

Betrayal

By

Daniel Hopson

Awarded An 'Honourable Mention' from the
Scriptwriters & Co Group
Theme: 'Betrayal'
September 2022

FADE IN:

1 INT. FLAT BLOCK - MARK STANDARD'S FLAT - NIGHT 1

Large dimly lit open space with a bedroom, living room and kitchen. Cluttered floor, neat bookshelves with tech books 'Advanced Hacking for Pros', messy kitchen, and crates with tech gadgets.

In one corner of the flat, looking down, a small camera with a red blinking light watches as a couple have an argument.

MARK STANDARDS (42), tech genius, but an underachiever and lacks confidence wears a 'TECH FOR CHANGE' T-shirt. His girlfriend, SALLY DAY (40), fiery red hair, smart and cunning moves her large suitcase to the door.

SALLY DAY
You said that a year ago!

She opens the door in a haste.

2 CORRIDOR 2

Grey walls with two red blinking cameras at both ends.

MARK STANDARDS
Please, Sally, one more chance.

Sally drops the suitcase and scoffs.

SALLY DAY
You could be doing so much more,
Mark!

MARK STANDARDS
I will try harder, a new start, a
new job -

Sally shakes her head. Mark, crestfallen, watches her leave down the corridor. He puffs, gazes at the spot where she exited, and retreats.

3 KITCHEN 3

Mark opens the fridge, takes out a beer and downs it. On the fridge two magnets: 'TRUST NO ONE' and 'BECOME THE NEW YOU!'

He takes another beer out from the fridge, and sits at the table loaded with empty pizza boxes, beer cans, a laptop and two crates of organised tech equipment.

He sighs and examines one of the crates and takes out a small alarm clock, which has several wires running from its motherboard to the laptop. He fiddles with the wires, checks the motherboard and places the battery holder lid on.

He twiddles his thumbs, and then downs his beer. He sets the countdown timer to 24:00:00. He presses the start button. 23:59:59. 23:59:58. He puts the timer underneath a pizza box. He gets another beer from the fridge.

4 KITCHEN - THE NEXT DAY 4

Mark, red-eyed, stirs with his arms sprawled across the table, his head on a beer can. He lingers and peeks at the timer: 15:45:12. He slowly gets up. He eyes the fridge magnet 'BECOME THE NEW YOU!', picks up his backpack and heads out.

5 CORRIDOR 5

The two cameras follow Mark's movements.

6 EXT. FLAT BLOCK - MARK STANDARD'S FLAT - STREET - DAY 6

Futuristic. Huge skyscrapers. Another world from Mark's flat. Hundreds of cameras align every corner, lamppost and building watching the thousands of phone-obsessed commuters.

A huge hologram rises into the sky: 'DATACORE'S MOON PACKAGE: Just £1,000,000 per person (per day)!' Mark shuffles to the largest skyscraper.

7 EXT. DATACORE HQ - DAY 7

Even more cameras, moving rapidly about. A sign over the entrance: 'DataCore: Your Data, Our Core'. A long line of DataCore employees, most suited, some in T-shirts like Mark, queue to enter the building.

The ground shakes suddenly, but no one's fazed by this disruption. A written announcement appears on a large billboard: EARTHQUAKE PRONE ZONE: STABLE. The shaking stops. The billboard warning vanishes and turns to a news channel. An anchor-woman, CHARLOTTE DAWN (32), confident.

CHARLOTTE DAWN

Today. DataCore announces within the next five years, there won't be a single homeless person living in the City.

(MORE)

CHARLOTTE DAWN (CONT'D)

There's already been a huge fifty percent drop in the past year alone! They've also announced the lockdown on the City's criminal activity by decreasing the number of camera blackspots. I'm joined by CEO, Roman Spin.

ROMAN SPIN (50), arrogant, tall, bald, well dressed, red eyes, wears white gloves, has gold teeth that don't match him, nods with excitement.

He turns to show off his gold teeth.

ROMAN SPIN

Not only is your data at our core,
your safety is too.

Mark rolls his eyes and frowns, and enters the HQ.

8 INT. DATACORE HQ - ENTRANCE - DAY 8

More cameras inside. SECURITY GUARDS (30s) watch on as Mark signs-in with his lanyard. Hundreds of floors and lifts. Another mini earthquake, which fazes no one. Mark stumbles into an unoccupied lift.

9 LIFT 9

A camera detects him and zooms in. He presses '10A', and within a second the door opens to the floor.

10 FLOOR 10A 10

More cameras. A small dismal office, old laptops, computers, bored and depressing looking COLLEAGUES. Half of the floor is taken up by another room, which has tinted glass windows and a polished oak door: MANAGER 10A. Mark strides to the door, bites his lip and knocks. A camera leers, and the door opens.

11 MANAGER'S OFFICE 11

A large room, but mostly empty. JASON CARDS (30s), small glasses, plump and bearded sits at the desk. Jason lowers his head so his glasses slip, his stern eyes leer at Mark.

JASON CARDS

Yes?

Mark stutters over his words:

MARK STANDARDS

I want - a new - floor - position -
promotion.

Mark recomposes himself:

MARK STANDARDS (CONT'D)

I want to try something different,
I want a promotion. I don't want to
be here forever.

A camera zooms in on Mark.

JASON CARDS

Mmm. Name?

MARK STANDARDS

Mark Standards.

Jason rubs his chin, types something and scans his laptop.

JASON CARDS

Worked here for 10 years...smart
but average progress. I need better
results before I can even consider
moving you to another floor. Back
to work.

Mark bites his lip and the camera follows him to the exit.

12 FLOOR 10A 12

Mark sits down, head in hands and gazes at his loaded laptop.
He puffs and gets to work. He inputs data, but an email
appears:

TITLE: ROMAN SPIN, DATACORE CEO, INVITES YOU, MARK STANDARD.

WHERE/WHEN: NOW. FLOOR: TOP.

Mark rereads it, curious and surprised. He goes to the lift.

13 LIFT 13

The camera peers down at him. Without needing to press any
buttons the lift rockets upwards.

14 TOP FLOOR - ROMAN SPIN'S OFFICE

14

Pristine. Orderly. No cameras visible. An enormous plasma screen on one wall shows live feeds from various parts of the City. A door at the opposite side of the room. Roman Spin beams behind his desk, eyes wide open, eager, excited, still wearing white gloves, indicates to a chair.

Roman reviews a document in front of him, then glimpses at Mark, back to the document and mutters to himself:

ROMAN SPIN
Hmmm, very good, intelligent, hmm,
they'll like him. Yes. They haven't
had a good one in a while. Had
loss. Excellent.

Mark confused, tries to ask a question, but Roman holds up a hand to stop him. Mark frowns, taken back.

ROMAN SPIN (CONT'D)
I watch the City's sadness,
happiness and even heartbreaks...

Roman presses his remote.

ON THE HUGE SCREEN: No sound. Mark and Sally argue at Mark's flat, then Sally drags her suitcase and leaves.

ROMAN SPIN (CONT'D)
We must lose in order to gain.

Roman goes to a cabinet and leans into the security panel with his eyes, the cabinet clicks open and he delicately takes out a large parcel.

ROMAN SPIN (CONT'D)
I want to offer you a job. First, a
simple task...

Roman places the parcel on Mark's lap.

ROMAN SPIN (CONT'D)
Deliver it to 666 Lane Road. Don't
look inside. Follow these
instructions, come back and you'll
have a new job. You have one hour.

Mark looks more confused, but Roman indicates to the door.

15 PASSAGEWAY

15

Mark rushes down a long narrow path with the parcel.

Cameras watch his every move.

16 EXT. DATACORE HQ - AFTERNOON 16

Mark hurries down the street, and turns a corner.

17 EXT. STREET ALLEYWAY - AFTERNOON 17

He glimpses at his watch, and spies around. No cameras.

He places the parcel gently on the ground, and carefully unwraps it to reveal a small locked metal box. He grabs a small device with wires sticking out from his backpack and connects one of the wires to the keyhole.

He presses a button on the device. CRACK! The lock breaks. Smoke fizzes from the box as he opens it, he flinches at what he sees inside, and very quickly slams it shut.

He dials a number.

MARK STANDARDS

It's me, I'm ready. Ten minutes.

Mark hurries out of the alleyway.

18 EXT. SAFEHOUSE - AFTERNOON 18

Mark pants into a small building. No cameras.

19 INT. SAFEHOUSE - AFTERNOON 19

No cameras. JIMMY DANT (50s), a journalist, excited, eager, sits waiting at a table with a notepad, a recorder and two glasses of clear liquid. Jimmy takes a sip of his and moves the other towards Mark, who sits down with the metal box. Jimmy flinches and moves his chair backwards, his eyes never leave the box.

JIMMY DANT

On the record?

Mark nods and the recorder is turned on.

MARK STANDARDS

It started a few years back, when I first joined them.

Mark takes a sip of the drink, and Jimmy smiles.

MARK STANDARDS (CONT'D)

I always had a sense of something going on. It turns out that in the past seven years, DataCore has paid out over one billion pounds in non-disclosure agreements to families. I noticed it when I came across two files for DataCore employees that didn't even exist. Or at least, they had. They had disappeared.

Mark takes another sip, and Jimmy smiles.

MARK STANDARDS (CONT'D)

The Moon Tech Program has thousands of illegal shipments arriving. Where do the employees vanish to? The top floor is where it all starts.

Mark taps the box and Jimmy winces.

MARK STANDARDS (CONT'D)

Me and my girlfriend faked a break up, using it as a means to pretend I was desperate to prove -

Slow claps from behind. Mark spins as Roman stands by Sally. Mark shellshocked, his vision blurs, he glances from Roman to Sally, and then to the liquid, his vision blurs more. Blackness and he collapses.

20 INT. UNDER DATACORE HQ - PRISON

20

Bleak, dark and empty. Shiny blood soaked walls. A scream in the distance. Mark wakes up, startled at his whereabouts crawls backwards at the sight of the flesh and bones.

MARK STANDARDS

Hello!?

His voice echoes. No one replies.

He gets up and squints through the bars. Hundreds of small cells with various handwritten hanging signs on them labelled with 'INTELLIGENT FOOD' or 'TRAMP FOOD'.

A flicker of a light from high above his cell on the wall, a monitor turns on.

ON THE SCREEN: Roman Spin laughs madly. A series of camera footage appear as Roman speaks.

ON THE SCREEN: Mark leads Sally down a street. They round a corner. Mark observes around and enters a small opening, Sally follows.

ROMAN SPIN (V.O.)
It's been fun watching you.

ON THE SCREEN: In the small opening, a hidden camera records Mark as he explains something to Sally. Sally seems taken back and shakes her head, confused. But Mark continues to persuade her.

ROMAN SPIN (V.O.)
We have more cameras than you can
imagine.

Mark grits his teeth as he watches ON THE SCREEN: Sally enters DataCore HQ and meets with a SENIOR OFFICIAL. A camera follows her as the senior official and her take a lift to the top floor.

ON THE SCREEN: at the top floor, Roman shows a huge archive of DVDs: 'THE ALIEN AND THE TRAMP' 'ALIENS LOVE INTELLIGENT FOOD' 'BLOOD SPORT: MY FAVOURITE TRAMP KILLER'. He hands Sally a large bag of money, and points to another bag full of cash, which she tries to take, but Roman shakes his finger.

ROMAN SPIN (V.O.)
She'll have that soon enough.

ON THE SCREEN: The video footage changes to a new location. Inside the safe house. Roman, Sally and Jimmy Dant plot.

ON THE SCREEN: At the top of DataCore HQ Roman presents a PowerPoint to several suited men. Roman points to Mark's face on the slide with the text 'Impactful storyline, plenty of twists' The suited men clap.

ON THE SCREEN: Mark opens up the box.

The screen goes black. A scream in the distance.

ROMAN SPIN (V.O.)
(echoes)
Not long now Mark, it's your nearly
feasting time! Any last words?

Mark's lip curls.

MARK STANDARDS
What's the time?

Roman laughs.

21 INT. FLAT BLOCK - MARK STANDARD'S FLAT - KITCHEN - NIGHT 21

Under the pizza box, the timer ticks down to 00:00:00. A long beeping noise followed by a rapid succession of CLICKS. His laptop turns on automatically.

ON THE LAPTOP SCREEN: A document opens titled 'HACK', which displays thousands of lines of code. Followed by another document titled 'UPLOAD'. A video of Mark opens.

22 INT. APARTMENT BLOCK - FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 22

A FAMILY watch the TV, which splutters.

Mark's video appears. All black background.

MARK STANDARDS (ON T.V.)
Hi, I'm Mark. I've worked for
DataCore for ten years.

The father grabs the remote and tries to change the channel, but nothing happens.

MARK STANDARDS (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)
I've been watching, waiting,
learning, patient.
Ever wondered where all the
homeless really go? Ever wondered
why we get earthquakes here? Ever
wondered why they have all these
cameras? DataCore HQ's has a little
secret in its basement. The tramps
don't get jobs here, they're food.
Underneath the HQ lay alien
critters --

23 EXT. ACROSS THE CITY - NIGHT 23

Across the City on every screen, every advertisement, every hologram has changed to Mark's video. Thousands have stopped to watch it, intrigued.

MARK STANDARDS
-- VIPs pay millions to watch as a
story unfolds all on camera. Watch
as a homeless man is given a new
life, for them to suddenly be
petrified alien food in a prison
under DataCore. Had a family member
vanish? Recieved a huge pay-out?
They lie to us, they betray us.

The video loops.

24 INT. FLAT BLOCK - MARK STANDARD'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM - TWO 24
DAYS LATER

Mark enters his flat. He takes one huge puff of relief and laughs, almost uncontrollably. He turns on his TV.

ON THE SCREEN: Charlotte Dawn stands outside DataCore. A huge headline: ALIENS EXIST! ALIENS KILLED! ALIENS EXTINCT?

CHARLOTTE DAWN

In a dramatic week of some of the most surprising events in the history of the City, DataCore's CEO has been arrested for murder, abduction, unlawful imprisonment, and for breeding an alien species under DataCore HQ.

ON THE TV: Roman, no longer his confident and arrogant self is dragged away in handcuffs with thousands of protestors trying to attack him and journalists desperate for a comment.

CHARLOTTE DAWN (CONT'D)

Meanwhile, Roman's accomplices, Jimmy Dant and Sally Day have been arrested for aiding and abetting in the abduction of the city's newest hero, Mark Standards.

ON THE TV: Sally Day, handcuffed, pushed along runs to the nearest camera.

SALLY DAY

YOU SON OF A BITCH, MARK! YOU
FUCKING BETRAYED--

ON THE TV: Sally's pulled away and forced into a police car.

Mark laughs.

FADE OUT.

THE END