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The Truman Show

By Andrew Niccol

FADE IN:

A white title appears on a black screen.

"One doesn't discover new lands
without consenting to lose sight
of the shore for a very long time."

Andre Gide

The title fades off, replaced by a second title.

"We're all in this alone."

Lily Tomlin

INT. A WOMB. DAY.

A fiber optic camera observes a five-month-old MALE FETUS as he gently floats, weightless, suspended in the amniotic fluid of his mother's womb. We focus on the unborn's hand, already a tiny, exquisite work of art, moving towards his newly formed lips. He sucks his thumb.

INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM. DAY.

A seconds old BABY BOY - umbilical cord still attached, smeared with blood and protective skin grease - is held up by an anonymous pair of latex gloves to the camera. Shocked by the unaccustomed light and cool of the delivery room, the newborn fights for his first, arduous breath. Following almost immediately, a cry.

From another angle we see the crying infant on a television screen, the individual lines of the screen clearly visible.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO

INT. CAR - UTOPIA, QUEENS. MORNING.

The face of the baby thirty-four years later, still crying. TRUMAN BURBANK, thinning hair, a body going soft around the edges, appearing older than his thirty-four years sits at the wheel of his eight-year-old Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme. He cries without shame, making no attempt to wipe away the tears. Pausing at an intersection in a quiet, working-class suburban street, a spherical glass object suddenly falls from the sky and lands with a deafening crash on the roadway, several yards in front of his idling car.

Truman exits the Oldsmobile to investigate. Amidst a sea of shattered glass are the remains of a light mechanism.

He looks around him but the street is deserted. He checks that all the surrounding streetlights are accounted for, even though the fallen fixture is far larger. He looks up into the sky but there is no plane in sight. With some effort, Truman picks up what's left of the crumpled light, loads it into the trunk of his car and drives away.

INT. CAR - TRAIN STATION PARKING LOT. MORNING.

TRUMAN sits behind the wheel of his car, unscrews the cap of a miniature bottle of Jack Daniels and empties the contents into his Styrofoam cup of coffee. Stirring it in with his finger, he burns himself.

TRUMAN

Shit!

As Truman drinks, he becomes aware of the delighted squeals of children coming from the gymnasium of Utopia Elementary School, adjacent to the parking lot. The sound of the children triggers a memory in his head.

EXT. LONG, WIDE BEACH. DAY, TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS EARLIER.

Unlike a conventional flashback, the scene in his memory appears to be playing on a television screen.

A sandy-haired, SEVEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN, runs towards a bluff on the beach.

The boy's father, KIRK, late-thirties, beer bottle in hand, flirts with two TEENAGE GIRLS at the shoreline. Suddenly, the father remembers his son. He looks anxiously around. The sight of the boy at the far end of the beach causes him to drop his bottle in the sand and run to him.

The boy is near the top of the cliff before his agitated father comes within earshot.

FATHER

(out of breath, clutching his side)

Truman! Truman! Stop!

Truman turns from his perch and waves happily down to his father. But the smile quickly vanishes when he registers the anger and distress on his father's face.

FATHER

Come down now!

His father's unnatural anxiety makes the next bay even more tantalizing. The boy considers defying his father. He puts his hand on the rock above him to stretch up and sneak a peek at the other side. One good stretch would do it.

FATHER

(reading Truman's mind, enraged)

No!

TRUMAN

(sensing his father is keeping something from him)

Why? What's there?

FATHER

(unconvincing)

Nothing's there. It's the same as this.

(trace of desperation)

Come down, please!

Truman is suddenly aware that the hundreds of other BEACHGOERS have stopped their activities to stare at him. Reluctantly he starts to retrace his steps down the rocks. When he finally jumps to the sand, his father grabs him roughly by the arm and drags him away down the beach.

FATHER

I told you to stay close. Don't ever leave my sight again. You gotta know your limitations. You could've been washed away by the tide.

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN, FINANCIAL DISTRICT. MORNING.

TRUMAN emerges from a subway exit in Lower Manhattan and walks briskly down the bustling street. A snarl of taxis, buses and COMMUTER traffic. A STREET VENDOR thrusts a pretzel under Truman's nose, a CAREER WOMAN catches his eye. Truman stops at a newspaper stand and plucks an issue of Cosmopolitan from the rack, quickly flicking through the glossy pages. Glancing in the direction of the NEWSPAPER VENDOR and finding him busy with another customer, Truman deftly tears a portion of the open page and pockets the cutting. He guiltily replaces the magazine, startled to find the Newspaper Vendor standing close behind him.

TRUMAN

(quickly recovering)

Gimme a copy of "The Sydney Morning Herald".

VENDOR

We ran out.

TRUMAN

(hastily departing)

Thanks anyway.

As Truman hurries away, the Vendor picks up the copy of Cosmo and instantly turns to the torn page. It is a Lancome advertisement with ISABELLA ROSSELLINI's nose missing. Truman is still in view but the Vendor makes no effort to confront him, almost as if he were expecting it. Passing one of the tall, black mirrored buildings that grow out of the pavement, Truman glimpses himself in the reflective glass. He doesn't like what he sees and attempts to suck in his gut, but quickly concedes defeat. The image triggers another childhood memory.

INT. SCHOOLROOM. DAY, TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS EARLIER.

Once again, the flashback appears to be playing on a television screen.

The sandy-haired SEVEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN sits in the middle row of a Catholic Elementary School classroom surrounded by thirty-or-so other well-scrubbed, uniformed YOUNGSTERS. DOUGLAS, the boy next to Truman is on his feet under the scrutiny of a sixty-year-old NUN with a face as wrinkled as her habit is starched.

DOUGLAS

I wanna be a chiropractor like my dad.

SISTER

(impressed)

Tell the class what a chiropractor does, Douglas.

DOUGLAS

He helps people by fixing their backs, Sister Olivia.

SISTER

That's right, Douglas.

(holding her back, hamming it up)

Perhaps I'll be your first patient.

The CLASS titters. Douglas sits down, pleased with himself, throwing a smirk to Truman.

SISTER

What about you, Truman?

Truman rises to his feet.

TRUMAN

I want to be an explorer

(with reverence)

...like Magellan.

The Sister's face falls.

SISTER

No one's going to pay you to do that, Truman.

(with scarcely disguised glee)

Besides, you're too late. There's nothing left to explore.

The class roars with laughter and Truman takes his seat.

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN, FINANCIAL DISTRICT. MORNING.

From TRUMAN'S POV we see that he is staring up at relief letters that proclaim, "American Life & Accident Insurance, Inc." above an office building's entrance.

A POLICE OFFICER walking his beat, wanders in Truman's direction. From another angle, we observe Truman from the Police Officer's POV - shaky, handheld camera - on a television

screen. Truman enters the building.

INT. INSURANCE COMPANY - TWELFTH FLOOR. DAY.

In a cramped, cluttered, windowless cubicle, TRUMAN talks on the telephone.

TRUMAN

(into receiver)

...okay, okay, let's call it what it is...
I'm not gonna lie to you...life insurance
is death insurance...you just gotta ask
yourself two questions...one, in the event
of your death, will anyone experience
financial loss?...and two, do you care?

A CLERK drops a large reference book on Truman's desk. He checks the spine - "MORTALITY STATISTICS, 1986 to Present".

TRUMAN

(into receiver)

Hold on will ya?

(to Clerk, putting receiver

to chest, referring to the book)

This's no good. Lumps all drownings
together. I need drownings broken down
by category.

The Clerk shrugs, returns the book to his trolley and continues his rounds.

TRUMAN

(returning to his call)

...just think about what I've been
saying and lemme...hello?...

The person on the other end has hung up. With an apathetic shrug, Truman replaces the receiver. He looks over his shoulder and places another call.

TRUMAN

(lowering his voice)

Can you connect me with directory
inquiries in Sydney, Australia?

(a long delay makes Truman
even more uncomfortable)

...er, yes. Do you have a listing
for a Lauren Powers...

(pause)

...nothing listed?...what about a Sylvia
Powers...nothing? Thanks...

Truman replaces the receiver, disappointed.

INT. LOCAL ITALIAN DELI. LUNCHTIME.

TRUMAN stands in line with a crush of other WHITE COLLAR WORKERS. As he reaches the counter, the store owner, TYRONE, has anticipated his order and has already begun preparing a meatball and mozzarella sandwich on Italian roll. Truman gazes at the sandwich skillfully under construction, pained by his own predictability.

TYRONE

(nauseatingly cheerful)

How's it goin', Truman?

TRUMAN

(deadpan)

Not bad. I just won the State Lottery.

TYRONE

(not listening to Truman's reply, as Truman anticipated)

Good. Good.

TRUMAN

Tyrone, what if I said I didn't want meatball today?

TYRONE

(not missing a beat)

I'd ask for identification.

Truman forces a half-smile.

We focus on another MALE OFFICE WORKER in line at the cash register, watching Truman out of the corner of his eye. About to depart with his sandwich, the man receives a guarded rebuke from the FEMALE CASHIER.

FEMALE CASHIER

(a whisper to prevent Truman overhearing)

He's right there. You're supposed to pay when he's here.

MALE CUSTOMER

(nonchalant shrug as he departs)

He never notices.

We re-focus our attention on Truman who is taking the wrapped sandwich from Tyrone.

TYRONE

Hold on, Truman. I got somethin' to show ya.

Tyrone holds up a front page of the New York Post that features a photograph of a scaled-down replica of Columbus' Santa Maria, moored in front of the Manhattan skyline. Truman's eyes widen at the photograph.

TYRONE

(referring to the photo)

The flagship of Christoforo...our Genoese

navigator, huh? I know you love this like me.

TRUMAN

(averting his eyes with difficulty)

Not me. You got the wrong man.

Tyrone tries not to let his disappointment show as Truman pays the Cashier and exits.

TYRONE

See ya tomorrow, Truman.

EXT. CITY PARK. DAY.

TRUMAN eats lunch alone on a concrete bench in a cement park. From his briefcase he pulls out an old hardcovered book, "To The Ends Of The Earth - The Age Of Exploration".

A TRANSIENT in a wheelchair approaches, looking for a handout. Truman gives the homeless man half of his sandwich, reconsiders and gives him it all, his appetite gone. As the transient wheels himself away, Truman loses himself in his book.

INT. A DIMLY-LIT ROOM SOMEWHERE. DAY.

Close up on an old man's face. CHRISTOF. Hair pure white, late-sixties, a vitality in his eyes that belies his years. He stands beside a floor-to-ceiling window in a dimly-lit room. Outside the window, a single palm tree swaying against a deep blue Californian sky. A news anchor-style earpiece disappears down the neck of the unconventionally-cut suit he wears. Suspended from the ceiling above his head is a television monitor upon which a surveillance picture of Truman, engrossed in his book, silently plays.

CHLOE, twenty-something, androgenous-looking, similarly-suited, joins Christof at the window.

CHRISTOF

(never taking his eyes
from the monitor)

You ever pass a car wreck on the side of the road? They're pulling out a body. You know you shouldn't look, but you do.

INT. A CONFERENCE ROOM SOMEWHERE. DAY.

A group of a dozen MEN and WOMEN of varying ages sit around a circular conference table in a sterile, windowless meeting room. All stare at a single telephone placed in the center of the table, anticipating a call. On cue, the phone rings and one of the men, after waiting for the second ring, picks up.

MAN

Hello?...I'm sorry, I got more than enough insurance.

He hangs up. After a moment the phone rings again.

INT. INSURANCE COMPANY. DAY.

TRUMAN sits at his desk, making a cold call.

TRUMAN

(into receiver)

...this isn't about insurance, this is about the great variable - when will death occur? Could be a week, a month, a year. Could happen today...A sunbather, minding his own business, gets stabbed in the heart by the tip of a runaway beach umbrella...No way you can guard against that kinda thing, no way at all...

The prospect on the other end, unimpressed with his pitch, hangs up. Truman's supervisor, LAWRENCE, younger than Truman by several years, sharper suit, sharper haircut, appears around the corner of the cubicle.

LAWRENCE

(handing Truman some documentation)

Hey, Burbank, I got a bridge-buyer in Stapleton I need you to cloes by four.

Truman turns pale.

TRUMAN

Stapleton on Staten Island?

LAWRENCE

(sarcastic)

You know another one?

TRUMAN

I can't do it.

LAWRENCE

(insistent)

A half hour across the bay. Sea air. Do you good.

TRUMAN

No, I...

(searching for a plausible excuse)

...I got an appointment uptown.

LAWRENCE

This is a sure thing.

(conspiratorial)

They're upping our quota. You need this.

Lawrence exits the cubicle. Truman's head drops. He picks up the framed picture of his wife from his desk. MERYL, early thirties, a petite woman easy to mistake for frail. He deposits the photo in his briefcase and departs.

INT. MUNICIPAL FERRY TERMINAL. DAY.

TRUMAN, briefcase in hand, ashen-faced, stands in line for the Staten Island ferry.

As the TOURISTS and COMMUTERS impatiently brush past him onto the boat, Truman remains frozen to the spot, mesmerized by the scummy water rising and falling beneath the dock, triggering a flashback in his head.

EXT. LONG ISLAND SOUND. DUSK, TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS EARLIER.

The flashback once again appearing on a television screen, the SEVEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN sits alongside his father, KIRK, in a small sailing dinghy.

TRUMAN

(shouting above the wind)

Let's go further, daddy! Let's go further!

FATHER

(shouting back)

It's getting late, Truman.

TRUMAN

(entreating his father)

Please!...

Kirk shakes his head ruefully and indulges his son by heading towards the gathering storm clouds on the horizon.

INT. MUNICIPAL FERRY TERMINAL. DAY.

TRUMAN turns and begins to fight his way back against the tide of PASSENGERS boarding the ferry, emerging back on the street into the bright sunlight, gasping for air.

Gathering himself, he makes for the entrance of Whitehall Street subway station. Two COMMUTERS surrepticiously observe Truman as he departs.

COMMUTER 1

(commenting out of Truman's earshot)

I can't believe he's taking the long way.

COMMUTER 2

He'll never make it.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN. DAY.

TRUMAN stands in a packed subway car, anxiously glancing at his watch, wiping his perspiring hairline with a handkerchief.

INT. TAXI. DAY.

A taxi crosses the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge towards Staten Island. TRUMAN keeps his eyes shut tight all the way across, refusing to look down at the entrance to New York harbor.

EXT. BAY STREET, STATEN ISLAND. DAY.

TRUMAN finally reaches his destination at a well-to-do condominium on Bay Street. As he approaches the lobby, he

realizes he has perspiration showing through the armpits of his suit jacket.

INT. CONDOMINIUM. DAY.

A middle-aged CONCIERGE behind a reception desk, is having his hair brushed by a YOUNGER MAN in his mid-thirties. Anticipating Truman's arrival, the hairdresser fusses one more time and swiftly departs through a rear door. TRUMAN enters the lobby and approaches the CONCIERGE, trying to keep his arms tightly at his sides to hide the perspiration.

TRUMAN

I'm here to see a Mr Hamilton.

CONCIERGE

You from the insurance company? You missed him.

TRUMAN

When will he be back?

CONCIERGE

Vacation. Two months. He waited as long as he could. You was supposed to be here by four.

A clock on the wall reads 4.12pm.

INT. SUBWAY. AFTERNOON.

TRUMAN sits by himself in the rattling subway car, defeated. The only other occupants in the train, a TALL WOMAN, mid-thirties, reading a pulp novel and two MALE YOUTHS, late-teens, sitting opposite the woman, slouching, ogling her.

YOUTH 1

(to woman)

You wanna read to me?

His companion smirks.

YOUTH 1

(more insistent)

You wannna read to me?

The woman looks up, unaware of the boys' presence until now. She quickly avoids eye contact and returns to the book. The other boy reaches over and snatches the novel from her grasp.

YOUTH 2

(menacing)

My friend asked you a question.

The woman picks up her bag from the floor in a reflex and holds it to her. She looks around the train for assistance, briefly catching Truman's eye. The youths also look in Truman's direction, staring him down, daring him to interfere. Truman quickly averts his gaze.

WOMAN

(reaching for the book)

Please...

The boy returns the book to the woman, but before doing so rips out the last page from the novel and stuffs it in his shirt pocket.

YOUTH 2

Now you're gonna have to ask me how it ends. The train pulls into a deserted station. Feeling vulnerable, the woman jumps up from her seat and exits. The youths, sensing a chase, also exit. Scanning the empty platform, the woman realizes she has made a serious error. Truman watches through the train's open door as the boys corner the frightened woman but still he remains in his seat.

YOUTH 1

We're gonna tell you how it ends, baby. One of the youths produces a knife from his pocket and waves it in the woman's face.

YOUTH 2

Don't you wanna know how it ends? The boys pin the woman to the station wall with the weight of their bodies. The woman looks again in Truman's direction. Again she makes eye contact, eyes pleading.

WOMAN

(screams)

Help!! Please, help!!

The woman's second scream is muffled as the train door closes. Truman looks up to the emergency handle beside the door. There is still time to act. He stands up and half-reaches for the handle but moves no further.

The train abruptly pulls away, leaving Truman time to see one of the youths covering the woman's mouth while the other reaches under her skirt before the train enters the tunnel. Truman bows his head in shame as the train rattles on.

INT. SUBWAY STATION. DAY.

The train safely out of sight, the YOUTHS promptly release the WOMAN. She calmly hitches down her skirt, no longer afraid. The young men, no longer angry, help fix her hair and retrieve her shoulder bag.

WOMAN

Thanks.

The threesome walk along the platform together, as if lifelong friends.

WOMAN

(pondering the incident)

He did nothing.

YOUTH 1

(shrugs, suddenly more couth)

Physical violence paralyzes him. Always
has.

EXT. TRUMAN'S HOUSE. DUSK.

The backyard of a modest but tidy one-story tract home. Beyond the plank fence at the end of the property flows a busy Expressway.

TRUMAN wheels a lawnmower towards the garage as his wife, MERYL, pulls up the drive in her four-year-old Toyota Camry. She has a sensible blue vinyl bag over her shoulder and carries a new knife-set in a wooden block. She kisses Truman affectionately on the cheek.

MERYL

(proudly referring to the knife-set)

I got it free with the tune-up.

Looking over Truman's shoulder, she notices a small uncut patch of grass, missed by Truman in one of his passes.

MERYL

You missed a section.

Meryl enters the house. Truman restarts the lawnmower and obediently pushes it towards the offending patch of lawn. As the mower brushes up against the unconforming blades of grass, Truman pulls back abruptly. He checks the kitchen window for Meryl and wheels the mower away, leaving the patch uncut.

INT. TRUMAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN. DAY.

MERYL is applying ointment to her wrists as TRUMAN enters.

TRUMAN

(referring to her hands)

Do they hurt?

MERYL

I was afraid I'd seize up during cross.

One of the keys kept sticking.

Truman picks up Meryl's newspaper and skims idly through it. He notes an article headlined, "SLAYING TRIAL ENTERS SIXTH WEEK".

TRUMAN

(referring to the article)

Is he gonna take the stand?

MERYL

(dispassionate, matter-of-fact)

No point. Two eye witnesses saw him

near the dumpster where they found the legs.

She flexes her arthritic wrists.

MERYL

You gonna eat before you leave?

TRUMAN

I'll get something out.

MERYL

(sensing something odd
in his demeanor)

Did something happen today?

Truman turns to her too sharply, his guilt showing.

TRUMAN

(composing himself)

What could happen?

EXT. UNOPENED FREEWAY. NIGHT.

An abandoned freeway project in Queens. The four hundred yard stretch of deserted freeway is paved but unmarked. At one end is an off-ramp that abruptly ends in inid-air, reinforcing steel protuding from the concrete.

TRUMAN stands at the end of the off-ramp with MARLON, thirty-two, the kind of physique some descibe as fat, others big. Marlon drinks beer from a can while Truman addresses a teed-up golf ball with a number three wood.

Truman winds up and swings, making a healthy contact with the ball. The ball arches away into the night sky, lit by the adjacent operating roadway. From a new angle we see the ball take a huge hop on the outside lane of the abandoned freeway and continue down the asphalt.

Marlon tosses Truman another ball from a bucket of badly scarred golf balls - a ball initialed with the letter, "T". Truman sets the ball up on the makeshift tee area and launches himself into his second shot. With a slight fade, the second ball carries even further than the first.

Truman hands Marlon their sole golf club without comment.

Marlon is still looking admiringly in the direction of the shot.

MARLON

Ouch. Whose nuts were those?

TRUMAN

(opening a beer from the six pack)

Mine.

Marlon tees up a ball of his own. initialed with the letter "M".

TRUMAN

I gotta get out, Marlon.

MARLON

(mild interest only)

Yeah? Outta what?

TRUMAN

Outta my job, outta Queens...out!
Marlon takes a practise swing.

MARLON

Outta your job? What the hell's wrong
with your job? You gotta great job.
You gotta desk job. I'd kill for a desk
job.

Marlon addresses the ball and swings. A sweeping hook shot
that bounces off the freeway out of bounds.

MARLON

(annoyed by the errant tee shot)
Sonofabitch.

TRUMAN

It doesn't mean anything.

MARLON

(still looking in the
direction of his ball)
Nothing means anything. Try stocking vending
machines for a living. My biggest decision
of the day is whether the Almond Joys look
better next to the Snickers or the Baby Ruths.

Truman selects another "M" ball from the bucket and tosses it to
Marlon.

TRUMAN

(adamant)
I gotta get out.

Overcompensating with his second shot, Marlon slices the ball in
the other direction. A lucky bounce keeps it on the cement
fairway.

MARLON

(skeptical, picking up his beer)
Sure and go where?

Truman gulps his beer as he prepares his answer.

TRUMAN

(unable to disguise his reverence)
Australia.

MARLON

(impressed)
No shit. Where is Australia exactly?
Near England?

Truman picks up a golf ball to demonstrate. He points to a
dimple on his make-shift globe.

TRUMAN

See here, this is Queens.

(sliding his finger around
the other side of the ball)

All the way round here, Australia. You
can't get any further away before you start
coming back.

(tossing the world in his hand,
warming to his subject)

Y'know, there're still places in Australia
where no human being has ever set foot.

MARLON

(still dubious)

So when are you leaving?

TRUMAN

It's not that simple. Takes money, planning.
You can't just up and go.

(heading off Marlon's skepticism)

Oh, I'm gonna do it, don't worry about
that. I just gotta move slow. Pick a
moment. Bonus time's just around the
corner. Soon as I get a retaining wall
built on the back of the house I can
start thinking about selling up...and I'll be
gone. Up and away on that big steel bird.

(as if to convince himself)

I'm going, don't you worry about that.

Marlon nods even though the concept of taking flight is beyond
his imagination.

MARLON

I never knew anybody who got out.

An awkward moment. Truman, once again, not so sure of himself.
He masks his doubt by teeing up another ball.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. FREEWAY. LATER THAT NIGHT.

TRUMAN and MARLON wander down the empty freeway, retrieving
the golf balls. As they return them to the bucket they check
the initial on each ball to determine the winner of their
long-drive competition.

TRUMAN

(slightly the worse for drink)

Tick-fucking-tock. That's the fucking
problem, Marlon. I'm thirty-four. I'm
older than Jesus Christ.

Marlon looks sideways at Truman. It sounds to him like the beer
talking.

TRUMAN

Where do the dreams go, Marlon?

MARLON

(picking up the last ball marked with an initial "T", trying to ignore the question)

You win.

TRUMAN

I'm serious. Where do the dreams go?

MARLON

(humoring his maudlin friend)

They're still there. Just buried under what we settled for.

They approach Truman's Oldsmobile. Truman opens the trunk to deposit their humble golfing equipment. Inside are the remains of the fallen light fixture.

TRUMAN

(referring to the light)

You really think it could've dropped off an airliner?

MARLON

(unimpressed)

Sure. It's halogen. You oughta report it.

(quickly changing the subject)

You coming for a drink?

TRUMAN

I can't tonight.

EXT. EATON'S NECK POINT. DUSK, TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS EARLIER. The lines of a television screen signal another of Truman's flashbacks. A small group of MOURNERS in black, several openly weeping, stand on the end of a small jetty, including the SEVEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN, dry-eyed in an ill-fitting suit, his weeping MOTHER, older sister, RAQUEL, and a PRIEST at the head of the gathering.

The priest nods to Truman who holds an ornate wreath, heavy and cumbersome in his tiny hands. He heaves it off the dock.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO

EXT. EATON'S NECK POINT, LONG ISLAND. NIGHT, PRESENT.

A smaller, more simple wreath lands on the calm, dark water beyond the jetty twenty-seven years later. TRUMAN stares at the wreath for a long moment, turns and wanders back towards the shoreline.

In his work suit minus his shoes and socks, he sits on the sand. He has a portable tape recorder slung over his shoulder and points a corded microphone at the surf. For a long while we

watch Truman's impassive face as he makes the recording of the lapping waves, staring up at the handful of stars visible through the gloom.

We focus on the lantern room of a nearby lighthouse. From the light's POV, through the green hue of a night vision camera, we observe Truman get to his feet and walk towards the dark water.

TRUMAN

(shouting at the surf)

I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

INT. DIMLY-LIT ROOM SOMEWHERE. NIGHT.

CHRISTOF's dispassionate face is reflected in the screen of a television monitor that displays the distraught TRUMAN at the water's edge.

INT. TRUMAN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

At the Formica kitchen table, TRUMAN makes calculations in a school notebook, a bottle of beer close at hand. MERYL appears in her robe, a glimpse of black negligee beneath, restless. She throws her arms around Truman's neck.

MERYL

(suggestive)

What are you doing? Come to bed.

TRUMAN

(ignoring the suggestion)

I figure we could scrape together eight thousand.

MERYL

(suddenly exasperated)

Oh. God, everytime you and Marlon--

TRUMAN

--We could bum around the world for a year on that.

MERYL

And then what, Truman? We'd be back to where we were five years ago. You're talking like a teenager.

TRUMAN

Maybe I feel like a teenager.

Getting to his feet. Truman holds Meryl by the arms, talking excitedly to her the way we imagine he did when they were courting.

TRUMAN

Meryl, it'd be an adventure.

MERYL

We said we'd try for a baby. Isn't that

enough of an adventure?

TRUMAN

That can wait. I want to get away. See some of the world. Explore.

Meryl gives a derisive laugh.

MERYL

You want to be an explorer? You mean like all the other great explorers from Queens? You don't even have a passport, Truman. I bet you don't even know how to get one.

The words sting. Truman turns away.

Seeing the pain she's caused, she changes tack.

MERYL

This'll pass. Everybody thinks like this now and then.

(making one more attempt
at seduction)

Come to bed.

EXT. A NIGHTWATCHMAN'S OFFICE SOMEWHERE. NIGHT.

In a nightwatchman's office, two UNIFORMED GUARDS drink coffee.

GUARD 1

How can they have a child?

GUARD 2

It's not gonna be his, you idiot.

GUARD 1

Why not?

GUARD 2

You think she'd go through with it?

(reassessing his own opinion)

Guess I always thought they'd adopt.

INT. TRUMAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM. NIGHT.

TRUMAN stands in the darkened bedroom in his Hanes underwear looking down at his bed. MERYL has fallen asleep waiting for him, snoring lightly. Truman rests his hand tentatively on the bed. The surface rocks. A waterbed. The motion triggers a flashback in his head.

EXT. LONG ISLAND SOUND. DAWN, TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS EARLIER.

As always the flashback appears to play on a television screen. The SEVEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN sits on the upturned hull of a small dinghy in calm, deep water.

TRUMAN

(plaintively calling into the mist)

Daddy!!...Daddy!!...

His cries go unanswered.

INT. A LIVING ROOM SOMEWHERE. NIGHT.

Two OLD WOMEN, seventies, sit beside each other on a sofa against a bare wall, looking directly into camera as they talk. Nothing else of the room is seen.

OLD WOMAN 1

(playing amateur psychiatrist)

It left him with more than his obvious fear of the water. It's as if he felt his father had gone beyond his limitations and he vowed never to repeat the mistake. He was never the same curious little boy again.

OLD WOMAN 2

We're all born with a pound of cocaine up our nose. By the time we're eleven it runs out.

OLD WOMAN 1

Half the people I knew named their babies after him.

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN. MORNING.

TRUMAN emerges from the subway station and as usual stops at the newspaper stand. He picks up a copy of Vogue and flips through the glossy cosmetic ads, surreptitiously tearing CLAUDIA SCHIFFER's nose from one of the pages. He returns the magazine to the rack and begins his daily pilgrimage to work through the rush hour pedestrian traffic.

Pausing to check his profile in the mirrored building, he glimpses the reflection of a HOMELESS MAN standing directly behind him. Truman, spellbound by the man, suddenly wheels around to face him. The Homeless Man is in his late-sixties. more well-groomed and well-fed than the average vagrant, with a serene smile on his face.

From a new angle we see a two-shot of Truman and the Man on a television screen. The Homeless Man places his hand ever so gently on Truman's cheek. Truman makes no effort to withdraw. He is transfixed by the the man's eyes. He appears to recognize him.

TRUMAN

(almost to himself, mouthing
the word)

Daddy...

Suddenly a distinguished OLD WOMAN walking a small dog and a YOUNG MALE BUSINESS EXECUTIVE carrying a briefcase, walking in opposite directions along the sidewalk, grab the Homeless Man, one taking each arm.

A bus suddenly screeches to a halt beside the struggling group, doors already open, and before Truman can react, the Old Woman and the Young Executive force the Homeless Man onto the bus. Truman lurches after them, but he is met by the bus doors, closing sharply in his face.

TRUMAN

(to BUS DRIVER)

Hey, stop! Stop!!

Truman thumps against the doors, but the BUS DRIVER ignores his cries and the bus roars away from the curb. He starts to run after the bus, colliding with several PEDESTRIANS who make no attempt to avoid him.

Stepping blindly into the street, he tries to hail a taxi. A vacant cab suddenly switches off its "FOR HIRE" light as he reaches it. Truman pleads with the TAXI DRIVER through the closed windows and locked doors of the cab but the driver is apparently oblivious to Truman's shouts.

Frantic, Truman, dashes into a nearby parking structure and grabs a bunch of car keys from the key rack of the unsupervised parking attendant's kiosk. Running along the rows of parked cars, Truman desperately presses the car security buttons attached to the key rings

A car alarm chirps and Truman turns in time to see the car's winking sidelights. He jumps inside a brand new BMW and guns the car. The PARKING ATTENDANT, alerted by the squealing tires, appears from the Men's Room and attempts to wave Truman down.

ATTENDANT

(running after the car)

Hey!

Truman ignores the attendant and accelerates into the street without looking, causing a taxi and a postal van to take evasive action.

Catching sight of the bus in the distance, Truman leans on the car's horn as he recklessly weaves past other motorists. He is only a couple of car-lengths from the bus.

TRUMAN

(reading aloud, the
ID number of the bus)

Two, four, oh, six.

Suddenly the taxis and cars directly in front of him start to slow for no apparent reason. Truman looks for a way around but the cars crab across the street, blocking any passage, working together almost as if they are running interference.

TRUMAN

(shouting at the cars)

Outta the way! Outta the way!

The bus is escaping.

Truman suddenly jumps the sidewalk in the car, scattering PEDESTRIANS.

The same cars on the street that seemed intent on slowing his progress suddenly accelerate in unison, anticipating his move. By the time Truman reaches the end of the sidewalk, the cars are clustered together on the corner in an impenetrable jam. Truman spies the bus turn the corner at the far end of the street and disappear from view.

Fumbling with the gear stick, he finally finds reverse but turns to find a hostile group of PEDESTRIANS herded tightly together behind the car, leaving Truman with nowhere left to go.

The car door is suddenly jerked open and the out-of-breath PARKING ATTENDANT yanks Truman from the driver's seat.

ATTENDANT

What the fuck are you trying to pull?!

TRUMAN

(cowering, the fight instantly gone out of him)

I'm sorry! I'm sorry! No harm done!

No harm done!

ATTENDANT

(feverishly inspecting the fenders for dents, he finds none)

I oughta fuck you up!

The Attendant looks into Truman's terrified eyes. They get the better of him.

ATTENDANT

Get the fuck outta here.

The Attendant shoves Truman's briefcase into his arms and brushes him aside. As he departs, Truman notices that the traffic jam in the street and the mysterious crowd of pedestrians has dissolved.

EXT. BUS DEPOT. DAY.

Row after row of parked buses. TRUMAN and MARLON exit an administration office. Instead of heading for the exit, Truman begins marching down the first row of buses, inspecting the number painted on the rear of each one.

MARLON

What're you doing?

(gesturing to the office)

The man told you there's no such bus.

TRUMAN

He's lying. Two, four, oh, six was definitely the number.

Marlon stops walking. Truman continues his inspection. Seeing there is no reasoning with him, Marlon hurries to catch him up.

TRUMAN

I never believed he was dead.

MARLON

(trying to be patient)

C'mon, Truman, a lotta times they don't find a body. You know what the currents are like in that water.

TRUMAN

(shudders, a memory flashing in his head)

You had to see his face when that wave hit. He wasn't scared Marion. It was like he was expecting it, waiting for it. He knew it was coming.

MARLON

Why would he fake it?

(trying to make light)

He's not Elvis Presley.

TRUMAN

(ignoring the joke, pondering the morning's events)

You know what was really strange about today? An old woman with a little dog and a businessman, walking in opposite directions on the sidewalk, both react like clockwork. They force him onto a bus against his will, a bus that doesn't normally stop outside my building. And when I'm giving chase, the bus never makes another stop and I get the feeling that the traffic and the pedestrians are working together to make sure I never catch up with it.

MARLON

(sarcastic)

Oh, so now it's also the pedestrians and the buses and the cars? What are you saying, the entire population of Lower Manhattan is conspiring to stop you finding out that your father staged his death to

pursue a life as a street person? Oh yeah,
that makes sense.

Truman has no answer. We see an aerial shot of Truman and Marlon on a television screen, continuing to check the rows of buses, Marlon still marveling at Truman's obstinance. They have come to the last bus in the final row. Truman hangs his head. The offending bus is not amongst them. He makes towards the exit without comment and Marlon follows.

Unseen by the pair, we focus on the ID number on one of the buses they have previously checked - "2400". A single drip of black paint trickles off the last freshly painted digit.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET. DAY.

TRUMAN and MARLON, drinking beer, sit in the rear doorway of Marion's delivery van, wholesale-sized boxes of candy stacked behind them.

TRUMAN

You think I imagined it, don't you?

MARLON

I think you're missing your dad.

(trying to be delicate)

The anniversary was yesterday, wasn't it?

Truman is surprised Marlon remembered. Marlon nods to the sidewalk.

MARLON

You got sand in your cuffs.

Truman looks down at his feet. A small, tell-tale pile of sand has poured out of his tight trouser cuff.

TRUMAN

Maybe you're right. If only the old woman hadn't left her dog behind.

We see a flashback in Truman's head of the earlier scene in the Lower Manhattan street. It confirms that the old woman's DOG was abandoned on the sidewalk.

INT. TRUMAN'S MOTHER'S APARTMENT, QUEENS. DAY.

TRUMAN stands in the corridor of his mother's cramped, fussy, doilyed apartment with his older sister, RAQUEL, late forties, prematurely grey. Through a doorway, the figure of his MOTHER is visible asleep in bed, despite the early hour. Truman and Raquel speak in hushed tones to avoid waking her.

RAQUEL

Don't you dare go in. Truman. I just got her off to sleep.

TRUMAN

It was Dad. I swear.

Raquel fixes Truman with a contemptuous stare.

RAQUEL

Well, the next time he shows up. bring him over. Until then, I'm not saying a word about this to Mom and neither are you.

TRUMAN

If it wasn't him, it was his twin. Can you think of a reason he'd want to hide from us?

RACQUEL

I know a reason he'd want to hide from you. Look at how you treat us. You live ten minutes away, we hardly see you from year to year and then you turn up with this story so insane you don't even believe it yourself. Haven't you hurt her enough, Truman? She already blames you.

TRUMAN

(incredulous)

I was seven years old!

RAQUEL

But you're here and he's not. Has it really taken you this long to invent a story to ease your conscience?

TRUMAN

I'm telling you he's alive!

RAQUEL

(snapping back bitterly)

And I'm telling you he's fish food!

Truman meets her unforgiving eyes. Without another word, he walks out of the apartment.

Truman safely departed, the figure in the bed, rolls out.

CHRISTOF, fully clothed, relishing the danger of being so close to Truman without being detected. Raquel's demeanor immediately changes, all trace of bitterness gone from her face, she appears younger, posture more upright, almost a different person. Christof hugs Raquel.

CHRISTOF

You did well.

INT. DRESSING ROOM SOMEWHERE. NIGHT.

A cavernous dressing room contains a long row of identical mirrored make-up tables. At the only occupied table, Truman's contrite father, KIRK, is having what's left of his homeless disguise cleaned from his face by a MAKE-UP ARTIST under the watchful eye of two DARK-SUITED BODYGUARDS.

From a mezzanine floor out of Kirk's vision, CHRISTOF and CHLOE also take in the proceedings. Behind their heads, a monitor

shows a surveillance picture of an agitated TRUMAN sitting in his car, trapped in rush-hour traffic.

CHLOE

We've tightened security.

Christof nods indifferently, knowing the damage is already done.

CHLOE

(referring to Kirk)

Why would he do this to us?

CHRISTOF

Old age. Sentiment. You play someone's father all those years, you are someone's father...He sees the way Truman is. He feels responsible.

Christof turns and enters an office adjacent to the balcony, containing a state-of-the-art monitor and VCR. Chloe follows. Christof plays the cued recording without comment. We focus on the screen.

EXT. LONG ISLAND SOUND. DAY, TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS EARLIER.

A younger-looking CHRISTOF sits in a motorboat in the calm water of Long Island Sound. Truman's father, KIRK, twenty-seven years younger and a DARK HAired BOY, Truman's age at the time, acting as a stand-in, sit in the stern of a sailing dinghy. Two SCUBA DIVERS in the ocean.

YOUNG CHRISTOF

(barking instructions to Kirk)

...as soon as we give the cue, tack to windward...

Kirk rehearses turning the tiller in the instructed direction.

YOUNG CHRISTOF

The freak wave will strike from the starboard side. Remember, you don't go to the diver. The diver goes to you.

To simulate the wave, one of the divers puts his full weight on the side of the dinghy to capsize it. Kirk and the boy are tossed into the water. While the boy immediately bobs to the surface in his life jacket, Kirk fails to surface. After a long moment, he reappears with the second diver some distance away. now wearing a spare aqualung.

YOUNG CHRISTOF

...Good! Good!...of course, on the day you only surface once you're safely beyond the cove...Try it one more time...You okay?

Kirk is staring at Truman's stand-in, clinging to the upturned boat. Kirk's expression suggests he is not a totally willing participant in the masquerade.

The present-day Christof freezes the monitor on Kirk's uncertain face.

INT. TRUMAN'S GARAGE. DUSK.

A cluttered garage, dimly lit by a single work lamp. TRUMAN looks over his shoulder before turning his attention to a dusty trunk under a canvas sheet. The trunk is fastened with a combination lock. He deftly dials the correct combination and opens the lid.

Inside, mementoes from his youth. A "HOW TO SAIL" book, a stack of "GREAT EXPLORERS" magazines, and beneath it all, a garment in a drycleaning bag. Truman carefully lifts up the plastic to reveal a schoolgirl's lavender cardigan decorated with pearl beading. He puts the cardigan to his nose and breathes deeply.

Footsteps. Truman hastily drops the cardigan in the trunk and shuts the lid. MERYL, standing close behind.

MERYL

What're you doing out here?

TRUMAN

(turning attention to an upturned
mower on the garage floor)

Fixing the mower.

Meryl doesn't look like she buys it.

MERYL

(concerned)

Your sister called. She was worried about you.

TRUMAN

(matter-of-fact)

I saw my father on State Street dressed as
a homeless man.

MERYL

(attempting to comfort)

I kept seeing my brother for years after he died.

TRUMAN

(irritated at her subtle dismissiveness)

What do you want?

MERYL

I made macaroni.

TRUMAN

I gotta go out. About a replacement...

(hastily adding)

...mower blade.

Meryl nods, not at all convinced. After an uncomfortable pause, she turns and heads back to the house.

EXT. CAR WASH. DUSK.

TRUMAN ruefully examines the broken car aerial on his freshly washed Oldsmobile. In the background is the warning sign he has just ignored, "CLOSE WINDOWS, LOWER AERIALS".

Truman removes the metal coathanger from beneath the lavender cardigan and forces the bent wire into what's left of the severed aerial.

INT. TRUMAN'S CAR. DUSK.

TRUMAN motors down a busy shopping street, crowded on both sides with PEDESTRIANS. As he drives, he tests his car radio. Adjusting the tuner knob, he finds a station.

FEMALE VOICE (from radio)

...west on Atlantic...he's making a right
on Woodhaven...

Truman glances up at the street signs along his route and finds that they coincide exactly with the streets quoted on the radio. Distracted, he almost bowls over an OLD LADY on a crosswalk.

MALE VOICE (from radio)

...God, Truman almost hit Marilyn!...he's
on the move again, passing the Burger King...

Truman readjusts the radio as it starts to fade out. Suddenly there is a piercing blast of feedback. He looks up and, as far as the eye can see, every PEDESTRIAN, MOTORIST and SHOPKEEPER along the street suddenly winces in pain and holds their right ear at exactly the same moment.

MALE VOICE

(from radio, in distress himself)

...something's wrong. Change frequencies...

Truman tries to pick up the channel once again but without success.

EXT. DRUG STORE. DUSK.

Still shaken by his experience with the radio, TRUMAN exits a Drug Store with a small, brown paper bag. Out of the corner of his eye he catches a MALE BYSTANDER still checking his right ear with his finger. He goes to say something to the by-stander but thinks better of it.

EXT. REDLIGHT DISTRICT, QUEENS. NIGHT.

HOOKERS in white heels and spray-on skirts display their wares. TRUMAN cruises slowly past in his Oldsmobile, the expression of the prostitutes turning from seductive to contemptuous as each is by-passed.

Suddenly Truman pulls sharply into the curb beside a leggy, prostitute, VERONICA, wearing a platinum blonde wig. She is in deep discussion with a fellow WORKING GIRL. Veronica recognizes

the car and instantly bends down to the open passenger window.

VERONICA

Hey, Truman! Where you bin? You bin
cheatin' on me?

Veronica opens the door and folds herself into the passenger seat.

INT. TRUMAN'S CAR. NIGHT.

VERONICA knows the form. As TRUMAN pulls away from the curb, she is already removing the lavender cardigan from the drycleaning bag on the back seat. She drapes the cardigan around her shoulders.

VERONICA

Bout time you got this thing cleaned.

(half-joking)

Don't tell me you bin makin' your old lady
wear it.

Truman passes her the brown paper bag without reply. Veronica removes a bottle of perfume and proceeds to liberally apply it.

VERONICA

(examining the bottle)

God, do they still make this stuff?

What's the Sell-By Date?

INT. FLUSHING MEADOW PARK. NIGHT.

From a vantage point in a disused tower high above the park. CHRISTOF and CHLOE watch as Truman's Oldsmobile enters the park grounds and comes to a stop near the large metal framed globe, the Unisphere. Both Christof and Chloe wear earpieces, a miniature television propped at their feet shows a close-up picture of TRUMAN and VERONICA inside the car.

CHLOE

(into a flip-phone,
condescending)

...you see him messing with the antenna...what
did you think would happen?... "lapse of
concentration", is that what you call it?
I call it amateur-hour...

(sarcastic)

In case you hadn't noticed, we don't get to
do it over.

Christof, totally unfazed, regards his zealous young assistant with affection and even a mild amusement.

CHLOE

(as she hangs up, querying the
smile that plays around his lips)

You think this is funny?

CHRISTOF

The mask has slipped before. Everything can be explained.

TRUMAN kills the lights and he and VERONICA exit the car unaware that they are being observed.

CHRISTOF

(adopting a more serious tone
as he returns his attention to Truman)

What's dangerous is that he makes the connection between what happened today and the girl.

We focus on Truman and Veronica as they take a seat at the edge of the pool surrounding the great steel globe.

VERONICA

Like I say, I don't normally do this.

I gotta charge extra.

Truman nods his agreement and forks over several bills.

Veronica deposits the money in her purse and perches herself as modestly as possible on the edge of the fountain.

When she is ready, Truman tenderly places his arm around her shoulder. Veronica responds, hesitantly, becoming immersed in her role. She reaches out her own hand and rests it on the nape of his neck. Slowly both heads drift together, but stop just short of their lips meeting, agonizingly close. So close they can feel each other's breath, barely a sliver of daylight separating them. Then finally their lips touch in the most gentle of caresses.

They hold the kiss for another long moment and then simultaneously break. As they look into each other's eyes, Truman goes to say something but Veronica hushes him by placing a finger to his lips. Then abruptly she moves out of frame, the cardigan falling from around her shoulders in her haste.

From Truman's POV we focus on the cardigan on the pavement, triggering a flashback in his head.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CORRIDOR. DAY, SEVENTEEN YEARS EARLIER.

As with Truman's previous flashbacks, this scene appears to be playing on a television screen. However, on this occasion it is also accompanied by CHRISTOF's comments from his perch in the tower above the park.

CHRISTOF (V.O.)

He's re-created the event on and off for a number of years. We've never understood what prompts him to indulge the fantasy, or for that matter what inspired such a painfully shy boy

to approach her in the first place...

A SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN, carrying a stack of books, spies LAUREN, sixteen going on thirty-five, wearing the lavender, beaded cardigan at her open locker. She is entertaining two GIRLFRIENDS with what appears to be a lewd tale.

CHRISTOF (V.O.)

We'd noticed them making eyes at each other for some weeks but never thought he'd say anything. She was a year older, wrote poetry, way out of his league...

Truman, obviously terrified, musters the nerve to approach the lockers. The three girls look up, surprised by the interruption.

TRUMAN

(to Lauren, tongue-tied, a strangled greeting)

Hi.

GIRLFRIEND 1

(to Lauren as the two girlfriends abruptly depart)

See you in class.

Lauren is unsure whether or not to follow her friends.

TRUMAN

Lauren, right?

Her name is carefully written in blue ink on the covers of her text books.

LAUREN

No.

TRUMAN

(ignoring her lack of interest)

Look. I was wonder--

LAUREN

--I can't go out with you.

TRUMAN

I haven't asked you yet.

LAUREN

Well when you do, that's my answer.

(softening)

I'm sorry. It's not up to me.

TRUMAN

(summoning up courage from somewhere)

Why, you married?

Lauren smiles despite herself.

TRUMAN

I'm not asking you to have my children,

just a pizza. How about Saturday?

LAUREN

(adamant)

No.

TRUMAN

Friday?

Lauren looks around the deserted school corridor.

LAUREN

Now.

TRUMAN

Right now? We got finals.

LAUREN

If we don't go now, it won't happen.

Truman hesitates.

LAUREN

(impatient, looking anxiously around)

Well, what do you want to do?

THE PICTURE ON THE TELEVISION SCREEN SUDDENLY FAST-FORWARDS AT SUCH SPEED IT BECOMES A BLUR - THEN RETURNS TO NORMAL SPEED.

EXT. FLUSHING MEADOW PARK. DUSK.

The SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN and LAUREN enter the park near the Unisphere. The park is deserted on a hot June afternoon.

CHRISTOF (V.O.)

We knew we were taking a risk. She hadn't been properly coached, but we were torn...

He'd summoned the courage to make the approach...We wanted to reward that. Of course she took full advantage...

Truman and Lauren run up to the ledge of the pool surrounding the steel sculpture.

LAUREN

I never knew this place existed.

They both stare down at the inviting water. Lauren suddenly throws off her cardigan and jumps into the pool without another thought. She comes splashing to the surface. Truman stares down, transfixed by the shimmering water.

LAUREN

Come on! Come on! It's wonderful!

TRUMAN

(nervous)

I...I can't.

Lauren suddenly stops splashing.

LAUREN

That's right. Oh, God, I'm sorry.

She quickly climbs out of the pool, dripping wet.

TRUMAN

(confused)

Why? You've got nothing to be sorry about.

Has someone been talking to you?

Lauren wrings out her dress.

LAUREN

(to the sky, upset)

Get me out of here. I don't want to
be here.

Lauren starts walking away.

TRUMAN

(confused, calling after her)

What are you talking about? Lauren! Lauren!

Truman runs after Lauren and holds her by the arms, forcing
her to face him.

LAUREN

(distraught)

My name's not Lauren! It's Sylvia!

Truman looks into her eyes and believes her.

THE PICTURE FAST-FORWARDS AGAIN AT HIGH SPEED FOR A MOMENT AND
RETURNS TO NORMAL.

TRUMAN and SYLVIA (as she is now called throughout the remainder
of the movie) sit on the ledge of the pool - the same spot as
Truman and the hooker, Veronica, seventeen years later. As we
have just seen imitated, Sylvia and Truman kiss with great
delicacy. Truman goes to say something but she covers his lips
with her finger.

SYLVIA

In a minute someone's going to come and
stop me talking to you.

TRUMAN

(looking around the deserted park)

Who? There's no one around.

SYLVIA

(covering his lips once again)

You remember when you were a little boy,
you stood up in class and said you wanted
to be an explorer like Magellan. And your
teacher, Sister Olivia said, "You're too
late, Truman. There's nothing left to
explore." And all the other kids laughed.
And you sat down.

TRUMAN

(incredulous)

How do you know about that?

SYLVIA

It doesn't matter. You've forgotten about that boy, Truman. You got scared. Just because something happens, doesn't mean you can't take another chance in your life.

TRUMAN

I don't understand.

SYLVIA

(looking over her shoulder nervously)

There isn't much time. Just listen. Everybody's pretending Truman. Everybody but you.

(pointing to the
buildings on the horizon)

Look at that project. You think anybody lives there? It's all for you, Truman. A show. The eyes are everywhere.

TRUMAN

(protesting)

Eyes? Where?

SYLVIA

(frustrated, raving)

Everywhere, disguised...Truman, they're going to fill your head with lies. You've got to make yourself deaf, you understand? When you're afraid the most, it means you're on the right track. Trust that boy. Promise me you'll do that?

Truman nods, unsure of the commitment he is making.

Suddenly a 1962 Plymouth roars towards the fountain out of nowhere.

SYLVIA

(scared)

I told you, Truman!

The car skids to a stop and a large MAN, 40ish, with a shock of dark hair jumps from the car. The man yanks the frightened Sylvia to her feet causing her cardigan to fall to the ground.

TRUMAN

(shocked)

Hey!

MAN

(to Sylvia)

Get in the car, Lauren!
Truman jumps up.

TRUMAN

(to the Man)

Who are you?!

MAN

I'm her father!

SYLVIA

No he's not! He's just saying that!

Does he look anything like me?!

TRUMAN

Shut your mouth!

The man backhands Sylvia roughly across the face and bundles her into his car. Truman rushes at the man.

TRUMAN

Leave her alone!

The man easily fends Truman off, knocking him to the ground. He slams shut the passenger door of the Plymouth.

MAN

(to Sylvia)

I told you not to come here anymore!

(to Truman, who is getting
to his feet)

Which one are you?

Truman is suddenly struck dumb, the doubts start crowding back into his head.

SYLVIA

(calling out from the car)

Don't listen to him, Truman. Make yourself deaf. Come find me.

MAN

(to Truman, getting into the car)

Don't bother! We're moving to Australia.

New York's done something to her head.

The Plymouth roars away. Truman stares after it and then turns back to the cardigan left on the ground.

CHRISTOF (V.O.)

Why did he say Australia? Why couldn't he have said New Jersey?

EXT. FLUSHING MEADOW. DUSK, PRESENT DAY.

VERONICA'S head suddenly appears back in frame beside TRUMAN.

VERONICA

You want me to do it again? I think I could do it better.

TRUMAN

(coming back to reality)

No...thank you.

Truman picks up the cardigan. They return to the car.

INT. TRUMAN'S CAR. NIGHT.

TRUMAN drives VERONICA back to her turf. She smokes a cigarette, flicking ash out of the window.

TRUMAN

Veronica, what do you know for sure?

VERONICA

For sure?

(taking a long drag on her cigarette
as she gives the question due
consideration)

The nuns at my school, they used to say,
"The whole of life is faith."

Truman regards his companion in a new light. He comes to a stop at the corner where he picked her up.

VERONICA

(giving Truman an affectionate
peck on the cheek)

On the house.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CORRIDOR. DAY, SEVENTEEN YEARS EARLIER.
Another televised flashback. The SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN stands reflectively beside Sylvia's open and vacated locker.

CHRISTOF (V.O.)

We removed all physical trace of her
but we couldn't erase the memory...

ANOTHER SHORT BURST OF FAST-FORWARD AND THEN THE PICTURE RETURNS TO NORMAL SPEED.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY. DAY

In a secluded corner of the library the SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN sits at a table surrounded by a stack of glossy women's magazines. By tearing out individual facial features - eyes, nose, mouth, ears, chin, hair - from photographs of YOUNG WOMEN in the magazine's advertisements, Truman has been able to improvise a composite picture of Sylvia.

The montage is a passable likeness although Truman is not completely satisfied with Sylvia's nose. He toys with several nose examples before reluctantly settling for one. He stares wistfully at the completed picture.

ANOTHER BURST OF FAST-FORWARD

INT. SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN'S HOUSE. DAY.

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN enters the front door. His older

sister, RAQUEL, has been awaiting his arrival.

CHRISTOF (V.O.)

When he decided to go after Sylvia, we
were forced to intervene once again...

TRUMAN

(excited)

I've got something to tell you, Sis.

RAQUEL

(adopting a low, serious tone)

I've got something to tell you too.

TRUMAN

(unable to contain his news)

I'm going to Australia.

RAQUEL

Mom's real sick.

Truman's face falls. As he enters the bedroom where his ill MOTHER lies gazing at the ceiling, we focus on his EXCHANGE STUDENT APPLICATION that he has inadvertently crushed in his hands.

THE FLASHBACK SEQUENCE OVER, WE RETURN TO THE PRESENT TIME WITH THE IMAGE NO LONGER APPEARING ON A TELEVISION SCREEN.

INT. TRUMAN'S CAR. NIGHT

TRUMAN turns into his street but stops several houses short of his own driveway and kills the car's engine. In the light of a streetlamp, Truman opens his briefcase and removes the framed photograph of his wife, MERYL. But he turns his wife's face away from him and opens the clasps on the back of the frame. Removing the backing, he exposes the composite picture of SYLVIA we witnessed in the flashback of his youth, worn and faded by the years. With the frame on his lap, Truman retrieves a handful of paper fragments from his jacket. Noses. He tests the likeness of each one in turn. Unsatisfied that any of the new noses is an improvement, Truman tosses them out of his car window. We watch the paper fragments blowing in the breeze as Truman's car proceeds down the street and into his driveway.

EXT. SYLVIA'S BEACH HOUSE. DAY.

Close up on a nose. We pull back to reveal that the nose belongs to SYLVIA, seventeen years older than Truman's composite picture - slimmer in the face, wearing her hair shorter. She is standing at the water's edge on a long, deserted windswept beach, several sailing dinghys pulled up beyond the high-water line. In the background, a solitary, white beachfront house - an other-worldliness to the idyllic scene. Looking up into the sky, Sylvia's attention is drawn to a piece

of paper carried on the ocean breeze. The paper catches on the mast of one of the sailing dinghys. A page from a newspaper, carrying a photograph of TRUMAN in the street where he encountered his father. Sylvia retrieves the page. The article's headline reads, "TRUMAN'S FATE IN DOUBT". Spying a MAN, late-thirties, kindly face, riding up to the beach house on an old bicycle, Sylvia secrets the page under her sweater. The man waves cheerfully as he comes to join her on the sand. Sylvia waves cheerfully back.

INT. BAR SOMEWHERE. NIGHT.

In a quiet bar, a WAITRESS patiently explains her viewpoint to the BARMAN. A PATRON on a barstool, eavesdrops.

WAITRESS

She was willing to lose him if it meant he could find himself.

(registering the barman's blank look)

Never mind.

EXT. TRAIN STATION PARKING LOT. MORNING.

TRUMAN sits in his car, about to lace his coffee. From inside the adjacent Elementary School gymnasium, he hears the familiar excited squeals and shouts of SCHOOL CHILDREN. Truman suddenly throws aside his miniature of Jack Daniels and sprints across the parking lot and into the school.

INT. UTOPIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. MORNING.

TRUMAN slams through the front doors into the reception area. It is deserted, no one stationed at the administration desk, the corridors empty. He runs down a vacant corridor, pushing open classroom doors as he goes. They are all unoccupied. Finally, he stands outside the gymnasium. The childrens' voices can still be heard. Truman takes a deep breath and bursts through the double doors.

The room is empty save for a large reel-to-reel tape recorder in the middle of the basketball court playing a continuous tape of childrens' voices. The recorder is attached to speakers on tall stands facing the ventilation ducts. Truman stares at the machine in disbelief.

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN STREET. MORNING.

TRUMAN exits the subway, still lost in thought. He stops at the newstand and picks up a copy of Vanity Fair to resume his ritual search but his heart is not in it.

He starts his trek to work, pausing to stare at his reflection in the mirrored building, hoping that the Homeless Man will appear at his side once again. But no one joins him.

However, as Truman continues to stare, it is the building itself

that takes his interest. An imposing forty-story office building, a black, sheer mirrored box clad in the kind of reflective glass that shields its occupants from the world, a building Truman passes every day.

As usual, a steady stream of EMPLOYEES and VISITORS enter and exit the building's high-ceilinged lobby past an intimidating security desk manned by two UNIFORMED GUARDS. Beyond security are banks of elevators, ferrying executives, clerical staff and delivery personnel to and from their floors of business. Truman abruptly enters the building. He strides confidently past the security desk trying to look as if he belongs.

SECURITY GUARD 1

(to Truman)

Can I help?

TRUMAN

(sneaking a glance at the
building directory)

I have an appointment at, er...Diamond
Enterprises.

SECURITY GUARD 1

They went bust.

The second Security Guard is rising from his seat to block Truman's path to the elevators but Truman reads his mind and makes a dash for it.

He slips into an elevator just as the doors are closing, defeating the flailing arm of the pursuing guard. A WOMAN EXECUTIVE in the elevator looks in horror at Truman. The cause of her concern becomes all too apparent. Looking beyond the woman, Truman discovers that there is no back to the elevator car.

The elevator is simply an opening into the body of the building. Truman pushes past the Woman to be confronted with the fact that the entire office block is nothing but a giant, empty shell with no floors above the ground floor.

The PEOPLE Truman has just witnessed entering the other elevators are milling around a refreshment table, sitting on folding chairs, changing their clothes behind temporary curtained cubicles or lining up to re-enter the bogus elevator cars. Gradually, they all turn to gape at Truman, who in turn stares back, appalled.

The Security Guards suddenly appear at Truman's side and take him by the arm.

SECURITY GUARD 1

You gotta leave.

TRUMAN

(riveted by the equally-stunned
building occupants)

What're they doing?

SECURITY GUARD 2

You gotta leave.

The Guards frog-march Truman out of the huge facade towards an
Emergency Exit.

TRUMAN

(not going quietly)

Just tell me what the hell's going on?

SECURITY GUARD 1

We're re-modelling.

TRUMAN

Like fuck! What're they doing?

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN STREET. DAY.

TRUMAN continues to struggle as the GUARDS usher him to the
street.

TRUMAN

You don't tell me, I'll get you investigated!

SECURITY GUARD 2

Investigate what? You're trespassing!

Truman sees there is no point in arguing further. His
shouts are attracting the interest of PASSERS-BY. A thought
occurs to him.

He starts to run along the street, suddenly entering another
building at random. An office block with a bank on the ground
floor. As he skirts the bank, he feels the eyes of the BANK
STAFF and CUSTOMERS on him. Is he so suspicious-looking or
were they expecting him?

Truman rushes to the elevators. The lights above the doors
show all the elevators on upper floors. Frantic pressing
of the elevator button gets no response. Truman heads for the
stairs but is intercepted by a BANK OFFICIAL who bars his way.

OFFICIAL

You can't--

TRUMAN

(anticipating his response)

--I know.

Truman backs away out of the office and continues to run down
the streets of Lower Manhattan's financial district. Every
building he encounters seems to have a SECURITY GUARD
anticipating his arrival or a building OFFICIAL hanging a CLOSED
FOR BUSINESS sign on the front door.

He feels the eyes of PEDESTRIANS. Is he simply drawing attention to himself by his behavior? Truman wheels around, trying to make eye contact with passers-by. They shy away. Truman stops still, his head reeling.

INT. INSURANCE COMPANY. DAY.

From the office window on the twelfth floor, TRUMAN can observe the glass building down the street. He ponders the black, mirrored box. LAWRENCE appears at his side.

TRUMAN

You ever been into the AMT Building?

LAWRENCE

(following Truman's gaze)

Not since they begun reconstruction.

(referring to the file
in Truman's hands)

What're you doing with that?

TRUMAN

(defensive)

I'm going to visit a site.

LAWRENCE

What for?

TRUMAN

Because I never do.

LAWRENCE

(placing a hand on Truman's arm)

That's why we got adjusters.

TRUMAN

(looking at Lawrence's hand
on his arm)

You got a problem with me going?

LAWRENCE

I got a problem with you not doing your job,
Burbank. You already screwed up once this week.

TRUMAN

Let me worry about that.

Truman exits with the report. After waiting only a matter of seconds for an elevator, he impatiently enters the stairwell. As soon as he disappears from sight, a grim CHRISTOF emerges from a nearby office, shadowed as always by CHLOE. They approach Lawrence with the familiarity of business associates.

LAWRENCE

680 West 89th.

Christof nods. Chloe opens a flip-phone to make a call.

INT. INSURANCE CO. - STAIRWELL. DAY.

An out-of-breath TRUMAN arrives on the second floor landing of the stairwell to find two burly MOVERS blocking his path with a large office desk they are attempting to transport. Truman considers retracing his steps, then without warning clambers over the mahogany barrier.

MOVER 1

Hey, would it kill ya to wait?!

INT. SUBWAY. DAY.

TRUMAN paces impatiently on an empty subway platform with other frustrated passengers. He loses patience and suddenly turns and runs up the stairs.

INT. TAXI CAB. DAY.

TRUMAN sits seething in a traffic jam that exists for no apparent reason.

TRUMAN

(impatiently to driver)

Is there another way? Can't you get around this?

EXT. A CHARRED APARTMENT BUILDING ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE. DAY.

TRUMAN exits his taxi and takes in the scene. A partially burnt building, waterlogged, still faintly smoldering. Truman checks the address on his file. A small, serious-looking BOY straddles his bicycle on the sidewalk.

TRUMAN

(to the boy)

When was the fire?

BOY

(shrug)

Week ago.

TRUMAN

How come it's still smoking?

BOY

Started up again.

(dismissive)

Kids.

TRUMAN

(referring to his claims report)

Says here it burnt to the ground.

BOY

Wishful thinking maybe?

The boy is wise well beyond his years. Truman fixes him with a glare.

TRUMAN

Someone send you to tell me all this?

BOY
(unfazed)

You the one askin' questions.

The boy casually rides away.

EXT. CITY PARK. DAY.

TRUMAN wanders aimlessly through a city park, observing. We sense, truly observing for the first time.

A group of YOUTHS play a pick-up game of basketball. A YOUNG WOMAN walks a pair of AFGHAN HOUNDS. An OLD MAN answers the incessant questions of his GRANDCHILD. Nothing appears amiss.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE. DAY.

TRUMAN stands amidst a throng of TOURISTS and COMMUTERS marooned on Times Square. Mesmerized by the two fast-moving rivers of vehicles flowing through the intersection.

Truman stares down at the street, contemplating stepping out into the traffic. However as his foot is poised, the stream of cars that passed so close by seconds earlier, now appear to be giving him a wider berth. He steps off the sidewalk and, to an accompaniment of car horns, begins to wander back and forth without fear through the traffic, confident that each vehicle will take evasive action.

Safely on the other side of the street, he stands in front of the window of an electronics store. He watches a local TV news show covering the Santa Maria replica moored near Pier 13. However Truman is forced to look away when he glimpses his own face on another TV taking a feed from a camcorder aimed out the store window. He shudders at his video reflection.

INT. DIMLY-LIT ROOM SOMEWHERE. DAY.

TRUMAN'S face stares out from a television monitor. We slowly pull back to reveal that other smaller monitors surround the first until we find ourselves staring at a video wall in a room the size of a football field.

The curved bank of monitors, suspended by cables from the ceiling, gives the appearance of a giant patch-work mobile. Investigating the screens we discover surveillance pictures from all over New York City, covering every facet of Truman's life. Camera angles from the interior of Truman's house, his backyard, car, subway station, office, the deli he frequents, the seashore to which he is drawn, the park he visits with Veronica, the abandoned freeway where he golfs with Marlon, many of the locations strangely devoid of people.

Beneath the video wall is a state-of-the-art mixing desk, its illuminated buttons glowing brightly in the gloom. Facing the desk, several OPERATORS in high-backed, high-tech swivel chairs,

wearing the slimmest of headsets. SIMEON, a meticulous young man with a penetrating gaze, sits directly in front of the largest of the monitors, co-ordinating camera angles. CHRISTOF stands over Simeon's shoulder, staring intently at the live picture of Truman now seated at a streetside cafe, continuing to inspect his surroundings. CHLOE hovers in the background.

There is an uncomfortable silence in the control room as the production crew feel themselves under scrutiny for the first time. Christof leans forward and talks soothingly into a microphone on the control panel.

CHRISTOF

...Everybody stay focused...remember who you are...

EXT. STREETSIDE CAFE, LITTLE ITALY. DAY.

TRUMAN sits alone at the table, still looking for a false move. A DELIVERY MAN unloads boxes from the back of his truck and carries them into a Restaurant Supply store. Further down the street CONSTRUCTION WORKERS take their time tending to an electrical repair in an exposed manhole. A POSTAL WORKER does his rounds. An OLD WOMAN struggles with two heavy shopping bags. Everybody appears natural, places to go.

Truman turns his attention to a group of ITALIAN-LOOKING MEN at the only other occupied table at the cafe. We see extreme close-ups as Truman scans the men's faces for any sign of phoniness. They are talking loudly, making suggestive comments to the WAITRESS and generally showing off like schoolboys. Their behavior passes the test, all seems genuine.

Truman idly regards his three-stone wedding ring with which he has been fidgeting.

INT. CONTROL ROOM. DAY.

The on-air monitor shows TRUMAN from the ring's POV, revealing that the small center diamond contains a miniature, hidden camera. Truman suspects nothing.

He looks up to find two well-to-do SOGGERS, out for a lunchtime run, making their way down the street towards the cafe. Truman happens to glance at the sneakers of one of the joggers. He springs to his feet and blocks the joggers' path.

CHRISTOF

(staring at the monitor)

Damn!

Unseen by Christof, his Assistant Director, Simeon takes a moment of pleasure from the older man's distress.

EXT. STREETSIDE CAFE, LITTLE ITALY. DAY.

TRUMAN

(to the jogger with
the familiar sneakers)

Small world.

JOGGER 1

(attempting to sidestep Truman)

Excuse me.

Truman blocks the man a second time.

TRUMAN

You don't remember? Two days ago I gave you
my meatball sandwich in the park. You were
in a wheelchair. Same sneakers.

An almost subliminal flashback appears in Truman's head
confirming that the JOGGER and the HOMELESS MAN in the
wheelchair two days earlier are one and the same.

TRUMAN

(commenting ironically on his
new-found mobility)

A miracle!

JOGGER 2

(coming to his companion's aid)

Get the hell outta here.

The second jogger pushes Truman back against the cafe table
causing him to stumble.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - MARLON'S WORK. DAY.

MARLON is loading boxes of candy into the back of his van.

TRUMAN hurries up to him.

TRUMAN

Marlon. I've gotta talk to you.

MARLON

(surprised)

Truman! Sorry, I'm up against it today.

TRUMAN

I've fallen over something, Marlon.

Something to do with my Dad. I think.

MARLON

(looking at him for the first time)

Are you okay? You look like shit.

TRUMAN

(ignoring the inquiries
about his health)

It's big, Marlon. You wouldn't believe
who's in on it.

MARLON

(distracted)

In on what?

TRUMAN

There's no point trying to show you, they cover their tracks too well. But I've been going into a lotta strange buildings, seeing a lotta familiar faces, y'know what I mean?

MARLON

(still engrossed in his own problems)

Something's definitely in the air. My last delivery, a kid got crushed to death. tilting a vending machine. They won't even let me take the rest of the day off.

TRUMAN

Do it, anyway.

Marlon scoffs at the suggestion then realizes Truman isn't joking.

TRUMAN

I'm deadly serious. Marlon. We can't talk here. I'm being followed.

MARLON

(suddenly concerned)

Who?

TRUMAN

I don't know. They look just like regular people.

(producing a notebook from his jacket pocket)

But I've been writing down numbers - license plates, taxi numbers, ID numbers - the same ones keep cropping up over and over.

MARLON

Is someone leanin' on you, Tru? Cos I got some friends here, they owe me. We can lean back.

(pointing out a taxi parked outside the yard)

Is he one of them?

TRUMAN

(anxious)

I don't know. Could be. One thing's certain. The key is spontaneity. Be unpredictable. They can't stand that. That's why we've got to get outta here. Can you come with me?

MARLON

(weakening)

Christ, Truman. You're gonna get both our asses fired.

Marlon shuts his van and gets in. Truman enters the passenger side.

MARLON

Where're we going?

TRUMAN

The beach.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

CHRISTOF is in deep conversation with two executives. MOSES, a contemporary of Christof but more jaded and debauched-looking and ROMAN, a fresh-faced, younger man. CHLOE hovers in the background. A monitor, suspended from the ceiling shows a surveillance shot of TRUMAN and MARLON pulling into a beach parking lot in Marlon's van.

The glass conference room looks out onto the vast control facility where SIMEON continues to call the shots, all too aware of the closed-door discussion taking place in the background.

CHRISTOF

(marveling, excitedly referring to Truman on the monitor)

I can't believe how much he's shoved down. That he sensed the significance at aged seven and clung to it so fiercely.

Roman paces, agitated, unimpressed. Moses, more respectful.

CHRISTOF

(gesturing to the clifftop on the monitor pointedly excluding Roman from the conversation)

You remember, Moses, it used to end right there, before the expansion.

ROMAN

(unable to contain his anxiety any longer)

Christof, the cracks are starting to show.

CHRISTOF

(reassuring, keeping himself in check)

I'll paper over them.

CHLOE

(coming to the defense of her mentor)

Truman's had bouts of paranoia before and recovered.

ROMAN

(adamant, faintly hysterical)

No, not like this. It's compromised.
Becoming unwatchable.

Too much for Christof. He wheels on the young man.

CHRISTOF

Fear? Doubt? Is that what you have
trouble watching? Perhaps you don't like
watching yourself.

Roman is stung into silence.

MOSES

(realizing his colleague is in
over his head, including Chloe
to save Roman's face)

Why don't you two wait outside?

Reluctantly Roman and Chloe exit and join Simeon at the video
wall.

CHRISTOF

(instantly more comfortable in the
company of a man his own age)

He's jumped the rails, Moses, that's all. We'll
get him back on.

MOSES

You know why they're so nervous. The birth of
Truman's child is going to double revenue.
For God's sake don't let him upstage you.

(indicating Simeon through
the glass walls)

You've been grooming a successor.

CHRISTOF

He's not ready.

MOSES

Him or you?

CHRISTOF

(jaw setting firm, referring
to Truman on the monitor)

You can't pull him back in without me.

(more reflective)

He's just acting out of character.

MOSES

What if he's in character? What if he's
starting to act in character at last? Have
you ever considered that?

EXT. LONG ISLAND BEACH. DAY.

TRUMAN runs down the beach towards the cliff he attempted to scale as a seven-year-old boy.

EXT. CLIFFTOP. DAY.

TRUMAN sits on the clifftop, staring out at the view his father had been so desperate for him not to see twenty-seven years earlier. However the deserted bay beyond is exactly as his father described - almost identical to its neighbor. MARLON, laboring, crests the rise and joins his friend on the clifftop.

MARLON

What're we doing here, Truman?

TRUMAN

This is where it started.

MARLON

Where what started?

TRUMAN

Things. Things that don't fit. Loose threads. False steps. Slips of the tongue.

MARLON

(irritated)

Make sense, Truman. You going religious on me?

TRUMAN

(tears of bitterness welling in his eyes)

My father didn't want me to see what was over here. Whatever it was, it's gone now. I never shoulda listened to him that day. I knew it was wrong.

We see a quick flashback of SEVEN-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN on the cliff-face twenty-seven years earlier.

TRUMAN

There were a hundred people on the beach that day. Everybody knew what was going on except me.

MARLON

I don't want to put you down but why would anybody go to all this trouble over you?

TRUMAN

Maybe I've been mistaken for somebody else.

(a memory triggered)

A couple of years ago, I tried to get hold of a copy of Time Magazine. The week before an ad said, "Next Week: Truman Burbank and the Lost Generation".

Marlon shrugs, unimpressed.

TRUMAN

A guy with the same name as me in Time Magazine. It ain't a common name so I looked out for it. But the day it came

out, every newstand was sold out. No library had it. I even wrote off for a back-issue. Never seen a copy to this day.

Marlon remains unconvinced.

TRUMAN

Maybe I'm being set up for something. You ever feel like that, Marlon? Like your whole life has been building to something?

Marlon looks skeptically at Truman. He hasn't had that feeling.

MARLON

(becoming testy)

A coincidence. Haven't you ever heard of a coincidence?

TRUMAN

I'm a walking coincidence. I can't count 'em. No something's happening, Marlon. I've got to get to the bottom of it.

MARLON

(shaking his head in exasperation)

Of what?! Why're you doing this to yourself?

TRUMAN

I'm scared, Marlon. I'm as scared as hell. But I've never felt more alive. It's just like she said.

MARLON

(suddenly intrigued)

Who?

TRUMAN

It doesn't matter. She was too beautiful for here. Now Marlon is really confused.

TRUMAN

Can you lend me some money? A hundred bucks.

MARLON

All I got on me is the takings from the machines. Why do you need it?

TRUMAN

I'm going away for a while.

INT. SYLVIA'S BEACH HOUSE. DUSK.

The comfortably furnished room of a writer. Walls lined with books. Desk overlooking the sea, strewn with notes, photos and other reference material. Sylvia's name on the spine of several published volumes. Pages of unfinished manuscript, handwritten in blue ink.

SYLVIA stands at a bookcase, looking for inspiration. As she

pulls out a book, a magazine falls to the floor. Truman's missing copy of Time Magazine. His face on the cover with the headline, "Truman Burbank and the Lost Generation". Sylvia retrieves the magazine. In front of a nearby mirror, she holds Truman's photographed face next to her own, for a moment imagining them together. Then, catching herself, she quickly lowers the magazine, left alone with her own reflection.

INT. TRUMAN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

We see TRUMAN's disturbed face reflected in the screen of his television set, montaged over that of ROBIN LEACH, host of "Lifestyles Of The Rich And Famous". MERYL, wearing her robe, head against Truman's chest, sips from a bottle of beer.

MERYL

(attempting to open him up)

What's going on, Truman? You're not yourself.

TRUMAN

(vague)

Maybe you just don't know me very well.

INT. DINING ROOM SOMEWHERE. NIGHT.

CHRISTOF eats a sumptuous meal in an ornate private dining room with an elegant WOMAN, thirty years his junior. Playing silently on a monitor on an antique side table is a surveillance shot of TRUMAN and MERYL slumped in front of their television. CHLOE, enters the room and nods an apology to Christof's dinner companion - a woman her own age. Christof's companion shrugs resignedly. Christof registers Chloe's thinly disguised resentment, enjoying the rivalry.

Chloe inserts a cassette tape into a nearby VCR. Christof wipes his mouth with his napkin and picks up his wine glass as he gives the television his full attention. A commercial for "GLOBAL TRAVEL" begins to play.

INT. TRUMAN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

TRUMAN continues to watch "Lifestyles" restlessly. However, as he goes to get up from the sofa, MERYL starts to slide down his chest towards his lap.

MERYL

We could do it right here, like we used to.

The program cuts to a commercial break. The commercial is for "Global Travel".

NARRATOR

(from television)

Travelling Down Under? Global Travel is turning rates to Australia upside down. Round Trip to Sydney only \$829. One way, \$465.

Global Travel at Broadway and 44th...
Truman perks up at the commercial while Meryl's attention is elsewhere.

TRUMAN

(abruptly getting up)

Lemme go to the bathroom.

MERYL

Don't be too long.

Truman exits the living room. However, on his way to the bathroom he hesitates at the kitchen table. He surreptitiously lifts the plastic-coated plaid tablecloth to reveal numerous bills laid out flat beneath it to keep the stash hidden.

INT. CHRISTOF'S BEDROOM. DAWN.

CHLOE pulls back long, white silk drapes to reveal a spectacular view overlooking the Hollywood Hills. CHRISTOF rouses from his enormous round bed. His DINNER COMPANION also stirs, waving coyly to Chloe as she modestly covers herself, only mildly perturbed by the intrusion. Chloe switches on the television set in the extravagant bedroom. Playing on the set are TRUMAN and MERYL still fast asleep in their own bed.

CHRISTOF

What happened overnight?

CHLOE

He couldn't do it, even on the sofa.

CHRISTOF

(smiling to himself)

God, that thing of his must be psychic.

(matter-of-fact)

He didn't masturbate?

CHLOE

Not for the last two inonths.

Chloe exits and Christof climbs out of bed.

INT. TRUMAN'S HOUSE. MORNING.

MERYL emerges from the bathroom, ready for work, surprised to find TRUMAN sitting at the kitchen table.

MERYL

(rubbing ointment into her wrists)

Aren't you gonna be late?

TRUMAN

I got a call in the area.

(nodding to her wrists)

What's the case? Anything interesting?

MERYL

(dispassionate)

Rape on the subway.

Truman's eyes widen. We see a quick flashback in Truman's head of the two YOUTHS assaulting the WOMAN on his train.

MERYL

They're guilty as hell but they'll walk. No witnesses. Her word against theirs.

(picking up her bag to leave)

Maybe we could meet for lunch today.

Meryl gives him an affectionate kiss and exits the back door. Truman waits for the sound of Meryl's car to disappear down the road and exits himself.

INT. COURT BUILDING. MORNING.

TRUMAN enters the courtroom building. A crush of DEFENDENTS, FAMILIES, ATTORNEYS and POLICE OFFICERS. Truman goes to enter a courtroom but a SECURITY GUARD blocks his path.

SECURITY GUARD

You a witness?

TRUMAN

Er, yes...

(suddenly losing heart)

No, no I'm not.

SECURITY GUARD

Closed session.

Before the guard can move him on. Truman sneaks a look at proceedings through the courtroom door window. He recognizes the two YOUTHS sitting at the defendant's table. A PROSECUTOR is on his feet, addressing the JURY. MERYL is working attentively at her stenotype machine, her fingers rapidly pressing the keys. However, Truman notices a glaring omission. There is no paper emerging from Meryl's machine. The roll of paper tape sits on the floor beside her chair leg.

:

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY. DAY.

The EMPLOYEES and CUSTOMERS inside GLOBAL TRAVEL are all doing a last-minute primp, fixing their hair and checking their clothes. Suddenly, in unison, they take their positions and begin working. As TRUMAN enters GLOBAL TRAVEL, one CUSTOMER looks up a fraction too quickly, anticipating his arrival. Truman takes a seat at the only unoccupied desk, opposite a female TRAVEL AGENT. Feeling uneasy about a surveillance camera in the corner of the room, he nervously obscures his face with his hand.

TRUMAN

I wanna book a flight to Australia.

AGENT

Where exactly?

TRUMAN

(believing she is being
deliberately obtuse)

Australia.

AGENT

(a trace of condescension)

Where in Australia? What city?

TRUMAN

Sorry, Sydney. Sydney, Australia. That's right.

AGENT

(entering the destination in her
computer)

For how many?

TRUMAN

(finding the question suspicious)

One.

AGENT

When do you want to leave, remembering, of
course, that you do lose a day on the way there?

TRUMAN

(more urgent than he intended)

Today.

AGENT

(reading off her computer screen)

I'm sorry. I don't have anything for a
week.

TRUMAN

(suspicious)

A week.

AGENT

(patiently explaining)

It's the busy season.

TRUMAN

(paranoia showing)

You sure you're not trying to keep me here?
You are a travel agent, aren't you? Your
job is to help people travel, not keep 'em
where they are.

(pointing to the agent's
name tag, "DORIS - Travel Agent")

Or maybe you're a different kind of agent, Doris?

AGENT

(showing amazing restraint)

I do have a fabulous rate on a cruise ship departing for Australia tomorrow. But you wouldn't want to do that.

TRUMAN

Why wouldn't I?

AGENT

I thought you were in a hurry.

TRUMAN

(calming down)

That's right.

AGENT

You want to book the flight?

Truman pulls out a wad of money from his pocket and several rolls of quarters from Marlon's vending machines. The agent looks askance at the pile of cash.

TRUMAN

You were expecting me, weren't you?

The travel agent ignores the question and prints the ticket.

AGENT

It's non-refundable.

EXT. SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA. DAY.

CHRISTOF stands with a PRODUCTION MANAGER, mid-thirties, on the forecourt of the Sydney Opera House, its sail-like roofs soaring above them. Framing the background, the coathanger-shaped Sydney Harbor Bridge.

PROD. MANAGER

(unable to conceal his pride)

Happy?

Christof gives a grudgingly complimentary nod.

CHRISTOF

(staring out at the pleasure craft littering the harbor)

Can we contain him long enough?

PROD. MANAGER

I think so.

Christof looks skyward at the cottonwool clouds above the harbor.

PROD. MANAGER

(anticipating his next question)

He flies at night. Thick cloud cover to disorient him. Hopefully we'll knock him out with complimentary cocktails, pull the

shades down during the movies. He'll never know. Christof gives another grudging nod of approval. The Production Manager is beckoned by a group of CONSTRUCTION WORKERS who are putting the finishing touches to a corner of the Opera House. CHLOE drifts to Christof's side, a Watchman TV in her hand.

CHLOE

(referring to the surrounding scene)

Why go to all the trouble?

Christof glances at the TV screen in her hand, showing TRUMAN sitting in his office gazing at his composite picture of SYLVIA.

CHRISTOF

He believes she has the answer.

CHLOE

Why not just tell him she's dead?

CHRISTOF

It's too late for that. That won't satisfy him. He's going to have to find out for himself. See it with his own eyes. Right now he needs something genuine.

(rueful, all too aware
of the contradiction)

Even if we have to fake it.

INT. INSURANCE COMPANY. DAY.

Close up on typewriting appearing on a page.

"Please accept my resignation from
American Life & Accident, Inc. to
take effect immediately.

Yours tru"

TRUMAN gets up from the typewriter in mid-word and strolls to a fellow AGENT's desk.

TRUMAN

(to agent, picking up
a dictionary)

"Yours truly..." You spell "truly"
"l...y" or "e...l...y"?

INSURANCE AGENT

I always write "Yours faithfully..."

Truman finds the appropriate page in the dictionary and gazes at the entry for a long moment. He looks up, staring into the middle distance. His eyes widen as something clicks in his mind. Suddenly LAWRENCE snatches the dictionary from his hand.

LAWRENCE

Where the hell have you been, Burbank?
What the hell's going on?

TRUMAN

That's what I'd like to know, Lawrence.
The AGENTS in the other cubicles turn in their direction.

TRUMAN

I was just about to resign. Isn't that
a laugh? I just realized there's nothing
to resign from, is there?

LAWRENCE

Listen, don't bother with the resignation.
Just get the fuck outta here.

TRUMAN

(addressing the whole office)
Why're you all pretending? Huh?
(gesturing to a computer terminal)
What is this a front for? Why aren't I in
on the joke? Was I away that day?!

Noting two colleagues exchanging a look, he pulls the computer
off the desk to get their attention. It lands on the floor with
an expensive crash.

TRUMAN

(hysterical)
I'm talking to you! Who am I?!

LAWRENCE

(taken aback by the sudden violent act)
You better get outta here or I'm calling Security.

TRUMAN

(mimicking)
"Security! I'm calling Security".
Truman picks up the framed photograph from his desk, containing
SYLVIA's hidden likeness. Suddenly he wheels on Lawrence,
pinning him to a cubicle wall.

TRUMAN

You don't believe a single word you're saying!
(to the assembled group)
None of you do!
(suddenly talking to a sprinkler
head in the ceiling)

You hear me?!

We see Truman's manic face from the sprinkler head's POV.
Truman stomps off down the corridor, other Insurance Agents
giving him a wide berth. He shoves computers, desk lamps and
pot holders off desks as he goes.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET. DAY.

TRUMAN steps out of the office, suddenly able to breathe

again, pleased to be outdoors despite the gloomy sky overhead.
INT. CONTROL ROOM SOMEWHERE. DAY.

CHRISTOF is once again standing at the picture window in the dimly-lit control room where we first encountered him. Behind him, the fronds of the palm tree sway in a gentle breeze. The sky, a cloudless, cobalt blue in sharp contrast to the overcast day in New York City.

SIMEON, co-ordinating camera angles, sits in front of the largest of the monitors that shows a live picture of TRUMAN stuck in his car in gridlock.

SIMEON

(talking quietly into a
slim headset)

...and back to the close-up...

CHLOE's attention is focused on a subsidiary monitor displaying a freeze frame of TRUMAN reading the dictionary a few minutes earlier.

CHLOE

(to a hard-bitten Operator, staring
at the dictionary)

Do you think he sees the entry?

OPERATOR

Hard to tell.

CHRISTOF

(sarcastic)

Why don't we ask him?

CHLOE

(snapping back, referring to the book)

I don't know how it got there!

(to Operator)

Enhance.

Christof turns his back on the screen and stares out the window. We focus on an enhanced picture of the dictionary's text.

genuinely, etc. 2. in fact; really.

Trumanesque (Esk)a. characteristic
of the experiences of Truman Burbank
(a Trumanesque town, conversation,
etc.) [circa. 1972)

:

trump,n. [