

Nothing In A Rectangle Is True

By

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10 page sample

REGISTERED WGAw No. 998785
5/31/2004

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TITLE AND FULL CREDITS

FADE IN

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

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 phone for the time 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: he lands 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.

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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.

TALLEY
What did you think was going to
happen?

RUNGTIWA
The black man was walking toward
the white man.

ALBERT
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

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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:

INT. FAMILY ROOM - DAY

A typical family evening at home. A big screen TV is on. DAD is sitting in a lounge chair, MOM is on the couch with her iPad. A TEENAGED BOY and a TWELVE-YEAR-OLD GIRL, both holding their phones, sit on the floor.

On the TV, a rerun of the 80's show MacGyver is on, and Mac 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

Eeeeeek!

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.

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MACGYVER

Hvem sier den helecopters er
farlig!

The girl laughs with the dad. The mom and the teenager groan and return their attention to the phone and iPad.

BOY 1

Det er dum!

GIRL 1

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

We see the family as they continue to watch their devices. 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 videos
and surfing the net. And where do
most of these movies, television
shows and digital platforms come
from?

EXT. APPLE HEADQUARTERS

Val stands in front of the Apple logo in Silicon Valley.

VAL

California!

EXT. SILICON VALLEY TRAVELOGUE

Talley is awed at the Google sign and asks Peter to take her picture. A Google ENGINEER with a cup of coffee talks with Val as he badges into the building. Albert attempts to follow some hipster software engineers into Facebook. Val, Roy, Rungtiwa, Peter, Talley and Albert all slump together, tweeting in the lobby of Twitter. They watch a movie on an iPad together in front of Netflix. Everyone takes a rest while Albert watches another one in front of Amazon.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Talley drives a white Lincoln convertible, past a freeway sign for Los Angeles. 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.

INT. STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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. "Girls meets Breaking Bad" 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] in Santa Monica, decide what stories you'll watch on television, streaming services 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 networks will buy it. Networks 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.

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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 or videos a day. The average European watches over three hours of television or videos 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 the internet started streaming the news to all of us directly. People in Estonia now watch American shows 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.

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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:

INT. THE STAGE - DAY

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 on location. Green
screen is much cheaper.

PETER
But I was eating chicken satay in a
fancy suite in Hollywood. 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?
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. The
news sucks.

Talley looks hurt.

VAL

I google stuff constantly. It's amazing how fast I can find things out.

ALBERT

I watch Youtube all the time.

ROY

Me too.

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.

(CONTINUED)