

HOLLYWOOD MOVIES, FINE ARTS SCULPTOR and STORYTELLER:

My Last Battle to Live

I am **Stuart Land**. You may not know me, but you've seen what I've created and maybe read my books.

I've sculpted and designed creatures and props for 40-plus major movies including *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *Invaders from Mars*, *Beetlejuice*, *Aliens*, *Poltergeist II*, *Predator*, *Masters of the Universe*, *A Nightmare on Elm St: The Dream Master*, *The Abyss*, *War of the Worlds TV*, *Neon Maniacs*, *Volunteers*, *Star Trek V*, *Home Alone*, *Universal Soldier*, *Freejack*, *Ralph S. Mouse*, *Nightflyers*, *Independence Day*.

Theme parks in many countries: Disneyland, Disney World, Universal World, Knotts Berry Farms, Lotte World, Edmonton Mall Complex, and Los Vegas Hotels: Luxor, Flamingo, Monte Carlo, The Hilton, Excalibur, and museums, and zoos.

This is why I'm on GoFundMe: click my mini-bio.

<https://stuartland.com/stuart-lands-atrial-flutter-urgent-appeal/>

Stuart Land: Sculpting Sigourney Weaver's "Ripley" for *Aliens*, 1986



After a lifetime sculpting in the fine arts, for Hollywood films, theme parks, and galleries across the world — after surviving 5 years of cancer, a stroke, and heart surgeries — I now have to fix the last heart problem, an “Atrial Flutter” with a procedure called “Catheter Ablation”.

I thought it was a pacemaker, but this method uses electricity, and doesn't require a machine inside my chest. The cost is 20,000 for an operation done through arteries. It will work the rest of my life. My problem, besides having used up all my money fighting cancer, is that I'm dying and all I can do is lie in bed. Every day is agony. Thinking is difficult. Medicine barely works. Creativity is impossible without full blood flow.

Moving around is painful. A half-day operation would fix everything. And allow me to live. I need the operation now.

This is my story. None of this is AI. Not here, in my books, or in my sculpture. It's not just about illness. It's about a life of creation, loss, resilience, and what it means to keep going when everything is taken away.

[**Click to SHARE or DONATE on GoFundMe**](#)

If you take the time to read my story, thank you—truly. Your attention alone means a great deal to me. If you're unable to donate (the smallest amount will help), please consider sharing my appeal. Every share is a chance for hope, and your kindness could make the difference. \$20K is far beyond what I—or even my most generous friends—can afford. Everything I had went into fighting cancer. When I was diagnosed, Covid began and I couldn't fly back to America to get treatment through Social Security. Expats lose that right, even though I paid for it all my working life.

My mini-bio is not a story of what I've done; it's an account of how I ended up, unable to pay for something that will let me keep living. You may not know my name—but I promise, you've seen my work across films, television, theme parks, hotels, museums, universities, and private residencies. I helped shape the worlds you've escaped into. I was one of just 40+ people in America's smallest union—The Hollywood Sculptors' Union. We helped build the illusions behind the magic.

I've written 14 novels and 21 screenplays, won awards and contests. Now, I need help from an audience I never personally met—but who may have already enjoyed my art.

NOVELS — MOVIES — ART



Behind the Magic: A Sculptor's Life in Hollywood

You've watched heroes climb into machines I sculpted from scratch, walked beside aliens I built with my own hands, and believed in worlds I helped bring to life from clay. For years, I was a sculptor and prop artist behind the scenes of both Hollywood and Chinese film industries—on everything from cult classics to blockbuster effects films, before CGI took over.

Sometimes I was given a design. More often, I was handed chaos: an empty set, a loose idea, or just a script, and told, “Make something incredible. Now.” While designers had weeks or months, I had days—sometimes only hours.



Universal Soldier, 1992

It wasn't glamorous. It was long hours, weird materials, and nonstop problem-solving. But when the lights dimmed and the audience was pulled into a believable world—that was everything. Somewhere on that screen, there was always a piece of me: my hands, my imagination, my sweat, and grit.

Becoming a Hollywood Sculptor

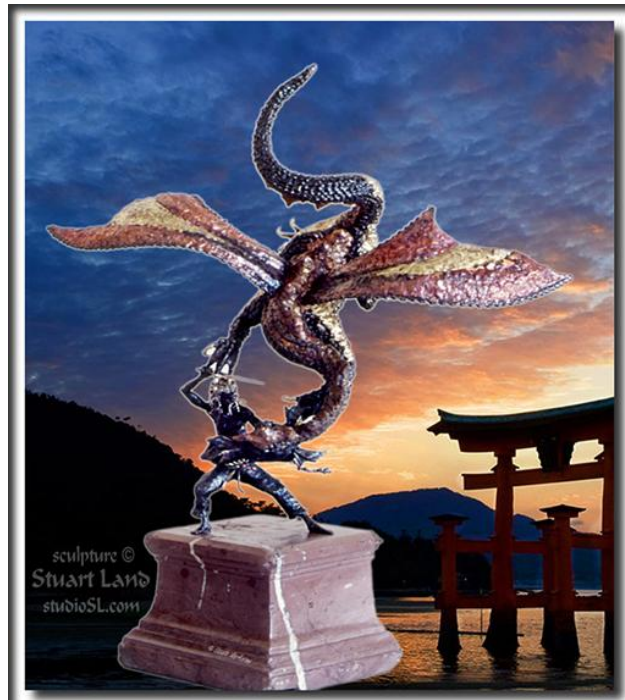
In Hollywood, talent alone wasn't enough. To make it, you had to be fast, adaptable, and inventive. I was self-taught. My first sculpture was a low-rider chopper, welded together with a torch. That led to fine-art metalwork—an art form practiced by only a handful of people worldwide in the early 1970s. I did that for 13 years.



Dancing Elephant & Ballerina
1974

Eventually, I crossed into Europe, building a van from scratch in Amsterdam. I didn't know the city, but parked on a side street to outfit the van. By nightfall, bright lights poured out of picture-frame windows. I was in the Red-Light District. The women on the block came out, curious about who was moving in. They brought me coffee, snacks, and helped me build.

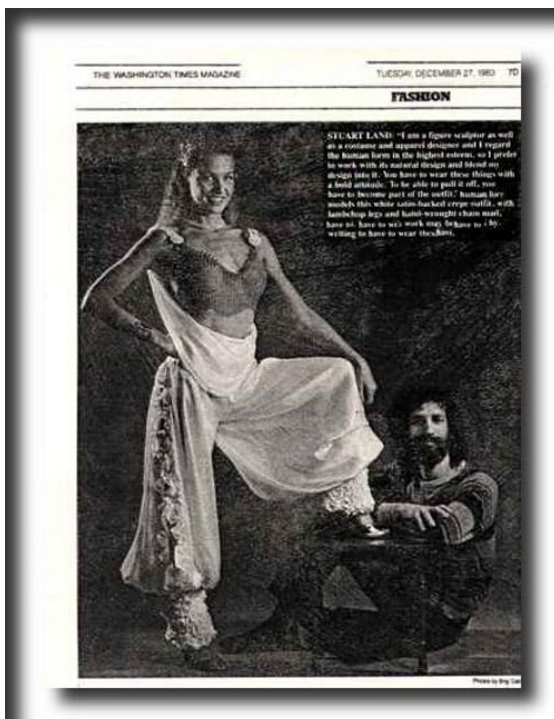
For months, I traveled across eleven countries—visiting galleries, museums, soaking in art and history from the 20th century to thousands of years back. I sat in on classes, met curators and creators, including Byron Kneel, head of the London School of Art. He'd never seen anything like my metal sculptures and invited me to share his studio.



Woman in the Wind (Welded Steel) 1979
1978

Warrior vs Dragon

When I returned home, I began designing wearable metal outfits. One of my costume sculptures ended up in a fashion book listing the top 100 designers of the time. That led to Studio 54, then Playboy Headquarters. That wild chain of events—sparked by my art—landed me in conversations about a spot in the magazine.



But sculpture wasn't easy to survive on. Many pieces were stolen right out of galleries. I was broke. Then came a storm during a camping trip with my son—I injured my arm and intestine, required two major surgeries, and couldn't work for months.

Then I saw *Alien*. That one movie changed everything.

It had no computers. Just terrifying, living creatures made by hand. I knew I had to be part of that world. So, I packed up and drove to Hollywood.



Bronze woman 30"

Breaking In

I didn't know anyone in the movie business—except one rising comedian in L.A. His wife, an Olympic ice skater, introduced me to a famous costume designer in Hollywood. He loved my work but told me the truth: I had the skills, but not the experience. I'd have to start from scratch—become an

apprentice, learn everything from the bottom.

This was before the internet. There were no behind-the-scenes specials, no guides on how to break into film. I relied on movie magazines and the phone book. I cold-called



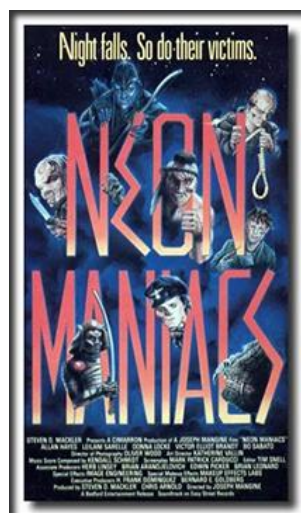
Shot before computers, no AI. Live on set. Later, I Photoshopped red frame.

sculptors listed in film credits. Almost none responded. But one legendary woman did—and she brought along a friend. We hit it off. They taught me how the system worked: the gatekeepers, the unspoken rules, the hidden opportunities.

For the next seven months, I drove all over L.A. with my art portfolio—nude sculptures, furniture, abstract forms. No monsters. No gore. I was twice the age of most of the crews I met. Finally, I got hired for a low-budget sci-fi film: \$70 a week, 50 hours. But I was in. Some of the young guys I worked with on that set? They now lead the most famous effects teams in the industry. You've seen their shows. *The Walking Dead* is one of them.



I kept knocking on doors. Stan Winston—creator of *Jurassic Park* and *Terminator*—welcomed me into his shop. He liked my work but said I needed to build a creature. I had no studio, so I sculpted in a friend's living room. I was terrified the piece would get crushed just driving it across town. But when I brought it in, Stan and his crew loved it. He said, "If we land the next big job, I'll hire you."



While I waited, I went to MEL—Makeup & Effects Laboratories—run by Alan Apone. I told him I was working for \$70 a week. He had the same issue: I had no creature designs. He showed me a current project and asked if I could create a hand effect. On the spot, I drew sword-hands across the butcher paper on the table. He looked once, turned, and said, "Start tomorrow. Ten hours a day, five days a week. I'll pay you \$600."

That was my break. I was finally working among the best—and learning everything I could. *Neon Maniacs* became a cult classic. I've already done two interviews on it, and just asked to do another.



Invaders. Aliens. Predator. The Abyss.

I started meeting people and getting jobs. When the jobs came, so did medical insurance. It wasn't cheap, and I had to pay for it myself. But the artists I worked with taught me a lot. Carl Surges, one of the finest sculptors in Hollywood, brought me onto jobs and introduced me to urethane foam carving. It's like marble—but soft. You can shape it with a knife and form almost anything. I became a master at it. Soon, shops began hiring me to fix what other artists had messed up.

Then I found the darker side of Hollywood. I was thrown into it without warning.

I went on a trip to Monument Valley with a friend, thinking about whether to keep chasing the Hollywood path. You had to constantly search for work. Messages came in through answering machines. That's how I got one about a meeting for *Invaders from Mars*—my childhood favorite movie.

I drove back the next day. First, I met with concept artist William Stout. He wanted me to sculpt a Martian ray gun he'd designed. Then I met the production designer, Leslie Dilley—he'd worked on *Star Wars*. He loved my art and arranged for me to meet director Tobe Hooper to hear his vision. He directed *Poltergeist*.

The next morning, I showed up for what I thought was a one-on-one breakfast meeting. It turned out to be 25 people. No one introduced me—not even to Tobe. I sat at the end of the table and listened. Two things stood out: they had dozens of artists who'd been working for months, but still no design for the Martian spaceship or the main prop—a giant needle machine.

There was a huge breakfast spread, but I didn't eat. Instead, I pulled out a 3-inch piece of clay I happened to have in my pocket and sculpted a spaceship with my fork. I can't even remember why I had clay on me.

When the meeting ended, I passed the little ship down the table. Tobe looked at it for 20 seconds and shouted, “Who made this?” I raised my hand. “I did. With my fork.” He said, “Go to Apogee tomorrow and create it.”

“Apogee is a union shop,” I said. “I’m not union.” “We’ll fix it,” he said.

And so began the ride—good fortune and disaster, hand in hand.

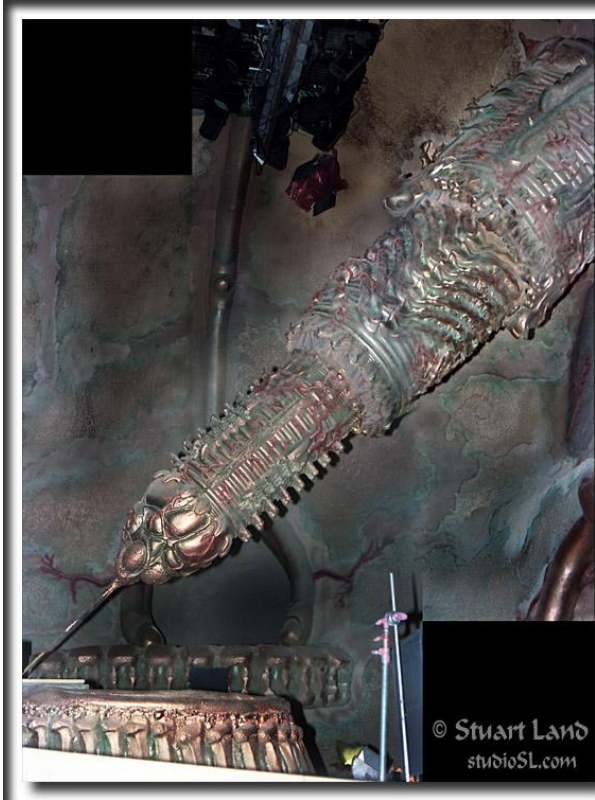


Martian Spaceship - Invaders from Mars, 1986

My Invader’s spaceship.

Apogee was owned by John Dykstra—one of the creators behind *Star Wars*. The artists there were top-tier. I worked on *Invaders* for months. I sculpted the spaceship I’d designed, along with the ray gun. They never handled the union issue, but I was paid union wages—which I didn’t know until my first paycheck.

Tobe loved the spaceship and the ray gun. A photo of John Dykstra standing next to my spaceship was published in a movie magazine. I wasn't mentioned. I was ready to go home—until Les Dilley called and asked me to build the Giant Needle Machine.



Hundreds of people had built the spaceship interior inside an aircraft hangar at America's biggest port south of L.A. It was huge—like a football field—carved into tunnels and alien caves. The Needle Machine was supposed to be a massive syringe: three nested aluminum tubes that extended outward. They were shiny, slanted 45 degrees, and suspended 30 feet in the air. The largest tube was 10 feet in diameter and 12 feet long, followed by 9 feet, then 8 feet, all the same length.

Each tube had a 6-inch slot. I had to design and dress this thing with parts that could slide in and

out through the slots—and I had one minute to come up with an idea. I called Les and told him I needed an assistant and two more people to make molds and cast foam parts—everything had to be light. I ran around L.A. looking for salvageable parts I could mold and repurpose. I hired a woman painter who helped glue parts on for two days—then disappeared. As a finishing touch to the whole project, they had me puppeteer the ray gun blasts.

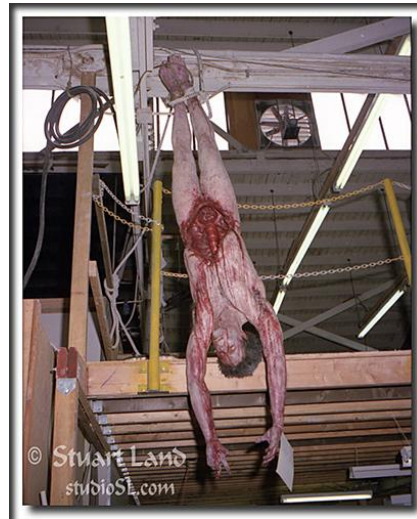
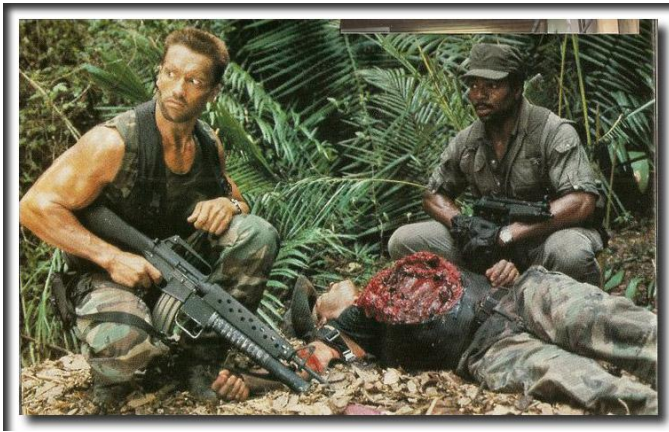
When the movie came out, I received no credit. None for designing or sculpting. The woman I hired for two days? She got my credit—because she became the production designer's girlfriend.

Eventually, I found out the truth: if I wanted to work on big studio films, I had to join the sculptors' union. It was the smallest union in the country—only 40 members—and the hardest to join. You needed sponsorship, the dues were steep, and I still didn't know all the techniques.

But then, things aligned.

Big-budget films were booming in the early '80s. One day I walked into BOSS Film, a prestigious union shop owned by *Star Wars* veteran Richard Edlund. The head of the sculpture department liked my nude sculptures and helped get me—and several others—into the union.

The first union film I worked on? The original ***Predator***, with *Jean Claude van Damme*.



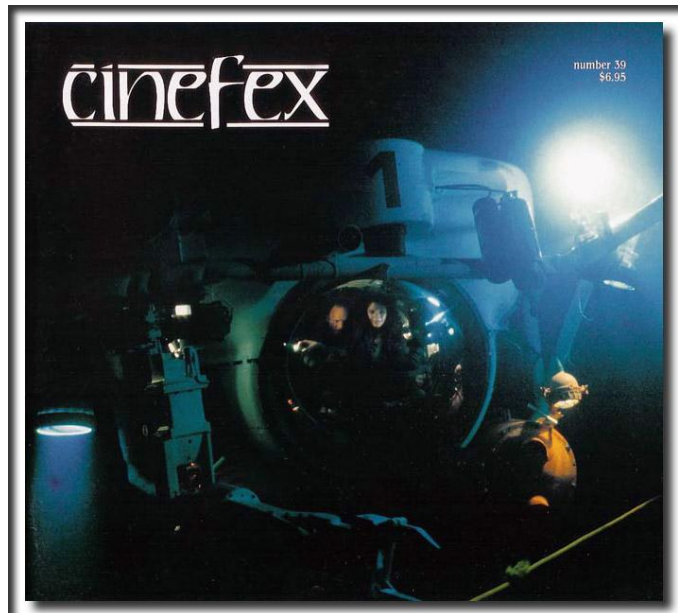
I finally got my blood and guts.

One day, Doug Beswick's effects shop called me in to sculpt a woman for a new James Cameron film. It turned out to be *Aliens* — the sequel to the film that had inspired this whole journey. I sculpted the miniature Sigourney Weaver for the Power Loader battle at the end.



Over the years, I worked on more than 35 feature films, and also TV shows, and commercials. Union or not, no matter what I designed or sculpted, I only ever got credit on three, and two was from the same director.

I also did a lot of sculpting for Cameron's other major film, *The Abyss*. I didn't design anything, but I had to interpret blueprints—many of which had the wrong measurements. I sculpted both underwater mini-subs by myself. A crew handled the fiberglass coating. They both fully functioned underwater.



Alien Spaceship interior, The Abyss

Later, I sculpted Dracula's castle for *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.



That one started from a charcoal sketch—just a $\frac{3}{4}$ view. I built it six feet high inside a tiny eight-foot shed. They shot it, liked it, and came back wanting a full 360-degree version—including the mountain it sat on. They had no reference, so I had to invent the rest.

They wanted shots from every side. And close-ups.



Ram's head lions at entrance to the Luxor, Las Vegas.
and the infamous baboons below the obelisk.

I soon expanded into theme parks around the world—Disneyland, Universal Studios, Lotte World, and Knott's Berry Farm. Eventually, I took my skills to Las Vegas, sculpting for major hotels like the Luxor, the Flamingo, and the Monte Carlo. Unfortunately, the Monte Carlo was recently torn down or altered—along with all my sculptures of Romanesque women.. The Luxor might be imploded this year. My sculptures are outside, so you can still see them. Over the years, my work ended up in other theme parks, hotels, zoos, universities, and I made 300 UCLA Spartan\\s helmets for their marching band college football franchise.



The Little Mermaid's throne at Disney World in Florida

Luck, Skill, Experience

To create art, an artist needs experience. Some are given it. Others earn it—or choose it. I did all three.

From the time I was two years old, my parents had turned their house into a ballet school. From ages two to six, I lived in a house full of girls and ballet. All my friends were those girls. I had two sisters and a brother who lived in the basement and I hardly saw. The two women who raised me were from completely different worlds—but they became my world. One was our Black maid, who took me everywhere and talked with me about everything. The other was my Russian dance teacher, whose voice lulled me with its accent and grace.

Because I was the only boy among fifty girls, ages four to fifteen, they became the people I talked with as we grew up together. Children talk about everything when adults aren't around. Children know a lot about life that adults forget.

Most of my early life took place inside that house. I started ballet when I was three. It was hard, but I loved being around the girls and learning with them. When I was four, my maid would walk me to nursery school a mile away and pick me up again. After that, I walked myself. In an urban setting, a mile each way is far for a tiny child—but it gave me the freedom to explore. I often got lost.

Back then, the city looked like *It's a Wonderful Life*. It was almost the same time period. Letting a five-year-old walk alone through town wasn't a big deal. Now, that beautiful village is a major urban city. It no longer resembles what it used to be. The 1930s movie theater is the only building still standing.



I made many sports and artistic figures as children as porcelain figures.

When I was six, my parents moved the family out of the ballet house. Ballet—and all the girls who'd swarmed around me—were gone. My mother opened a new school several days a week.

When I was ten, she took me to a ballet rehearsal for a big production. It was for children only. I rehearsed for an hour with a group of boys my age. When we were done, I wasn't cast with the boys. I got the lead male role, Tad, in the 1958 *Nutcracker*—performed at the Palace Theater in Washington, D.C., alongside the lead child female role. The rest were the best

New York City Ballet dancers in the world—Maria Tallchief and André Eglevsky.

Normally, that would be a great start to a ballet career. But my parents were professional dancers. They didn't tolerate negativity about ballet. I had to rehearse constantly with my co-star, who was already amazing and two years older. Her career

was set. I already knew my body wouldn't allow me to become great. She understood. Still, the experience was invaluable. I learned what it felt like to work alongside the best in the world, backstage. And I learned this: if I was going to do something with my life, I needed to be great at it. Ballet wasn't it.

My art career didn't start until I was 20. But I had a lot of life experience by then.

Before they had a name for it, I discovered I had dyslexia. I couldn't read. I reversed things in my mind. My school principal—a kind, caring man—used to visit each classroom and do something fun to encourage the students. He discovered my dyslexia and arranged for me to work with a tutor every day at another school. He and the woman teacher taught me how to read. It didn't cure the dyslexia completely, but it allowed me to overcome it and recognize it.



I made a number of fine art figures. Half-life-size.

When I started sculpting, the dyslexia returned. If I tried to copy something, I'd reverse it. I had to look at a reference many times before starting. It made sculpture extremely painful to learn—especially because I began with melting metal.

Still, I found other ways to feed my curiosity. I was drafted into the Vietnam War but went into the Air Force Reserves as an X-ray technician. That gave me a lot of body experience. My best friend became a hairdresser. That sounded fun—especially

since we were the only two guys in the shop. I learned a lot about design and fell in love with Vidal Sassoon's styles and his way of reimagining hair. This was the late '60s. I went to his shows in New York City.

Another friend from the Air Force became a police officer. That sounded interesting, too—so I enlisted. Why? Because the city was changing fast, especially my beat around the U.S. Capitol, which divided the city into four quadrants. The Northeast and Southeast were predominantly Black neighborhoods. Southeast, along the Potomac River, was rapidly gentrifying—old buildings were being torn down and replaced with high-end condos.

The Western quadrant included downtown: expensive stores, hotels, government buildings, and the Smithsonian museums lining the Mall from the Capitol to the

Washington Monument and the White House. I witnessed many historic events, including Vietnam War marches.

Dyslexia faded into the background as I continued sculpting—but it returned in full force when I began writing.

I had learned to type in high school. But writing brought new challenges: keeping the letters aligned was one thing—keeping the words in order was another. I could write a paragraph, but it would come out jumbled. I had to constantly self-edit.

So I decided to try the hardest thing I could imagine: writing a novel.

I didn't know how. But after working on so many big-budget films, reading scripts became routine—and I began to understand why so many movies didn't work. I didn't know how to write a screenplay either. But I figured I could write a sentence.

So I started with a novel.

My friend, Carl Surges, the sculptor, decided he wanted to write a screenplay, so we met at his house, because he had a pool, and wrote. I had a good story, but everything else was terrible. I could see it, but didn't know how to fix it

I was completely lost. I called one of the most respected screenwriting instructors in Hollywood and asked, "Can your course help a novelist?" To my surprise, he gave me a full half hour of his time. He was kind, honest, and generous. I took the course. It was expensive. Brutal. Brilliant. It opened a door I didn't know existed.

It took me over a decade to finish that first novel—because it grew into a mini-series. And when that was done, I was into writing screenplays.



Ghost Busters 'Doors' - 22 ft high - Universal Studios

To write deeply, I had to see life from every angle.

Not just observe it—live it. It was like undergoing therapy with no safety net. Around that time, I got an agent. One of his first questions was: "Can you pitch to *Star Trek*?"



I designed and sculpted the bedroom suite for *NIGHTFLYERS* - George R. R. Martin first movie: (*Game of Thrones* author)

I hadn't even seen a full episode. So a friend and I binge-watched the series to catch the tone and feel. We co-wrote a script in just a few weeks.

We thought it was good, but we had no idea how it would land. My agent sent it off in an hour.

Three days later, we had a ***STAR TREK*** meeting.

We met the lead writer-producer. He was young, sharp, a little too cocky—like Hollywood expected him to be. He liked the script but said a few moments didn't quite fit with *Star Trek's* universe. I admitted I'd only seen three episodes. He laughed. Said he hadn't seen any when he was hired. We became fast friends.

My co-writer dropped out, but I kept going. I was invited to pitch stories directly to the writing team. I'd have lunch and dinner with them, listen, learn. I could walk into the offices anytime. The producer read one of my movie scripts, liked it, and introduced me to his agent. She read four of my scripts in one day—and signed me.

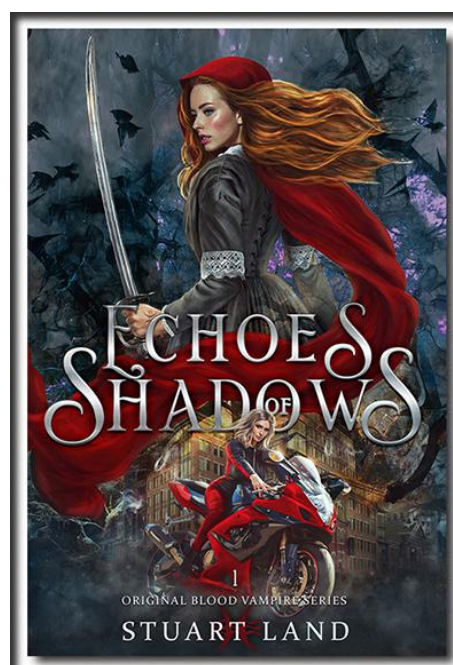
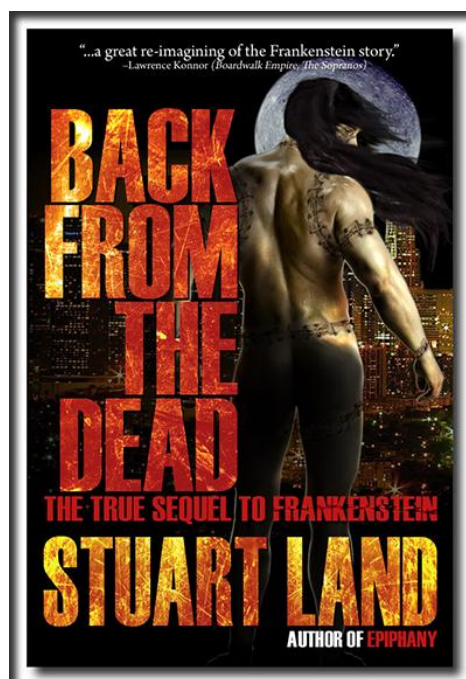
Over the years, I pitched nearly fifty stories to *Star Trek*. Some of my ideas—plots, openings, even images—made it into the show. But I never got credit. Never made a dime. That’s when I saw just how ruthless the writing world could be.

One lunch changed everything. Through a friend, I met a well-known actress interested in screenwriting. She was about to meet with the same producer I’d worked with—to talk about becoming the next *Star Trek* lead. She mentioned it at lunch. I had no idea. Before I met with her, he invited me to a dinner party he was giving for her. Then he uninvited me because I had lunch with her.

But the final straw was the script.

He’d left a draft for me on his secretary’s desk. I opened it—and the first scene was my pitch, copied nearly word for word.

That ended our friendship. And my time with *Star Trek*.



Back from the Dead
of Five)

Echoes of Shadows (Book One

I kept sculpting. Kept designing for film, TV, theme parks, and hotels. But I knew now: credits were rare. Protection was nonexistent. The union couldn’t—or wouldn’t—help.

I'd worked on over 35 major productions. I received only three credits.

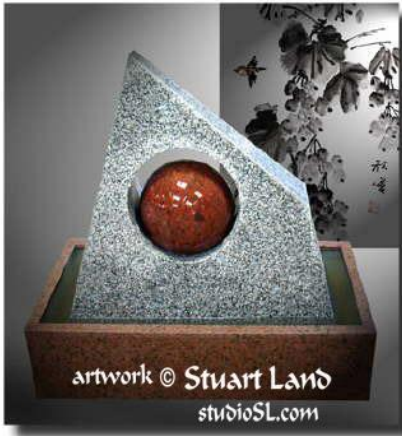
So I returned to fiction. I finished my first novel and signed with a traditional publisher. But it was another trap. They held the rights for seven years. I didn't earn a single dollar.

The truth was, I didn't make a fortune from films because the work was unpredictable. You had to hustle for every job unless you were on a steady crew. I led projects, took breaks to write scripts and novels, and suffered huge losses from bad luck and theft. Not from lack of quality—but from trusting the wrong people.

A New Foreign Chapter



In 1999, I moved to Thailand to create rolling-ball water fountains—meditative sculptures made of marble and granite. A perfectly balanced 16-inch sphere would spin silently on a cushion of water. At the time, only one person in the world was making them. I found him. We became friends, and I designed a new series we built together.



I shipped five tons of fountains to an art gallery in Sausalito. But before they arrived, the owner backed out—too heavy, she said. Even though we’d already agreed.

So I raced to L.A., switched shipping companies, and found a new gallery in the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood—a landmark of colored glass buildings. They were a nightmare to work with. Setting up the exhibit alone was excruciating.

After a couple of months, I returned to Thailand. Then they demanded I remove everything. A big outdoor festival in Beverly Hills had approved me—and after I flew back, they unapproved me. I pivoted again, finding a prestigious gallery on Walking Street in Santa Monica. They carried dinosaur skeletons. I placed all my fountains and six original paintings inside, where everything could be seen from the Walking Street..

Then—disaster. The gallery closed. The owner, who had once vacationed at my home in Thailand, vanished. He stole everything.

Tens of thousands of dollars lost. All my art—gone.

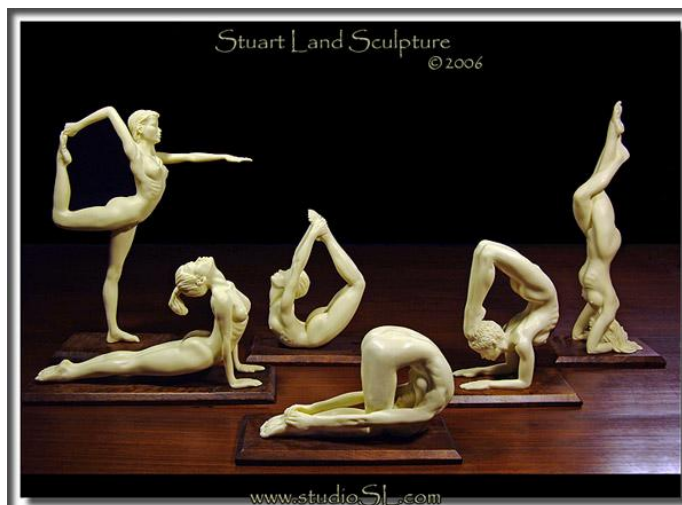
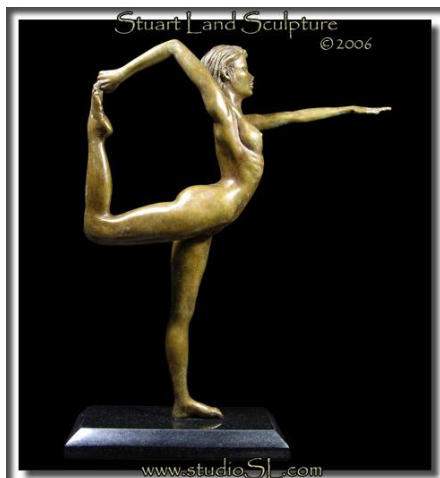
Still, I pressed on. I designed a line of tabletop fountains—elegant, simple, hypnotic. A factory agreed to produce them. They received a large order—300 units—but shipped them without payment.

I lost every fountain. Every cent.

I thought about suing. Then I learned the factory owner had been arrested—for killing his wife and all their children.

I turned to bronze yoga figurines: six graceful, nude forms in classic poses. I placed an ad in *Yoga Magazine*. One ad cost \$5,000.





Trials of Fire, Stone, and Flesh

The foundry ran late, weeks behind schedule. When the pieces arrived, the patina was wrong. All wrong. The warm, subtle tones I'd envisioned were missing. My ad had expired. *Yoga Magazine* had moved on. I couldn't fulfill a single order. The loss was devastating.

So I built my own resin studio, hired skilled Burmese sculptors, and created two new lines of resin figurines: six sensual, 1/6-scale erotic figurines. Beautiful, alive, unmistakably mine, and six Yoga sculptures.

Then came another blow. The landlord of my building doubled the rent and refused to release the sculptures until I paid. I scraped together the funds. Eventually, I shipped the pieces to a friend in L.A., who passed them to another friend. They sell occasionally online—but it was never enough to recover what I'd lost.

Then came the worst of it.

A serious, inherited heart condition struck. My valves began to fail. I needed major surgery to replace two of them. At that time, I had been in the best shape of my life—five years of intense gym workouts. That strength never fully came back.

The Crossing – China, 2014

I was invited to Beijing to work on Chinese films. I spent a month there, and when they learned I was a screenwriter, they asked me to adapt one of my scripts into a Chinese

horror story. I did it. They paid me. But the project stalled. They wanted to use CGI for the effects, but I wrote it for practical effects—and now the cost was too high. After years of rewrites and revisions, it was finally shelved.



The Crossing, 2014, (John Woo director, the most expensive Chinese film to date)

Back home, I received an email from Lawrence Konner—writer/producer of *The Sopranos*, *Boardwalk Empire*. He bought my novel *Back From The Dead*, the true sequel to *Frankenstein*. He loved it. We finalized an option deal.

Then the bottom fell out.

A terrible *Frankenstein* movie (*I, Frankenstein*) hit theaters—and every critic hated it. Our deal collapsed.

So I tried again. I wrote a Thai horror film and produced a full theatrical trailer. With script Translated into Thai, I hired a diverse crew, cast Thai TV stars as lead, and set up casting offices. We had real actors, Special Effects, original music, powerful imagery. The whole trailer felt alive.



Make-up tour in China

We held a closing party in an art gallery. Screened the trailer. Everyone loved it.

Two Thai production companies wanted in. We held meetings, script reads, drew up plans. Then—silence. No calls. No emails.

Eventually, I found out why: the industry didn't want a foreigner writing and directing a Thai film. Even though the entire cast was Thai, speaking Thai, and the crew was international and Thai. The powers that be didn't want a foreigner writing and directing a Thai film.

Then I had a stroke.

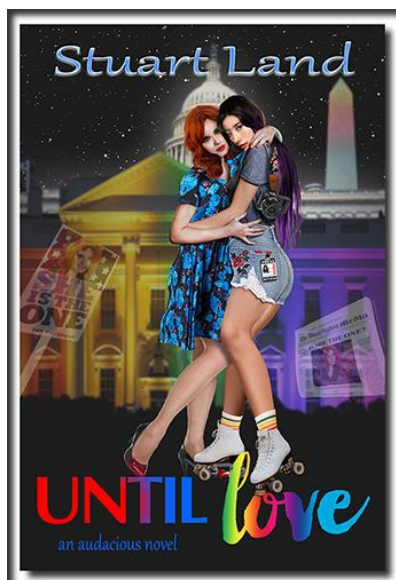
I couldn't speak. I couldn't make a sound.



A month passed before I could talk again. Most of my Thai was gone. English was difficult. Friends helped me survive financially. I paid them all back. It took a year before I could write again.

Dell University contacted me. They'd read *Back From The Dead* and wanted to write about it for the 200th anniversary of *Frankenstein*. They dedicated a full chapter to my book in their academic tribute to Mary Shelley. It was a moment of light.

I returned to China on a month-long lecture tour, visiting ten cities to talk about Hollywood makeup effects. I pitched my horror movie again—this time for the Chinese market. But Chinese law bans modern ghost stories using ancient ghosts. If it had been set in ancient times, it might have worked.



In December 2019, I launched a new novel—*Until Love*, a lesbian romantic comedy filled with humor and heart. The early reviews were strong: four and five stars. I was ready to market it.

And then—COVID.

I never caught the virus.

But in January 2020, just weeks after the outbreak began, I was diagnosed with cancer.

When Everything Stops

My marketing funds vanished—swallowed by hospital bills. I couldn't promote *Until Love*, or any of my other books. I couldn't sculpt. I couldn't sell. I could only try to survive.

It took a full month just to diagnose me. Thailand had shut down. Hospitals closed. Clinics went dark. I stood alone in an empty cancer center, waiting—for anything—when a doctor happened to walk by. She listened to my story, then gently took my hand and led me to her office. She was head of the clinic.

She made some calls.

Soon, I was in the treatment ward, being evaluated. But in Thailand, seeing a doctor at a public hospital takes three to five hours. A young intern ran some tests and delivered his solution without hesitation: “Cut out half your tongue.”

I went elsewhere. Two more clinics. They offered radiation and chemo—but said I'd have to wait. Treatment couldn't begin until a wisdom tooth was removed—one I never even knew existed. I'd never had dental problems. Never even a cavity.

The tooth removal took five hours. I was awake the entire time.

They severed a major nerve. Half my face went numb and painful—and stayed that way for over four years. I couldn't chew. Couldn't eat. Couldn't even brush my teeth.

Radiation destroyed my sense of taste, my sense of smell, and my salivary glands. No one warned me what that meant.

Thai people rarely get cavities. Their soil, their food, their bodies resist them. None of that helped me. Without saliva, decay set in fast. I scrambled to find help. One hospital carried the medicine I needed—but I had to see a new doctor to buy it. One small bottle cost \$1.25.

The treatment itself was brutal. Thirty-six rounds of radiation over two months—five days a week. Cancer doesn't hurt. Treatment does.

My tumor was in the back of my tongue. To reach it, the radiation had to be exact. That meant immobilization. I was taken to a separate clinic where they placed me on a table, laid a perforated plastic sheet over my face, heated it, then vacuum-sealed it to my

skull, like a horror mask. I couldn't move—my head, neck, and upper chest were locked in place.

Each session lasted 20 to 45 minutes inside a machine that whirred, slammed, groaned—like something from a sci-fi nightmare. At first, I felt nothing. But soon, the nausea hit. Then exhaustion. I couldn't eat. I lost weight. I took handfuls of pills just to function.

Then came chemo.

As a foreigner, I had two options: join 50 Thai patients in a crowded, open ward—bed to bed—or pay for a private suite with a toilet and a team of nurses. The Thais paid \$1 a day. As a foreigner, I'd have to pay \$65 a day. I chose the private suite at \$70 a day. Each session took about 12 hours. If it ended late, I stayed the night.

The chemo didn't hurt. But the needles did. And one night, I woke to find myself soaked—my arm bleeding. The hose had disconnected, and blood had pumped out while I slept. There was no lock on the line. Just friction. I felt bad for the nurses. They had to clean up that mess.

The damage lingered on and on. Once radiation and chemo finished, I was in hell. I had no saliva. No taste. No smell. No hunger. I couldn't chew. Couldn't eat solid food. Everything I loved—gone.

Nutrition became a daily war.

The hospital had little to offer. The nutritionist gave me meals I couldn't possibly eat. I turned to the internet. I learned to blend my food, so I hired a kind woman to help me prepare it. She changed three times over the years. They kept me alive.

I took me six months to walk again. I did that every day to the lake in the temple by my house. My weight dropped from 155 to 104 pounds. Today, I'm at 115. The cancer is in remission. But the scars remain.



Stuart sculpting Mertin-the-kitten in Mouse on a Motorcycle. 1986

The Fight That Never Ends

A year ago, my cardiologist thought a simple, non-surgical procedure could fix my heart's arrhythmia. Electrical stimulation. It worked—miraculously. For 15 hours, I felt reborn.

Then it all fell apart.

Air bubbles entered my bloodstream. I screamed in pain—daggers shooting through the veins in my left arm. My neighbor rushed me to the hospital. I passed out in the car. The attendants pulled me out—grabbing my left arm. Every capillary ruptured. My arm doubled in size.

When I woke, I was in the operating room.

By strange luck, the surgeon was an old client. I'd helped him with his English reports. He performed two emergency surgeries that night, and two more the next day.

My left hand was paralyzed, shaped like a claw.

I spent a week completely immobile, stuffed in a bed, not moving, the only foreigner in the ward. Then five more weeks I don't want to relate. Then a month at a rehab nursing home. relearning everything—how to sit up, how to walk. At home, I weighed just 98 pounds.

Eating blended food was difficult. Only a couple of months ago was I able to eat real food. I could finally eat real food. That was a luxury!

Then—the medicine failed. I asked the doctors what was wrong. They spoke in terms I didn't understand. No one said the word in English. It was only later that I realized and mistranslated what I really needed: not a pacemaker, but a *Catheter Ablation*, still \$20K.

With it, I'll live. Without it, I lie on the couch all day, waiting. Before, the medicine worked 100%, now only 10%. It keeps me conscious. Nothing more. I can't walk. I can't write. I can barely type. I feel the world fading, like a scene slowing to a stop. The four pills I take each day are the only reason I'm still here.

Before... even through cancer, stroke, and heart failure—I wrote a new novel, and five vampire audio books. Not now.

A Life in Stories

I've completed **14 novels** and published **nine**, including three of the six-book vampire series. However, I've completed five audio books where every character has a unique voice. I've already commissioned covers for the first three. I need three more.

I've written **21 screenplays** across genres—action, thriller, sci-fi, drama, comedy. In international contests, they've placed first, second, and third. Many were optioned.

The Screenplays

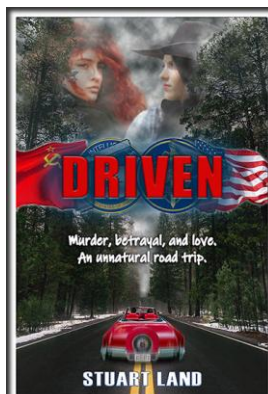
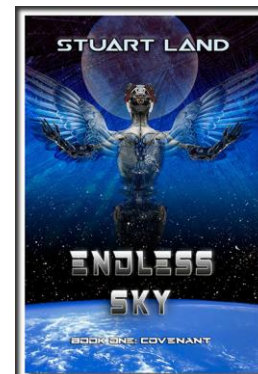
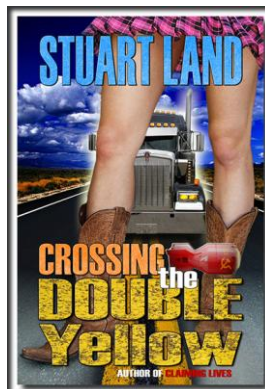
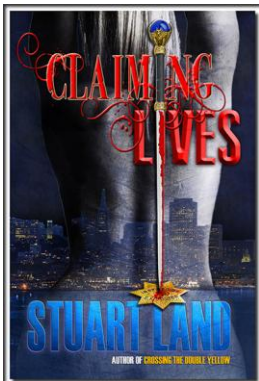
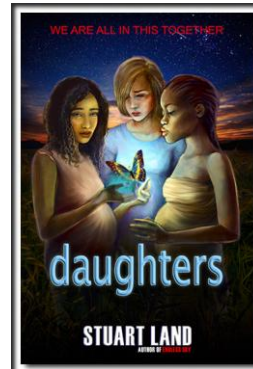
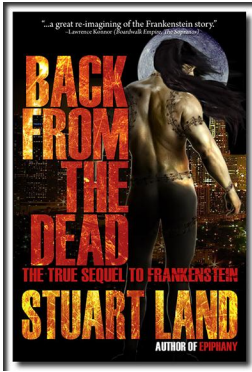
1. *The Machine* (1987)
2. *Virtue of Evil* (1989)
3. *Eye of the Beholder* (1992)
4. *Back From The Dead* (1992)
5. *East is East* (1993)
6. *Telepresence* (1994)
7. *Clear Cut* (1994)
8. *Inside-Outside* (1994)
9. *Koku* (1995)

10. *Darma* (1995)
11. *Captured Image* (1995)
12. *3 Guys* (1997)
13. *Politics of Love* (2004)
14. *Michael's Garden* (2004)
15. *Night Sky* (2004)
16. *The Key* (2005)
17. *Obscura* (2005)
18. *Crossing the Double Yellow* (2005)
19. *Todd McCoy's Adventure West* (2005)
20. *Claiming Lives* (2009)
21. *Night Kill* (2014)

The Novels

1. *Back From the Dead* (2011)
2. *Shadow House* (2011)
3. *Daughters (Epiphany)* (2011)
4. *Claiming Lives* (2011)
5. *Crossing The Double Yellow* (2012)
6. *Endless Sky* (2012)
7. *Until Love* (2019)
8. *Driven* (2022)
9. *Echoes of Shadows*
10. *Dust and Shadow*
11. *Tears of Memory*
12. *Tears of Reckoning*
13. *Blood Sorrow*

14. *Currents of War*

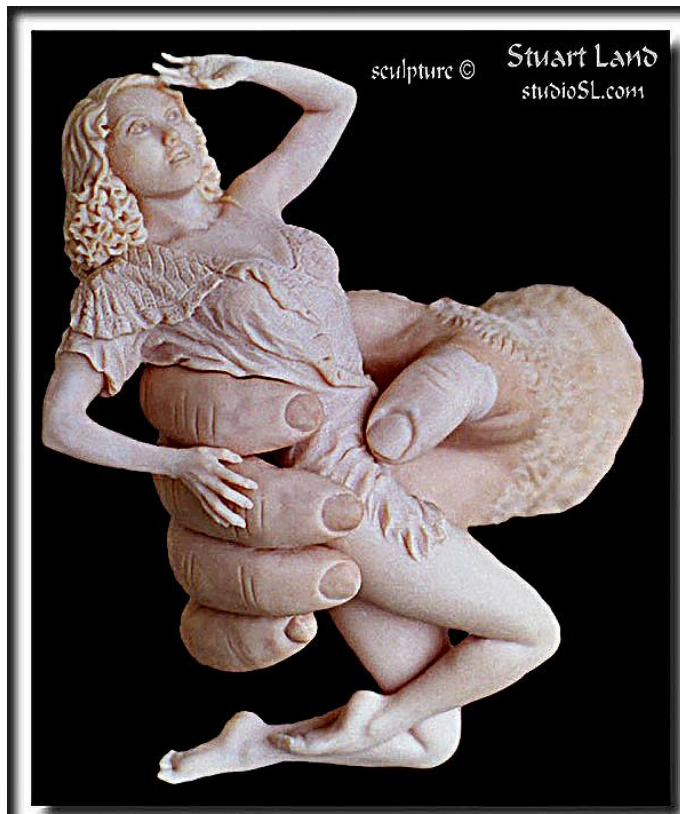




A Final Word

If you've read this far, thank you. This hasn't been an easy story to share. It's not just about hardship, illness, or survival. It's about refusing to give up, no matter how many times the world says "no."

I've lived a life of art, of stories, of sculpting dreams into form. I've helped create movie magic, told tales on screen and page, built beauty with my hands. But now, I need help.



A production company hired me to sculpt Fay Wray for a series of bronzes. They made a bad mold, Ruined the casting, so I couldn't approve it. I lost all the money and the sculpture. I managed to retrieve the original, even though it was broken.

Heart surgery isn't a fashionable event for me—it's my only lifeline. It's what will allow me to continue living, creating, eat, and rise from my bed. "*Catheter Ablation*" costs \$20,000. I pay \$3000 a year for pills. But they will stop any day, because they no longer work. When the surgery is complete, I won't need any pills. After everything—cancer, stroke, heart surgeries, theft, betrayals—this is where I am.

If you're able to help me—through donation, sharing this appeal, or sending a kind word—I'll be deeply grateful. It will help me keep going. Not just to survive, but to live and regain my creativity. I still have books to write. Sculptures to build. Stories to tell.

Thank you for reading.

—Stuart

My art, books, and movies are here:

www.stuartland.com

www.studioSL.com

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