

BRAVE NEW SHOW



BY
WILL HAYNES

Air Force One bore over the Manhattan skyline like a mechanised eagle, en route to DC and back to the White House Tower. In his first term the President had improved The White House no end by adding another hundred floors and plating every room with gold. The Roosevelt Room now lit up like Caesars Palace, the Oval Office like the MGM Grand. He'd also reformed the electoral process and eliminated the two-term limit from the constitution. Now they were called Seasons. In this brave new world there were no longer terms and elections, only seasons and ratings.

America was run now as a reality television game show.

The show is called *The Administration*. Each season of government being four years long, the President was now half way through his third season. Like governing nations, the format was simple: each episode, the Cabinet was divided into two teams by the President, set various tasks and pitched against each other. At the end of every episode the Commander-in-Chief would fire one of his Cabinet...

It was originally touted, in the first season, that one winner, a last man standing, would emerge in the final episode and receive some sort of prize but so far, every season, the President couldn't help but fire every last one of them and hog all the power to himself... After all, greed was good. That was how he'd succeeded so triumphantly in business in his pre-Washington career. And it was a fun way to run the democracy or Kingdom or whatever it now was... Who cared?

Whatever.

All cabinet positions were largely redundant; little more than hollow titles. Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Treasury; they meant absolutely nothing. Any genuine power behind the throne sat with the President's true, biological advisors, his offspring and successors; Dennis Jr., Dicky and Denica Trunt. The only individuals in America with power that counted; the ear of Caesar. But even to the golden progeny, his treasured Truntlings, Caesar's ear was often hard of hearing.

Episode by episode, season by season, nations had fallen beneath the considerable weight of the giant Trunt boot: a media machine backed up by nuclear arsenal. And from the ashes, ruins and rubble, sprang forth bountiful skyscrapers and golf courses, bearing the President's brand in neon lights, pink marble, gaudy purple velvet and, oh my, gold plating.

This season, in order to boost the ratings, the show was to be called "*CELEBRITY ALL STAR ADMINISTRATION*". It would be the biggest, the greatest, the best ever television show in the history of totalitarianism. Every episode begins something like this...

Roll title sequence:

The music starts.

Contemporary hip-hop Remix of the Star-Spangled Banner... Red, white and blue backdrop. Strobe lights accompany the US national anthem.

Flashing images: Dollar signs intercut with Stars and Stripes.

The lyrics over the top:

"OOH MONEY, MONEY, MONEY, POWER... DOLLAR BILLS, Y'ALL..."

Brave New Show

Slow motion shot of the President majestically stepping out from his Black Hawk by Trunt Helicopter, striding powerfully towards camera.

Text: "WHAT IF YOU COULD TAKE IT ALL?"

Cut to a panoramic shot of the Washington DC Skyline with the phallic White House Tower. Neon lights garishly spurting "Trunt" at the apex. Then back to three figures cat walking in silhouette. Jumping to a mid-shot we reveal the President's key advisors, the Truntlings, backlit in front of the flag, arms crossed - expressions serious, humourless, Botoxed.

Cut to a studio sound stage, six football fields in length. Biggest studio ever. Ridley Scott's wet dream. Flashing lights. Gold plating everywhere, sweeping crane shots, intercut with close-ups, of a troupe of blonde, large-chested cheerleaders in tight star-and-stripped low-cut midriff tops and gold hot-pants. They shake their booty in front of giant banks of lights. The lights form massive letters, spelling something:

A.L.L.

Everything about the President spelled A.M.E.R.I.C.A.N D.R.E.M.E. (He did most of his spelling phonetically after all, or simply dictated it to lessers and lackeys: Vice Presidents, Secretaries of State and Ghostwriters etc. He'd 'written' sixteen books, including his most famous Bestseller, a new updated edition of the Bible. The Trunt New Testament featured the words 'HUGE', 'WEALTH', 'GREAT', 'SUCCESS', 'QUALITY', 'WINNER' and 'LOSER' a good deal more than the King James edition. Dan Brown helped a bit with that one. Turns out Pontius Pilate was weak, a loser who 'showed no real Leadership skills'. It was his 'dumb' decision to spare Barrackobamarabbas, the bandit and terrorist, even though his official Promised Land Birth Certificate didn't necessarily prove he'd been born in the Promised Land... But Judas was pretty savvy, he'd summarized, and would have made a solid ratings boosting contestant. Whatever.)

And on a Carnage Scale of One to Ten (One being represented as a priceless Pre-Raphaelite, masterfully capturing the universally accepted notion of Paradise: a Garden of Eden where all races and creeds coexist in harmony. Ten being a rejected Turner Prize submission shat onto the canvas by a warped Art GSCE dropout now channeling his post-prison, post-therapy, psychotic delusions into creative abortions: riots, mass-scale looting, barbarians well past the sacked city gates and carrying out their professional raping and pillaging duties with dedicated fervor; torched buildings lighting up the sky, burning bodies running out of the infernos onto bloodstained rubble - limbs flailing as they trip over the dead - while Japanese Skyscraper-size Reptiles stomp down the boulevards, crushing all infrastructure in their wake), you could say the President had notched it up to Eleven.

Cut to a close up of the Vice President, SARA PLAININ, smiling maniacally to camera, lips pouting, blowing kisses, wearing a sparkling, cleavage-bearing, split-to-the-thigh ballroom gown and a Miss USA sash. She

Brave New Show

dances wildly; at times looking like she's simulating fellatio, also in front of the massive lettering.

S.T.A.R.

Now, one by one, the Cabinet Contestants are introduced, also at the studio location, close-ups of their beaming headlights:

ARNELL GROUNSWAGGER (with caption below of his designation: Secretary of State), BULK LOGAN (Secretary of The Treasury), BRITANI SPARS (Secretary of Defense), ELLIS ROADMAN (Chief Political Advisor to the President)... One by one, the temporary ruling celebrity class are rolled out, cheesy grins painted on under flashing lights, intercut with shots of the DC Skyline and dollar bill signs...

C.E.L.E.B.R.I.T.Y.

Flashes of 'PRESIDENT TRUNT' text throughout, not particularly subliminal by any means, and more perfectly sculpted slow-mo's of the President boarding Air Force One... the President stroking the First Lady's thigh (a late night edition also showed the President sitting on a massive pile cash while the First Lady blows him)... A cutaway of a politicontestant, STEVEN BAWDWIN, rolling around on a massive pile of sticky cash... more time-lapses of American Trunt-brand-stamped Skylines...

The lyrics:

"POWER CAN DRIVE SOME PEOPLE RIGHT OUT THEIR MINDS".

A.D.M.I.N.I.S.T.R.A.T.I.O.N.

Yes, if not already rather obvious from the show's title sequence, the President really loved for it to be widely known that he was particularly wealthy, or as he liked to put it – "REALLY RICH" – and that his wife was very beautiful or, as he far more eloquently put it – "REALLY HOT". He enjoyed her. He wore her like his Rolex.

He'd snapped the First Lady up for a song in some Eastern Eurasian country where he was building a big Trunt Taj Mahal Casino and mixing it with the necessary pleasure: judging a beauty competition he owned. *Was it Poland? Latvia? Colombia?* It was a solid deal. He had it stipulated in the nuptials contract: Three times a week, baby. No appendixes, no get-out clauses! Anything less was a deal-breaker. The First Lady had survived boardroom firings so far, but there was always the competitive threat from the Second Lady or the Third Lady. Kept her on her toes (technically, the First Lady already was the Third Lady, but whatever). The Office of the First Lady consisted of a chorus line of Playboy centrefolds-in-waiting. If the First Lady disapproved of this she didn't show it. She couldn't. She couldn't move her face: Botoxed into total poker-face impassivity. She might have been nudging sixty but she'd been pulled apart, reassembled and soldered back together so many times she now resembled a sort of waxwork Frankenstein's Barbie Doll, a Tussauds attempt at a 20-something centrefold, only with less to say. The President only had the emotional

range of two or three facial expressions anyway so they were well matched. Handsome couple.

A wide shot of all twenty contestants in the studio in front of the massive letters, goose-stepping and raising their arms to salute the great leader. The Hegemon benevolently inspects them at his rally. Finally, the DC Skyline at night, projected in blinding lights onto the Tower: A high contrast, Che-Style icon of the President's face etched onto the buildings, next to the show's title:

CELEBRITY ALL STAR ADMINISTRATION

The thud of a drum: and fade to black...

"Honey, I'm coming home," the President bellowed for the rolling camera's sake, one squinting eye on the autocue. He either hoped or imagined the gesture made him resemble a young Marlon Brando casually gliding off eye-line, as he simultaneously filmed his money-spinning reality TV show^{TRUNTMARK!}, not-quite-effortlessly blending Show business with politics in his inimitable style.

"I'm... so... very... pleased... That's really... really?... very... nice." Her voice betrayed the scripted lines that were playing unconvincingly from the speakerphone on Air Force One (or as it was now known "Air Force One by Trunt!")

Still, the President marvelled at his multi-tasking ability. Who else could read an autocue 30,000 feet above the turf while dealing with foreign and domestic policies such as his new Galápagos Islands Casino & Golf Resort or his construction of the West Bank Big Wall around New Mexico – the residents of Albuquerque were said to be most displeased – and many other developments? He'd got the idea for the Wall from Charlie's unpublished short story 'The People's Republic'... in fact he'd based almost all of his policies on it (Charlie was the president or whatever of England- he'd come to the Wedding as had anyone who mattered. England was some shrimp-potting Island on the outskirts of Eurasia, right? Was the Capital called Dublin? Beckingham Palace? Had the Big Ben by Trunt, right? He didn't understand how it was governed though... Charlie was the President, but then he had a coalition government – a power share – split between shareholders called Boris, Jeremy and Nigel. Princes or something? The Princes shared responsibility for overseeing the shrimp-potting operations. He didn't get it. He didn't care. He didn't like shareholders. Maybe he'd annexe it?). Other non-property-development domestic matters he was multitasking from high in the sky included populist crowd pleaser policies, like rounding up and deporting all the troublesome Hindus from the Free World (*was it Hindus or Buddhists?*).

His mind drifted back to Sandy Arabia and his plans for that licensing deal with the Hindus (or Wasabi's?). He wanted to develop some old place (chuck on a few more floors, plate it in gold and rebrand it from plain old "Mecca" to the far more zingy "Allah by Trunt!"). An artful deal he could no doubt tie in with his looting of the region's oil. This thought caused him to revert to his factory setting: the Trademark^{TM!} frown and pout topped by his orang-utan's thatch. Then he carried on from the script and addressed the masses with the show's opening Presidential Boast:

"I'M PRESIDENT TRUNT. I'M THE GREATEST, MOST SUCCESSFUL LEADER IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE..."

Brave New Show

Every episode began the same way: The title sequence, then the Presidential Boast followed by an edited montage of the previous episode's policies:

NARRATOR'S VOICE OVER (V.O.)
"LAST WEEK ON ALL STAR ADMINISTRATION, OUR GREAT LEADER PRESIDENT TRUNT..." etc.

Footage of the President doing something important: Assessing why Secretary of State, former Wrestler Bulk Logan, had lost control of running a hotdog stand.

The President: "Let's face it... Your location sucked. It sucked. Admit it. Sucked."

Bulk Logan sweats, stumbles to articulate an excuse...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
"ON TEAM LIBERTY, EMOTIONS RAN HIGH"... etc.

Footage of celebrities screaming at each other in their suite at The White House Tower... Director of the Office of Administration, former celebrity sex-tape socialite and hotel heiress Milan Hitlon, screams: "I said we shoulda pitched the stand..." wherever.

Cut to talking Head of Whoever:

"Blah blah, opinion opinion, Hot Dogs sell better at ball games rather than defunct, burnt-out ghettos..." etc.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
"... WHILE ON TEAM FREEDOM, PROJECT MANAGER ARNELL GROUNDSCHWAGGER RULED HIS TEAM WITH AN IRON FIST..."

Footage of Groundschwagger, disagreeing with former-actor-turned-Televangelist-nutcase, Steven Bawdwin, over what kind of sauce to use.

Groundschwagger: "No. As Project Manager, I say we use chilli sauce on our Freedom Dogs."

Soundbite: Steven Bawdwin. "He wouldn't listen to the rest of the team who were unanimous in favour of mustard."

NARRATOR (V.O.)
"BUT BACK IN THE OVAL BOARDROOM..." etc.

Cut to the boardroom:

Both Cabinet teams are assembled before the Commander-in-Chief.

The President (offhand): "Personally, I like mustard on hot dogs."

Groundswagger's expression: a man who has just shit himself...

The President brusquely addresses the contestants, asks Bulk Logan: "So who was the weakest link?"

The Bulk: "I'd have to say Britani".

Britani Spars looks outraged.

The Cabinet Team bicker amongst themselves, backstab and bitch.

The President observes. Nods sagely. Always a great ratings booster... Turns his attention back to Team Freedom and Project Manager Arnell Groundswagger sweating profusely in the hot seat.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"BUT DESPITE BULK LOGAN'S POOR CHOICE OF LOCATION, IT DIDN'T STOP HIS TEAM FROM MARCHING ON TO VICTORY."

The President: "You know what? I really don't like chilli sauce on my hot dog. I hate it. Bulk, your team have won."

Cut to: the winning team of celebrities whoop, holler and high-five one another. Britani Spars and Bulk Logan bear hug. Memories wiped clean. All is forgiven. President: "Very good, Team Liberty. Very good... Tremendous job. Go back to your suite upstairs at Trunt White House Tower where you'll find that I've laid on a Great, Magnificent Surprise. Your reward is..."

... much the same as always. Traditionally, in *The Administration's* format, the Winning Team is hauled up to the President's private quarters, a triplex penthouse at the White House Tower. After an orgy of footage that gives the proles a snatched glance of, well, another lifestyle, a fleeting but grotesque display of the President's enormous wealth – Louis XIV chandeliers, the Sistine Chapel ceiling, pink marble and gold-plating everywhere – the survivors are filmed dining on hot dogs with the President and the First Lady, dutifully asking all sorts of fawning questions of the Great Leader... And, my oh my, how they danced. How beautifully they sang for their supper: "Mr President is it true you once... etc.?" The President would look on benevolently and then respond: "It's true," to the question of whether he had actually invented electricity or freed the slaves or was ordained by God. Of course nobody questioned whether his personal wealth calculation method had any economic legitimacy. It wasn't exactly *creative accounting*, but anyone who "didn't get" his *financial wizardry*, such as chalking "projected" future profits on to his current balance sheet, was simply "STOOPID". This system was in fact genius. He randomly plucked figures out of thin air and then shouted them loudest (\$180 billion, at the last count) and they became fiscal facts. Few would question the Fuhrer.

Cut to: The winning team back in their lofty suite, drinking champagne, ignoring volcanoes of caviar spilling from ivory saucers, but watching with glee, via video uplink, the Losing team fighting for their lives in the boardroom:

The President: "Who are you bringing back in with you?"

Groundschwagger: "I bring back Milan and Stefann".

The facial expressions of both Milan Hitlon and Steven Bawdwin suggest that Arnell Groundschwagger has just casually proposed the ritual slaughter and cannibalisation of their firstborns: Shock, horror, outrage.

The President: "Really? You sure? That's not the decision I would've made..." (Before Arnie can respond or change his mind)... "Right, everyone else back to the doghouse. Milan, Bawdwin, you stay."

Groundschwagger: "I stand by my decision on the chilli sauce."

The President: "Come on... You gotta admit that the chilli sauce was a terrible idea. Just admit it. I might fire you, I might not. I don't know. Just admit it..."

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"BUT THE PRESIDENT WAS LEFT WITH LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO FIRE ARNELL GROUNDSCHWAGGER..."

President: "You're fired."

Arnie: "I'll be back."

President (the observant will notice the entirely different backdrop/filming location): "Only on a rerun!"

Cut to Talking Head: Milan Hitlon. "So Arnie was screaming and hurling insults at me, but I was, like, pft, nah, whatever!" Raised palm, head shaking. "No you do not! Uh huh."

Cut to response talking head. Bulk Logan: "Politics is a tough game, bro... You can't take the heat you best not get in the kitchen!"

Wide shot: Groundschwagger, bags packed, leaving the White House Tower, looks back up at it mournfully.

Gets into a stretched funeral black Sedan.

Close Up of Groundschwagger in the back of the limo: "Whilst... I... do... not... belief... that... I... should... haff... been... fired... for... this... taskkk, I... do belief... that if the Pressident sayss it iss right then it must be right... the Presssident is always right."

Brave New Show

Another celebrity, someone we don't recognise: "The President is ALWAYS right."

Wide shot: All celebrities (in unison, eyes glazed, palms raised and the other hands placed on the Trunt Bible): "THE PRESIDENT IS ALWAYS RIGHT!"

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"YES, FELLOW AMERICAN PATRIOTS... OUR SUPRME LEADER THE PRESIDENT IS ALWAYS RIGHT."

Fade to black...

And the new episode begins:

EPISODE 10- Sermon on Rushmore

The episode starts inside the contestant's suite at the White House Tower.

Someone is talking about how powerful and sexy the President is. There is general agreement. Another contestant compares him to God ("He was looking down at me like the face of God"). More agreement. Another contestant says that God anointed the President, and then everyone gets a bit competitive, halo-polishing, praising the President and God in almost equal measure. The phone rings and one of the contestants answers it. On the other end of the line it's Vice President Plainin, who fulfils the role of the secretary usually played by an actress in earlier seasons. She informs the Cabinet they need to gather at the airstrip outside the Tower in ten minutes. Pandemonium as makeup is applied and the cabinet fight over access to the restroom...

COMMERCIAL BREAK: Trunt Timeshare properties or something.

Fade in: MOUNT RUSHMORE.

We see a wide shot of the iconic Mountain in which the faces of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln were once carved. Thousands of cheap, Mexican slaves toil and sweat, restoring the colossal sculptures into the correct form: Four massive faces of President Trunt.

In the foreground the President stands before the construction site facing the gathered cabinet members. He's flanked by his advisors, Dennis Jr. and Dicky Trunt. Vice President Plainin takes notes. He begins his sermon:

“Hello everybody... This morning we’re standing in front of Mount Rushmore, an iconic American landmark. It wasn’t always so well known, but now it’s one of the greatest, most successful, best known, best ever landmarks ever.”

The cabinet members stood dutifully to attention as the President laid out the details of the task. Rough edited summary: the poor are losers and the meek are weak, and lazy. These scroungers will go to Boardroom Hell. But blessed are those who thirst and hunger for success. For the winners: rejoice and be glad because your reward in the Kingdom of the Boardroom will be...

“...will be really, really great. And in turn the Losers will be persecuted...”

The Vice President chipped in, “Ooooh... You betcha!”

The President continued to reveal that the episode's task was Foreign Policy, and specifically within it, Brand Marketing. Last season, the final task had been passing the Really Fucking Patriotic Act where the Internet had been "fixed" and all freedom-loving Americans aged between birth and death were required by the Secret Police, the STI (Special Trunt Intelligence – the FBI and CIA both having been disbanded in Season 2), to work on Trunt construction sites for between two to five years. It might have extended to other Trunt enterprises, but the President hadn't rolled out too many other entrepreneurial ideas aside from building "really, really big Stuff". All TV stations, apart from Vox News, which had miraculously gotten away with a licensing deal (tribute money like the mafia) had been seized by the Trunt Administration so there wasn't much complaint broadcast via the TV networks. And the Internet no longer worked in America for anything other than the basic mob-appeasing necessities – online shopping and porn.

In short: This week's task is to annexe somewhere (country TBC, probably Sweden), sack it, and make off with the treasure. Dennis Jr. adds they will be judging the teams based on three criteria: Brand Message, Cost-efficiency and Overall Success of the Annexation.

However, despite the President's nuclear publicity machine assuring the brain-dead proles that all was on the up and up in the Land of The Free, there was trouble at the top. The ratings. They were still falling. This was, in truth, a complete and utter fucking disaster for a dictatorship dressed up as TV show... Some kind of rejig to the format was required to keep the interest of Joe Public... and the President had figured it out. At this moment in the series he sprung it on the cabinet. (Groundschwagger had no fucking idea how lucky he was getting out when he did.)

“Also, there's a small change to the rules...”

No longer firings, now PUBLIC EXECUTIONS!

The Project Manager of the losing team will bring two people back to the boardroom and one of them will be executed in the most sensationalist manner the executives can dream up.

The President wondered to himself why it had taken him so long to figure it out... For some time, *Trial-by-Media* had replaced the outdated *Twelve Good Men and True* court system (and the economic benefit of the premium phone lines was beyond dispute). Vox News became Judge, Jury and Executioner. The ratings peak on Vannity Live hit an all-time spike when the electric chair was re-introduced live on the show. For posterity he'd held onto the Supreme Court but it was no longer a starchy line-up of anonymous grey faces with “legal qualifications”. Now it was a kickass Kangaroo Court, consisting of Celebrity, shiny and glittery like the President's Midas touch. Such recognized personalities as Lindie Loghan and Dustin

Bielber signed off on the death orders... Now he'd simply extend televised executions to his cabinet. Genius! That'd shake things up a bit. The ratings would shoot heavenwards like another concrete Trunt monstrosity on Viagra. The contestants weren't best pleased. In a rare expression of dissent there were even direct protestations to the President himself about his judgment... They didn't faze the Great Leader...

"You know I'd love to change that policy. I'd hate to kill you. I love you. But what can I do? I got no choice. Now go out and make me some money. Lots of luck folks. I'll see you back in the boardroom."

... He got a semi.

COMMERCIAL: Trunt condominiums Florida. Paradise on Earth. Brief description of the advert: V.O. : "Fed up with mayhem in this increasingly unstable world?" Footage of Godzillas. A bit of the Daily Hate too... (Hindus again)

Fade in:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"FELLOW AMERICAN PATRIOTS..."

(Under the assumption the viewer has the attention span of a goldfish, tells us what we've just seen)

The teams confer and ask such questions as, "What is annexing?" and, "What is a Sweden?" to answers such as, "I've no idea," "I'll take it," or, "You do it," Finally, they agree on Team Liberty and that aging Rock Icon Agnes Hooper will oversee the invasion of Switzerland. Or was it Swaziland? If they got it wrong they might lose points, but then again the President rarely picked up such trivial minutiae as long as the cash rolled in. Who cared? What did it matter? On the opposing side, Team Freedom, the contestants duck responsibility as much as possible before it falls on an unwilling Britani Spars to oversee combat operations and lead the charge once more into the breach...

COMMERCIAL BREAK: Trunt product, Trunt product, Trunt product. Consume. Consume. Consume. Don't ask questions. Don't think. Just consume.

The Task at hand. The usual chaos ensues. A few more commercial breaks. Then the boardroom. The firing...

Britani Spars had done a good job with the Republic of the Congo, the President had to admit... He liked the way she'd pitched the bongo-bongo tribal chiefs against each other to rob the diamonds. *Smart*, the President thought... But now they'd got the loot and the First Lady had even bigger and shinier rocks to wear, and the other team had annexed Sweden, as was clearly specified in the briefing, he fired her anyway. Her rival Project Manager, decaying rocker Agnes Hooper, survived another episode before being hung from the Washington Bridge like a Christmas decoration. Steven

Bawdwin went next: the winning team's reward was to use him as target practice with the latest line of Trunt "Home Defense" AK47s; Bulk Logan went by stoning: Trunt-preference pink marble – so much more lethal than common pelt. In the episode dedicated mostly to plugging Trunt Brand Cosmetic Surgery the Attorney General, Punk Rocks, (of 'ex-husband to that famous ex-Reefwatch Starlet' fame) was cosmetically enhanced into a doppelgänger of the writer who'd written that book (*was it The Da Vinci Verses?* thought the President) that annoyed the Wasabis (*or Hindus?*) then dumped into a trebuchet and catapulted into *Allah by Trunt!* with a sign stapled to him that read "I am Salmon Rushbye" (*The President reasoned if the landing didn't kill him, the Wasabis probably would... He didn't fully understand the Japanese mentality, but he knew they really hated that book...*)

Episode by episode, the President eliminated members of his cabinet with utter ruthlessness. The ratings shot up and the cash poured in. Don't ask how. The President simply plucked a figure – \$360 billion – and shouted his newly doubled net worth out for the entire world to envy. After all, the President was always right... especially when it came to matters of money or his offspring. Terrific apprentices they were. Little acorns. The Truntlings had demonstrated their considerable business talent, acumen and creativity by dreaming up an extraordinary range of entertaining ways to execute the cabinet contestants (though naturally, the Great Leader took all the credit):

EPISODE 15:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"ON THE PREVIOUS EPISODE..."

The boardroom.

President: "Let's face it, John, you did a lousy job... Your only task was to make sure the Golf Courses in Eurasia got their Environmentally Perfect certificates. You failed. You lost."

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"OUR GREAT LEADER HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO SENTENCE
CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS,
GOLFER JOHN NICHOLAUS, TO DEATH"

John Nicholas: (sweating, pleading, tears) "Please, Mr President, please! Please, please, please! Not that. Not that. Please..."

President: "You're fired!"

Cut to:

A Death Chamber (with a twist).

Nicholaus is strapped into an electric chair. The cables running from it are not connected to the mains but instead to its unconventional power supply: an exercise bike being ridden by none other than Director

of National Drug Control Policy, former Tour de France winner, Gal Armstrong.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"ARMSTRONG KNOWS THAT IF HE FAILS TO GENERATE SUFFICIENT POWER, HE HIMSELF WILL LOSE..."

Gal Armstrong pedals for all he's worth: each cancelled sponsorship, every revoked endorsement, and every last damn World Anti-Doping Agency deprived penny.

Nicholaus slowly fries like an egg on a hot Chevrolet-by-Trunt combustion engine. One of his eyes pops out but, though squealing like a hog, he's still very much alive.

Armstrong peddles harder.

EPISODE 16:

A huge Trunt Arena.

The stands are packed with patriotic Americans. Beer, hot dogs, the whole nine yards. Cheers of delight from the flag-waving crowd. Waving flags of Trunt USA 2029. The taste of Victory: The Trunt Games.

In the Royal box sits the Emperor Trunt and the Truntlings. (It was the First Lady's day off. Check the contract.)

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"THIS WEEK ON ALLSTAR CELEBRITY ADMINISTRATION, PROJECT MANAGER GAL ARMSTRONG LEAD TEAM FREEDOM..."

The arena itself is filled with big fucking lions.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"...TO A SPECTACULAR DEFEAT..."

The President (shouting to the Mob): "HELLO EVERYBODY... LET THE TOURNAMENT BEGIN!"

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"... AND HAD TO FACE THE CONSEQUENCES!"

A spiked golden gate is raised and in peddles Gal Armstrong on a racing cycle...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"ANY FORM OF PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS ARE STRICTLY FORBIDDEN..."

Brave New Show

Armstrong really fucking peddles around the arena...
to evade the hungry lions.

Remarkably, he does so... for a while.

COMMERCIAL BREAK: Trunt Whatever product.

At the half-time break, the tiring lions are replaced
with even newer, bigger, better, fitter, best ever,
steroid-pumped, genetically-modified, performance-
enhanced lions.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"BUT FOLLOWING A RANDOM DRUG TEST, IN A SHOCKING
REVELATION, ARMSTRONG IS FOUND TO HAVE TAKEN ILLEGAL
PERFORMANCE ENHANCING DRUGS..."

The President: "YOU FAILED. RELEASE THE LIONS!"

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"...SO IN ORDER TO LEVEL THE ARENA, ARMSTRONG IS
HAMSTRUNG AND HIS BIKE TYRES PUNCTURED."

He is not successful in the second half.

The performance-enhanced lions take their time with
the hobbled Director of National Drug Control Policy.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"AND GAL ARMSTRONG WAS LITERALLY TORN LIMB FROM LIMB.
ON NEXT WEEK'S EPISODE..."

EPISODE 17:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"U.S. TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, ENCORP'S LEN KAY, IS
LYNCHED BY AN ANGRY MOB OF FORMER ENCORP EMPLOYEES"

The President (talking head): "You know, he can't
complain. He was officially dead and all... He was
only ever able to re-emerge from Aspen and his death-
faking once I gave him a Presidential Pardon..."

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"AND AS AN UNUSUAL TWIST THE PRESIDENT MAKES ANOTHER
SNAP DECISION..."

The boardroom. Two faces radiate extreme relief, while
a third, that of Len Kay, is broken, beaten, defeated,
head in hands.

President: "You know what?" (a beat) "I'm gonna fire
two people today."

Brave New Show

The two other candidates, Encorp's Geoff Shrilling and former Basketball player Ellis Roadman, are suddenly as alert as gerbils in the python's tank.

The President: "Shrilling, you're fired too."

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"HE IS JOINED BY HIS FORMER BUSINESS PARTNER, CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS, GEOFF SHRILLING..."

Roadman: shuts his eyes and exhales deeply. Shrilling: crushed before Caesar like crumpled origami.

Cut to: Footage of an angry mob stringing Kay and Shrilling up from the former Washington Monument, now a massive Trunt T. They writhe, struggle and kick, flailing as the ropes pull them higher, until finally their bodies go limp.

The President (to camera): "Great brand recognition"

It could not be better.

EPISODE 18:

The boardroom.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION, MILAN HITLON, GETS THE SACK"

A gagged and bound Hitlon is sacked: literally sealed into a weighted canvas Louis Vuitton bag, like one of her accessory poodles, and hurled over the Washington Bridge where, six episodes on, Agnes Hooper's skeletal corpse (not entirely indistinguishable from the Hooper with a pulse) still dangles like decomposing Halloween decor.

Welcome to the future: it is murder.

EPISODE 19:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"ON TODAY'S EPISODE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS TURN SOUR"

Boardroom.

President: "You're telling me that North Korea have reneged on the Trunt Juche Tower Pyongyang?"

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"THE PRESIDENT HOLDS HIS CHIEF POLITICAL ADVISOR AND
NORTH KOREAN ENVOY, ELLIS ROADMAN, ACCOUNTABLE"

President: "You know, Ellis, I really hate to do this. I really do. I love you, I consider you a friend... And you know, a lotta times in the past, you know, people used to say 'Mr Trunt's a racist' or whatever and I was like, 'How can I be a racist? I'm the least racist person ever. I've got a toking black in my administration.' OK, so what if the Vice President doesn't like taking meetings with you one-on-one? Can I blame her? She's a woman. What do you expect?"

Vice President Plainin takes a sideways glance at the Chief Political Advisor. Clutches her handbag.

The President (continues): "So, Ellis, I really hate to do this, I really do, BUT you failed. You lost... So you're fired. And anyway..."

The President shrugs and nods at his Assistant for Science and Technology, former Heavyweight Champion Ike Byson, as Roadman is dragged screaming from the boardroom.

EPISODE 20:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

"ON THIS EPISODE WE TRAVEL TO PAMPLONA, ITALY, WHERE
FORMER HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING CHAMPION, 'METAL' IKE BYSON,
FACES THE RAGING BULL"

Plaza de Toros Arena, SPAIN, Southern Eurasia.

Ike Byson - tarred and covered in red feathers, armed only with an oversized pair of foam giant finger novelty Boxing Gloves, wrists bound - against the angry bull. It could be a Karmic Revenge fantasy dreamed up by an Animal Rights Activist...

The President (talking head): "Back in his prime I woulda put my money on the champ..."

So, after all of the show's wildly entertaining Administrative purge, who were we still left with from the Administration? Now it was down to Vice and one other unlikely candidate: the President's food taster, former Hollywood Superstar Mack Daymon, star of such films as the successful Bored franchise: The Bored Mentality, The Bored Retirement and The Bored Resurrection. (It was also Daymon's task to transcribe the broadcast episodes for records in the national Historical archive). The politically astute may have noticed that the President's Administration consisted of Republican celebrities, and Daymon was the exception.

Getting over a bout of amnesia, Mack Daymon had forgotten he was a Democrat... Not that that mattered, the party was an ancient relic of the past and had gone the way of the dodo, Tasmanian tiger and the sabre-toothed cat. All political opposition, like *Specialist Scientific Interest* conservation sites, had been bulldozered in the President's first season. Still, at least he could perhaps try to work the system from within. The lone voice on the left? Last Man Standing... Nope, given the amnesia he had no idea what a Democrat even was. Those who remembered were wise enough to never speak the D word aloud. Otherwise there would be the sound of boots, the thump on the door in the middle of the night and that would be the last anyone ever heard - or spoke - of them. NONETHELESS, the President had kept a paranoid eye on him, and maybe he was saving the best execution until last... If someone poisoned the food in the meantime it would still make a reasonable episodic aside. Assassination attempts on the President's life were not uncommon. One or two of his doubles had been offed in the past. Whatever.

Most of the airy-fairy Hollywood liberal elite had vanished, ended up in "Camp Freedom" (Guantanamo). Mack Daymon had been spared only because since he'd suffered the amnesia he'd forgotten he was a Democrat and the President liked the violent action sequences in the Bored films. How he'd actually got the Amnesia was due to some tinkering in a behaviour modification experiment the President's previous Assistant for Science and Technology, Doctor Hank Strangeinger Jr., had performed on him. Whatever, Daymon didn't remember any of it anyway.

Now just the President's lowly food taster...

EPISODE 21: The Episode to end all episodes

I'm so damn sick of hot dogs! It's all the President ever eats... It might be heresy for me to think these thoughts, let alone commit them to paper, but let's face it... Sand is slipping through - let's just say that I'm fucked.

How did this all come about? I don't know. I just came to one day, with a feeling that the world's something weird, feels like it's upside down or inside out, even though this is all I know, but somehow you know that there's an alternative out there somewhere, that's real. I experience echoes and glimmers of something else, some other time and a feeling of discontentment, and at that place in time everything seemed bad and perhaps there was another land, another meadow, call it "greener pastures" if you like, but you didn't know how good you had it until it was gone. But then it's gone and you don't know if it was even real... That's how I feel. It's like something that's been amputated, like feeling the presence of a phantom limb; one you're told you were never born with even though you can still see the scars; a conjoined twin, wrenched away at birth, then clubbed over the head and told it never happened. That's what it feels like. But what is reality anyway? A television show.

And transcribing this show for the National Historical Archive? WTF? It's absurd that anyone would want to watch it. Like everything round here, I'm pretty certain no-one's checking the small-print in the deal, I doubt anyone will even read this "transcript" before it's filed. Who's left? The President rarely reads anything he signs, I'm not even sure if he can read, and Vice is much the same. She gives me her notes, the minutes she

takes for the President, and they're virtually illegible. The bits that are rarely have anything to do with the subject she's supposed to be taking notes on. What was the one she had earlier on? "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night", with little doodles of angels and demons and mushroom clouds sprawled all over the sheet... But anyway, what I'm saying is: Why the fuck would anyone want to watch this mind-fucking of the masses? Why?

The purges. Admittedly, the President has, on one level, worked a magic trick with this deregulation of life, or liberation of death, for short-term profits... but it's no realistic long-term solution. It's a big bang and then it's doomed. And what then? The quick-fix has gone down well with Joe Public but now the fresh supply of scalps is diminishing, and every season has to be BIGGER, BETTER, MORE SENSATIONALIST. How is the President going to even maintain it, let alone top it? He's killed everyone off. It's going to be a very hard sell, going forward, to the contestants taking part that their participation is essentially a death sentence!

What's next? Ordinary folk? Or clearing out the dregs of the prisons and asylums: a "governing" class of convicts, criminals, rapists and madmen? Perhaps? Actually...

From time to time the President will look at me in that way of his that liquidises your insides like a gastric flu, chuckle to himself and say that word... Geronimo? Guantanamo? What does it mean? Is it something to do with Camp Freedom and the inmates? His wry smile suggests that he's got a secret supply stashed somewhere. Of who or what? Other time's he'll be chuckling along with the Vice President as she takes his notes or brings him his drinks or applies his orange makeup and he'll say, "Perhaps it's time for a 'temporary liberal cabinet for a season or two' while the supplies last... Clear Gitmo of the trash..." She'll do what she always does, just say, "You betcha!" before quoting something from some strange book... Like an older version of the Trunt New Testament?

Day by day, The President becomes increasingly paranoid, almost like he's expecting a time when he'll be facing the barrels from the other side of the boardroom desk. His growing paranoia seems like it's in direct correlation with his ever-tightening grip on power... He becomes more isolated the more his business empire expands... and he's building that nuclear bunker up in the Rockies. He's diverted about a million Mexicans. They're digging and digging and digging and so much pink marble's been exported up there that the mortality rate of the laborers crating it up has gone off the chart. Not that the President has the slaves on the books. He's weird about Mexicans... Another case of do as I say but not as I do... Like, where every other business in the Free World has to employ US. Suppose it's a genius way to keep an advantage over your competitors while "stabilising" employment at home...

But though the President is deranged and paranoid and killing everyone he can think of in unthinkable ways, I don't think he's given a moment's consideration to the greatest threat, that oh so clear and present danger: The Vice President.

It terrifies me. She seems obsessed with this thing called the rapture and I think she wants to bring it about... She genuinely believes that it's dead certain and she'll have a first class ticket to Heaven's pearly gates while others will tumble into rocky, painful, eternal hellfire and think she actually wants to bring it about if it doesn't happen some other way... And the President worries about building another concrete hard-on or how the ratings are or the most entertaining way to kill an old friend, but completely ignores this fact that's glaring him in the face. I think we'll all have front-row seats to the end of days if the President lets her know the codes...

But in truth I doubt I'll last that long. Trunt knows what kind of fate the President's kids are dreaming up for me but I bet it'll be a zinger. Hopefully it'll be one like Roadman's where I may just have a glimmer of hope of surviving the game: he was released into the wild, a Trunt Golf Reserve, to be human 'Game' to the Vice's 'Great White Hunter'... At least the poor son of a bitch stood a small chance that way, but the Vice was too damn good a tracker and marksman. She hunted him down like a dog on the 16th hole... All those moose, back when she was the Governor of Alaska. Still better odds than some of the others. But let's be realistic, it won't be something they've already done this series. It'll have to be something bigger, better, more sensationalist... maybe the President's sons would join the hunt, they're both fairly competent predators. They did bazooka the last rhino... But I think it'll be something else, something even more explosive or much more painful. Freediving for bullion in a vat of hydrochloric acid? Or maybe a tank of piranhas? They've not been done yet. Who knows? I suppose, a small measure of optimism, is at least it's no more tasting the Fuhrer's hot dogs... I really hate that yellow mustard.

There's a thumping on the door... maybe this is it? Wonder, who'll transcribe my execution... Vice? I write these last thoughts in the hope that, that, what hope? I dunno.

Still here. What are the odds? They must be cooking up something real special... A point of note: Vice actually has the codes. I was on Air Force One the other day, Vice back at the W.H.T., and the President's on Speaker with her. Something about the Middle East...

The President says: "Israel and Philistine. Which is which?" The Vice doesn't reply immediately and the President just carries on "Israel's the one that has all the Islams, right?"

"It must be!" says Vice, "You betcha!"

"So what's the deal?"

"Well. They have a big wall there to keep out all the Philistines."

"A big wall?" says the President. "That's a breach of Copyright. We got a licensing deal?"

"Nope!"

"Well, sometimes you gotta be strong. Flatten it."

"You betcha!"

"You've got the codes, right?"

"No. Not yet."

"Top drawer of my desk... It's unlocked."

"Ooooooooh, you betcha!" then she murmurs something like: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed... You betcha!"

And that was the Middle East...

Today, I beg the President to switch the codes but Vice comes in and hisses "Be Gone, Foul Daymon!" at me. I say, "You cannot be serious, you're letting this zealot handle the codes?" She just replies: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. You betcha!" The President is looking at the blue prints for the New Middle East. The Vice's eyes glaze, and she carries on with: "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. You betcha!" He orders another hot dog.

Things have gone from bad to catastrophic. In Manhattan. The President is loading up Air Force One with all he can make out with. Gold bullion seems to be the top priority, then the Office of The First Lady, The Truntlings, a few boxes of blueprints and files and some old home DVDs and finally The First Lady. Vice is back at the White House, addressing the nation in a live televised address (Seems the Fuhrer shoulda listened to me): "AND THE SEVENTH ANGEL SOUNDED; AND THERE WERE GREAT VOICES IN HEAVEN, SAYING, THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST; AND HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER. YOU BETCHA!"

She's launching on Russia and China. They're retaliating. Inevitable.

If there's time to print this I'll slide it into one of the President's boxes.

This is it. Still, no more hot dogs...

Air Force One fled like a scarpering Eagle over the burning Manhattan skyline, en route to the Rocky Mountains bunker and pretty fucking far away from DC. By the President's third season the bunker was two-hundred stories deep, reinforced by canyon-width steel, covered with gold plating, pink marble – how it would sparkle – and stashed with enough supplies to last about two hundred years...

Flying over the country the President saw the Free World turn to rubble: fire scorched earth, while lakes and rivers boiled – basically, the most sensationalist parts of the Bible. The ground beneath him blackened as first Manhattan, then city by city, the Free World fell. The landscape below rippled with mushroom shaped clouds of dust that resembled Trademarked logos: a chain reaction that toppled nation after nation as the nuclear branding stamped its mark on every skyline across the planet.

Tiring quickly of current events, the President turned his attention from what was happening outside to some in-flight entertainment. A bank of monitors displayed live scenes of the immeasurable global destruction. While Kentucky fried, Mississippi burned. The vast desert surrounding Las Vegas reclaimed the once shining beacon of vice as its own again, forever keeping its secrets. The City of Angels was swept into the Pacific Ocean with all the resistance a ball of fluff offers a mop. Images simultaneously ran of London, Paris, Tokyo, Berlin and every other Eurasian Capital, annihilated like CGI scenes in a Bruckheimer blockbuster. Hong Kong, as if by a fastidiously controlled demolition came down in a swift, choreographed free-fall. Dubai sunk straight into the sand. Moscow's Kremlin crumpled, presumably killing Tzar Valdimir and his ministers, and Saint-Petersburg didn't stick around on ground. The Petronus Towers folded in on themselves like two collapsible cardboard boxes. London Bridge fell down, proving generations of primary school children to have been rather prophetic. Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece Saint Paul's blew away and resettled over the Thames. The Straightened Tower of Pisa toppled over into a billion little particles, and as for the Great Wall of China; events echoed Berlin in the autumn of '89. Like *La Révolution*-era aristocrats, Easter Island's Heads were decapitated by the blast. Flame sacked Istanbul's city walls as the Colosseum's gates shut for the last time.

One prominent screen on board displayed what looked like a White House *ground zero* site, but this may just have been *Independence Day*, the President's usual in-flight movie of preference, or perhaps even archived footage of the White House construction site during season one's cosmetic Tower "enhancement" stage... But by far the greatest significance was that great cultural artefacts, seven gifts to humanity of such divine beauty – the Great Pyramids, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Olympian Statue of Zeus, the Temple of Artemis, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes and the Lighthouse of Alexandria – all of the finest Casino & Golf Resorts, the Trunt Wonders of the World, were reduced from lucrative tourist destinations to toxic dust.

Yet ignoring these grand events on board the plane, fixated instead to the events of another monitor, he watched looped reruns, while munching on a hot dog, of Mack Daymon's final moments just before the warheads struck Manhattan... He had to admit that, despite the small inconvenience of the apocalypse, it was by far the show's most impressive execution yet. What a climax to the series.

Occasionally glancing out the cabin's window, he didn't observe angels, halos or the selected bodies of The Chosen shooting Heavenwards past Air Force One towards divine light. There was, however, all that promised fire and brimstone and the long-prophesised End of Days happening on the bubbling tarmac below. He had to give it to the Vice President: she'd by far exceeded every one of the show's other cabinet killings in terms of scale, spectacle and originality. Technically, before the rockets most likely flattened the White House, she was ever so briefly the Winning candidate (even if he hadn't noticed her ascending, as she'd no doubt presumed she would, to Heaven – perhaps she'd whizzed by the other window?). Either way, she was still the show's Winner. And he always backed Winners. In fact, everything he did, no matter what, was always the biggest and best of its kind. So he reflected to himself, with no small measure of pride, that he'd achieved something unique that no one ever had before. He'd pulled off the apocalypse: the biggest, best-ever, and most successful Armageddon ever.

It was a hell of an episode.

About the author



Will Haynes began his career in the UK film industry as a dogsbody, before turning to writing. He has been on the run since his controversial fable on rural affairs, 'The Parish State', was denounced by the Countryside Alliance. North Korea has also doubled the bounty on his head for his shocking exposé of British Public Schools in his story, 'My Week with Kim Jong Un'. And the Royal Family are said to be less than happy about his dystopian allegory of hereditary Neoconservative dynasties, 'The People's Republic'. He was last seen in a bar somewhere in Paris, complaining that the martini lacked an olive, before staggering down Boulevard du Montparnasse on the hunt for one of those awesome cheeseburgers that you can only get in Paris. His publicist has declined to comment.

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Will Haynes (II) SEE RANK
Miscellaneous Crew | Assistant Director | Director

Will Haynes is known for his work on [Angels & Demons \(2009\)](#), [The Good Shepherd \(2006\)](#) and [London Boulevard \(2010\)](#). See full bio »

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Known For

Angels & Demons (2009)	The Good Shepherd (2006)	London Boulevard (2010)	Last Chance Harvey (2008)

For further information please visit www.willhaynes.net