

TITLE AND CREDITS

FADE IN

1 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY 1

TALLEY, a pretty, mid-20's African American woman, waits at a bus stop. Across the street she sees MIKE, an overstressed cube-dweller in a jacket and tie, at the opposite bus stop. He's getting desperate. He checks his watch and calculates the odds. No buses in sight. Talley smiles compassionately at him. He avoids her look. PETER, a young, messenger bag carrying British import, screeches up next to Talley on his bicycle, a little too closely. Peter blushes. She smiles generously to him. They both look politely away from each other, but in the same direction, toward Mike.

Mike notices NOAH, 20 feet away, a dark skinned man in a Raiders jacket, holding a paper bag and wearing a knit cap. Noah looks at Mike. Mike looks away quickly. He looks back. Noah is still looking. Mike turns away. He is uncomfortable.

Talley glances at Peter. He has clearly sized up the situation across the street: Mike is over-reacting and Peter thinks this is funny. Talley likes this. He's good looking too.

Mike looks around. No buses. A few people walk about on their way home from work. He looks back: Noah is walking toward him. Mike is scared and takes a step back. Noah glances around furtively, shifts the paper bag to his left hand and reaches into his right pocket with his right hand. Mike looks from Noah's hands to face in alarm.

Wide shot. The scene freezes.

Peter and Talley look at each other, frozen at first. Then they pat themselves, checking to make sure they are still animate. They look at each other astonished.

ALBERT, ROY, VAL, and RUNGTIWA walk in looking at each other and the camera. They walk between the frozen people.

ALBERT
Were you scared?

VAL
I was scared.

Albert walks around a frozen person, hides behind him, sticks his head out.

ALBERT

This is bad ass. It's just like
"The Matrix".

Peter looks at the frozen people, at the camera, and back to the frozen people.

PETER

How is this possible?

No one answers Peter. He and Talley walk over to inspect the frozen Noah.

ALBERT

What did you think was going to
happen?

RUNGTIWA

The black man was walking toward
the white man.

TALLEY

Raiders jacket, paper bag, knit
cap.

Val stands next to Mike.

VAL

I think this guy's a goner.

Albert stands behind a man in a suit. The man is tilted forward in the middle of a stride. Albert pulls up his sleeves, does a take to the camera.

ROY

Oh, brother.

Albert gives the man a push. Time and motion resume. None of the people can see our characters who get out of their way.

PETER

Thank God!

Noah continues to walk. Mike looks around nervously; no place to escape. Mike takes a step back. Noah walks past him. He takes a potato chip wrapper out of his pocket and throws it into a garbage can as he walks past it. The audience can see through the bag: an empty bottle of orange juice.

Val looks incredulous.

VAL

What the heck was that?

TALLEY
 You thought he had a knife and a
 40.

VAL
 Well yeah.

Mike looks relieved and shaken.

PETER
 Oh, I get it.

Peter walks past Val and Mike toward the camera. The screen splits in two. On the right half of the screen:

PETER
 You see a close-up of Mike.

On the left half of the screen: Close-up of Mike looking worried with the TITLE "Mike".

PETER
 And a close-up of Noah.

Close-up of Noah looking dangerous with the TITLE "Noah".

PETER
 And you're scared.

Noah's half the screen slides off, revealing Talley who stands looking at Peter with admiration. Peter looks at her and looks down shyly, then walks past Roy. The camera stays with Roy who draws a rectangle with his finger around the edge of the screen.

ROY
 This is a movie.

Rungtiwa walks past Roy into a Close-up and stops.

RUNGTIWA
 And nothing in a rectangle is true.

DISSOLVE TO

TITLE: NOTHING IN A RECTANGLE IS TRUE

FADE IN:

2 INT. FAMILY ROOM - DAY

2

A typical family evening at home. The TV is on. DAD is sitting in a lounge chair, MOM on the couch.

A SIX-YEAR-OLD kid sits beside her. A TEENAGER and a TWELVE-YEAR-OLD sit on the floor. They pass a bag of chips and drink sodas. On TV, "Mac" MacGyver is in trouble. He's in a Huey UH-1H cargo helicopter with a machete-wielding drug lord. The helicopter tilts dangerously to and fro as the pilot struggles to right it. "Chica" Escobar struggles with the pilot for the controls. MacGyver ducks as the drug lord swings. Chica puts her hands over the pilot's eyes. The pilot makes a face as he tries to fly blind. He swats at her hands.

Dad and the kids laugh.

GIRL 1

Eeeeeeeek!

The helicopter lurches suddenly. The drug lord and MacGyver tumble out of the helicopter. Chica gasps. The family gasps. Chica looks down, MacGyver is hanging from the front of the helicopter's pilot side runner, looking at Chica through the window. Chica jams the stick to the left, simultaneously opening the pilot's door. The pilot goes flying out of the helicopter past MacGyver. Chica gets in the seat and smiles at MacGyver.

MACGYVER

Hvem sier den helecopters er farlig!

The youngest kids laugh with the dad. The mom and the teenager groan.

BOY 1

Det er dum!

GIRL 1

Det er morsom! Hva vil De sier om De hang fra en helecopter?

We see the whole family as they continue to watch TV. Roy steps in and addresses the camera.

ROY

We're here in Tallinn, Estonia, with the Tsirk family. They are spending this evening doing what most people around the world are doing this evening: watching television. And where does most of this television come from?

Val stands in front of the Hollywood sign on the hillside.

VAL
Los Angeles, California

4 EXT. FREEWAY - DAY 4

Talley drives a white Lincoln convertible, past ugly buildings and palm trees. She smiles happily. Beside her are Albert and Val in the front seat and Roy, Rungtiwa, and Peter in the back seat. Val has her arm around Albert. Albert leans forward and turns up the MUSIC. Peter grooves to the music. All of them wear sunglasses.

5 INT. STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 5

CREATIVES and production company EXECUTIVES sit around a table in a well-appointed conference room. The creatives are pitching television show ideas to the executives. Sentences are normally short and fast-paced. Lots of jargon. "Mad Men meets Dexter" types of descriptions. There is discussion of what the audience will like and not like, what they will understand and not understand.

Rungtiwa leans into the frame, and speaks quietly so that she doesn't disturb the meeting.

RUNGTIWA

This is a pitch meeting. Production company executives, like the ones here at [Production Company], decide what stories you'll watch on television, and in movies. Harold and Ed came with ideas that they thought would sell. These ideas are fairly similar because they've excluded ideas that they think would not sell. [Production Company] may buy an idea if they think distributors will buy it. Distributors buy shows if they think that they can sell them to viewers or advertisers. All this is based on what shows have made money in the recent past.

Val leans into the frame from the other side.

VAL

Let me get this straight. Everyone in the world watches the same few stories from the same few people who make shows that they think will sell to the most people?

Albert, Roy, Talley and Peter lounge around on the other side of the room. Roy's drinking coffee, Peter and Albert are eating chicken satay on little sticks from the snack table.

ALBERT

Don't people in other countries make TV shows?

ROY

People in more than 150 countries watch American movies or television . 82% of the films shown in Europe are American. Only 2 percent of programs on US screens come from Europe.

RUNGTIWA

The average American watches over four hours of television a day. The average European watches over three hours of television per day.

TALLEY

You guys make it sound like this is a bad thing. We know much more about each other since people started watching television and satellites started beaming the news to all of us directly. People in Estonia now watch American television because the "iron curtain" which surrounded them until fairly recently came down. Technology and the media which followed brought down the Berlin Wall, inspired the Arab Spring and continues to bring down tyrants.

VAL

(whispering)

What's this have to do with this pitch meeting?

ALBERT

Nothing.

Albert crosses his arms, looks at the camera and blinks. The pitch meeting background disappears:

6 INT. THE STAGE - DAY

6

the characters are on a green screen stage. Peter has a whole body response of disgust.

PETER

No!

VAL

Where'd the pitch meeting go?

PETER

You have to stop doing that!

Roy laughs. Talley looks at the other characters questioningly.

RUNGTIWA

This is a movie. It's too expensive to take us all to Los Angeles. Green screen is much cheaper.

PETER

But I was eating chicken satay in a room in Los Angeles. And it was good too!

Peter sits on a green apple box and folds all his limbs together.

PETER

Man, this just sucks.

Talley looks at Peter with sympathy.

RUNGTIWA

That wasn't true.

PETER

There are true things. Scientifically proven true things. You just said that the average American watches four hours of television a day. That's a provable statistic and so it's a true fact within a reasonable margin of error. I'm sitting here and I'm talking right now, and that's a true fact. You can observe it, you can measure it, it's true. There are true things.

ROY

But what was that you were saying about the news?

(MORE)

ROY (cont'd)

Are you saying that the media,
specifically the news, has helped
people in the world to be freer, or
to have more power over their
lives?

TALLEY

The news shines light into dark
corners. People know more about
each other's lives. A girl cannot
get run over by a bulldozer in
Palestine without everyone in the
world knowing about it.

Peter gets up, goes to the green apple box where the snacks
had been and inspects the props on it for leftover food. We
see the lighting and camera equipment on the green screen
stage. Peter addresses Talley:

PETER

Man, I don't want to see that.
Television sucks.

Talley looks hurt.

ALBERT

I watch television all the time.

ROY

Me too.

VAL

I think television is fine. I love
the cooking shows.

TALLEY

I watch the Discovery Channel for
the documentaries.

At the front of the green screen stage, on a small table near
the camera equipment, there is a computer and a television
monitor. On the monitor we see the pitch meeting concluding.
The Creatives are ushered out as DON and CONNIE are ushered
in.

PRODUCER I

What's the pitch?

DON

Feature: Kind of educational, kind
of docudrama.

PRODUCER II

Educational?

CONNIE
It's a feature.

DON
It's Sesame Street meets Spike Lee
meets ...

CONNIE
Noam Chomsky.

PRODUCER I
Pass.

DON
It's media training for adults ...

Both producers stand.

PRODUCER II
Pass. Thanks. Bye.

Two more creatives are ushered in, as Don and Connie are encouraged to leave.

7 HYPOCRITE

7

An excerpt from the film "Hypocrite" by David Chalker: A tough young woman in a tank top addresses the camera (the audience: the camera's point of view).

TOUGH WOMAN
What are you looking at?

She approaches the camera and picks it up.

TOUGH WOMAN
You can't look away, can you?

She throws the camera against the wall and tosses it in the air. She catches it and scrapes it across a dumpster. She slams the camera against the wall, and then holds it out, staring at us.

TOUGH WOMAN
If you can't look away, then you're
just my bitch.

She throws the camera into the dumpster and walks down the street. The camera peeks out, looks around, gets out and follows her down the street a bit.

8 EXT. POWELL'S TECHNICAL BOOKS - DAY 8

AMBER CASE, the world's foremost cyborg anthropologist crosses a city park and enters Powell's.

9 INT. POWELL'S TECHNICAL BOOKS - DAY 9

Amber wanders through its small but impressive collection of ancient (meaning 35 year old) computers. She describes the difference between a traditional anthropologist and what she does.

Amber studies the ways in which people and their machines are merging. Using your iPhone to navigate down the street, for example, is on a continuum with having a prosthetic knee. She is not speaking about the future: People are cyborgs now. She views this as inevitable, and as progress. She concedes to Rungtiwa that it is possible that Life 2.0 could be a difficult transition for some.

10 EXT. PIER 39 - DAY 10

We see a crowd of people walking toward and away from the camera. A Christmas tree is prominent with Christmas ornaments. It appears cloudy. A male NEWS REPORTER holding a microphone looks at the camera. He is wearing a heavy coat.

NEWS REPORTER

By the looks of it, fears of a floundering economy don't seem to have dampened the holiday spirit here at Pier 39. In fact it's swarming with shoppers. As you can see behind me, the tree is trimmed, we're all bundled up and we're ready to brave the winter chill and look for that necktie for Dad and that nice pair of slippers, that ... Um. Okay. Again. In 5, 4, 3,

By the looks of it, fears of a floundering economy don't seem to have dampened ...

News Reporter's voice fades out.

VAL

(OS)

Everything in the frame you see. Everything outside the frame you don't see. This is the choice of the filmmakers.

The camera pans to the left. Empty stores, no people. A shop owner stands outside his shop, staring at the camera. It's sunny. The camera pans to the right. Shade. No people, empty shops. Next to the News Reporter are a man's legs and torso.

VAL

(OS)

They make this choice because they want to focus your attention on certain things, and prevent you from seeing other things. It's a statement by the filmmakers.

The camera tilts up. The man on the right is on a ladder holding a flex silk to shade the News Reporter. He looks bored. The camera tilts down past the News Reporter to show his legs. He's wearing Bermuda shorts.

VAL

(OS)

It could be valid, it could be moving, it could be important, but it isn't true. Is there really a crowd there? Is it cold? Is it Christmas? Does this guy even own a pair of decent pants? You'll never know.

Camera reframes to the original frame.

NEWS REPORTER

...that necktie for Dad and that special pair of slippers for Mom. Back to you, Tom.

News Reporter smiles at the camera. He drops his smile, lowers his mike, looks off screen.

NEWS REPORTER

Ok, let's get out of here. I'm sweating like a pig. Why is it so hot today?

11

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO, WBEZ, CHICAGO - DAY

11

Ira Glass, producer of the "This American Life" radio show, sits in front of a computer sound editing console and a big microphone. Albert sits opposite him. Ira describes to Albert the difference between traditional news reporting and story telling by giving an example. Using the computer editing machine, he plays a radio story he has prepared, in which a man is on a train platform in Chicago.

Across the platform, the man sees another man walk up to a person and say something. The person he is talking to regards him seriously. He walks up to another person and says something. That person also regards him seriously. In the radio story, Ira's voice describes how the first man comes closer and hears the second man say ...

Ira taps the keyboard to pause the program. At this point, explains Ira to Albert, no one changes the radio station. Everyone wants to know what happens next, what the man said. This is the power of stories and story telling. Ira jokes that radio is your most visual medium.

Ira taps the keyboard and the story continues: the man on the platform has been telling people either "You're in" or "You're out". One of the platform denizens explains how he felt upon hearing that he was out.

MAN ON PLATFORM

I felt bad. No one wants to be out.
Everybody wants to be in. Everybody
wants to be a winner.

Albert laughs.

ALBERT

Cool.

12 EXT. MOVIE SET - DAY

12

GEORGE CLOONEY is standing on the set between takes. He speaks to a headset-wearing, clipboard-carrying ASSISTANT DIRECTOR. Grips and camera assistants work around him. The Assistant Director leaves, patting George on the shoulder. George smiles back and turns to address the camera (us), which dollies with him as he strolls around the set.

GEORGE CLOONEY

Hello, I'm George Clooney. You know, each year, in our country, thousands of people suffer from ARCS, or Acute Respiratory Constriction Syndrome. This terrible disease destroys people's lives, can be crippling and even deadly. Worst of all, all this suffering is needless. Doctors at major medical institutions are close to finding a cure, but they need your help.

Clooney goes to a craft services table where there is an ARCS donation box with an information card. He picks up the box and holds up the card.

GEORGE CLOONEY

Please give to the American ARCS Foundation. Donation boxes have been placed in the lobby of this theater. Please take the time to read the information card and then give generously. This moment of your time may save a person's life. Thank you.

Clooney faces the camera which has a Teleprompter and is on a dolly. The dolly grip locks the brakes on the dolly. Clooney holds a smile. The crew also holds still.

DIRECTOR

And cut. Perfect. Circle that take. That's it.

Everybody moves. Clooney nods to the crew, shakes hands with the director and walks off the set. Our camera approaches him. Peter approaches Clooney with a hand microphone.

PETER

That was great. Can you tell me more about Acute Respiratory Constriction Syndrome?

GEORGE CLOONEY

No.

PETER

No?

GEORGE CLOONEY

I don't really know anything about it.

PETER

You don't? What about the ...

GEORGE CLOONEY

I was reading the prompter. I don't really know much about it. Okay.

Clooney shakes hands with Peter and leaves. Peter looks at the camera.

13 INT. WIKIPEDIA OFFICES - DAY

13

JIMMY WALES, founder of Wikipedia, is at the desk in his office. Talley sits opposite him.

TALLEY

My friend Roy thinks that the internet is an inch deep and a mile wide. What do you think about the seriousness and value of information on the internet?

Wales accepts the premise, but describes Wikipedia as a place where information, submitted by its legions of authors is converted, perhaps to knowledge, and thereby made valuable.

Talley asks how Wikipedia established its credibility and why everyone treats it as gospel. Wales says that one of Wikipedia's primary rules is that writers strive for neutrality no matter what their personal opinions are. Both readers and writers respect these rules. The result is that they have earned the respect and trust of readers, including teachers and academics.

Talley asks, can there be truth in the media? A German newspaper once misquoted you as saying that you were the Queen of England. Wales laughs and says that knowledge is more important than truth. The internet can help you find the information you need to be knowledgeable.

14 INT. THE STAGE - DAY

14

Talley is in a narrow space behind a set wall, secretly eating a Slim-fast bar. The circus overture plays and we hear applause. She looks up and chews a little faster. Peter comes through feeding out an audio cable, surprised to find Talley there. Talley smiles excitedly and looks away. He looks at her, she looks back. They touch as he scoots past. Talley looks at Peter, he looks at her. She looks down shyly. We hear a cymbal crash and Peter leaves. The camera follows him onto the stage.

A circus: The room is dark. You can barely make out a crowd, which MURMURS, GASPS and APPLAUDS at the right moments. A spotlight highlights a girl in a leotard walking across a tight rope. Other acrobats hold her guy rope and gesture dramatically. She does daring tricks. Roy walks into the foreground and addresses the camera.