

**TRUST**

by

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1

EXT. FOOTBRIDGE - NIGHT

A cold, wet and miserable night. Sleet falling against a single streetlight, turning to slush on the footbridge.

Particles of sleet on the handrail, melting, dripping, blown outwards, falling towards a fast running river far below.

Unseen hurried footsteps scrunching through the slush.

An upright suspension post momentarily interrupts the handrail, which continues up to...

A pair of polished black leather brogues, fidgeting on the slippery rail.

The footsteps slow.

Pinstripe suit trousers, three quarter length coat, scarf around the neck of NIGEL MORRISON.

The footsteps stop.

Standing facing Nigel is the GOOD SAMARITAN, watching Nigel standing on the handrail.

Nigel grips the upright bridge support, a black leather glove on his hand.

He glances over his shoulder at the Good Samaritan, turning as far as his precarious position allows.

Nigel's ghostly pale, hollow expression, his eyes red. A man on the edge, no way out.

He turns back towards the river, lowers his head, looking down.

NIGEL (V.O.)

(nervous laugh)

Looks cold. I'm not a good swimmer...

(half turns towards the Good Samaritan)

How long do you think it'll take for me to die?

Nigel attempts a smile, shakes his head, turns back.

Nigel's POV: Slowly falling from the handrail, down towards the river, gaining momentum, snow on the river bank...

Blackness.

FLASHBACK.

2 EXT. PUBLIC PLAYGROUND - DAY

Thirty year old FIONA JENKINS is walking hand in hand with her five year old son, TOM.

They approach a cordoned off play area.

A scruffy, unshaven man in overalls turns to face them, this is DAVID JENKINS, Tom's Father and Fiona's ex-husband.

Tom recognizes David, tugs his Mother's hand.

Fiona glances down, nods at Tom, releases his hand.

Tom runs towards David, who drops down to his knees, opens his arms and sweeps his son into a bear hug.

Fiona stands back a respectful distance, but keeps a watchful eye on Tom.

She turns to look behind her, smiling reassuringly.

NIGEL (V.O.)

A ready made family.

(pause)

Not without problems of course, we had ours... who doesn't.

David shoots Fiona an awkward but grateful glance. He grins down at Tom, races him to the slide, Father and Son happily playing.

3 INT/EXT. NIGEL CAR - DAY

Nigel Morrison is sitting in a big luxury car, music from the radio in the background. He's dressed expensively in a smart business suit.

He reaches forward to click the radio off, a chunky gold watch on his wrist.

He glances out of the passenger window, observing Tom playing with David, Fiona sitting on a park bench, hands clasped in her lap, looking on.

Nigel taps his hand on the steering wheel, flicks his wrist, eyeing the time.

NIGEL

Fiona's ex-husband was the thorn in my side...

He dials a number on his mobile, staring out of the window, lost in thought as the phone dials.

4 EXT. NIGEL CAR - DAY

Nigel is leaning on his car as Fiona and Tom walk back from the playground, hand in hand.

In the background David lights a cigarette, watching Tom and Fiona walking away from him, towards Nigel's car.

NIGEL (V.O.)  
He had to rub it in...

Nigel smiles down at Tom, opening the car door for him, stoops to accept a hug, but Tom ignores him, climbs into the car.

In the background David grins at Nigel in glee that his son has ignored his replacement.

Nigel can't help a bitter glance at David.

NIGEL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Like he could offer a tenth of what  
I could.

Nigel stares angrily towards David, who grins, walks on, whistling happily to himself.

Nigel closes the car door with a sigh, accepts a reassuring hug from Fiona.

5 INT/EXT. NIGEL CAR - DAY

Nigel's car driving.

Nigel is watching Tom in the rear view mirror as he kneels on the back seat, waving madly to David, who is visible through the rear window, waving back at Tom.

6 INT. LOUNGE - DAY

A children's birthday party in full swing.

Five year old GIRLS and BOYS sit on the floor watching a CLOWN MAGICIAN.

The Clown pulls a bunch of plastic flowers from his sleeve and kneels to present them to Fiona, who enters the lounge with a tray of party food.

NIGEL (V.O.)  
Ours was a house filled with  
laughter.

Fiona flushes, the children clap as she places the tray on a table already stacked with food.

Fiona graciously accepts the flowers with mock cartoon embarrassment, hands clasped in front of her, swaying, batting her eyelids.

7 INT. ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

The front door opens, Nigel bustles in, late.

Fiona carries the empty tray from the lounge, hovers in the hallway to greet him, shoots him a disapproving look.

Nigel steps forward, arms held out apologetically, embraces Fiona who playfully shakes her head, still happy to see him, late or not.

8 INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Nigel pokes his head around the lounge door, watches the children sitting laughing at the Clown, who is pulling a stream of knotted handkerchiefs from his mouth.

NIGEL (V.O.)

Tom and I were growing really close, I felt like a protective big brother to him.

Tom glances round, sensing Nigel's presence.

Tom stares at Nigel for a second or so, smiles a little awkwardly. Step Dad's late again.

The Clown pulls off his hat, waves a wand over it.

Nigel offers a wrapped present, smiling.

Tom nods, smiles more enthusiastically.

The Clown pulls a small pure white bunny from the hat, places it on the floor. The bunny twitches its nose.

A collective 'Ahhh' from the children. Some stand for a better look, others grin, craning their heads forward to see the cute bunny.

NIGEL (V.O.) (cont'd)

He was really starting to accept me.

Fiona cuddles up to Nigel, smiling over the children as they enjoy themselves.

9 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Nigel is pouring himself a cup of tea, the wrapped present next to the toaster on the work surface.

Fiona enters, Tom following her.

Nigel smiles at Tom, gives him the present.

Tom unwraps the birthday paper, reveals a large Buzz Light-year.

Tom grins, runs out to show his friends.

Nigel smiles, looking on. Fiona hugs him.

10 INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Nigel is facing forwards, staring down intently at a computer screen, which throws a reflecting glow up on his face.

Fiona knocks at the door, enters.

Nigel double clicks the mouse, the glow disappears. He smiles up at Fiona as she ushers a sleepy, reluctant Tom into the study.

NIGEL (V.O.)

We were buddies.

Nigel rises from the desk, crouches down and hugs Tom, who stands his hands at his side, unwilling to accept the affection.

Nigel stands, kisses Fiona and ruffles Tom's hair.

Fiona picks up sleepy Tom, carries him out of the room.

11 INT. STAIRS/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Soft breathing and light snoring from the partially open lounge door.

Footsteps padding softly down the stairs.

Nigel creeps into the kitchen, opens a cupboard, selects a glass and trickles water into it from the tap.

He leans back on the work top, sipping the water.

12 INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Nigel gently pushes the lounge door ajar.

Tom and two friends, MATTHEW and REBECCA, are curled up in sleeping bags, fast asleep.

NIGEL (V.O.)  
Sleeping children. Its so humbling,  
puts life into perspective.

Nigel stands at the doorway, looking on, visibly moved at the peaceful scene.

13 INT/EXT. NIGEL CAR - DAY

Nigel's car is outside the school gates.

Climbing out from the back seat onto the pavement are Tom, Matthew and Rebecca.

Two YOUNG MOTHERS approach the car, Mum #1 leans down at Nigel's open window, smiles at him, interrupted by a flying hug from Matthew.

NIGEL (V.O.)  
Such a nice feeling when you're  
accepted into a group, as an equal.

Rebecca bounces up to Mum #2, who stoops to hug her child.

Tom waves goodbye to Nigel and the three children scurry into the playground.

NIGEL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Takes time to establish that sort  
of trust.

14 EXT. PLAYING FIELD - DAY

A kite, fluttering in the breeze, held over his head by Tom.

He runs with it, releasing it, grinning as it is jerked up into the sky by Nigel tugging on control strings.

Tom runs to Nigel, who is concentrating on the kite, unravelling the string.

Nigel lowers his hands, passes over control to Tom, who accepts the string eagerly.

Fiona stands next to Nigel, hugs him as she watches Tom tugging on the control strings, the kite flying high.

15 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Playtime.

Kids running around, playing football, hopscotch, skipping in the sunshine.

In a corner of the playground, Tom is terrorizing the other children.

Tom punches Rebecca, kicks and bites Matthew, who both burst into tears.

A TEACHER rushes over, intervenes. All three children are upset, crying.

NIGEL (V.O.)

Then Tom started misbehaving at school, despite his stable family environment.

(pause)

I blame his Father.

The Teacher leads all three children towards the school building.

Tom in particular is very upset, strange considering he is the bully.

16 EXT. SCHOOL GATES - DAY

Fiona stands at the gate, waiting for Tom to emerge with the other children.

She smiles at other mums, a little preoccupied, barely noticing children running to their Mums, filtering away from the gates.

Fiona stands waiting with only two other parents, Matthew and Rebecca's Mums.

She becomes aware of the agitation amongst the group.

Fiona glances at her watch. They are all becoming anxious to see their children.

Mum #1 drops her cigarette, stubs it out, starts walking towards the school building.

NIGEL (V.O.)

Then Fiona gets pulled in to see the Headmistress.

The school HEADMISTRESS appears through the School building double doors. At her side are Tom, Rebecca and Matthew.

The Headmistress walks over to Fiona and the Young Mums.

Rebecca and Matthew run to their respective Mum's.

The Headmistress dips her head at Fiona, beckoning for her to follow.

NIGEL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Seems Tom's been acting strange at  
School.

Fiona picks up Tom, smiles weakly at the Young Mums, then follows the Headmistress back towards the School building.

17 INT. HEADMISTRESS OFFICE - DAY

Fiona sits clutching Tom on her lap, facing the Headmistress over a desk.

NIGEL (V.O.)  
Meddling old bat. Fucking things  
up.

Fiona is hugging Tom closely, confused, conflicting emotions flickering across her face.

She shakes her head, frowning, hugging Tom even closer.

18 INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Fiona is tucking Tom into bed. His cartoon pajamas match the duvet cover.

She smiles down at him, weary, concerned.

Fiona strokes Tom's forehead and cheek, his eyes are red, sore from more recent crying.

NIGEL (V.O.)  
Fiona was angry with the  
interference... Rightly so.

She sits watching Tom as he drifts off to sleep.

From downstairs, the front door opening, closing shut with a clunk.

Although not loud or aggressive, this sound jolts Fiona into action.

She stares at the bedroom door, concentrating on the noise.

NIGEL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Only a matter of time till I ended  
up on the receiving end.

Fiona's breathing speeds up, her hands shaking. She steps up from the bed carefully, staring down at her son.

She rolls up her sleeves, strides to the bedroom door, resolute.

Her hand is on the door handle, she pauses, releases it and reaches for the adjacent set of drawers, rummages around.

She produces a key.

She opens the door, steps out into the hall, locking the door behind her, pushes the key deep in her pocket.

19 INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Fiona is sitting in the darkened lounge, hunched forward on the settee, agitated, staring through the television screen which drones on quietly.

Nigel pushes the door ajar, glances in.

NIGEL (V.O.)  
She started acting...

Fiona turns to stare at him, hurt and angry, searching his face.

NIGEL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Weird.

Nigel smiles awkwardly, withdraws.

Fiona stares at the closed door, breathing hard, thinking, unsure.

20 INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom curled up in bed, fast asleep in the foetal position.

21 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darkness.

The sound of light breathing.

Fiona and Nigel lying in bed, facing away from each other.

The neon figures on Fiona's alarm clock click to '3:14am'

Fiona is staring at the clock, eyes red, still angry, waiting.

Nigel stirs.

He slips out of bed very carefully.

Soft footsteps to the bedroom door, almost no noise.

He's picking his steps carefully to avoid squeaky floor boards.

Fiona is rigid, eyes wide, alert, concentrating on steadying her breathing, listening for the smallest sound.

A light brushing sound of carpet under the door as Nigel sneaks out of the bedroom.

22 INT. LANDING - NIGHT

Nigel creeping downstairs.

23 INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom stirs, turns over, settles, a leg poking out from the duvet.

From the kitchen below, the sound of a tap running, trickling water into a glass.

24 INT. LANDING - NIGHT

Nigel creeping back upstairs, holding the glass.

He stops at the top of the stairs outside Tom's bedroom, listening.

Satisfied, he places the glass of water on the floor.

Reaches for the door handle to Tom's room.

Presses it down, opens the door...

25 INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom sleeping, vulnerable, a leg poking out from under the duvet.

Nigel steps into the bedroom, walks carefully towards Tom.

To the left of the partially open bedroom door is Fiona.

NIGEL (V.O.)

How did she get it so wrong.

She stands in her nightclothes, shaking with emotion. Shock, anger, disgust.

Nigel creeps towards Tom's bed, sits gently on the side of the bed, begins to adjust the duvet...

NIGEL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Thought I had her trust.

Fiona turns sharply to the chest of drawers, grabs the nearest heavy object - Nigel's Buzz Light-year present.

A SCREAM from behind Nigel, who reels in shock as Fiona launches herself at him, WHACKING him with Buzz Light-year, arms flailing wildly, SCREAMING at him.

Fiona, punching, kicking Nigel, bundling him towards the open door.

Tom, cowering in the corner of the bed, arms clutching knees, rocking, head buried in his knees, sobbing.

Nigel is trying to protect himself from Fiona's frantic lashing out.

She pushes Nigel out onto the landing, SLAMMING the bedroom door shut behind him, locking it with shaking hands.

NIGEL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Why Fiona? I'd done nothing wrong.

She runs to Tom, clutches him close, emotion overcoming her, tears streaming down her face, rocking with Tom. Trying to console him and calm herself.

26 INT. LANDING - NIGHT

Nigel is huddled up in the corner of the hall, hugging his knees, crying.

NIGEL (V.O.)  
I'm no coward, but I had to report her... to protect myself.

27 INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Montage of shots.

Nigel being fingerprinted.

NIGEL (V.O.)  
I'm not proud of it...

Mugshot front and side profiles of Nigel holding a series of identification numbers.

NIGEL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Imagine having to shop your girlfriend.

Nigel in a cell, sitting on a bunk, realization sinking in, head in hands, sobbing.

28 INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Fiona is sitting in the lounge.

Beside her is David. He is hugging Tom, blinking back angry tears.

On the coffee table are steaming cups of tea.

Sitting opposite is a FEMALE DETECTIVE, taking notes.

29 INT. NIGEL STUDY - DAY

Two uniformed POLICEMEN are removing Nigel's computer.

30 INT. POLICE STATION INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Nigel is sitting facing the Female Detective and her younger MALE DETECTIVE colleague.

Beside Nigel sits a SOLICITOR, arms folded.

The Female Detective lays a typed statement on the table, slides it across to Nigel. She lays a pen on top of it.

31 EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Nigel steps out into the sunshine, bleary eyed, haggard.

He walks down the street, head down, hands buried deep in pockets.

NIGEL

I felt weak for not being in control.

(pause)

I became paranoid... Seemed everyone knew.

Nigel passes a female TICKET WARDEN, writing out a parking ticket.

The Traffic Warden steps off the pavement into the road, wary of Nigel, backing away, as if avoiding a nasty smell.

Further down the street net curtains twitch, a FIGURE hovering at the window, staring out.

A male DOG WALKER stops just ahead of Nigel, his dog cocks it's leg, urinating up a lamppost, forcing Nigel to alter direction to save his shiny black shoes.

NIGEL (cont'd)

Do you have any idea how that feels, to be held in such contempt by society. Do you?

32 INT/EXT. NIGEL CAR - DAY

Nigel sitting in his car, spaced out, unshaven, his clothes ruffled, slept in.

He's watching the house at a distance through his car windscreen.

The house front door opens, Fiona hurries out with Tom.

She glances around, spots Nigel's car, bundles Tom into her own car, climbs in, locks the door.

Fiona's car speeds off in the opposite direction to Nigel.

Nigel watches her leave.

He steps out of his car, walks over to the house.

His keys rattle in the door lock, but he's unable to open it.

Nigel scowls at the door, tries another key, no luck.

NIGEL

She retaliated, of course. Typical fucking woman.

He hammers a clenched fist on the door, teeth gritted.

He begins breaking down.

Rests his head against the door under his hands.

33 EXT. SCHOOL GATES - MORNING

Nigel's car speeds up to the entrance gates, brakes hard, stops.

He gets out of the car, slams the door, scans the playground of children for Tom.

A few Mums standing chatting, there are nudges within the group, angry glances at Nigel.

NIGEL

I could sense them leering at me,  
closing in.

(pause)

Vultures.

Rebecca's Mother glares at Nigel, then reaches into her handbag, withdraws a mobile, dials three times.

Nigel is stung by her look, shrinks back, anger subsiding, suddenly self conscious.

He glances around nervously, withdraws.

Nigel's car roaring away, the group of Mums staring after him.

34 INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY

An expensive car showroom, open plan, sales desks in one corner.

Nigel is standing over a desk, emptying a drawer of possessions into a small box.

The immaculately presented MANAGER hovers awkwardly.

NIGEL

I couldn't face work after that.

Nigel glances at the Manager, his eyes pleading for his job.

The Manager looks away, won't meet his gaze.

The Manager holds out his hand.

NIGEL (V.O.) (cont'd)

They tried to keep me... but I  
couldn't face their sympathy.

Nigel reluctantly pulls a set of car keys from his pocket.

He starts to detach a set of house keys, then stops, realizing they are useless now.

He offers the keys.

The Manager points to the desk, he won't even take the keys from Nigel, doesn't want to dirty his hands with the dregs of humanity.

Nigel drops the keys, they clatter onto the table.

Nigel picks up the box, scans the faces of the rest of the sales team.

Although all are facing him, watching, none meet his eyes.  
Nigel's face says it all. One big mess.

NIGEL (cont'd)

Why Fiona...

(pause)

What did I ever do to you?

We sink into Nigel's troubled eyes and dissolve to...

35 EXT. FOOTBRIDGE - NIGHT

Nigel's eyes: staring out into the night.

Tears stream down his face.

He is shaking, twitching on the railing, swaying.

Nigel jolts his balance back, breathing heavily.

He takes several slow, deep breaths.

In the foreground with his back to us, the Good Samaritan stands facing Nigel.

Nigel can't do it, won't jump. Nigel begins to sink down, edging down onto the rail, preparing to climb down.

Nigel is crouching on the rail, turns his head to guide his foot down onto the footbridge, glances up, recognition yet confusion on his face.

A SHOUT and the Good Samaritan rushes at Nigel, shoving him hard over the rail.

Nigel's strange expression frozen on his face as he topples out into free air, shock, yet a sense of release as he falls in slow motion...

Nigel falling away from the bridge, down through the sleet, the swollen dirty brown river waiting for him below.

On the bridge, the Good Samaritan turns from the handrail to reveal their identity - the face of David, Tom's father.

David has a grim expression on his face, no pleasure, or even satisfaction, just a sad sense of justice and the love of a father, protecting his family.

The fast falling sleet slows, thickening, turning to softly falling snow.

David walks slowly away, casual footsteps in the gutter.

A faint, yet clear SPLASH from far below.

End.