

NOW NOW NOW – 2016 06 23

One woman's journey to the present.

Narrator: Buses: despite what you may think they're a very interesting thing. For both the customer and the bus operator the main imperative is to make sure that people are on the bus for as little time as possible. Everyone has somewhere else they'd rather be. The bus company is actively working to give you more time at home with your loved ones or at work getting your job done or shopping or playing the theremin or sitting in the sunshine.

Trish Richards is currently the head of timetabling in the bus service. It's her job to minimise the time spent on the bus for the maximum number of people. If she makes one person's journey slightly longer it's only because she can reduce several other people's journey time. In the five years since she started the job she's given people tens of thousands of hours of time and she prides herself on that.

She takes the bus herself of course. It's the most efficient way to travel. She gets up every morning at 7:23am.

Trish yawns and stretches.

Narrator: She has 22 minutes to shower and breakfast and make lunch for her two children, 11 year old Philippa and 7 year old Tommy.

Tommy: [*Darker than his age.*] It's Thomas.

Trish: Come on. Time to go. Philippa will you put down your phone for one minute?

Philippa: [*Holding phone for video chat, raising her eyes skyward.*] Sorry, can't chat girls. It's not in Mum's "schedule". Miss you!

Trish: Flipping hell Philippa! You're going to see them in under an hour!

Narrator: They leave the house at 8:09. Catch the 68A bus at 8:11. Alight at 8:23. Three minutes walk sees the kids in school at 8:26am.

Tommy: Tommy you be on time this evening?

Trish: I'm always on time sweetie.

Philippa: [*To Tommy.*] Would you *relax*?

Tommy: I am relaxed.

Philippa: She's always on time Tommy!

Tommy: It's Thomas.

Narrator: 1 minute walk to catch the 12 at 8:27am seeing her into work for 8:59am leaving her 1 minute to grab a badly needed coffee in the shop next door.

Bob's face lifts when he sees her.

Bob: Hey, I thought you'd never come.

Bob hands her a coffee.

Trish: Thanks.

Bob: Rushing off?

Trish: Sorry.

Narrator: She spends her time in work evenly divided into hour long sections: researching, aggregating, talking, listening, deliberating, implementing, delegating and reconsidering. She's trained herself to skip lunch in order to allow her to leave work at 4 to catch the 12 at 4:03pm to arrive back at the school at 4:29 to collect her children and bring them home.

Tommy: You're late.

Trish: No, I'm not sweetie; this is when I always get here.

Philippa: Can't I go hang out with Emily and Charlotte for a couple more minutes?

Trish: No. The bus leaves in 1 minute Philippa. You know that.

Narrator: The rest of the evening is taken with preparing dinner, helping with homework, getting the children into bed, and then ringing her sister to listen to her day.

Bea: I'm just so bored! Y'know? All day long I just sit there listening to people and their stupid problems. "It's just not working for me.", "The timing is wrong.", "Can you add some happy music over the bit where the bride got drunk and fell into the hedgerow?" Video editing is so boring, y'know?

Trish: *[Tired.]* Yeah, I know.

Narrator: Trish then has 20 minutes to watch the start but not the end of an episode of her favourite TV show: Detective Staples.

Staples: Well, now we know it couldn't possibly have been the mother.

Assistant: How's that Staples?

Trish is on the edge of her seat.

An alarm beeps.

Reluctantly Trish reaches for the remote control.

Staples: Because the mother wasn't wearing any-

Trish sits in silence for a moment.

Narrator: She then gets to spend 1 minute thinking about her husband James and how much she misses him, before going to bed just in time to get 6 hours and 50 minutes of sleep – which she's calculated as the minimum amount she needs to function and keep to her schedule.

Brian: I'm going to be late! I'm going to be late!

Narrator: One day Trish was on the 12 bus between school and work when she spotted a man causing a disturbance.

Brian: Why do you keep stopping to let people on?! You're wasting time! They can catch the next one! I'm going to be late!

Narrator: Trish thought about not getting involved but the fuss was actually causing the bus to move slower. Soon the bus driver would have to stop and alert the police which would cause everyone on board (38 people at a guess) to be late.

Trish: Sir, you're only slowing the bus down.

Brian: *I'm* slowing it down? This guy's the one driving like a fuckin' hearse! What are you, paid by the hour?

Driver: Yes.

Trish: Where are you trying to get to?

Brian: I've got to get to the train. I've got to catch my train at 9:05 or it'll be a fucking disaster!

- Narrator: Trish weighed up her own timetable and the timetables of all the other passengers on the bus and was left with no choice.
- Trish: Follow me.
- Narrator: She grabbed one of the several bags that were toppling from his laden arms and they alighted at the next stop. They caught the 33B across town utilising the faster traffic lights cycle to meet up with the 14 which stopped at fewer stops than other buses and delivered them to the train station at 9:03. When they got there the man ran from the bus without thanking Trish.
- Trish: [*Sighs.*]
You're welcome.
[*Looks down.*]
Hey! You forgot your-!
- Narrator: But it was too late.
Trish turned around and caught the 19A to her work arriving at 9:17am. She tried to make up the time during her work day but her schedule was too well scheduled so she came out of the work day exactly 17 minutes behind schedule.
- Trish: I'm sorry I'm late.
Tommy won't look at her.
- Trish: I'm sorry. There was a man on the bus this morning. Look can we talk about this later?
[*Looks at her watch.*]
We have to get to Philippa's Carole King Retrospective! She's spent ages practising that oboe and now...
We need to get the...
The 23 will...
Or...
- Philippa: It's fine.
- Trish: No, I'm sorry! I shouldn't have missed it. It was a really big moment for you. I'm sorry. Did your friends film it?
- Philippa: Of course.

- Trish: Maybe I can watch that?
- Philippa: Uh. Yeah. Don't worry about it.
- Narrator: No one talked during dinner. Tommy didn't ask for help with his homework. Philippa didn't ask before she left to see her friends.
- Bea: Heyyyyy! I've just been sitting here all day burning 200 DVDs of a wedding where no one made any speeches, or cut the cake or danced or *anything*. They're practically blank DVDs. It's just ten minutes of people eating! Precious memories of some chicken and gravy! Where've you been?! I'm so bored! I thought you were going to call over?
- Trish: I'm sorry. I forgot. It's been a busy day. Sorry. I'm sorry.
[*Turns around.*]
I'm sorry Philippa. I'm sorry Tommy.
- Tommy: [*Shouting, angry.*] IT'S THOMAS!
- Narrator: When the kids were in bed Trish finally caught up with herself by skipping Detective Staples and cutting straight to missing James.

Trish sits on the sofa looking sad. She holds the remote control in her hand but doesn't turn the TV on.

After a moment she looks across and sees something. She reaches over and pulls over Brian's bag. She examines it.

- Narrator: Trish examined the strangers bag looking for a label or some kind of hint that would help her get it back to him. But to her frustration she didn't find anything.
- Trish: What kind of animal doesn't label their bags?

Trish opens the bag.

Narrator: Inside the bag she found one object. A rock. With what looked like a button on it. And a sticker which simply read

Trish: "Time Saver". Huh, it's a bit late for that.

Narrator: There were no instructions in the bag. She examined the object for a moment. Then seeing nothing to lose she pressed the button.

Trish presses the button.

Nothing happens.

Narrator: Nothing happened.

Trish falls over asleep.

Trish wakes again. She's in her living room.

Narrator: Trish woke in her living room at 7:22am. She lay there confused for a moment before hearing her alarm go off through the ceiling. She started to get up to turn it off when she heard it stop by itself.

Trish is puzzled.

Narrator: Then she heard two feet hitting the floor and walking across the bedroom above her.

Trish: What the hell?

Narrator: The footsteps started to come down the stairs. Trish looked around for a weapon, regretting changing to a more efficient gas fire which didn't require a poker. She brandished the Time Saver and opened the living room door a crack just in time to see...

Trish closes the door and turns around terrified.

Narrator: ...herself, coming down the stairs.

Trish: What the fuck?

Suddenly Philippa enters the living room.

Philippa: Oh!

Trish: Hey!

Philippa: [*Looking back.*] I thought you were in the kitchen.

Trish: Yeah. I am. I was. Nothing to worry about sweetie. I just had to come in here. I came through the window. I do it sometimes just to save time.

Philippa: Really?

Trish: Yeah. In fact I'm going to head out the window now and I'll see you back there.

Philippa: O-kay.

Narrator: When the impostor left with her children at exactly 8:09 Trish followed. She watched as her doppelganger dropped her children to school and then got on her regular bus to work all the while displaying absolutely no outward signs of being a terrifying robot assassin sent to kill her.

Trish1: Into town please.

Bus Driver: 2.35.

Trish2 runs up, ducking onto the bus in a crouch.

Trish2: Into town please.

Bus Driver: [*Confused, unsure.*] 2.....35.

Narrator: Hiding behind a big man in an overcoat Trish was amazed to see the mad man from yesterday get on the bus.

Brian: To the station. Quickly please.

Bus Driver: 2.6-

Brian: Yes, 2.60! We don't have time for that!

Narrator: Just like before, he started making a commotion and urging the driver to hurry up. Trish was thinking about doing something when her double got up and ushered him off the bus taking the bag with the Time Saver off him as she did. Trish looked down. She still had the Time Saver in her hands.

Trish: Excuse me. This may sound crazy but...what day is this?

Passenger: It's Tuesday.

Trish: [*Shocked.*] What?! How?!

Passenger: Uhhhhhm. Just...by...like...that's what it's called.

Trish stares at him dumbfounded.

Passenger: It...was named after Tiw the Norse god of single comb-

Trish: Sorry, I don't have time!

Bob's face lifts when he sees her.

Bob: Hey, I thought you'd never come.

Trish is moving much slower than before. Bob holds out a coffee for her.

Trish: Oh. Uh. Thanks.

Bob: Rushing off?

Trish: Sorry?

Bob: Don't you normally have to rush off?

Trish: Oh...yeah...I guess not.

[*Brightening.*] Thanks!

Staples: And that's how I knew it *was* the mother because fish don't have tear glands.

Trish: [*Shakes her head in wonder.*] Brilliant.

Narrator: At 4:29 Trish was right on time to meet Tommy at the school gates. At 4:52 she and Tommy were perfectly timed to get the best seats for Philippa's Carole King Retrospective. At 6:57 they celebrated with the early bird at Pizza Palace.

Trish: Now how about a trip to the cinema?

Tommy: Yeah!

Philippa: I...can't. I said I'd meet my friends.

Trish: Oh sure.

Bea: Heyyyyy, thanks for calling over! I've just been sitting here all day burning 200 DVDs of a wedding where no one made any speeches, or cut the cake or danced or *anything*. They're practically blank DVDs. It's just ten minutes of people eating! Precious memories of some chicken and gravy! Have you ever heard the like?

Trish: Only once.

Narrator: Later that night when they were all home again Trish hugged her kids and put them to bed. She sat in the living room pleased with her extra day. What more could she want?

Trish smiles.

Then looks at the Time Saver.

Narrator: Trish went out into the garden.

She presses the button and falls over asleep.

Narrator: When she awoke she watched her other self in the living room hiding from her other other self in the kitchen and when they had both left she walked in the opposite direction.

Bob's face brightens when she enters.

Bob: Hey, I thought you'd never come!

Trish: Rushing off?

Bob: What?

Trish: After the morning rush. I thought maybe we could get a coffee.

Bob: [*Smiles.*] Sure.

Narrator: It was a lovely day. Trish and Bob went for brunch which turned into lunch.

Bob: Fancy a walk up the mountains?

Trish: Yeah, we could get the 41 in about 21 minutes from-

Bob: Or...I have a car. We can go whenever we want.

Narrator: They walked and talked about nothing that was anything to do with the present or the immediate past or the immediate future. Trish didn't have to rush off and pick up her kids or help her sister. In the evening Bob drove her home.

Trish: That was a really nice day.

Bob: Yeah. I'm glad you could stick around.

Trish: So am I.

There's a pause and they start to lean in to kiss but Trish stops. She's spotted something.

Trish: Sorry. I've got to go.

Bob: Oh, okay. Will I-?

Trish: [*Calling behind her.*] Soon!

Trish gets out of the car.

Narrator: Trish followed her daughter. Philippa was supposed to be with friends this evening but instead she walked alone, head down. When she got to the park Trish watched as Philippa propped her phone up on a railing.

Philippa looks away from the phone and starts to sing.

Philippa: [*Sings a bit of Carole King's "You've Got a Friend".*]

You just call on my name,

And you know wherever I am,

I will be there running,

You-

[*She pretends to catch sight of the phone.*]

Charlie! What are you doing?! Stop filming me! Jesus! I'm definitely not showing this one to my mum. She'll think I'm crazy!

Trish: Philippa...

Philippa: [*Startled.*] Mum! What are...what are you doing here? You shouldn't be here.

Trish: What are you doing? Where's Charlotte? And Emily? And Anne?

Philippa deflates, gives up.

Philippa: They're dead.

Trish: What?! How?! Did I...?! The Butterfly- How...how did they die?!

- Philippa: [Shrugs.] Consumption probably.
- Trish: [Cautiously.] Was it because they travelled in time?
- Philippa: No! I'm talking about the Bronte sisters Mum. Are you drunk?!
- Trish: No. Nothing. Forget that. What are you saying?
- Philippa: I just...I invented friends so you wouldn't worry about me.
- Trish: [Taken aback.] You don't have any friends?
- Philippa: Yeah but it's okay. You don't need to worry about it. You have enough to worry about.
- Trish: Philippa, what? How can you say that? Whatever I have to worry about it's...The whole world could be ending and I'd still have time for you, okay?
- Philippa: [Quietly.] Okay.
- Trish: I'm sorry. I didn't notice that you-...
You're amazing! Why do the other kids not want to be your friend?
- Philippa: No, I don't want *them*.
- Trish: What? Why not?
- Philippa: Because they could go away again.
Like Dad.
- Trish: Ohh, sweetie.
[Trish hugs Philippa.]
I know. Your dad was my best friend. My life was so much easier when it wasn't just mine. I miss him every single day. But I don't for one second regret getting to know him. Because knowing him meant that I could know you. And that's the best use of my time that I can ever imagine.
- Philippa: Okay. Thanks Mum.
- Trish: Of course. I'm just sorry I couldn't say this to you sooner.
[Thinks.]
Wait a second.

Trish picks up the Time Saver.

Philippa: Mum. What are you doing here? Where did this car come from?

Trish: I'm here to take you to the concert. I know where the owner keeps his keys. And he won't need it for another [*Looks at her watch.*] 78 minutes. Get in.

Philippa goes to get in.

Trish: And bring your friends with you.

Philippa: Oh, Charlotte and Emily are making their own way there.

Trish: Not them. [*Points.*] Those friends. The ones with the instruments.

Several kids are standing waiting for a lift carrying instruments.

Philippa: Oh. They're not my friends.

Trish: Not yet. Kids! Get in! I'm taking you.

Narrator: Trish didn't say where because she wasn't heading for the concert.

Trish: Why do you guys play instruments?

Kid 1: Well, it's a useful skill to have to...

Kid 2: I just want to play well...

Trish: Great, great. Listen. Your parents love you whether you do this concert or not. Now who wants to go ride a rollercoaster?!

The Kids look at each other.

Kids: Yeah!

Narrator: As they walked into the rollercoaster park Trish pulled Philippa aside and repeated the conversation they hadn't had yet.

Trish: Because knowing him meant that I could know you. And that's the best use of my time that I can ever imagine.

Narrator: But she said it even better this time.

Kid 1: Hey Pippy! Dare you to play Tommy You Still Love Me Tomorrow on your oboe while we ride the Devastator!

Philippa laughs and starts to run off but suddenly stops.

Philippa: Mum! Wait! What about Tommy?!

Trish: It's okay; I asked someone to pick him up.

Narrator: Trish arrived early to pick up Tommy before any of her other selves got a chance to. But as she did she saw another kid talking to him. A bigger kid.

Randy: Tommy! Little Tommy misses mommy! Where's your mommy Little Tommy? [*Looks at his watch.*] One more minute till she comes and picks up her Little Tommy!

Tommy just sits there with his head down.

Trish is stopped in her tracks. She thinks then collects herself and walks over pretending to see nothing.

Trish: Hi T-Thomas! I'm a little early! As you know my schedule is changed so I can just show up at any moment now.

[*Turns to Randy.*]

Oh, hello there.

Randy: [*On the back foot.*] Uh. Hi.

Trish: Let's head off then Thomas. Bye now.

Randy: [*Regaining his composure.*] Seeya Thomas.

Randy watches them leave then turns to go in the opposite direction only to find himself face to face with a terrifying-looking Trish.

Trish: Hello there *Randy*.

Randy looks around confused.

Randy: Wait! How did you?!

Trish: Hello *Randy*, of 18 Cherrywood Drive, where you live with your obviously not particularly prudent parents, *Randy*.

Randy: How do you know where I live?

Trish: If you go anywhere near my boy again your parents will find out about this.

Randy: [*Finding courage.*] They...They won't believe you. I didn't do anything.

Trish: This video disagrees with you *Randy*.

Trish plays a video of Randy bullying Tommy.

Randy: How did you get that? You can't see my face. That could be anyone!

Trish: I thought you might say that so here it is from another angle. And another. And this is a two shot with the school gates behind you as a kind of proscenium frame because I was really getting the hang of the camera at that stage.

Randy: How...how did you get that? Where were you hiding?

Trish lunges in close to him.

Trish: *Everywhere!* I am *everywhere* now Randy and you better not mess with Thomas again or you're going to fucking regret it you little prick.

Randy: [*Feebly.*] Hey. You can't call me that.

Trish: Too late.

Trish walks away.

Bea: Heyyyyy, thanks for calling over! I've just been sitting here all day burning 200 DVDs of a wedding where no one made any speeches, or cut the cake or danced or *any-*

Trish produces a fire poker and uses it to smash Bea's DVD burning machine and then she throws the machine out the window.

Bea: What are you doing?!

Trish: Bea, you can't waste your whole life sitting here burning DVDs. You want to be a filmmaker so do it!

Bea: Yeah, but...the machine made the tree catch fire.

Trish looks out the window.

Trish: Oh fuck!

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Bea: What are you doing?!

Outside the window another Trish opens a hose on the fire in the tree. The water jet hits a cat in the tree sending it flying into the air and splatting it on a fence.

Trish: Oh fuck!

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Another Trish holds a rug to catch the cat and save it from the fence.

The terrified cat leaps from the rug and runs out into the road making a cyclist swerve and run into a parked car snapping her leg.

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Another Trish swings in a crane with a net that plucks the cyclist from her bike just in time.

The bike keeps rolling and smashes the parked car's wing mirror.

Trish surveys the damage.

Trish: Ah fuck it.

Narrator: Trish was exhausted. Seeing nothing else to do she went to the park in the centre of town and collapsed on a bench in the sun. As she sat there she spotted something. Herself. Trish saw herself in the distance running down the road, then turning a corner and disappearing out of sight. Then a moment later another copy of herself ran past in the opposite direction. Then another. She sat there for the whole day watching herself come and go. And in every copy of herself she saw the same thing: the concern and the care on her face as she raced to help someone. Trish watched herself and smiled.

Announcer: Ladies and gentlemen the 9:05 train is departing in 1 minute from platform 4.

Trish: Hey!

Brian stops.

Brian: Oh!

Trish: Here's your Time Saver.

Brian: It worked then?

Trish: Yes. It worked. Thanks.

Brian: Good. You didn't happen to send a self-aware supercomputer back in time to the 1940s did you?

Trish: I don't think so.

Brian: Shame, that would have explained a lot. Well, I'd better get going. If I miss this train there'll be hell to pay.

Narrator: Trish handed back the Time Saver and walked away to get on with her day.

Trish opens the car door.

Bob: Oh, hey. You came back. I thought you had to leave.

Trish: Not this time.

Trish kisses Bob.

Narrator: The Time Saver was mostly a useless invention. In all the time I had it and all the experiments I carried out with it the only successful one was when I gave Trish Richards a moment to stop and think.