

Perspectives on problems a short film

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Defining the project

Living beings face problems at least on a daily basis. These exist on several levels.

From so called negligible problems, like *paper cuts*...

To larger ones like *household scuffles* or problems at the *work place*...

To issues of global proportions, like *poverty, wars, epidemic, global warming*...

To extreme personal loss... e.g. *death*... widely deemed as man's greatest fear.

So at what position does something like death fit in to the spectrum? How grave is the problem is the problem of personal loss?

Answer... *It's all relative.*

The gravity of any problem is relative to the circumstances in which it occurs.

A pin prick in sedate circumstances will hurt and annoy much more than one during a celebration.

My aim is to capture and portray people's perception on problems in one frame. *Juxtaposing* contrasting as well as similar events, issues and reactions. We often times live our lives in isolation and shut out the rest of the world in our time of grieving. But time does not stop. I will attempt to present...

The ways in which we view and prioritise events in our lives

The ways we react to them

And the ways we handle them (or at least attempt to)

No problem is so grave as to make the world stop on its axis. Nor is any problem so small as to be considered inconsequential.

Problems unknown

There also exist innumerable problems that we ignore or consider out of our reach to do anything about. These can indirectly affect us on an individual level. *E.g...*

There also exist innumerable problems that we ignore or consider out of our reach to do anything about. These can indirectly affect us on an individual level. *E.g...*

A war between nations of the Middle East could affect global petroleum prices
A hike in fuel prices will affect transportation costs
This will in turn cause a hike in the cost of Consumer goods
And thus a person sitting in at home in Mumbai... quietly going about his own business... is now paying more for his daily onions and potatoes.

A rise in population in South America
Leads to need of space for living and agriculture
Deforestation
Leads to rising CO2 levels and global temperature
Leads to increase in number of A.C's, refrigerators
Further contributing to expansion of the ozone hole
Increase in global warming...
Affecting crops... rising sea levels... skin cancer....

There are several more examples of this nature. Apart from this there are small ways in which we affect people and things around us... possibly causing disastrous effects.

Simple things like forgetting to close the fridge door...
Dropping leaving a lit cigarette butt into the trash can...
Leaving the cooking gas valve open.

Thus along with wrongdoing and misfortune, negligence is often times a stimulus to our own suffering. We are the victims... we are the perpetrators.



Concept 1:

A young woman comes home from work after having “the worst day of her life.”

The film is a narrative of her detailing out her day to a friend at home.

The milk packet burst
Had a fight with her fiancée
Gouged a hole in her top while ironing it
Was late to work
Had the worst meeting ever
This followed by a disastrous job interview
Broke her heel on the way home...

However parallel events (some happening in the background, on T.V. for instance), tend to constantly put her problems into a different perspective. Some events enhance the gravity of her words, while others end up downplaying the magnitude of her “misfortunes”. She however remains oblivious to these as she continues with her story.

A possible end to the film could be...

An event that completely nullifies every little “disaster” in her day.

The concept is one that a lot of working class people would be able to relate to readily. “Today was the worst day of my life,” is a line that has been used frequently and flippantly by all of us at some point in our lives.



Concept 2:

Parallel lives of four people from different backgrounds facing consequently exclusive as well as common problems

The film would show these people in their regular environments... facing and handling daily problems and needs.

- A middle class working man

- A blind man who runs a phone booth

- A boy living on the street

- A girl with rich parents

However at various points these people would be linked in ways they are completely unaware of. Bumping into each other accidentally. Or affecting each other positively as well as negatively in ways more indirect. Thus unknowingly influencing each other's lives in some small way.



Final concept:

A boy of around 25 years left his home... possibly thrown out.
Two weeks later he is found dead... possibly suicide.
The film is set in the aftermath of the demise.

The film will be a parallel set of reactions, testimonies, flashbacks, speculations, mind frames and juxtapositions of other harsh realities existing outside our private worlds.
Jumping back and forth between the past and the present... fact and fiction.

The people speaking are the ones who were supposedly a direct part of his world. His family, and close friends. They are also the ones who claim to have known him best when he was alive. However they too are in the dark as to his motive for his actions. Their testimonies are thus a mixture of reaction and speculation as to why he did it. Their words will also shed light on their own lifestyles and their own private concerns.

Shots of the past will be interspersed among the testimonies in the present. I would prefer to call these flashback shots 'reality shots'... since all the testimonies and shots in the present are based on relative and biased perception of the truth. These shots will also show the tragic living conditions dwelt in by a large chunk of our society.

Children playing on streets

Animals and poor people rummaging through trash dumpsters

Destroyed houses

A final dimension of the film is a set of animations. These are animations done by the protagonist. The animations are direct reflections of problems that genuinely bothered him.



Why suicide?

Death is man's greatest fear. And the death of another brings out a host of reactions and levels of introspection within the people around. Death can bring out the worst and at times the best (strength, love) in people. But although death brings about all of this, suicide has suicide brings to death added dimensions like guilt, confusion, bewilderment. This adds to the process of coping with the loss.



Background score and sound

For the score I have asked the members of my band to compose and record fitting music (if feasible). Mostly instrumental. Words may not play an important role unless an existing and familiar song is used. The score will play an especially important role in the 'reality' shots, since these shots will be almost purely visual with no dialogue for most part.

Another audio thread running through the film is the news. Softly being read out in the background at several points, it will help enhance situations and hopefully add to the overall impact of a joyful world ridden with tragically fraught with pain. This V.O. will also lead into the animated news segment. Although the animation is of a more satirical nature, the V.O. will carry it in and out of the film naturally.

Sound recording...

- The sound of a typical college crowd
- The sound of traffic
- Of a baby crying
- Of voices from the past
- Of voices haunting the mind
- Of children laughing
- Of the protagonist screaming in pain
- Of mocking laughter
- Of a dog howling in the distance
- Of people abusing
- Of glasses clinking at a party...

These and more according to requirement will complete scenes.

Sounds for the animations, like cannon fire, flying missiles, chain saws, man falling... will be made with the mouth. This should add to the nature of the simplistic animations... hitting the right cords without being necessarily slick or realistic.



What problem could be so grave as to cause someone to leave behind family and friends... forever? Why do we react the way we do?

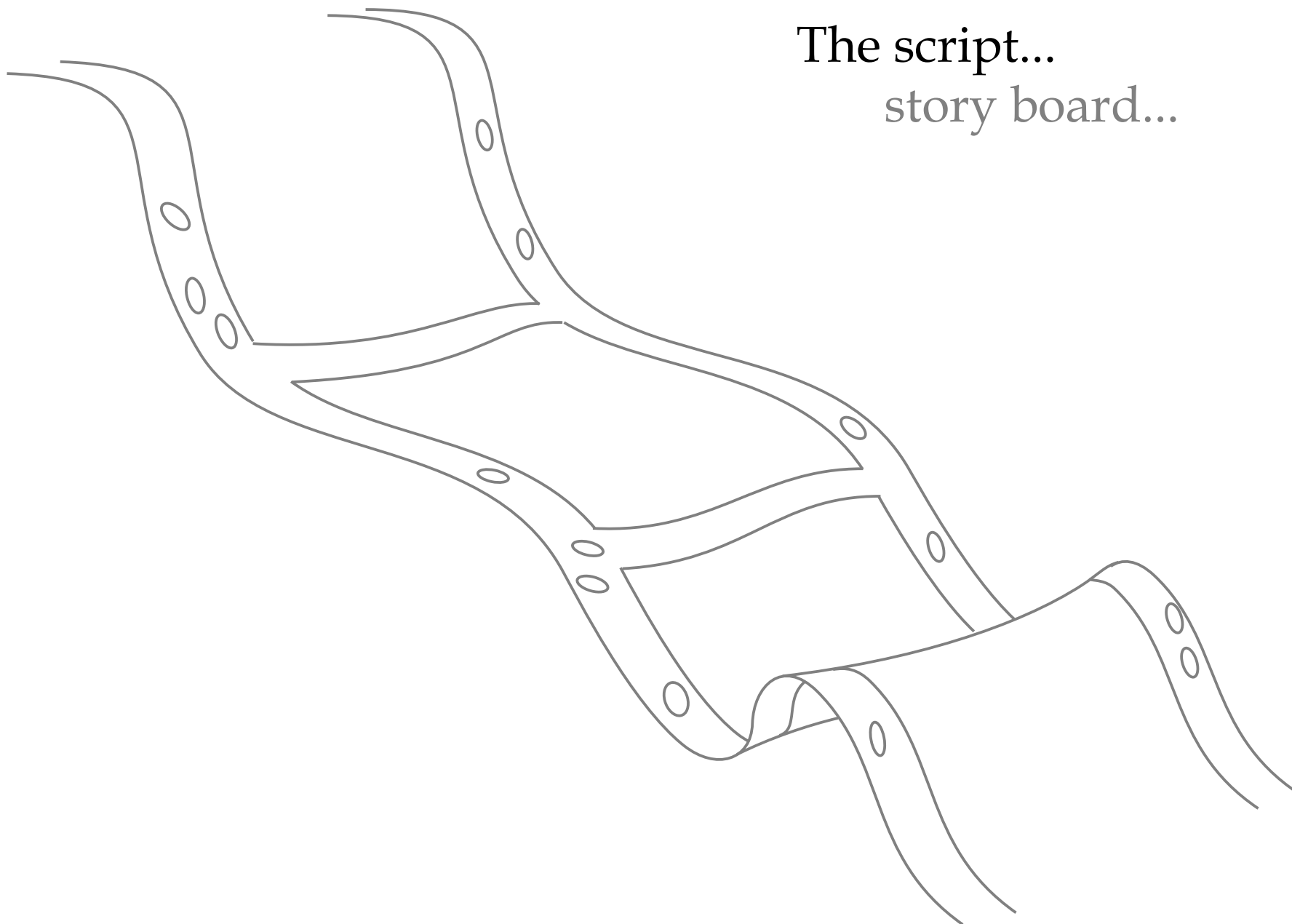
The larger objective

The larger objective (a hope) of this film, is to attempt to make at least one viewer look inside as well as outside his/her world, and hopefully at some point reassess his/her perspective on life... reassess choices... responsibility...

I am not attempting to offer solutions or advice. I am in no position to do that. In fact the ultimate cause of the death is also left uncertain. All I would like to do is open up a channel for introspection, reason and question.

The title of the film has not been put in yet ... Still waiting... looking for the right one.

The script...
story board...



Please note:

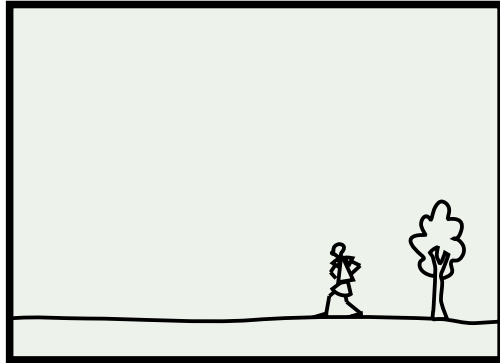
Camera position and angles in the final output may not necessarily be as shown in the story board.

Shots of Sam:

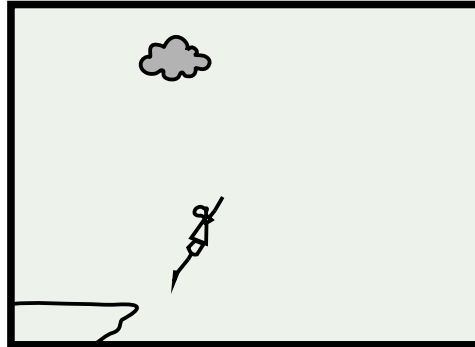
All shots of Sam are a flashback. I would prefer to call the 'reality' shots though, since every other comment, opinion and reaction is only a relative truth. These shots will also contain the harsh realities of our streets... The people living on them...

The shots will be consequently far more diverse than depicted in the story board.

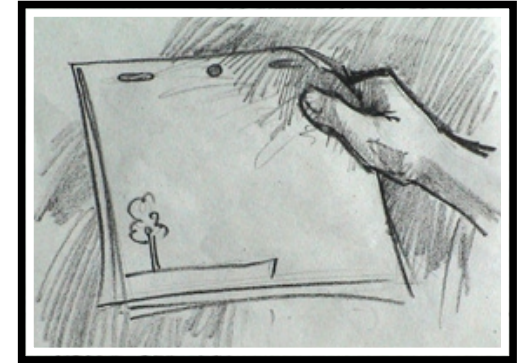
Note that in the story board, all flashback shots - 'reality' shots - have been denoted by a double border. All of these shots have been filmed at a lower shutter speed. The movement is blurry and times hazy. Frames with an extra white border, are transition shots between the present and the past.



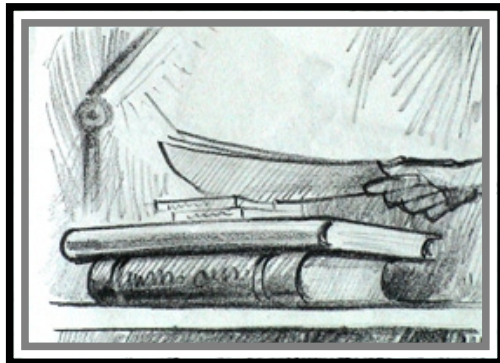
Animation... A happy guy walks in. A couple of unexpected events occur. One finally making him turn back dejected.



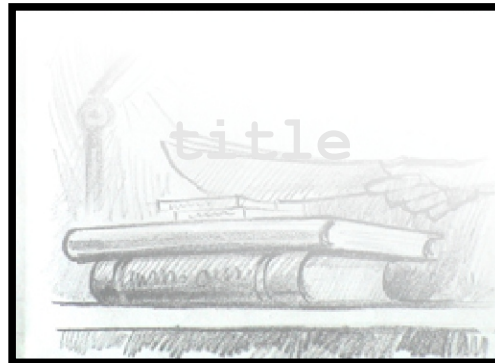
On reaching the edge of a cliff... He waits contemplating for a while... Then decides to fly...



At the end of the animation, a hand takes last few sheets of animation off the table.



Tight shot. Papers are dropped on a messy desk. Some books are put into a bag.



Fade to white.



Film title fades in. Grey on white. (Title to be decided)



Fade in... Eyes...

Girlfriend: (very softly) I don't know why



Fade to Sam walking...



Girl friend: He was always troubled by these larger issues. Global problems. Streets... and he was always making these hajaar little animations.



Fade to Sam...





Girlfriend: (soft but with conviction) He cared.



Neighbour: He only cared about himself. I don't mean to sound rude, but we've been neighbours for a long time. I feel bad, but he was like that. Even as kid. He was a pakka badmaash!



Fade into to sam. Sounds of children laughing and playing in the background.



Neighbour: So naughty. Now also. Plays that damn music so loud. I mean, I have to take care of the family... iron their clothes, cook, wash, clean the house, kapda-wapda... sometimes I don't get my morning chaai also...How much I'll take? I have to do the bazaar...my back, my head everything pains... and then... then that music.



Her husband: (hesitantly) But... he was a sweet boy. He...



Neighbour: (interrupting - annoyed) Vah! Change of tune!!?



Zoom out. Suddenly we hear an angry "Just go!" in the background.



Camera immediately pans left... Out of the house...



Slow shutter - past. We see the maid stopped at the threshold of Sam's house.



Maid: (in the kitchen - present) They used to fight so much. Finally they threw him out of the house.



As the camera pans away, we hear the same "Just go!" Camera quickly pans out of kitchen (slow shutter - past)



We see Sam walking out of the frame. In it are his parents. Father with an angry look on his face. Camera holds on the parents for a couple of seconds, then follows Sam...



The maid has stopped in her tracks as he walks out the door...



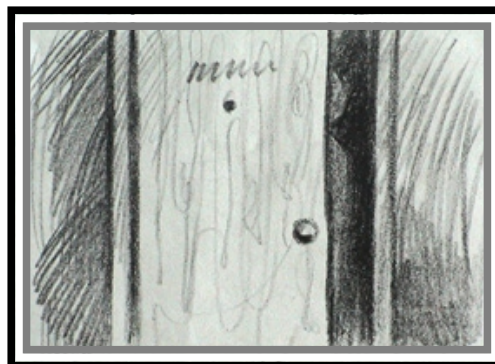
... Camera follows... Capturing maid close up for a moment...



... Walks through the doorway leading to the stairwell...



... Camera pans back to the house (from the outside)... Brother in the doorway... Parents in the background... The maid has just walked in and out of sight...



Camera just catches the inquisitive neighbour's door being shut...



Pan back to house... Drowning in light



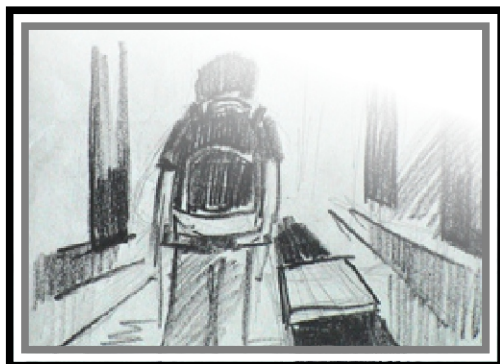
*Cut to tight shot of father (present)...
Staring... Numb... Hold*



Cut to maid... shaking her head



Fade to Sam...



*By the end of this shot the camera zooms
into a white light the shot dissolves into
white...*



*The white fades into a day sky and the
camera pans down to a college...*



*Camera pans around for a bit. Sight and
sounds of students...*



Cut to Student 1:



Cut to Student 1:



Long shot of college



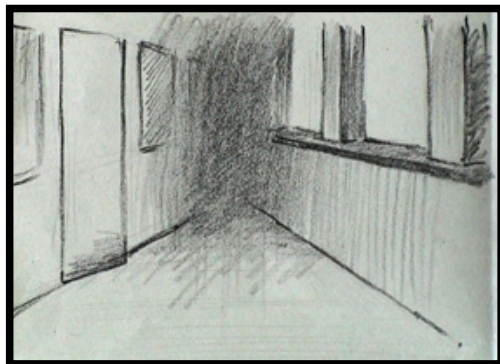
Long shot of students 3 and 4 in the frame... Talking with each other



Student 3: Boss, all new comers are treated in the same way. It's a tradition... and it's all fun.



Student 4:): Everyone has problems. Shit happens! Deal with it.



Fade to empty corridor... Sounds of mock laughter and screams of agony in the background.



Student 3: (annoyed, defensive) Fuck, everyone has gone through it, okay! No one has gone and jumped of a fucking building! Maybe he killed himself because he flunked in three papers! Arrey one person dies every time India loses! I mean, how the... how should I know!?



They wave the camera away and walk away... visibly perturbed



Fade to Sam



Cut to tight shot of father (present)... Staring... Numb... Hold

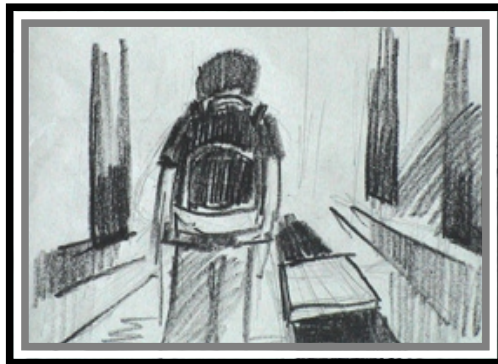


Split screen sequence... Two halves of the screen... Father yelling at Sam. Here the father's part is in one shot, while Sam is shown at different ages through the sequence.

Father: "What is this? These are your marks. What, you have no shame? What is wrong with you? Ha? Look at your hair. Can't you get a normal haircut like everyone else. Always such a mess. Your room also. Go clean it up. It's a bloody pig sty. Look at me when I talk to you. And don't talk back. Is this how you talk to your friends also? I'm sure your extremely sweet to them. You just don't appreciate all that we do for you. We had none of the comforts you have now. So much we do. And this is how you repay us..."



The two are not seen directly facing each other. The shots of Sam are of him going about doing his own thing...



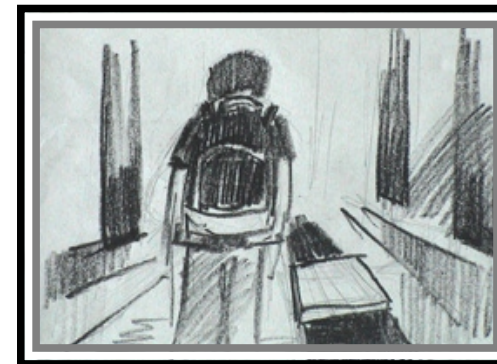
Cut to Sam walking. In the background we can continue to hear the voice of his father (muted)... Also that of his mother



Cut to close up o mother crying...



Quick fade in and out of Sam



Brother: He was always there for me.
Now what am I supposed to do... Ha?

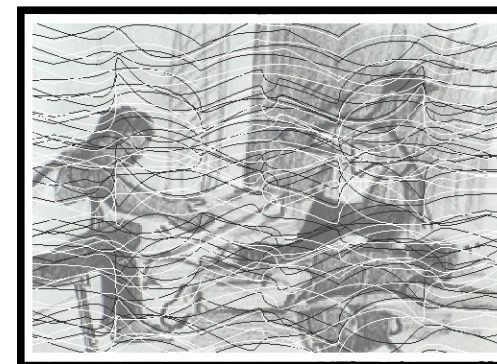
Walking through dark narrow lanes



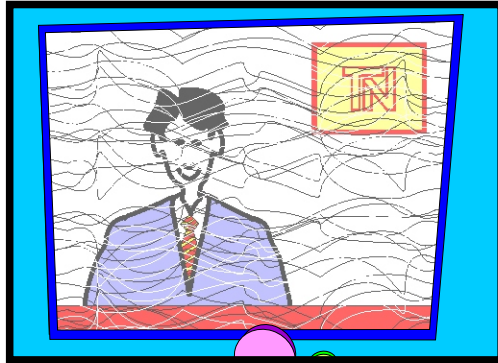
*Comes reaches what appears to be the
den of a gangster... Approaches him...*



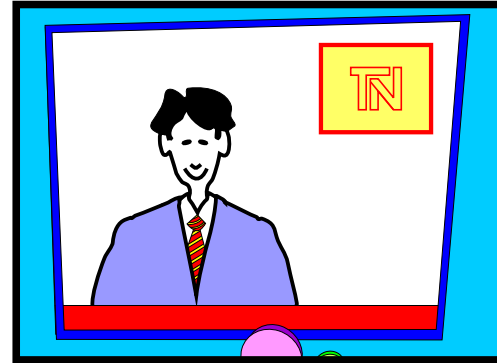
*Is shoved away for not having brought
what he was supposed to... Gets beaten
up...*



*Fade into bad T.V. signal... Lots of
static...*



Zoom out to reveal news frame... A news reader has faded into the frame...



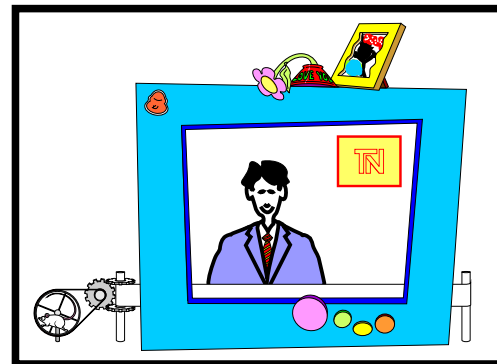
News reader begins to read the news in a very animated, and artificial way. His body and frame are all cutouts... Only his head is animated.

News readerIn another happy breaking news, 14 more Santa's have been painted dark green for using the word Christ in Merry *Christmas*. Once again the moral police of our city come to the rescue of our innocent and impressionable youth. And in other news... (starts sifting through papers - starts mumbling rattling these as if looking for the real story)... 49 children killed in a bus accident... H.S.C. papers leaked... the bubonic plague may be back... a young man of 24 commits suicide...

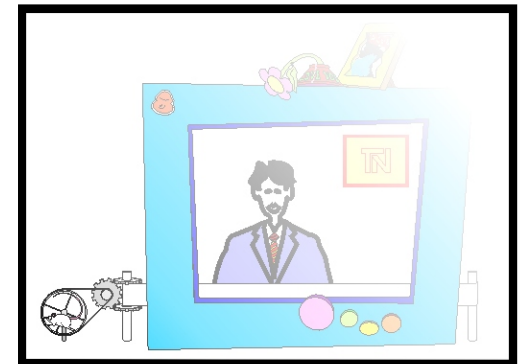
(the news reader next to him starts whispering to him...

... Both giggling between themselves "I heard that he had AIDS... and a drinking problem... and his girlfriend was sleeping with his best friend" laugh inward the other guy falls off his chair)

... sorry... (resumes sifting)... suicide... water shortage in subcontinent... six more species of wild cats extinct... (sudden excitement) Ah! Here it is! In a very, very dubious and controversial decision... Sachin Tendulkar was out for a duck. (fast) President expresses deep shock and calls for two minutes of silence. Only after which angry mobs will be allowed to riot.



At the end of the piece the camera zooms out a little... To reveal a mouse sunning in a wheel to keep the news scroll bar moving... The news reader has an overly pleased expression on his face.



Fade to white...



Fade in to tight shot of best friend

Best friend: I don't know why



Fade to Sam... In the background we can faintly hear party sounds... Laughter... Music...



Best friend: (very guilty ashamed soft)
He must have found out... I'm not sure... I think he saw us...
(Faint party sounds can be heard...)



A couple of photographs of a party get flashed on the screen... One of them has the best friend and the girl friend close together... Sam faintly in the background... Looking away...



Best friend: He saw us... but it was just one kiss... just one of those spur of the moment things... circumstance things... one thing led to another... it will never happen again... never... they were in love.



Girl friend: No, I don't think he saw anything. I'm pretty sure... And even if he did, he wouldn't kill himself over it. I know him. I mean I knew him. He was stronger than that.



Girl friend: No, he wouldn't... I mean... it was nothing. It meant nothing. It was so silly... We were in love. Yes, we fought at times. Who doesn't? But... we were in love...



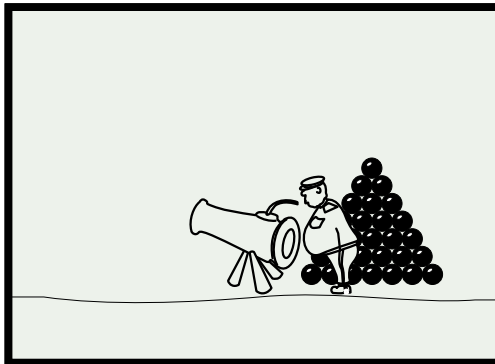
Best friend: He was my best friend... how could I do this to him... oh God, how could I... (starts crying incessantly almost bawling screaming)... oh God...how could I...I killed him... I killed him...he was my best friend... I killed him



Girl friend: He didn't see us. He couldn't have. He couldn't...



Fade to Sam



Animation... a satire on war...



Cut to brother...

Brother: I don't know... no one knows... he left home 3 weeks back and a week later he killed himself... know one knows why... no one even knows where he was in those three weeks...



A slightly longer sequence of shots of Sam.. Sleeping ending in a shot of him sleeping by the road...



Brother: ... someone told me he saw him sleeping on a footpath... I don't know...I'm not even sure if he killed himself...



Quick cut to mother



Brother...



Father...



Best friend...



Zoom out from him... We see the girl friend next to him... Zoom out continues



... We see the father and the mother next to them... Continue...



...We see the brother as well... All of them together on a talk show... As this zoom out is taking a place, we hear another news bulletin...



... 'A young girl has just committed suicide... She was a secret of Sam'...

Fade to black...



Fade to black...

Credits

Credits	Credits
Credits	Credits
Credits	Credits
Credits	Credits



Credits

Credits	Credits
Credits	Credits
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Credits	Credits

Weighing scale vendor: Arey bhai...
humse kya lena dena?