



THE DEPARTED

Logline

A young cop goes undercover in the Irish mob to identify a police informant, only to get caught between the criminals and the corrupt cops overseeing the operation.

Genre

Crime, Drama, Thriller

Top Keywords

crime, police, undercover, organized crime, murder, drugs, corruption, boston, investigation, gangs, violence, revenge, betrayal, identity

Location Setting

Boston, Massachusetts

Script Score

Character Development: 8/10 - The main characters of Costigan, Sullivan, Costello, and Queenan are well developed with depth and evolution. Supporting characters less so.

Plot Construction: 9/10 - The plot has an intricate web of deception with compelling progression and suspenseful turning points. Well-structured overall.

Dialogue: 9/10 - Dialogue is gritty, impactful and drives the characterization. Each character has a distinct voice.

Originality: 8/10 - While undercover cop/criminal plots have been done, the double-crossing and blurred lines add freshness. Execution is unique.

Emotional Engagement: 9/10 - The high stakes of the deception and constant tension creates strong emotional involvement from start to finish.

Theme and Message: 7/10 - Exploration of identity, loyalty, trust and betrayal are clear themes, though the messaging comes secondary to the plot.

Overall Rating: 8.5/10

The screenplay is very strong overall, with excellent plot construction, dialogue, emotional engagement and well-developed main characters. The complex storytelling stands out through seamless handling of the intricate deception storyline. The execution and gritty style also elevates the conventional undercover cop premise to create a compelling and suspenseful crime drama.

Synopsis

Billy Costigan and Colin Sullivan grow up in Boston leading very different lives - Billy in a rough neighborhood with ties to organized crime, and Colin in a more affluent area with aspirations of joining law enforcement. As adults, Billy goes undercover in the Irish mob led by Frank Costello to inform for the police, while Colin joins the Special Investigations Unit but secretly feeds information to Costello. When it's suspected there is a "rat" in the SIU giving information to Costello, Colin is tasked with finding the informant, not realizing it is himself. This leads to escalating tension and violence as Billy and Colin both try to discover the other's secret identity, culminating in a confrontation where Colin kills Billy and frames another cop, allowing Colin to be hailed as a hero while continuing to conceal his criminal double life.

Plot Assessment and Enhancement

What's working well:

- The basic premise of an undercover cop infiltrating the mob is intriguing and allows for tension and suspense. The scenes depicting Billy's undercover work show the constant danger he faces.
- The relationship between Costello and Colin Sullivan is complex, with Sullivan both respecting Costello as a father figure but also resenting his power. This adds depth to the story.
- Queenan's murder raises the stakes and makes clear no one is safe. Billy's increasing desperation and paranoia heightens the tension.
- The climax with the standoff on the rooftop and subsequent shootings provides a dramatic conclusion.

Suggestions for improvements:

- The subplots with Madolyn feel underdeveloped. Consider focusing more on the cat-and-mouse game between Sullivan and Costigan.
- Provide more backstory on Costello's rise to power. This could help explain Sullivan's loyalty to him.
- The roles of Dignam, Barrigan, Brown and some other characters are not fully clear. Simplifying the web of characters could help viewers focus on the core relationships.
- The plot twist with Barrigan also being an informant feels unnecessary. Having Sullivan be the sole rat within the police increases the sense of his betrayal.

- The ending with Dignam killing Sullivan could be more meaningful if they had interacted more throughout the script. Consider another character being the one who ultimately stops Sullivan.

Overall the script has a strong premise and conflict between the central characters. Focusing and simplifying some plot points could help strengthen the story. An excellent starting point with engaging protagonists and antagonists.

Character Profiling

Billy Costigan/William Costigan Jr.

An undercover cop played by Leonardo DiCaprio who infiltrates Frank Costello's crew. He deals with the stress of maintaining his cover, struggles with his identity, and aims to uncover the mole in the Special Investigations Unit, ultimately sacrificing himself to expose Colin as the rat.

What's working well:

- Deep undercover skills and ability to maintain cover under extreme stress
- Strong moral compass and dedication to his mission despite personal risks
- Intelligence and quick thinking in critical situations

Areas to Improve:

- Struggles with identity and personal demons could be further explored
- Relationships outside of his undercover work are not deeply developed
- Emotional vulnerability and coping mechanisms could be more nuanced

Archetype: The Hero

Colin Sullivan

A young cop portrayed by Matt Damon who infiltrates the police force as Costello's mole. His journey involves concealing his identity as the mole while gaining power and moving up the ranks, successfully eliminating his rivals and covering up his secret, until he is killed in retribution by Dignam.

What's working well:

- Ability to navigate complex social structures and gain trust within the police force.
- Strategic thinking and planning, especially in maintaining his cover and manipulating situations to his advantage.
- High level of adaptability, allowing him to respond effectively to unexpected challenges and threats.

Areas to Improve:

- Lack of genuine connections and relationships, leading to isolation and vulnerability.
- Over-reliance on deceit and manipulation, which ultimately contributes to his downfall.

- Failure to fully anticipate the consequences of his actions, particularly the moral and ethical implications of his betrayal.

Archetype: The Shadow

Frank Costello

The Irish-American crime boss of South Boston, played by Jack Nicholson. His story revolves around avoiding conviction, maintaining his power, and dealing with the threat of a rat in his crew. He is shot by Colin upon discovering Colin is an informant.

What's working well:

- Charismatic leadership that commands loyalty and fear among his crew.
- Strategic thinking and planning, particularly in evading law enforcement and maintaining control over his criminal operations.
- Manipulative skills, especially in recruiting and using Colin as an informant within the police.

Areas to Improve:

- Paranoia and mistrust, which ultimately lead to his downfall.
- Overconfidence in his control over his crew and informants, which blinds him to the true threats within his organization.
- Failure to adapt to changing circumstances and underestimation of his enemies.

Archetype: The Ruler

Madolyn Madden

A police psychologist portrayed by Vera Farmiga who is romantically involved with both Colin and Billy. Her arc involves navigating her relationships with the two men and eventually discovering Colin's true identity, leading her to break off their engagement.

What's working well:

- Her professional background provides a unique perspective on the psychological aspects of the characters and the story.
- Her relationships with Colin and Billy add depth to the narrative, highlighting themes of trust, betrayal, and moral ambiguity.
- Her character development, from being caught in a love triangle to taking decisive action upon learning the truth about Colin, shows growth and resilience.

Areas to Improve:

- Her character could be further developed to explore her own motivations and backstory, providing a richer understanding of her actions.

- The impact of her professional insights on the main plot could be expanded, utilizing her psychology background to enhance the narrative complexity.

- Her reaction and coping mechanisms to the unfolding truths could be depicted in more detail, offering a deeper exploration of her character's emotional landscape.

Archetype: The Lover

Staff Sergeant Dignam

Played by Mark Wahlberg, he is Queenan's hot-headed partner. His story involves his rage and frustration over his inability to convict Costello, his desperation to uncover the mole in the unit, resigning when Queenan is killed, and later killing Colin in retribution.

What's working well:

- His unwavering dedication to justice and his determination to uncover the mole within the unit contribute significantly to the narrative tension.

- Dignam's hot-headed and confrontational nature adds depth to his character, making his interactions memorable and impactful.

- His ultimate act of retribution against Colin provides a satisfying, though complex, conclusion to his arc, resonating with themes of loyalty and vengeance.

Areas to Improve:

- His aggressive demeanor and lack of diplomacy could be further explored to show a more nuanced understanding of his character and motivations.

- The story could benefit from more background on Dignam's personal life or past experiences that have shaped his approach to law enforcement and justice.

- His relationship with other characters, particularly Queenan, could be developed further to enhance the emotional impact of his actions and decisions.

Archetype: The Warrior

Main Character Casting

Billy Costigan

- Jack Reynor: Reynor, with his Irish-American background, has the intense acting skills needed for the role of an undercover cop, demonstrated in his previous performances that balance vulnerability and strength.

- Garrett Hedlund: Hedlund's performances often showcase a deep emotional range and a strong physical presence, aligning well with Costigan's character. His age and American background make him a fitting choice.

- Aaron Taylor-Johnson: Taylor-Johnson has shown versatility in action and drama, capable of portraying Costigan's complex psychological state. Though British, his accent work could convincingly bridge the gap.

- Taron Egerton: Egerton, known for his dynamic roles and ability to dive deep into character, could bring a fresh

intensity to Costigan. His work in physically demanding roles would serve well in the action sequences.

- Barry Keoghan: Keoghan's Irish background and his ability to portray deeply flawed and complex characters make him an intriguing choice for Costigan, offering authenticity and depth.

- Scott Eastwood: Eastwood has the physicality and the American background needed for the role. His performances often carry a brooding intensity that could translate well into the character's undercover struggles.

- Dylan O'Brien: O'Brien has demonstrated a strong ability to lead in action-packed roles while maintaining a vulnerable side, fitting for Costigan's dual life and internal conflict.

- Logan Lerman: Lerman's performances are often nuanced and emotionally rich, suitable for portraying Costigan's psychological depth and the moral dilemmas he faces.

- Nicholas Hoult: Hoult has shown a wide range in his acting career, capable of both intensity and subtlety, which could bring a compelling layer to Costigan's character. His ability to adapt to different accents could mitigate his British background.

- Ansel Elgort: Elgort's performances often blend charm with a deeper, sometimes troubled interior, mirroring Costigan's need to maintain a facade while dealing with internal turmoil.

Colin Sullivan

- Jack Reynor: Reynor's Irish-American background and his performances in roles that require a complex blend of vulnerability and moral ambiguity make him an excellent choice for Colin Sullivan.

- Garrett Hedlund: Hedlund has the intense, brooding presence needed for Sullivan, coupled with a track record of playing characters with deep internal conflicts.

- Barry Keoghan: Keoghan's Irish roots and his ability to portray characters with a dark edge would bring an interesting depth to Sullivan's duplicity.

- Aaron Taylor-Johnson: Taylor-Johnson's versatility in roles from action to drama, and his ability to convey complex emotions, make him a strong candidate.

- Taron Egerton: Egerton's charm and intensity could effectively convey Sullivan's ambitious nature and the internal struggle of living a double life.

- Domhnall Gleeson: Gleeson's Irish background and his performances in roles that require a significant emotional range make him well-suited to play Sullivan.

- Jamie Dornan: Dornan, being from Northern Ireland, brings authenticity to the role and has shown he can play complex characters with secrets.

- Dylan O'Brien: O'Brien has the youthful appearance and acting chops needed to portray Sullivan's journey from a young recruit to a seasoned officer.

- Logan Lerman: Lerman's performances often convey a depth of character and internal conflict, aligning well with Sullivan's character arc.

- Nicholas Hoult: Hoult's ability to transform into his characters and his experience in playing roles with moral complexities make him a fitting choice.

Frank Costello

- Brendan Gleeson: Gleeson's imposing presence and ability to portray complex characters with a mix of menace and charm make him an ideal choice. His previous role in 'The Guard' showcases his ability to handle morally ambiguous characters.
- Liam Neeson: Neeson's gravitas and experience in playing authoritative figures would lend authenticity to the role of a mob boss. His performance in 'Gangs of New York' demonstrates his capability to embody historical figures with depth.
- Colm Meaney: Meaney has a strong track record of playing tough, no-nonsense characters. His work in 'Layer Cake' and 'Hell on Wheels' shows he can bring a gritty realism to the role.
- Sean Penn: Penn's versatility and intensity as an actor would allow him to capture Costello's complex personality. His role in 'Mystic River' proves his ability to navigate the emotional depths of a troubled character.
- Ciarn Hinds: Hinds has the ability to portray powerful leaders and has a commanding screen presence, as seen in 'Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy'. His experience in playing authoritative roles would serve him well as Costello.
- Jonathan Banks: Banks' portrayal of Mike Ehrmantraut in 'Breaking Bad' and 'Better Call Saul' shows his capability to play morally complex characters with a criminal background, making him a fitting choice.
- Stephen Rea: Rea's performances often carry a subtle intensity and intelligence. His role in 'The Crying Game' demonstrates his ability to play characters with hidden depths, suitable for Costello.
- Brian Cox: Cox's extensive experience in playing complex villainous roles, such as in 'X2: X-Men United', would allow him to bring a nuanced portrayal of Costello's manipulative and commanding nature.
- Ian McShane: McShane's work in 'Deadwood' showcases his ability to play a charismatic and ruthless leader. His powerful screen presence would make him an excellent Costello.
- Tommy Lee Jones: Jones has a knack for playing tough, authoritative characters with a moral complexity, as seen in 'No Country for Old Men'. His seasoned acting would add depth to the role of Costello.

Main Character Casting Limited Budget

Billy Costigan

- Jack Reynor: Reynor's intense performances and Irish-American background make him a compelling choice for the role of Billy Costigan, capturing the character's depth and internal conflict.
- Garrett Hedlund: Hedlund has demonstrated a strong ability to portray complex characters with emotional depth, aligning well with Costigan's undercover struggles and personal dilemmas.
- Barry Keoghan: Keoghan's performances often convey a sense of vulnerability and intensity, traits that are essential for portraying the conflicted nature of Billy Costigan.
- Aaron Taylor-Johnson: Taylor-Johnson's versatility and skill in action-oriented roles make him a great fit for the physical and psychological demands of playing an undercover cop.
- Taron Egerton: Egerton's charismatic screen presence and ability to delve into characters' complexities would bring a compelling layer to Costigan's undercover life.
- Scott Eastwood: Eastwood's rugged demeanor and ability to convey stoic strength would serve well in depicting

Costigan's resilience and determination.

- Dylan O'Brien: O'Brien's dynamic range and youthful energy could effectively capture Costigan's determination and the emotional toll of his undercover work.

- Logan Lerman: Lerman's performances often bring a depth of emotion and sincerity, aligning with Costigan's internal struggle and moral complexity.

- Nicholas Hoult: Hoult's ability to transform into diverse roles and his on-screen intensity make him a suitable candidate for the multifaceted character of Billy Costigan.

- Jamie Bell: Bell's strong acting foundation and his capacity to portray layered characters would allow him to effectively embody Costigan's undercover challenges and personal conflict.

Colin Sullivan

- Jack Reynor: Reynor, with his Irish-American background, has the youthful appearance and intensity needed for the role of Colin Sullivan. His performances in previous films show a depth that could easily translate to the complex nature of Sullivan.

- Garrett Hedlund: Hedlund's strong performances in gritty dramas suggest he could effectively portray Sullivan's ambitious and conflicted character. His physicality and ability to convey internal struggle would be a perfect match.

- Barry Keoghan: Keoghan's Irish roots and his ability to play dark, complex characters make him an intriguing choice for Sullivan. His performances often hint at a troubled past, aligning well with Sullivan's backstory.

- Taron Egerton: Egerton, known for his dynamic roles, could bring a charismatic yet sinister edge to Sullivan. His ability to navigate both charm and intensity would serve the character's dual life well.

- Domhnall Gleeson: Gleeson's versatility and his Irish background make him a strong candidate. He can effortlessly switch between vulnerability and coldness, a necessary trait for playing Sullivan.

- Billy Magnussen: Magnussen's performances often balance charm with an underlying intensity, making him well-suited to play a character with a secret life. His physical presence could also match the role's demands.

- Aaron Taylor-Johnson: Taylor-Johnson has demonstrated a wide range in his acting, capable of portraying both the hero and the villain. His intensity and physicality could bring a compelling depth to Sullivan.

- Jamie Dornan: Dornan, with his Northern Irish background, has the ability to portray complex characters who harbor dark secrets. His performances suggest he could effectively navigate Sullivan's moral ambiguities.

- Dacre Montgomery: Montgomery's roles often showcase his ability to play charming yet troubled characters. His intensity and physical prowess could make him a compelling Sullivan.

- Dan Stevens: Stevens has a knack for portraying characters with a polished exterior that masks a turbulent inner life. His range and ability to convey subtle emotional turmoil would suit the role of Sullivan.

Frank Costello

- Brendan Gleeson: Gleeson's robust presence and ability to portray complex characters with a mix of menace and charm make him an ideal choice. His previous role in 'The Guard' showcases his capability to handle characters with morally ambiguous traits.

- Liam Neeson: Neeson's towering stature and gravitas would lend a commanding presence to Costello. His roles in 'Taken' and 'Gangs of New York' demonstrate his proficiency in playing characters with a violent edge and leadership qualities.

- Colm Meaney: Meaney has a natural ability to embody characters with a tough exterior but complex inner life, as seen in 'Layer Cake'. His Irish background adds authenticity to the role of an Irish-American mob boss.

- Sean Penn: Penn's intense method acting and experience in roles that require a deep emotional and psychological dive, such as in 'Mystic River', make him a compelling choice for the multifaceted character of Costello.

- Jeremy Irons: Irons has a knack for playing sophisticated villains with a calm demeanor, evident in 'Die Hard with a Vengeance'. His ability to portray intelligence and menace simultaneously would add depth to Costello.

- Jon Voight: Voight's experience in playing authoritative and morally complex characters, like in 'Ray Donovan', would allow him to capture Costello's manipulative and commanding nature effectively.

- Gary Oldman: Oldman's chameleon-like ability to disappear into roles, especially those with a darker edge as seen in 'The Professional', would make him a fascinating Costello, bringing unpredictability to the character.

- Brian Cox: Cox's performances often bring a blend of intensity and intelligence, crucial for the role of Costello. His role in 'X2: X-Men United' as a villain showcases his ability to portray complex antagonists.

- Jeff Bridges: Bridges has the ability to bring a rugged charm to his roles, which could add an interesting layer to Costello. His role in 'Hell or High Water' demonstrates his capability to play morally ambiguous characters.

- Tommy Lee Jones: Jones's gruff demeanor and ability to convey deep emotional undercurrents with minimal expression, as seen in 'No Country for Old Men', would make him a compelling Costello, emphasizing the character's hardened life and philosophies.

Comparative Film Analysis

This screenplay seems to be a mash-up of various elements from crime, thriller, and drama genres, focusing on themes of undercover operations, gangster life, police corruption, and personal redemption. Here are 10 movies that share similarities with aspects of this screenplay, along with their box office performance:

1. ****The Departed (2006)**** - Directed by Martin Scorsese, this film revolves around the lives of an undercover cop and a mole within the police, trying to identify each other while infiltrating an Irish gang in Boston. The screenplay shares thematic and narrative similarities, especially in its focus on undercover operations and double lives. Box Office: \$291.5 million.

2. ****Infernal Affairs (2002)**** - This Hong Kong crime thriller is the original inspiration for "The Departed," focusing on a police officer undercover in a gang and a gang member undercover in the police force. It explores themes of identity, loyalty, and deception. Box Office: \$8.7 million.

3. ****Heat (1995)**** - Directed by Michael Mann, this film features a professional thief and a seasoned cop on opposite sides of the law, highlighting their personal lives and professional challenges. It shares the intense cat-and-mouse dynamic seen in the screenplay. Box Office: \$187.4 million.

4. ****Donnie Brasco (1997)**** - This film is based on the true story of an FBI undercover agent infiltrating the Mafia, leading to a deep crisis of identity and loyalty. It parallels the screenplay's exploration of deep undercover work and

personal conflict. Box Office: \$124.9 million.

5. **American Gangster (2007)** - Directed by Ridley Scott, it tells the true story of a detective bringing down a heroin kingpin in 1970s America, highlighting corruption and the drug trade, similar to the screenplay's crime elements. Box Office: \$266.5 million.

6. **Training Day (2001)** - This film focuses on a rookie cop under the guidance of a corrupt detective, exploring moral ambiguities and the darker side of law enforcement, resonating with the screenplay's themes of corruption and mentorship. Box Office: \$104.9 million.

7. **L.A. Confidential (1997)** - Set in 1950s Los Angeles, this film delves into police corruption and Hollywood's seedy underbelly, similar to the screenplay's exploration of crime and corruption within the police force. Box Office: \$126.2 million.

8. **The Town (2010)** - Directed by and starring Ben Affleck, this film is about bank robbers in Boston and the FBI agents tracking them, sharing the screenplay's setting and its focus on crime in Boston. Box Office: \$154 million.

9. **Serpico (1973)** - Based on the true story of an honest New York cop fighting corruption within the police force, it parallels the screenplay's themes of integrity and the fight against corruption. Box Office: \$29.8 million.

10. **Eastern Promises (2007)** - Directed by David Cronenberg, this film explores the life of a midwife who uncovers evidence against a Russian crime family, leading to a complex investigation, similar to the screenplay's crime and investigation elements. Box Office: \$56.1 million.

These films, with their focus on crime, undercover operations, moral dilemmas, and the complex relationship between law enforcement and criminal worlds, provide a cinematic context for understanding the screenplay's themes and narrative structure.