

I C U

by

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INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

A completely deserted staircase. A sign reads:

Be cool - you're on camera!

In the corner of the stairwell, a video surveillance camera stares down benignly.

A bell rings, there's a SOUND of surging energy about to erupt and then...

Classroom doors burst open, kids flying out. The end of the day. We're caught in the rush following the exodus down the stairs and out a set of double steel doors.

EXT. STREET- CITY HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Students pour out. Some board yellow school buses, others disperse into small packs spreading in different directions.

MARK, 17, a good looking kid hidden within a nerdy shy exterior, walks out alone. He's looking for something, we're not sure what.

Mark's POV: a quick scan of the intersection as he comes up to it. He spots FRANNIE, 17, like him a loner, stylish somehow, in thrift store chic, as she crosses to the opposite side of the street. A brief moment of recognition on her part. Mark's not sure if it's positive or negative but at least she noticed. He averts her look, then turns slowly back to see which way she's going.

His POV: Frannie heads down the street.

Suddenly, blackness...

SOUNDS OF howling and hooting over BLACK.

MARK

What the hell...?

Three WISE-GUY KIDS surround Mark wrapping a sweaty gym towel around his head. He struggles to pull it off as girls GIGGLE in the background. Mark gets turned around, trips and falls into a trash can which ramps up the laughter.

Mark finally gets the towel off only to find one of the wise-guy kids offering a hand up. He doesn't bite. He pulls himself up. The kids laugh and head off- probably to torture someone else.

Mark wipes the crud from his jacket. It leaves a nasty stain.

MARK (CONT'D)

Damn...

Then he remembers what he was doing and looks around quickly trying to find Frannie.

A quick series of shots - plenty of people but not her. He shakes his head, picks up his book bag and starts to walk away.

BEEP. His phone goes off indicating a text message:

Byby 4 now towel boy.

A slight smile crosses his face - maybe it was worth it.

EXT. CITY STREET - LATER

Mark meanders down a busy street. The work day's ending and people are on the move, making their way home. Mark looks up at a sign on a lamp post:

Police Security Area:

You are under surveillance

Mark spots the cameras standing guard over the street. He stares up at one.

SHOT: Camera's POV of Mark looking up and directly into it.

He moves along looking in store windows and spot checking people as they hurry past. He settles on a middle-aged BUSINESSMAN exiting an office building as he buttons his coat. Mark snaps a quick photo of the man with his cell. The chase is on.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

The man walks briskly forcing Mark to step it up just to keep pace. The man turns a corner --- Mark follows, snapping another picture from behind.

The man enters a bank and steps up to an ATM machine. Mark pauses in the bank window before noting the surveillance camera mounted over the ATM. He turns away and steps out of camera view.

SHOT: The bank camera's POV as Mark turns and leaves the frame.

EXT. CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Mark watches as the man stops at a newsstand and scans the covers of various magazines. Mark, walks past him, casually stopping to look in an electronics store window.

There, on a big plasma screen connected to a camera that peers out at the street.

On the screen: is a wide view of Mark, the street behind him the newsstand and the man.

CLICK. Mark snaps a picture of the screen.

We see the photo that results - an interesting inverted tight shot of our BUSINESSMAN buying his newspaper for the ride home.

CLICK: the sound of another photo being taken - we're not sure where or of what...

In the store television: the man walks away passing Mark and swings around a corner. Mark waits a beat, turns and follows.

We pull back to a wide high angle shot as Mark dashes after him. The camera hangs there a moment, panning left to follow, then zooming in, the focus slightly behind, as if it's lost it's target then found it again. The view is odd and somewhat disorienting.

ECU: Mark's face.

Mark sees his target boarding a city bus and races to catch up.

INT. CITY BUS - CONTINUOUS

In his rush he climbs on just as the door closes and inadvertently bumps the Man. So much for being discreet.

MARK

Sorry...

The man nods a pleasant "ok", looking Mark dead in the face. Mark's shoulders slump. Another chase ruined, Mark tries to play it off by looking around, a little too casual. He spots a sign:

You may be under video surveillance.

He cranks his head, "May"?

The bus slugs through traffic as Mark hits the "Request Stop" button.

INT. MARK'S ROOM - NIGHT

CU: a computer screen image of MRS. BIRNBAUM preparing dinner. Stocky, in her 70's and totally oblivious to the fact that she's being watched.

The edges of the screen show a set of faded kitchen curtains dotted with teapots and a window box indicating that we are looking through her window.

EXT. MARK'S ROOM, WINDOW - SAME TIME

The shade to Mark's window is pulled all the way down. A small surveillance camera, rigged outside in the upper corner of the window takes in the scene in the rear courtyard. The camera starts to move as we hear:

A subtle electronic WHIRRING sound.

Back to the computer screen: The image becomes a dark blur of red brick, moving right until it settles on another window: this time it's MR. BIRNBAUM, in his boxers, sipping a Budweiser and watching the evening news.

Mark sits at his desk. He frowns at the image- not what he's looking for.

MARK

Hmmm... you should be home by  
now...

He hits the joystick.

WHIRRRR... the camera moves upward and over past several dark windows. It hovers on one for a moment - nothing going on. It starts to move away when the light in the room comes on. The camera quickly readjusts to find the door opening...

WHIRRRR... It's Frannie, dressed the same as we last saw her on the street. She comes in and drops a pile of library books on a desk. She takes off her coat, checks her watch and starts to unbutton her shirt. The camera zooms in ever so slightly. Greater anticipation...

A BEEP - another text. Mark tries to keep one eye on Frannie while glancing down at the phone. He sees:

What R U Lookn @?

Jolted, he drops the phone and looks at the screen as Frannie, stops unbuttoning and hurls her cell phone onto the bed. She charges straight to the window- seemingly staring right at him- and pulls the curtain closed.

Mark stares down at the phone, then to his window.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. MARK'S ROOM - DAYBREAK

CU of the digital clock reading 6:03.

He tosses and turns. Gets up, goes to the window.

Daylight creeps into the courtyard. Peeking out he sees Frannie's window -closed, curtain drawn.

He lies back down - eyes wide open.

Finally, he gets up and starts to get dressed.

EXT. STREET - EARLY MORNING

A garbage truck hauls away trash. Mark exits his building, checking his watch- 6:38.

He comes around the corner and looks at the entrance to Frannie's building. He steps down into a stairwell leading to the basement of the building. He waits.

A little while later, Frannie exits the building walking quickly away from Mark's surveillance perch. Mark steps out -

CLICK - he takes a picture of her with his cell.

She sweeps around a corner. He breaks into a slight run to catch up and as he carefully peers round the corner...

SSSSSSSSST a cloud of spray hits him in the eyes and mouth - Mace. He stops dead in his tracks, coughing and wheezing. Frannie kicks him in the groin and he hits the sidewalk hard.

FRANNIE

You disgusting little creep! Stop following me!!

MARK

... I'm sorry... I wanted to...

FRANNIE

Leave me alone! And stop sending me those pictures!!

MARK

What? What pictures? I didn't send you any pictures.

FRANNIE

Liar!

She pulls out her cell, hits a key and shows him: A series of photos of her through her bedroom window, on the street, at lunch... Mark wipes his eyes and looks at them.

MARK

I... I didn't take...

FRANNIE

Stop lying and leave me alone before I go to the cops.

She yanks the phone out of Mark's hand and starts to walk away but is stopped by a BEEP - a text.

At the same moment Mark's phone also BEEPS. He squints at the phone and his jaw drops.

On his phone is a picture of Frannie macing him - just moments ago.

Frannie walks back showing him her phone- the same picture.

The messages along with the pix are the same:

I C U

Mark and Frannie look at each other for a beat, then turn their heads searching for the photographer.

A camera shutter SOUND freezes the two teenagers in the frame.