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words

Jason Bourne's amnesia

Sean Spence

Jason Bourne (Matt Damon, the Bourne film trilogy) is an assassin who cannot recall his past. Discovered floating in the Mediterranean, bullets in his back, he miraculously recovers, surviving serial confrontations, before recapturing his identity. Bourne's is a psychogenic amnesia: he retains new information, his use of concepts is preserved, he is fluent in several languages, his motor skills are exceptional. Indeed, it is his 'procedural' memory that betrays his former life. If confronted, he summons up precision violence, seemingly out of nowhere. But can his recovered 'self' atone for its past? An act of contrition closes the second film.

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