

The Disappearance of Mark Dennis

by

Mark Dennis

OVER BLACK

SIDD (V.O.)
RTF 367K, Fall 2006. Sandy Stone
teaches Postmodern Gothic to 37
students.

Flashes of each of the 37 students.

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Within the first two weeks, 8
students drop the class. No one
misses them. No one remembers
their names.

37 pictures lined up, Brady Bunch Style. 8 pictures flash
white and disappear. Clips of class. Hyper speed of a
typical class projected from a security camera position.

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The roster is set. For the next
few weeks, the remaining students
will continue to come to class on a
regular basis. Occasional absences
are expected and forgiven for many
of the students. Doctors
appointments. Film shoots.
Hangovers. You name it. People
have every excuse in the book for
not showing up.

Transition to presentations. Nicole's picture. Whatever
else we can get.

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
October __. Project # 1 due for
class. Students present a variety
of projects. ____ does that
myspace pictures project. Saturday
basically invents a new musical
instrument.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Saturday jams out with his keyboard. Very comically
dramatic.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Dolly into empty room - I AM CYBORG plays on the big screen.

SIDD (V.O.)

The last presentation of the day, I AM CYBORG, a short film made by my roommate, Mark, airs for the class.

I AM CYBORG CLIP

INT. ZACH'S APARTMENT - DAY

ZACH

It was a lot of fun. He actually sent me a text message really early in the semester asking if he could make a mockumentary on my lifestyle as a cyborg. Sure, why not? My mom laughed when I told her. This is pretty out of character because she fucking hates Mark.

Zach shrugs.

ZACH (CONT'D)

But that's Mark, you know? He thinks about stuff way in advance. If I was gonna be a director, I'd want to be just like him. And I'm not saying he's smart. Don't get me wrong. Wait, what was the question?

Clock ticking to 3:45 pm. Doors open. Class pours out into the hallway of CMB

SIDD (V.O.)

3:45 pm. Class lets out on time. Mark tells Sandy he won't be able to make it to the next class because he has a press screening for the John Cameron Mitchell film "Shortbus"

Clip of Shortbus. Old Movie style of someone walking down the stair case. Dramatization.

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

As I'm leaving, I see Mark taking the stairs, presumably heading home. This is the last time I see Mark. Almost two months ago.

Fades to white to someone typing myspace.com

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Mark's Myspace and Facebook pages haven't changed in weeks. When Facebook launched its newsfeed, I thought I'd be able to tell for sure if he had been online, but nothing has changed in months. There's still that same douchebag picture that he made me take of him.

Mark dressed up like Buffalo Bill from silence of the legs with the penis tuck.

Facebook profile. Myspace profile.

Interview clips section. Talk to Sandy.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Sidd walking into police station.

SIDD

(to camera)

We're gonna go to the police station and file a missing person's report. This isn't about rent being due. It's about finding out the truth.

Sidd smiles at how cheesy what he said was.

SIDD (CONT'D)

What?

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Sidd stands at the reception desk. No one is in sight. He leans over and looks around.

SIDD

Hello?

Very briefly, Sidd gets a glimpse of Bevo sitting in a police chair with a Magnum. Sidd rubs his eyes. Bevo is gone.

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Doesn't look like we're gonna be getting much help there.

EXT. POLICE STATION -

Sidd walks out of the police station with a script in hand.

SIDD
 (reading)
 No one's terribly interested in
 finding Mark.

Sidd looks up at the camera.

SIDD (CONT'D)
 I don't like this line.

Back at the script.

SIDD (CONT'D)
 Can I change it?

Pulls pen out.

SIDD (CONT'D)
 Let's change it.

EXT. POLICE STATION - SAME

Sidd walks back out. This time without the script.

SIDD
 It looks like I'm on my own for
 this one.

INT. SIDD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Image of computer monitor as Sidd edits the previous scene.
 Very postmodern.

SIDD
 I don't really like that much
 either.

Mouse clicks away. Pulls together sperate letters to make
 the SUPER - Drug Rehab

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Possible theories to the
 whereabouts of Mark Dennis. 1. Drug
 Rehab.

EXT. DRUG REHAB - DAY

Mission Impossible Theme. Action movie style. An ACTOR playing Mark in a dramatization leaps over a fence wearing a hospital gown. Mad dashes into the street and is hit by a car.

SIDD (V.O.)

Ya, that's right. Mark had a drug problem.

Intense montage of drug related things. Requiem for a Dream style...fuck, we'll use some of that. The Actor does a line of coke. Blood pours from his nose.

SAME PLACE - The Actor is WATCHING HIMSELF bleed on the couch. The line of coke still sitting in front of him. He shrugs and goes down for a line.

Waits.

Waits.

Cringes.

ACTOR

FUCK! It burns.

Gets up and walks off screen.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Shot of a toilet bowl flushing. SUPERIMPOSE - Theory number 2

INT. MARK'S ROOM

Actor stares intently at TV screen. Lady Sovereign's "Love me or Hate me" music video plays. Actor moves to the beat.

SIDD (V.O.)

Theory number two...the overwhelming popularity of Music Television leads to Mark's untimely demise as he believes that he himself is now the star of every music video, locking himself in a small closet with nothing but a video ipod.

Actor rushes into the closet at hyper-speed and slams the door.

CLIPS of ACTOR Superimposed to popular music videos.

Side by Side images of the previous two theories, somehow anialated by a bulldozer or a shotgun to show the logo for Theory Number Three - The Truth

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Theory number three. From this
point known as "The Truth"

INT. SIDD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sidd clicks away at his computer.

SIDD
November 1st, I stay up all night
cutting together my second Post-
Modern Gothic project. It's the
worst thing I've ever made...or
seen. No one's seen it and I'm
already fucking embarrassed. I'm
used to Mark giving me pointers and
coming up with ideas for my
projects, but this solo endeavor
has turned into a real shit storm.

Sidd puts the DVD into a jewel case. Walks down the stairs. Sees a package on the table. Sidd opens the package. It's contents. A DVD, labeled "Project 2 - Beans" and a script labeled "Project 3"...

SIDD (CONT'D)
8:50 a.m. I'm late for my 9
O'Clock in Jester when I see the
package on the coffee table. It's
contents. A DVD labeled Project 2
and a script labeled project 3.

Sidd pops the DVD into the playstation. Beans plays.

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Knowing I would probably make a
shitty project without his help,
Mark has put both of our names on
project number 2 to "save my grade"
as I've heard him refer to it so
many times.

(MORE)

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 The film is decent, it gives a few laughs, and though I have no clue how he pulled it off, I will gladly claim I took part in it and the class will be none the wiser.

INT. STUDIO - SAME

Sidd stands in front of the class explaining the video to everyone.

SIDD
 See, it doesn't have to make sense because its postmodern!

Overwhelming cheers. Sidd is the man. Folds his arms and soaks it up. Slow Motion.

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 As I'm going through the script, I get a better idea as to Mark's whereabouts.

Sidd thumbs through the script.

Shot of script. Showing these exact words.

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Mark has written a script for a third film project about why he was absent. The only problem. The third act, the resolution. There is still no closure on the disappearance of Mark Dennis. Instead, a small note within the script "Once you have finished filming the first 2/3 of the script, I'll send you an AVI of the last part telling you what happened. And then you will know the truth.

Sidd reading on the script.

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I fully expect the script to end with some bullshit like...

Sidd looks up at the camera, very dramatically.

SIDD (CONT'D)
 "And the truth shall set you free".

Flash cut to - the making of the documentary you are reading. Sidd going through Mark's room. Pointing out to the camera man, Mark's bed and computer.

SIDD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So I begin filming what Mark refers to as "The most appropriate Post-Modern Gothic Project" he or I could ever make, I realize this whole situation reminds me of that Nic Cage flick "Adaptation. And for some reason, I wind up spending then next ten minutes after my first editing session in front of the bathroom mirror making Nicolas Cage faces at myself.

Sidd stands in front of the mirror making the classic Nicolas Cage screaming face. A moment of quiet. Interpol's Stella was a Diver fades in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sidd sits alone on the couch, watching television.

SIDD

I spend the rest of the evening after completing the first scene of the film, watching Nicolas Cage in Adaptation. And at one moment in the film when Charlie Kaufman's character yells at his dumber brother, I realize how much I miss Mark.

Dolly in on Sidd, sad on the couch. FADE TO BLACK

CLIP OF UNSOLVED MYSTERIES.

ROBERT STACK

Update!

INT. SIDD'S ROOM - LATER

Sidd clicks away at his mouse.

SIDD

5:37 pm. November 23rd. I finish filming the script Mark has given me. Seconds later, the answer finally arrives.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Sidd opens the front door. A package lays on the ground. Sidd looks around, over the balcony. Bevo the Longhorn waves from across the street and runs. Sidd perks up, like he's about to run after him.

SIDD

Wait!

Bevo stops.

A truck swerves in front of Bevo and a guy with a bandana jumps out with a machine gun and blows Bevo away.

Sidd is lost in sadness.

He walks into the house, opening the package.

DVD Player - Disc pops in.

MARK'S FINAL PROJECT BEGINS

INT. UNKNOWN - NIGHT

Old - Movie Footage

Mark lays sleeping.

MARK (V.O.)

You're probably wondering what happened to me. Why I disappeared.

Mark's eyes open.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark comes down the stairs slowly. Walks through the portal thing.

INT. SAME LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Everything is graphically different. Animation maybe?

Mark approaches a mirror image of himself. Everything is the same except for - Mark's eyes are distorted...they're completely blank, black holes.

Mark stares at the image of himself. The mirror man kind of moves around like Bob Marley. A light comes from the side. Mark turns to see it. It is the projected image of the Syllabus. Key words are punched across the screen.

SANDY

(Sandy gives a monologue about Post-Modern Gothic.)

The screen image flashes to a shot of the classroom, class in full effect. Mark watches the image.

INT. POST MODERN GOTHIC CLASSROOM-

Mirror Mark and Mark are now standing next to the classroom, completely invisible to everyone else. But something is different. The class members are animated Vampires, Zombies. Still working on all of this. It may be too long. We'll see. The point will be that Mark goes into a "Parallel University" called The University of Techas where he is the subject of an alternate post-modern gothic class in which the class of cyborgs, vampires, and monsters studies him.

Time to learn how to animate.