

JOE LOYA

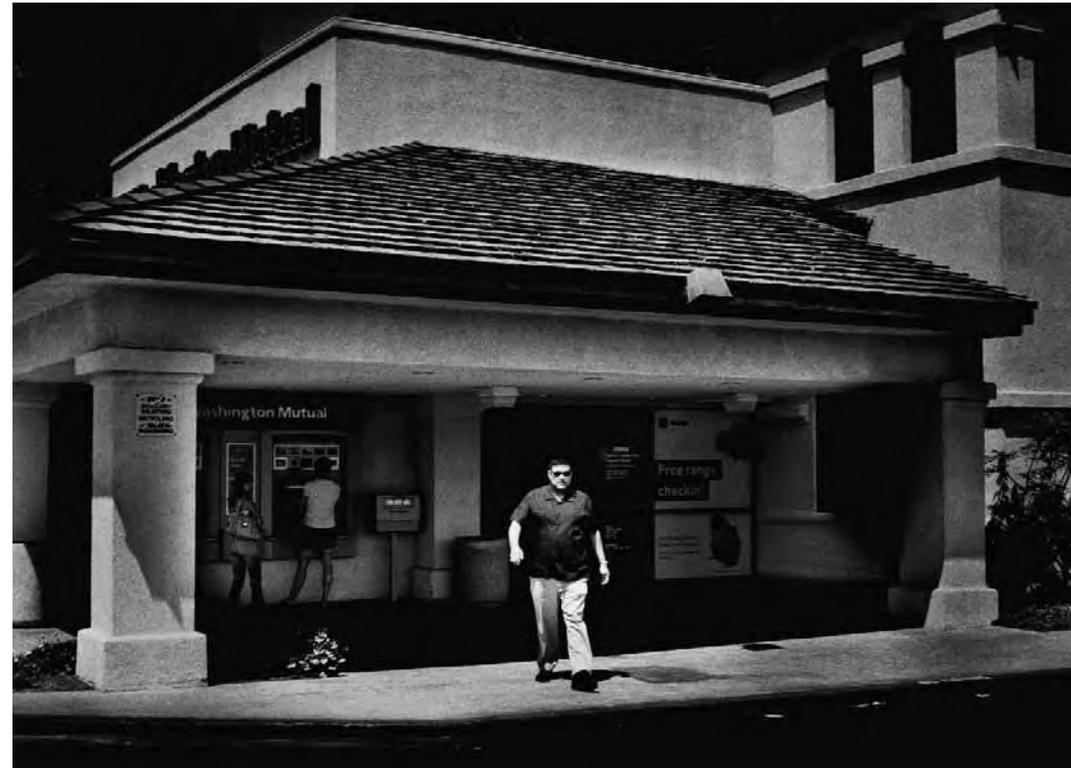
Before becoming a playwright, essayist and journalist, Joe Loya robbed banks for a living. His memoir, *The Man Who Outgrew His Prison Cell*, was published in 2004.

Growing up

My parents were sixteen years old when I was born. They converted from being Catholic to Protestant, we went to church four times a week. My family was really loving in the beginning. My dad was ambitious to fit in, to be white and middle class. He went to night school and got his degree at eighteen. He started teaching himself Greek and Hebrew because he wanted to be able to translate the Bible from its original languages. I was also deeply religious. When my brother would cry, I would say; 'Paul, don't cry, Jesus said let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' I was a Bible quoting little kid.

When I was seven my mother got diagnosed with severe kidney disease. Her body would have rejected a kidney transplant so essentially they waited for her to die. This took about two and a half years. They used her as a guinea pig to try new drugs. Some of the medication really made her go mad. Sometimes my dad would drive her to the hospital and she'd try to jump out of the car because she wouldn't recognise him. I was nine when she died. She was twenty-six years old. During that time my dad started changing. He was working really hard to pay the hospital bills. He had to get up in the morning, get us ready for school, go to work early, then go to see my mom after work and bring her home. He had been very violent as a kid and was in a gang before he became a Christian. When my mother got sick he snapped and started to become violent again. He started hitting us.

Obviously there's grief and stress, you know, all this shit, but he had no skills to handle it. Once when I was learning my multiplication tables he asked me to memorise all 144 equations. He told me that for every one that I missed I was going to get two whips with the belt. I missed five. He took it personally and saw it as rebellion. My mother was at the house at that time and he was like: 'OK pull your pants down and bend over the couch.' My mom started to cry, 'Don't whip him, he did good.' My dad was yelling, 'He knew what he was doing and he deserves this.'



I handed the cashier a note,
'We have a bomb,
I have a gun.
Give me the money now.'

Above and pages 26-29

Joe Loya leaving some of the banks he has robbed.

My mom kept crying and begging him not to hit me. Finally he said, 'You don't want me to hit him? Then you come over here and do it.' She said: 'I don't want to.' and he said: 'Well if you don't I'm going to hit him extra hard.' He put the belt in her hand and made her hit me ten times. She hit me so feebly because she was sick, and stupidly I didn't cry. So my dad felt like she didn't hit me hard enough and he whipped the shit out of me.

That stuff was starting to go on when my mother was very sick. We were getting bigger so I think he felt like he needed to subjugate us more. At church everyone thought he was this wonderful godly young man. He became a widow and has these two lovely kids. Then he met my stepmother Brenda. She was twenty when he was twenty-seven. She was Irish-American. It was odd to have her drop into a family in a Mexican neighbourhood that was just a sea of brown people. Fifteen months after my mother died they got married. She was wonderful. She loved my dad, thought he was this impressive Bible-loving college pastor. She canned jellies, made curtains for our room, did everything. She introduced us to all this new food like key lime pie and ham hocks, shit that I wasn't accustomed to eating. We wanted to be as white as possible, so she was very helpful in that way.

The noblest thing my dad ever did was to quit being a pastor. He said, 'You know, if I want to be a servant of God, I have to have my home right, before I can go to church. My home life isn't right, so I need to leave the ministry.' That was the only ethical thing he had ever done in my eyes. He went to work for the New York Life Insurance Company. He was very successful, a born salesman. Brenda became his secretary, which was the beginning of the end. She started having an affair with the guy who was in the office right next to her. Apparently there were some pictures taken of her and him so the office knew about this thing and my dad was very humiliated. He stopped going to work. She divorced him. He went bankrupt. He started working bullshit little jobs, when he was working at all. We just became punching bags.

One time, I was sixteen and my brother was fourteen and we were in the kitchen, my brother was washing dishes and I was drying them. My dad came in and just sucker punched my brother in the back of the ribs. My brother winced and my dad leapt up and grabbed his hair and dunked his head into the soapy

dishwater. He held it there for a second and then lifted it up, my brother was trying to breathe and water was coming out of his nose. I was paralysed. He did this three times. Then, when he was done, he lifted his head out of the water, leaned in and he said, 'You should have died instead of your mother.' The violence escalated so much in our home I started to think that he wanted us dead. I was forced to be something that was very difficult for me to accept about myself – a coward. The helplessness that I felt made me consider suicide.

Six months later he got a new girlfriend. She was slow, but super-sweet. My dad could easily manipulate her. She took us out to a steak dinner one night and I begged her to not be with my father. I told her that he beats us. I lifted up my knife and said, 'The next time he hits me I'm going to stab him.' She said, 'That doesn't solve anything. Violence is crazy.' Smarter words were never spoken. But for whatever reason, I had that impulse to pick up that steak knife and say that. My father suspected that I told her something. He said, 'Susie told me what you told her and I'm not mad, I understand.' For the first time he was taking the high road, and I was so relieved that I wasn't in trouble, I felt safe for a moment. It was the first and last time I would ever confess to a crime. Because I expressed some sense of relief, he was like: 'So you *did* tell her.' He was fishing and I was a knucklehead. I had given myself up. He picked up the teapot and threw it at me. Then started beating the fuck out of me. That night, in the hospital I had a broken rib, fractured elbow and a massive concussion. He beat my brother on the way out of the house too.

Later, when I got back home he went down to 7-Eleven to break up with Susie 'cause we didn't have a phone. When he left I told my brother to lock himself in the bathroom. I went to the kitchen, pulled out a steak knife, and put it under the pillow. I sat on my bed and waited. He came back for round two. I pulled the knife out from under the pillow and stood up. He started coming at me saying, 'Put that knife down, put that knife down,' then I charged him. I swung the knife at him and he put up his left arm to block it but I had enough power to go over his arm. He turned his neck away from me and I stabbed him in the back of the neck about an inch from his spine. I just drove it into the soft part of his neck, then I twisted it and tried to break it off.

He screamed out, 'You killed me!' and he dropped. I stepped over him to leave the bedroom and said, 'You did this to yourself.' My brother was already at the front door and I yelled, 'Go, go, go,' and started to run. I was scared to death. This man had been beating me with impunity for all those years and I had this fear that he's like King Kong, that he's going to take the knife out of his neck, chase me and kill me.

We went to my aunt's house. I told her that I killed my dad because I thought a neck shot was a kill shot. She called the police but when they got there he was gone. He had picked himself up and took the knife out. He didn't want to live, so he took all the pills that were in the medicine cabinet, but there wasn't much there. He drove to a park and sat in his car waiting to die. But the LAPD came across him. This was back in the 1970s, when the justification for beating everyone was that they were on angel dust. So they pulled him out of the car and they beat the fuck out of him 'cause they said he was resisting arrest. While beating him they realise he's gushing blood from the neck and they're like, 'We didn't stab him, what the fuck just happened?' He told them that his son had stabbed him. They took him to the psychiatric hospital.

I was taken to the police station and interrogated. This was before I knew my dad was still alive. There was a sense of a recovery of myself that was very powerful. The cop starts telling me that I'm going to be charged with attempted murder. This was 1976 so there wasn't the child abuse stuff that eventually happened – the sense that when you have been beaten like that you're afraid to leave. I was in this holding room with my brother and the social worker came in and I said I wasn't feeling well. The adrenaline had stopped and all of a sudden I was in pain. They took me to the hospital and sure enough they found out that I was being abused. There was no more talk about attempted murder shit. We were put into foster care.

I was at a facility they put you in before foster care. There were some horrible cases – kids who were there because the infant child of their family had been roasted in the oven by the father. Kids walking around on crutches. Horrible abuse. We were all wounded. But I was the only one there who had struck back at the person who was inflicting pain on them. I had moved to a 'new

place' while all of them were still scared. There was this eerie thing at night where a lot of the kids would cry that they wanted to go home. I couldn't understand that. Later I realised it's human nature. We don't do change well. I swore I'd never be that person, that was part of what drove me into crime. This thing like: 'I've gotta keep running, you're not going to get me back.' Those kids felt safe in bondage, but I wanted to feel scared and anxious. I accepted that because that to me is emancipation, it's real rebellion against authority. That's the way I translated it in my head. I always remember that crying. As an adult I would tell people, 'Fucking weaklings, fuck that – I wasn't like that.'

My dad went to court to try to get us back. He took it seriously, made us feel safe, would come and apologise. Senior year we went back to live with him. He never raised a hand to us again and was completely submissive. There was this elaborate doubleness when I came back that involved praying every day and family day on the weekend, but I had disgust for my father. I looked down on him for being weak and letting me dominate him. But then I felt horribly guilty because I was supposed to be a child of God.

The other thing that started happening was about every three or four months I felt the urge to do something violent. That feeling of stabbing my father was the most powerful moment of my life. On some cellular level I was re-fashioned. My imagination was completely altered in a way that humans are not supposed to be altered. I wanted to be a Christian and I wanted to love Jesus, but the only authority past my father was God and I had swiped my father right off the pedestal. I was looking God straight in the face and going, 'You know what, you're not even here.' I was becoming Godless. I also became really materialistic, I was tired of being poor.

Dark ambition

I had this new sense of entitlement like, 'I'm big. I'm dynamic.' I wanted the world. There was a dark part of my ambition, 'I deserve this, I'm going to get it. And if you don't give it to me, woe be you.' I decided I needed to make money – fast. I tried almost every get-rich-quick scheme, I started borrowing from friends. I would hang out with my Christian friends, borrow from them and not pay them back. I became scandalous. I had burned

every one I knew so I couldn't borrow any more money. I started defrauding employers. I was hustling and eventually I had a Mercedes-Benz and a BMW. I was only twenty-three. I was stealing cars. Santa Barbara finally figured out that I was doing something wrong, so they kicked me out.

I went back to Los Angeles and met these guys on the golf course who were making a lot of money in real estate. I told them that my uncle had a chop shop in Mexico and that any time I wanted to invest money he would get me 20,000 back for my 10,000 dollars. I appealed to the larceny in their hearts and I ended up with 30,000. Of course I never paid them back. Eventually I had warrants in five counties in Southern California: Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Diego, Riverside, and San Bernadino. So I hit the road, took off to Mexico as a fugitive.

I got robbed. I thought I was a bad ass criminal, but in Mexico I met *real* criminals. I needed money because I was a fugitive now and I only had 4,000 dollars left. When you're a criminal that's *nothing*, you're so impulsive you buy everything. Defrauding was out of the picture, so the next thing was to notch it up to robbery. I had never robbed a liquor store or a 7-Eleven, I'd never robbed anyone with a gun. But I knew at fucking 7-Eleven I'm going to get seventy-three dollars and like five cents. I can't be going back and forth robbing the liquor store every other day. I was a Mexican, and the idea of the bandido was in my head. Pancho Villa, the folk hero of Mexico, used to cross the border and rob banks and post offices and then return to Mexico. It seemed like it was my only option. I thought I could make a lot of money.

So I get into the United States in a stolen car and I go to rob a bank one day. I started at nine in the morning walking in and out of banks all day long, scared shitless. I'd write a note, stand in line, tear it up and walk outside. I'd get stomachaches and shit. I would always exit the bank at various stages of the robbery. Sometimes, I would walk in and just walk right out. This went on all day long. Finally, it was 4.45 and the banks closed at 5.00 so I needed to shit or get off the pot. I had parked my car in San Diego proper, about twenty minutes from the border. I walked into this bank, I go to the cashier, I handed her a note. It said, 'We have a bomb. I have a gun. Give me the money now.' It was a mistake that I learned from: as soon as you give someone

something to concentrate on they're too scared to go to the next step and she just kept her eyes on it. There was clearly enough time for her to have read it ten times. I finally start pulling the note back, and she was pulling it to her and we're doing this little tug of war with the note and I mumble, 'I'm not fucking around, give me the money.' I pretended like I'm reaching for a gun. She panicked and gave me the money. It was that easy.

I walked out real quick and started booking. I was running down the street and I look back and there's five men chasing after me, in various stages of ill health, so I wasn't in any fear of being caught. I was putting massive distance between us very quickly. I jumped in a cab and had it drop me off at the border. I thought for sure the border would be closed by that time, so I went to a Motel 6 and stayed there overnight. The next morning I went to Kmart and picked up a case of Dr. Pepper, my favourite drink, which they didn't have in Mexico. I got on the freeway and there was huge traffic, and there's no backing up now because all these other cars are behind me, I realised I was fucked. The Highway Patrol closed the border and they were checking for stolen cars going to Mexico. But I thought I was slick and could talk myself out of it. I've got whiteness all over me because I went to private schools. I was a fucking idiot, I got busted in a stolen car. They arrested me for the five warrants I had. They had no idea I'd robbed that bank. I spent two years in prison. In those years that I was in prison, all I knew was that when I get out – I'm robbing banks. I have now elevated myself to Bank Robber.

I got out of prison and waited a month. Then for fourteen months I went on a bank robbing spree. I robbed approximately thirty banks. I robbed two in one day. I robbed four in one day. I robbed a vault for 32,000. One day I robbed a bank and I was so mad at the small amount of money that I walked into the bank next door, robbed it and walked out. I would typically rob them when I got angry. The time I robbed four banks was because I woke up in the morning, and I said, 'You know what, I don't want to keep robbing and coming home with 10 or 12,000 dollars, I want to rob one day and make 50,000.' So I told myself, 'Don't come back until you have 50,000 dollars.' Finally, I go to rob this bank in Lakewood and I pick up a transmitter. At the time these transmitters were new technology. They put them in the centre of the money

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and they would wrap it with rubber bands.

I had picked up exploding dye packs before. One exploded on me when I was walking out of the bank and I barely got away because I was running with this bag with red smoke coming out of it. Tear gas got in my eyes. I was blinking, trying to keep my eyes open. Another time I brought one home that didn't explode. Normally they would explode twenty feet out of the bank, really explode. There was a guy who ran out with it once, put it in the front of his pants and it blew off his left nut. He sued the bank! The first one that exploded on me put a big hole in my nylon fanny pack! So after that every time I go to rob a bank, I went after slim packs of money, or if it was medium sized, I would pick it up and I would fan through it. I open the bag, all the money is small packs, and I'm like, 'OK no dye pack in here.' I see the money that's the exploding dye pack and I put it off to the side.

Several miles away I'm surrounded by cops. There's a helicopter over my head. When I robbed the bank I had three or four sweatshirts on, this loud red madras cotton shirt and bright baby blue jacket. I wanted them to notice my clothing and not look at my face that much. So I looked really fat because of the sweatshirts, but I was thin in those days. I take all those clothes off, throw them into a bag, and throw it into the gutter. Now I'm wearing shorts and a UCLA tank top, topsiders. So when they pick me up, they put me on the sidewalk and they bring the two women who I just robbed. They look at me and I don't look anything like the man who just robbed them. So they say, 'No, that's not the guy who did it.'

But I'm still with the money. The police think, 'Maybe he's not the robber but he's probably an accomplice, because he has the money.' They locked me up. The FBI comes to interview me five or six hours later. I'm real cool with them, like, 'Sorry for the fuss, but...' 'How'd you get the money?' 'Fascinating story. I'm at May Company, I drive in the parking lot, I go do some shopping, but I forget that I left my wallet in the car. So as I come walking back to my car, I see this really fat man in a loud red madras cotton shirt and a baby blue jacket, he comes running by and throws something into my car then he takes off. I open it and it's money. I took off and you guys catch me a few miles later. That's why those women didn't recognise me.' They kinda buy it, but

at the same time they don't. The one thing they have are photos of a guy who they nicknamed the Beirut Bandit because he spoke such good English that they didn't think he was Mexican. But he was dark like a Mexican, so he must have been from Pakistan or India or Lebanon or somewhere. They noticed that the Beirut Bandit looks an awful lot like me.

A day and a half later when I went to my arraignment, I was thinking they were gonna pretty much have to let me go, only to find out they bring to court sixteen pictures of the Beirut Bandit. They said 'Your Honour, we want 100,000 dollar bail because we're at sixteen and counting. This man is the Beirut Bandit.' So now I realised I'm fucked. My aunt put up her house and I made bond. I got out and I robbed five more banks. I took my uncle – who looked like me but was four or five inches shorter – and taught him how to rob banks. He was a complete idiot. But I got what I wanted from him.

One time he robbed this bank and was running to my car. He looked like fucking Keystone Cops kind of shit, you know, he has this big crowd running after him. It was like *Help!*, the Beatles movie where they're running and everyone's chasing them. He ran through traffic, almost got hit, crossed this really busy street, so nobody else follows him. This truck that was in the traffic started chasing my car down the street. I took off and I'm going so fast on a residential street that by the time I see this major dip in the road where I'm supposed to be going fifteen miles an hour I'm now going like ninety miles an hour. By the time I put on the brakes, I hit that thing and I'm in the air. The truck driver told the cops, 'I think he busted his oil pan, because he went flying in the air when he hit that dip.' Sure enough, I did pop my oil pan. My car had stalled so I pulled it to the side of the road and parked on this main street. I crossed over and went into a smorgasbord restaurant that had tinted windows, they like to keep it cool, they don't like the sun coming in, 'cause it's a buffet, they don't want the food going bad. Right when I walked in, I looked out at my car across the street. The cops pull up, look under my car and there's all this oil coming out. I went to the cashier and I say, 'Excuse me, can I use your restroom?' Instead of going into the restroom, I ran into the kitchen and out the back down this alley. I ran straight into a dead

end fence. But the fence was to the LA River, and it was dry. I scaled it, jumped down to the cement riverbed and ran. It was fucking hot, but I was able to make it out of the neighbourhood because they were looking for me on the streets.

I climbed a fence and went over to a parking lot, where these guys are hanging out by a truck. I say, 'Hey listen, my car broke down, I need to get to Del Taco on the other side of the freeway,' 'cause I had seen a Del Taco, 'Twenty bucks just to take me over there.' So the guy says, 'Jump in the back.' I'm in the middle with two guys and we pass my car with all these cops around it and these guys are like, 'Wow, I wonder what happened down there.' We get to Del Taco, I call my brother, 'Hey Paul, come pick me up man, I'm in trouble.' He came by and took me home.

That night I'm with my friend, we decide we're going to go get a movie, as we pass my house I see the police around it. I say, 'Take me back to your house.' I call my dad who says, 'Turn yourself in, they know you did it. They know you were in the bank.' I said, 'I wasn't in the bank. I swear on mom's grave I wasn't in that bank.' He called the FBI agent who says, 'Have Joe call me.' So I call him and he says, 'Your dad told me you swore on your mother's grave that you weren't in that bank so here's what I'm going to do for you: I'm going to personally take this surveillance tape downtown tomorrow morning. Call me in the afternoon, I'm not going to track your call, just call me and let's do this.' I call him in the afternoon and he says, 'Listen to what I'm going to say: you have a double.'

The reason they knew it wasn't me is because they have all these markers in the bank that tell you how tall someone is. So in all my pictures the counters are waist high, and in this guy's pictures the counters are higher, because he's five inches shorter than I am. Those little poles that have the rope – those all measure your legs, all that shit in the lobby is used to measure your height. He could tell that the guy was much shorter than me, but he looked like me, 'cause he was my uncle. When the FBI went to the bank tellers a few hours later they had pictures and said, 'Did one of these guys rob you?' Both tellers pointed to me. Then they found my car. But now they had evidence that it's not me. All these tellers had picked me out of the pictures. Now if those two women who had just been robbed picked me out, and

it *wasn't* me, then all those other bank robbery identifications become suspect, because now there's a guy who looks like me. So the FBI agent said, 'Tell your lawyer what just happened here.' They scramble and they say, 'We'll give you eight years if you plead guilty to the three bank robberies.' Because they had me on those three. I was like 'Where do I sign?' Otherwise I was looking at thirty-six years. That's how I got eight.

The FBI agent said, 'You know what Joe, I still think you were in that car, but I'm not going to pursue that.' He really liked me. He told me in the back of a car once when we were going to arraignment, 'I never met anyone like you in my eighteen years of doing this. I still believe in you, you're going to have to do time, but I'm not going to wash you up.' When I came out and I wrote my first op-ed for the *Los Angeles Times*, he contacted me and he was like, 'I just read your piece today, and I feel good. I knew you would turn around, man.' It was really cool.

Criminals on film

Al Pacino, Robert DeNiro, Paul Newman, Robert Redford, Brad Pitt, George Clooney, John Travolta, Warren Beatty – all these sex symbols played bank robbers. They're attractive, they're likeable. Serial killers are always going to be represented as monstrous and demented – eating each other's eyeballs, skinning them and all this shit – so that you can't relate to them. When I talk to people about robbing banks, it's interesting to me how many would say, 'I thought about robbing a bank.' They never said, 'I thought about raping someone in the ass.' Or kicking someone almost to death or kidnapping someone. Bank robbing is a sexy crime. People are learning how to be criminals by watching movies, they mimic the posturing of these guys. There is this romanticisation even among the criminal class.

After the Civil War a lot of people were suffering, they were very poor. To rob banks was to stab authority in the eye, that's why these guys became folk heroes. Then in the Depression there was Baby Face Nelson, there was Bonnie and Clyde, and people were getting into the drama of it all.

There have been some performances where I walk away and I say, 'That actor really got it.' In *The Believer* with Ryan Gosling, this Jewish kid is a neo-Nazi. It's based on a true story. When I

saw that movie I was like, 'I knew that guy in prison.' Ryan Gosling could have walked the prison tier with that posturing and convinced anybody. A lot of criminality is performance.

I like to talk to my criminal friends about both crime and prison movies. *The Shawshank Redemption* – we think that's a fucking silly movie. But most of my friends dig *Dead Man Walking*. I liked that Sean Penn's character was so complicated. You wanted to like him but he was also a fucking crazed murderer. We know all these men have done something monstrous and we have seen ourselves as monstrous at times. Sean Penn's character dies at the end. He doesn't end up on the beach in Mexico emancipated, he gets fried. The father of the victim doesn't feel the relief that he thought he would. It's pretty amazing.

I have a list of movie scenes that are my favourites. Obviously the scene with Marlon Brando in *The Godfather* with the kid where he's playing with the orange. Also in *The Long Good Friday*, at the end where Bob Hoskins' character gets busted by the IRA, and for the last thirty seconds of the movie you see his face go through six phases of grieving. When I saw *A History of Violence*, I thought Cronenberg caught something that violence truly is. When violence makes contact with you, it intersects with you in a way that is so surprising and shocking. When you are committing a crime time slows down. When I would rob banks, it was almost an eye-of-the-storm type of moment. You're absolutely present. Your body is feeling more vital than it ever will. You are confronting your mortality, your life is now completely altered and you will always experience the vibrations of that moment.

In *A History of Violence* when the robbers start robbing the restaurant, that was pre-meditated, so we saw it coming. What we *didn't* see coming was that coffee pot, and it just killed him. It just happened like that. The whole movie you had seen Mortensen's character being quiet and passive and peaceful and loving. Then all of a sudden... That was so wonderful. It was so in the moment and alive. More importantly, it showed Mortensen's character having to grapple with his history. And as us, who have changed our lives, we know what it is to be haunted, to have to deal with the memories. I walk in a room and I know what I would do if something happened. I just cannot stop. If I walk into a bank I automatically know where the cameras are,

without even intending to. I immediately see what can be turned into a weapon, I was trained to that kind of violence. So when you see this guy trying to be ethical, trying to kill off his past and it comes back, we feel for him. Because there have been moments when we've had to wrestle with what we would do if we were in a situation where we needed to bring up our violence. When I see this movie I'm totally moved by how these choices keep coming to him. I also loved the end when he walked into that kitchen. You don't know if his family life is going to be mended, everyone goes into default family mode. He sits down and the mother kind of accepts that he's going to be at the table, but that's not hope, that's not achieving reunion, that could be just his last dinner with them before she kicks him out of the house for ever. It made me wonder what his redemption would look like. What would the healing in this family look like? I was drawn into the human drama of it and the lack of resolution, because that had been my life in so many ways.

Writing

When I started writing, all my friends who are ex-cons said the same thing: 'Joe, let them know that we're funny.' We're talking about guys who did serious things. That's one of the reasons I have problems with Michael Mann. Because criminals are funnier than he makes them. We're goofy. Convicts *love* Elmore Leonard because he makes criminals funny. They might not be exactly like criminals are, but they're humorous, they make fun of each other, they insult each other, they tell jokes that are raunchy, they laugh at other people. Joseph Wambaugh works too, because he is the other side of the coin – he gets the cops and he has them joking. You know cops struggle with suicide and alcoholism, but they're a fraternity, like we're a fraternity. I also like James Ellroy. Because his mother was killed, he gets it. He gets that moment. He understands the randomness of it, the acute confusion and complete surprise. It's like he's just flipping his soul inside out, and you can see the scars. You almost get an alcoholic rant. He's somebody who you're like, 'You're really suffering, but man is this interesting.' I've met men like him, so in a way he's become a criminal on the page. He's taken the energy of criminality and turned it into art. ●