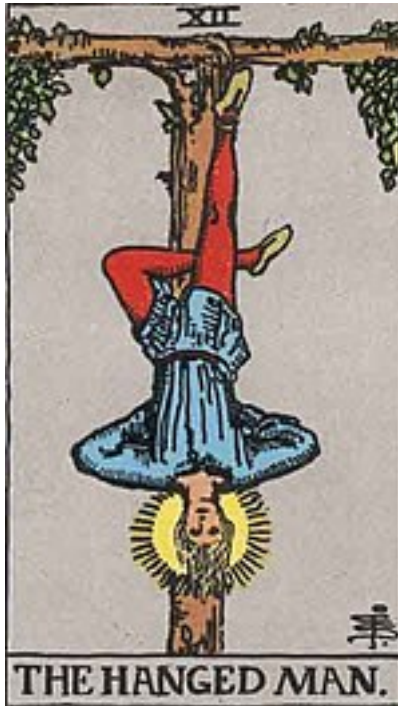


# “CHASING THE DARK”

Bible for a One-Hour Serial Drama



Created by Mike Bencivenga

## CHASING THE DARK



**GENRE:** Supernatural Thriller/Romance

**LOGLINE:** When dark, satanic forces arrive in New York, a Russian psychic must partner with a beguiling client in order to foresee the future and conquer the evils that lay ahead.

**COMPS:** *Stranger Things* meets *Outlander*

The central idea of the show is that all the things in the mystical world that we think can't exist (mind reading, ghosts, fortune telling, reincarnation etc.) are real. In **CHASING THE DARK** all things are possible. And they're a lot scarier and more deadly than we ever could've suspected

### PILOT SUMMARY:

**Natalya Petrova** has to get out of town. She was born with clairvoyant powers that show her dark, upsetting visions of the future. Now living in New York, she senses the arrival of an evil demi-god, **Santos**. He wants to draw psychics to him to harness their power to terrorize and rule the city. Well, Natalya wants no part of that! On her way out the door she meets **Danny McNab**, a guy looking for a tarot card reading (her side hustle). Natalya senses he's the man she's fated to be with. But she sees in one of her mental 'flashes' that Danny might actually end up harming her. So, after a passionate night together, she runs.

Unwilling to let Natalya go, Danny tosses his boring life aside and takes off after her. As it turns out, Danny isn't the only person hot on her heels. While she was working at an investment firm to predict the market (a very real practice) Natalya 'read' more than she was supposed to, uncovering all kinds of corruption. Two goons, hired by the firm's president, are also following her to make sure she doesn't go to the cops. And another psychic, **Artie Stemple**, is telepathically ordered by Santos to find her. So Danny, the thugs and Artie are all hell bent to bring Natalya back to NYC, the last place she wants to be.

### SERIES OVERVIEW:

Each season will follow Natalya and Danny down a different rabbit hole of the mystical world. The first season will deal with psychic phenomena, telepathy and mind control. Season two will explore the existence of ghosts, reincarnation and the afterlife. Later seasons will deal with extraterrestrials, time travel and telekinesis.

Fans of **STRANGER THINGS** and **DOCTOR WHO** will find a lot to enjoy in the series as it explores, with suspense and humor, the dark mysteries of the supernatural world.



## CHARACTER BIOS

**Natalya Petrova (30)** Natalya was born in Russia with the power to see into the future. At age 6 her parents sent her off to a Kremlin run school where they cultivated her psychic gift. At 18 she read the mind of the head of the school and realized that they were grooming her to be a Russian spy. Wanting no part of that she headed to America to start a new life. While telling fortunes on Venice Beach, she met Barry Becker who was impressed with her 'skills' and offered to fly her to New York to work with his hedge fund as a 'consultant.' Once there, Becker desires more than her powerful mind. She looks into his soul and realizes he's a crook. When she confronts him with what she knows he threatens to have her deported. She quits and Becker has her followed to be sure she doesn't reveal what she knows about his shady business dealings.

**Danny McNab (28)** Danny grew up in Queens with a Dad who works as a detective for the NYPD. When he was 15 his older sister was killed trying to stop a mugging. Her death shattered the family. His parents split when his father took to drinking away his sorrow. And it caused Danny to grow up being overly cautious and noncommittal. But it also gave him a serious distaste for injustice. He befriended his high school classmate, Milo Becker, when he saw him being bullied. They have remained constant companions ever since. But having such a dependent friend has hurt Danny's romantic relationships. The latest girl to run into this roadblock is Lian Wu. She sees a lot of potential in Danny but is frustrated by his lack of drive and detached nature. Danny is frustrated by it too. He's just never found anything he cared about enough to shake him out of his lethargy. He's spent his young life avoiding trouble and always takes the easy way out.

**Milo Becker (28)** Milo was born with Asperger's, a mild form of autism that makes it difficult for him to interact socially. He is withdrawn but incredibly brilliant. His parents, Doris and Barry, struggled to deal with the stresses of raising him. At 13 he accidentally burned their Montauk beach house to the ground. When Doris divorced her philandering husband, she took Milo to live with her in Queens. Meanwhile his guilt-ridden father kept writing the checks for whatever he wanted or needed. What he needed was a friend, and he found one in Danny McNab. Danny became his protector from the bullies and, in return, Milo helped him with his schoolwork and shared the money his father lavished on him. The two went to college together and Danny created a research company for him called 'Ass-Burgers Inc.' It gave Milo an identity. Now all he needs is a girlfriend.

**Lian Wu (28)** Lian is the youngest daughter in a Chinese family. Her father is an international trader. Her mother wants her to have babies. Lian sells beauty products and loves to give makeovers. Meeting Danny, she saw him as the ultimate 'fixer-upper.'

**'Galileo' Gustavos (40)** Hector Gustavos gave himself the nickname 'Galileo' because he feels he can find anything or anyone. A son of Greek immigrants, he has cultivated the intuition he was born with and now works as a professional 'finder' for the Atlas Security firm based in Manhattan. He's a proud man who feels he's the smartest egg in the carton.

**Vinnie ‘Beefier’** (35) Vinnie Filosa was a very big baby. He was the biggest newborn in the history of Bronx-Lebanon hospital. Vinnie was a wrestling champ throughout high school, earning him the nickname of ‘Beefier’. He wanted to be a professional wrestler but his father forbade him to do it. Instead Beefier got a job as a bouncer and then a ‘security executive’ with Atlas. His only problem is he thinks he’s smarter than he is.

**Arthur Stemple** (59) Artie had his dreams of going to college dashed when he was drafted to go to Vietnam. There he was hit with a dose of ‘Agent Orange’, a chemical weapon the army experimented with. It made Artie sick with headaches and seizures. His mind was flooded with images and messages that kept him distracted and sleepless. To combat the ‘noise’ Artie turned to booze and drugs. Over time he learned to use his chemically induced psychic gift to make a buck as ‘Arturo the Incredible’. His act suffers because his conscience forces him to share unpleasant truths with the audience.

**Santos Cabrerra** (50’s) Santos Cabrerra was born a mutant, with a freakish third eye in the middle of his forehead. His parents saw this as a sign of devil and threw him into the sea. He was rescued by followers of Santeria and raised as ‘the holy child’. Santos loved the religion, especially its practice of casting spells to punish churchgoers. He uses his psychic powers to build a following for a more satanic version of Santeria throughout the Caribbean. He’s summoned to New York to help battle neighborhood gangs and drugs.

**Daniel McNab Sr.** (50) All Daniel Sr. ever wanted to be was a cop. After joining the NYPD he married his high school sweetheart, Joan. When their daughter was killed it tore the family apart. Depressed, Dan Sr. took to drink and retreated from the family. Around that time he busted up a Haitian drug ring. To get revenge, the Haitian dealers targeted him with Voo-Doo spells. Dan Sr. was beset with night sweats and crawling skin that doctors couldn’t heal. He told his superiors that he was under a Voo-doo curse. Frightened by how unhinged he’d become, Joan divorced him and took their son to live with her. Dan Sr. was put on ‘disability’ by the cops and branded a kook by the press.

**Barry Becker** (55) Barry was a crafty young man who made a bundle selling the answers to the test needed to become a Wall Street trader. This was the first of many fortunes he would amass, always with a bit of larceny at the center of it. Barry sees his son Milo’s Asperger’s condition as a punishment for his misdeeds. When he and his wife split, he lets her take him with her but he guiltily continues to send Milo money for anything he wants. Barry has plenty of cash from the Madoff-sized ponzi scheme he’s running.

**Ethan Hollister** (15) Ethan grew up the youngest of four boys to an Amish family in rural Pennsylvania. Early on he realized he had the psychic skill to be a ‘douser.’ He could find water in the ground using a forked stick. As a teenager Ethan realized he could sense which animals needed medical care. His three older brothers left the farm at 16 to experience ‘Rumspringa.’ That’s the chance offered to Amish teenagers to leave their closed community before being baptized into the church. All three brothers did it and then left for good. So Ethan’s family is reluctant to let him be exposed to the outside world. But when Artie Stemple comes to collect him, Ethan is very ready to escape.

## SEASON ONE EPISODES

Because the first season of *CHASING THE DARK* deals with fortune telling, each episode will be based on and named after a character from the classic tarot card deck.

### EP. 1: “The Hanged Man”



Danny meets Natalya, a Russian psychic. She calls him ‘The Hanged Man’ and tells him they are destined to be together. After a passionate night together she runs off, telling him not to follow her. But he’s hooked. With the aid of Milo, his brilliant roommate with Asperger’s, Danny tracks her movements and takes chase. Two hired goons, ‘Galileo’ and ‘Beefer’, are also following Natalya. But she’s not running from them. She wants to get out of New York because she’s frightened of a satanic priest, Santos, who’s set up shop in Spanish Harlem. She feels him ‘call’ her to lend her powers to his evil cause. A nightclub mind reader, Artie Stemple, senses Santos’ call as well. Artie believes his mission is to collect other psychics and deliver them to help Santos. On the road, Danny is followed by the two goons and runs them off the road as he pursues Natalya. But Artie gets to her first.

### EP. 2: “The Fool”



Artie urges Natalya to go back to New York with him. She sees that Artie is under Santos’ ‘spell’ so she knocks him out and takes off. Meanwhile Danny is arrested for speeding and spends the night in jail. Galileo and Beefer get towed out of the ditch and arrive at the motel too late. Natalya’s gone. When Danny gets there he meets up with Artie who urges him to convince Natalya to go back, “For her own good.” Santos’ reign of terror in New York has begun. He is killing off bad apples and anyone who opposes him. Danny’s father, a disgraced former NYPD detective, takes notice of this. He begins to investigate on his own, snooping around the crime scenes. Meanwhile Natalya directs Danny, using a toy store speak-and-spell, to the Pennsylvania B&B where she’s hiding. He goes to her and they passionately reunite. Danny tells her what Artie said and they fight. She refuses to go back. She goes out for a smoke and is grabbed again by the goons.



### EP. 3: “The Lovers”



Danny realizes she's gone. He calls Milo and tells him that, since he has his credit cards back, he has no way to track her. Milo sends him to a hypnotist so Danny can remember the numbers tattooed on her arm. Meanwhile Natalya is locked in the trunk of the hired goons' car. They're driving back to NYC when she flips the trunk lid open. They pull over and she manages to steal their car. Artie goes to an Amish farm where he continues his mission by collecting Ethan, a teenaged boy with psychic powers. In New York, Danny's father goes to his cop friends and tells them he believes Santos is using mind control to kill people. They laugh at him and tell him to go 'sleep it off.' Danny goes to the hypnotist and, in a trance, recalls the code numbers from Natalya's arm. He shares the code with Milo just before the goons capture him. They force Danny to call Natalya but, when he does, he tells her it's a trap. Though she could escape, she goes back to rescue him. Meanwhile Milo decodes the numbers and learns that she's a Russian spy.

### EP. 4: “The Magician”



Galileo and Beefer are holding Danny in a barren field. Natalya arrives and they all fight. Beefer knocks Natalya out and, enraged, Danny beats him to death with a tire iron. Galileo, who despises Beefer, lets him do it. Galileo then drives off with the still unconscious Natalya as Danny steals Beefer's gun before burying him. During this Artie introduces Ethan to life outside of his Amish home. He explains to the boy that by joining together with Santos they'll become part of a bigger pool of psychic energy. He demonstrates this 'enhanced' power by using his mind to get an ATM to spit out money. Back in New York, Milo is freaking out because he has lost contact with his touchstone, Danny. In a panic, he calls his Dad. At the same time Galileo, driving with Natalya, calls his boss to tell him Beefer has been killed. The boss tells Galileo to bring Natalya to his beach house. Just then, the boss is interrupted by another call. It's his son. We learn that the guy who hired the goons to chase Natalya is Barry Becker, Milo's Dad.

## EP. 5 “The King of Wands”



Danny hitches a ride to town to get to a phone. Back at his apartment, Milo's Dad arrives and asks his son what Danny knows about Natalya and his business. Milo says they're in love. Barry tells Milo exactly what to say if he calls. Natalya wakes up and is bound, riding with Galileo. She asks where Danny is. Danny calls Milo who tells him, "Go to the roof of the Golden Nugget Casino in Atlantic City. Be there by 7PM." Artie and the kid are driving toward New York but pull off into a Jersey Motel for the night. Danny goes to The Golden Nugget. On the roof a helicopter picks him up and flies off. Meanwhile Danny's Dad goes to the Spice Shop to see Santos. The dark priest senses trouble and orders him to be thrown out. A riot starts. The cops arrive. Reporters too. The helicopter lands on a private helipad in The Hamptons. Danny is delighted to find Natalya there. A hand bursts out of the ground in a field. Beefer is alive. And he's mighty pissed.

## EP. 6: “The Devil”



The cops arrest Danny's father and tell him to stay away from Santos or they'll lock him up. After a night together, Danny and Natalya talk to Barry in his beach house. He tells Danny that he 'bought' Natalya from the Russians. And he gives her to Danny as a 'thank you' gift for being good to Milo. At breakfast, Ethan tells Artie about a dream (the same one Artie and Natalya have). Artie says he doesn't know what it means. The filthy, beaten up Beefer staggers into an animal hospital where he pays the doctor to fix him up. In the Hamptons, Barry lets Natalya and Danny go. Once they're gone, he orders Galileo to start closing his accounts. It's time for him to disappear. Driving, Natalya tells Danny not to take her to New York. He argues that they'll never have a life if she doesn't face her fear. The cleaned up Beefer steals a car and heads to New York. Danny brings Natalya to the Spice Shop. Once she's there, her will is drained from her. Artie answers the door and brings her in. The ushers shove Danny out and slam the door on him.



## EP. 7: “Death”



Danny goes home. He tells Milo he failed. His roommate shows him the photos of his Dad, Voo-Doo Danny, in the paper. Danny is further crushed. He goes to his room and collapses. The next morning, Santos sends his apostles out on their first mission. He orders the 12 psychics to gather money and food as offerings. Artie, Natalya, Ethan and the others use their psychic power to do his bidding. Galileo is shredding Barry’s files when he’s shocked to get a call from his ‘dead’ partner. Beefer angrily asks where Danny is. Danny drives to see his Dad at his house in Queens. They go to a local bar and commiserate about how they both screwed up by trying to be heroes. Danny promises him that he’s ‘over this nonsense.’ Santos sits, beaming with pleasure at all the treasure his apostles collected. He tells them their next chore is to focus their power to kill a Santeria priest. Ethan says he won’t do it. Santos unveils his mutated ‘third eye’ and focuses it on the frightened boy. Using the collective power of the psychics he kills the boy. Natalya and Artie are horrified.

## EP. 8: “Justice”



Natalya and Artie dispose of Ethan’s body. They tearfully agree they have to do something to stop this. Find the will, the strength to fight Santos. Danny goes back to his data entry office and begs for his job back. Natalya goes to Danny’s apartment, drawn there to see Milo. She tells him that his father is draining his accounts. Thanking her, Milo tells her she must go and be with Danny. She remarks that his Asperger’s makes it impossible for her to ‘read’ him. When she leaves, Milo goes online and keeps the cash from being stolen from his account. A Haitian guy visits Danny’s Dad. He read about Dan Sr. in the paper and wants to help him fight Santos. Back in his office, Danny decides to call his old girlfriend to get his old life back. Natalya is walking downtown and goes to a magic store where she buys a new deck of tarot cards. Meanwhile Artie goes to a church to pray for forgiveness. Santos senses him slipping away and becomes enraged. Artie is almost crushed by a falling statue in the church. Someone calls it ‘a miracle.’ “No,” Artie says, “It’s a warning.”



## EP. 9: “Strength”



Beefee arrives in Manhattan. Rethinking his actions Danny meets with his old girlfriend in a bar and asks her to take him back. Natalya interrupts and tells Danny’s fortune. He gets the card ‘strength.’ Just then, his Dad calls and tells him about the Haitians who want to help stop Santos. With their help Danny will kill the evil priest but Natalya says, “We need somebody he can’t read or control. Like your roommate.” She tells his Dad to meet at the Spice Shop at 8PM. Danny and Natalya go to get Milo but are chased by the vengeful Beefee. When he catches Danny, Natalya tells Beefee that Galileo and Barry are his real enemies. And they’re about to fly off at the heliport. Beefee goes after them as our crew head to the Spice Shop. Artie helps them get Milo close to Santos. The satanic priest can’t control Milo’s mind. Milo stabs Santos in his third eye (the dream all the psychics were having) and kills him. Evil is thwarted. Milo is a hero. ‘The Lovers’ are reunited until former KGB agents grab Natalya. The chase continues into Season Two.

## END OF SEASON ONE

### ABOUT THE WRITER:



**Mike Bencivenga** is an award winning writer/director in theater, film and television. His plays include *SINGLE BULLET THEORY*, *COUPLETS*, *BILLY & RAY*, *SUMMER ON FIRE*, *BAD HEARTS*, *MINUET ON THIRD*, *WASTED DAYS*, *COMPROMISED* and *TALK OF THE TOWN*. In 2013 *BILLY & RAY* won the W. Keith Hedrick award for best play and was produced at The Falcon Theater in LA and at The Vineyard Theatre in New York. Both productions were directed by the legendary Garry Marshall. In 2014 Mike's political comedy, *SUMMER ON FIRE*, won the Christopher Wolk prize for excellence and in 2016 his play, *BAD HEARTS*, won the Stanley Drama Award. On film Mike has won numerous honors. He wrote and directed two features, *LOSERS IN LOVE* and *HAPPY HOUR*, both of which had theatrical releases. Mike is also an Emmy winning producer at ABC NEWS. To learn more visit: [www.MikeBencivenga.com](http://www.MikeBencivenga.com).