

## **Mad Men Promo Ideation**

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### **MAN ON THE MOON**

1969 – the year man walked on the moon.

Don sits in his office, working on an ad. As he works, we glance around the room to see iconography from seasons past – the Kodak carousel, a package of Lucky Strikes, the anti-smoking ad, SCDP / CGC letterhead.

Don seems stressed ... whatever he's working on, it doesn't seem to be coming together.

He lets go of his pen. Instead of dropping to the desk, it floats in the air.

He grabs his drink and walks over to the window.

REVERSE SHOT from behind Don as he looks out upon the blackness of space -  
- the Earth floating in the distance.

TAG

It's a long way home.

(Note: I think this image of Don look out upon the earth could work very well in a print campaign.)

## THE HOTEL POOL

Don lies in a lounge chair at a hotel pool, reading a book. (Something symbolic from 1969 – Slaughterhouse Five? The Godfather?) He is alone. Dressed in a business suit.

As he reads, people begin entering the pool area. People dressed in fashions of the times, contrasting with his “square” appearance.

The pool is soon filled. Don continues reading, but keeping one eye on the party that’s coming together around him.

As he looks up, he catches the eye of a gorgeous young woman. She beckons to him.

He surveys the rest of the pool. Now everyone is beckoning to him. “Come in,” “Come join us,” “Come play with us.”

Don rises. He sets his book on the lounge and walks to the diving board.

He stands on the end of the diving board and looks at the water. There’s something eerie about their smiling faces ... they look like sirens, luring him to his death.

(Note: might be more resonant if the other cast members are in the pool ... is Sally dressed in a bikini, Glenn’s arms around her?)

We freeze with Don on the end of the diving board in his suit, unsure of whether to jump.

TAG

Dive in.

Standing on the edge.

## COMEBACK

Don stands on a street corner dressed in shabby clothes, looking worse for the wear. If we didn't know him, he could be any drunk on the street.

As he begins walking, we realize that something looks strange. His movements are choppy. His jacket flies off, and we realize the footage is moving in reverse. (Don is moving forward, but the footage was shot with him walking backward – ref: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=co3qMdkucM0>.)

He continues walking forward, and as he walks, he transforms. His five o' clock shadow fades. While walking, he changes from his shabby suit to a crisp, classid Don Draper suit.

As he walks that old Don Draper glory is restored. A glass flies into his hand from off screen, then fills with ice and whiskey. A cigarette does the same in the other hand.

He finally gets to the end of this journey and stands before the SCDP offices.

Don stands before the glass doors – poised, confident, ready to kick some ass. The camera moves behind him and he becomes a silhouette – a nod to the famous show opening. Resolve to logo and tag.

TAG

Time to come back.

Coming back.

It's a long way back.

He's back.

Coming home.

## THE PHOTO ALBUM

Don sits in a hotel room, looking weary. Drink & cigarette in hand.

He opens up his briefcase and pulls out a photo album.

He begins flipping through the photo album. Inside are memories we've seen from past episodes ... Don with a smiling Betty, Don with his family, Don at work.

He stops on a picture of him with Megan on their honeymoon. He looks closer. *It seems as if his face is fading.*

He looks up at a picture of him with the SCDP team. Same thing.

He begins flipping back through the book. He's fading from the pictures as he watches.

He puts his hand to his mouth in shock ... *and realizes he can see through his hand.*

We pull out and watch as Don vanishes before our eyes.

The photo album hits the floor and lies open to display photos of all the iconic Mad Men characters – with Don nowhere to be found.

TAG

Lost and found.

Let's get lost.

Catch it before it vanishes.

## AIRPORT 1 – THIS IS YOUR LIFE

Don rides on a moving sidewalk.

On the walls are posters of some of his most recognizable campaigns from previous seasons – Mohawk Airlines, Hilton Hotels, the Kodak Carousel. Don looks up at the posters, admiring his own work.

We get to the next poster and Don does a double-take – *it's Megan*. Frolicking on the beach in a travel ad. Strange, but not completely implausible – she is an actress, after all. Maybe she landed an ad campaign.

The next poster we see – an ad for New York – shows Betty and Henry having a romantic dinner. More implausible, but still not outside of the realm of possibility.

With the next poster, there's no doubt that we're seeing Don's life – it's Peggy, in a perfume ad – "The Essence of the Modern Woman."

As the sidewalk continues to roll forward, Don is greeted by one poster after another, featuring moments from previous seasons. The posters become accusatory, frightening – a poster of Sylvia Rosen - "Looking for Something Different?" a poster of Don's hanged brother – "The Great Escape."

Don begins to sweat, confronted by these demons from his past.

PULL OUT to show that the sidewalk stretches on into infinity, ads as far as the eye can see. FREEZE with the logo and tagline in an image that looks itself like an advertisement.

TAG

It's a long way home.

It's a long way back.

Look what you've done.

## **WHAT'S REAL**

Don sits at a bar, a drink in front of him. He looks pensive, far-away.

We crane around to show him from another perspective and we see that he's actually two-dimensional – not a cardboard cutout (because why would a cardboard cutout be sitting in a bar?) but graphically two-dimensional – a shell of a man.

Similar shot takes place in other places we'd expect to see Don – at a restaurant with a strange woman, in a cab, at home.

Final shot is Don sitting at his desk. We expect him to be 2-dimensional, but as he rises from his desk and walks away, we realize he's the "real" Don Draper.

He reaches back into the frame and grabs the desk, which is revealed to be two-dimensional.

(ref: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/28/3d-illusions-brusspup\\_n\\_2204939.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/28/3d-illusions-brusspup_n_2204939.html))

TAG

What's real remains.

## **WHAT'S REAL v2**

Don walks into he and Megan's apartment. He looks around the room, thinking about what he's had and what he's lost.

He picks up a picture of he and Megan. As he holds it, it begins to melt through his fingers.

The pictures crumbles to dust and falls to the ground. *That's odd.*

Don walks over to the bar. He pours himself a drink. The glass melts. The alcohol turns to sand.

Nervous, he puts his hand on the end table to steady himself. The end table melts.

He tries to leave the room, but the doorknob melts in his hand.

The entire room begins melting away around him, until he's finally left standing in a stark white room.

He's confused, not sure what to do. Until he begins walking.

As he walks, he gains confidence. He walks forward and the world begins to rise around him. He's in a hallway.

And finally, he ends his walk at the doors to SCDP.

He puts his hand on the doorknob. IT'S SOLID.

He opens the door and walks inside.

TAG

What's real remains.

## **FALLING**

(Music suggestion: Michael Penn, "Look What the Cat Drug In" - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kih1yRyQD6Q>)

Black and white. Don falls through the sky. He isn't falling as one would in real life ... it's more graceful, as if he's floating down. Think Alice falling down the endless rabbit hole.

As he falls, he passes the other *Mad Men* characters in the sky – similar to the *Wizard of Oz* opening. They're all heightened, dreamlike versions of themselves – Megan as tarted-up starlet, Betty as a shrieking she-devil, Roger as the (literal) layabout.

In addition to the characters, we see recognizable props, images, artwork from previous seasons creating the impression that Don is traveling through the entire history of the series.

He finally lands in his chair at the office, and we switch to color. He smirks – a little of that old Don Draper swagger – and gets back to work.

Resolve to tag and logo.

## **TAG**

There's no place like home.

Back to work.

Time to go back to work.

It's a long way down.

## **The Fog of War**

Don walks through a fog. We hear snippets of dialogue from seasons past – moments where Don revealed himself, either purposely or by accident.

We see scenes, characters from earlier seasons projected on the fog. Don walks up to them, trying to capture them, but as he touches them they dissipate.

He stumbles through the fog – confused, scared.

Finally, he sees a light in the distance. He walks toward it.

As the light becomes clearer, he walks with more confidence.

He finally breaks through the fog and finds himself standing before the doors to SCDP / CGC.

RESOLVE to tag and logo.

TAG

Clear skies ahead.

There is a clearing.

## **THEMES TO EXPLORE**

*Following are themes of the series / season that might be worth further exploration – particularly in animated sequences.*

### **Estrangement / Acceptance**

At the end of Season 6, Don is estranged from the two main things that have defined him to this point - his women and his work. At the same time, he's finally accepted his identity and let his children into who he really is. The interplay between the *forces he's pushing away* and the *forces he's pulling in* could inspire some interesting animation concepts.

Question: can he have it all at once? Is Don's duplicity the secret to his success, or a roadblock?

TAG inspirations

He had to lose everything to find himself.

### **The Importance of Work to Don's Identity**

Season 6 finds Don for the first time without the one thing that's given his life structure – work. What will happen to him without it? Is work his rock, or is it the one obstacle standing in his path to self-acceptance?

TAG inspirations

What do you do?

### **The Year**

1969 is among the most pivotal years in modern history – the year of the moon landing, Woodstock, the March on Washington, the Manson Family murders. It was a year when all the movements of the Sixties simultaneously came together and fell apart and the last year of the historical decade (if not exactly the last year of the cultural era). It's seen as a year of almost unbearable tension. We can equate this tension to what Don is feeling as he struggles with drinking, work, and his identity. Visually, I picture the decade as the acid sequence in *Easy Rider* – terror, joy, innocence, sadness, all mixed together in a schizophrenic stew. Musically, it's "Revolution #9."

TAG inspirations

Break on through.

### **Picking Up the Pieces**

In Season 6, Don's well-built veneer of cool finally shattered in a very public way. Now, he has to *pick up the pieces* and *put himself back together*. It's as if he's a jigsaw puzzle in which the pieces no longer fit together. For animated treatments, can we take something from this image ... pieces of a whole image changing shape to create an entirely new image?

TAG inspirations  
Return to form.