

DAN MCDOWELL

POOL MAN

Pitch Packet

Dan McDowell – Writer

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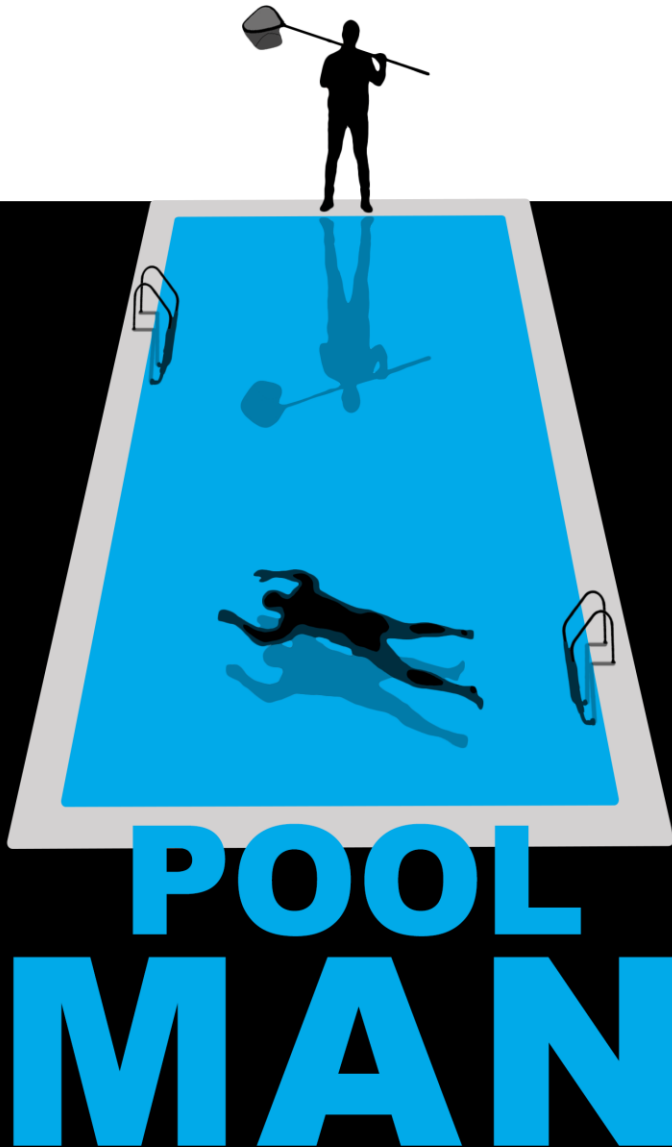


About Dan

- Thriller/Horror/Dark Comedy Writer based in San Antonio, TX
- Began creative writing in 2019
- Author of 3 published novels, 4th title to release in 2023
- BA in Social Work, MS in Business Management & Leadership
- Married with two children, Andrew (1), Alice (6)
- Work in FinTech industry as a business manager at Citi, have worked in IT/business functions past twelve years
- I'm an old soul and still mostly "live" in the 80s and 90s when it comes to music, movies, and television.
- Other Hobbies: guitar, traveling, collecting vinyl records, watching art house, eclectic, and less discovered films



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POOL MAN

There are degrees to deadness.

Mystery

Thriller

Dark Comedy

Logline: *Dead bodies, a bizarre game show, and an amputee collide in one of America's strangest towns. Mix in a bad habit that's all the rage with a mysterious conspiracy, and you've got one hell of a ride.*



Material Type
Book



Intended Medium
Movie



Language
English



Location
Texas, United States



Rating
Parents Strongly Cautioned



Era
Recent Past
1991

Comps



I consider Pool Man a suspense thriller that's never afraid to embrace dark humor, the macabre, or explore the vulnerable. Though certain elements are on the fringes of bizarre, I feel each of these films touch in a similar camp and still manage to entertain without alienating. These are a few titles that come to mind when I imagine, Riverton, the universe of our protagonist, Greg Preakle.

Story Background



- **Year:** 1991
- **Setting:** Riverton, Texas (fictional town comparable to Austin), have written three novels in same universe where dark, strange, and quirky things happen, some characters overlap but each story stands alone **Main Character:** Greg Preakle
- **Supporting characters:** John Fatts, Dave Levett, Will Hoblitz, AP Robbins, Mom, Dad, Denny Preakle/The Host, Dr. Carl Hicks, Coach Simmons, Detective Neil Penske, Detective Markle, Stolz, Joan, Jerry Greenwich
- **Main locations in story:** Cove Ridge Trailer Park, West Riverton High School, Castle Productions Studio, Oak Hollow Hotel, Richland Lake
- **Themes:** Brothers, Addiction, Manipulation, Unmet Expectations, Conspiracy, New job, Family dysfunction, Fantasy and reality

Synopsis— Pool Man

Greg Preakle's a cynical, one-armed 41 year old with complex family baggage rivaling a soap opera. After 20 years cleaning the same pool, Greg discovers a dead body in it and ends up fired, concluding it to be murder. To make ends meet, he goes on "Twisted Hacks", a bizarre game show that promises cash to its helmeted participants and wins \$10,000. Later that evening, an unidentified driver demands \$9,000 and Greg's drunk neighbor, Dave, saves the day shooting at the car. Dave lands Greg a job interview with high school principal, John Fatts, whose bad habit is sucking slugs (a euphoric experience local to the region, typically associated with lower class). Greg starts a new job under the mentorship of a cantankerous custodian, and quickly discovers things at his alma mater are far stranger than he first thought, encountering his dead mother's psychiatrist at the school during weird hours, the arrival of an unruly assistant principal that demands order, and a classmate turned coach that's living in the past. Things take a turn for the bloody and unexpected when they keep ending up dead with Greg nearby and a masked megaphone wielding psycho mere steps ahead. As Greg struggles to manage reality from fantasy and everyone else around is "sucked into" sucking slugs, he finds himself at the center of a larger than life conspiracy promising the investment of a lifetime. Family dysfunction, visceral horror, social criticism, and nonstop suspense-- POOL MAN is a darkly funny story that has it all.



Why audiences will engage...



Pool Man is a weird and wild ride that casts a wide net touching not only the dark thriller market but also comedy and satire in a delicate but tangible manner. Content can be delivered dark, quirky, and smart, while still reinforcing the importance of decision making and its long term effects on relationships. The underlying mystery paced with action will keep audiences engaged and wondering what's happening next.

- **Relatable but Different-** Preakle's facing real life struggles amidst a bizarre backdrop and this combination has potential to resonate differently with teenagers and adults.
- **90s Flavor-** The story brings elements of yesteryear back to life again, a welcome distraction. Considering programs like Cobra Kai, Fear Street, and a slew of other films and shows embracing Hollywood in the 80s and 90s, it's likely to connect.

Q&A/Feedback

APPENDIX

Appendix: Pool Man- Characters



Greg Preakle
Male / 41 years old



Cynical and jaded. Laid back, he's horizontal, too much family baggage to let emotions weigh him down.



John Fatts
Male / 61 years old



Wacky, above the law, and always in the right place at the right time to be successful.



The Host/Denny Preakle
Male / 38 years old



Larger than life on television, unnoticed behind close doors.



AP Robbins
Female / 44 years old



Feisty but letter of the law enforcer who hates disorder.



Will Hoblitz
Male / 68 years old



Old cantankerous janitor that should have retired years earlier. Doesn't work hard because he doesn't have to.



Dad
Male / 70 years old



Perfectionist, loyal to the Army, always prioritizes work over family.



Dr. Hicks
Male / 64 years old



A straight-laced doctor with a commitment to the unconventional, not afraid of pseudo-science.



Mom
Female / 45 years old



A depressed woman that could never please herself or anyone else. Traumatized by loss of son.



Dave
Male / 55 years old



A beer drinking taxidermist who's anecdotal quirks make you love him.



Joan
Female / 48 years old



Quirky chain smoker with nothing better to do than put curlers in her hair and watch her neighbors.



Detective Neil Penske
Male / 45 years old



No-nonsense cop with no filler, he's straight to the point and cuts to the chase.



Coach Rick Simmons
Male / 41 years old



A guy living in the past that's struggling to meet his wife's expectations and coach a fledgling basketball team.



Detective Markle
Male / 30 years old



Hyperactive junior detective aiming to please.



Stolz
Male / 48 years old



Useless trailer trash super, pushy and annoying.



Johnny Lathrop
Male / 45 years old



Hyperactive realtor, think Joe Pesci in Lethal Weapon

Appendix: Pool Man - Synopsis

- Greg Preakle's a cynical, one-armed everyman that's cleaned the same pool for decades, eking out a dull existence in Cove Ridge Trailer Park with people like Dave, his drunken taxidermist for a neighbor, and Joan, a cheese-loving cat lover that lives on the opposite side. Life changes when he finds a body in the pool at the hotel he works for, declares it murder, and ends up fired shortly thereafter.
- Flashbacks paced throughout the story tell us of Preakle's complex baggage, showing glimpses of his backstory throughout the 60s and 70s-- his stint in basic training, the amputation of his arm, his father's militaristic pursuit for perfection, his mother's fragile emotions, and most significantly, the loss of his younger brother, Denny, in combat, methodically showing the collapse of a once idealized and perfect family torn apart by tragedy, and Greg never meeting up to expectations.
- A local cable station, Channel 33, is the home of Castle Productions, a studio that hosts shows like "Twisted Hacks," a program locals call the "alternative to homelessness." The macabre and bizarre quiz show is as gory as late-night censors will allow, and the host of the show is obnoxious, but there's something endearing about him. Having "pissed off the goddess of chance" as barely sober neighbor, Dave, puts it, Greg grapples with his job loss, winning \$10,000 on "Twisted Hacks", and an unknown harasser demanding \$9,000 upon his victory just outside his home. Dave shoots at them, scaring them away, and lands Greg a job interview with charismatic southern charmer, John Fatts, a high school principal.
- Greg and Fatts have an unconventional interview on a boat, slinging back beers and Fatts reassuring that the job will "transform" him. Fatts reveals a bad habit. He sucks slugs (Tark slugs are a regional favorite with a euphoric side-effect, earning them the moniker, "poor man's crank."). Greg enables Fatts' behaviors finding them odd. He gets the job at the high school under the cantankerous Will Hoblitz, a janitor that's been there many years. They wander, carrying out day to day tasks. He quickly concludes Hoblitz is useless, also encountering former classmate turned coach, Rick Simmons, forever stuck in the past.

Appendix: Pool Man - Synopsis

- Greg investigates mysteries at the school like why the family doctor is there at weird hours, the fact that there are hidden rooms with unexplained markings, unknown lists, and the ongoing brouhaha accompanying Fatts' antics on campus. On a break, Greg visits his father on "anniversary day," the date of Denny and his mothers' deaths, and the pair struggle to exchange words.
- Enter new Assistant Principal (AP) Robbins, a letter of the law enforcer who demands order. Her attitude is intimidating, but Greg admits "most people need a woman like her in their lives for accountability." At home, Greg's harassed again with Dave nowhere to be seen, and finally pays \$9,000.
- Shortly after AP Robbins' arrival, the school improves. Meanwhile, Will Hoblitz goes missing, gets caught sucking slugs in an "attic break room" with Twisted Hacks on a television, and soon ends up dead in a water heater closet.
- Greg's taunted by someone through a megaphone and dressed in black. Coach Simmons ends up dead in a basketball hoop. Greg stresses out and sucks a slug. He finds a poorly edited video tape in the attic showing Simmons' final minutes. Local authorities, Detective Penske and Markel get involved and Fatts loiters closely. Greg struggles with side effects of the slug suck having a strange vision featuring Simmons and Hoblitz encouraging him to kill AP Robbins with electricity from an exit sign.
- Greg spots Fatts near Castle Productions with another familiar man. He waits and snoops around more correlating many things. He slips into the empty studio, finding out the network is being sold to the Nightmare Channel and Fatts' wife is station manager. He's caught and flees the scene.
- AP Robbins calls him and asks to meet unexpectedly. She takes a drink of poisoned coffee and keels over before they can talk. Detective Penske arrives saying Greg needs to be taken in for questioning. Shortly after, they go to Castle Productions where they meet up with realtor, Johnny Lathrop, the man Greg had seen Fatts with before. The studio's relocating. As they explore, its reiterated that Twisted Hacks' blood and gore is just "smoke and mirrors" despite Greg believing it to be real. Shortly after, Penske is shot and killed and Greg is knocked unconscious.

Appendix: Pool Man - Synopsis

- He wakes in a tunnel next to another man that claims he's a prisoner. It's Denny. Some big reveals occur and a fight breaks out. Denny's been in disguise hosting "Twisted Hacks" as "The Host." He reveres Fatts who saved him from Vietnam. They walk through the tunnel into an "earthy" board room and meet Fatts. The tunnel links up to a hidden room in the school's basement.
- There's a production plant where Greg discovers Dr. Hicks to be harvesting and working with Tark slugs. Greg's invited to "presentation night." A short time later, others arrive, including neighbor, Dave. Fatts, Denny, and Dr. Hicks sell an opportunity. "Tark slugs are the future." In addition to euphoria, slugs have other uses including weight loss, to which both of them have partaken. After fainting, Greg wakes influenced by slugs. Fatts and Denny admit having forced them. The deaths in the school were staged and AP Robbins and Penske are fine. They take Greg through the door where they and the other "dead people" reminisce to the elaborate ruse. Fatts admits sucking slugs, too much money, access to makeup and special effects, and a lot of pull in the community offered him the means to "transform" Greg. AP Robbins is a paid actress and Penske's moonlighting. Simmons and Hoblitz are investors. Fatts' proposes Greg join Tarkano enterprises, and move to California. He and Denny part on complicated but amicable terms.
- Greg's father's in drunken shambles, admitting he was responsible for the body in the pool. He seems relieved to admit it. The body belonged to Fatts' father bringing the complicated family history full circle as Fatts' mother and Greg's father had been in affair. Greg decides not to tell his father of Denny.
- Months later, Greg runs into Dave packing up for California to join Tarkano Enterprises. Dave admits to Greg he hired the \$9,000 harassers to fund his investment. Though it's a complicated, they part amicably and Dave pays him back. Greg also admits he's dating actress, Julia Wells, who is hired at the school for her efforts as a principal. As the story comes to a close, Greg turns on the TV. A commercial comes on with Fatts narrating and offering an opportunity that will "change your life." Denny comes on the screen with two other women on a beach, a Tark slug following close behind.