

NIGHTSHIFT

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. BUSINESS PARK - NIGHT

A business park on the outskirts of town. Tall modern buildings of glass and concrete. Token green patches interrupt the greyness. Lights are all off.

A car pulls in, headlights slicing the darkness of the deserted parking lot.

In the car is JOE, 30. He parks. He looks at one of the buildings, checks his watch. He's dressed in a dark blue jumper and pants. He picks up a cap from the passenger seat, puts it on his head - completing the security guard outfit. He grabs a satchel bag from the back seat, gets out.

He walks to the building.

He presses a buzzer. A few seconds later MATT, 50, another security guard, comes to the door and lets him in.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

Matt leads Joe into the reception area where there is a security desk. On the desk is a torch, a phone, a radio, a newspaper, and a monitor showing CCTV footage from all around the building, broken up into 9 panels.

Matt, in a hurry, grabs his coat from the back of a chair.

MATT

I'm on the morning shift so I'll see you at eight. I'll leave you to it then.

Matt makes his way out.

JOE

Is there anything I need to know?

Matt stops, looks him over, makes a show of thinking about something.

MATT

(Sarcastic)

How to win friends and influence people?

Joe gives a pained smile at the crack. Matt flashes a wry grin.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

You got your training, didn't you?

JOE

Yeah.

MATT

Then you're as much an expert as I am.

Matt leaves.

Joe hears the door closing behind him. He looks around, taking in his surroundings, and puts his bag under the desk.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Joe does his rounds, torch in hand. He turns on and off the main lights as he navigates the corridors, using the torch to guide him to the next light-switch.

He opens doors and shines the torch into different rooms, the light falling over open-plan grids of cubicles, over executive offices, boardrooms, corporate washrooms, over computers, desks, phones, photocopiers, whiteboards, leather-backed swivel chairs. It's upscale, corporate with a capital C - no shortage of money here.

He ascends the stairs, comes to the top floor, repeats his process, moving down the corridors, opening each door.

He arrives at a door, tries the handle. It's locked. He looks surprised momentarily, then moves on.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

Joe returns to his desk, humming a tune idly. He sits down, glances at the monitor - 9 panes of footage, each with empty corridors, empty rooms. The panes change in rotation. All unremarkable shots of the empty building he's just searched.

He swivels on his chair. Bored already.

He reaches down for his bag under the desk. Something grabs his attention. He reaches in, takes out a baseball bat. He holds it aloft like a batter, examining it. He gives a practice swing, hearing it swish through the air.

He puts it back, pulls up his own bag from under the desk, and takes out a laptop.

INT. RECPEPTION AREA - NIGHT - LATER

Joe types onn the laptop. After a few seconds he sits back, looks at his work.

ANGLE SHIFTS

to see the word document he's been working on:

FADE IN:

EXT. PENTAGON - DAY

.....followed by a long blank page. Joe stares at it numbly, his mind as blank as the page.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT - LATER

Joe plays hurling, using the baseball bat as a hurl and rolled up ball of newspaper page as a sliotar.

He eyes up a makeshift goal - an upturned bin on top of his desk. He throws the sliotar, swings the bat, connecting. He watches the sliotar sail by the bin.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT - LATER

Joe is sitting staring at the laptop.

We angle in on the word document again.

FADE IN:

EXT. PENTAGON - DAY

.....followed by a long blank page.

No progress. Joe sighs, defeated.

He minimizes the word document. Behind it a browser window is open. Tantalising colourful semi-clad women vie for his attention, a flashing button tempts 'Enter site'.

Joe scrutinises the onscreen proposition.

A pop-up window appears on the bottom of the screen with the message:

Battery running low

(CONTINUED)

Joe reaches into his bag, takes out a cable and plug. He looks around for the best place to plug it in. His eyes pass over the CCTV monitor.

He freezes. He drops the cable, scrambles towards the monitor.

ONSCREEN

On one of the 9 panes, a view looking down a long corridor. At the far end of the corridor, a figure with their back to the camera, walking away from it. A woman with a black skirt and white blouse, and long hair. She seems to stumble every second step, and he notices she is wearing one high-heel shoe and has the other foot bare. She disappears around the corner.

BACK TO JOE

He looks astonished. After a few seconds he snaps out of it.

JOE
(To himself)
Bit late to be working, miss.

He takes up the torch and walks out from behind his desk.

He hesitates for a moment, looks back towards his desk.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

He walks down the corridor. He has the baseball bat hanging loosely by his side, the torch in his other hand.

JOE
Hello? Anybody in here?

His voice echoes down the corridor. No reply comes.

He walks on, a little more tense now he hasn't got a response. His fingers grip the bat a little tighter.

He walks down the corridor, opens up each door, shines his torch into each room. Nothing out of place in any of them.

He comes to the room that was locked before. He walks past it.

He hears a CLACKING SOUND - like a heel walking across a floor - come from inside it.

He stops, turns and looks back at the door.

(CONTINUED)

The clacking sound disappears.

He walks back to the door, tries the handle. It's open.

He hesitates a second, then pushes the door open and shines the light inside.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The light falls over a small open-plan floor space, room for about 12 cubicles. It looks empty. He sees one of the windows is open. The wind is gently rocking a venetian blind back and forth, making a CLACKING sound against another window.

He steps into the room, scanning it carefully. He reaches for the light-switch, finds it, illuminates the room.

Satisfied it's empty, he moves over to the window.

He looks out the window. Eight stories below is the pavement. The business park is still dark and quiet.

He ducks his head back in, closes the window. Just as he turns to go he notices something under one of the nearby desks. He goes over, picks it up.

A HIGH-HEELED SHOE. The heel is broken, hanging loosely off the sole.

He looks around to see the other shoe, but there is none.

He places it back where he found it, goes to the door. He flicks the light off, closes the door.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

He walks down the long corridor, approaching the CCTV camera which captured the figure. He stares up at it, almost questioning it. He stands there a few moments, staring at the camera, scratching his head.

He hears a CLACK-CLACK of a heel on floor behind him. He swings around. He looks up the empty corridor. No sound anymore. Just silence.

He turns back, looks up at the camera, stares at it for a few moments, thinking.

He rubs his neck, checks his watch. He shrugs, moves away from the camera.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

He arrives back at the reception area. He slumps down in the chair. He looks at his laptop.

The Word document stares back at him.

FADE IN:

EXT. PENTAGON - DAY

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Joe stares at the document in disbelief.

The laptop screen goes black, unnerving him for as second.
Battery dead.

He looks around.

JOE

Who's in here? Who the fuck's
messing with me?

Silence.

He looks at the CCTV monitor again. He goes over to it.

He expands one of the panes - the footage showing the
reception desk. He rewinds it, stops.

He fast forwards slowly from the moment where he left the
desk.

ONSCREEN

(CONTINUED)

We see the empty desk. A few moments later he arrives back in fast-forward and sits down before the lap.

BACK TO JOE

He pauses the footage, takes a breather. Nobody came to the desk. Nobody could have wrote that.

He plugs in his laptop, starts it up. He opens the word document.

FADE IN:

EXT. PENTAGON - DAY

.....followed by a long blank page. He stares in disbelief.

He scratches his head.

He goes back over to the CCTV monitor. He expands one of the screens - an empty corridor. He rewinds the footage until he sees himself as a backwards blur, stops and plays it.

ONSCREEN

Footage of Joe moving along a corridor checking rooms. Joe passes out of the line of sight.

BACK TO JOE

He selects another camera view, does the same.

ONSCREEN

Footage of himself doing the rounds. Just him moseying around. No sign of anyone else.

BACK TO JOE

He picks another camera view, does the same.

ONSCREEN

It's the footage of himself in the long corridor. He arrives at the camera and looks up at it, scratches his head.

BACK TO JOE

He watches his past self, looking out at him from the screen.

ONSCREEN

At the far end of the corridor behind Joe, the woman turns the corner. She walks down the long corridor towards him.

(CONTINUED)

BACK TO JOE

His eyes balloon in shock.

ONSCREEN

She walks unevenly on one heel. Her long hair is matted down over her face, making her features impossible to make out. She's wearing the black skirt, white blouse pulled out untidily in the front.

Joe turns around and looks up the empty corridor. He looks right at her approaching him, oblivious to her, then turns back and stare up at the camera. The woman keeps walking towards him.

Joe just stares up at the camera. The woman gets nearer, just a few feet from him now. Joe rubs his neck, checks his watch. She reaches an arm out. Almost touching him. Joe turns to his side and walks out of frame.

BACK TO JOE

Joe's face is pale with dread. He steps back, recoiling from the CCTV monitor.

He swings around suddenly, terrified for a second she is behind him.

Nothing. He's alone in the reception area.

He picks up the baseball bat, clenches its handle tight with white knuckles, backs into the wall so no-one can surprise him.

Eerie silence in the building.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT - LATER

Joe sits staring apprehensively at the monitor. After a few moments, he gets up and goes over to it. He rewinds the footage he's just watched and plays it again.

ONSCREEN

The long empty corridor. Joe walks down it, towards the camera. He arrives below the camera, looks up at it, scratches his head. He turns, looks up the long corridor, then turns back to the camera. He stares at it for a few moments, rubs his neck, checks his watch, then moves out of frame.

BACK TO JOE

(CONTINUED)

Joe can't believe it. He rewinds again. The same footage plays - himself only, no sign of the woman.

He rubs his eyes. He can't be seeing things. Can he?

He slumps down, confused.

After a few moments he looks up at the ceiling.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Joe approaches the room apprehensively. He has a torch and baseball bat. He arrives at the door, opens it. It swings open into the dark room. He shines his torch in.

The window is open.

His torch beam fades. He stands at the threshold in darkness, scared.

He pats for the lightswitch on the wall, finds it, flicks it.

The light switches on for a nanosecond just before the bulb blows.

Back in darkness, Joe stands, hesitant to move in. He stares at the open window.

After a few moments he closes the door, retreats.

EXT. BUSINESS PARK - MORNING

Matt walks up to the door of the building, newspaper tucked under his arm. He types in a code on the keypad and pushes the door in.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - MORNING

He comes into the reception area. He sees Joe sitting with his chair pushed back into the corner - where no-one can creep up on him. The baseball bat is propped by the wall. Joe's face is sheet white.

MATT

Didn't have to use that, I hope.

Joe looks puzzled, then realises Matt is referring to the baseball bat.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

No.

MATT

I better put that away. Don't want
to scare the office drones.

Matt collects the bat and returns it to its resting place.
Joe grabs his jacket from the back of a chair, puts it on.

MATT

Everything go okay last night?

Joe stares at the monitor. He seems to be about to say
something, then thinks better of it.

JOE

Yeah... fine.

He grabs his bag, which his laptop is already packed up in,
and walks to the door. He stops by the desk as Matt opens
his newspaper.

JOE

What do they actually do here?

MATT

(head in newspaper)
Don't sweat about what they do
here. It's above our pay grade.

JOE

Seriously.

Matt looks around, makes sure no-one else is coming in, then
leans over towards Joe, keeping his voice low. Joe leans in
to hear him.

MATT

They prey on misfortune.

Joe looks puzzled.

MATT

Vulture funds. Came in after the
crash. Bought up everything for
nothing. You going back to a flat
now for a bit of kip, yeah?

Joe nods.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

You're probably paying your rent to them. Don't even know it.

(beat)

Anyway, like I say, don't worry about it. One thing about this job: you don't have to take your work home with you.

Matt goes back to his newspaper. Joe leaves.

EXT. BUSINESS PARK - MORNING

Joe walks down the pavement towards his car.

He stops suddenly, looks up. He sees he's standing directly beneath the window. He's in the exact spot he was looking down on. He examines the pavement where he's standing.

He hears the CLACK-CLACK of heels on pavement.

He swings around and looks behind him.

Nobody there. He moves on quickly.

EXT./INT. CAR - MORNING

Joe gets into his car. He takes out his mobile, dials a number, puts it to his ear.

JOE

Can I speak to Brian please?

(beat)

Can you tell him Joe Riordan called?

(beat)

It's about the job. I was just wondering if there was anything else available? If you could get him to call me back that would be great.

(beat)

Okay, thanks.

He hangs up. He puts the key in the ignition. He checks the back seat in the rearview mirror.

Empty.

He starts the engine, prepares to drive off, hesitates.

He turns around and checks the back seat.

Empty.

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

Joe drives along a road on the outskirts of town. It's busy, morning commuter traffic flowing. As he drives he can't stop glancing into the rearview mirror - looking into the back seat. Checking behind him.

He can't help it. He keeps on glancing in the mirror, checking for her, like he can't be complacent for a second.

He opens the glove compartment to get something. His eyes are drawn to the open compartment.

A woman's high-heeled shoe rests inside it. The same shoe from the office.

Joe is mesmerised at the sight, can't take his eyes off it. Suddenly the car radio comes to life in a burst of static.

RADIO

Fzzzzzz.....

Joe switches it off, returning the car to silence.

His mobile rings. He takes it out, answers it.

JOE

(into phone)

Brian?

A beat. no answer.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

(whispering)

Welcome.

The voice doesn't come from his phone. He turns to his side, sees HER in the passenger seat beside him.

Her black hair is matted to her face, obscuring it. It's matted with dried blood, like it impacted hard against something.

She opens her mouth, a rampart of broken teeth, and lunges towards him.

BLACKOUT

We hear the sound of tyres screeching, followed by a series of bangs.

(CONTINUED)

END BLACKOUT

CLOSE ON

Joe's hand lies outstretched on the road. Somebody places a blanket over it, covering his body.

INT. RECPEPTION AREA - MORNING

Matt reads the newspaper while listening to the radio.

RADIO NEWSREADER

"News has just come in about a crash on the main Tullamore-Edenderry road. Initial reports are that there is one fatality. We'll keep you informed about that story as we hear more. Now here is Andy with your sports update fzzzzzzz..."

The radio signal turns to static. Matt reaches across, moves the dial to try to get the signal back, only gets static. He switches it off.

He returns to his newspaper. He glances at the CCTV monitor. He does a double-take. Something's caught his eye. He goes over to the monitor, inspects it.

In the pane showing the long corridor, he sees two figures with their backs to the camera moving away from it up the corridor, towards the corner. They turn the corner.

Matt operates the buttons, expands the pane to full-screen, rewinds the footage.

He presses Play, watches intently.

The two figures walk down the corridor. Out front is a woman - black skirt, white blouse, long hair. She walks confidently and smoothly in her high heels, on both feet. She holds the hand of a male figure, dressed in dark clothes, leading him to the corner. The man has his head turned back towards the camera.

Something about the male figure unnerves Matt.

He pauses the footage. He zooms in on the figures.

In increments the figures get bigger as the camera zooms closer to them, defining them more.

(CONTINUED)

Eventually the camera closes in on the male figure, zooming in until it focuses clearly on his face.

Matt gasps in recognition.

We focus in finally on the face.

Joe's face.

He's pale with dread, his mouth curved in a grim downturn, his terrified eyes pleading for a rescue he knows isn't coming.

CUT TO BLACK