

THE NEWSPAPER MAN

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. TIMES HERALD BUILDING — NIGHT

A piece of newspaper swirls unnaturally in the street, caught in cross-breezes. It begins to slide down the dark, empty avenue, passing a newspaper machine.

The paper inside the machine bears a headline which reads '*City's Homeless Population To Double In Coming Years*'. Above stands the Times Herald building, it's windows all dark save one.

INT. TIMES HERALD BUILDING — HENRY'S OFFICE — NIGHT

HENRY MORTIMER (early 50's) is chewing on an unlit cigar in his small office, typing at a manual typewriter which sits on the desk next to a modern computer. He is dressed neatly in suit and tie, cufflinks and a Rolex. A fedora rests on his head, covering his thinning hair.

Papers cover the desk and framed articles and photographs adorn the walls. A small Christmas tree stands in one corner and a set of golf clubs leans in another.

He pulls the page from the machine and sets it atop a neat stack in a manuscript box, then picks up the lid to the box and places it on top, patting the box affectionately. Then he leans back in his chair, hands behind his head, stretching.

Tired but satisfied, he rubs his eyes and checks his watch, then places the manuscript in a briefcase.

The telephone on his desk rings and Henry answers.

HENRY

Hello?. . . No, I can't do it

HENRY (CONT'D)

tonight Bob, I'm beat. . .

Yeah, just finished. I'm

handing it off to the publisher

tomorrow. . . I appreciate

the offer, but I'm dead tired.

I'll talk to you tomorrow,

ok?. . . Alright, see you

then. . . Bye.

He rises from the desk, stretches again, picks up the briefcase and moves to the door, grabbing overcoat and scarf from a coatrack. He glances back toward his desk before turning off the lights.

EXT. TIMES HERALD BUILDING - NIGHT

Henry exits the building, lights his cigar and walks along the deserted sidewalk.

Traffic lights decorated for the holiday season blink yellow on the desolate street. A large banner hangs across the street reading *'Only 24 More Days 'Til Christmas'*.

The only sound is the CLOP-CLOP of Henry's shoes and the RUSH of a lone passing cab.

EXT. HENRY'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Having made the short walk home, Henry approaches his three story brownstone, which stands on the corner in an exclusive neighborhood.

Beside his stoop he sees a dark figure huddled, covered in a filthy blanket. He approaches slowly and sees that it is an OLD HOMELESS WOMAN.

HENRY

Hey, you!

She does not respond, so he nudges her with his foot and she begins to move, slowly waking.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(nudging her again
with his shoe)

C'mon, lady. This is not a flop
house.

OLD HOMELESS WOMAN

I'm sorry, sir. I was just
trying to get some sleep. I'm
very tired.

HENRY

I don't care what you are. Go
and sleep somewhere else. This
is a respectable neighborhood.
At least it used to be.

The old woman rises and collects her bundle.

OLD HOMELESS WOMAN

Ok, i'm going. But somebody
ought to teach you some respect.
I'm a person just like you.

HENRY

(laughing)

Just like me? Ok, old lady,
whatever you say.

She shambles away, grumbling and cursing to herself. Henry begins to climb the steps to his door but notices a strip

of newspaper attached to his shoe. He tugs at it, but it doesn't budge. Shrugging, he proceeds to his front door and opens it.

INT. HENRY'S BROWNSTONE — NIGHT

Henry hangs up his overcoat and scarf, flips on the T.V. (a NEWS REPORT about a religious group helping the local homeless with food and blankets) and settles in on his couch, putting his feet up on the coffee table.

He sees the strip of newspaper pasted across the side of one of his expensive leather shoes and begins pulling at its edges, trying again to remove it. It will not budge.

He goes to the kitchen and wets a rag with warm water, takes off the shoe and attempts to remove the stuck-on paper by gently rubbing with the rag. No go. The damp rag has no effect at all.

The strip of newspaper is a torn headline reading *"Get A Job" Says Economic Writer Henry Mortimer'*.

INT. HENRY'S BROWNSTONE — LATER

Henry sits on the couch, exasperated. Bottles and cans of all kinds of cleaning products sit on his coffee table. The strip of newspaper is still attached to the shoe, unscathed.

He removes the other shoe, picks them both up and drops them into the kitchen trash can.

HENRY

Well, there goes three hundred dollars.

INT. BAR — DAY

A dimly-lit bar decorated for Christmas. Henry sits in a booth opposite two of his co-workers. They are BOB MORGAN (late 40's) and STEVE MCCARTY (mid 30's). A WAITRESS brings a tray with three high-ball glasses.

BOB

(to Waitress)

Thank you doctor.

(to Henry)

So, Morty, you turned in the book?

HENRY

Yessiree.

STEVE

Hey, I didn't even know you were writing a book. What's it about?

HENRY

It's about them. . .

He points to the window where a HOMELESS MAN in ragged clothing is begging change from passersby on the sidewalk.

HENRY (CONT'D)

. . .and all of the goddamn do-gooders that are only making the problem worse by kow-towing to these leeches.

Bob and Steve exchange a look.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Do you know that there's a
park not five blocks from
here where three hundred of
them live. Three hundred!
It's an eyesore. It's a damn
shame is what it is.

STEVE

So. . .does that mean i get to
take over your column once you're
a rich, best-selling author?

HENRY

Don't start measuring the
drapes just yet, Steve. I've
got no plans to retire anytime
soon.

BOB

(finishing his drink)

What do you boys say we get outta
here and head down to Warren's
where we can get some serious
drinking done?

STEVE

I'm game.

HENRY

Can't do it, fellas. I've gotta
go by my mom's place. She's
expecting me.

(checks his Rolex)

In fact, i better get going.

He tosses some bills onto the table.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Stay out of trouble you two.

STEVE

You got it.

BOB

Never!

EXT. BAR — DAY

Henry exits the bar. The Homeless Man approaches him.

HOMELESS MAN

Happy Holidays, mister. Spare
some change for a veteran?

But Henry does not hear him or pretends he doesn't and walks past without even looking at the man. The homeless man looks dejected at being thus ignored as Henry moves toward the street, hailing a cab.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING — EVENING

Henry exits the cab outside his mother's building, which is in a "transitional" area of the city. The building has seen better days and several unsavory characters mangle on the trash-strewn sidewalk.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING — HALLWAY — EVENING

Henry knocks on a door and an attractive, nicely dressed older woman answers. She is CAROLINE MORTIMER (80-ish), Henry's mother.

CAROLINE

Hi, son. Come in, how have
you been?

HENRY

Good, mom, good. I see you have
company.

INT. CAROLINE'S APARTMENT — EVENING

A couple in their early 50's and a young woman (late teens)
are seated in the well-kept apartment. They are FELICIA
CONNER, JOE CONNER and their niece TRUDY. As he enters
they are rising to leave.

FELICIA

(nudging her husband)

We were just leaving, right Joe?

CAROLINE

Henry, these are my friends
Felicia and Joe Conner and their
niece Trudy. Everyone, this
is my son Henry.

The Conners exchange pleasantries and season's greetings
with Henry. It is clear from the young girl Trudy's
behavior that she is mentally challenged but she smiles
sweetly during the introductions. The three exit amid
goodbyes and Caroline closes the door.

CAROLINE

(to Henry)

They're really nice people.
Moved into the building a few
years ago just after your
father died, but we've only
gotten to know each other
recently.

The two walk back toward the kitchen/living room area of
the apartment.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Can i get you a cup of coffee?

HENRY

Uh, yeah, sure. Thanks.

CAROLINE

(pouring the coffee)

I'm worried about them. Joe got laid off a few months back and with this economy he can't find a job anywhere, so they have to move out of the building. I don't know where they'll go.

HENRY

Now there's an idea. Moving out of the building i mean. Have you given any thought to what we talked about before?

CAROLINE

No, Henry. No. All of our memories are here. And I have friends in this building that I've known for decades.

HENRY

Yeah, Ma, but this place has gone downhill. I mean really downhill. Maybe it was nice thirty years ago, but now it's a real dump. You can afford to move.

CAROLINE

But i don't want to move. Come

and sit down and let's talk
about something else before you
get me upset.

INT. CAROLINE'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Henry and his mother are wrapping up their conversation.
Coffee cups and a few dishes are on the table.

HENRY
(laughing)
. . .You should have seen the
look on that poor girl's face.

CAROLINE
(laughing)
Your father never could tell
a joke, bless his heart. But
that didn't stop him from trying.

Caroline moves to refill his cup.

HENRY
Thanks Ma, but I've gotta get
going.

They rise and she sees him to the door.

CAROLINE
Alright son, thanks for
stopping by. I'll see you
on Christmas. Oh, it looks like
you've got something on your
leg.

He looks down to see a strip of newspaper protruding from
under his pant leg and attached to his shoe. His face goes
white.

CAROLINE

Are you ok, honey?

HENRY

Yeah, i'll be fine. I've got
to go now. I'll see you on
Christmas, ok? Gotta run.

He hurries away down the hallway as she looks on,
concerned.

INT. HENRY'S BROWNSTONE — NIGHT

Henry sits in his apartment wearing boxer shorts. One bare
leg rests on a butcher's block on the coffee table.

The strip of newspaper is attached at one end to the side
of his leg at the calf and at the other end to his sock and
shoe. He is exhausted and near tears as he lays down a
hatchet he has been using to try to cut the paper.

Scissors, knives and pruning shears are on the table. He
has tried them all. The butcher block has hatchet marks
where he has hacked at the paper, but nothing has worked.

The headline on the newspaper strip reads '*Homeless
Destroying Our Fair City*'. Henry's name is on the byline.

INT. HENRY'S BROWNSTONE — THE NEXT MORNING

He is dressed for work, looking somewhat haggard from a
poor night's sleep. He applies black polish to his shoe in
an attempt to cover the newspaper.

EXT. CITY STREET — DAY

Henry is walking to work, glancing furtively at the nicely
dressed people who surround him on the sidewalk.

Passing a large homeless encampment which fills a park about the size of a city block, he stops and watches as volunteers from a local church are serving soup and bread to a long line of ragged-looking individuals.

He shakes his head and moves along at a faster pace toward his office.

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - DAY

He is on the phone, talking animatedly.

HENRY

But Councilman Ross, there has to be something you can do.. . .it's a city park. Can't you just send the police out to arrest them for vagrancy?. . . Well can't you at least pass some kind of ordinance to stop people feeding them?. . . Ok, Councilman. I appreciate your time. Thanks.

Flustered, he hangs up the phone. A knock on the door.

HENRY

(annoyed)

Who is it?

Bob Morgan leans into the office.

BOB

Hey buddy. Wanna go grab a couple drinks? Man cannot live by bread alone.

HENRY

No, thanks. I've got some

HENRY (CONT'D)

Christmas shopping to do.

BOB

Ok. Well, i'm an XL if you were wondering, but i'm also partial to cash. Or gold. Whatever's easier for you. See you later buddy.

HENRY

I'll see ya, Bob.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

A high-end department store filled with expensive merchandise and expensive people. Henry imagines that they look at him strangely, but brushes it off.

Standing before an elaborate display of perfumes he points to one.

HENRY

I'll take that one.

The SALES CLERK retrieves the bottle and returns to the counter.

SALES CLERK

Will this be cash or credit?

HENRY

Credit please.

He reaches to his back pocket for his wallet. A look of concern passes over his face.

From behind we can see now what the problem is. A large

piece of newspaper is spread across the back of his pants, preventing him from accessing his wallet.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Um, I. . .I seem to have
forgotten my wallet. I'll. . .
I'll be back.

The Clerk's face moves from slight concern to disinterest. Henry turns and hurriedly departs the store, turning this way and that and trying in vain to hide the paper with his hands.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

HENRY

Why is this happening to me?

A PASSERBY looks at him, perplexed, then shakes their head. Just another loony talking to himself.

Henry approaches an outdoor newsstand. As he passes, all the newspapers suddenly leap from the racks, as if targeting him.

The PROPRIETOR, a heavysset guy in a stocking cap moves around to the front of the racks as Henry stands there in shock, newspapers lying all around him and stuck to his pants and shirt.

PROPRIETOR

What the fuck do you think you're
doing? Get outta here. Get outta
here! Shoo! Go on you fuckin'
bum!

Henry is appalled at being called a 'bum' and hurries away in a panic, paper streaming from his body.

EXT. HENRY'S BROWNSTONE — DAY

He hurries to his front door. Sanctuary. A place to rest and think over what is happening to him.

He reaches to his front pocket for his keys. Nope. Paper covers the pocket.

He looks first to a window, then to a rock that is part of a small area of landscaping near the stoop.

At the moment he is reaching to pick up the rock a patrol car rolls past, the POLICEMAN giving him a good, long look. Damn.

EXT. CITY STREET — LATE AFTERNOON

Henry shuffles down a sidewalk, casting his glance away as people passing stare at him with disdain.

Catching his reflection in a shop window, he stops and looks long, barely recognizing himself. He reaches up and tugs at a piece of paper attached to his cheek. He tugs harder and a trickle of blood falls down his face.

Panicked, he begins to walk again, quickening his pace.

EXT. HOSPITAL — EVENING

Quite a few people meander around outside the emergency room entrance, some smoking, others waiting on rides, etc.

INT. HOSPITAL — WAITING ROOM — NIGHT

Henry is sitting in a large, crowded waiting room. An athletic-looking ORDERLY in white talks with a RECEPTIONIST near the sign-in desk. The Orderly eyes Henry suspiciously.

A BEARDED HOMELESS MAN in ragged clothing, newspaper wrapped around his lower legs, enters and sits down opposite Henry.

A piece of the newspaper around one of the man's legs begins to wave and flap. Then the man's leg jerks forward, pulling him onto the floor and dragging him in Henry's direction.

Henry rises, terrified and begins to back away. He trips over the legs of a YOUNG WOMAN and falls. Rises again quickly, backs up and falls over a small table.

BEARDED HOMELESS MAN

(rising to his feet)

What's your problem, man?

Henry turns to run away, but the Orderly stands directly in front of him.

ORDERLY

C'mon, pal, let's get you out
of this waiting room, huh?
The doctor will see you now.

HENRY

Oh, thank you young man. I'm
having a really bad day.

ORDERLY

Hey, I understand. We all
have rough days sometimes. Just
come along with me and we'll get
you taken care of, ok?

Henry follows him to a nearby door. The Orderly opens the door, ushers Henry in and closes it between them.

EXT. ALLEYWAY — NIGHT

Henry finds himself not in a doctor's office, but outside, alone in a trash-filled alleyway.

EXT. HENRY'S BROWNSTONE — NEXT MORNING

Henry awakes behind some small bushes that are beside the stoop of his building. More newspaper has accumulated on him during the night, covering a large portion of his body as well as part of his face.

EXT. TIMES HERALD BUILDING — DAY

He stands on the sidewalk, staring up at the window of his office. People file in and out of the building. Some look at him with distaste and others with pity.

A MAN approaches holding out a five dollar bill to him. Henry pushes the man's arm away.

HENRY

What? No. I don't need your charity!

MAN

Ok, buddy. I was just trying to help.

Henry looks up at the man and realizes that it is his friend Bob Morgan, but Bob doesn't recognize him. Bob looks at him curiously, shakes his head and moves away into the building.

Henry shuffles off down the sidewalk, wandering aimlessly. Occasionally a piece of newspaper blows up and attaches itself to him.

The banner across the street reads 'Only 21 More Days 'Til Christmas'.

EXT. CITY STREET — DAY

Henry sits in an alleyway, looking miserable. He glances at the Rolex on his wrist, then removes it and holds it in his hand as if weighing it. He removes his fedora and places the watch underneath, then secures the hat back onto his head.

A RESTAURANT WORKER exits the back of a restaurant with a bag of trash in one hand and a greasy paper sack in the other. He throws the trash in a dumpster, then approaches Henry and places the paper sack near him.

RESTAURANT WORKER

Some pizza in here if you want
it, man. It's clean, just
leftovers.

Henry is too hungry to protest but waits until the man has gone back inside before lunging at the bag of pizza. He eats voraciously, like a feral animal.

EXT. ALLEYWAY — EARLY MORNING

Henry Awakes behind a dumpster and crawls from beneath a newspaper covered blanket.

EXT. CITY STREET — DAY

A newspaper machine, the paper inside bearing the headline '*Henry Mortimer Book Best Seller Despite Disappearance*'.

Henry stands before the machine, ensconced in newspaper like a mummy. It covers the majority of his body from the neck down but just a portion of his face.

A group of THREE CHURCH LADIES with kindly faces approaches him.

CHURCH LADY #1

Excuse me, sorry to bother you
but we just wanted to invite
you to enjoy a warm meal this
evening. We'll be serving
soup and bread at the park there.

She points to the homeless encampment we'd seen earlier and holds out to him a pamphlet from the church advertising the location of the park and the nature of their mission to help those less fortunate.

She holds the paper out directly in front of his face. It begins to move and flap in the woman's hand. He looks at it in horror for a second before turning and running away down the street. The church ladies look on, bewildered.

As he runs away we see the banner across the street reading 'Only 6 More Days 'Til Christmas'.

EXT. CITY STREET — EVENING

Henry walks along the sidewalk, downtrodden. Everyone turns to stare at him in pity and revulsion.

He stops before a shop window. His face changes as he realizes that he is looking at a large display of his new book '*Cleaning Up The City: Battling The Bums And The Do-Gooders That Enable Them*'.

The smiling image of himself smoking a cigar in pin-striped suit and tie looms large on each cover. Placards announce that the book has become a New York Times best seller.

TWO WELL-DRESSED BUSINESSMEN exit the bookstore, each carrying a copy of the book. They see Henry and stop, looks of disgust on their faces.

BUSINESSMAN #1

You see, Fred? This is exactly what Henry Mortimer was talking about. They're everywhere!

The second Businessman shakes his head disapprovingly.

The two men move along, leaving Henry slumped dejectedly on the sidewalk as the crowd flows past.

EXT. ALLEYWAY — DAY

Henry finds an oversize suit jacket and slacks in a pile of discarded clothing. He puts them on over his paper-wrapped body.

EXT. CITY STREET — ANOTHER DAY

Henry sits on a bus stop bench. Several pieces of newspaper have affixed themselves to his clothing and a large headline across one lapel of the jacket reads '*Search Continues For Missing Economic Writer*'.

He pulls the suit jacket tighter around himself and looks longingly across the street where a COFFEE VENDOR is at work, serving a short line of morning customers. When the customers have been served, the Vendor crosses the street with a cup of coffee in hand. He offers it to Henry.

COFFEE VENDOR

Hey pal. Thought you might like a hot cup of coffee. It's cold as hell out here. I wasn't sure how you take it, so i just put in a

little cream and sugar for you.
Henry looks up at the man with tears in his eyes.

HENRY
Thank you. I needed this.

COFFEE VENDOR
(patting him on
the shoulder)
Hey, no problem. Any time.

Henry smiles and watches as the kindly vendor crosses back to the coffee stand.

He removes the lid and takes a sip, feeling the warmth flow into his chest.

Suddenly a WELL-DRESSED WOMAN passes, dunking a ten dollar bill into his cup, spilling some of the coffee.

HENRY
What the- ? Hey lady,
I don't-

But the woman has dissolved into the crowd. He pulls the wet bill from his cup and shakes it.

In the background we see the banner hung across the street. It now reads 'Only 1 More Days 'Til Christmas'.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

A distant group of carolers is SINGING a hymn. Henry sits on a fire escape opposite his mother's building where he can see into her window. She is sitting, head in hands, in an armchair in the glow of her holiday decorations and she is crying.

Seeing this, he reaches out a ragged, paper-covered arm toward her, as if he would touch her. The arm drops lethargically.

HENRY

Oh, ma. . . I'm so sorry.

His mother rises, moves to her front door and opens it. AN OLDER COUPLE from her building enters carrying Christmas presents. He watches as they hug and comfort her.

After a moment he climbs back down the fire escape, dropping the last few feet into an alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY — NIGHT

He has dropped directly into the path of THREE TEEN STREET RUFFIANS, who look at him threateningly.

RUFFIAN #1

Well well, what do we have here?

RUFFIAN #2

Hey Tommy, he's all covered in newspaper.

RUFFIAN #1

Likes to keep warm I guess.

RUFFIAN #3

You like to keep warm, newspaper man?

RUFFIAN #1

(to Ruffian #3)

Newspaper man. I like that.

(to Henry)

Is that true? Do you like to
keep warm, newspaper man!?

The teen flicks open his Zippo lighter, ignites it and waves it in front of Henry, who is rigid with fear.

RUFFIAN #1 (CONT'D)

I know a way you can get *real*
warm.

He lunges the flame toward Henry, who panics and bolts down the alley, leaving the three boys LAUGHING heartily, slapping their thighs and patting each other on the back.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Henry slows his run, catching his breath. He sees the homeless encampment up ahead, stops for a moment, then moves toward it.

EXT. HOMELESS CAMP - NIGHT

Makeshift tents are scattered here and there throughout the park and fires burn in barrels. HOMELESS PEOPLE warm themselves around the fires and some huddle beneath blankets or in sleeping bags.

Henry sits down near one of the fires, leaning against a tree, and closes his eyes.

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE (FORMERLY HENRY'S OFFICE) - DAY

Steve is settling into his new office. He places a box on the desk and begins to remove office items and desk ornamentations, etc. Bob enters the open door, carrying a potted plant.

BOB

(indicating the plant)

Hey buddy, you forgot Lucille.

STEVE

I did not forget her. I was
just saving the best for last.

He kisses the plant's leaves, then takes a bottle and
spritzes them before placing the plant on a table.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Thanks for helping me get
settled in here. It's kind
of weird taking over his
office, if you know what I
mean.

Through a window we can just make out Henry standing across
the street, looking up toward his former office.

BOB (O.S.)

Believe me, i know exactly
what you mean. It's the
strangest thing. One minute
your sitting having a drink
with a guy and the next minute
he's just gone.

EXT. CITY STREET — DAY

Henry is absolutely ensconced in paper, looking up at the
Times Herald building.

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE — DAY

Below on the street Henry turns away and walks across an
intersection. Bits and pieces of paper follow and advance

on him from various directions, drawn as if to a magnet.

EXT. HOMELESS CAMP — NIGHT

A dejected Henry stands in the soup line, receiving a large bowl, a hunk of bread and a small cup of coffee. The Three Church Ladies dispense these items and each of them gives Henry a look of concern.

He leans against a tree, eating the soup and bread and casts glances at his surroundings. A WOMAN loads something onto an overburdened shopping cart. TWO MEN stand over a burning trash can, conversing, poking at the fire with sticks. A MAN is asleep on the open ground, curled into a fetal position.

His eyes widen as he recognizes Joe And Felicia Conner and Trudy eating their soup in front of a nearby tent.

He watches them for a long moment, noting their disheveled appearance as they huddle together.

Henry lifts a portion of the brim of his hat, which is attached in places to his head, and reaches under, retrieving the gold Rolex he had placed there earlier. He bounces it in his hand, deciding.

Then he moves to where the Connors are sitting and leans down to Joe.

HENRY

I want you to have this.
It's a Rolex. It should
sell for enough to get you
and your family into an
apartment for now, 'til you
can get back on your feet.

He places the watch in Joe's hand. Joe looks at the dirty, newspaper-covered man standing before him.

Joe

Mister, we appreciate the
offer, but we can't take
your watch.

He moves to give the watch back, but Henry closes the man's hand over the watch with his own.

HENRY

No. Take it. I don't need
it anymore.

Felicia rises and hugs Henry.

FELICIA

Thank you and God bless you,
sir. You are a good man.

Joe and Trudy rise as well and they all hug Henry.

Suddenly, the sound of a BULLDOZER. It sits at one edge of the park, surrounded by POLICE. Most are on foot but a few ride HORSES. An OFFICER speaks through a BULLHORN.

OFFICER

Attention citizens! This is an
unlawful assembly. Please clear
the park immediately or you will
be subject to arrest.

Mayhem as the bulldozer starts forward. Police Officers check the tents in its path, removing anyone sleeping within before the dozer pushes everything before it.

Mounted Officers ride forward, some barking orders through

bullhorns.

A few men scuffle with the police, initiating a barrage of pepper spray and smoke grenades.

Everyone scatters and Henry watches as Joe, Felicia and Trudy grab their few possessions from the tent and run away into the night.

All around him is chaos as the bulldozer continues its rampage.

Henry crosses the street, hiding himself in the shadow of an alley. From here he continues to watch as the remaining stragglers and resisters are arrested by the police and their belongings are pushed by the dozer into a large pile at one end of the park. A front end loader scoops from the pile and deposits the items into a dump truck.

EXT. CITY STREET — DAWN

The coffee Vendor dispensing his product to a small line of customers.

EXT. CITY STREET — DAY

The newspaper stand and its Proprietor selling a newspaper to a BUSINESSMAN.

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE — DAY

He is at his desk, typing on a computer while BOB swings a golf club. They laugh and banter.

EXT. BOOKSTORE — DAY

The window display with dozens of copies of Henry's book, his smug, smiling face on the covers.

EXT. CITY STREET — DUSK

A red sun is sinking on the street between the canyon-like rows of buildings.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE — NIGHT

Through the windows of her apartment Caroline Mortimer can be seen setting out a small table with snacks. She is accompanied by the same Older Couple from earlier.

She responds to a knock on the door and Joe, Felicia and Trudy enter, looking somewhat better put together, if not jovial. It is a warm and pleasant get-together, despite the tragedy of the circumstances.

EXT. ALLEYWAY — NIGHT

Henry is alone in an alleyway between two brick buildings. Newspaper surrounds him on all sides, pressing in, pulsating, like a living thing.

He takes a swig from a bottle of whiskey, struggles to light a match with his paper-covered fingers and lights a stub of cigar, blowing out a large puff of smoke. As he does so he is not at all careful with the bottle and spills quite a bit of the whiskey onto himself.

INT. BAR — NIGHT

Bob, Steve and several MEN AND WOMEN are carousing at a table in the crowded bar.

BOB

Hey everybody, it's time for
the countdown!

They all turn to the television behind the bar and watch as

the ball in Times Square begins to drop.

ALL (O.S.)

10. . .9. . .8. . .

EXT. ALLEYWAY — NIGHT

The cigar is in the corner of Henry's mouth. He draws deeply and expels the smoke.

HENRY

(chuckling to
himself)

Well, Henry, this is one
deadline you're gonna make.

A strip of paper blows up and covers the part of his mouth not occupied by the cigar.

INT. BAR — NIGHT

Everyone stands at attention, glasses in hand, preparing to ring in the New Year.

ALL

. . .7. . .6. . .5. . .

EXT. ALLEYWAY — NIGHT

Henry attempts to strike a paper match on a matchbook. The match falls unlit. He strikes another. It flares up then quickly goes out.

Henry's face is completely covered in paper except for his eyes and the cigar stub. He takes a long puff.

Now another strip of paper flies toward him and covers his eyes.

INT. BAR — NIGHT

The ball in Times Square is still dropping on the television screen.

ALL (O.S.)

. . .4. . .3. . .

EXT. ALLEYWAY — NIGHT

Henry emits a large puff of cigar smoke. He is breathing heavily. Two strips of newspaper fly up and cover his ears, blocking out all sound.

A match strikes silently and catches an even flame.

INT. BAR — NIGHT

The patrons all stand, facing the television.

ALL

. . .2. . .1. . .Happy New Year!

As everyone celebrates, a bright orange light is visible in fiery reflection on the brick building across from the bar.

EXT. CITY STREET — NIGHT

Through the windows of the bar we see that everyone is hugging and toasting the new year.

The orange light flares on the walls of the surrounding buildings, then burns lower.

EXT. CAROLINE'S BUILDING — NIGHT

Caroline, Joe, Felicia, Trudy, the Older Couple and several

OTHER GUESTS are ringing in the New Year. There are toasts, but the occasion is somber.

EXT. CITY STREET — NIGHT

FIREWORKS begin over the tops of the buildings as we hear a CHORUS of voices from the bar singing 'Auld Lang Syne'.

A discarded piece of newspaper lifts and swirls, then swiftly, almost with a sense of purpose, blows away down the street.

FADE OUT.

THE END