

T H E R U N N E R

Screenplay

by

Mark Talbot-Butler

Based on original material

by

Chris Jones, Genevieve Jolliffe,  
Jon Walker and Jem Wellens

PROPERTY OF:

LIVING SPIRIT PICTURES LTD.,  
Windmill Cottage,  
Windmill Crossroads,  
Acton,  
Nantwich,  
Cheshire CW5 8LR

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What is Paranoia?

Fear.

The creation in the mind of something from nothing.

But worst of all -  
It's destructive...

FADE IN:

MAIN CREDITS ROLL:

THE RUNNER

*Black screen. Silence.*

*Then, from within the silence, a NOISE begins to build. LOUDER AND LOUDER. The sound of HOARDS OF PEOPLE RUNNING AND SHOUTING.*

*SCREAMS of terror. Gunfire rattles --*

*-- and a BLURRED BLACK AND WHITE IMAGE snaps into view. Definition is poor. We can't really tell what's happening. But we can hear confusion. PANIC. Then it becomes clear... .. we're looking through the viewfinder of a VIDEO CAMERA.*

*And all hell is breaking loose.*

*We're caught in the middle of a battle. The camera SHAKES. A nearby EXPLOSION rocks our point-of-view even more. The cameraman fights to control the picture, eventually managing to steady the image.*

*And we see a GUTTED HOUSE, smoke and flames rising from the blackened timber. People are running and scrambling from the confusion -- wiping camera. Blackened BLURS in our view.*

*A woman, KATH HANZAKER, appears in frame. Her forehead is smeared with blood. She shouts to the CAMERAMAN:*

KATH

Get away! Jack! Forget it!!  
They're too close!

*KATH motions behind her. The camera WHIPS ROUND to show WILLIS, the sound man. He's in trouble, his legs weak beneath him. The camera moves closer as WILLIS drops his equipment and falls heavily to the earth.*

*We hear the CAMERAMAN's hoarse voice from behind the lens:*

CAMERAMAN

Billy! Billy! Are you...?

*... but before he can finish -- another HUGE EXPLOSION, much CLOSER this time, RIPS the camera from his grip.*

*The image rolls and spins as the camera SMASHES to the ground -- then steadies...*

... and we see WILLIS lying face-down in the dust. He's dead. KATH is already beside him. We see the CAMERAMAN, JACK SLATER, for the first time. He's left the camera lying on the ground. It's still recording.

SLATER crawls towards KATH and WILLIS as another EXPLOSION, at a safer distance this time, shakes the earth.

KATH hauls the dead body close as SLATER watches, helpless. She calls his name over and over, as if shouting loud enough would wake him up.

But it doesn't.

KATH is FRANTIC. There's nothing she can do...

... and, in HUGE CLOSE-UP, we see her closed eyes SNAP OPEN. A beat -- and we realise that we're...

#### INT. KATH'S BEDROOM - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

She's FULLY-CLOTHED, lying on top of the bedsheets. It's been a rough night.

An inner-city apartment. The sound of traffic filters through the heavy rain outside. It's been pouring for weeks.

KATH sits up on her bed, BREATHING HEAVILY. She's exhausted. Her face is wet with perspiration. She looks round to the small bedside table next to her.

Sitting next to the lamp is an expensive STILLS CAMERA -- and the lens is broken. KATH grabs her Zippo and packet of Camels and lights up. She takes a deep breath and exhales. It seems to help.

She runs a hand through the untidy crop of black hair. For the first time, we get a clear view of her face. Strong features. Authoritative.

This is the woman that runs the show.

The bedroom is a mess. The contents of an open suitcase are thrown around the floor. Unopened letters. Documents. Photographs are everywhere. As if someone just got back from a long foreign trip.

KATH, now pleasantly nicotine-induced, focuses as best she can and scans the darkened room. The TELEVISION SET hisses static from the corner. It must be late. She checks the DIGITAL CLOCK.

*It blinks '00:00' at her.*

*Damn.*

*At the other corner of the room, KATH sees her word processor and keyboard. The light from the screen bathes the room in a cold white glow. She stubs out the half-smoked cigarette and walks over, leaning towards the screenful of text: the conclusion to her latest NEWS REPORT...*

*"... this is not desperate proclamation. It remains for you to decide. All this reporter knows is that if the current political situation does not improve, we may be on the brink of a major international incident. Diplomacy or war? Who knows? At present, anything is possible."*

*She sighs...*

KATH  
Give it to 'em, kid.

*Save. Exit file. KATH hits the key.*

CUT TO:

**EXT. CITY - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT**

*The City. A huge, sprawling concrete nightmare somewhere within the continental United States. A choice colour scheme above street level: black and grey.*

*It's 4.30 in the morning and as busy as ever. Traffic, noise, crowds. We look around at the streets. We look in at the people...*

*Not a very nice place. Keep your doors locked and don't go out after dark. Unless, of course, you've got a gun.*

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - THAT MOMENT - NIGHT**

*We're looking down a sidestreet adjacent to one of the city's major thoroughfares. It's deserted. Cars roar past the narrow entrance, but we can see no people,*

*A solitary STREET LAMP illuminates the entrance to the passage. We look up: the building directly beside us is one of the city's major banks. There's an AUTOMATED CASH DISPENSER built into the wall at street level. It beams a pale green light onto the brickwork around it.*

*A slight movement to the left, and we see TWO PUNKS, MARCO and CHRIS -- both about twenty years old, clad in worn black leather jackets -- standing around the corner with their backs to the wall.*