

SCI FI HEIST

Basic premise is there is contraband alien tech which has been printed from deciphered code of an alien transmission. It has leaked out of labs and now it's being made by hackers and in clandestine ways. Like meth labs but for alien technology. ...maybe some of the things that are made really are drugs. So a black market has evolved around this stuff.

We follow one (or several) black marketeers who are looking for the ultimate score. But exposure to the tech also has a mutating effect. It's a live fast die young situation.

Keep it all very street. Raw and gritty with an outer Michael Mann gloss.

Main guy in-firmed in some way. Looking for redemption? Conscripted into a heist that's sure to go wrong, with lots of twists and betrayals along the way.

Who's my main character? Boy... Girl? Do I want to keep it a kind of Boy's fantasy.

First part is introducing the world. Our guy living the good life. Things going wrong. Maybe we start with the mentor getting killed and our guy getting damaged, either emotionally or physically or both.

He's hustling on street for the most meager subsistence. He's barely getting by and there's a price on his head. Then he gets conscripted into a shady operation by a mysterious entity.

After that it's about bringing the team together. Lots of mistrust. No honor among thieves.

The big target is scouted and the plan is made, but of course everything goes wrong. What our guy doesn't realize is there is a bigger game at play. The alien tech that's being scoped is the last piece of a gateway to bring the aliens to Earth (maybe they are a threat?). And he ends up having to destroy it all. Or going through it?

So make this a redemption story. Give it a political subtext in that it's about outsiders hacking the corrupt system.

SO NEXT STEP:

I should start coming up with a colorful array of characters. And also a menu of cool tech and set pieces. After that I start to outline and maybe evolve into scriptment. From there, I could draw the comic book. Or I could write a script.

CHARACTERS

MAIN GUY/GIRL: What's the skill. What kind of person? What age?

MENTOR: Adopted our hero at a young age and taught him the ways of a good blackmarketeer. He's killed at the beginning but maybe reappears in some fashion. As a memory or as an aspect of the alien tech.

THE TEAM

LOVE INTEREST: Is this a boy or a girl?

THE VILLAIN: Who hires him. Someone we don't trust with good reason, but there's someone behind him.

THE MUSCLE

THE BRAIN

BOSS'S MOLL

THE WIZARD

FREAK

A RIVAL TO OUR HERO WHO BECOMES ALLY

BIG BAD - who hired him in the first place

STREET TRASH (for ACT 1)

FENCE FOR ALIEN GOODS

ALIEN TECH COPS

HITMEN

Locations:

Need a bar for the black marketeers

Is this in some exotic place? ...India ...China ...Russia ...Brazil?

Set Pieces:

Opening scene when mentor dies

Drug trip

Hero rescued from street trash and recruited

First heist (success)

Busted by cops

Love scene with alien tech

Big heist

Showdown in front of the 'GATE'

*NEED SOME AMAZING VISUAL HOOK

What are they breaking into? Government facility? Stronghold of a competitor?

Think about the hero's journey. ...Is it a redemption story? HmMMMM.`

Think about the main character's story. Redemption works well because at the end he can make a sacrifice to a larger cause.

Heist stories often have a character who is trying to go straight but is sucked back in to do one last job... often with tragic results.

Also we need to find a means to introduce the world without being expositional.

I like starting with a job gone wrong. Our guy is young and cocky and he gets his best friend and mentor killed and he's psychologically and physically scarred as a result. He's at the bottom but he's recruited for what is tantamount to a suicide mission by mysterious cabal. He takes the job because he has no choice. But in the process he redeems himself and saves the world.

So what is his skill. He must be able to do something related to the alien tech. Connect and manipulate it in some way.

Maybe not everyone can use the tech. You have to have altered yourself in some way? Maybe this is where my fantastic visual hook comes into play. Maybe it has to do with speed. Something perceptual?

What is our guy wanting from this last heist. Freedom? Does he have a kid? What are the emotional stakes. Why should we care about the gateway?

I need to come up with a lexicon for the tech. There's a language component to it. A slang. Streetspeak. I should do some research into drug trafficking terminology.

I like that our guy is non-violent. He doesn't like guns. He's light on his feet. And he uses the tech. Also, maybe he's mutating.

Maybe he has some intuitive ability to know how to assemble the tech or how to activate it. But it should be something dynamic and fun to watch.

What does the tech do, what are the applications? Weapons, matter transformation, power supply, ...maybe they can do things that people desperately need in the future... like water purification.

There should be a whole subtext to the economy built around the trade of aliens tech. There's a legit economy (which is manipulated by powerful corporations) and there is the illegitimate economy of the street, which has a degree of integrity in that it is honest about its dishonesty.

So what is the metaphor here? Alien tech shows how we commodify something sacred. We're using it the wrong way.

Maybe his ability isn't a specific thing but rather an enhanced interface with the tech. He's biologically adjusted to interact with it. But there's a price and as the story progresses he's beginning to fall apart.

THOUGHT: Do I want drones? Autonomous police force? They are equipped to deal with the hazardous alien tech.

Also, let's make a point that our hero has moral boundaries, he's a criminal but he won't steal anything that can be turned into a weapon.

How changed is the world? Is the influence visible? Has it affected the average person?

Maybe our guy is a hacker/programmer who is good at decoding the alien transmissions? Maybe he is more of a manufacturer/seller rather than a thief. Maybe he cracks the code and then someone else has the machinery to print it.

What is the skill he possesses that is critical to the heist? Something he has to assemble. Maybe it's more to do with his ability to fit the puzzle pieces together. He's not a code breaker but a puzzle solver. He can get close to the tech and connect the components.

Thus there is a MODULAR design in play. When you're putting this stuff together you don't know what it's going to do. It could explode, mutate you, consume you... it's like being on the bomb squad. There's an adrenaline component to the work.

So where this is all leading is he is going to assemble a gateway. Either for the aliens to come to us or for us to go to them.

Maybe there's something about the tech... like you have to activate it, otherwise it's an inert object. So to do this job you have to be a bit suicidal.

BTW: where is this taking place?

NEW THOUGHTS. Make the main character a woman. Get away from the macho crap. And give her a child. That's why she wants to leave this life. Is the child deformed/exceptional as a result of proximity to the alien tech?

In any case, we begin with her making her final score before leaving (to where?) or to help her child with a medical procedure. But someone kills her fence and steals her money. So she's forced to take on another more dangerous job that she doesn't want.

Maybe the alien tech has offered a way to survive (solve?) global warming. You can purify water, you can grow food, etc.

So ACT 1 is the first heist. She sells the goods but before she gets paid her fence (who is like a father to her) is murdered and the goods stolen. She finds out who did it tries to track them down, but they offer her another job. A bigger, better one. She is forced to agree. All the while she's getting pressure from police.

Is her ex part of this? How kitchen sink do we get with it? Is there a second tier guy who she owes money to that's after her? Does she have a drug problem?... or is that boring. How noble and strong a person is she?

ACT 2 begins with assembling the team (it might include a rival from the street). Play up the paranoia: she doesn't have control over who she's partnered with, is given limited information about what she is supposed to be stealing, so she can conduct her own investigation into who is behind this and what they want.

Need to reverse engineer a few good twists:

1. WHO THE VILLAIN REALLY IS AND WHAT HIS/HER TRUE PURPOSE IS?
2. HOW THE HEIST GOES WRONG?
3. NEED A MOLE AND THIS SHOULD BE A SURPRISE
4. THE TECH IS REVEALED TO BE A GATE... BUT WHAT DO THEY ASSUME IT IS?

Is there a cat and mouse game going on? Or do we leave the authorities at arms length?

There needs to be some kind of parallel story related to the child. The child is sick. The child is being used by the authorities to track or control her.

Conceptual questions about the alien tech:

HOW IS IT MANUFACTURED?

HOW MUCH IS IT UNDERSTOOD?

HOW IS IT CONTROLLED AND REGULATED?

HOW IS MADE USER FRIENDLY?

Begin assembling a reference photo file.

NEW APPROACH:

Do it as a three book series.

First book is somewhere between one hundred to one hundred and thirty pages.

Gets Shel past first heist.

At the end she discovers that she has to do two more.

...That her old mentor is not dead. He set her up. Either managing her or in competition with her.
The father or her husband shows up.
She needs to find the next module because it will save her child.
But the module belongs to the biggest cartel.

Questions:

What is her super-power? Is it like a sixth sense for the modules.... She senses them and knows intuitively how to activate them?

Where is the first module held and what is the nature of the heist?

Who are the team members and what happens to them?

A B storyline? ...Another mob boss whose interest will intersect with her own?

Second half of BOOK ONE:

Shel has escaped from authorities, but she's injured and on the run

She hunts down the Madame Le Pham's killers

But they come back with an offer (it was all a set up)

She is rescued by a drug cartel (who?) that wants to employ her on a dangerous heist

Shel has no choice

We meet the team (see above)... or work to assemble them

Shel finds ally within the team (another woman... love interest... who will betray her)

Meanwhile, Shel's kid (Tess) is being used (by a mysterious individual) to track her... also we establish a growing telepathic/telekinetic link

The target is an armored transport carrying modules

Then we do the heist

Love interest betrays them and things go badly

But Shel has her own escape plan set and we reveal she was ahead of everyone else

She gets out with the goods

But is stopped as her old mentor Bronski shows up... With Tess.

Tells her he has two more heists for her.

DETAILS FROM SECOND HALF BOOK ONE

Shel is injured but manages to escape from crash site.

She goes to hidden cache of modules.

Makes contact with a friend in the underground who tells her who killed M. Pham (who?)

It was made to look like an Armenian hit... (what's the point of this deception?)... maybe it is Armenians?

Shel pulls off ballsy ambush only to discover... it's really an AI (?!) behind this.

Is that a fun double twist. ... we think it's AI but it's really Bronski?

AI convinces her that she needs to do another heist. ...You'll get your kid back... how can this be assured?

A competing black marketeer running trucks to (or from) an airport.

They have to traverse urban wasteland (the site of module leak)

That's where the ambush is going to happen.

She says no but the police tell her to say yes because they want that shipment.

The fate of her kid is in the balance (who has the kid?)... the police?

She meets her team.

This happens on an impromptu on the mission, so the intros happen through an action sequence

(Throughout Shel retains some kind of contact with the kid... does the kid have a role to play in events?)

She connects with a woman in the team

There is a brief romance (?)

The heist goes horribly wrong.

Make it like Wages of Fear... volatile modules in trucks.

The girl/love interest turns on everyone.

But the AI boss kills her

Reveal it's really Bronski.

He has two more heists for her to do.

Feb 21 2019

New idea:

Shel goes to informant to find out who killed Le Pham.

He tells her about The Shard - secret syndicate composed of hardcore users

They are like the Fremen from Dune — they have learned how to harness the tech-drugs

Another module allows them to control their changes to some degree

But it also makes them psychotic

So they have heightened powers

Maybe they have some secret motivation — philosophy

They know something about the module that Shel stole that she doesn't know

We will learn later that Bronski used them/set them up — to get Le Pham's module

And to trick Shel into the latest heist

These guys are scary

All users

Meta-human

Messed up

But they need her

Maybe Shel connects to another woman in the shard

This woman wants to get out

And she tells Shel that the Shard will kill her unless she joins them once the job is finished

Not romantic, but she feels for her

And then she's going to get killed.

Maybe this woman is going to help Shel at some point

Ends up being sacrificed

Might be fun to have a Ka-razy Shard guy - like Bill Paxton in Near Dark

Along the way, maybe they test Shel, put her through a kind of ritual process

And they keep tempting her with drugs

But she resists, much to their amusement

(***this creates an atmosphere of extreme danger and uncertainty)

Meanwhile she's being contacted by the police who have her daughter
And are forcing her to be a double agent (we should see what the Shard does to double agents
along the way)

Then it's the big heist and it goes spectacularly wrong

Meanwhile, we track Shel's kid
Who is being studied
And whose powers are growing
Bronski is going to reunite them at the end
But he will need to still have something on Shel that requires her to keep working with him.

FEB 24

Who's the person that Shel get's info about the Shard... is it a one step process or does it take
more than that. —maybe an addict. Get a deeper view of that life. See some of the tragedy and
misery surrounding it.

Maybe it's a montage kind of thing... going into low life places... and then out of the blue she
meets this really scary guy who says he knows who killed Le Pham and where they can be
found... Maybe she's going to go back to Benny. And that leads somewhere else.

Next we see Shel infiltrate their hideout and threatens them.
She is overpowered, but instead of killing her
They hire her, the bait is after this heist "you can buy back your kid."

FEB 25

***Idea for the end: Shel get's her kid back, thanks to Bronski. But the kid is sick. And Bronski
reveals the only thing that's going to make her better is the next module (how does he know
that?)

Anyway, picking up where we left off
We spend a quiet moment with the Shard...
Maybe they have a classic: here's the heist
Shel is contacted by the police: be a double agent and you get your kid back
they give Shel a tracker
they trick Shel, saying they are taking her somewhere but it's a cruel initiation
And on the other side of that nightmare they are waiting
Before Shel can catch her breath they are out to execute their heist

***Somewhere in this do we cut back to the kid and see what's going on with her?
Developing powers?
Is she being studied?
Is there interest in her in terms of module research... the hint of contacting ET's and what their
intentions might be?

THE HEIST

A big motorcade with a armored truck
Like in HEAT
It goes horribly wrong of course
Psycho shard starts killing everyone
Shel somehow gets away with the module
Somehow she's cornered by the surviving Shard members
Police show up
Big shoot out
She is saved by Bronski
He's got her kid
But the kid is sick and Bronski claims that the only way to save the kid is to go after another
module.

THE SHARD

Boss
Psycho
Sympathetic Shel-like woman
Weasley guy
Maybe a trigger happy kid
(It's like the cast of Near Dark)
A few redshirts

FEB 27/19

Maybe a little flashback to life with her kid... the trailing effect of the psychokinetic moment
Druillet style
Would it be too corny that the memory is by the sea... a beach?
Then start the hunt with Benny, Shel is suspicious
She finds him in a drug den
We see tragedy there... the suffering of this specific form of addiction
The addicts believe they are communicating with gods?
She beats the hell out of him, angry mother side
But Benny knows nothing
As she is about to leave scary, scary dealer/user stops her
He knows who killed Pham: The Shard
Big build up about them — psychotic, political, dangerous, post-human
They move around a lot but right now they are — —, get there fast before they move on.

...Where?... Abandoned brutalist building. Maybe it has a name.

August 13. 2019

Shel is captured by the Shard.

We go to black and hear her daughter trying to speak to her
She's gets a glimmer of what is being done to he daughter
The woman that heads the medical experiments

...so maybe She'll gets a glimpse of her

When Shel wakes she is in a vehicle
The Shard leading her somewhere
A heist and they want her help
They know she will give it because she needs her daughter back

Some kind of heist scene (which is both an initiation and a set up for the real big heist)
After the heist she gets the sympathetic ear of one of the shard members — a man or a woman? (Is it revealed this person is a police mole?)

Or is she contacted by the police somehow?

August 14. 2019

Shel wakes up in the vehicle
She's given the ultimatum: join us and get your daughter back.

They drop her off in the middle of some situation that requires her special talent:

So we need to establish what that talent is (nose for the modules?) which is a talent they don't possess.

Also: need to know what this heist (is that is what it is) is for. It needs to be a component necessary for the big heist.

If it is the big heist: then is it a route for the armored car... plans for the armored car... information about what is in the armored car?

August 15. 2019

here's an idea... the Shard take Shel to the home of an insanely wealthy man who is part of the legit trade of the tech. He has something they need (we will discover) related to the heist that is coming up. Get a bit Chandler-esque... set up some intrigue for down the road?

Maybe this is a guy who we might have heard about earlier...

So we get a peek into that world and the lives of the other half. But the man's family is threatened which makes Shel sick. It's a home invasion... ugly scary stuff.

There could be home security... an internal system or guards— so there's danger and some of the shard get pasted.

Also, the Shard might have a philosophy or political stance... an attitude towards tech billionaires that control the trade.

Maybe after they get what they want they kill him anyway.

And the way they get it requires a talent that Shel possesses.

August 17, 2019

The module the wealthy man has is what?...

Maybe it isn't a module. Is there a talent/power that Shel possesses that WE didn't know about.

Would it make sense that the Shard knows this guy is going to be transporting some goods.

Do they need him to make a new route/time for the transport.

Weaknesses/information about the transport

Maybe Shel is used to neutralize some defense mechanism.

Maybe they want information about the new module and in the process find out that it's being transported (to where for what purpose?)

Sept 14/19

The big heist.

So they have to isolate the transport that's got the module. then they have to break in. So maybe they somehow isolate it from the others. but then when they do stuff goes wrong. Horribly wrong.

Psycho goes crazy killing everyone. Police show up. Shel has deceived them... they went after the wrong one and her partner in crime has got the right one — she has rendez-vous with him. But then he double crosses her. But Bronski saves her. And somehow Tess ends up figuring into all this.

Oct 8/19

How about I make this simple?

They get the module but only after the Shard goes totally psycho and kills everyone.

But somehow Shel leads them into trap — the cops are hidden in the tunnel already.

They take the module but it's the wrong module — somehow boobytrapped (because Shel knows they don't have Tess)

She has rendez-vous with her accomplice, who has the right module.

But her accomplice betrays her... That's when Bronski shows up and saves her and he's got Tess.

The police are coming. She has a choice. Bronski tells her that her daughter is sick. He knows that there is another module that will save her.

Shel joins the two modules into a super module and they escape together.

.....

Try it again

.....

What do I need to happen:

Shel has set up the shard — the police ambush them.

Shel fools the police.

Shel joins the two modules (the one she stole at the beginning) and the one at the end (which her accomplice steals)

**That needs to be her real trick — because that's what no one but her knows about.*

In joining them something happens to her: She becomes more alien — super powerful.

She transports herself out of there to Tess.

What happens to Dr? ...To The Accomplice?

She gets Tess back, but Bronski (who has been behind this all along) tells her Tess is sick and needs another module to get better, so Shel is forced to join him again.

Beats:

They raid the last of the transports and get the module.

But police ambush them in sealed tunnel (they were waiting there because Shel tipped them off).

Shel gave them away.

Head shard guy tries to use his exo-suit module but Shel already pilfered it.

Police take the module — claim they have Tess (but Shel knows better). Just when they are about to double cross her — her accomplice shows up with the real module and then—

Shel surprises everyone when she joins BOTH modules.

And she becomes super-human-alien.

She blasts everyone and escapes with her accomplice (or is he killed by the police?)

And she transports herself to Tess — who is sick.

The doctor is with her. She tries to warn Shel but is killed by —

Bronski.

Reveal he was behind the whole thing. It's what he wanted from the start.

Also reveal, the only way to make Tess better is to steal another module.

Shel has no choice but to rejoin her mentor.

And we end with them transporting to (Sal Paulo?) to the next heist.