: late 20s, early 30s at the time of his suspicious death; the Golden Dragons bookie and married to Ai, the Kaifu (the Godfather)'s only niece.

SYNOPSIS (OF PILOT):

Two young boys, Michael and Brian, play with cowboys on the floor of the living room as their father, Kieran, counts a massive amount of money at the table and sings to himself. There is white noise coming from the city in background on a typical Friday night.

At the same time, a group of five Chinese men -- clearly Golden Dragons -- get off a subway train and walk ominously towards an apartment, heading up the stairs. The white noise of the city bustle vanishes from earshot, and Kieran stops singing and looks up from the table. Michael and Brian notice the white noise gone, and they too stop playing for a moment.

Kieran puts down the cash in his hand and starts to rise from his chair when the white noise returns. He picks up the cash and continues counting and singing. Brian makes a gun shooting sound and takes Michael's cowboy. The boys run into the dining room to their father, cowboys in hand.

The white noise vanishes again, and all three of them look around. A gust of wind comes in through the window and knocks two dollars off the table. Brian notices the dollars, but Kieran does not. Brian motions to his brother to look at the dollars on the ground. Michael scoops up the bills from the floor, and they dart into the other room. Kieran starts singing "Dirty Old Town" again.

The boys sit down amongst their cowboy toys, and Michael takes a dollar and gives it to Brian. They grab each other's necks and touch their foreheads together. Brian smiles at his brother. Michael watches Brian as he plays with the cowboys, admiring his older brother.

As Kieran packs the money into a manila envelope, he hears the faint noise of a door opening behind him. He turns, and a man appears from the shadows of the back door, armed with a silenced gun. Then, two men enter from the front door, armed with similar guns. They surround Kieran at the dining room table.

One of these men leans over and grabs the money from the table. Another man raises his gun, and as a wash of white-hot hate comes over his face, he shoots Kieran in the head. The other two men shoot Kieran in the chest, riddling his body with bullets.

Michael and Brian stare at their lifeless father on the living room floor. One man approaches the boys and stops at Michael. The man raises his index finger over his mouth, looks into Brian's eyes, and tousles Michael's hair. The men walk out the front door. Michael's eyebrows lower, and the tears roll.

The same framing used to frame Young Michael in the previous scene frames present-day Michael, as he strides confidently to partake in some mischievous criminal activity.

FORMAT:

Presentation of Content:

Each season unfolds a season-long vignette, intended to be watched in order. While each season will focus on a different cast of characters, each of these characters exists in our larger character universe (think like the *Marvel* universe). For example, characters that survive Season 1 can appear in Season 3, and obviously backstory can be utilized in this way too.

Style of Content:

The style of the series is neo-noir. The coloration of our pitch video calls to mind Asian crime dramas of the 80s and 90s, evoking Wong Kar-wai hits. The series will feel gritty and real, borrowing some from the vein of the French new wave with our camera language. This will build a heightened sense immediacy and drama. The audience finds out new information only via the characters, as though the audience is a fly on the wall.

Themes of Content:

The themes center around family, loyalty, identity, and the desire for control. Characters make difficult decisions as they face the real-world implications of living public lives of crime and privates of normalcy, only to find out success in either comes at the cost of the other.