



# SKIPPINGSTONE

Thesis Proposal

J. Søren Viuf

[viuf@chapman.edu](mailto:viuf@chapman.edu)

[jsv-film.com](http://jsv-film.com)



# SKIPPING STONE

## GENRE

'Revisionist' Western Coming-of-Age Adventure

## SETTING

Late 1920s South/Midwest United States

## LOG LINE

Every day, local scamp LILY begs the cantankerous old ferryman ABEL to let her cross the river on his cable ferry — the only way on or off their island.

And every day he refuses...until he learns what she's really running from.

## THEMES

- The River/Water as Metaphor
- Passion of Youth vs. Cynicism of Age
- Guilt and Redemption
- Parent/Child Relationships



"Cable Ferry Sketch" George Caleb Bingham

# PRINCIPALS

## ABEL



“The Ferryman”

- Civil War veteran seeking solitude
- Has violent visions from his past
- Gruff exterior hides his desire to protect Lily

## LILY



“The Orphan”

- Infinitely Curious
- Resourceful, Plucky, on a mission
- Hides the truth about her family so Abel will take her across the river.

Ref: Mattie Ross in ‘True Grit’

## SCANLON



“The Bootlegger”

- Airs of a sophisticated gentleman, but quick to anger
- Heavy-handed father of LILY

Ref: Forrest Bondurant in ‘Lawless’

## TURNIPSEED



“The Uncle”

- Brother to Scanlon
- Agent of Evil, eager to do harm
- Uncontrollable, unpredictable



## ACT I

- Forever promising to take LILY across the river, ABEL makes Lily perform menial chores as a toll
- Impossible to please, he nitpicks details as an excuse not to take Lily across. He sends her home.
- But Lily doesn't want to go home...

## ACT II

- Suffering ghostly visions from the War, Abel is awoken by criminals who force him to transport moonshine - though he refuses to step foot on the opposite shore.
- The next day, Lily returns to work with Abel, but he finds another excuse not to take her across. — though he's really starting to care for this little scamp.

## ACT III

- In the middle of the night, Abel awakes to a panicked Lily trying to launch the raft.
- A furious Scanlon is hot on her heels. As they're escaping, he cuts the rope of the raft.
- Suddenly unmoored, Lily and Abel float away on their new home, on to the next adventure!



# INSPIRATIONS





# GOTHIC AMERICANA



GEORGE CALEB BINGHAM



MARK TWAIN



NORMAN ROCKWELL



# 'LONE WOLF & CUB' RELATIONSHIP



*TRUE GRIT*

ROOSTER COGBURN  
AND MATTIE ROSS



*GAME OF THRONES*

THE HOUND  
AND ARYA STARK





# VISUAL REFERENCES

A blurred still from the movie 'The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford'. The image shows a man in a black hat and suit standing on a wooden bridge over a river. In the foreground, there is a large wooden cross. The background is a dense forest. The overall tone is dark and moody.

*THE ASSASSINATION OF JESSE JAMES  
BY THE COWARD ROBERT FORD*



# VISUAL/TONAL REFERENCES



*SPRING, SUMMER, AUTUMN, WINTER  
...AND SPRING*

*☉ BROTHER,  
WHERE ART THOU?*

*MUD*



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# CONCEPT ART





# LOCATION POSSIBILITIES

Hidden Valley Wildlife Area  
Riverside, CA ~35 miles



Courtesy of Beth Tate

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Lake Fulmore  
Idyllwild, CA ~90 miles



Fairmont Park  
Riverside, CA ~38 miles

All Managed/Permitted by Riverside Film Commission and Inland  
Empire Film Permits:  
<https://iefilmpermits.com/riversidecounty/>





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Pitch Deck Available At:  
[jsv-film.com/thesis](http://jsv-film.com/thesis)