



# THE GOOD BROTHER

a look book

PREPARED BY DIRECTOR ADAM SALKY





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"It was not easy for Robert to make his break. Something within him could not be denied, yet he also wanted to please his parents."

- Patti Smith, Just Friends

Family. It is what makes us who we are, but also what can keep us from becoming who we need to be. Blood relations are the deepest, the most elemental, and the most difficult from which to break free, but that is exactly what Kevin must do in order to be redeemed for his life of deception. In *THE GOOD BROTHER*, Nick and Kevin Matheson have been taking advantage of young widows, until Kevin falls in love with their next victim and realizes that he is living the wrong life.

What kind of film is this?

*THE GOOD BROTHER* is an elevated thriller, a psychological suspense film that brings a fresh take to the con-artist genre. It is firmly rooted in complex character relationships, rather than plot contortions and the expected 3<sup>rd</sup> act quadruple cross for which the con-artist film usually falls prey. This is a genre that everyone loves when it is done right. One that too often falls apart when the plot pushes the story instead of the characters.

In *THE GOOD BROTHER* the deception is real, and the characters' reactions to it are realistic. The story plays on the vulnerability we risk when we let others into our private lives. It is compelling because it articulates something that we don't want to admit to ourselves: that we, as human beings, have the capacity for deceit, that we can play on the weaknesses of others for financial gain, but also that we can strive to be redeemed.

The thrills of *THE GOOD BROTHER* are primal. They are driven entirely by our most intimate relationships: lovers and family, where the stakes are highest.



THE GOOD BROTHER is a thriller, but what is it really going to look like? I strive to create a unique look for the camera and lighting design for each film I direct. However, I have found inspiration for the style of this film in naturalistic thrillers, films like "Fatal Attraction," "The Vanishing," "Animal Kingdom," and "Blood Simple." These films employ a lighting and camera style that is intended to make the circumstances of the story look and feel as real as possible.





There is a general mood of heightened tension in my first feature, DARE. The audience is in suspense, wondering what will happen next. As this simmers, feeling like it could boil over at any time, special attention is simultaneously paid to the humanity of the characters. A good example of this juxtaposition is DARE's pool scene with Ben and Johnny. I intend to capture a similar feeling in THE GOOD BROTHER.



OFFICIAL SELECTION  
**SUNDANCE**  
FILM FESTIVAL



UNITED STATES DRAMATIC COMPETITION

DARE, true to its name, strikes out in some risky new directions. This high school semi-romance, which blends comic and tearful moods, is at once more provocative and more contemplative than most of its big screen counterparts.

-A.O Scott, THE NEW YORK TIMES

"TOP TEN FILM OF 2009" One of the smartest and most honest teen films in years.

-Rafer Guzman, NY NEWSDAY



The unique visual style I have developed for the THE GOOD BROTHER incorporates specific moments of heightened visuals. They are intended to marry imagery in the dialogue or description with specific thrilling, emotional scenes, to create memorable cinematic images. For example, in the climactic scene between the brothers, Annie, and Linda, we will see visual “searing” of Linda's image into Nick's retina just after she pulls the trigger, and Nick falls to the ground.

KEVIN

I read that when a person dies, his  
eye is sort of like a little camera.  
It takes a picture of the very last  
thing that person sees.





In designing the look for THE GOOD BROTHER I am drawn to the work of Todd Hido, Alec Soth, and Mike Sinclair, three contemporary American artists who are known for taking photographs of the American landscape. The following pages show a country in the midst of a modern, economic depression, the transient nature of Nick and Kevin's life, and references for Annie and Linda, the women they meet in the story. Nick and Kevin go from town to town, never putting down roots, always looking for the next score. They traverse the country, but always end up in the same motel room. The lighting is naturalistic. It captures images that range from the grungy, transient existence of the brothers, to the more traditional lives of the Annie and Linda where there is brightness and warmth.





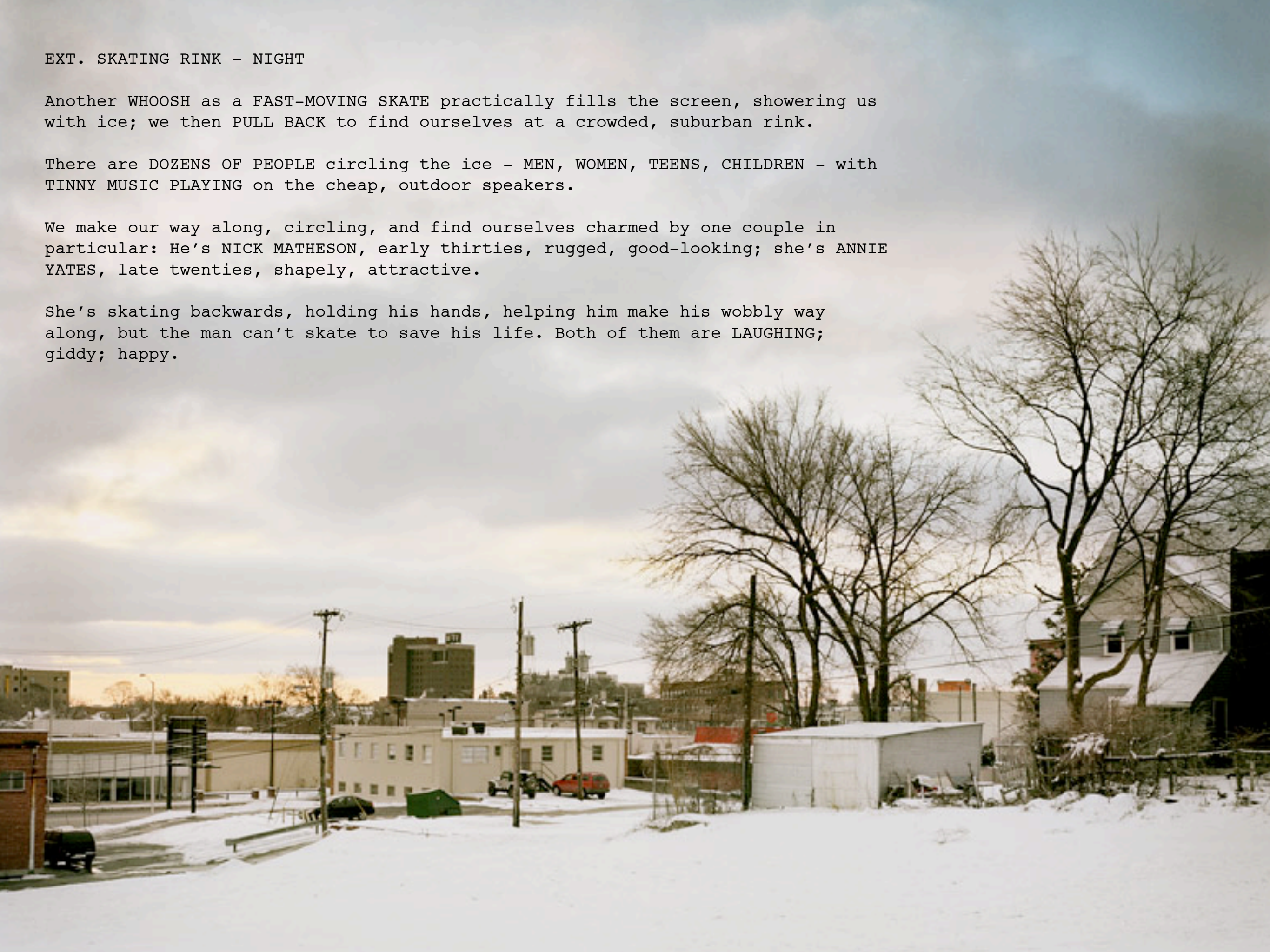
EXT. SKATING RINK - NIGHT

Another WHOOSH as a FAST-MOVING SKATE practically fills the screen, showering us with ice; we then PULL BACK to find ourselves at a crowded, suburban rink.

There are DOZENS OF PEOPLE circling the ice - MEN, WOMEN, TEENS, CHILDREN - with TINNY MUSIC PLAYING on the cheap, outdoor speakers.

We make our way along, circling, and find ourselves charmed by one couple in particular: He's NICK MATHESON, early thirties, rugged, good-looking; she's ANNIE YATES, late twenties, shapely, attractive.

She's skating backwards, holding his hands, helping him make his wobbly way along, but the man can't skate to save his life. Both of them are LAUGHING; giddy; happy.







EXT. TRANSIENT MOTEL - NIGHT

HIGH ANGLE: From the roof, looking down through the glow of neon:

Kevin pulls up in the pick-up and cuts the engine and gets out and approaches. The motel isn't exactly seedy, but you wouldn't want to die in a place like this.



# VISUAL STYLE

THE CHARACTERS: Nick & Kevin 10/13

Nick and Kevin are blue collar guys, rough and capable. They have been on the road running their con for so long that a weariness always lingers beneath the surface. Each has a natural charisma, and charm, an ease with women that allows them to quickly gain trust. Nick is the older brother, the alpha, but Kevin is coming into his own. He knows he can no longer live the life. He must do something – The visual tone of their world is harsh, stark & empty, bathed in fluorescent motel lighting.



INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN

KEVIN MATHESON is several years younger than his brother and equally good looking. But he seems somehow more fragile, more sensitive, even a touch melancholy.





# VISUAL STYLE THE CHARACTERS: Linda & Annie 11/13

Linda and Annie are small town, middle class women with friends, families, lives. Annie is brash and bold, Linda is warm and nurturing, but as young widows both are vulnerable. Falling victim to the brothers' deception undermines their foundations. This money could mean losing their homes, their safety nets. It makes them question their own instincts and ability to trust. They react to this in different, but equally powerful ways – Their tone and light is warm and inviting, drawing contrast to the brothers.





## ADAM SALKY – DIRECTOR

Adam made his feature film directorial debut with *DARE*, an official selection and Grand Jury Prize Nominee of the 2009 Sundance Film Festival in the Dramatic Competition Category. A magna cum laude graduate of Emory University, Adam completed his MFA with honors at Columbia University's Graduate School of the Arts Film Division. Adam served as an advisor at the Sundance Labs, has guest lectured on directing at Columbia University and various high schools, and is currently an adjunct professor at USC's graduate School of Cinematic Arts teaching screenwriting and directing.

## MARY JANE SKALSKI – PRODUCER

Producer MARY JANE SKALSKI's career began at Good Machine where she worked on the early films of Ang Lee, Ed Burns and Nicole Holofcener. Her credits include *Win Win*, *The Visitor*, *The Station Agent*, *Pariah* (as an EP), *Mysterious Skin*, *Dare*, *Against the Current*, *Wonderland* (doc), *The Myth of Fingerprints*, *The Hawk is Dying*, *Chain*, *Fur*, *The Jimmy Show* and *Trick* (EP). Her most recent film was the 2012 Sundance opening night film *Hello I Must Be Going*. It will be released in September.

## PABLO FENJVES – WRITER

Following a decade as a journalist, Pablo F. Fenjves moved to Los Angeles to pursue a second career as a screenwriter. *Man on a Ledge* was released by Summit Entertainment this past January, and his most recent spec, *Undertow*, is being produced by Michael De Luca and Relativity. Fenjves has also worked in television (ten produced *MOWs*, including HBO's *The Affair*) and has a stellar track record as a ghostwriter—four of his books have made *The New York Times* best-seller list.

## ADAM SPIELBERG – PRODUCER

Adam Spielberg is the founder of Filament Productions, a new production company based in Brooklyn. Filament's first feature Olivia Silver's *ARCADIA*, starring John Hawkes premiered at the 2012 Berlinale winning the Crystal Bear. Most recently they premiered Jamie Meltzer's doc, *INFORMANT* at the San Francisco IFF. Adam was an executive for six years with Gigantic Pictures. Among dozens of productions for Gigantic, Adam produced Ramin Bahrani's *PLASTIC BAG* starring Werner Herzog (Opening night short Venice '10), Co-Produced *NIGHT CATCHES US* starring Anthony Mackie (Sundance '10), and was associate producer on Adam Salky's *DARE* (Sundance '09). He also worked on Comedy Central's iconic *CHAPPELLE'S SHOW*.



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