

# THE TARZAN PROJECT

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ALTERNATIVE TITLE: GORILLA-MAN: THE TARZAN PROJECT

FORMAT: Feature film.

GENRE: Action/Superhero/Sci-fi

NUTSHELL: The Legend of Tarzan meets X-Men: Days of Future Past meets Brightburn



LOGLINE: As a superhuman individual in a suit of gorilla armor launches a deadly rampage, past events surrounding a young boy being subjected to an experiment meant to give him the strength of a gorilla are brought to light.

SETTING: Modern day + 90s flash back, all in and around a private estate. Think X-mansion.

SYNOPSIS: Inside an abandoned warehouse, an unseen man with tremendous strength vigorously trains. Then, he unloads a gun into an armored suit that is fashioned in the likeness of a gorilla, successful testing its invulnerability.

In 1990's New England, wheelchair bound JANE (12) is ripped from her orphanage room by MARK RUBENSTEIN (45). Mark orders orphanage guard RICKY (30) to tell resident orphan DERECK (12) that Jane has died. Ricky does as instructed, and Dereck erupts into a rage of superhuman strength. Dereck then breaks into a secret lab within the orphanage, destroying its contents, but he catches fire in the process and is then believed to be dead by investigating authorities.

20 years later, FBI agents MICHAEL BRENTWOOD (40) head to Rubenstein manor under the remote supervision of his boss, AGENT EVANS (40). Michael takes on the identity of an arm dealer and attend a an illegal arm trade being held by Mark. Also attending are CEDRIC LAVIGNE (35) and his French-English translator JESSICA SORENTINO (30). Mark, now 65 years old, presents a revolutionary serum he's developed that gives its user the strength of a gorilla. He demonstrates its power by injecting himself.

Michael reveals his FBI identities and order a raid on the gathering. However, GORILLA-MAN, a man adorned in identity-concealing gorilla armor who possesses the strength of the serum simultaneously attacks the event and begins a bloody rampage. Agent Evans enters the location on a wheel chair: she is non-other than ADULT JANE. She reveals herself to Mark as the head of the FBI's raid. Jane spots Gorilla-man and believes him to be Dereck. Gorilla-man spots Mark, and the two of them enter into a vicious, superhuman battle.

A flashback then reveals, a 30 year old Mark at the start of his serum research. After failures with adult subjects, he decides to experiment on younger, more resilient ones. He purchases an orphanage and blackmails its sexually abusive head, FATHER MIGUEL SANDOVAL (45), into covering up his often times deadly experiments on the orphans.

Mark hypothesizes a new approach to his work. He selects 1 year old Dereck as a new subject and attempts to condition him to his coming strength by having him be raised by a gorilla named Maria. Mark decides to call this approach the Tarzan Project.

As Dereck grows up, he becomes friends with Jane as she becomes a resident of the orphanage. The inquisitive Jane becomes curious about Dereck's unusual upbringing. Mark takes an interest in Jane and experiments on her as well, ultimately leaving her wheelchair bound. Dereck is taken away from Maria, enraging the gorilla, who is then killed by Mark's underlings.

Dereck's abilities are tested, but it is determined that his full strength will only activate by a stressful emergency situation. Dereck is left along with Father Miguel, who attempts to sexually abuse him. Dereck's strength activates in defense, and he kills the priest in defense.

In the past, Mark brands Dereck with the word ANIMAL. Jane then convinces Dereck to escape. Mark learns of this, and looping back into the opening scene, he tells Dereck that Jane is dead. Dereck dons Maria's skin, burns the lab, and escapes unharmed.

Back in the present day timeline, Gorilla-man becomes exhausted. Katie and Jessica unmask him and discover that he is not Dereck, but rather, a random Russian soldier. Jessica then reveals that she too is a Russian spy after the serum. Katie shoots and kills Jessica and Gorilla-man. It is then discovered that Michael is a mole who is working with the Russians. Mark arrives and kills Michael.

Cedric reveals himself to be the real Dereck. Dereck fights and kills Mark. He then takes the Russian soldier's gorilla armor for himself. In the aftermath, Jane refuses to share information on Dereck with an INTERROGATOR. Jane then taunts the Interrogator, daring them to seek out Dereck while Dereck is seen traveling towards the city, wearing the armor, preparing to take on a role as its masked defender.

## JANE



The now wheelchair bound Jane has grown to become the fearless leader of an FBI strike force that is targeting the organization and its head that once imprisoned and experimented on both her and Dereck. Jane has a sharp mind and a good sense of humor, particularly surrounding her disability. She is an admirable figure, and one who is quite formidable in the eyes of her foes. Upon being caught up in Gorilla-man's rampage, she is devastated to see the monster that the boy she once knew has become. However, Jane remains insistent on the fact that goodness must still lie within Dereck's heart, a belief that pays off when the true nature of Dereck's identity and backstory is ultimately revealed.

## MARK



Powerful, cold, and intelligent, Mark is a dangerously ambitious visionary. He knows he is the smartest one in the room, and this gives him immense confidence. However, it also fuels his frustrations with the slow-minded world around him. He is an ever-present figure in both Dereck and Jane's past and present. There is no end to what Mark will do to further his research, including the murder of both adults and children, which he views as necessary collateral towards progress. Mark is the Frankenstein to Dereck's monster, and like Frankenstein, Mark will find that he has sewn the seeds of his own destruction by abusing the laws of nature and purposefully ignoring the responsibility he has towards his research and his creation.



## MICHAEL



Michael is an FBI agent who is tasked with infiltrating Mark's operations and disrupting his sale of his research to potentially antagonistic rival governments. Michael is a competent, however, there is a sense of levity and informality that surrounds him. He is a bit of a jokester who is always looking to cut the tension with a wisecrack. He is also fearless, but this tends to lean into an angle of recklessness. A surprise twist comes when Michael is revealed to be an agency mole who is in league with the Russians. When this happens, his strength and skill as an agent transform him from a valuable ally to a powerful foe.

## JESSICA



Jessica is Mark's assistant and right hand woman, who is caught up in the larger-than-life situation of Gorilla-man's rage. As an aid to Mark, she is poised, diligent, and professional. As reveals of secret identities and motives begin to occur, Jessica is unmasked as also being in league with the Russian forces. She and Michael provide some surprise twists that complicate the conflicts and swell the obstacles that Jane faces.

## FATHER MIGUEL SANDOVAL



Father Miguel is a man who projects the outward image of a kind and caring priest and headmaster of an orphanage. However, beneath his benign exterior lies a man who is concealing some sizable evils, as he is revealed to be a sexual predator who targets the children he is tasked with housing. Mark uses Father Miguel's crimes and unholy desires as leverage in order to take control of the orphanage and use its residents in his experiments. Father Miguel eventually sets his sights on Mark's prize experiment, young Dereck, a decision that he will not live to regret.

## KATIE



Katie is a driven and serious FBI agent. Katie's focus and resilience pay off when she is placed in a life-threatening situation of the rampaging Gorilla-man, and she proves to be a level-headed and valuable ally to Jane.

## YOUNG DERECK



Leading a life of isolation while being subjected to an experiment meant to condition him to control the strength of a gorilla, Derek's existence was a lonely and tragic one with very little human connection. That is, until he met the bright and inquisitive Jane, who offered him both friendship and a chance to connect with humans in a way he previously thought possible. Derek struggles to maintain his humanity while being surrounded by authority figures who mean to repress it. His unwavering sense of good and loyalty towards those he loves provides him with his only beacon towards growing beyond his circumstances and towards his destiny as a protector of humankind.

## YOUNG JANE



Curious, inquisitive, and brave, Jane immediately takes notice of the isolated Dereck when they come to share the same orphanage. Feeling both sympathy towards and a kinship with the lonely boy, the two of them develop a quick friendship. Jane's brightness and sense of imagination lights a spark of humanity with Dereck, allowing him to maintain control of his true human nature, even while others attempt to suppress it. However, Jane's strength of will and her positive influence on Dereck do not go unnoticed those who have power of them, and Jane herself is soon targeted by those who have ill intent for Dereck, ultimately landing her in a wheelchair. However, her strength remains unwavering, even despite her differently abled status.



## GORILLA-MAN



A rampaging man with the superhuman strength of a gorilla who is wearing stylized armor that reflects his animalistic nature, Gorilla-man is a true force of nature in the story. Entering into the scene unexpectedly, he carries out a brutal rampage, which leads to both the guilty and the innocent falling victim to his bloody carnage. Throughout the majority of the story, the man in the armor is believed to be Dereck, who has tragically taken on the personality of the monster his younger self resisted becoming. In a twist, it is revealed that the man in the armor is actually a Russian spy impersonating Dereck and using his identity to cover his government's attempts at seizing the research that led to both his and Dereck's superhuman strength.