

Banana Republic
an original screenplay by
Richard McCluskey
and
Vivek Srivastava

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

A blazing meteor streaks across space *en route* to Earth. The Earth is a tiny blue dot in the blackness and is clearly vulnerable to the large rock hurtling towards the planet.

INT. NASA MISSION CONTROL - MONDAY 12:37 AM

It's chaos at Mission control; the mood is frantic. People are running in all directions, PHONES can be heard ringing off the hook and the DIRECTOR is hunched over a computer monitor trying to find out what's going on. Haggard and unshaven, this is clearly a man who hasn't seen a good night's sleep in a while.

DIRECTOR SHEA

What's the news, boys?

GARY

(sarcastically)

There appears to be a large meteor headed straight for the Earth.

DIRECTOR SHEA

Listen smartass, I have fifty reporters breathing down my neck, not to mention the White House. I need something a little more useful than "there's a meteor headed for the Earth." What else can you tell me?

MARK

You could mention that there's a three percent chance it won't hit us. But the final numbers aren't back yet.

Mark taps some numbers into a calculator.

MARK (CONT'D)

Actually, that percentage is going to come down a bit.

GARY

(to Mark)

Are you in the pool? I've got twenty-four hundred bucks riding on two and a half percent.

MARK
(surprised)
Twenty-four hundred? I just threw
in fifty for two and a quarter
percent.

DIRECTOR SHEA
Jesus Christ.

MARK
(to Gary)
How are you betting twenty-four
hundred bucks?

Gary stands up suddenly and grabs his jacket from the back
of his chair. Mark and the Director turn to look at him.

GARY
Who gives a shit? We'll be dead by
Monday.

The Director storms off.

INT. NASA MISSION CONTROL. CONFERENCE ROOM - MONDAY 3:00 AM

The Director is finishing up a briefing to the PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES and various other government officials.
Projection screens at the front of the room are covered with
graphics and charts. The President is listening intently.

DIRECTOR SHEA
I'm happy to take any questions you
may have, but as you can see, all of
our forecasts have absolutely
disastrous results.

The President takes a moment to reflect. Finally,
assuredly...

PRESIDENT
Well then, it looks like we'll have
to evacuate.

DIRECTOR SHEA
Excuse me, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT
We'll evacuate the nation to safer
ground. We still have some friends
out there in the world and I'm not
above calling in favours.

DIRECTOR SHEA
Ummmmm...

The Director looks back on the graphs he just explained to the group, unsure of how to proceed.

DIRECTOR SHEA (CONT'D)
...with all due respect Sir, there is no safe ground. As I explained, the meteor isn't predicted to make impact with the United States. In fact, it will likely hit the earth somewhere near the southern tip of Argentina. But wherever it hits, the results will be globally catastrophic. In short, there is nowhere to evacuate to.

The President nods... pauses... and then...

PRESIDENT
Bunkers then.

DIRECTOR SHEA
(confused)
Sir?

PRESIDENT
We'll build underground bunkers. Here in America. That's what we'll do.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL
(enthusiastically)
We've got those limestone caves in Missouri, Mr. President, and Crawley's the one who's been harping on over there about job creation.

The President begins jotting notes on his notepad.

DIRECTOR SHEA
(exasperated)
I'm not sure if I'm being clear, but we've got 36 hours before this thing makes impact... 40 if we're lucky. There isn't enough time to begin...

PRESIDENT
(interrupting)
Are you with us, Shea?

The Director furrows his brow, unsure of the question.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
There are two types of people in this world: those who are with us
(MORE)

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
and those who are against us. What
side are you on?

DIRECTOR SHEA
(earnestly)
I'm with you, Sir.

PRESIDENT
Excellent.

The President stands up...

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Then you take care of your job...
and leave me to mine.

The President is halfway out the door before finishing his
remarks.

DIRECTOR SHEA
Yes, Sir.
(muttering)
I'm just not sure what my job is
anymore.

Shaking his head, the Director grabs his paperwork and rejoins
his team on the floor.

INT. GARY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM - MONDAY 5:00 AM

The RADIO turns on, waking up Gary. The song playing is
FIVE YEARS by David Bowie. Gary reluctantly climbs out of
bed and pulls apart the curtains. Even though it's early,
there are dozens of people gathered in the parking lot below
his building, looking up at the sky. The incoming meteor is
now a bright white dot in the morning sky. Gary pulls out a
cell phone.

GARY
Hey, it's me. Are you awake?

The voice on the other side of the phone is inaudible.

GARY (CONT'D)
Uh, it's five o'clock. Look, I know
it's early but can you meet me?
Maybe we could meet for breakfast?
(beat)
(surprised)
Work? Are you kidding--look, just
meet me OK?
(beat)
OK, I'll meet you at Roger's.
(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)

(beat)
You too.

INT. A BOOTH AT ROGER'S DINER - MONDAY 7:00 AM

Gary is sitting at a booth with his girlfriend, LINDA. They are waiting for their breakfasts to arrive and Linda is stirring her coffee absently and looking out the window at the meteor in the sky -- as is most everyone in the restaurant. Gary finally breaks the silence.

GARY
I think we should get married.

LINDA
(shrugging)
Yeah, I wish.

GARY
No, really I mean it. Let's get married today.

LINDA
Are you crazy? I have work today!

GARY
I don't understand this. Why are you going into work? A meteor is headed toward the Earth. You know that right?

LINDA
Gary, work is important. I can't just skip a day whenever I feel like it. They're counting on me--

GARY
(exasperated)
--you work at Banana Republic!
(his voice rising)
And the world is going to be destroyed --

Gary looks around and the few other diners in the restaurant are looking at him. Gary lowers his voice.

GARY (CONT'D)
--the world is going to be destroyed in a little over a day.

LINDA
I thought it was next Tuesday.

GARY
This Tuesday.

LINDA
This Tuesday that just went by?

GARY
How could it be this Tuesday that
just went by? This coming Tuesday.
In a day and a half, Linda!
(beat)
(softly)
Let's get married.

Linda looks out the window and seems to consider the meteor's impending arrival.

GARY (CONT'D)
What is it?

LINDA
I don't know. I just don't think
you're the one.

EXT. ROGER'S DINER - LATER

Linda exits the diner and takes out her cell phone to make a call. Gary is nowhere to be seen.

LINDA
(on the phone)
Hi Mom.
(beat)
Yeah, I'm just on my way to work
now.
(beat)
When, tonight? Ok, I'll let you
know.
(beat)
I think I just broke up with Gary.

There's a long silence, and then ominously...

LINDA (CONT'D)
No, of course I didn't tell him.

Linda gets an incoming call.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Listen Mom, I've got another call.
Bye.

INT. LINDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM -
CONTINUOUS - MONDAY 9:00 AM

JOYCE, a salt-and-pepper-haired woman in her mid-60s, places the phone on the kitchen counter and stares out the window at the impending meteor.

Her husband JACK is sprawled on the couch across the room watching news coverage of the meteor. The footage on the television looks almost identical to the view from their window, a fact which is not lost on Joyce.

JOYCE
Linda broke up with Gary.

JACK
Which one's Gary?

JOYCE
You know who Gary is, Jack.

JACK
The one from Thanksgiving?

JOYCE
(dryly)
The one from the last three Thanksgivings.

JACK
(rhetorically)
Is that right?

Joyce rolls her eyes and begins to pack up her purse.

JOYCE
She thinks she'll be home for dinner tonight. Any requests from the store?

Jack isn't paying attention. His focus hasn't diverted from the television even for a moment.

JACK
Sorry?

JOYCE
Requests... for dinner.

JACK
Oh... beef.

JOYCE
Just beef?

JACK
Just beef.

JOYCE
(half-amused)
Alright then, I'm off to get beef.
Anything else?

Jack shakes his head without making eye contact.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Call me if you think of anything.

Joyce grabs her keys and heads for the front door. She's almost out of the house, before she turns and walks back towards her husband. Joyce approaches Jack on the couch, leans down, and kisses him on the forehead.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I love you, Jack.

Jack looks up and smiles.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - BOARDROOM - MONDAY 4:00 PM

The President and the JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF are congregated around a table discussing the evacuation effort.

PRESIDENT

OK, let's make this a quick meeting. My Brussels trip is at the end of the week, and I need to get all my ducks in a row.

The other people at the table look at each other confused.

CHIEF OF THE ARMY

Yes, sir. What did you learn from your meeting in Houston?

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

They're on-side with the plans. They've confirmed that the Missouri caves should provide sufficient protection upon impact for approximately two-hundred and fifty thousand candidates. They also confirmed that a full-scale evacuation of the rest of the country is a wise idea.

The patience of the room is wearing thin. And then...

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

I am also proposing the construction of a underwater facility which could hold another seven-hundred and fifty thousand people.

CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE

I'm sorry sir, we are expecting impact tomorrow evening, is that correct?

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

I don't want to hear it, Frank.
I've seen them put together bungalows
on TV faster than that. With our
best men on it, we could get Atlantis
up in no time. Of course, that
depends on Congress.

CHIEF OF THE ARMY

Sir, with all due respect, there
isn't enough time to build a new
facility. If we are going to evacuate
the country and move people to...
er... Missouri, we need to act now.

The President takes a moment to think about this. He looks
down at his notes. He flips a few pages. He considers
carefully and then flips a few more.

The Joint Chiefs of staff are looking at one another nervously
and shifting in their seats. Just then a JUNIOR STAFFER
pokes his head into the conference room.

JUNIOR STAFFER

Uh, sir. It's the first lady on
extension 3410. It's about your
upcoming trip to Belgium. Did you
want to take it in here?

PRESIDENT

No, no. I think we're just about
done here. I'll take it in the Oval
Office.

(to joint chiefs of
staff)

Get the selected candidates en route
to Wyoming.

(to CHIEF OF THE ARMY)

Clive, can you mobilize immediately?

CHIEF OF THE ARMY

Wyoming, sir?

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Missouri, I'm sorry. I'm a little
distracted. Cheryl's not sure if we
should bring the dogs to the summit.
You know how she gets.

CHIEF OF THE ARMY

Yes, sir.

INT. NASA MISSION CONTROL - MONDAY 10:00 PM

A few engineers are burning the midnight oil. Another engineer, JAMES, and Mark are chatting while keeping their eyes fixed on their workstations.

JAMES

I just heard that the "evacuation" is scheduled for tomorrow morning. Are they seriously that stupid?

MARK

Stupider, even.

JAMES

I guess they feel like they have to do some--

MARK

(to himself)
What the hell?

JAMES

What is it?

MARK

Get Shea. He needs to see this immediately.

The Director is nearby talking to some other staff. James interrupts him and motions him over to Mark's station to inspect the computer and its readings. It's clear that what the Director is looking at doesn't make sense. He turns to Mark.

DIRECTOR SHEA

I don't understand this, Mark. Why are you showing me a satellite?

MARK

It's not a satellite, sir. It's the meteor.

The Director looks at Mark with wide eyes.

MARK (CONT'D)

Yes, the meteor. Right there, at two hundred and fifty thousand kilometres.

Mark points to the computer screen. The meteor is represented by a tiny blip.

MARK (CONT'D)

Unless our instruments are malfunctioning like crazy, the meteor has just... stopped... and is now orbiting us at twenty-four hundred meters per second.

DIRECTOR SHEA

(whispering to himself)
Why the hell is it doing that?

MARK

I think the real question, sir, is how?

INT. LINDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE. LINDA'S BEDROOM - TUESDAY 3:30 AM

Linda is tossing and turning in her bed, clearly unable to sleep. Her cell phone suddenly VIBRATES on her bedside table. She picks it up to take a look at the text message: "I'm downstairs. Come outside. Please."

EXT. LINDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Linda opens the door and steps out of the house to find Gary pacing. He has been drinking. Inside the house, suitcases are visible in the front hall.

LINDA

Have you been drinking all day?

GARY

I've maybe had a few.

(Beat)

Linda, what are those bags for?

LINDA

(surprised)

Ummmm... my parents and I are going to the cabin.

Linda wants to change the conversation.

LINDA (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

GARY

I'm here to see you. You haven't been answering my calls.

LINDA

I answered the first seven, Gary.

GARY

This doesn't make sense.

LINDA

A lot doesn't make sense right now.

GARY

We've been happy.

LINDA

I haven't. Not for a while at least.

GARY

Shit, and this is what it takes to get you to tell me!?

LINDA

Things come into perspective pretty quickly.

GARY

We can work through it, Linda.

LINDA

In the next twelve hours?

GARY

What if we had more time?

LINDA

You told me yourself, Gary. What was it - two and a half percent?

GARY

So you're just going to go to the cabin and what? Wait it out?

LINDA

We're not just...

Linda is clearly exhausted with the conversation.

GARY

(confused)

What are you saying?

LINDA

We're not just waiting it out.

Gary doesn't quite understand, but doesn't necessarily care.

GARY

Let me join you, then

LINDA
 (exasperated)
 Gary.

Gary grabs Linda by the shoulders and forces her to look him directly in the eyes.

GARY
 Let me join you.

Linda seems to be considering granting the request. Before she has a chance to respond Gary's cell phone BEEPS. It's a text message from Mark:

MARK
 (text message)
 We need you at the office. Now!

GARY
 Shit. It's work.

LINDA
 I thought you said work wasn't important?

GARY
 I said your work wasn't important.

Linda, clearly upset at the comment, takes a step back. Gary immediately starts to back-peddle.

GARY (CONT'D)
 No... listen.
 (beat)
 I want to come with you. I want to be with you for this. Even if you don't love me any more, I still love you. Don't do this without me.

LINDA
 Fine. We're leaving for the cabin at seven. If you're back in time you can join us.

Gary is relieved with the compromise.

LINDA (CONT'D)
 I'm not waiting, though.

GARY
 I'll be back.

Linda watches Mark as he gets into his car and drives away. He knocks over the mailbox while reversing out of the driveway. He shrugs and drives away.

Linda shakes her head and looks up at the sky and at the meteor, wistfully.

INT. NASA MISSION CONTROL - TUESDAY 4:52 AM

Mark, the Director, and the NASA team are crammed into a tiny conference room. A projection of the meteor, now frozen in orbit, is on the screen. Mark whose face is half-obscurd by projected light, is explaining the significance of his findings.

MARK

So apparently, at around ten hundred hours yesterday morning, the meteor's incoming velocity dropped from fifteen thousand metres per second to around fifteen hundred metres per second --

There is a loud reaction to this news.

MARK (CONT'D)

(trying to speak over
the din)

-- AND it seems to have established an orbit around the Earth. All we know is that the meteor hasn't collided with anything, and is not being affected by the gravity of anything we can detect. But that's all we know.

Director Shea stands up and walks to the front of the room.

DIRECTOR SHEA

Gentlemen, with national evacuation procedures already underway, we need answers, and FAST, as to what has happened here, and what effect this has on ultimate point of impact.

An engineer in the crowd asks a question.

ENGINEER #1

So it's still headed toward the Earth?

MARK

It would appear so. But given the dramatic nature of the speed change, well, we really have no idea what is going to happen next.

Gary, who has been watching the entire time, shouts out. He is very obviously intoxicated.

GARY

So what you're saying is that it's a goddamn spaceship? Is that what you're saying?

Mark is clearly not impressed with Gary's behaviour.

MARK

I'm not saying it's a spaceship. I have no idea what it is. There are no radio waves being emitted by this thing and it seems to be made of iron and basalt. Typical meteor stuff, except that one moment it's blasting across space on a crash course and now it's just cruising gently toward us.

GARY

Like a car into a garage.
(to himself, with a
tone of disbelief)
It's a fucking spaceship.

Mark starts to protest but the Director cuts him off.

DIRECTOR

Whatever it is, we need to figure it out and fast. Whether that thing's a UFO, a rock, or a piece of the Titanic, I need to find out before morning. No one is going home until I know what this thing is. And no communication with the media. Is that clear?

INT. LINDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE. KITCHEN - TUESDAY 6:27 AM

Linda and her parents are sitting down to breakfast. Jack is eating a plate of bacon big enough for ten. The sun can be seen barely rising over the horizon outside the kitchen windows. The television is on in the background. The family sits in silence as the voice of a female newscaster can be heard:

NEWSCASTER

(on television)
The FAA has ordered all planes grounded and all commercial air traffic has ceased after it has become apparent that the President's plans for wide-scale evacuations will not be feasible. Riots broke out at airports around the country as the news spread.

The television coverage cuts to a middle-aged woman at the airport with young child. Thousands of people can be seen in the airport behind her.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

(on television)

I don't understand why we're being told this now... what are we supposed to do?!

NEWSCASTER

(on television)

The President's office has not issued a statement on this development and has been curiously silent over the last television hours, given the frequency with which we've become accustomed to updates. A source, speaking on the condition of anonymity, has informed us that no further statements from the President's office will be forthcoming. With less than seven hours until the predicted impact, many are suggesting...

Linda briskly shuts off the television.

LINDA

I can't watch it any more. I'm done with this shit.

JOYCE

(rolling her eyes)

Watch your language, Linda. We raised you better than that.

Linda looks at her mother, wide-eyed in disbelief.

JACK

OK, OK. We're all a little tense.

(beat)

We should start getting ready to go.

LINDA

(sarcastically)

Quite the family vacation.

JOYCE

(concerned)

I thought we all agreed?

LINDA

We did... We did, Mom.

Linda lets out a big sigh.

LINDA (CONT'D)
I just have to wait until seven.

Linda looks over at the clock, which reads 6:32 AM.

INT. NASA MISSION CONTROL - TUESDAY 7:02 AM

Gary, Mark, and the NASA crew are all madly working away at their respective workstations. Gary, sobering up with his third cup of coffee, makes a discovery.

GARY
(calling to the
Director)
Shea, get over here!

The Director hurries over to Gary's workstation.

GARY (CONT'D)
This thing is speeding up, Sir.
3000 metres per second.
(beat)
10,000.

DIRECTOR SHEA
Shit.

GARY
(calmly)
No, Sir. It's reversed its orbit.

The Director looks back at the computer.

DIRECTOR SHEA
It's going in the opposite direction?

GARY
This thing's not heading for us
anymore.
(beat)
I guess it's changed its mind.

The good news starts to spread around the floor. NASA employees begin assembling around Gary's work station to verify the information.

DIRECTOR SHEA
You're sure of this?

GARY
Ninety-seven and a half percent.

The Director steps back from the computer in disbelief.

DIRECTOR SHEA

I guess I'll call the President.

MARK

Good luck getting a hold of him.

(beat)

Does this mean I can get some
breakfast now?

Mark's comment triggers Gary's memory; he had completely forgotten about Linda. Panic sets in.

GARY

(frantic)

What time is it?

MARK

Ten past seven.

Gary pulls out his cell phone. His phone can't connect to a network.

MARK (CONT'D)

We lost cell service a few hours
ago, buddy.

Gary throws his cell phone down on his desk and reaches for his desk phone. He quickly dials Linda's phone number from the land-line. The recorded voice of an operator picks up: "The number you have dialed..." Gary furiously slams the phone back down. He is panic-stricken.

INT. GARY'S CAR - DAY

Gary is stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic. The sound of HORNS is filling the air as the entire city attempts to evacuate. Gary turns on the RADIO.

NEWSCASTER

(on the radio)

We have just heard reports from the
White House that the first round of
offensive maneuvers have proved
successful at slowing the meteor's
arrival.

Gary turns up the radio.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

The White House has reported that
they expect full destruction of the
meteor in less than five hours.

Gary switches off the radio.

GARY
 (frustrated)
 I don't have time for this.

Gary throws the car into park and gets out. He takes off on foot to Linda's house.

EXT. LINDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gary runs up the sidewalk to Linda's parents' house. He is sweaty and exhausted, but manages to make it up the front steps. There is no car in the driveway. He bangs on the front screen door.

GARY
 Linda!

He continues to bang on the door while taking deep breaths. He is shouting through the front door.

GARY (CONT'D)
 (gasping and panting)
 Linda! Are you there? Please be there. Shea was keeping us hostage while we tracked this thing, which apparently isn't crashing into the Earth anymore. So we have some time now.

There is only silence. Gary looks back at the empty driveway. Gary continues to speak to the door, but softly.

GARY (CONT'D)
 It's OK. I don't blame you for leaving me and this bullshit place. I know I haven't been the world's best boyfriend. I'm sorry about forgetting your birthday. I mean, I remembered, but only a few days later. And I'm sorry that I forgot to feed your cat when you went to Maui. That was just dumb. And I guess mostly, I'm sorry that it took a meteor before I realized that you're the one. But you are, you're the--

The door swings open and Linda is standing there.

GARY (CONT'D)
 --one.

LINDA
 Is that why you asked me to marry you? Because of the meteor?

GARY
Linda! You're --

Gary turns to the empty driveway, and then looks around confused.

GARY (CONT'D)
--still here.

LINDA
I stayed behind. Why did you ask me
to marry you?

Gary is caught off guard and is clearly confused.

GARY
Wait, are your parents on the meteor
right now?

LINDA
What?

Gary realizes how stupid his question sounds, but asks anyway.

GARY
Did, uh, your parents get on that
meteor that was supposed to crash
into the Earth?

LINDA
Gary, my parents went to their cabin
in the woods. You've been there.

GARY
It's just that the other night...

LINDA
Can you answer my question? Why did
you ask me to marry you? Because
you thought we would be dead in a
few days?

GARY
Well, not just that.

Linda looks cross at this explanation. Gary quickly attempts to smooth things over.

GARY (CONT'D)
No, I mean it's not that at all. I
guess it's because we were dying,
and I love you, and I wanted to marry
you, but now we're not dying, and I
(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)
still love you, and I still want to
marry you.
(beat)
I don't know.

LINDA
That was pretty good.

GARY
Is that a yes?

LINDA
Let's talk about it over breakfast.

The two of them start walking down the driveway.

GARY
Is any place open?

INT. NASA MISSION CONTROL. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

The Director is sitting alone behind the desk in his office. He has just hung up the phone. His demeanor has changed significantly. He is calm - at peace almost. Diplomas and certificates line the otherwise bare walls around him.

After a moment in silence, he turns on the television across the room. The President is making an address from the Oval Office.

PRESIDENT
(on television)
I can now confirm that thanks to the
actions of the brave men and women
of the United States military, the
meteor no longer poses a threat to
the safety of the nation or Her
people.
(beat)
I have received phone calls from
many world leaders thanking the United
States, and more specifically,
thanking me, for my swift and decisive
action in this matter. I am happy
to accept that gratitude.
(beat)
I would also like to thank the
American people for remaining calm
and collected during these trying
times. It's moments like these that
test the resolve of a nation and I
know that Cheryl and I, as this
nation's parents, couldn't be prouder.

The Director rolls his eyes and turns off the television. He sits in silence for another minute behind his desk. He turns and looks up at the diplomas on his wall. Shaking his head, he stands to leave the room, turning off the light on his way out.

FADE OUT