

**True Life Stories**

**THE BRUCE WILSON STORY**

(FINAL DRAFT)

by

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**SCENE 1            EXT NIGHT            BRUCE AND ANGIE'S HOUSE**

Bruce is fitting up his car for suicide via the exhaust pipe. The action is tight, abstracted. The soundtrack is Bruce reading the poem he wrote in his darkest hour, describing his feelings of despair and lack of hope. We see the knife cutting the hose, the toilet role being taped to the exhaust, tight shots of Bruce's eyes and hands, the hose being pushed through the almost closed window, the towel sealing the window.

BRUCE (O/S)

I am in a tunnel of darkness and fright  
The end is being walled off to shut off the light  
I can't break out, no matter how I fight  
Each day gets darker, the next I truly dread  
There seems no way out, am I better off dead?

BCU cigarette being lit, cut to Bruce sitting in a chair by the prepared car, smoking, staring into the darkness. We hear the soundtrack of scene 2: Loud knocking on a door, then the voice of Bruce's mother, Linda.

LINDA (O/S)

He's out.

MAN'S VOICE (O/S)

(POLICEMAN)

That's not why we're here,  
Linda.

**SCENE 2A            INT NIGHT            THE WILSON HOUSE**

We inside young Bruce's room. He is in bed, listening to the adults outside his room.

LINDA (O/S)

(sounding frightened  
suddenly)  
What's happened?

The voices become an inaudible as the adults move into the living room. Bruce gets out of bed and sneaks down the corridor. Bruce runs into the room. Linda is on the couch, her head in her hands. The two policemen stand awkwardly in the centre of the room.

BRUCE

Mum? What's happened?

LINDA looks up. Her face is drawn taut with grief and tears are flowing down her cheeks. When she speaks, it is almost a whisper.

LINDA  
There's been an accident. It's  
your father...

BRUCE  
Is he alright?

LINDA  
(shakes her head)  
No, he's not.

Bruce knows his father is dead.

BRUCE  
(shouts)  
They're bullshitting. They're  
always coming here spinning crap  
about him.

Bruce turns and runs from the room. Linda calls after him.

LINDA  
Come here, honey.

**SCENE 2B                      INT NIGHT                      BRUCE'S BEDROOM**

Bruce turns savagely away as Linda kneels next the bed.

LINDA  
Bruce, honey, listen to me. . .

She reaches out to touch him, but he shrugs her arm away violently.

BRUCE  
He'd be here with us cept for  
you and that bastard.

Linda bows her head in defeat.

**SCENE 3                      EXT DAY                      THE BEACH DAIRY**

The video game is outside under the alcove of the shop. Bruce is huddle over the game, living every blow. He does not notice his mother appear next to him.

LINDA

Why don't you give the games a  
rest just for today. Its  
lovely on the beach. We could  
go for a walk or a swim.  
Martin brought a cricket bat.

BRUCE

Don't like the beach.

LINDA

Oh, for God's sake!  
 (fights for control)  
 Bruce, its been really hard for  
 everyone. The accident wasn't  
 anybody's fault - not mine, not  
 Martin's.

Bruce slams another coin into the machine. Linda's patience snaps.

LINDA

You want to know why we never  
 got anything in the Will?  
 Because it turned out your dad  
 had a whole other family in  
 Auckland. They got the lot.

Bruce has frozen. Linda realises she has gone too far.

LINDA

I'm sorry...I didn't mean...

He shrugs her hand off and savagely feeds more coins into the machine. Linda leaves, at a loss.

**SCENE 4            INT DAY            A VIDEO PARLOUR**

We track through the shadows and brightly lit screens of the parlour to find Bruce playing one of the games. The other players are mostly a couple of years older than him and wear the distinctive garb of the video game gang scene. Bruce is conspicuously straight-looking. Three of them appear suddenly and close in around Bruce. He tries to ignore them.

FIRST BOY

Got a smoke, mate?

BRUCE

Nah.

The Second Boy is already ferreting in Bruce's bag. He emerges with a packet of smokes.

SECOND BOY

Didn't your mummy tell you not to  
 tell lies?

FIRST BOY

(threateningly)  
 Don't bullshit us again, eh?

First Boy pockets Bruce's cigarettes. Bruce puts coin in machine.

FIRST BOY  
Got any twenties for your mates?

The Second Boy pulls a bag of 20s from Bruce's bag, shakes them.

SECOND BOY  
Rich boy, eh?

BRUCE  
(lunging for the money)  
No!

The Second Boy grabs him and the First Boy stops him with an uppercut to the sternum.

FIRST BOY  
Gotta share with your friends,  
rich boy.

They exit, tossing the money between them. Bruce is winded, doubled up. His young face hardens with hatred and impotent fury.

**SCENE 5A                    EXT NIGHT                    A SHOP IN DESERTED SUBURBAN STREET**

Its late at night. The street is dark and deserted. Our older Bruce (16/17) is spraying grafitti - a very large, stylised "Mr Mean" on a wall. In his other hand he holds a can of beer. A car waits next to him, two youths his own age in the front seat. A joint is being passed around in the car and they are drinking beer.

MICK (DRIVER)  
Come on, Bruce.

BRUCE  
Don't rush me. This is art I'm  
doing here.

A light goes on in a house opposite.

MAN'S VOICE  
Hey, what do you think you're  
doing!

BRUCE  
Shit!

He dives into the car and the vehicle roars off in a cloud of dust.

**SCENE 5B                    INT NIGHT                    THE MOVING CAR**

Bruce and the passenger are laughing loudly. Someone thrusts a joint into Bruce's hand.

MICK  
Yeah, very funny. Its my bloody car he'll recognise.

BRUCE  
(toking on the joint)  
Finish it later, eh?

**SCENE 6A                    INT NIGHT                    A VIDEO PARLOUR**

A fresh-faced young boy, much the same age and appearance as Bruce in Scene 3, is playing one of the games. Bruce and Mick appear either side of him and crowd in.

BRUCE  
Got a smoke?

In a long shot through the activity of the parlour we see the cigarettes disappear. He mouths the words "Got any 20s?"

**SCENE 6B                    INT NIGHT                    THE SAME VIDEO PARLOUR**

Bruce is playing "Final Fight; he lives the violence.

**SCENE 7A                    INT NIGHT                    THE WILSON HOUSE**

The Policeman (holding Bruce's spray cans), Bruce, Linda, and Martin (Bruce's stepfather) are in the living room. . Bruce has fixed a sullen stare on the ground at his feet. Linda looks weary; Martin disgusted.

POLICEMAN  
Next time I'll charge him.

MARTIN  
We'll get him onto some wall scrubbing first thing tomorrow

BRUCE  
(exploding)  
You're not my bloody father. You can't tell me what to do.

Bruce storms from the room.

POLICEMAN

Good luck.

The Policeman leaves. Linda looks hopelessly at Martin.

MARTIN

Don't look at me. There's no  
point me talking to him.

Martin stalks back to the TV. Linda exits wearily.



**SCENE 7B            INT NIGHT            BRUCE'S BEDROOM**

Linda opens Bruce's bedroom door. Inside, Bruce is screening out the world with music through his headphones, staring defiantly into space. The heavy metal is so loud it is clearly audible even to Linda. She leans against the door and watches him, at a loss as to what to do with him.

**SCENE 8            EXT DAY            THE SCHOOL**

Angie and Bruce sitting propped against a tree.

BRUCE

Been onto the olds again about me shooting through into town.

ANGIE

Better watch out. They're just looking for an excuse.

BRUCE

They can chuck me out if they like. I don't give a stuff.

ANGIE

Well I do.

The bell goes. Angie stands and unceremoniously dumps Bruce's head on the grass.

BRUCE

Ow. Take it easy.

ANGIE

English.

BRUCE

(remaining where he is)  
Not me. Gotta see my old mate the Principal again.

ANGIE

(concerned)  
What about?

BRUCE

(laughs)  
Nothing good, that's for sure.

**SCENE 9            INT DAY            OUTSIDE THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE**

Angie is waiting anxiously in the corridor outside the Principal's office. The door opens and Bruce emerges.

ANGIE  
Have they chucked you out?

Bruce looks stunned.

BRUCE  
No. Not exactly.

ANGIE  
Well, what happened then?

BRUCE  
Remember that Army Cadetship  
thing?

Angie is blank for a moment then recalls.

ANGIE  
Yeah...

BRUCE  
Well, I got one.

ANGIE  
You got one?

BRUCE  
School's making a big deal out of  
it. Seems the Army doesn't give  
out too many.

Angie doesn't know how to react.

ANGIE  
(trying to sound enthusiastic,  
though still uncertain)  
That's great... That'll show  
'em..

BRUCE  
Only sat the exam to get out of  
maths.

**SCENE 10            INT DAY            THE AIRPORT**

Linda hugs Bruce. Martin and Angie watch.

LINDA

I'm so proud of you.

Martins offers his hand to Bruce in a gesture of reconciliation.

MARTIN

Best thing that's ever happened to you, Bruce. Good luck, eh?

They shake hands. Bruce hesitates, then speaks.

BRUCE

Look, I'm sorry about the crap I've given you guys. . . I know I've been a pain in the arse a lot of the time...

MARTIN

Water under the bridge, mate.

BRUCE

(glances at the departure board)

Gotta get going.

He turns to Angie and hugs her. Her eyes are wet, though she isn't crying.

BRUCE

First leave, eh?

ANGIE

You better. Or else.

They kiss and Bruce disengages himself. With a wave Bruce moves off into the crowd.

## **ACT II**

### **SCENE 11      EXT DAY      THE SHOOTING RANGE**

Bruce and several other soldiers are at the target range, shooting from prone position. Bruce's shots cluster around the bullseye.

CORPORAL#1

Nice shooting Wilson.

He moves on. The soldiers fit another cartridge into their rifles.

JACK

(good humouredly)

Aren't we the bloody golden boy  
then?

Bruce makes a mock effort to see Jack's target.

BRUCE  
 You firing blanks or something,  
 Jack?

Jack laughs and gives Bruce the single finger salute.

**SCENE 12            EXT DAY            A SURF BEACH**

Jack is teaching Bruce how to surf. Bruce is lying on the board in waist deep water, Jack standing next to him holding the board to keep in steady. Bruce is wearing a ludicrously oversized wetsuit.

JACK  
 OK. Start paddling now!

Bruce flails wildly at the water in a very loose approximation of a paddling technique, a catherine wheel of flying spray. He succeeds in catching a wave and briefly rises to his feet before falling backwards into the water. He resurfaces whooping with ecstatic joy.

JACK  
 You're a machine, Bruce.

BRUCE  
 This is bloody great!

He drops onto the board and begins flailing his way back out through the foam again.

**SCENE 13            EXT DAY            ARMY CONFIDENCE COURSE**

Bruce and Jack are abseiling down the tower; Bruce hurtles downwards, hooting.

**SCENE 14            INT DAY            AN INSTRUCTION ROOM**

The Instructor (a Lieutenant) is lecturing the students.

INSTRUCTOR  
 What we're aiming to do first is  
 give you a general grounding in  
 the basic principals of  
 telecommunications and the  
 equipment. Open your text to page  
 ...

Bruce's eyes have glazed; his brain has switched off. He doodles aimlessly on the page of his notebook.

**SCENE 15                      INT NIGHT                      A BARRACKS DORM**

Bruce is lying on his bed reading his telecommunications handouts and writing notes, not enjoying it at all. Jack and two other soldiers enter with beers and a pack of cards and gather around a small table.

BRUCE

Boss off for the night, is he?

JACK

(laughs, shuffling cards)  
Yeah. You in?

BRUCE

Gotta finish this.

JACK

Cut the shit! Look, we got three kinds of beer. Come on, man

Bruce hesitates for a moment, looking at the book, then back at the table: Jack is dealing a hand for him and there is a chair waiting. He joins the table. His eyes and face light up.

**SCENE 16                      INT DAY                      A BARRACKS OFFICE**

The Instructor slams the filing cabinet shut and moves to his desk. Bruce is standing to attention.

INSTRUCTOR

What's this about a posting to Christchurch?

BRUCE

I don't think I'm cut out for telecommunications, Sir.

The Instructor regards him dubiously and Bruce continues hastily.

BRUCE

I like infantry, Sir. I like the physical stuff.

INSTRUCTOR

Wilson, if you think Infantry's an easy option, forget it. Its a bloody hard slog and you end up with nothing. Absolutely nothing.

A Telecommunications ticket's  
goldplated. You can go anywhere  
with it.



The Instructor waits for a reply, but Bruce maintains a stubborn silence.

INSTRUCTOR  
 You're a disappointment, Wilson.  
 A real bloody disappointment.

**SCENE 17**                      **EXT DAY**                      **A PARADE GROUND**

Jack and Bruce are among recruits doing very basic drill.

CORPORAL#2  
 Its not a bloody Sunday school  
 picnic. Slope arms 123, 123,1.  
 Order arms 123,123,1.

BRUCE  
 (muttering to Jack)  
 Can't believe we're doing this stuff  
 again...

The Corporal walks up to Bruce until their noses are almost touching.

CORPORAL#2  
 Got a problem, Wilson?

BRUCE  
 We did all this basic stuff at  
 Waiourou, Corporal.

CORPORAL#2  
 Did you, indeed? Sorry if we're  
 boring you, Wilson.  
 (screams)  
 Drop and give me fifty, asshole.

We leave Bruce starting his pushups to an insanely rapid count.

**SCENE 18A**                      **EXT DUSK**                      **THE SURF BEACH**

Angie, sits in the car wrapped in a blanket, waiting for Bruce.

ANGIE  
 (to herself, very wearily)  
 Come on, Bruce.

**SCENE 18B**                      **EXT DUSK**                      **THE SURF BEACH**

It is almost dark as Bruce emerges from the ocean. He sits at the edge of the water and stares unhappily out to sea. Angie joins him, still with her blanket.

ANGIE

Don't you have to be back at base?

BRUCE

(in a dull monotone)

Yeah.

Angie makes an effort to brighten things up.

ANGIE

Oh well, not long now til your time's up.

BRUCE

Thing is, what am I going to do if I leave? I'm not qualified for anything 'cept shooting people.

**SCENE 19 INT NIGHT A PARTY AT ANGIE'S HOUSE**

A champagne cork explodes out of the top of a bottle and foams onto the floor. Glasses are hastily filled. There is a lot of fancy food carefully laid out on tables - Angie has gone to a great deal of trouble for this celebration.

BRUCE

No more dawn starts. No more mindless bloody drill.

They all drink the toast.

JACK

(moving off with the boys)

Great spread, Angie

Angie smiles at the compliment. Several male guests, including Jack, have sat down around the coffee table. A pack of cards is produced. Mick (the Driver of the car in Sc.5) calls across to Bruce.

MICK

You in, Bruce?

Angie is unimpressed. Bruce knows he shouldn't play, but he can't resist it.

ANGIE

(quietly)

Bruce.

BRUCE  
 (to Angie)  
 Just a quick couple of hands, OK?

Before she can react, he's at the table.

MICK  
 So when do you two find out  
 whether you've got into the Police  
 or not?

JACK  
 Next week, one way or another.

BRUCE  
 Good Army men like us. Snap us  
 up.

He is totally immersed in the game. Angie watches him from across the room then turns away to her sympathetic female friends.

**SCENE 20**                      **INT DAY**                      **THE FACTORY**

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Bruce is being shown how the Stores paperwork operates. His eyes have glazed and he follows the Manager like an automaton.

MANAGER  
 So this copy goes to the customer.  
 The pink copy goes to accounts,  
 and this one stays in your files.  
 Got that?

BRUCE  
 Yeah.

MANAGER  
 Any problems, just ask.

The Manager exits. Bruce looks wearily down the endless rows of grimy, grey shelving.

**SCENE 21**                      **INT NIGHT**                      **A CASINO BAR**

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Bruce and Angie are playing the only poker machine in the bar, Bruce calling the shots. There is a sharp contrast in their reactions to the game. For Angie, this is simple fun, and she treats it with open, good-humoured excitement. Bruce is fixed, manic, totally absorbed. He wins the jackpot. The

coins are pouring out of the machine. People turn to watch.  
Angie whoops with delight.

BRUCE  
(hits machine)  
Stuff it!

ANGIE  
(caught off-guard)  
What's the matter?

BRUCE  
Its not meant to pay out yet.

ANGIE  
Course it is. We won.

BRUCE  
 (very edgy)  
 Don't you understand? I'm s'posed  
 to be able to go double or  
 nothing.

He savagely hits the machine and exits, leaving Angie alone.

**SCENE 22A**                      **INT DAY**                      **THE FACTORY**

Bruce and the factory manager are in a dull office,  
 facing each other across the desk.

MANAGER  
 I'm sorry, son. Last on, first  
 off. Its the only fair way.

BRUCE  
 Yeah, yeah.

MANAGER  
 You're a bright young bloke.  
 You'll find something. You've  
 still got two weeks.

BRUCE  
 (making for the door)  
 You can stick your two weeks. I  
 was gunna quit anyway.

**SCENE 22B**                      **INT DAY**                      **THE STORE**

Bruce dumps his grey coat on the counter as he marches  
 out. The other men follow him with sympathetic eyes.

**SCENE 23**                      **INT NIGHT**                      **A BAR**

Bruce is immersed in a game of poker, piles of \$20 bills in the  
 pot. The Pub Dealer sits immediately to Bruce's left. Bruce  
 looks at the last of his money (\$50), then makes his decision  
 and pushes it into the middle of the table. The Dealer matches  
 the bet.

BRUCE  
 Raise you fifty.

PUB DEALER  
 I'll see you.

BRUCE  
 (laying his cards down)  
 Full house, Kings and Queens.

PUB DEALER  
 Four Aces.

BRUCE  
 Shit.

The dealer takes the huge pot. With a sick look, Bruce watches it go, then abruptly leaves the table.

**SCENE 24**                      **INT DAY**                      **ANGIE'S HOUSE**

Bruce and Angie are standing facing each other across the kitchen. Angie is reaching into her purse

ANGIE  
 (taken aback by the amount)  
 A hundred?

BRUCE  
 Well, I gotta have a stake to win  
 my money back, haven't I?

Their eyes meet and Angie gives in, starts unhappily pulling cash from her purse. Bruce watches the bills.

**SCENE 25A**                      **INT NIGHT**                      **THE PUB**

With the soundtrack filled with the call of a horse race spilling from a TAB telecast, we track past two immaculately dressed old ladies feeding vast piles of coined pensions into poker machines to find Bruce playing another machine. His expression, the robotic precision of his actions, his deapan, glazed detachment, mirror theirs. And he is losing.

**SCENE 25B**                      **INT NIGHT**                      **THE PUB**

Rob (the barman) is looking doubtfully at the cheque Bruce has given him.

BRUCE  
 Have my cheques ever bounced?

ROB  
 No... its a lot of money, though.

BRUCE

Comeon, Rob, do us a favour. I'm  
one of your best customers.

Rob hesitates, undecided.

ROB  
Just this once, OK?

He opens the till and starts counting out twenty dollar  
notes. Bruce watches the money hungrily.

**SCENE 26A                      INT NIGHT                      THE GAMBLING DEN**

The den is an ordinary house in an ordinary suburban street.  
The room has been cleared of furniture except for a table,  
illuminated by a single shaft of light. The gamblers cluster  
around the table on kitchen chairs while a school of burly  
minders cruise the shadows behind them. Half empty glasses  
are refilled and new joint is passed in to replace the old -  
this action occurs over the opening dialogue.

Bruce is drinking and smoking with happy abandon and he is  
winning. A pile of cash sits in front of him; a large bet  
sits further towards the middle of the table. They are  
playing Blackjack.

BRUCE  
Buy another one.

He adds more money to his stake and takes his fifth card.

BRUCE  
Yes! Five and under.

DEN DEALER  
(sourly, revealing cards)  
Pay 21.

As the Dealer sourly pays him out, Bruce starts to gather  
up his winnings. Minders materialise from the shadows  
behind him.

DEN DEALER  
Not leaving us just yet are you  
Bruce? Gotta give the bank a  
chance to win some of its money  
back.

The minders crowd in on Bruce.

BRUCE  
Just going for a leak.

He returns his money to the table. The minders step aside to let him pass and watch him with cold eyes.

**SCENE 26B** INT NIGHT THE GAMBLING DEN

Bruce places a bet with the last of his cash. The card is flipped over and he busts. The money is hauled into the middle by the dealer and Bruce exits, shaken. Nobody even looks at him and the game continues without pause.

**SCENE 27** EXT NIGHT OUTSIDE THE DEN

Bruce walks numbly outside and stops in the middle of the dark street. He stands alone, the darkness crowding in.

**SCENE 28A** EXT NIGHT OUTSIDE ANGIE'S HOUSE

We open on BCUs of the hose being fitted to the exhaust and in through the window.

**SCENE 28B** INT NIGHT ANGIE AND BRUCE'S BEDROOM

Angie is sleeping peacefully in bed; Bruce steps into the doorway behind her, smoking, and watches her for a moment, his face softening with sadness.

**SCENE 28C** INT NIGHT THE KITCHEN

Bruce enters frame; looks back out to the car. He bows his head in a gesture of defeat, then his inner tension explodes into external violence. He hurls a bottle against the wall, then turns his rage on anything within reach in the kitchen. Angie rushes into the room.

ANGIE

What are you doing? Stop it.

She moves to smother his violence with her body. He begins to rhythmically smash his head into the fridge in a paroxysm of self-loathing.

ANGIE

Don't, don't.



Angie shoves herself between him and the fridge to stop him and he momentarily subsides in her arms.

ANGIE  
 Its alright, its alright.  
 (touches his forehead)  
 Just wait here, OK?

She starts to move away. Bruce seizes a carving knife from the sideboard next to him. His eyes are wild - he looks possessed, dangerous.

BRUCE  
 No!

ANGIE  
 (starting to move anyway)  
 I'm just...

BRUCE  
 Angie!

He draws the blade of the knife through his clenched hand, blood smearing the blade and welling out of his fist.. Angie screams and covers her face with her hands.

The pain seems to stop Bruce in his tracks. He stares down at his hand; the blood is falling in great, heavy drops onto the floor. Angie's voice (crying now) seems to coming from miles away, distant, disembodied.

ANGIE  
 I just want to help you.

We cut to a BCU of the drops of blood hitting the floor with a heightened "splat, splat" . The only other sounds are Bruce's breathing, his pounding heartbeat, and the ticking of the kitchen clock. We hear the policeman's voice through this aural medly - like Angie's last lines, the voice seems to filter through a fog of sound from a long way away.

POLICEMAN  
 How about putting the knife down,  
 eh?

His voice breaks the trance. Bruce's hands drop to his sides. His manic, furious energy has left him and he seems to crumple into a spent husk. There are two policemen. One takes the knife carefully from Bruce's hand.

POLICEMAN  
 Good man. Steady as she goes.

ANGIE  
He wouldn't have hurt me.

## ACT III

**SCENE 29**                      **INT DAY**                      **THE PSYCHIATRIC**  
**HOSPITAL**

Bruce and the psychiatrist are sitting in a lounge-like setting in an office.

DR  
Basically, there's nothing wrong with you. We've given you time out and your state of mind has improved markedly. You have to understand, Bruce. We have a very limited number of beds and there's a queue a mile long out there. Schizophrenics, manic depressives. You're ready to go home.

BRUCE  
I can't believe you guys. For three weeks all we've done is sat here and talked about how I'm feeling. Suddenly I don't matter, cos you want my bed. What a joke.

**SCENE 30**                      **EXT DAY**                      **THE BEACH**

Angie and Bruce are sitting side by side on the sand.

ANGIE  
But why do you have to go away?  
Why can't I help you?

BRUCE  
I have to sort it out for myself.  
(a silence)  
Its the only way...

Angie gets up abruptly and walks briskly away along the beach. Bruce goes after her. Tears are streaming down her face.

BRUCE  
Angie. . .

ANGIE

Leave me alone. Just leave me alone.

Bruce stops and watches the distance grow between them.

**SCENE 31**                      **INT DAY**                      **THE PUB**

Bruce is drinking hard and playing a poker machine with desperate intensity. He loses the last of his money.

BRUCE

Shit!

He heads for the bar.

BRUCE

(to the barman)

Cash a cheque?

BARMAN

Sorry mate.

**SCENE 32**                      **INT DAY**                      **THE SURF SHOP**

Bruce's wetsuit and board are on the counter. The Owner slaps the notes down on the board.

OWNER

Hundred and fifty. Take it or  
leave it.

Bruce knows he is being ripped off. He vascillates momentarily, but in the end he has no choice. He snatches the money and stalks out.

**SCENE 33****INT NIGHT****THE SAME PUB**

There is a noticeable change to the night hour during this scene. Not only are the windows dark, but the pub is crowded with after-work drinkers. We see a montage of Bruce losing his \$150 (the shots are kept tight and are not necessarily in this order): Bruce playing like a condemned man; coins being taken from a vast pile on the machine's tray; a \$50 note being handed over the bar; Bruce being given vast bags of coins back over the bar; hand feeding coins into the machine; sweat on Bruce's face; his hollow, set eyes; his hands pressing the buttons; the whirling cards in the machine; the looks from the drinkers around him; the last \$50 bill going over the bar; the disbelieving look on the barman's face as he changes yet more notes into coin; more coins into the machine; Bruce's face as he loses; the last coins being lifted from the tray. He rattles them desperately in his locked hands.

BRUCE

(voice low, urgent)

Come on, baby. Do it.

He loses the game. Shattered, he looks around the sea of shifting, strange faces. The sound of the crowd, the jangle of coins and glass, and the whirling song of the poker machines swell up around Bruce in a wave that threatens to engulf him. A drinker wipes the frame and we cut to Bruce at the bar's public phone.

BRUCE

I need some help.

**SCENE 34****INT DAY****THE GAMBLER'S ANON****OFFICE**

Bruce and the Compulsive Gambling Society Counsellor are seated in spartan office.

COUNSELLER

Gambling is a very powerful addiction. We can help you beat it, but you have to accept that you have a problem.

A moment of silence.

BRUCE

Its like... its not easy for me to admit to myself that this thing's got me by the balls.

COUNSELLER

I know. Question is, do you want  
to beat it?

Bruce makes his decision. His tone has steel in it.

BRUCE

Yeah, yeah. I'll do whatever it takes.

**SCENE 35**

**EXT DAY**

**A GARAGE**

We open on a BCU of a spray can tagging on what looks like a wall. Cut to CU Bruce concentrating. Bruce is just finishing the word "Capture". He starts on the next word.

**SCENE 36**

**EXT DAY**

**THE CITY CENTRE**

Cut to the finished sign: "Capture yourself a creative mind". We cut wide to reveal Bruce on the busy street. He is dressed in a suit, standing next deck chair which props up the placards. A second placard proclaims "Bright young man willing to work hard. Bruce Wilson. Phone 373 4908." A businessman, 50s, stops.

BUSINESSMAN

Good on you, son.

In a long lens shot through the crowd, we see Bruce and the Businessman shaking hands.