

"BEHIND THE SCREEN EPISODE 1"

"PILOT"

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FADE IN:

1. INT. DAVID'S OFFICE- DAY.

DAVID walks into his office and is approached by SOPHIE.

SOPHIE  
Good morning.

David picks up a paper.

DAVID  
Morning.

SOPHIE  
Did you see the news this morning?

DAVID  
You are in control of my schedule. You know that as a director in a fledgling television company I had two meetings after nine o'clock last night with studio executives and already this morning I have had to take my wife to a hospital appointment. Please do tell me, bane of my life, when I would have had time to read the news?

Close up on Sophie as she raises her eyebrows at him. Cut back to wide shot.

SOPHIE  
No need to be sarcastic about it.

David smiles at her.

DAVID  
Since when do you watch the news?

SOPHIE  
I watch the news every morning (she pauses) thank you very much.

DAVID  
You need to hurry up and get married.

SOPHIE  
I know but about the news.

David looks frustrated.

DAVID  
What have I got on this morning?

Sophie looks down at her notebook.

SOPHIE  
Daniel's called an emergency meeting in  
the office opposite Hugo's.

DAVID  
Why?

Sophie smiles.

SOPHIE  
You should have read the news.

DAVID  
I'm going, you cruel woman.

David leaves the office.

INT. HALLWAY. DAY.

David non-verbally acknowledges those walking down the hall. DANIEL moves from off camera to catch up with him. They both walk towards the moving camera.

DANIEL  
Have you seen the news this morning?

David looks back at him.

DAVID  
Why does everybody keep asking me that?

JOSH walks passed.

JOSH  
It's going to cause trouble.

Daniel turns back.

DANIEL  
We are working on it.

DAVID  
Working on what?

DANIEL  
There's a situation at a school in  
Birmingham. Former pupil with a couple  
of shotguns is holding it hostage.

David stops dead.

DAVID  
You're joking?

DANIEL  
Sadly not.

DAVID  
But we are just about to film. Mark just  
finished writing the scene... They know  
it's in the book.

David shakes his head.

DAVID (CONT.)  
Is it going to be an issue?

David keeps on walking. Daniel follows him.

DANIEL  
I don't know but it was controversial  
when the book first came out. If people  
find out it's in the show, then they are  
sure to ask questions.

DAVID  
It's one little story line right at the  
beginning.

DANIEL  
Technically it's not the scene that's  
going to be an issue.

David nods once.

DAVID

I know, it's that stupid line...  
I told him, I told him not to add it  
into the show... You know back in my day  
you could write a show and you wouldn't  
have to worry about what was happening  
in the world, people would just enjoy  
it.

DANIEL

Make sure you don't tell that to Mark.

DAVID

It's going to be one hell of a day.

Fade out:

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FADE IN:

2. INT. TABLE READ OFFICE- DAY.

Daniel and David walk into the office. MARK has his head on the desk.

DAVID  
If you ask me if I've seen the news, we  
will fall out.

Mark doesn't lift his head.

MARK  
(Grunt)

David sits opposite Mark and Daniel sits next to him.

DAVID  
What's wrong with him?

DANIEL  
Our illustrious author was out with who  
last night? Oh, that's right the press  
association.

Mark finally lifts his head.

MARK  
I was networking.

DAVID  
So, what are we going to do?

Mark seems bemused

MARK  
It's not going to be an issue.

The door opens. HUGO and BETH walk in and take seats at the table.

HUGO  
There is going to be one major media  
storm.

Mark looks frustrated.

DANIEL  
Any more news?

BETH  
They are trying to get demands to him,  
but they haven't explained a motive.

HUGO  
They've released a picture and I'm  
telling you now if we were casting for  
the role of a-

DAVID  
Let's leave jokes until its resolved.  
So, what's going to be our issue?

MARK  
There won't be one.

DAVID  
We aren't all geniuses Mark so let's  
assume there is.

Mark puts his head down.

HUGO  
If they link it to the book or the show,  
we could be looking at a massive media  
backlash. They will be expecting Mark to  
come out against it like he did before  
but that could make things worse.

DAVID  
Why?

MARK  
Because last time I used it as a  
campaign against Incel's. If I came out  
against this kid now, they would say I  
was fuelling the fire and using the  
incident to make the show controversial  
before release.

David nods.

BETH

We could be looking at actors pulling out, not wanting to ruin their career.

DAVID

That would be an issue if we had any high-profile actors.

DANIEL

We still need a network, if we don't handle this well, we may be dead in the water.

DAVID

How do we handle it?

HUGO

If we had a press officer, we could run a coordinated campaign. We could push the other aspects of the show. Without one, these media organisation are going to tear through us.

BETH

Didn't we have a press officer?

DANIEL

We did until Mark split up with her.

MARK

Technically she split up with me.

David looks around the room, frustration on his face.

DAVID

People. What do we do?

MARK

It's not going to be an issue and if it is then we will deal with it but it's nothing. The media are done with my witch hunt. Some kid is holding up a school and it's terrible but it's not my fault, it's not your fault and its certainly not the shows' fault. If I have to go on every media outlet and say it then fine but I won't because it won't be an issue.

DAVID

Beth, Hugo, start talking to any media people you know. Mark, Daniel, I want you to work on an alternative scene.

MARK

There can't be an alternative scene. This is the scene; it sets up everything else that happens in the series. If we change that then we will have to change a hundred scenes after.

DAVID

Look into it.

MARK

We are two weeks away from shooting the pilot, with this very scene. The actors have it

DAVID

Look at it.

MARK

Okay.

Mark checks his phone and then stands up.

MARK

I'm going to go see Annie, she has something for me.

DAVID

Okay. Beth, I want you to work with of some our focus groups and see what they reckon to casting choices for next week's auditions.

Mark leaves the room. FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

3. INT. MARK'S OFFICE- DAY.

Mark walks into his office. ANNIE is waiting for him in front of his desk. She has forms in her hand

ANNIE  
It's going to be an issue.

Mark stops dead and looks at her.

MARK  
Since when did you become an expert in media journalism?

ANNIE  
When I studied for four years doing my degree.

Mark gives her a cheeky smile.

MARK  
Oh yeah. Why are you working for me again?

ANNIE  
Because you wouldn't know where you left your head if you didn't have someone to tell you.

MARK  
No I remember it's because your rubbish at media journalism and since your like a sister to me, I gave you a job.

Annie looks at him confused.

ANNIE  
I am your sister.

MARK  
Yeah, but not sure adopted really counts.

Annie looks desperately hurt.

ANNIE  
(Sadly)  
That may be the worst thing you've ever said to me.

Mark puts his hand on Annie's shoulders.

MARK  
I'm sorry. You know I love you.

Annie wrinkles her nose up.

ANNIE  
You look terrible, and you stink of alcohol.

MARK  
Yeah I had a few too many last night.

ANNIE  
I didn't know press could drink so well?

MARK  
They can't, it's just having to listen to them drove me to drink.

Annie smiles cheekily.

ANNIE  
Why don't you ever take me with you?

Mark looks horrified.

ANNIE

Are you worried I will cramp your style?

MARK

Annie I am a best-selling author, a well-known political analyst and executive producer of my own TV series. I do that just by turning up.

Annie smiles.

ANNIE

I have the new artwork by the way.

Mark gets all excited.

MARK

Can I see it now?

Annie goes to hand him the folder and then takes it away.

ANNIE

Umm no, you have a staff meeting.

Mark looks confused.

MARK

I've just had a staff meeting?

ANNIE

That was an emergency staff meeting, now you have schedule planning meeting.

Mark turns around.

MARK

So, what am I doing here?

ANNIE

I honestly have no idea.

MARK  
I better go.

Annie hands him the pictures.

ANNIE  
I told you. Useless.

Mark walks away.

ANNIE  
It's going to be an issue.

Mark turns around.

MARK  
I know.

He leaves the office.

FADE OUT:

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FADE IN:

4. INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT- DAY

ANDREW is asleep in the chair; the betting channel is on the TV. Suddenly the door opens and GRACE walks in with a coffee.

GRACE  
Really?

Andrew is startled awake.

GRACE (CONT.):  
I thought you were done with this.

Grace grabs the remote and turns off the TV.

ANDREW  
I wasn't gambling, I was just watching  
the racing.

Grace looks at him in disbelief.

GRACE  
For an actor you really are a bad liar.

Andrew stands up and starts to rub his face. He takes the coffee that Grace offers him.

GRACE  
You need to see this.

Grace turns the TV back on and changes it to the news. Andrew watches it show the hostage situation.

ANDREW  
God dammit.

GRACE  
Sound familiar?

Grace comes up to him and starts hugging him.

GRACE

This is your chance to get back to where you were before that disgusting habit knocked you down. Don't let anything ruin it.

ANDREW

Mark's a good guy. If he keeps a level head, then we go up together. You just wait and see.

GRACE

(Flirtatiously)

I need to go to work but I will be here when you get back movie star.

Grace releases him.

ANDREW

Soon.

Grace gives Andrew a peck on the cheek before leaving. Andrew runs a hand through his hair before turning the TV back onto the betting channel.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

5. INT. TABLE READ OFFICE- DAY.

Mark walks back into the office. Hugo and Beth have gone, Daniel and David are left seated.

DAVID  
What was it?

Mark places the folder down on the table.

MARK  
New concept art for the warehouse.

DANIEL  
Any good?

Mark sits down.

MARK  
I haven't looked yet.

DAVID  
Get someone to take them down to the studio today and give them to Sarah.

MARK  
I can do it.

DAVID  
Send Annie, or one of the aids.

MARK  
It's fine. I need to go see what they have done for the pub to see if I have all my ques sorted.

DANIEL  
I thought we were going to look at the confrontation for episode three?

Mark shrugs.

MARK  
You can handle it.

Daniel looks startled.

DAVID  
You are going to let him write it on his own?

MARK  
Don't look so horrified, that's what we hire script writers for.

DANIEL  
This is a first.

DAVID  
If you are sure.

MARK  
What are you doing?

DAVID  
I'm going to see Peter.

MARK  
After more money?

DAVID  
I want to make sure we are still able to do our jobs.

DANIEL  
Give him our best

DAVID  
If that's all gentleman then I think we better get to work.

David leaves the office. Daniel grabs his things and Mark stands up and opens the folder.

DANIEL

Mark, thanks for letting me do this on my own.

Mark taps him on the shoulder.

MARK

No worries it's about time you did some things solo.

DANIEL

Is there anything specific you want in it?

MARK

No, I trust you.. You have the book; everything is in there.

DANIEL

So, nothing?

MARK

Nothing.

Mark goes off screen then hastily re-appears.

MARK

Remember to put notes down for the choreographers they will try and do it all themselves but work with what is in the book.

Daniel nods. Mark turns to leave but turns back.

MARK

Also don't forget about the line for the scar.

DANIEL

Got it.

MARK

And I want to see an advanced copy  
before it goes anywhere near David.

DANIEL

Alright.

MARK

Yeah you got this.

Mark leaves again as the camera focuses on Daniel as he  
looks nervously at the camera.

FADE OUT:

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FADE IN:

6. INT. SCREENWRITERS OFFICE- DAY.

Daniel walks into his office where LOUISE is sat at her desk waiting for him.

LOUISE:  
Good morning. Seen the news?

DANIEL  
Let's not go there.

Louise stands up and walks around to stand by Daniel.

LOUISE:  
What does Mark think?

DANIEL  
That it won't be an issue.

LOUISE:  
It shouldn't be. It's not Mark's fault that this stuff happens.

DANIEL  
He doesn't help though.

Louise sits down and smiles, pulling out a notebook.

LOUISE:  
Did David ask you to work on an alternative scene?

Daniel sits down at his desk and looks nervous.

DANIEL  
Yeah.

LOUISE:  
Where do we start?

DANIEL  
We don't.

Louise looks confused.

LOUISE:  
Why not?

DANIEL  
I don't know. It's Mark's scene. His favourite scene I think, I don't want to tread on his toes.

LOUISE:  
You are the writer you know.

DANIEL  
So are you, would you want to do it?

LOUISE:  
Change that scene? Hell no.

DANIEL  
Then you know what I mean.

Louise gives him a conceding shrug.

LOUISE:  
So what are we working on?

DANIEL  
(Distracted)  
The confrontation for episode three.

LOUISE:  
Mark wants us to write the confrontation?

DANIEL  
So, he says.

LOUISE:  
I will print the pages.

DANIEL  
Also print the two pages before.

LOUISE:  
Why?

DANIEL  
I want to work on the scene before  
first.

LOUISE:  
The build-up scene, there is a full day  
of work in that.

DANIEL  
We can't write the confrontation without  
the scene before.

LOUISE:  
We have the chance to work on a big  
scene. At Mark's request might I add,  
and you want to focus on the small scene  
before. A scene that Mark would have you  
writing anyway. Why not get this scene  
done before he comes and does it all  
himself anyway instead of wasting our  
time on a build-up scene.

DANIEL  
One, we are paid to write the build-up  
scenes and two, well Mark's having a  
rough time with this on the news. He  
might not admit it but he is, and I want  
to make sure this is perfect so we are  
going to work on the build-up, get our  
setting and our frame of mind in the  
right place so that when I hand it to  
him, he isn't going to want to change  
everything.

Louise stands up.

LOUISE:  
I'm going to print those pages.

DANIEL  
Can you print off Mark's notes for this scene as well please. He will kill me if I don't use them.

Louise shakes her head.

LOUISE:  
Whatever you say boss.

FADE OUT:

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FADE IN:

7. INT. RESTAURANT- DAY.

David goes and meets PETER in a restaurant, he sits down with the studio head and the waitress comes over. Silent conversation as David orders. Close up on the pair.

PETER

A salad is a bit light isn't it.

DAVID

Mark usually grabs us all something greasy when he comes back from the studio. I'm looking forward to it.

PETER

That stuff will kill you.

Peter stops as David looks down.

PETER

I'm sorry. How is Abi?

DAVID

She's responding well to the treatment; the nights are still tough, but I think she will get through it.

Peter nods.

PETER

How are things going with the show?

DAVID

We are getting there slowly. The last few pieces are fitting into place. Once we get the script finalised, we should be ready to start.

PETER

I've got studio heads chomping at the bit for this adaptation.

David looks up excitedly.

PETER (CONT.)

Not to mention the media hype that Mark's working on the project.

DAVID

Anyone made us an offer yet?

PETER

No. News keeps getting out about delays and casting troubles. Some people think we are dead in the water already.

DAVID

Daniel and Mark are putting together an amazing pilot and the books a best seller.

PETER

A point we could get across if we had a press officer.

DAVID

No-one wants the role.

PETER

Why?

DAVID

We keep making very public mistakes.

...

PETER

Someone told me about a line in the book about children or something. Is it going to be an issue?

DAVID

Mark doesn't think so

PETER

What about everyone else?

DAVID

They think it's going to be an issue.  
Only if it gets out though.

PETER

Mark might be loved for his sharp wit  
and smile by teenage girls, but the  
intellectuals hate him.

DAVID

That's what you get for being a genius.

PETER

It will get out and if it's in the show  
it will re-surface in six months' time.

DAVID

I know but try telling that to a writer.

PETER

Send him to me, I will have a talk with  
him.

DAVID

You might be the only one who can get  
into him.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

8. INT. STUDIO- DAY

Mark enters the studio and looks around, taking in the vast array of sets. He smiles at a worker before walking towards SARAH.

MARK

Sarah, the concept art just came through.

Sarah walks over and takes it from him.

SARAH

This is perfect. I will hand it over to our design team and see what they can come up with...

Mark nods and walks away from her towards the bar scene.

SARAH

What do you reckon?

Mark looks over to the bar and pulls out his notebook.

MARK

Yeah, it's great. Do you mind if I go and have a look?

SARAH

It's your set.

Mark walks into a bar set and starts making some notes in his notebook. ADAM, comes behind Mark.

ADAM

Mr Wilson.

Mark turns around and smiles.

MARK

Yeah?

ADAM

Can I get you anything?

MARK

A coffee would be great thanks. Adam, right?

ADAM

Yes sir.

MARK

Just a coffee, milk no sugar. Cheers.

Adam disappears and Mark continues to look at the set. Sarah walks back into frame.

SARAH

Like it?

Mark walks around the set.

MARK

It's perfect. How many days are we shooting in here?

SARAH

You are booked in for four days before we tear the space down for a bedroom.

Mark looks around again.

MARK

I can make it two. If we put a camera here and here.

Mark indicates to two points opposite each other.

MARK

The focal point of the scene stays just in this area. We can get both shots in

one hit.

SARAH

Would make our life easier on the day.

MARK

Speak to Josh, the camera man, he will get the rigs set up.

Mark looks over at another set being built. He swallows visibly.

MARK

Is that the school?

SARAH

Yeah, should have it finished in a couple of days.

MARK

Great... I'm just going to have a walk around.

Adam returns holding Mark's coffee.

ADAM

Mr Wilson, your coffee.

Mark takes the coffee and starts walking around. He notices Andrew sat at a desk and walks over to him.

MARK

Hey.

Andrew stands up and the two men hug.

MARK

What are you doing down here?

ANDREW

They are just sorting me out with wardrobe.

MARK

Already?

ANDREW

Well no one seems to be able to tell me when we are going to start shooting.

MARK

We are getting there.

ANDREW

Really?

MARK

Yeah, the pilots almost ready just finalising the last bit now. Trust me once we start it will fly by. These things take time... Apparently.

ANDREW

I know Mark this isn't my first show.

MARK

No but it is mine. Trust me if I knew it was going to be this much trouble, I would have took the teaching job and never been a writer.

ANDREW

I don't know kid. I think you have a talent for it. I haven't had the chance yet to thank you for this.

MARK

It's fine man really.

Mark leans on a table.

ANDREW  
How's David?

MARK  
Grouchy as ever, I don't know why he  
took this job but he's likely to give  
himself a heart attack.

ANDREW  
Probably wanted to get out the house.  
How is his wife?

MARK  
(Dismissively)  
Fine yeah.

Mark suddenly notices the screen.

MARK  
Horses?

ANDREW  
I'm not gambling I swear.

Mark stands up.

MARK  
Come on Andrew. You promised me when I  
got you this job that you wasn't going  
to be gambling anymore. I have enough  
problems I can't have you doi-

ANDREW  
Mark, I just stuck it on. I'm not  
gambling I swear.

MARK  
Good.

Awkward tension with pause.

MARK

Listen. Fancy getting a drink down the oyster tonight? Get out and forget all the nonsense going around.

ANDREW

Yeah sounds good.

MARK

Half seven then.

Mark drinks his coffee. Andrew looks at him.

ANDREW

This school thing?

MARK

It's not going to be an issue. Hey, I've got to get back. I've left Daniel writing a scene and if I don't stay with him, he may have gone off my notes but trust me, a couple of weeks and we can start shooting. This is the way to the top my friend. I assure you.

ANDREW

(Nodding)

I believe you.

Mark and Andrew shake hands before Mark walks away. Camera pans around to show Andrew as he stares at the screen fiddling with a coin in his pocket.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

9. INT. ELIZABETHS OFFICE- DAY.

ELIZABETH is at her desk, typing on her computer, when HARPER walks in.

HARPER

Someone just sent this through, said you would like to see it.

Elizabeth looks up at her and takes the document from Harper.

ELIZABETH

Who was it?

HARPER

Some guy. He said he used to work with you when you worked for that television company.

Elizabeth seems shocked

ELIZABETH

It wasn't Mark was it?

HARPER

The writer? No, some weird dude with glasses, said he worked on the social media team.

Elizabeth nods and begins reading the document.

HARPER

Wasn't Mark your boyfriend?

ELIZABETH

He was.

HARPER

What happened?

ELIZABETH  
Never date a genius.

HARPER  
Why not?

Elizabeth's eyes widen as she continues to read the paper.

HARPER  
What is it?

ELIZABETH  
Downstairs, are they covering the school?

HARPER  
Yeah.

ELIZABETH  
Any updates?

HARPER  
He's still there, they are trying to get demands to him. We have a source that believes they are going to storm the place.

ELIZABETH  
Oh Mark.

She slowly places down the piece of paper.

ELIZABETH (CONT.):  
We all told you not to do it.

HARPER  
What is it?

ELIZABETH  
It's the script for the pilot that is about to start shooting. The pilots

written by Mark, and it says that Incels deserve to die.

HARPER

A good time to be saying that. What are you going to do?

ELIZABETH

I'm going to write an article about it. Same old Mark Wilson taking out his personal vendetta on young men with problems. Sparking hatred and isolation for a group who spend all their lives feeling hatred and isolation.

HARPER

He always seems so good on the TV. Is he really like that?

Elizabeth smiles sadly.

ELIZABETH

No but it's what the media will want to hear.

Elizabeth continues to type on her computer as Harper walks out.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

10. INT. SCREENWRITERS OFFICE- DAY.

Daniel and Louise are working on the script.

DANIEL  
You got that down?

LOUISE:  
He got that scar from a Ukrainian woman  
when on detail.

Louise puts down her sheet of paper.

LOUISE (CONT.):  
I mean come on, is that really  
necessary?

DANIEL  
Mark wants it in the scene.

LOUISE:  
Of course he does.

Pause in dialogue while Daniel writes something down.

DANIEL  
The choreographers are not going to like  
me doing their work for them.

David walks in.

DAVID  
Just let them come up with their own  
thing, Mark won't notice anyway.

LOUISE:  
But he will notice the scar.

Daniel looks frustrated.

DAVID  
A scar?

DANIEL  
Its character development.

DAVID  
For who?

LOUISE:  
The gym instructor.

DAVID  
Really? He's in what, four scenes?

DANIEL  
Six actually.

DAVID  
Cut it.

DANIEL  
But Mark says.

DAVID  
The line will only be cut by the  
editors, save them the job and cut it  
now.

LOUISE:  
It would be my absolute pleasure.

DANIEL  
How's Peter?

DAVID  
Anxious for us to get started, is Mark  
back yet?

DANIEL

No?

DAVID

Call me when he is. I want you both in my office to look at alternative scenes. I want you in as well Louise. If you can print off the pilot, we can make the changes.

Focus on Daniel as he discreetly shakes his head at her.

DANIEL

Actually, David can I have a word about that?

Daniel stands up and follows David out to the hall, the camera cuts to them in the hallway.

DAVID

You don't want to write it?

DANIEL

I don't.

DAVID

We need an alternative scene. Peter has got studio heads after the rights to this pilot, but they are worried that we keep making mistakes. I'm worried about that too and I won't have this being another.

DANIEL

I get that, but I can't be the one to do it. I can't mess with Mark's legacy like that.

DAVID

We need this scene. I might be all smiley Mr nice guy.

DANIEL  
I swear none of us think that.

DAVID  
Get it done.

DANIEL  
I will look at some ideas, see if we can draw something from one of his other books but we won't use it unless it gets out to the public.

DAVID  
Okay.

DANIEL  
And we keep it away from Mark.

DAVID  
I want to see a plan on my desk by the end of the day.

The hallway door opens and Mark walks in.

MARK  
Hey guys.

DAVID  
How was Sarah?

MARK  
Yeah brilliant, she's got everything sorted and I ran into Andrew he's looking in real great shape.

DAVID  
That's good.

There is an awkward silence as Mark looks around.

MARK  
Everything all okay?

DAVID  
Everything is fine.

David turns towards Daniel.

DAVID  
I will see you at the end of the day.

David walks off passed Mark. Mark walks up to Daniel.

MARK  
What does he want to see you about?

DANIEL  
Nothing, just something that came up  
while you were away. Nothing you need to  
worry about.

MARK  
Good.

He pokes his head through the door.

MARK  
Hey Louise.

LOUISE:  
Mark.

MARK  
Aren't you a little ray of sunshine.

Louise gives him an evil smile.

LOUISE:  
It comes from reading this poor excuse  
for a book.

MARK

That poor excuse for a book is keeping you employed.

LOUISE:

And that's why I cry myself to sleep every night cradling a bottle of wine.

Mark laughs and steps back out towards Daniel.

MARK

I do like her, she will go far in this business. How is the scene coming along?

DANIEL

Yeah, we are getting there. You want to take a look?

MARK

Later. I just need to go over this bar scene quickly. I will pop in when I'm finished.

Mark goes into his office. Camera follows Daniel as he walks into the screen writer's office. He picks some sheets from his desk and hands them to Louise.

DANIEL

Can you finish these off for me?

LOUISE:

What are you doing?

Daniel looks down.

DANIEL

Alternative scenes.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

11. INT. MARK'S OFFICE- DAY.

Mark is sat down at his desk, the camera pans around him, slight focus on the news playing in the background. Annie walks in as he is watching the TV.

ANNIE

How was the studio?

Mark looks up.

MARK

Yeah, it all looks good.

ANNIE

Don't you want to go and help Daniel?

MARK

He has it covered.

ANNIE

Well what are you doing?

MARK

Watching the news.

ANNIE

The volume isn't on.

MARK

I'm reading the breaking news.

ANNIE

Okay then. Kevin called; he had a good meeting with Andrew.

Mark nods so Annie leaves the room. He puts the volume up on the TV.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O)

Multiple shots were fired and the suspect we believe has injured a police officer. When other officers stormed the school they had no choice but to shoot the suspect. We have just had it confirmed that he died at the scene.

Mark slams his fist into the table. Annie looks back in horrified.

MARK

God dammit.

GUEST SPEAKER (V.O):

It is unclear at this moment whether this is directly linked to the situation, but social media is reporting that the suspect in question is a part of the involuntarily celibate movement. I've been checking the suspects twitter and as with many in their community a lot of hatred is directed at his classmates, movie stars and unsurprisingly Mark Wilson.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O):

It should be noted that internationally acclaimed author Mark Wilson has been a constant commentator on the involuntarily celibate movement and has come under scrutiny for the way he has dealt with them in the past.

MARK

Shit.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O)

The best-selling author is known for writing about the Incel movement and has received some abuse for his work. Whether this is directly linked to the suspect in question it is at the moment too early to tell.

ANNIE  
They are blaming you.

MARK  
Yeah I heard that.

ANNIE  
Have they mentioned the scene yet?

Mark stands up.

ANNIE  
Where are you going?

MARK  
To go and see David.

Camera follows Mark out of the office as he walks up the stairs. Josh and TOM stop him.

JOSH:  
It's going to be an issue.

Mark stops and looks at them.

MARK  
What are you two even doing here? We don't start filming for another three weeks.

TOM:  
But you promised us work since November.

JOSH:  
So, we are going to take that work.

MARK  
So, we are just paying you to stand around.

TOM:  
Pretty much.

MARK  
Well instead of commenting on stuff way  
above your paygrade that you know  
nothing about, phone Sarah and talk to  
her about rigs for the bar scenes.

Mark continues to walk up the stairs.

FADE OUT:

(c) Jacob Bower 2019

FADE IN:

12. INT. OUTSIDE DAVID'S OFFICE- DAY.

Mark walks up the stairs and approaches David's office. Sophie is in their working.

MARK  
Is he in there?

SOPHIE  
He is in with Beth and Hugo.

MARK  
Can I go in?

SOPHIE  
Sure.

Mark walks forward and knocks on the door before slowly opening it.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - DAY.

David, Hugo and Beth are all sat talking. They stop and turn as Mark walks in.

MARK  
Sorry.

DAVID  
Its fine, we were just discussing who we should look at for the role of Rebecca.

MARK  
I thought Nikki Summers was going to do it?

HUGO  
Pulled out this morning.

Mark looks irate.

MARK

What? why wasn't I told about this?

BETH

Because I handle the casting choices  
Mark.

MARK

But I should be told when one of our  
actors drops out.

DAVID

She was never one of our actors she was  
a maybe.

MARK

Why weren't she tied down?

BETH

She got offered another role. One that  
might actually film.

MARK

Dammit. Does this stuff never end?

DAVID

Mark.

MARK

Sorry.

HUGO

We are thinking of going for Lisa  
Nichols.

MARK

We can't afford Lisa Nichols.

BETH

What do you think we should do then?

MARK

We are a small firm, with young writers. We can't buy a star we are going to have to build one. I will sit in with you during the casting, see if we can find someone special in the bunch.

DAVID

All right then guys. Beth look over the candidates for next week's auditions, see if there is anyone worth signalling out.

BETH

Got it.

Beth and Hugo stand up, they go to leave and Mark grabs Beth's arm to stop her.

MARK

Sorry for snapping. Weird day.

Beth nods and walks off. Mark closes the door.

DAVID

You know you really need to learn to hold your tongue, we delegate it out for a reason so that you don't have to worry about everything.

MARK

But I do worry about everything.

DAVID

Well what's worrying you now?

MARK

They've made the connection.

DAVID

To the show?

MARK

No just to me. Apparently, the suspect has tweeted about my work.

DAVID

You said it wasn't going to be an issue.

MARK

I know but if I get out on top of it. Go on TV, do a couple of shows. Get my side out.

DAVID

No. We need to keep low on this. You appear on TV and start acting knowledgeable about the Incels then one of them will post about your books and the whole thing will circle back to us.

There is a knock on the door. Annie steps in.

ANNIE

Sorry. Mark I am getting calls left right and centre. Every news outlet wants you to appear as a guest speaker on their show.

MARK

They must have something.

ANNIE

They haven't mentioned the show yet. They just want you.

DAVID

Of course they do. Mark you are the most knowledgeable person on their movement. No one knows it better than you.

MARK

But I shouldn't do the shows?

DAVID

Absolutely not if we want to keep this product in the clear.

MARK

We need to release a statement at least.

DAVID

Sure.

Mark turns towards Annie. She writes notes as he speaks.

MARK

Release this. I am deeply saddened and disturbed by the events occurring today but I wish not to speak or to speculate on the motives of the suspect in case I hinder the police operation or cause further damage in the event.

ANNIE

Is that all?

MARK

Yeah.

DAVID

Thank you Annie.

Annie leaves.

DAVID

Smart choice.

MARK

I always thought that you could just write what you want and people would see it as literature.

DAVID

You threw your hat into this ring. Everything you do will be scrutinised and sometimes it happens for the

strangest reasons.

MARK

I should have stuck to politics. Never should have even written those stupid books.

DAVID

But you did.

MARK

I never thought they would get anywhere. Now look what damage it's doing.

DAVID

You are a very talented man Mark and that shouldn't be wasted. You do brilliant work outside. Young men are reading more than ever and you are still young, you still have many years left to do even more good but life has a way of throwing curveballs at you. Trust me, I know.

MARK

Yeah of course.

Mark pauses and rubs at his stubble.

MARK

Hey I'm going out for a drink with Andrew later if you want...

DAVID

I can't I've got to take over from the nurses.

MARK

Yeah I should have guessed. Anyway, I better go see how Daniel is getting on.

DAVID

Keep your head up Mark.

Mark nods and leaves the room.

FADE OUT:

(c) Jacob Bower 2019

FADE IN:

13.INT. NEWS BULLPEN- DAY.

Elizabeth walks out of the office and goes to Harper's desk.

ELIZABETH  
Harper, anything more about the shooter?

HARPER  
Yeah the officers had no choice but to kill him. They are going to make a statement in a few minutes.

Elizabeth looks stressed.

HARPER  
What's up Liz?

Elizabeth walks back into her office and then comes out with a sheet of paper.

ELIZABETH  
It means I'm going to have to publish this.

Elizabeth hands over a sheet to Harper who immediately begins to read it. A look of childish delight coming over her face.

HARPER  
This is some juicy stuff.

Harper hands it back over to Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH  
I have to publish it, don't I?

HARPER  
Of course you do. That exclusive will have everyone reading your blogs.

ELIZABETH  
But I used to work for them.

HARPER  
And you left, and you work here now. You  
don't owe them anything.

ELIZABETH  
Maybe.

CUT TO:

INT. ELIZABETH'S OFFICE.

Elizabeth walks back into her office and sits at her  
desk, she opens the document on her laptop.

ELIZABETH  
Oh Mark, I did warn you

Elizabeth shrugs. Camera focuses on the laptop as she  
presses publish.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

14. INT. SCREENWRITERS OFFICE- DAY.

Daniel and Louise are acting out a scene. Louise is on the floor with Daniel stood over her. Mark walks in and stands in the doorway.

DANIEL

Get up now you lazy worm.

Louise looks up at him and begs.

LOUISE:

Please I can't.

MARK

Wow and I wondered why you two are writers.

Daniel and Louise look startled.

MARK (CONT.):

No please continue. Looking good down there Louise.

Mark smiles and walks in.

DANIEL

Everything all good?

MARK

Well they've found a link to this kid and me so that's a start. Is this the scene?

Mark walks over and grabs the sheets, his eyes flicker onto the school scene open on Daniels's desk.

MARK (CONT.):  
You printed off the school scene.

Daniel throws something else over them.

DANIEL  
Just reference.

Mark begins reading the script.

MARK  
This is good.

LOUISE:  
Really?

MARK  
Yeah, really good.

Mark suddenly begins writing notes on the sheet of paper. Daniel and Louise look at each other as he keeps on writing notes.

LOUISE:  
Mark, you said it was good.

MARK  
Oh it is... I just... Yeah its nothing. By the way, me and Andrew are going out to the oyster club tonight. If you fancy it?

DANIEL  
More networking.

MARK  
We've had a stressful day. You're invited too Louise.

LOUISE:  
Aren't you kind.

DANIEL  
I will see what Chloe has to say.

MARK  
Bring her.

DANIEL  
She won't like that.

MARK  
Seven thirty. We can go over these  
changes.

Mark leaves the room.

DANIEL  
Now where were we?

Daniel and Louise get back into their starting positions.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

15. INT. MARK'S OFFICE- DAY.

Mark walks into his office, where Annie is waiting.

MARK

You can go home now Annie we are done for the day.

ANNIE

What are you doing tonight?

MARK

Nothing.

ANNIE

I want to come with you.

MARK

Who told you?

ANNIE

Sophie.

MARK

I hate that girl. fine yeah, I'm going out.

ANNIE

Can I come?

MARK

You just want to ogle at Andrew.

ANNIE

I will do no such thing. I didn't even know he was going to be there.

MARK

You are a terrible liar.

ANNIE

So I can come?

MARK

It's a free country do what you like but please don't be weird around Andrew. Is there anything else?

ANNIE

I have some responses to your statement. Thought you might want to look them over.

MARK

Cheers. I will see you tonight.

ANNIE

Thank you Mark.

FADE OUT:

(c) Jacob Bower 2019

FADE IN:

16. INT. SCREENWRITERS OFFICE- DAY.

Camera focuses in on Daniel and Louise both sat at their desks, finishing work.

DANIEL  
Are we done?

Louise shuts her laptop.

LOUISE:  
I think so, we can start the confrontation first thing in the morning if you aren't too hungover.

DANIEL  
I don't get hungover.

LOUISE:  
Oh I forget, it's the food you eat at the end of the night.

Daniel stands up and grabs some sheets.

DANIEL  
See you tonight Louise.

Daniel leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S OFFICE.

Annie is working inside.

DANIEL  
Hi Annie.

Annie turns around and smiles.

DANIEL  
Mark gone?

ANNIE  
Yeah, he just left for home.

She points to the sheets in his hand.

ANNIE  
Is that some work for him?

Daniel tucks it away.

DANIEL  
No, it's just some stuff from David. I  
just wanted to talk to him, but I can  
see him later.

ANNIE  
Okay.

Daniel nods and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE DAVID'S OFFICE.

He knocks on the door. Sophie exits.

SOPHIE  
He's waiting for you.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE.

Daniel walks into David's office. David is sat at his  
desk reading some notes.

DAVID  
Do you have them?

Daniel hands David the sheets.

DANIEL

They aren't finished but there's three ideas for the scene.

DAVID

Mark seen them?

DANIEL

Not yet but I'm still hopeful he won't have to hear about it at all.

David skim reads through them all.

DAVID

These are good. Yeah, very good.

DAVID

End of the week I want these finished and don't hold back.

Camera focuses on Daniel as he looks nervous.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

17. INT. DAVID'S HOUSE- EVENING.

David walks in through his front door dropping his laptop case beside the sofa and going over to a downstairs bedroom. ANGELA steps out.

ANGELA:  
Hello Mr Williams.

DAVID  
Good evening Angela.

David walks over to her.

DAVID  
How has she been today?

ANGELA:  
She has slept most of it, but the new drugs seem to be working well.

DAVID  
Good. The pain?

ANGELA:  
Seems minimal, why?

DAVID  
She didn't sleep much last night, I wondered whether I had done something wrong.

The nurse gives him a smile.

ANGELA:  
It's the drugs Mr Andrews, they meddle with her sleeping pattern. She's been as bright as a peach since she woke up. I will put her some dinner on and then

head off.

DAVID  
Thank you Angela.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM.

David walks into the bedroom and goes to sit by the bed.  
ABI is laying within.

DAVID  
Evening beautiful.

ABI:  
You flatter me.

Abi winces in pain as she sits up.

ABI  
How was work?

DAVID  
Same as usual. Mark's upsetting  
everyone.

ABI  
I do love that boy. He makes me laugh. I  
just wish I will be alive to read his  
next book.

DAVID  
I will tell him to get a move on with it  
tomorrow. He won't be able to say no to  
you.

The nurse returns with a plate of food. She places it  
down on the table beside Abi and David.

ANGELA:  
Do you have everything you need Mrs  
Andrews?

ABI  
Yes, thank you.

Abi violently coughs, David reaches over and sticks a tissue in her face, wiping her off.

ANGELA:  
Are you okay Mr Andrews?

David gives a subtle nod.

DAVID  
Thank you Angela.

ANGELA:  
I will see you in the morning.

The nurse leaves, David picks up the food and places it down gently on Abi's lap.

DAVID  
Do you need me or?

ABI  
I can handle it.

As Abi starts eating, David grabs his phone and starts going over some notes.

ABI  
That thing on the news you saw this morning. Was it a problem?

DAVID  
I don't know yet. It depends how it all ends.

ABI  
Stick the news on, I could use the noise.

David flicks on the TV. He shares a smile with his wife before gently holding her hand and rubbing it. Camera fades.

FADE OUT:

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FADE IN:

18. INT. DANIEL'S LIVING ROOM- EVENING.

Daniel is eating dinner with CHLOE. The TV is playing in the background, but they seem to be un-aware of it. Daniel is enthusiastically telling a story.

DANIEL

And I have no idea what I'm meant to do because Mark is my mentor the guy whose teaching me everything and David is asking me to go behind his back with this scene.

CHLOE

What's the issue anyway?

DANIEL

Mark's books are about Incels and the spy trying to take them down.

CHLOE

I've read it.

DANIEL

Right yeah, sorry. Well that bit in the school. Right at the beginning. The main character makes this huge mistake at a school and the kid gets shot by police. Then he says something about it being just one more lonesome freak off the street.

CHLOE

I remember. He was criticised massively for not understanding or respecting the trauma some Incel's went through.

DANIEL

Exactly but it was what Mark was trying to show that the character didn't understand their cause. Some Incel gets killed just after the books released and everyone blames Mark for it. He weathers the storm and the next two books become a best seller. That scene is in the show with that line. That wouldn't be an issue but-

CHLOE

A kid today took a shotgun into his school and held them hostage.

DANIEL

And he just so happens to be an Incel. Then the police shoot him and...

CHLOE

One more lonesome freak off the street.

DANIEL

We have to be so careful and hope they don't realise that the same scene is played out in the show.

CHLOE

That's why you need the alternate scene.

DANIEL

I can't do much about it, now I have to sit with Mark tonight and pretend that I'm not working on crushing his legacy while we talk.

Chloe has a sad smile on her face.

CHLOE

Oh. That's why you wanted dinner early.

DANIEL

Yeah, I thought we would have a bite to eat and then head down to the oyster and

see everyone.

CHLOE  
We did that last week.

DANIEL  
Yeah well its been a stressful day I thought it might be nice to un-wind.

CHLOE  
We can do that here though Daniel. Sit down, watch TV, just us, like we used to.

DANIEL  
That was back then, I don't unwind like that anymore that was before.

CHLOE  
Before what? Before you got friends, I am the only person who has been with you through everything.

Daniel places his fork on the table.

DANIEL  
Please Chloe, don't be like this.

CHLOE  
You don't get it do you Dan? You don't see it.

DANIEL  
It's only for a couple.

CHLOE  
It's okay. You go with your temporary friends. I will stay here watch the soaps and unwind on my own. I will only bring your mood down.

DANIEL  
Are you sure?

CHLOE  
Positive.

Daniel stands up and kisses her on the cheek.

DANIEL  
I love you.

CHLOE  
Yeah.

FADE OUT:

(c) Jacob Bower 2019

FADE IN:

19. INT. BAR- NIGHT.

The camera pans around the bar, Daniel, Louise and Annie are talking on a table, it moves passed them towards the bar, where Andrew and Mark are talking.

MARK

Cheers.

Mark lifts his drink and nods in Andrew's direction. He takes a quick drink. Andrew takes his slowly.

ANDREW

Your statement was good.

MARK

It was hiding under the rug. What's the point in writing about these groups and not speaking about them?

ANDREW

The kid was killed, it's not worth putting your reputation on the line. There are enough people who hate you.

Mark laughs.

MARK

Thank you very much.

FAN walks towards them, holding a copy of Mark's book.

FAN:

Mr Wilson.

Mark turns and smiles at her.

MARK

Yeah?

FAN:  
Can you sign this for me?

Mark grabs the book and pulls out a pen from his pocket and begins to sign his name.

MARK  
Enjoy the read, best wishes, Mark  
Wilson.

Mark hands the book back.

FAN:  
Me and my friends.

The fan points to a table on the otherside of the bar.

FAN (CONT.):  
Are studying literature. It would be  
amazing if you could come over and have  
a chat.

Fan plays with her hair. Mark nods uncomfortably.

MARK  
Maybe later.

Fan smiles and walks away over to the table. As she disappears. Andrew stands up straighter.

ANDREW  
You can have my autograph if you want?

His shoulders drop.

ANDREW  
Since when did the world change and the  
writer become more popular than the  
actor.

MARK

People finally realise the genius.

ANDREW

They will remember me again. They won't have a choice. I will be appearing on their televisions every single day.

Mark places a hand on Andrew's shoulder.

MARK

The joys of press tours.

Mark takes hold of his drink and takes a long gulp from it.

MARK

For my first book Kevin had me doing TV and radio four times a day. The man's crazy for it. Thank God for social media, do it all in one.

ANDREW

Just get me behind a camera, that's the only place I feel comfortable.

Camera leaves them and pans back over to Daniel, Louise and Annie.

LOUISE:

I swear she was an absolute pig and she stank.

Louise and Annie laugh, Daniel looks uncomfortable.

ANNIE

I was with this guy called Adam once.

Annie scrunches up her nose.

LOUISE:  
Looks like you liked him.

ANNIE  
Oh he was great, Mark on the other hand.

LOUISE:  
Oh that must not have been easy.

ANNIE  
Was all fine until he walked in.

LOUISE:  
You mean while you were?

ANNIE  
Yeah full swing. In fairness we were in his room.

LOUISE:  
That's terrible.

ANNIE  
He never forgave us and did whatever he could to split us up, Adam wasn't bright.

DANIEL  
Mark's favourite person.

ANNIE  
Well Mark was too clever for him and when he found out that Adam was cheating, him and my other brother Tony went after him.

DANIEL  
I didn't know you have another brother.

Annie nods and takes a sip of his drink.

ANNIE

He is four years older than me, two years older than Mark.

DANIEL

Mark never mentions that.

ANNIE

Him and Mark don't talk much anymore. You see Tony was our parents' real child and they were like best friends as kids but when Mark began to make it, I think he felt isolated and some resentment about not being their real child or something. They just fell out.

LOUISE:

Weird.

Louise turns towards Daniel.

LOUISE:

What's your worse sex story?

DANIEL

I don't have one.

LOUISE:

Nothing at all?

DANIEL

Nothing.

ANNIE

What about any sex story? Lurid love affairs as a teenager?

DANIEL

I've only ever been with Chloe.

LOUISE:  
No way.

ANNIE  
That is so cute.

DANIEL  
She is my world. I would do anything for  
her.

FADE OUT:

(c) Jacob Bower 2019

FADE IN:

20. INT. DANIEL'S LIVING ROOM- NIGHT.

Chloe is sitting on the sofa on her own. She is flicking through the TV crying, checking her phone. Suddenly it starts to ring. She picks it up and answers.

CHLOE

Hi Amy...

She nods her head listening to someone on the other side.

CHLOE (CONT.):

I just don't know how to keep him around anymore.

...

CHLOE (CONT.):

He used to do anything for me, now, now I just feel like I'm not enough.

...

CHLOE (CONT.):

One day I am his world and now, his world has expanded and I don't think I can keep up. For all I know he is drinking with some Hollywood pretty blonde forgetting all about me. I will keep him no matter what.

Focus on Chloe as the camera fades.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

21. INT. BAR- NIGHT.

Immediate cut to Daniel, sat with Louise as she has a laughing fit.

LOUISE  
(LAUGHING):  
You wait he is going to kill you.

Louise laughs again.

LOUISE (CONT.):  
I can't wait to see it.

DANIEL  
You need to have less drink.

LOUISE:  
And you need to work on another scene.

Daniel checks his phone and tries to ring Chloe.

LOUISE:  
Who are you calling?

Daniel pauses and looks concerned.

DANIEL  
Chloe but she's not answering.

LOUISE:  
Don't worry about that just get me  
another drink. Genius writer man.

Daniel hangs up and gently stands up.

DANIEL  
I'm going to get another drink.

Camera follows him as he walks to the bar, he taps Mark

on the shoulder and carries on walking, camera crawls away from Daniel as it turns towards Annie and Peter talking at the bar.

ANNIE

I'm just saying you were amazing in Cooper Street.

ANDREW

I was only on it for a year.

ANNIE

(Dreamily)

Yeah but those were the best year.

Annie stands up straight. looking confused with herself.

ANDREW

You would have been what?

ANNIE

(giggling)

Thirteen... But you were really good.

Andrew looks confused.

ANDREW

I'm sorry, you are?

ANNIE

Oh I'm Annie, Mark's assistant.

ANDREW

You're his sister.

Mark suddenly appears and grabs his drink.

MARK

And the bane of my life. Annie.

Mark leans in close to Annie.

MARK

Didn't I tell you not to be weird around Andrew.

ANNIE

I'm not being weird.

ANDREW

No it's nice to meet a fan.

Annie's phone begins to ring she ignores it and stares at Andrew.

ANNIE

I am a fan.

Andrew points at Annie.

ANDREW

Your phones ringing.

ANNIE

Yeah it is.

Mark looks confused and turns towards Andrew before coming back to Annie.

MARK

Annie.

Mark taps Annie on the shoulder.

MARK (CONT.)

Your phones ringing.

Annie looks embarrassed.

ANNIE

Right. I should answer that.

Annie grabs her phone, gives a gentle wave and then walks off screen. Mark turns back towards Andrew.

MARK

I'm sorry about her. I did say not to be weird, but she's not quite used to this sort of company.

ANDREW

Trust me it's fine. Nice to know someone remembers me.

MARK

It's not that I'm worried about it but she's going to be your point person when you need to get to me and I can't have her you know. Making a fool of...

ANNIE (O.S)

Mark.

Annie comes back into shot, Mark ignores her with a wry smile.

ANNIE

Mark.

Mark waves her away.

MARK

Annie I'm sorry I won't embarrass you.

ANNIE

Mark it's out there.

Mark's face drops, he turns around and looks at Annie.

MARK

The show?

ANNIE

Yeah.

MARK

Okay.

Mark walks away from the bar.

ANNIE

What are we going to do?

MARK

Okay.

ANNIE

Mark, what do you want me to do?

Mark turns back around.

MARK

Andrew, I'm sorry but somethings come up.

Camera follows Mark as he walks over to the table. Annie and Andrew follow.

LOUISE:

What's up Daddio?

MARK

It's out.

Daniel looks shocked.

DANIEL

Oh god.

ANDREW

By out, you mean that line from the show?

DANIEL  
Whose got it?

Mark turns towards Annie.

MARK  
Annie?

ANNIE  
I don't know who first wrote it but it's everywhere now.

ANDREW  
Mark, you assured me it wasn't going to be an issue.

Mark grabs his stubble.

MARK  
We will sort it. Daniel, go home start working on some statements for the press.

DANIEL  
I'm a script writer.

MARK  
Until we have a press officer, you are everything.

Daniel nods. Mark turns towards Annie.

MARK  
Annie, I need you to talk to whoever you can. Pull me every copy of every story on this. I need to know how much they know.

ANNIE  
Sure thing.

Annie disappears.

MARK

Andrew, I need you to get onto any contact you have. Find out who first published the story.

ANDREW

You can handle it.

Andrew nods and then laughs as he walks away.

LOUISE:

What do you want me to do?

MARK

Go home and sober up.

LOUISE:

That it? I can help Daniel with comments.

MARK

Not today.

LOUISE:

Why not?

MARK

Because me and Daniel will be working on them in the morning.

LOUISE:

I can help.

Mark leans on the table.

MARK

I need you to do our work tomorrow.

Louise looks shocked.

MARK

Tomorrow is going to be the worse day of our careers. Mine and David's names are going to be dragged through the mud and I'm going to be blamed for that kid's death today. I need you to do the work that we can't tomorrow, Louise. I need you to step up.

LOUISE:

Now I know I'm drunk.

Mark turns away with his head in his hands.

DANIEL

I will get her home.

Camera turns to just focus on Mark. Annie returns and gives him a quick hug before stepping away.

ANNIE

I've made a start.

MARK

Email me when you get the chance. Do you need me to get you a taxi home?

ANNIE

I've got one coming and I got one for you as well. It will be here in about twenty minutes.

MARK

You are too good to me.

ANNIE

I know. Mine's here but I will email you when I get home.

MARK

I will see you in the morning. Be in early it's going to be a bad day.

Annie walks away but quickly turns back.

ANNIE  
It's not your fault Mark.

Mark smiles slightly.

MARK  
Yeah. I'm going to wake David.

Annie smiles solemnly and then walks away.

FADE OUT:

(c) Jacob Bower 2019

FADE IN:

22. INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM- NIGHT.

David is asleep in his lounge chair. He is woken by his phone ringing. He answers it.

DAVID (INTO PHONE):  
Yeah?

MARK (V.O):  
It's happened.

DAVID (INTO PHONE):  
The news have the line?

MARK (V.O):  
Yeah.

David puts his left hand to his face.

DAVID (INTO PHONE):  
How bad is it?

MARK (V.O):  
I'm working on that but I wouldn't put the news on if I was you. I've got Daniel working on some comments from us, I will work with him tomorrow.

DAVID (INTO PHONE):  
Do we know who first published it?

MARK (V.O):  
Andrew is going to find out for me if he can. \*pause\* David.

DAVID (INTO PHONE):  
Hmm.

MARK (V.O):  
We will get through it.

DAVID (INTO PHONE):  
You better hope so, if we don't then  
you're going to have to find a new job.

MARK (V.O):  
We will talk in the morning.

David hangs up and slams his fist into the nearby table.

FADE OUT:

(c) Jacob Bower 2019

FADE IN:

23. INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE- NIGHT.

MUSIC QUE.

Daniel is walking into his living room, moving the blanket over Chloe before moving over to his laptop and beginning to work on it.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

David is watching the news, while writing some notes down, camera pans round to show Abi fast asleep.

INT. MARKS STUDY. NIGHT.

Mark is also on his laptop, screen pans round to show that it is three am on his clock.

INT. ANDREW'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Andrew is sat in his chair as he drinks whiskey and bets on horse racing. Staking one hundred pounds on a race.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM

Scene cuts back to Mark as he is doing sit-ups. As he rises he takes a sharp in-take of breath and grabs his side. Mark stands up gingerly before grabbing his phone and checking it. Camera focuses on the time and shows it to be five Am. Mark stands up and walks off to grab himself another coffee.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

24. INT. OFFICE ENTRANCE AND STAIRWELL- DAY.

Mark enters. Annie is waiting for him.

ANNIE  
Morning.

Mark stops and stares at her.

MARK  
Morning. Were you waiting here for me?

ANNIE  
I was.

MARK  
Why?

ANNIE  
I was worried about you.

MARK  
Strange woman.

Mark carries on walking and Annie follows him as they walk through the building.

ANNIE  
You look terrible, have you slept?

MARK  
Not a wink.

ANNIE  
You really should sleep it's-

MARK  
Annie.

ANNIE

Yeah?

MARK

What do you have for me?

Annie hands over the documents that have been resting in her hands.

ANNIE

All the major papers are running the story about the kid. A lot of online stuff is falling directly onto you.

MARK

Any mention of us in the papers?

ANNIE

I've highlighted a few areas but I wanted you to look for yourself.

MARK

And it's all in here?

ANNIE

Yeah and I've sent some over to Beth, Daniel and Hugo to look at.

Mark and Annie both stop at the bottom of the stairs.

MARK

Are they all up there?

ANNIE

I think they are waiting for you.

MARK

Okay. Annie thank you for this.

ANNIE

Anything else you need?

MARK

Yeah can you get hold of Andrew and see if he knows anything else.

ANNIE

With pleasure.

Mark looks disgruntled.

MARK

Annie now's not the time for jokes.

ANNIE

I know, I will be good.

MARK

I will see you in a minute.

Annie leaves shot into Mark's office. Mark turns around but stops as Daniel calls.

DANIEL

Mark.

MARK

Yeah?

Mark and Daniel begin walking up the stairs together.

DANIEL

Have a good night?

MARK

It was brilliant watching myself get slated on the news again and again until dawn. Yours?

DANIEL

I've been ignoring phone calls most of the day. Chloe wants me to resign.

MARK

Maybe you should. I'm sure you can earn a good wage commenting on how terrible I am.

DANIEL

Come on Mark.

MARK

No I'm serious. They pay good wages for that.

DANIEL

I'm not going anywhere and I'm actually a little bit annoyed that you thought I would.

MARK

Sorry I'm tired. Have you got some comments?

DANIEL

Yeah and Louise is finishing off the confrontation now.

MARK

I will come and sit in with you after this. Can't bear to be around Annie, she is in mothering mode today.

They stop outside David's office where Sophie is busy working.

DANIEL

Hi Sophie.

SOPHIE

Hi guys.

DANIEL

Is he ready?

Sophie nods.

SOPHIE  
Hugo and Beth are already in there.

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE.DAY

Mark and Daniel enter the room. Camera follows them. David, Hugo and Beth are sitting at the desk. They stop their conversation as Mark and Daniel enter. Mark and Daniel take their seats. Mark immediately starts going over the papers.

DAVID  
Let's begin. Beth?

BETH  
From my point of view we are quite good. A few people have pulled out of casting but we've actually had more applications.

DANIEL  
Why is that?

BETH  
They think we are going to admonish Incels and some people want to be a part of that.

HUGO  
Well we aren't going to admonish them.

MARK  
After the trouble they've caused me, I think I will.

DAVID  
So we can go ahead with casting. See if we can ride the train of negative press on that front.

HUGO  
But our lead might not be so lucky.

DAVID  
What do you mean?

Hugo passes a sheet of paper to David.

HUGO  
Andrew isn't the most popular actor as  
it is. Seems a few papers have it in for  
him.

David passes the sheet over to Mark who scans it before  
handing it to Daniel.

DANIEL  
Ex-gambling addict bets on wrong show to  
boost career.

BETH  
Catchy headline.

HUGO  
On our front there is only one line  
about the show, the rest just goes into  
his past.

MARK  
It's going to kill him.

DAVID  
Do you think he might pull out?

MARK  
I doubt it. He's a good guy. He knows  
that not many people would give him a  
chance to get his career back on the up.  
Andrew's grateful.

DAVID

Good. Daniel. What do you have for me?  
It better be good news.

DANIEL

Well Mark set me to doing comments for  
the press, which is great but I don't  
know where we stand.

DAVID

We stand to protect the show.

DANIEL

I get that but do we support the line  
and therefore support the notion that  
all Incels and this kid are evil or do  
we deny the scene is there.

David looks at Mark.

DAVID

Can we deny it?

Mark shakes his head.

BETH

How did they even get the line?

MARK

They got it from us.

HUGO

Sorry?

DAVID

Back when we first started, we sent out  
scenes from the pilot to friends, ex  
staff, people like that. We wanted to  
get feedback on how the scenes were  
reading.

MARK

One of them would have given it to the press.

BETH

Fantastic.

DAVID

Our position?

MARK

I don't think we can take a side.

HUGO

Why?

MARK

Because the show doesn't take a side. This scene does but the show on the whole is a lot more sympathetic towards Incels than my book was. It's right in the middle and we could get that across if we had some of the pilot filmed but still, we would need a media manager to get it out there.

DAVID

Daniel. Work versions of this to your questions. It is alarming to us that this line is causing harm to some people. It is taken out of context and does not state the position of the show or its creators, on the people known as Incels. We will look into this matter and consider whether the line should be in the show.

DANIEL

Great.

MARK

It's good.

DAVID  
What about you?

MARK  
Well we aren't front page news.

BETH  
That's a start.

MARK  
The kid is though, in fact he's page two and three as well. The issue is we get a nice column on page three of most newspapers.

Mark stops as he reads one of the papers.

MARK (CONT.)  
In fact in some I get a whole page.

DAVID  
What's your play?

MARK  
I'm going to hang low. Make it seem like it's business as usual. I will help Daniel with the comments and oversee Louise with her work but I won't make any statement myself. Annie is looking into who published it first. If I find that out, I might find who gave them the script. See if they hate us and how many more things I've written, that they might be hiding in the closet.

DAVID  
Good work. People I want this day to run smoothly and will someone please get us closer to filming this pilot. I don't want us getting bogged down by this. Get to work.

Everyone stands up and leaves.

FADE OUT:

(c) Jacob Bower 2019

FADE IN:

25. INT. BETTING SHOP- DAY.

Andrew walks into a betting shop. OLD GUY is sitting at the counter reading the paper. The CLERK is behind his desk.

CLERK:

Morning Andrew. Didn't expect to see you here.

Andrew walks over to the desk and shrugs.

ANDREW

We've had a bit of trouble at work. I think I've finally worked out who has started this problem but that just going to cause more trouble. So I thought I would come for a walk and spend some my earnings from yesterday.

CLERK:

Not bad, going to spend it all on here I hope?

Andrew shakes his head.

ANDREW

Nah just wanted to stick a few quid on for the football tonight.

CLERK:

Only a couple of quid.

ANDREW

yeah just something to make it interesting, you know?

Andrew pays for his bet and receives the ticket. He is stopped before he can leave by old guy sat at a table.

OLD GUY:  
Hey superstar.

Andrew turns around to face him.

OLD GUY:  
Not very often I see your face in the  
news paper.

ANDREW  
What do you mean?

OLD GUY:  
Have a read.

Andrew grabs the paper and slowly reads it, his jaw  
tightening. Continues to read while speaking.

OLD GUY:  
Didn't bet right on that one. Says  
you're an addict.

CLERK:  
What?

ANDREW  
It's lies.

ANDREW  
(Whispers)  
Son of a bitch.

CLERK:  
I thought I read something about that a  
while ago.

ANDREW  
It's a lie. If I was an addict wouldn't  
I be on a register somewhere

CLERK:  
I suppose.

Andrew finishes reading and chucks the paper on the table. He walks back up to the desk.

ANDREW  
Hundred quid on the four at the next at Harlow.

CLERK:  
You sure?

ANDREW  
Just do it.

Andrew pays the clerk and receives the ticket. He walks outside and grabs his phone after a few seconds it's answered.

ANDREW (INTO PHONE)  
Is that Annie...?

ANDREW  
Great. Is Mark there...?

ANDREW  
Annie I know who first published the story.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

26. INT. SCREENWRITERS OFFICE. DAY.

Mark and Daniel are sat at Daniel's desk, looking over the laptop. Louise is sat at her desk writing.

LOUISE:

So let me get this straight. They got the line from us?

MARK

That's good... Yeah... You think you might want to use a word over two syllables at any point?

Daniel stops writing.

DANIEL

Louise asked you a question.

Mark spins in his chair to face her.

MARK

Yeah. Don't you remember? We gave the script to around thirty people for testing.

LOUISE:

No. What sort of people?

MARK

Friends. Family.

Mark stands up and walks over to a bowl of fruit and grabs some grapes.

MARK (CONT.)

Employees, ex-employees.

Daniel turns around in his chair also.

DANIEL  
Even Chloe's read it.

MARK  
Sure she's not the leak?

DANIEL  
No way.

LOUISE:  
You sure, she was pretty annoyed at you  
yesterday.

DANIEL  
She wouldn't leak it.

MARK  
Why?

DANIEL  
She never got through the whole show.  
She didn't like it.

MARK  
Dump her, get rid, right now.

LOUISE:  
So who do you think did leak it?

DANIEL  
My bet is that was that guy from human  
resources who didn't like you.

MARK  
Yeah he was weird.

LOUISE:  
Why didn't he like you?

MARK  
He was going out with Annie.

LOUISE:  
Now that makes sense.

MARK  
No he wasn't clever enough to leak it,  
whoever it was would have to have been  
close with a member of press.

LOUISE:  
Probably your ex-girlfriend.

Mark's face drops, Daniel smiles and points at Louise.

DANIEL  
There you go, she's solved it.

MARK  
No way. No way she wouldn't do it to me.

Annie walks in.

MARK  
Trust me Annie I'm fine you don't have  
to keep checking in on me.

ANNIE  
I know who published the first story.

MARK  
Who?

ANNIE  
Elizabeth.

Daniel's eyes widen and he looks nervously towards  
Louise. Mark is clearly stunned.

MARK  
Elizabeth who?

ANNIE

She wrote it on her blog. Mark, the papers and news outlets picked it up from there.

MARK

Elizabeth who?

ANNIE

You know who Mark.

Mark slams his fist on the table.

MARK

God dammit.

ANNIE

Calm down.

MARK

I'm going to kill her. I swear she just wants to ruin my career.

Mark grabs his things and goes to leave.

DANIEL

What are you going to do?

Mark stops in threshold of the door.

MARK

I'm going to pay that manipulative devil a visit and find out why she wants to ruin my life.

Mark storms out of the office. Annie stops by the door and shouts out to him.

ANNIE

Do you want me to make an appointment?

MARK (O.S):

NO!

Annie disappears after him, Louise leans over towards Daniel.

LOUISE:

I wish I could be a fly on that wall.

DANIEL

I don't.

They smile and return to their work.

FADE OUT:

(c) Jacob Bower 2019

FADE IN:

27. INT. NEWS BULLPEN- DAY.

Mark walks through an office, smiling at the office staff. He stops at Elizabeth's office door and knocks. A woman's voice beckons him in. Mark opens the door and steps in.

CUT TO:

INT. ELIZABETH'S OFFICE.

Elizabeth is sat behind her desk, working on her laptop and looks shocked when he walks in. Mark quickly shuts the door.

ELIZABETH

Mark?

Elizabeth shuts the laptop.

MARK

Do you just hate me that much?

ELIZABETH

Listen.

MARK

Did I do that much wrong to you?

ELIZABETH

Mark.

MARK

I mean really Liz, are you trying to tear me down still?

ELIZABETH

Enough Mark geez.

Mark rubs his cheeks.

ELIZABETH (CONT)

A Hello might be nice.

MARK

Really? After you published that rubbish?

ELIZABETH

It's news Mark, and I don't think it's right that you come into my office and start having a go at me for doing my job.

MARK

You had a job.

ELIZABETH

Now I have another.

MARK

Attacking me and my work.

ELIZABETH

You messed up Mark. I told you, David told you, the world told you. You can't have that line in the show. If you had a press officer, I'm sure they would have told you as well.

MARK

WE HAD ONE! YOU WERE OUR PRESS OFFICER. WE WERE ONE DAY AWAY FROM HAVING A NETWORK TAKE ON THE SHOW! THE PILOT WOULD HAVE BEEN DONE BY NOW AND WE WOULDN'T BE FLOUNDERING BUT YOU LEFT AND SINCE THEN ITS ALL GONE TO CRAP! ALL BECAUSE YOU LEFT!

Elizabeth stand up sharply.

ELIZABETH

Don't come and yell at me in my office.

Mark takes a breath.

MARK  
I'm sorry.

Elizabeth nods and walks around her desk to stand opposite Mark.

ELIZABETH  
Mark it's my job to report on these things, it's what I need to do to get paid.

MARK  
Why did you leave?

Elizabeth takes a step back.

ELIZABETH  
I'm not doing this.

MARK  
Come on Liz, why did you leave? It wasn't because you hated the show.

ELIZABETH  
No it wasn't.

MARK  
Did you hate me?

ELIZABETH  
No but I was starting to.

MARK  
Then why? When you first read the pilot script in that bar, you said it could be the best thing you've ever seen and now you're trying to destroy it.

ELIZABETH

That's my job.

MARK

Liz, we are floundering. I am struggling to hold these people together.

Mark turns around like he is about to leave but he quickly turns back to face her.

MARK (CONT.)

They look to me to be the one to save the show. David is the leader but everyday his wife's getting sicker, and it is tearing him a part. We don't have a star that can give us any weight, trust me Andrew is brilliant but he's not the person you bet on to keep a show like this together. Daniel, Louise, Annie they all work so hard, but they can't help me. We need you back.

Elizabeth laughs and goes and walks back behind her desk.

ELIZABETH

Your serious?

MARK

I need to be there as producer, I can't handle the press as well. I'm no good at it.

ELIZABETH

Now that's the biggest understatement you ever said.

Mark smiles slightly.

MARK

You like the show, you like David. Come back and help us get it right.

ELIZABETH  
I've got a job Mark.

MARK  
Not a very good one.

ELIZABETH  
I prefer it to working with you lot.

Mark points at her.

MARK  
(COYLY)  
I don't believe that.

Elizabeth nods.

MARK  
At least come and meet with David. Have  
a sit down with him and tell him how we  
get ourselves out of this mess.

Elizabeth looks around as she struggles with the  
decision.

ELIZABETH  
I will come and see David but only  
because I like him.

MARK  
Listen, I'm sorry I yelled that was  
wrong of me.

ELIZABETH  
You've had a hard week.

MARK  
I will see you later.

ELIZABETH  
I will see David later.

MARK

Yeah.

Mark turns around but stops as Elizabeth calls him.

ELIZABETH

Mark, you do know your sister is a media analyst right, she should be you're press manager.

Mark laughs.

MARK

Well Liz, I'm glad to know your sense of humour hasn't changed.

Mark walks opens the door and walks out of the office. Elizabeth smiles before opening the laptop and continuing to work.

FADE OUT:

(c) Jacob Bower 2019

FADE IN:

28. INT. OUTSIDE DAVID'S OFFICE- DAY.

Scene begins with Elizabeth walking into the office. She smiles at Hugo and Beth as she walks past, goes up to the stairs to see David. Camera focuses in on Daniel and Mark looking at her as she walks up. Camera switches back onto Elizabeth as she goes over to David's office.

SOPHIE  
Elizabeth. Hi.

Elizabeth steps in.

ELIZABETH  
Hi Sophie. I'm here to see David.

Sophie points to the door.

SOPHIE  
You can go in. Glad to know you are helping us out.

Elizabeth nods and walks in to David's office. He is reading the latest script.

ELIZABETH  
Hi David.

David puts down the paper and stands up.

DAVID  
Hi Liz.

David hugs Elizabeth. They separate.

DAVID  
You're looking well.

David goes back behind his desk.

ELIZABETH  
Thanks, How's Abi?

David points to the seat and sits down. Elizabeth follows him.

DAVID  
She is getting there.

Slight pause while Elizabeth shuffles in her seat.

DAVID  
We are in a bit of trouble Liz.

ELIZABETH  
I will say. That's why I want to help you

DAVID  
We need you back, I want to offer you a job.

ELIZABETH  
David, I've got a job, a job I love. Really I want you to succeed and I'm going to help you but that's it.

David nods and hands her the script he was reading.

ELIZABETH  
What's this?

DAVID  
Mark just sent it over, it's a scene where Andrew's character meets with a group of Incels. Go on have a read.

Elizabeth reads the script. A small smile spreading upon her lips.

DAVID

Some of his best work, don't you think?

ELIZABETH

It's very good. Gets the otherside out perfectly but if he's written this as a response to me leaking out the line, everyone will know it.

DAVID

That's right but he wrote it three weeks ago.

Elizabeth looks stunned.

DAVID

Mark's grown up Liz, we've all grown up. This isn't some playground nonsense because Mark's Incel brother used to beat him and tried to kiss all of his girlfriends. We aren't trying to hurt these people but no one believes that because of stories like what you've written.

ELIZABETH

David listen.

DAVID

No you listen Liz.

Elizabeth seems shocked.

DAVID (CONT.)

This show will change things for people who feel lost and helpless, it will help turn a man whose lost everything through addiction into a top flight actor and may be able to create some real change. You have a chance right now to become a part of that. You have a chance to help create something magnificent and wasn't that the reason you got into media journalism. To report on Magnificent things. Elizabeth it's time to step up

and come back into the big league.

Camera focuses on Elizabeth camera fades.

INT. STAIRWELL.

David is walking Elizabeth out of his office. She shakes David's hand and walks down the stairs, ignoring Mark as she passes. Mark looks up at David who nods his head. Camera focuses in on Mark, who smiles and turns back around towards his office. He walks over to an open door and peers in. Daniel and Lousie look up at him. He signals an Okay with his fingers. Daniel and Louise make victory gestures. Mark does a little skip walks into his office. Annie is waiting for him.

INT. MARK'S OFFICE..

MARK

Okay then Annie, what's the next job.

Camera zooms out as Annie walks up to Mark, her voice fading.

ANNIE

Sarah wants you to come down and check out the school quickly and the One Show want you on to discuss how you came into this company.

FADE OUT: