

TRANCAS COVERAGE REPORT

Written by

Nick Crayne

Email: beaglebond@gmail.com

LOGLINE

A fledgling actor sets out to find his place in the spotlight of Hollywood. But when the cost of his unyielding ambition means losing those he loves will he persevere?

SYNOPSIS

We open on JIM standing on Trancas beach, waves crash against the shore. He stares beyond the fog, shes with him here he can almost kiss... CRASH. The memory vanishes, we cut to a few years earlier. Jim (20s) drives with his friends GENE (20s), CHRIS (20s), and CLAIRE (20s), when he sees the Hollywood Sign. He gets pulled over for speeding, a small price to pay for being so close to his dreams.

The group arrives at their residence in Hollywood Hills, a relic from the 1920s. As Chris and Gene argue about the house Jim can see in the distance the sign calling out to him. The next day Jim goes with a talent agent ED (60s+) to a studio's editing room to view his part in an upcoming movie.

Jim returns home and has a meaningful conversation with Gene, one that foreshadows the conflicts Jim must face. The next morning out for a drive he stops at Trancas Beach. He spots ELLA (20s) swimming gracefully when a wave suddenly smashes into her Jim leaps in to save her. A grateful Ella reluctantly invites this stranger to breakfast with her friend SUSAN (20s+). They share their backgrounds and ambitions with each other.

Jim invites her to a housewarming party, Ella feels a sense of deja vu, no. They in fact met before, a few years ago at another party where he revealed a deep internal fear. A preordained event poised to destroy everything that defines him. She agrees to go to the party where their romance blossoms, they quickly find themselves at Ella's beach cottage. Tucked away from the world they express their intimacy to one another.

Later at the premiere of his movie Jim's anticipation turns to anger. He confronts Ed when he learns his scene ended up on the cutting room floor. Ella rescues Jim from his brooding by taking him on vacation. We only see the end of their vacation as Ella leaves to New York to pursue architecture. They pass it off as just a casual fling but their parting glances reveal something much deeper.

Time passes, Jim now a rising star mingles at a ritzy party with his new girlfriend. He meets talent agent David MACKLIN (50s) a wolf in sheep's clothing. He convinces Jim to dump Gene's movie for a blockbuster and take him as an agent. Meanwhile, memories of Ella sporadically taunt him. On the

set of the blockbuster Jim channels his pain by trying to upstage actor Julian PEWTER (30s+).

Jim tells Gene he can't get Ella out of his head so Gene sets up a casting session with Susan to track her down. She tells him Ella is happy living in New York. He takes out his frustration by hitting Pewter and is promptly fired. Macklin takes him out to dinner to comfort him not with words but a path. A path that leads to his dream though devoid of friendship, artistry, and Ella.

Fleeing the cynicism and recurring memories he ends up at Trancas beach. There he meets RAY Fletcher (30s+) an actor who he admires though represents the irrelevance he fears. He offers Jim advice that he can be happy post-stardom. He visits Chris & Claire who play a new song 'Ella's Theme' for him. The memories of his time with Ella on their vacation reemerge. He goes to visit Gene but because of his indecision, he was replaced by his rival Pewter.

About a year later we find Jim at home browsing old TV shows when he spots Ed, his first agent. He calls Ed who expresses pride in Jim's recent work. It's not enough to lift his mood though, in a drunken wanderlust he gets mugged. He manages to recover physically and attends a New Years party. He tries to make himself feel better, bragging to Pewter about his financial success.

He can't believe his eyes Ella, he brings her back to the old beach house. Ella tells Jim she wants a commitment, one that means hurting his career. He reluctantly decides to take a year off and reconciles with Gene. He joins Gene's film despite Macklin telling him it's career suicide.

A while later we find Ella and Jim at a party, he tells her of his newfound commitment. It falls on deaf ears, driving home Ella tells him she left because she felt she wasn't enough for him. He tries to move on but when he finally earns an Oscar he feels empty. When he learns that Ed died he loses it and goes to Ray for comfort. Ray's experience and advice help Jim take an honest look at himself.

Jim goes to visit Ella in New York but finds her distressed. Susan's husband left her and attempted suicide. After getting Susan treatment and comforting Ella they go to their hotel's rooftop garden. They discuss Jim's fate; the looming 'something' poised to destroy him. She tells him his actions have sealed his own fate.

She tells him she can't stay with him and embarks on a work trip to Honolulu. She's surprised to find an engagement ring in her room and contemplates whether Jim truly loves her for who she is. We find Gene abruptly shutting down his set

to inform Jim something happened. We see Ella wearing the ring, heading home as heinous storm violently rattles her plane.

He channels his pain into a scene with Susan that brings the crew to tears. At home he confesses his uncertainty to Gene; did he love her for who she was or what she meant to him? He goes to the beach holding a final letter from Ella. The storm that took her life batters the beach, her final words reduced to smudged ink.

POSITIVE THOUGHTS

The screenplay paints clear visual imagery, making it easy for actors and potential investors to imagine themselves in vintage Hollywood.

The themes present resonate with audiences and are industry proven. Jim's failure is that he was so caught up in the romanticism of love while neglecting the reality of it. For example, *'Her'* (2013) explores this theme in the protagonist's relationship with his ex-wife.

The looming threat Jim talks about draws readers in with intrigue by gradually exploring the mystery behind Jim's psyche. It drives the story forward and makes the relationship between Ella and Jim truly unique.

The story is structured proficiently with impactful story beats that drive the story forward. Many moments throughout are easily reminiscent of classic Hollywood greats. I think *'Trancas'* has the potential to be a truly exceptional romantic tragedy.

GENERAL THOUGHTS/CRITICISM

The biggest problem the story has lies in its conflict. While reading, I noticed two major themes, the dangers of romanticizing love while neglecting reality. And that relationships suffer in the face of unmitigated ambition. I believe the conflict could be better molded to serve these themes.

A good illustration of this concept is displayed in the show *'Bojack Horseman'*. Bojack a star on the rise abandons his best friend Herb the writer on his show when he's publicly outed and fired. Herb refuses to forgive him on his deathbed and his words to Bojack are biting.

When Jim abandon's Gene's movie it needs to have more impactful consequences. What if the movie falling through made Gene go bankrupt and lose the house. Then when Jim goes

to seek redemption from Gene the house is being demolished. A house he hated but grew to realize he needed and it can't be replaced. Similar events like Ed's death could be changed to better serve the premise.

The dialogue is good for the most part but in places could be tidied up. Such as on PG.15 Ella and Jim's kitchen conversation which feels expository and stagnant. When a couple meets they should either have a common interest or antagonistic forced trying to separate them.

In '*500 days of Summer*' the protagonist through his headphones hears "I love the Smiths". In '*Casablanca*' the backstory that has separated Rick and Ilsa can be seen in their glances at each other. In the kitchen scene, we don't really have either scenario and the scene suffers.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

-Organizing action into 4 lines at a time, listing a time period, eliminating passive voice are screenwriting conventions that would provide an easier reading experience.

-PG.7 consider cutting/moving editing room scene, why do we need to know this is going to happen before Jim?

-Consider consolidating Susan and Ray into one character to build a stronger character. In a similar vein develop a stronger arc between Chris/Claire and Jim or cut them.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

JIM PARRISH: Male(20s). Ambitious, ego-driven, obsessive, paranoid. Jim wants to achieve his dream of being a big Hollywood star. He thinks he can have success and maintain his relationships but when he can't he falls apart.

ELLA GRANT: Female(20s). Intelligent, ambitious, a good listener and best friends with Susan. She loves Jim, but she isn't willing to sacrifice her career for him. She desperately wants him to confront the truth about himself.

DAVID MACKLIN: Male(50s). A conniving, cynical, cutthroat Hollywood agent. He delivers on his promises and thrusts Jim into stardom but at a cost to his personal relationships.

ED: Male(60s+). Jim's original agent, experienced, a reluctant optimist. He helped start Jim on his journey to achieving stardom.

SUSAN: Female(20s+). Abrasive, struggling, an actress marred by her experiences. Ella's best friend, Ella supports her through her failing marriage.

GENE: Male(20s). A screenwriter whose best friend is a typewriter and a close second his friend Jim. He cares about Jim and gives him advice, but conflict emerges when Jim waffles on starring in his movie.

RAY FLETCHER: Male(30s+). An older wiser actor who now lives on the edge of the spotlight his wife now occupies. He reflects the inevitability of what Jim must become to find success in both acting and love.

Julian Pewter: Male (30s+). English, Academy Award-winning actor, stuck-up, he clings to the spotlight.