

# PURSUED

PITCH DECK



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## Logline

When a job ends with her ex-boyfriend dead,  
a homeless getaway driver flees into the outback,  
only to find herself pursued by something far more terrifying  
than the murderous criminals she's running from.



## The Pitch

*Pursued* is for fans of car chases, crime capers, creature features and buddy action movies. In short, audiences looking for a fun time.

It is an exciting mix of genres that shows that, no matter how bad things are, it can always get worse. *Pursued* follows Jan, a homeless, getaway driver, fleeing across the outback after a job goes bad. Accompanied by a woman she found stranded in the desert, the two strangers must work together as they battle against motorcycle cultists, her employer and his mercenaries, and a “big, black tumbleweed thing with claws”.

This scenario – where one issue piles upon another, until you’re barely keeping your head above water, only for something totally unexpected to come along and makes things worse – is an experience modern audiences are, unfortunately, only too familiar with.

Set in spectacular outback locations, *Pursued* gives audiences a mix of distinctive characters, hi-octane car-chases and otherworldly horror, as our protagonist struggles to survive the night by just, “keeping on going in the hope something turns up”.

## Introducing *Pursued*

*Pursued* is a sci-fi/action feature about Jan, a homeless, getaway driver, fleeing across the Australian outback after a simple job goes bad. Already pursued by her employer, and the white-supremacist motorcycle cult he attempted to ripoff, things go from bad to worse when a “big, black tumbleweed thing with claws” joins in on the chase.

Audiences have always enjoyed stories of down-on-their-luck people who, despite their exceptional abilities, must constantly battle against society’s entrenched prejudices. *Pursued* takes this setup and ratchets up the stakes. Not only must Jan look after herself, she must also protect the life of a naïve bystander from both the criminals and the ravenous Tumbleweed.

In addition to the external threats pursuing Jan, she must also battle her own physical, mental and emotional exhaustion. A fatigue so intense that, despite the her fear and anger, she has trouble staying awake and trusting what she sees. This makes keeping control of a speeding car on the broken asphalt road even more difficult.

The struggle to, figuratively, keep one’s head above water while dealing with a stream of new complications, is something modern audiences are, unfortunately, only too familiar with. And so, watching Jan doggedly battle on, is something they will find easy to relate to, and cheer for.

*Pursued* begins in the relative safety of suburban Australian at the start of a summer day. We meet Jan, down on her luck and living in her car, but still cocky. Not long after, we find her in the middle of the outback, in the dead of night, rich beyond her dreams, but exhausted, terrified, and fleeing for her life.

## Introducing *Pursued* cont.

Despite the bulk of the story being set in the outback, *Pursued* features a fun mix of characters ranging from an assorted array of criminals from the big cities, a handful of quirky locals, and an odd, middle-class couple out on a road trip.

*Pursued* is a fun mix of (dare I say it?) a Guy Ritchie-esque crime caper, 1970s hi-octane, car-chase movies, and an otherworldly creature feature, in which our protagonist triumphs by doggedly ‘keeping on going in the hope something turns up’.

## Look • Pace • Tone

**LOOK** • To better sell the reality of “the big, black tumbleweed thing with claws”, the movie’s look should be gritty and realistic. Early on, the Tumbleweed’s menace would best be communicated by the characters’ reactions, rather than giving the audience a clear view of it. This should be best left to the end, when the full horrific weirdness of Tumbleweed is finally revealed.

**PACE** • Once the job goes pear-shaped on page 12, the pace rarely slackens until the end of the script, slowing only to introduce new information, complications, build tension and – occasionally –to allow audiences a moment to catch their breath and hang out with our two, mismatched heroes.

**TONE** • Like other action movies, *Pursued* does have some “banter”, but the tone does tend to the more naturalistic. This is particularly important when it comes to characters’ responses to fatigue, stress and physical injuries. No one in *Pursued* will be able to bounce back up, after falling from a motorcycle going 90kph (55mph) on a broken, asphalt road.

## Short Synopsis

When getaway driver, Jan, allows herself to be talked into working a job for The Old Man, it ends with her ex-boyfriend dead, and her on the run from a white-supremacist, motorcycle cult.

Days later, Jan is exhausted and deep in the Australian outback, when she stops at a remote roadhouse in Duffers Flat. There she is warned of a strange entity “not of this world” that stalks the road ahead. However the warning is immediately forgotten, when members of the motorcycle cult arrive, forcing her to flee into the night.

Soon after, Jan is shocked to discover that the strange entity is actually real, when it begins to pursue her. The chase ends when she crashes her car while avoiding an SUV parked in the middle of the road.

When Jan regains consciousness, she searches for the occupants, but they are nowhere to be found. With her car bogged, Jan takes the SUV only to find Lucy, the surviving occupant of the SUV, a short time later.

Over the rest of the night, the two women reluctantly become a team as they battle for survival against the motorcycle cult, The Old Man and his mercenaries, and “the big, black tumbleweed thing with claws”.

The night ends back in Duffers Flat. Lucy with a life-threatening wound, Jan exhausted beyond endurance ... and the “big, black tumbleweed” waiting and hungry.



## Long Synopsis

In need of a shower, JAN (30s) visits her ex, TITCH (30s), where she learns of a suspiciously, well-paying job. Later, against her better judgement, she agrees to do the job for a mysterious crime lord known as THE OLD MAN (60s).

Jan, Titch and SIMMO (50s), The Old Man's second-in-command, are on the job, collecting large, heavy sports bags from various locations. Their third stop is a compound run by the KVA, a white-supremacist, motorcycle cult. Jan is alarmed, but Titch convinces her it's okay.

It is not okay. Titch never makes it out of the compound, while Simmo does manage to get the sports bag into the car, before being killed. Terrified, Jan flees the scene, pursued by a hoard of KVA kommandos, as she tears through the suburbs.

She manages to lose them in a shopping precinct's multilevel carpark. There she changes her look and steals a muscle car, taking the bags with her. On the street, the muscle car attracts the attention of two KVA kommandos. One, TEARDROP (40s), propositions her. Jan treats him like any other asshole.

Night in the outback. Jan has shaven her head and swapped cars again. Exhausted, she almost runs off the road. Not slowing, she swallows some pills and keeps driving.

She stops at the Duffers Flat Roadhouse for fuel and food. On the forecourt, she bumps into a couple and gets into an argument with BARNEY (50s). His partner, LUCY (20s), is mortified.

## Long Synopsis cont.

Inside, she meets MAVE and PIERRE (70s). Pierre tries to warn her of a “sparkling shadow” haunting the road to the north, but Mave thinks it’s nonsense. Their argument is interrupted by KVA kommandos pulling into the nearby pub. Jan sneaks out the back and flees into the night.

At a T-intersection, Jan buries some money she promised the couple. She searches the bags and finds a mobile (*cell*) phone. She smashes it.

Jan speeds north, past a sign welcoming drivers to “The Quarry”. The landscape becomes rockier and the road worsens. Despite popping pills and downing energy drinks, Jan’s vision becomes foggy and obscured by dark “floaters”. After a time, she notices that one floater appears to actually exist out in the desert. Shocked, Jan realises she’s being pursued by Pierre’s “sparkling shadow” (aka the Tumbleweed). Racing to escape it, Jan almost runs into Barney’s SUV which is parked on the road. She crashes into a ditch and is knocked unconscious.

At Duffers Flat, two kommandos leave the pub and head north.

Jan wakes and finds the car is bogged. Cautious, she gets out to check the SUV, and is attacked by the Tumbleweed. She escapes in the SUV, with the Tumbleweed in hot pursuit ... until it’s distracted by some kangaroos. Soon after, Jan realises she’s left the money behind. Reluctant, she returns and, in a tense scene, retrieves the bags. Jan is relieved when the Tumbleweed doesn’t come back. Racing north again, Jan almost hits Lucy when she staggers out onto the road. Terrified, Lucy is in shock after seeing the Tumbleweed kill Barney.

## Long Synopsis cont.

The two kommandos arrive at Jan's bogged car and report back.

Teardrop tells them to continue their pursuit. He then orders another four kommandos to join them.

Later, Lucy sees the two motorcycles following them and wants to warn them about the Tumbleweed. Jan is forced to tell her she's being pursued by the KVA. While trying to answer Lucy's questions, Jan lets her think she's an undercover journalist.

The two kommandos close in on the SUV. Jan and Lucy are saved by the Tumbleweed. They are both, relieved and horrified. The landscape changes, becoming sandy, but Jan doesn't slow down. In answer to Lucy's question, Jan tells her about the other kommandos.

Four kommandos examine the two smashed motorcycles. There is no sign of their comrades. They report back to Teardrop. Enraged, he and the remaining kommandos rejoin the pursuit.

Soon after the KVA leave, a convoy consisting of a black limo and three black vans roll into Duffers Flat. It is The Old Man, with CON (Titch's brother, 40s) and VINCE (30s). Each of the three vans has two heavily-armed MERCENARIES. The Old Man casually interrogates Mave and Pierre, confirming his suspicions.

Lucy discovers the bags of cash. She suggests giving the money to the KVA, to stop them. Jan tells her it won't work.

## Long Synopsis cont.

When the four kommandoes catch up to them, Lucy throws some out some cash, which the kommandos ignore. The kommandos attack, shooting at them. Jan and Lucy struggle to fight them off, eventually throwing out a holed jerrycan which explodes! They escape, leaving two kommandos dead and the other two badly injured.

On a low hill, Jan and Lucy repack the car to protect the remaining jerrycan from bullets. Jan sees their fuel is low and finds the fuel tank has been holed. Now they won't be able to reach the next filling station, and are almost certain to be caught and killed. Jan offers Lucy water, food and as much money as she can carry, telling her to go hide in the desert.

The Old Man and his convoy pass Jan's bogged car. He orders one of the vans to stop and search for clues.

At a one lane bridge, Jan and Lucy watch a semi-trailer approach from the other side. Jan goes for a pee, leaving Lucy to flag down the driver.

The two mercenaries in the van, who stopped to examine Jan's car, are attacked and killed by the Tumbleweed.

As Lucy talks to the truck driver, ADAM (40s), Jan learns he's with the KVA. She tries to warn Lucy, but Adam puts a gun to Lucy's head.

At the site where the Jan and Lucy defeated the four kommandos, the last remaining survivor tells Teardrop, he recognised Jan as the driver of the muscle car they saw back in the city. Teardrop is pissed off.

## Long Synopsis cont.

Adam has forced Jan to load the bags into his truck. Jan tries to bargain with him, but Adam is adamant (ahem) that he needs to kill her and take Lucy with him for “company”. Lucy kicks Adam in the balls, causing him to accidentally shoot her. After a brief game of hide-and-seek, Jan manages to incapacitate Adam.

After The Old Man’s convoy discovers the four dead kommandos, he admits he is impressed by Jan’s abilities. This irritates Con.

Jan and Lucy get into Adam’s truck and head south. Lucy is surprised. Jan says she needs a hospital, and the nearest air strip is at Duffers Flat. Lucy convinces Jan to stop by a culvert, and hide the money.

On the same low hill where Jan discovered the fuel problem, Teardrop sends two kommandos ahead to check if the approaching truck is with the KVA. Unaware of their approach, Jan accidentally runs them down when they meet a corner. Teardrop sees the truck appear from behind the hill, but no kommandos. Furious, he orders the others to attack the truck. Jan battles the KVA, swerving from side to side, as she tries to block the kommandos’ attempts at passing the truck. Frustrated, the kommandos resort to trying to shoot out the tyres.

Having seen the truck and kommandos approaching, The Old Man orders the mercenaries to let the truck through, but kill everyone else.

As the road widens, allowing the kommandos from racing past the trailer on their way to attack the cab.



## Long Synopsis cont.

Unable to block the attack, Jan believes they are doomed, when a blast of tracer rounds rips into the kommandos. Shocked, she looks back to see the Tumbleweed has returned, and is pursuing them.

On their way back to Duffers Flat, The Old Man's limo passes the dead mercenaries' abandoned van. The sight disturbs them.

The Tumbleweed takes out all the kommandos not killed by the mercenaries. And then attacks the vans. No one survives.

Jan and Lucy race towards Duffers Flat. Jan starts to believe they may make it, until Lucy sees the limo racing after them. Realising who it is, Jan begins to crumble. Lucy tries to encourage her. Their tyres are shot out and they crash into the stockyards.

Jan tells Lucy to play dead, and makes a run for it. Finding the money missing, The Old Man sends Con and Vince into the stockyards to capture Jan. After a desperate game of hide-and-seek, Jan is captured. Con argues with The Old Man and threatens to shoot Jan. The Old Man promptly shoots Con, killing him. Jan barely notices, her attention fixed on the approaching Tumbleweed. They all run. Vince is taken, and The Old Man shoots Jan in the leg. He runs past her, but the Tumbleweed ignores Jan, who is curled up on the ground, and takes The Old Man.

As dawn breaks, Jan limps to the truck. She calls out, but gets no answer. She turns to find the Tumbleweed directly behind her. She freezes. The Tumbleweed opens its maw revealing the eldritch horrors inside. Jan almost faints, and staggers forward ... and the Tumbleweed retreats.

## Long Synopsis cont.

Seeing this, Jan steps forward again. And again, driving the Tumbleweed out from the shadows and into the morning sunlight, where it dissolves.

Much, much later and Duffers Flat has all been renovated.

Jan and Lucy now run the roadhouse and are visited by Mave and Pierre, who have become grey nomads. Life is good.

Out in the desert, a Tumbleweed the size of a tennis ball, chases a lizard.

## Themes

*Pursued* is about **perseverance**. About not giving up when the odds are stacked against you and keep getting worse. It's about trusting in yourself, and the people around you.

Jan has grown up to know and trust in her own abilities. But she has always found it difficult to rely upon others. This is due to both, not wanting to impose on them, and her not trusting in their abilities or their intentions.

Jan's journey in *Pursued*, challenges her mindset. Stretched beyond her limits, her abilities suffer and she makes mistakes. She is then forced to rely upon strangers and (worse) to have strangers relying upon her.

Jan's victory in the end is not due to one single, dramatic moment. Instead, it is the result her determination. This is what forces her to continue to rely upon her abilities, even as she makes mistakes. And it allows her to accept the help of strangers, even though she doesn't fully trust them. Because of this, Jan is able to take advantage of that brief moment when luck nudges the scales in her favour.

# The World

Despite featuring a weird motorcycle cult pursuing our hero across the Australian outback, the setting is not the world of *Mad Max* – that’s still a few years away.

*Pursued* begins in Melbourne’s suburbs, in a struggling, working-class neighbourhood. After which we briefly visit: a bustling multicultural, inner suburb; then a quiet, green upper-class enclave; and on to the hectic arterial roads of middle-class suburbia. Before finally, arriving in the vast Australian outback under a black, star-filled sky. This is where we will spend the majority of the story, in and around the isolated ‘location’ of Duffers Flat. It was named after the cattle thieves who once camped there, in the days before the stockyards and airstrip were built.

Today, in addition to the above, Duffers Flat hosts a roadhouse (filling station, convenience store and restaurant), a pub housed inside a concrete blockhouse, and a caravan park (trailer park) from which its residents offer various services. Duffers isn’t exactly lawless, it’s just that the law only visits on those rare occasions when the stockyards are open.

Just to the north of Duffers Flat is a landscape known locally as “The Quarry”. A boon to owners of windscreen replacement businesses, the road that crosses this rock strewn region is cracked and potholed.

Driving it during the day requires patience and concentration, if you want avoid bursting a tyre or more serious damage. Locals avoid driving it at night. Further north, the land becomes sandy with shallow dunes. While in better condition than the road across The Quarry, sand drifts pose their own dangers.

## Introduction to Characters

Despite the bulk of the story being set in the Australian outback, the majority of our characters come from the cities and towns that crowd Australia's coastline. And, aside from a few of civilians, most are a mix of assorted criminals ranging from "hired muscle" to "crime lord".

The few locals we meet are friendly, but in keeping with their isolated location and their various occupations, are cautious around strangers.

Typically, the criminals don't admit to having any personal issues with each other. It is, after all, "just business". But that has never prevented things from becoming nasty.



# Character Descriptions

**JAN • driver, criminal, homeless (30s)**

Jan “Jetson” Jefferson grew up in a string of foster homes before enlisting in the Australian Defence Force. She became a driver and did tours of Iraq and Afghanistan, before returning to civilian life. With no family to speak of, she found the transition difficult to navigate.

While her ability to drive anything with four or more wheels allowed Jan to find jobs, being a woman who doesn’t deal well with bullshit, meant she had trouble keeping them.

However, her abilities did eventually find her working for people with “flexible” ethics. At first the work was exciting and the money was good, but times changed. And then she was asked to do things that no amount of money would allow her to do. And so she was labelled as “difficult” and the regular flow of jobs stopped.

Now she lives in her car, doing jobs for cash, or stuff she can exchange for cash, while occasionally imposing on Titch (her ex) to use his shower.

## Character Descriptions cont.

### **LUCY • legal secretary (20s)**

Lucy was raised in an unexceptional, middle-class family where their relative comfort insulated them from having to deal with much of the uncertainties and risks of contemporary life.

After dropping out of university, she set out to travel the world. However, being unused to the hardships of backpacking, she soon burned through her budget and was back home within two months of her one-year trek.

Soon after, she was forced to accept a job as a secretary in a law firm run by one of her dad's mates. There she met Barney (58), who was going through a messy divorce. The two "hit it off" and, when his divorce was finalised, they headed north to visit his rural properties. Their road trip was not been as much fun as either of them had hoped.

### **THE OLD MAN • successful criminal (60s)**

The Old Man is a mystery. Few know his name, and those that do, have no interest in sharing it. Some say he's an ex-cop or a spook, but when pushed for more information, they have nothing to add.

What is known about The Old Man is that he will work for anyone, if the money is right, and is ruthless in ensuring his clients receive the services they paid for.

## Character Descriptions cont.

### **SIMMO • The Old Man's concierge (50s)**

A professional bastard. Simmo is an ex-cop who feels himself to be above the other criminals he deals with while working for The Old Man.

### **TITCH • car restorer, Con's brother (30s)**

Despite working in the manly business of car restoration and having the body of Adonis, years of negging by his older brother has made Titch feel he needs to prove himself as a “real man”.

And so when the opportunity arises for him to provide the knuckles on a job, he practically begs his brother for a chance to prove himself.

### **CON • criminal, Titch's brother (40s)**

Con is a career criminal whose success is based on his ability to align himself with people far smarter and more powerful than he is.

### **MAVE • roadhouse co-owner (70s)**

Mave has lived all over Australia, but always in small communities. The cities freak her out. She bought the Duffers Flat Roadhouse about ten years ago, and now runs it with her partner, Pierre.

The roadhouse doesn't get a lot of traffic, and that's the way they like it. A relatively tranquil and unhurried life where they can mind their own business and, in turn, let other people mind theirs.

That said, Mave has always sided with the underdogs and is fearless in a way only people who have lived a long, rough-and-tumble life, can be.

## Character Descriptions cont.

### **PIERRE • roadhouse co-owner (70s)**

After living decades in Sydney, Pierre was on his way home, when his car broke down in Duffers Flat. At first he insisted that once he got the parts, he would be moving on. That was nine years ago.

Now he and Mave run the roadhouse together. While Pierre shares Mave's live-and-live philosophy, he is far more of a people person than she is, and so more likely to "stick his oar in" where it's not wanted.

### **TEARDROP • KVA member, commandant**

Teardrop is a member of the notorious, white-supremacist motorcycle cult known as the KVA. While he holds a senior position within the Australian chapter, he still enjoys getting his hands dirty when he can.

### **ADAM • KVA member, logistics (40s)**

Adam is a member of the notorious, white-supremacist motorcycle cult known as the KVA. He is, by his own admittance, one of the "bad people". Adam is pretending to be a truck driver when he captures Jan and Lucy.

## Teaser

*The following occurs when Jan wakes after crashing her car while being pursued by the Tumbleweed. With the car bogged, she has no other option than to leave it:*

Jan stands by the open door, clutching a cricket bat, waiting for something to happen ... it doesn't. She looks at the SUV sitting in the middle of the road, and calls out. There's no answer. She tries again, louder. This only results in making her headache worse.

Jan circles the SUV from a safe distance. Soft music plays from its interior. There's no sign of the couple. She goes to the car and turns off the music. Once again she calls out, and is answered with silence. Sounding the car's horn gets the same result.

A breeze stirs the straps on the car's roof rack. A strap brushes the back of Jan's neck. She spins, lashing out with the bat and shatters a side mirror. Her initial fear is twisting into frustration and anger.

Jan walks back along the road, searching ... and sees a shadow move behind a clump of a stunted acacia. She stops and calls out.

The shadow moves out from behind the bushes. It's the Tumbleweed! Twisting and writhing, a mass of black, thorny tendrils that **spark** as it circles her. Freaked out, Jan backs towards the car. Immediately the Tumbleweed changes direction, rolling toward her. Jan runs and throws herself into the SUV, slamming the door, just as the Tumbleweed smacks into the car's side, scraping along its entire length.



## Teaser cont.

Frantic, Jan stretches across the car and tries to pull the other door closed, but it was damaged when Jan's car hit it just before she crashed. Desperate, she yanks at the door and manages to slam it closed.

Jan searches around her. She catches a glimpse of the Tumbleweed in the rearview mirror, but when she turns to look, it is gone. She comes to a decision, and jabs the ignition.

The SUV surges forward, and immediately the Tumbleweed is there, rushing after her. The car's rear-collision alarm BINGS frantically. Jan looks up at the rearview mirror. The flailing Tumbleweed fills the mirror's view. Jan screams in terror and pushes down the accelerator! The SUV races over the cracked road with the Tumbleweed in pursuit.

Eyes on the road, Jan doesn't see the Tumbleweed peel off to chase after a mob of kangaroos, only becoming aware of its absence when she notices the alarm is silent. Not slowing, she tries to search around her for the Tumbleweed, and can't see it. Not believing it's gone, but also beginning to doubt if it was ever there, Jan SCREAMS.

*Soon after this, Jan realises she's left the money back in the bogged car ...*

## The Pursuit Continues

The tennis-ball-sized Tumbleweed seen in the closing moments of the movie hints at just one possible direction a sequel might take us.

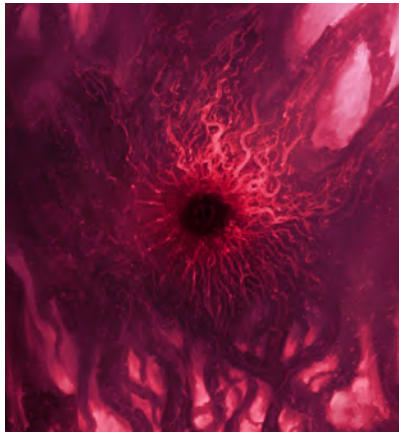
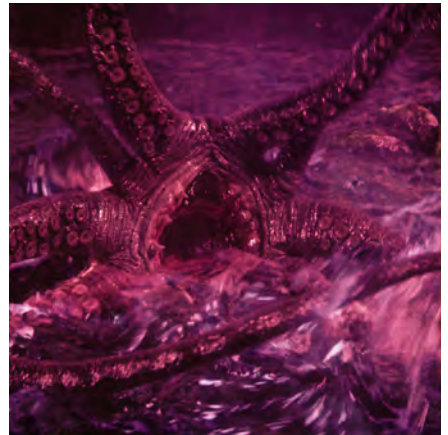
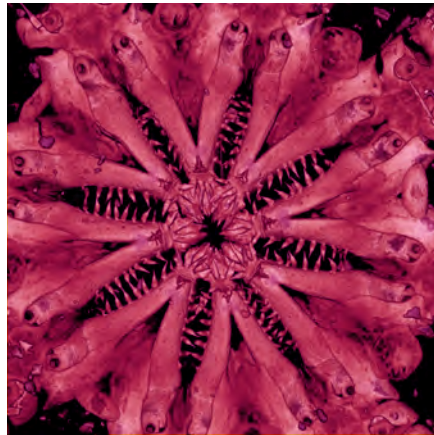
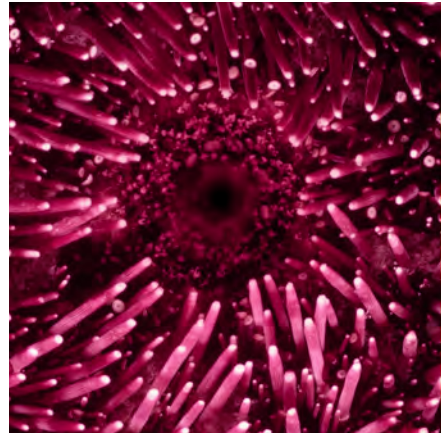
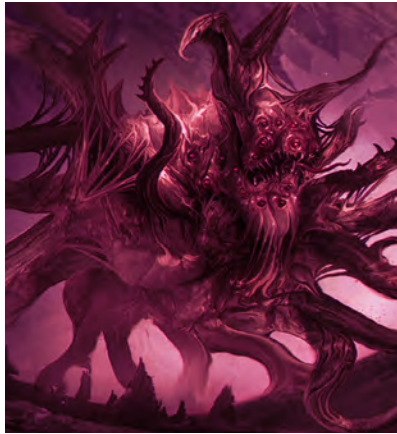
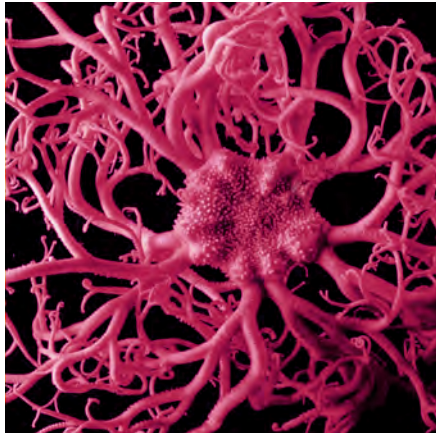
However even this, a direct sequel based on the current story, has a number of options that could be explored. Particularly about the nature of what Jan saw when she looked deep into the Tumbleweed's maw, and how she's coping with the trauma of that experience.

Plus, the Tumbleweeds' mysterious origins (probably intradimensional or extraterrestrial) opens up the possibility of setting sequels anywhere on Earth where there's room enough for characters to flee in a speeding vehicle from a pursuing Tumbleweed. For example, ice road truckers in the Alaskan wilderness, or maybe a busload of tourists in the jungles of S.E. Asia or perhaps South America.

# Look Book

*A few inspirational images for the ...*

## BIG, BLACK TUMBLEWEED THING WITH CLAWS





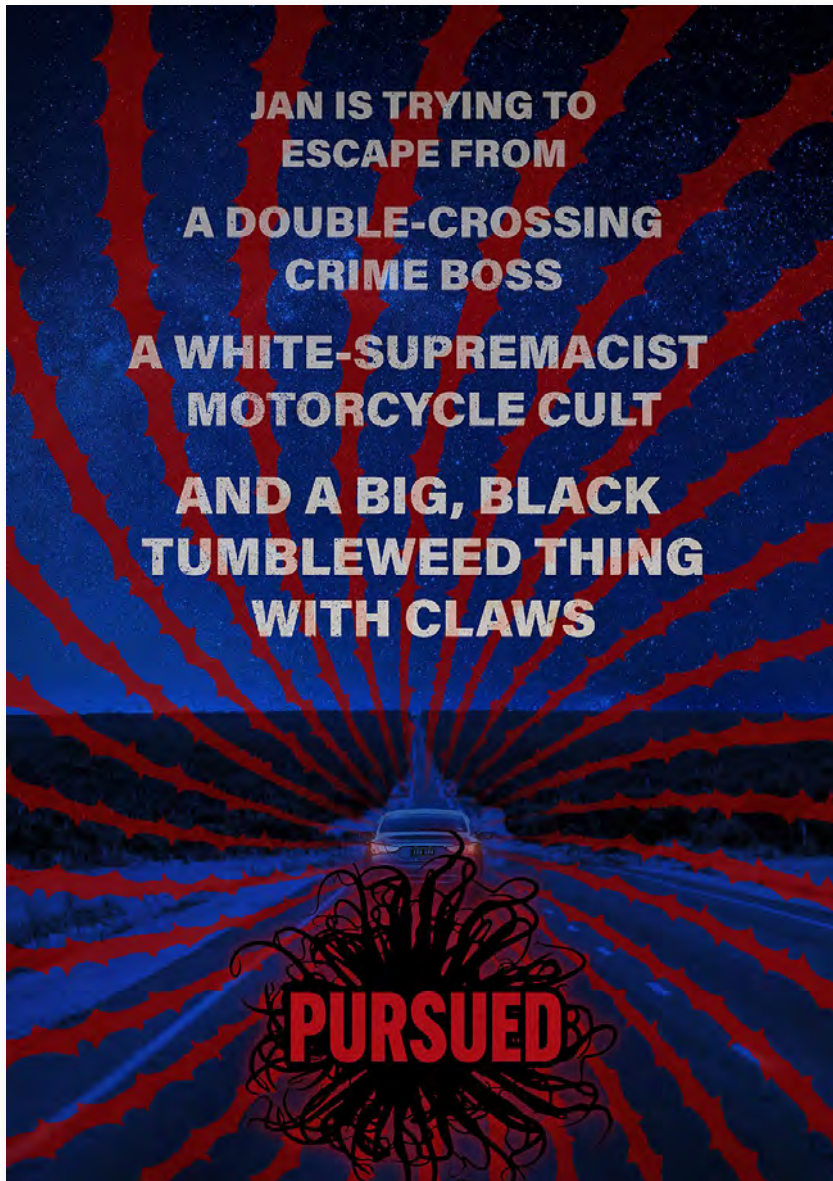
Look Book cont.

## TEASER POSTER



Look Book cont.

## TEASER POSTER







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