

Blinders Keepers
Screenplay by John Rachel
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INT: CONGRESS – NIGHT

The legislative hall is filled with senators, congressman, the Supreme Court, VIPs, press. They are assembled for the annual State of the Union address. PRESIDENT is at podium.

PRESIDENT

As I stand before this great body
and look out at the faces of those
who have dedicated themselves to
this great nation, I can say with
confidence that this nation is
strong and on certain footing.

He stops and abruptly his expression changes. Hands grasping the edges of the podium, he looks down lost in thought. When he looks back up, gone is the confident smile, the twinkle in his eye.

PRESIDENT cont.

Who am I trying to fool here? You, my
respected Congressmen? Some of the
finest legislators to ever hold public
office? The excellent justices of the
Supreme Court who preside over the
greatest legal institution in history?
Myself? No, I'm not here to try to fool
anyone. These are times unlike any this
nation has ever seen. So I'll tell you
exactly what the state of our union is.
It's a fucking mess!

A deathly silence fills the entire congressional chamber. Blank faces and unfocused eyes everywhere. Then, all at once, everyone immediately stands up and starts giving him a wild standing ovation. The President smiles and waves. Finally, they sit back down.

PRESIDENT cont.

So here's what we're gonna do. I
want you all to look down at the
floor. Now pull your pant legs up
over your calves. What do you see?
For those senators and congressman

from Texas, this will be easy. You won't have to imagine. The rest of you, just look and see what I'm seeing. See those loops. Those are bootstraps. Yes, bootstraps. Okay. Now look back up at me.

Dramatically the President holds up high in front of him his two index fingers.

See these? What we're gonna do is take these and insert them right in those bootstraps. Then all together, we're gonna lift. We're gonna lift like no one has ever lifted before. And we're gonna pick ourselves up. We're gonna pick ourselves up and we're gonna stay up. Do you know why? I'll tell you why. Because this is America. This is the greatest country that ever was or ever will be. And as we have demonstrated time and time again, as we have shown the naysayers and skeptics over and over, this is one country that can do it. We will do it! Yes! By God we will! Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank each and every one of you for your unselfish dedication, your unwavering patriotism and honorable service to this great country. God bless America!

Everyone goes crazy. The U.S. Army band playing "Happy Days Are Here Again" comes blasting out over the P.A. system. Red, white and blue balloons drop from the ceiling and the congressman start batting them around.

CROSSFADE:

INT: LIVING ROOM - DAY

NOAH's just gotten up. He's sitting at a desk top computer. A cat jumps up and Noah plays with it affectionately.

NOAH

Oh Capri! Now don't you go telling Naomi you're the real love of my life.

Cat gets down. Noah pulls up "Bambi Meets Godzilla" on YouTube. As the film credits roll, little Bambi is eating and frolicking in the forest. We hear gentle flute music and the playful chirping of birds. NAOMI stumbles in, still half asleep, comes over and gives him a token kiss.

NAOMI

Are you watching that again?

NOAH

It's inspiring.

Final scene of "Bambi Meets Godzilla": Credits finish and there's a thunderous KABOOM! as Godzilla's giant foot comes down and squashes the innocent little fawn. All we see is Godzilla's grizzly leg and Bambi's four tiny twig-like limbs sticking out from under the giant reptilian foot. The music and birds have stopped. As the KABOOM! trails off in a long tunnel of reverb, 'The End' fades up.

NAOMI

Ugh! That's horrible! Seeing that poor, helpless little creature crushed inspires you?

NOAH

It confirms my belief that the world is as screwed up as I think it is.

INT: FACTORY – DAY

Noah stands aside as four other guys wearing 'Full Metal Jack Its' tee-shirts drive lift trucks, piled dangerously high with sheet metal. They are laughing as other employees run for cover. TAL screeches to stop in front of Noah.

TAL

Hey, sphincter lips! It's your last day. Let's do some damage.

EXT: FACTORY MAIN OFFICE – DAY

Noah steps out of office with papers in his hand.

EMPLOYEES PARKING LOT

NOAH walks up to a lowriding Olds full of smoke. The whole vehicle shakes as heavy metal music thunders from inside. Passenger window rolls down. There are the four Full Metal

Jack Its, laughing and partying to the music. TAL is behind the wheel. Fat Freddie offers Noah a hit off a joint the size of a kielbasa. Noah declines.

TAL

This is truly fucked up. You're really leaving? Dude, you're going to miss out on all the fun!

NOAH

Damn, Tal. You're right. What am I thinking?

GHOST, a pumped up albino with a scorpion tattoo on his face leans forward and squeezes his mug in the window.

GHOST

Tonight, motherfucker! Tonight we give you a Full Metal Jack Its send off you'll never remember.

INT: STRIP CLUB – NIGHT

NOAH, TAL, GHOST, and Fat Freddie are on the firing line. A skinny, burned-out stripper is swinging around the pole.

TAL

Look at that scaggy bitch, man. What a sorry ass pair of tits!

NOAH

That's Gretchen. She's a meth head.

GHOST

You know her?

NOAH

That's my sister.

EXT: FARM – NIGHT

Noah leans against the car, watches as his drunken buddies tip cows. They whoop and hollar, taking belts of Colt 45.

CROSSFADE:

INT: BANK – DAY

TELLER is counting out money for NOAH.

TELLER

Eight thousand seven hundred, eight hundred, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, five, six, seven, and twenty nine cents. That's it. Are you sure you want to close out this account?

NOAH

I'm opening a dental floss factory in Madagascar.

TELLER

Well, golly. Good luck with that! I try to floss every day.

EXT: COUNTRY HOME — DAY

NOAH is stepping out onto the porch. His MOTHER is right behind him. She is happily demented, dressed like Lady Gaga at 50, only more bizarre. Trailer park chic.

NOAH

Don't worry about me. I'll be fine.

MOTHER

Can't you stay for dinner? You can say good-bye to your father.

NOAH

Mom. Dad left in '98. He hasn't lived here for 17 years.

She looks very confused.

MOTHER

Has it been that long?

EXT: TWO-LANE ROADS — DAY

Noah drives past one factory after another. Signs out front say 'Not Hiring'. Many are out of business and shuttered.

EXT: DOWNTOWN PULNICK, MO — DAY

Noah says good-bye to his hopelessly hayseed hometown, starkly rendered in its festering decline.

INT: LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

NOAH at the computer, printing fliers and maps downloaded from the internet. NAOMI arrives home from work and notices Noah's backpack leaning against the wall.

NAOMI

Are you sure about this?

NOAH

I've never been anywhere, Naomi.
There's no way it sucks out there
as bad as this.

Naomi looks hurt and turns away.

NOAH

Come on, Naomi. I don't mean you.
I've given this shithole 23 years
of my life. It's given me nothing
in return.

NAOMI

Where are you going? What are you
looking for?

NOAH

I don't know exactly. I'll know it
when I see it. It's not here. It's
the opposite of here. I'm dying in
this town. I need to find some way
to give meaning to my life.

Naomi looks at a flier. It's for a motorcycle rally in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

NAOMI

You're going to look for the meaning
of life at a motorcycle rally?

NOAH

It's not entirely random.

NAOMI

Sometimes random is good. In fact in
this case, it might be preferable.

NOAH

It's not a mindless orgy.

NAOMI

No. It's a mindless motorcycle rally.

NOAH

I like motorcycles.

NAOMI

And I like whipped cream. But I'm not going halfway across the country to look at creampuffs and sundae toppings.

INT: TELEVISION STUDIO / "RACHEL MADDOW SHOW" - NIGHT

RACHEL MADDOW

We all know the numbers. Unemployment is officially reported at 7%. Many experts think this is just wishful thinking and the real unemployment rate is over 25%. Last year more than 12 million homes were foreclosed on. But most people don't need statistics to see how bad things are. For three days now, there have been massive demonstrations in Washington DC. We go now to the scene in front of the White House. Reporter Phil Johannes is there live.

CUT TO: Roving reporter PHIL JOHANNES at demonstration.

It's total bedlam in front of the White House. People are yelling. Canisters of tear gas being fired by the police and lobbed back at them by the crowd. Protesters are carrying an effigy of the President with a noose around its neck. The reporter has a handkerchief to his mouth, and can barely open his eyes, is obviously in a lot of agony.

PHIL JOHANNES

This has not let up now for more than 48 hours, Rachel. The police just attacked the crowd. I can barely breathe, the tear gas is so thick.

Protester jumps on camera, grabs the microphone and yells.

PROTESTER

They want our blood. They won't stop till they get every last drop. The

free market? I'll tell you about the free market. It's free alright. Free of concern for decent people. Free of compassion. Free of hope. Capitalists are just a bunch of greedy pigs! Oink oink! Oink oink!

BACK TO: Television studio.

RACHEL MADDOW

Things don't look good in this country. People are tired of empty promises. They're tired of the rich just getting more and them getting less. I'm sure this story is far from over. We'll keep you up to date as things develop.

EXT: BUS TERMINAL — DAY

Noah kisses Naomi good-bye and goes into station.

INT: BUS — DAY

NOAH looks down the aisle. Bus is full except for one seat. He throws his bags in the overhead compartment and sits down next to a hugely fat PIG FARMER. It's evident from the look on Noah's face and those around that the guy stinks to high heaven. Noah sits down and has to fight the gagging.

PIG FARMER

Muh name's Tildon. Gots me a pig fahm. Rights down da road foam Inee-appliss. Shore nice a meetin' ya all!

As journey drags on we continue to see people around them with contorted faces, breathing through wet handkerchiefs, Noah turned away from farmer, throwing up in his mouth.

PIG FARMER

Yup. Gots me over fahv hundred pigs. Ornery little critters, them pigs!

Noah goes to the back of the bus. There's a 'Out of Order' sign on the restroom door.

EXT: BUS STATION — NIGHT

Bus pulls into Indianapolis bus depot.

INT: BUS STATION – NIGHT

Bus driver steers bus into a bay. Before it even stops, Noah is on his feet, grabs his bags from the overhead bin and rushes down the aisle. He bolts out the door as soon as the bus driver opens it. Others are just getting up to collect their things and exit.

Noah looks sick. He makes a desperate break for the lobby area. When he is halfway to the entry door, we see the bus explode in a huge ball of flame behind him.

Noah tumbles end-over-end, skids to a stop. There is panic and screaming. He manages to get to his feet and fights his way through the chaotic mob.

EXT: STREET – NIGHT

NOAH is sitting on a curb. Emergency vehicles rush past him, there are sirens, flashing lights. He has a few cuts, his clothes are a mess, his face is smudged with dirt and ash. He stands up and forces a taxi to stop. TAXI DRIVER eyes him warily.

TAXI DRIVER

No offense, buddy. But I need to see some green.

Noah pulls a huge wad of twenties out of his money belt.

NOAH

A hotel. Any hotel.

TAXI DRIVER

You got it, Son of Sam.

EXT: HOTEL – NIGHT

Noah walks up, people are making a wide berth around him.

INT: HOTEL LOBBY – NIGHT

Noah is standing at main counter. The HOTEL RECEPTIONIST, a young man who has hair that looks like patent leather and skin like a Japanese school girl, alternates between suspiciously examining Noah's identification and credit card, and stealing glances at Noah himself. Finally he gives Noah a chemically-whitened smile.

HOTEL RECEPTIONIST

Enjoy your stay here at the world-renowned Conrad Hotel, Mr. Tass.

INT: HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

NOAH enters the room and catches himself in the mirror. He looks like he just crawled out of the rubble after the bombing of Dresden. He takes a shower, then collapses on the bed and falls asleep.

CROSSFADE:

NEXT MORNING

NOAH wakes up and turns on the TV.

LOCAL NEWS ANCHOR

Michelle Carradine, a 28 year old mother of three was at the bus station last night, waiting for her mother, Sarah Schmidt to arrive from Tulsa. They hadn't seen one another for almost eight years. Michelle's mom had never seen her three grand children. Michelle was videoing the arrival of the bus with her hand held camera. You are now looking at the actual footage of this horrible incident.

INSERT: NOAH can be seen running toward the camera with the bus in flames behind him.

LOCAL NEWS ANCHOR cont.

Metro police, and we are now told the FBI, are looking for this young man. They believe he is from Missouri. He is now a prime suspect in this wanton carnage, a merciless terrorist attack that claimed the lives of 53 innocent people.

NOAH looks freaked out, dials lobby.

NOAH

Is there like ... maybe a theatrical supply store around here somewhere?

INT: HOTEL ROOM – DAY

Room service delivers several packages, which Noah empties onto the bed. There are various costumes consisting of wigs, moustaches, sideburns, hats, shirts and pants.

INT: HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Noah finishes packing. He's outfitted in a Freddy Mercury moustache, sideburns, a big Stetson, fringe shirt, tight jeans, and cowboy boots.

INT: HOTEL LOBBY – NIGHT

Noah checks out with a female receptionist, who is quite amused by his getup. After he signs the credit card slip, she hands him an envelope. It's a note from his father.

It's not like you to blow up buses. Be careful of the company you keep. Try to stay away from pig farmers, even if they make good mules.

Wyatt Grayson Tass

Noah looks confused. He runs out and hails a taxi.

INT: TAXI – NIGHT

NOAH

Airport. Hurry please. I'm late.

As they're driving, they approach the bus station. It's locked down. Police tape and security guards everywhere. Off to one side is a platoon of officers in full riot gear, ready to spring into action. Across the main street there is a modest size crowd holding a demonstration. Picketers carry protest signs: 'Down with corporations!' 'Truth is the H-bomb to tyranny.' 'Bombs and bullets will break the bonds of bullshit.' 'Fuck the rich! Be sure to use a condom!' 'Blow it up, start over!'

NOAH

Stop! Just drop me off here.

TAXI DRIVER II

You don't want to get off here.
Buses ain't runnin'.

Noah throws \$10 at the taxi driver and jumps out.

EXT: STREET OPPOSITE BUS STATION – NIGHT

NOAH wanders among the demonstrators. They are chanting, taunting the police. Some are playing guitar and congas, just trying to stay warm. Joints are being openly passed around. A pretty young girl with dreadlocks, TETRA, comes up behind Noah.

TETRA

Love the disguise. Are they shooting a western here or did you fall off your horse on your way to the OK Corral?

NOAH

I'm hiding.

TETRA

No shit, Sherlock. Hi. I'm Tetra.

NOAH

Like tetracycline?

TETRA

Tetra. As in theater of the absurd.
Don't ask me to explain.

Tetra walks Noah over to an old Chevy van which is parked at the edge of the gathering. It's all white, except for a huge black peace sign painted on the side. TYSON is working on his laptop. He takes a glance at Noah and just shakes his head.

TYSON

What have we here? Are you kinky or confused?

NOAH

My mother buys all my clothes.

TYSON

If you're a friend of Rick Perry,
you've come to the wrong place, Tex.

NOAH

I'm from Missouri.

TYSON

Well then, our women are safe and we don't have any sheep. Missouri, eh? Like that guy the pigs are looking for? Friend of yours?

NOAH

I am that guy.

TYSON

Whoa! Holy fuck! You? You! You are in deep shit, my friend. Welcome aboard. Wow! By the way, I'm Tyson.

NOAH

I didn't do it. Really I--

TYSON

This is awesome! You've come to the right place. Tomorrow, Tetracycline and me are on our way to the desert.

NOAH

I thought that was my joke.

TYSON

Going to a desert is a joke. What's funny about that?

NOAH

Nothing. Never mind.

TYSON

Dude! I get it. You need to stay under the radar. Well, this is it. No way they'll find you there.

NOAH

There? There being ...

TYSON

Area 51.

INT: CONFERENCE ROOM — DAY

The PRESIDENT is meeting with his "brain trust", a nerdy-looking group of young advisers. He's holding up a copy of

the National Inquirer. The headline reads 'Famous Psychic Predicts End of the World'.

PRESIDENT

What's with this anyway? Someone's always talking about how the world is going to end.

NERD #1 (CARL)

Astrophysicists actually do say that in about 4 billion years--

PRESIDENT

I'm not talking about 4 billion years from now, you numbskull! I'm talking right now. There's a lot of weirdness out there. Maybe we can use this.

NERD #2

Use what, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT

The end of the world!

NERD #3

Are we for it or against it? The end of the world, I mean.

PRESIDENT

Well, why don't you set up a focus group and poll the general sentiments of the voting public on whether the world should end or not? Maybe we can corner the doomsday vote. What a moron! I'm just brainstorming here. That's what these meetings are for, aren't they? Come on, for chrissakes! Give me some ideas here!

The President's SECRETARY pokes her head in the door.

SECRETARY

Excuse me for interrupting, Mr. President. But we are getting tight here. In four minutes, you have a photo op and formal lunch with Dr. Machivenyika Mapuranga, the ambassador from Zimbabwe.

PRESIDENT

Well, I certainly don't want to miss that. Did he bring me a zebra head for my desk?

Everyone starts to laugh but stifles it when the President snaps back around and gives them his serious business look.

PRESIDENT cont.

Listen up, people! We have a little PR problem here in the White House. The country is falling apart. At the rate we're going, I'll be asking the ambassador from Zimbabwe, Dr. Macarena or whatever the hell his name is, to start giving us foreign aid. And I'm taking the heat for this goddamn mess. Let's get those dormant lumps of grey matter between your ears working. The end of the world. It's big. It's bold. It's sexy. It's fucking scary! There must be some way we can put it to use. Like was famously said and oft quoted, 'There is nothing that greatness can't turn to its own advantage.' Words we should try to live by here, eh?

NERD #1 (CARL)

What a great quote! Who said that, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT

I did, you dimwit! In my inaugural address.

EXT: HIGHWAYS AND DESERT ROADS — DAY

NOAH rides with TYSON, TETRA and two other countercultural types, HEATH and BILLY X, across America. Noah watches in helpless awe as the others argue over maps, end up on dead end roads and meander through the desert vistas. The van is cramped and very uncomfortable, full of video recorders and related accessories. Finally they pull in to the tiny town of Rachel, Nevada and arrive at the Little A'Le'Inn motel.

EXT: PARKING LOT OF LITTLE A'LE'INN – DAY

They grab their bags and start walking toward entrance.

TETRA

They've got the remains of the alien here and his space ship. It crashed in the 50s. They talked to the alien until he died. They still have the space ship. But it's so advanced, they can't figure it out.

TYSON

You know the U-2 spy plane. And the SR-71 that goes over 2000 MPH. They built them right here. Now they're developing technology to cause earthquakes. And holograms so they can fake an invasion of the earth and control everyone on the planet.

BILLY X

There's a laser that can cut the moon in half!

NOAH

Did they have anything to do with Max Headroom?

TYSON

What the fuck is wrong with you? This isn't a joke.

INT: FRONT DESK OF LITTLE A'LE'INN – DAY

They are greeted by the effervescent lady who owns the motel, then go into the tiny café adjoining the reception area. They just start to eat lunch when COLONEL KERR comes bursting in. He's an older retired military guy, wire-thin, stern, always at attention, humorless, all business.

COLONEL KERR

Tyson. Good to see you. Who are these people? Have they been vetted?

TYSON

They're cool, Colonel. Billy X. Heath. You know Tetra. And this is

Noah Tass. He's from Missouri. He blows up busses.

COLONEL KERR

Okay. Fine. Can't take any chances. You got here just in time, Tyson. Things're about to break wide open.

Kerr opens his briefcase, spreads 100 photos on the table. They're aerial shots of the Area 51 base and all identical.

COLONEL KERR cont.

Can you believe this shit? It's fucking outrageous!

TYSON

Hmm. What makes you say that?

COLONEL KERR

Tune your sensibilities, boy! Look at those photos. Can't you see the writing on the wall? Something big is in the works. Apocalyptic! All their energies are being diverted. Nature abhors a vacuum. This is how it always is. The eye of the storm. You know it's really going to blow when things are this quiet.

NOAH

How long has it been like this?

COLONEL KERR

How long? Is that what you want to know? Is that your question? Well, lemme tell you. Give or take ... about twelve years.

EXT: SUMMIT OF TIKABOO PEAK OVERLOOKING AREA 51 - DAY

COLONEL KERR, HEATH AND BILLY X are standing looking through binoculars at the valley below with the Area 51 buildings. TYSON has all his video and photo equipment set up and ready. NOAH is off to the side slumped over, half asleep, bored out of his mind. TETRA is near him playing a Jew's harp. The van and a humvee are parked close by.

NOAH

We've been here for four days now.
What exactly are we waiting for?

COLONEL KERR

Those fuckers think they can pull
this shit right under our noses.
Well, they better guess again!

Tetra leans over and confers quietly with Noah. Then she walks over to Tyson and the others who are still looking off into the valley.

TETRA

Tyson, listen. I ... it's that time
of month and, you know, I need some
things. So Noah and I are going into
town. We'll see you back at the
motel.

BILLY X

I'll go too.

HEATH

Hey, I could use a break--

TYSON

You two! You're staying here! We got
work to do.

COLONEL KERR

Damn straight! We got 'em with their
dicks hangin' out. Fuck you,
motherfuckers! You're goin' down!

Noah gets behind the wheel of the van. He and Tetra drive away.

INT/EXT: LAS VEGAS - DAY/NIGHT

Noah and Petra hit the casinos, shows, clubs, restaurants, streets.

EXT: FRONT OF A'LE'INN - NIGHT

As NOAH and PETRA pull up to the motel, the place is eerily dark and quiet. There are no vehicles in the parking lot. The place looks deserted.

NOAH

This is weird. What's going on?

Noah heads over to look in the office while Petra runs off. Absolutely no one is around. Tetra comes back in a panic.

TETRA

They got everything. Bastards!

NOAH

Who? Space aliens?

TETRA

Come on! What are you waiting for?
Get your shit, man!

NOAH

You're serious?

TETRA

Serious as a heart attack.

INT: VAN — NIGHT

NOAH throws his bags in the back. TETRA is just finishing a call on her cell. She jams it in gear and speeds off.

NOAH

Who are we running from?

TETRA

You have to ask?

NOAH

I'm so confused. I mean what--

TETRA

Listen. I'll be alright. I can pull privilege. My dad is well-connected. You're a whole other story. Fuck! We should've never come here.

NOAH

So what's next? Are you sure--

TETRA

No worries. It's taken care of. You, Lone Ranger, are going to Casper, Wyoming.

EXT: THE FRIENDLY GHOST MOTEL, CASPER WYOMING – DAY

NOAH and TETRA pull up in front of a total dump of a motel on a secondary road.

NOAH

This is it?

TETRA

This is the drop point.

NOAH

Says who?

TETRA

Good luck, Noah.

Tetra drives away. Noah heads to the office to check in. The screen falls out of the outside door when he opens it. There is a grizzly and obese old man behind the counter, chewing tobacco and playing solitaire. He looks up like he's irked by the interruption.

INT: MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

NOAH is watching television on an old B&W TV set. There's much disaster news. He calls NAOMI and gets her voice mail.

NAOMI (as V/O)

If this is the fucking CIA, hang up now, you dickweeds! Noah! My life is hell. I miss you but ... my phone is tapped and my email hacked. There is a black SUV with tinted windows sitting across the street 24 hours a day. This is not good!! I wouldn't leave a message unless you promise to visit me in Guantanamo. I don't think you blew up the bus. But then again I couldn't blame you if you did. They usually smell like bum's pee. Bye for now. Hope you're better off than me.

EXT: ROAD IN FRONT OF THE FRIENDLY GHOST MOTEL – DAY

Noah looks in both directions. There's no traffic.

INT: MOTEL OFFICE — DAY

NOAH

Anyone call? Anyone ask for me.

This time behind the counter is an obese and grizzly lady, a wad of tobacco in her cheek. She's sitting in a wheel chair. She glares at him like he's crazy. Noah pays his bill for one more night. Buys a pack of cigarettes.

EXT: MOTEL — DAY

NOAH gazes off into the barren landscape. He looks bored and forlorn. Tries to smoke a cigarette. He chokes and throws the pack away.

NOAH

Screw this.

INT: MOTEL OFFICE — DAY

The grizzly lady is again behind the counter. Bags in hand, Noah pays his bill and leaves.

EXT: MOTEL — DAY

As Noah walks away, the GRIZZLED OLD MAN comes hobbling out. He's waving an envelope in the air.

GRIZZLED OLD MAN

Hey, boy. This came for you.

Noah looks at it. It's a note from his father with a police sketch of Noah in his Indianapolis cowboy disguise.

Hey, son! Let me know if you run into this guy. I hear he's in a heap of trouble.

Wyatt Grayson Tass

Noah is completely mystified and freaked out. He crumples it in disgust and fast balls it across the parking lot.

EXT: ROAD — DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

The sun is going down. NOAH walks along the shoulder of the road the motel is on. He has his thumb out. A couple of vehicles go by without slowing down. Then one screeches to a halt next to him. There are three in the car, in their

mid-20s: The driver is AL, a wild man. He could pass for Steven Segal wearing one of Tina Turner's wigs. LEON, who looks exactly like Leon Trotsky, is in the passenger seat. FRANCINE is in the back seat but we can't see her because she's laying down. She is petite and attractive, in spite of the fact that her head is shaved and she has an Iron Maiden tattoo on her skull. Leon rolls down his window.

LEON

Hey, asshole! Next town is forty miles from here. Have a nice day.

Leon and Al laugh hysterically and they peel away. About fifty yards up the road, the car comes to a screeching halt, then they burn rubber in reverse and come back.

LEON

Just yankin' your chain. Get in, bomber boy.

NOAH

How did you ...

They just laugh. In fact the two guys in the front seat, Al and Leon, seem to find everything hysterically funny. Noah throws his bags in the trunk and starts to climb into the back seat. AL whips around and yells at Francine.

AL

Wake up, you stupid cunt! We've got celebrity cargo.

FRANCINE

Don't ever talk to me like that again or I'll cut off your balls and stuff them up your ass!

She slides over and lets Noah get in the back seat with her.

INT: CAR - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

AL

You're lucky we found you. Why did you split from the Friendly Ghost?

NOAH

Well. I think I'm being followed.

AL (mockingly)
I think I'm being followed.

LEON
What a dipshit!

FRANCINE
You guys are a couple of barbarians.
It's not counter-revolutionary to
have some plain old-fashioned good
manners, you know. (to Noah) Hi!
I'm Francine.

INT: CAR — NIGHT

70s rock is blasting from the radio. LEON reaches in the glove compartment and pulls out a pipe. He lights a bowl of weed, then hands it to AL who takes in about 700 cubic feet of smoke and hands it back. Leon offers it to NOAH but he declines. Leon reaches over the seat and waves it in FRANCINE's face.

LEON
How about you, Miss Magic Eight
Ball?

AL
You know Miss Purity and Bean
Sprouts won't touch it. She can't
have that swamp inside her face dry
up and turn into a desert. Where
would the one-eyed trouser eels
live?

LEON
Did you say one-eyed trouser eels?

That brings peals of whooping hilarity from Leon and Al.

LATER: They drive through the night. Francine has drifted off. Suddenly she wakes up and looks over at Noah, looking him up and down.

FRANCINE
This is so wrong! So terribly wrong!

She attacks him, wrestles off his leather belt, reaches down and pulls off his leather shoes, rolls down the window, then throws them out. As soon as she gets the window back up, she

goes back to sleep. As if nothing out of the ordinary just happened, Leon fills the pipe again. Noah is totally confused, finally says something ...

NOAH

She threw away my shoes! My belt. My shoes and my belt.

AL

Did it ever occur to you that the cow you stole them from maybe wasn't done with them?

NOAH

I'm not following you. My feet are cold.

AL

Haven't you seen our ad in front of the cave? With the bear and the naked hunter?

NOAH

Ad? Ad for what?

AL

There's about twenty of them running right now. Everybody's throwing huge shit fits. They're calling them pornography! Fuck those assholes. You want to know what's pornographic? Stripping the hide off of an animal is pornographic. What's an animal supposed to do? Go to The Gap and pick up a new one?

NOAH

I haven't seen--

LEON

Save your breath, Al. Unabomber here hasn't the faintest idea what you're talking about.

AL

Listen, Dr. Doolittle. We're with PETA. P-E-T-A. That's People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Can you remember that?

NOAH

I belong to a similar organization. It's called P-H-T-S. People for the Humane Treatment of Strangers. Can you remember that?

Leon shakes his head. Al just rolls his eyes.

AL

Oh wow! He made a funny. Should we laugh? Or skin him alive and turn him into a nice belt.

LEON

He'd make a nice pair of sneakers.

FRANCINE

Why don't you losers shut the fuck up? (to Noah) I was in the ad with Bill Clinton and Alicia Silverstone. People keep saying it looked like we were having a threesome. What the fuck is wrong with everyone?

AL

But I'll bet Clinton stuck a cigar in your twat right afterwards.

FRANCINE

You have no clue how pathetic you both are. Pathetic fucking creeps!

They drive. The second-hand smoke makes Noah drowsy and he drifts off.

EXT: TRUCK STOP MOTEL – NIGHT

They pull up. Noah and Francine are aroused from a deep sleep. They all head into the motel.

INT: MOTEL ROOM – DAY

Close-up of a television. There is a milk ad showing a variety of African-Americans drinking milk, licking their lips, smiling into the camera. The final shot is a famous portrait of Martin Luther King, Jr. with a milk moustache Photoshopped on his upper lip. The ad ends with 'Got MLK?'

Program CUTS TO: a TALKING HEAD.

TALKING HEAD

And that's the ad that has sparked the controversy, resulting in widespread mayhem across the nation. We have reports that major urban centers including Boston, New York, Atlanta, Houston, Chicago and Los Angeles, have broken out in massive rioting. A curfew is being announced shortly. We now go live to Washington DC where a confrontation between some protesters and the DC police is underway. What's the situation there, Brett?

News report CUTS TO: On-the-scene reporter BRETT covering an incident in front of the Lincoln Memorial. Four black youths have painted a white moustache on Lincoln's upper lip and hung a sign that says:

Yeah, he's got milk ...
All the milk he can drink.
That's because he's white.
Us niggas can't afford it.

BRETT

As you can see, there are four young men up there on the monument. Police are trying to get them to come down. There's quite a crowd here. Many of them seem to be cheering the young men on.

Suddenly there are gunshots, screams from the crowd, and one of the youths falls. Chaos breaks out. The reporter scrambles. The camera is gyrating all over, then crashes to the ground and screen goes blank.

New report CUTS BACK TO: the talking head, who seems daffy and uncomfortable.

TALKING HEAD

Well, darn. There's sure some excitement going on there! Up next is America's best dog groomer here to show you how to make your poodle a movie star.

We now see the entire motel room with the television set. FRANCINE stretches, does a quirky dance, ballet mixed with epilepsy. She's got on a t-shirt that says, "Hey you! What part of 'Eat shit and die' don't you understand?"

BATHROOM

NOAH is curled up in the bathtub. He wakes to see AL taking a piss two feet away.

AL

You sure sleep a lot, bomber boy. Everybody's been in here. I had to stop Francine from taking a dump on your head. She's such a pervert.

FRANCINE

Fucktard! Don't listen to anyone with a gummy worm for a dick.

EXT: OUTSIDE MOTEL ROOM - DAY

NOAH is dressed, steps outside. LEON is sitting in lotus position close to the door. He has a camping knife in one hand. Blood is running down the opposite forearm.

LEON

Hey there, dude. You are a sleeping machine.

NOAH

Are you alright? What's going on?

Leon reaches for a motel towel, already heavily soaked with blood, and wipes his arm. There are thick scars which form letters. The last letter is a cluster of freshly bleeding cuts. So far his hacked up arm reads: Cruelty to anim

LEON

I been working on this forever. Getting these scars to thicken up like this takes a long time. You got to cut each one four, maybe five times. It's gonna say 'Cruelty to animals is a crime.' Or 'fucking crime'. Whaddya think? I don't want to alienate people. Know what I mean?

NOAH

You mean little old ladies. Pastors
and priests. Dweebs. The PC police.

LEON

We need everybody on board about
this cruelty thing. The world is a
slaughterhouse.

NOAH

It's a bloodbath.

EXT: SECONDARY HIGHWAY — DAY

They pull over to the side of the road, out in the middle
of nowhere. FRANCINE jumps out of the car, then goes around
to the trunk and pulls out a backpack. Everyone gets out.
Francine ignores the other two and turns to NOAH.

FRANCINE

I know what I believe in but I don't
try to convince others. I believe
people have to figure things out for
themselves. That way they become truly
committed and do the right thing. I
have what I call the Paul McCartney
test. In any situation, I just ask
myself, 'What would Paul McCartney
do?' It works.

AL

Now that's really brilliant. What
would Paul McCartney do? What? Pull
out a bass guitar and start singing
"Band On The Run"?

She walks away carrying the backpack, her free hand held
high in a middle finger salute.

NOAH

Where is she going?

AL

Francine's got some business to
attend to.

They get back on the road and drive. Just before sundown,
they reach Petersburg, ND. With little fanfare they drop
Noah at the front of the post office.

EXT: IN FRONT OF POST OFFICE — DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

LEON

You might want to buy some warmer shoes. Those tennies definitely aren't going to cut it. It gets down to 70 below here at night.

NOAH

Are you guys going to see Francine anytime soon?

AL flashes the victory sign and yells back at Noah as they drive away.

AL

Keep your dick moist and your fuses dry.

LATER: Just before Noah freezes to death, JOE, a slick dude in his early 20s picks him up in a new sports car.

JOE

Looking for some hot action? We've got girls that'll make your yam bag blow up like the Hindenburg.

Noah gets in. They speed off.

EXT: FUR FARM — NIGHT

Francine is using big wire cutters on a chain-link fence. She crawls through the hole she has made.

INT: FUR FARM QUONSET — NIGHT

Francine forces open the door, leaves it wide open, then proceeds to go down row after row of mink cages and open them. The minks jump out and scurry away.

EXT: DARK ROAD — NIGHT

Francine is waiting. Al and Leon arrive in car. She gets in and they drive away slowly with their lights off.

INT: AUTOMOBILE — NIGHT

Janis Joplin's Me and Bobby McGee is playing on the radio. "Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose..."

FRANCINE

Maybe you should kill the radio till
we get away from this place.

AL

We're cool.

Suddenly in the darkness ahead, headlights pointed directly at them all come on. Several vehicles are lined up side-by-side. Ten men step from behind the brightness. They are FBI and ATF officers armed to the teeth with assault weapons.

They unleash a barrage of gun fire. In a gruesome orgy of blood, a horrible slaughter. Francine, Leon, and Al are cut to ribbons and killed.

EXT: FARM HOUSE – NIGHT

JOE leads Noah from car into a huge, old dilapidated farm house. There is junk piled everywhere. Paint is peeling. The wood steps are broken and the porch is falling apart.

JOE

You're gonna dig this.

INT: FARM HOUSE – NIGHT

They enter a scene that looks like something from Haight-Asbury in the 60s. Holding court is QUICKSILVER. He is a 60s burnout and looks worse than the screen at the bottom of the bowl of the hookah he's toking from. Half of his teeth have fallen out. What hair he has left, grows in a band around his head in long stringy gray filaments that look like furniture stuffing. He's annoyingly optimistic and cheerful, often just laughing for no apparent reason.

QUICKSILVER

Just look at the map.

On the wall there's a map of Petersburg and the surrounding area. On it are over 160 black dots. In the center is a peace symbol.

HIPPIE PUNK #1

So?

QUICKSILVER

That's us right there. And this is
how it all ends, baby. There are over

160 ICBM silos with enough nuclear boom-boom to destroy the world over 25 times. It used to be 50 but they got girlie-boys negotiating these arms reduction treaties.

HIPPIE PUNK #2

Why do we even have ICBMs now that the cold war is over?

QUICKSILVER

'Cause we're livin' la vida loca, that's why! You got women drowning their babies in the bathtub. People shooting up post offices and schools. Don't you see a problem here?

HIPPIE PUNK #3

That's why we've got to fuck some people up and soon. We've got to stop the insane motherfuckers before it's too late!

QUICKSILVER

Wrong! Violence begets violence, my hyper-thyroidal soldiers of misfortune. Love is the answer.

Quicksilver gets up and wanders over to a 15-year-old girl. She giggles as Quicksilver starts gyrating his crotch only inches from her face.

QUICKSILVER cont.

And how would you like an hour of flower power, sweetheart?

She cowers and tries to crawl behind a sofa. Quicksilver starts dancing around the room to a Jefferson Airplane song that's blasting over the stereo. Joe corners Noah.

JOE

We better get some sleep. We're waking the rooster. Lots of road to cover.

Quicksilver tries to get everyone up dancing. Jimi Hendrix comes on the stereo.

INT: FARM HOUSE - DAY

NOAH is sitting drinking coffee in the kitchen. The clock on the wall says 10:35. The kitchen is a disgusting mess. People are straggling in, looking like they just woke up. JOE finally comes in with serious bedhead.

NOAH

Glad we got an early start. Lots of road to cover.

JOE

Our particular approach to life requires flexibility.

Joe tries to pour coffee and half of it ends up on the countertop. While he's trying to clean it up, the 15-year-old girl comes up behind him, wraps her arms and legs around him and licks his ear, then wanders off somewhere.

NOAH

The school bus stopped out front and waited. I guess that shoots her perfect attendance record at Petersburg Elementary.

JOE

Gimme a break. She told me she's eighteen.

NOAH

And if I told you I was head of Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic and could fly you to the moon, would you believe that?

JOE

Sure. If it was convenient.

EXT: FARM HOUSE - DAY

NOAH and JOE are throwing their bags into the car. It's very cold but QUICKSILVER is dancing around in sandals and a paisley kurta, throwing flowers on their vehicle and chanting some nonsensical mantra.

NOAH

Thanks for everything, Quicksilver. Mind if I ask you something?

QUICKSILVER

My soul is an open book.

NOAH

I can see you're a man of peace. So why would you want to live in the middle of all these weapons of mass destruction? All these ICBMs?

QUICKSILVER

(laughing)

So I can feel the love, my man! So I can feel the love.

INT: TELEVISION STUDIO – NIGHT

It's the Ed Show on MSNBC. ED SCHULTZ introduces a new segment.

ED SCHULTZ

Everybody knows things are getting desperate. Tonight we are introducing a new segment in my show called "We're Not Making This Up". These are stories of everyday Americans just trying to survive this catastrophic economy. First, we go live to Racine, Wisconsin to a man who is selling himself as a human punching bag.

A window opens and a 40s something man comes on the screen. His face is bruised and swollen, his eyes are black and blue, his nose twisted like a maple cream cruller.

ED SCHULTZ cont.

So, tell us. What's going on here?

HUMAN PUNCHING BAG

Well, for \$10 you can hit me in the face. \$5 the stomach. For \$20 you can kick me in the balls.

Someone walks up to him, hands him \$10, then punches him in the nose, which starts dripping blood. The human punching bag grabs a towel which is already soaked with blood.

ED SCHULTZ

Ugh! That's horrible. So why are you doing this?

HUMAN PUNCHING BAG

I need the money.

Window with Human Punching Bag closes.

ED SCHULTZ

Thanks, sir. Take care. Folks, it just gets crazier. Here is an ad we found on eBay under 'Home and Garden - Major Appliances'.

INSERT: Ad. (Ed Schultz reads it as a V/O).

I love my kids but bill collectors are at my door. Two sweet adorable children, boy 7 and girl 5. Sell as a pair or separately. Very low maintenance if you have cable TV. Father from Cuba and mother from Dominican Republic. Cuddly. Cute. Happy smiles. Bidding starts at \$600 each or \$1000 for both.

BACK TO: Ed full screen.

ED SCHULTZ cont.

People selling their children? What's this world coming to? And \$1000 for two kids? Sounds kinda cheap to me. Lastly now, we go to Portland, Oregon where a retired stage director for children's theater has apparently also put some unusual items on the market to raise some cash. This is Marty Kordakis.

New window opens on MARTY KORDAKIS.

MARTY KORDAKIS

I got a lot of duplicates, you know. I figure I only need one. So let others put 'em to good use.

ED SCHULTZ

Duplicates? I'm not following you.
Duplicates of what exactly?

MARTY KORDAKIS

I got two lungs, two kidneys, two
testicles, two ears. Hell, I really
only need one arm.

ED SCHULTZ

You're selling your body parts?

MARTY KORDAKIS

Don't act so surprised. Women have
been selling their bodies for
centuries. It's pretty much the
same thing.

ED SCHULTZ

Well, not quite. But I'm not one to
argue. I guess you do what you have
to do.

Window with Marty Kordakis closes.

ED SCHULTZ cont.

There you have it. And no, folks, we
aren't making any of this up. We wish
we were. But we're not. That's all
for tonight. It's all I can handle.

INT: SPORTS CAR — DAY

NOAH and JOE are driving on an interstate. Along the way we
see signs of unrest and disintegration: camps of homeless
people, troops and military vehicles, gangs of unemployed
men walking aimlessly.

JOE

So, Noah? Where's your ark?

NOAH

Ark's history. Hit an iceberg on a
freeway in Fort Lauderdale. I was
behind in my child support payments,
so I just ran. It was falling apart
anyway. Never buy pressboard from
the Chinese.

JOE

You're funny, man. But I won't hold your looks against you. Do you know what we're doing here? Like, why you're with me?

NOAH

You're supposed to teach me how to skateboard. Then we're meeting with the Dalai Lama.

JOE

Wow! So close. Actually, they have big plans for you.

NOAH

They? I have no idea who or what you're talking about.

JOE

I'm supposed to look out for your sorry ass. We've been losing way too many lately.

NOAH

Too many what?

JOE

Guys like you. Yahoos who know the boom boom stuff. Myself, I don't need the glory. Unless it's a glory hole!

NOAH

I'm not what you, what they think.

JOE

They told me you'd say that. Name. Rank. Serial number. That's cool.

NOAH

Do you do drugs?

JOE

Never! Absolutely not! No way. I'm clean, man. (pause) Got any?

CUT TO:

They're off interstate heading toward a convenience store. There are several police cars with officers crouched down behind them. A gun battle rages on with blasts being fired from inside the store.

JOE cont.

Damn! I wanted to get some corn nuts.

Joe does a screeching u-turn.

BACK TO: Back on the interstate in sports car.

JOE cont.

So, do you want to hear the plan?

NOAH

There's a plan?

JOE

Habitat For Humanity. See, I'm like a professional do-gooder.

NOAH

Does it pay well?

JOE

You dig these wheels?

NOAH

But I thought Avon gave out pink Cadillacs.

JOE

It's educational funding, my friend. Institutions of higher learning are facilitating my personal development. See, I live on student loans. And I learn by doing. I'm getting a real education. Fuck college!

NOAH

Student loans?

JOE

I check in with my university every three months, register for classes, then the day after they start I drop

them. The university refunds the course fees to my bank account and here I am driving us to the deep South, famous for hominy grits and southern belles.

NOAH

Won't you have to pay the money back? I mean, they are loans.

JOE

You aren't very imaginative, are you? The one thing I have learned by not sitting in a box listening to some bearded blowhard, is how to think outside the box. Yes. In theory, I will have to pay the loans back. But that's built on a lot of hypotheticals.

NOAH

Hypotheticals like?

JOE

Look around you! We're on the short end of a short fuse, my friend. You think there'll be banks? You think there'll be an economy? We're going to be a bunch of hunter-gatherers, man! They're not going to try to collect my loan. They're going to be collecting berries for their next meal.

NOAH

They're at least going to want your berries.

JOE

I thought you would be cleverer. Maybe building bombs is a pretty narrow specialty.

NOAH

It is. But I can fix clocks now. And bicycles.

JOE

I have learned so much these past two years. So much, dude! The world isn't at all like they want you to think it is. Text books are just propaganda for small minds.

NOAH

Especially the calculus texts.

JOE

See. Smart answer for everything. But that doesn't mean you're smart. I can tell you haven't lived. Where did you grow up? Some ant farm in the Midwest?

NOAH

Missouri. Pulnick, Missouri. You've never heard of it. I wish I hadn't.

JOE

Listen to me! Don't take offense. I'm not coming down on your case. It's never too late. I'm just saying, that's all. Just saying. And the great thing is we're starting right now.

NOAH

Starting what?

JOE

Your education, Mr. Boom Boom. Your education. Yo baby, it's hammer time!

EXT: HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE — DAY

There's a house being framed by ten to twelve volunteers. Out front there is a sign that says, 'Habitat For Humanity — Tuscaloosa, Alabama.' NOAH and JOE are on the roof side-by-side pounding nails into the 2x8s.

NOAH

Hammer time.

JOE

Wake up and smell the coffee. I get laid here more than Charlie Sheen with a suitcase full of roofies.

Joanna, a stunning early 30s babe, briefly glances up as she passes under them pushing a wheelbarrow.

JOE cont.

Aha! That one right there. She's definitely checking you out.

NOAH

You're whack.

INT: HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Progress on the home shows it's several days later. Noah and Joe are hanging drywall. CLARENCE, a handsome, well-built, late 40s black man who's in charge of the project, walks in and inspects their work.

CLARENCE

Well now. We ain't had so much fun since the hogs ate grandma.

INT: HOUSE - NIGHT

The volunteers all live together in a huge old colonial house, set up like a youth hostel. NOAH is sitting in the common lounge area, reading Jack Kerouac's "On The Road". Others are on the shared computers, watching a movie, just talking, microwaving popcorn, socializing. When a computer becomes available, Noah sits down at it. He signs on and suddenly the Instant Message window pops open.

WGT says:

How r things there in Tuscaloosa?

Me:

Who is this?

WGT says:

What's wrong with u, boy? Don't know yur own flesh and blood? And I thought you and I were becoming good buddies.

Noah is in shock. Ponders what to do.

WGT says:

Cat got your tongue? Listen, my confused rebel without a cause. Every fugitive isn't a hero.

Me:
WTF do you want?

WGT:
You could show some gratitude.
I'm keeping you alive.

Troubled and angry, he closes chat window, storms off.

NOAH'S ROOM

NOAH is lounging on his bed. There's a knock on his door.

NOAH
Come in, Joe.

JOANNA comes in carrying a bottle of wine and two glasses.
Noah scrambles to put on some pants.

JOANNA
Don't bother. I grew up with three
older brothers. You're Joe's friend.
Are you trying to screw every girl
here as well?

NOAH
I don't think Joe has to try. He
already has.

JOANNA
Not every one. I've been saving
myself.

NOAH
Saving yourself?

INT: HOUSE - DAY

NOAH is making coffee in the kitchen area. JOE walks in
with a huge shit-eating grin.

JOE
How is that girlfriend of yours
back home?

NOAH
When you were separated at birth,
your Siamese twin got the brain.

CROSS FADE:

EXT: KENNEDY CENTER / WASHINGTON DC – DAY

Establishing shot ... Kennedy Center.

INT: MAIN BALLROOM – DAY

We only see the podium from the POV of the audience.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Ladies, gentlemen, and distinguished
guests. The President of the United
States.

Huge deafening applause as PRESIDENT steps to the podium,
shakes hands with Master of Ceremonies, gives him a hug.
President waves and smiles to the audience. Finally, he
settles in to speak.

QUICK CUT: Audio engineer at sound mixing board pulls down
fader and as he does, the 'deafening applause' fades down.

BACK TO: President at podium.

PRESIDENT

My fellow Americans. I know times
are tough. I feel your pain. I hear
you. That's my job. Listening. Then
doing something about it. Right now,
things may be difficult. But America
is the greatest country in the
world. We are a 'can do' nation of
'can doers'. We're gonna put our
noses to the grindstone. We'll hit
the ground running. We'll be all
that we can be. You see, the buck
stops here. I know where the rubber
meets the road. As each day begins
and I see the new dawn illuminate
the American flag as it's raised in
the White House gardens, I look in
the mirror and say, 'Good morning,
Mr. President. This is the first day
of the rest of your life. Just do
it!' Ladies and gentlemen. Girls and
boys. Be proud. Stand strong. Keep
your groove. Have a nice day. And
God bless America. Amen.

Applause again is a deafening roar. President waves to the audience, one side of the ballroom to the other. He winks and nods at people he recognizes. The camera follows him off the stage. By accident the camera pans and shows the entire ballroom. The place is nearly empty.

EXT: HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE – DAY

NOAH, JOE and other volunteers are standing in front of the house they've been working on. Except for some landscaping, the place looks finished and ready to move in. CLARENCE is at the head of the pack with a big smile on his face.

CLARENCE

Now ain't that somethin'?

VOLUNTEER

How many of these have you built?

CLARENCE

Over thirty. But this one is special. I didn't tell ya. This house right here is where my new wife and I are puttin' down stakes. Start rebuilding our lives. Who knows? Even if I'm an old man, maybe we'll put a couple loaves in the oven.

NOAH

You'd be the best father in the world, Clarence. Besides, where do come up with that 'old' stuff?

CLARENCE

Listen up! From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank each and everyone one of you. It's been a long haul. I can't tell you how much I appreciate all your hard work. So here's the plan. Tonight we're all headin' out for a night on the town. We're talkin' some good ol' southern style fried catfish, the best music this side of Lonesome Molly's Mule Farm, and some serious butt shakin'! Tonight, my friends, we're goin' to Muscle Shoals.

JOE

Alright! Time to boot and rally!

EXT: HIGHWAY — NIGHT

Three vehicles in convoy. Clarence and volunteers are on their way to Muscle Shoals.

INT: OLD-FASHIONED SOUTHERN RESTAURANT — NIGHT

The volunteers have taken over the restaurant eating greasy traditional southern dishes, drinking beer, whooping it up, laughing. Clarence is making toasts, Joe and another volunteer have a chugging contest.

INT: HONKY TONK BAR — NIGHT

Live southern rock band is playing the music that's the good old Muscle Shoals sound. The dance floor is packed, the volunteers mixed in with the town folk, partying with wild abandon. Joe has taken up with a young southern slut.

But there are some serious rednecks there, women with big bouffants, guys with wooly beards, cowboy boots and hats, rough looking characters with big bellies. A few of them are giving the evil eye to Clarence who's dancing with several of the young white volunteer girls. It's innocent fun but the local men are getting increasingly testy.

SITTING AT TABLE: CLARENCE, Noah and several others are at a table drinking, laughing. JOE comes over with young slut.

CLARENCE

The guy was so dumb he couldn't pour piss out of a boot with the directions on the bottom.

JOE

These are my friends. This is Noah. He's a virgin. This is Clarence, my boss.

Young slut won't look at Clarence, chews gum and smirks.

EXT: HONKY TONK BAR — NIGHT

CLARENCE and volunteers walk to the parking lot. They're in good spirits. Young slut is hanging all over JOE.

CLARENCE

That was more fun than a rabid dog
in a hickory barrel.

JOE

We gotta do this every night!

When they come to Clarence's car, there are five pot-bellied rednecks waiting with crowbars and a chain saw. Clarence and the volunteers stand by helplessly as they destroy Clarence's car. The rednecks walk away, grabbing the young slut from Joe along the way. One redneck salutes Clarence using the chainsaw he's carrying.

CHAINSAW REDNECK

Have a nice day, nigger.

Joe lunges to go after and fight them but they hold him back. They get in their vehicles. Amazingly, Clarence's car still starts and they all drive away.

CROSSFADE:

EXT: HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HEADQUARTERS — DAY

Everybody is very somber. CLARENCE's smashed up car sits in the background as NOAH, JOANNA, JOE and other volunteers unload supplies from a truck. Clarence picks up a box.

CLARENCE

It's about time. Hey, we gotta run
this over to 26th Street. Anyone up
for takin' a ride?

NOAH

I'm on it.

JOANNA

I'll go.

They grab the box and start walking toward Clarence's car. Joe, who is trying to impress a young girl he is carrying stuff with, pulls out his car keys and tosses them to Noah.

JOE

Take my wheels. Indulge yourself,
love birds.

Noah catches keys. He and Joanna leave.

INT: JOE'S CAR — DAY

NOAH

Is it that obvious?

JOANNA

Who cares?

While driving and talking, they pass five large unmarked vans which look like typical delivery trucks. They are going in the opposite direction and in a tight convoy. Noah doesn't notice them. Joanna does a double take.

NOAH

I just meant--

JOANNA

Noah, you should know something. This is business. I like you. A lot. But let's just keep it at that.

NOAH

What's that supposed to mean? Why doesn't anyone tell me--

JOANNA

It's need to know. That's all.

EXT: RESIDENTIAL STREETS — DAY

NOAH and JOANNA drop off box with volunteers working at 26th Street house, then head back. As they get close to Habitat headquarters, Joanna looks up ahead, apprehensive.

JOANNA

Slow down. Something's weird.

Noah comes to an abrupt stop. There are security police who are dressed in full riot gear, being rough and dragging the volunteers into the vans, beating and pepper spraying them. Joe tries to resist, the officers gang up on him. Clarence is dragged into a van unconscious. When everybody has been captured, the vans drive away.

NOAH

Holy shit! What should we--

JOANNA

Just wait. Wait until it's safe.

INT: HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HEADQUARTERS OFFICE – DAY

The secretary is sitting there, slumped over in her chair, caught up in uncontrollable fits of crying. Noah and Joanna calm her enough for her to utter something coherent. She looks suspiciously at Joanna.

HABITAT SECRETARY

They asked about you. Why did they ask about you? They knew your name.

JOANNA

Come on, Noah. We've got to get away from here.

She rushes out with Noah in tow.

INT: JOE'S SPORTS CAR – DAY

JOANNA is driving. She frequently looks in the rear view mirror. NOAH looks freaked out. They pass a military convoy going in the opposite direction. There are several vehicles on the side of the road which have been abandoned and stripped, and a police car that's been torched.

JOANNA

IOU.

NOAH

IOU? What are you--

JOANNA

IOU is the 'what' and 'who' you were asking about.

NOAH

IOU. What does it stand for?

JOANNA

Internet organization underground. It grew out of Occupy and Anonymous.

NOAH

So what is it? Like a protest group?

JOANNA

IOU is an alternate world, Noah. A society within our society. It's everyone who's fed up with the

bullshit. The lies, corruption, incompetence. The looting of our treasury, buying our politicians, the plundering of the environment, ripping off the little guy, the fraud our democracy has become.

NOAH

Can they fight it? Will they really make a difference?

JOANNA

Or die trying.

There's a HITCHHIKER on the side of the road, a young black kid, late teens. Joanna screeches to a stop maybe 75 yards beyond. The hitchhiker runs toward the car, then approaches them tentatively.

EXT: HIGHWAY – DAY

Joanna and Noah get out. She starts throwing their bags out of the car.

HITCHHIKER

Hi. Are you headed--

Joanna hands the kid the car keys.

JOANNA

Here you go. Have a nice day.

Hitchhiker looks at them in disbelief. Joanna leads Noah away, carrying bags. Noah looks as confused as hitchhiker.

JOANNA cont.

Seems like a nice young man.

NOAH

Sure, Joanna. Thirty seconds is plenty of time to evaluate the temperament and moral integrity of a complete stranger. Why did you give the car away?

JOANNA

Hopefully, for his sake, there's no tracking device on board. But if

there is, he'll lead them someplace else. We can't take any chances.

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD — NIGHT

NOAH and JOANNA walk along a country road past encampments, homeless people huddled around fires.

NOAH

Jesus H. Christ! Aren't you afraid?
I'm afraid. I'm afraid to show my face.

JOANNA

Sure. Just like you, all of us, always on the run. Hiding. But there's one place they can't touch us.

NOAH

And where's that?

She holds up her phone.

JOANNA

Here.

NOAH

You can talk? Communicate? Don't they monitor everything now?

JOANNA

It's pure genius! IOU has a special network which sits invisibly inside every form of data transmission. Sure, the agencies can intercept it, but it's just nonsense. Just noise. This phone is on the network. To the spy boys, my conversations sound like a fruit blender.

EXT: SECONDARY HIGHWAY — NIGHT — CONTINUOUS

NOAH and JOANNA are walking, soon coming up on an old motel that's seen better days.

NOAH

Who put this together? Some team of hackers?

JOANNA

Team. That's funny you should say that. It was one guy. He goes by Tim. Obviously that's not his real name. Last time I saw him was at a rave. He's so weird. But he loves to party. Believe me, he's the last person you would suspect is a genius. You know the expression, 'There is no I in team'? So Tim used to go around to everyone and say, 'There is no E in Tim.'

NOAH

I don't get it.

JOANNA

E, Noah. Ecstasy. MDMA. At the raves, Tim was always trying to get someone to freebie him some Ecstasy. Everyone thought he was just annoying and a complete loser. Inevitably someone would lay some E on him, or pour some 2C in his drink just to make him go away. They had no clue. This was the guy who pulled it off!

NOAH

One guy. This Tim.

JOANNA

The IOU network has billions of bits of communication data being exchanged all of the time and these brilliant eggheads at NSA, the CIA, the FBI can't figure out what it says. It's like trying to catch millions of flies in the Louisiana Superdome in the dark with chopsticks.

INT: RUN-DOWN MOTEL — NIGHT — CONTINUOUS

NOAH

So did you fuck this Tim guy?

JOANNA

Of course. Wouldn't you?

NOAH

Only if he dressed up like a sheep.

JOANNA

Noah, you're one in a million.

NOAH

Flies in the Superdome?

JOANNA

You jealous boy.

NOAH

Busted.

INT: NEWSROOM STUDIO SET — NIGHT

The news program opens with big banner: 'Special Report — Economy In Crisis', CELEB REPORTER looking very concerned.

CELEB REPORTER

As we reported last week, Congress recently passed legislation which put into effect the President's plan to return America to the gold standard. Everyone is by law required to turn in all of their personally held gold, for which they are compensated at fair market value. However, as we'll be reporting tonight, this law has had some unexpected consequences.

CUT TO: CITY STREET — NIGHT

FIELD REPORTER is interviewing a BEATEN MAN, bleeding from the mouth and holding a compress to his face.

BEATEN MAN

They just come outta nowhere. Then them mother [bleep], they proceeds to hold me down, out come these big [bleep] pliers. They gots two of my teeth.

FIELD REPORTER

Why did they take your teeth?

BEATEN MAN

Why? Those [bleep] gone and took my gold fillings. Then they run away laughing like they a bunch of crazy [bleep] hyenas. Dat's why!

BACK TO: Newsroom studio set.

CELEB REPORTER

In related news, the new currency ...

INSERT: New printed currency is orange, not rectangular, instead of presidents has movie stars who have played presidents in movies (e.g. Bill Murray, Nick Nolte, Charleton Heston, Daniel Day-Lewis).

CELEB REPORTER cont.

... officially known as the USO is plunging in value on international currency markets. To see the effect of this, we now go to a Walmart in Atlanta, Georgia.

CUT TO: CHECK-OUT STAND / WALMART - NIGHT

Bagger is handing a small paper bag half-full of groceries to a LADY CUSTOMER. She is looking apprehensively at the L.E.D. read-out on the cash register waiting for the total. CLOSE UP of the read-out shows \$457.22. The lady dejectedly hands the cashier a huge wad of orange money. Then someone off-camera interviews her. She keeps looking in the bag and shaking her head.

LADY CUSTOMER

I can't believe it! \$450 for this. Why, that's a whole week's pay, for chrissakes. A loaf of Wonder Bread \$44.95! How am I supposed to feed my family?

BACK TO: Newsroom studio set

CELEB REPORTER

That's the question a lot of people are asking as the price of everything spirals out of control. We have reports that gasoline in California just topped \$37 per gallon. I spoke with a White House insider who chose

to remain anonymous. But he told me quote, 'Everybody here is scrambling to come up with some way to address this crisis. But don't hold your breath.' Unquote. Well, with this current administration, I don't think people are holding their breath. I think they're holding their noses.

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD – DAY

NOAH and JOANNA are on a dirt road way out in the sticks. Farms in every direction.

JOANNA

Because you blew up the bus--

NOAH

Why doesn't anyone believe me? I didn't blow up the bus!

JOANNA

Whatever. It doesn't matter. The Feds think you did and you've been labeled a terrorist. Everyone thinks you're a high value personage. IOU takes care of its own. That's why I'm supposed to look after you.

NOAH

Here I thought it was true love.

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD ENTRANCE TO A BEE FARM – DAY

Noah and Joanna are looking at an overhead wood banner over a long entry drive: None of Your Beeswax Bee Farm, Honey – "Nature's Confection"

INT: BEE FARM MANOR – DAY

KEVIN opens the door of a huge southern plantation manor. JOANNA and NOAH enter.

KEVIN

Hi. Joanna? Noah? I'm Kevin. Come with me. I'll introduce you to the Queen.

Kevin leads them up an elegant spiral staircase into her private chambers. The QUEEN is enormous. She's lying on a

gigantic stuffed pillow, with three young men at her side. One is reading aloud to her but stops when they enter.

The Queen's white hair is piled volcanically like freshly erupting whip cream on her bulbous head. She's wearing a tiara of brilliant blue gems. Her face is caked with makeup, lips looking like a hand grenade had gone off in her mouth, eyes thick with tar and metal flake spackling cement. The overall effect makes her look like a sumo version of Elvira, Mistress of the Dark. She's dressed in a shimmering black and silver sari. In one hand is a long cigarette holder with a cigarillo, in the other a martini.

KEVIN

Here are two more drones for you,
Madame Queen. Joanna and Noah, meet
the Queen.

QUEEN

Welcome to my full-length animated
feature, with dazzling artistry and
special effects so real you will
soon believe this is actually
happening. Would you like a green
apple martini?

JOANNA

I'm fine.

NOAH

No thanks. Very thoughtful though.

QUEEN

Fine, then. Kevin here will tell you
what you need to know. You will do
what you need to do. I appreciate
all that you will contribute to
vanquishing the evil which has
insinuated itself like a poison
into America and destroyed the
dream. And do enjoy your time at
None of Your Beeswax!

NOAH

Honey. Nature's confection.

QUEEN

Honey. The jism of the gods.

Kevin then gives Noah and Joanna a tour. On their way out of the manor, they pass a large wedding portrait of a very beautiful couple. The groom is in an army military uniform. The bride is slender, radiant, absolutely stunning.

NOAH

Wow! Who's that?

KEVIN

You just met her.

NOAH

The Queen?

KEVIN

She was 24. They had just gotten married. Then he was killed in Vietnam, a pointless war if there ever was one.

NOAH

All war is pointless.

KEVIN

I'm sure she would agree. Anyway, she's devoted the entire rest of her life to avenging those who took him from her. He was the one. The love of her life.

INT: BARN – DAY

KEVIN takes them into a storm shelter which opens into a huge finished basement. This houses 'Buzz Central'. It's a huge room full of computers and geeks working away on them. Buzz Central is divided into two halves, 'Information' and 'Disinformation'. Kevin points at the Information section.

KEVIN

That's where we do our legitimate blogging. We post on thousands of sites, big and small. Raising public awareness on the issues. Over there in Disinformation is where we have fun. This is where we create chaos. Upset the natural order of things.

RALPH walks their way. He's intelligent, intense, geeky but also mischievous looking.

KEVIN cont.

Hey, Ralph. What's up? Watcha working on these days?

RALPH

The Dot Gov Project. By next year, we're going to render the government a dysfunctional mess.

NOAH

Doesn't seem you have far to go.

RALPH

Good point.

EXT: BEE FARM — DAY

Noah and Joanna are putting on protective wear.

NEXT: They work along side a number of others on the apiculture boxes.

NEXT: We see them holding up bottles of fresh honey.

INT: BARN — NIGHT

Noah is working on a computer in Buzz Central. Two geeks are watching, then leaning and pointing at the screen, reaching over to type entries, giving him instructions. They all start laughing and exchanging high fives.

EXT: BEE FARM — DAY

Noah is in the top of a tree, trying to coax a cat to come down. The Queen in a state of great agitation is standing with her three attendants under the tree. Joanna is off to the side laughing and yelling encouragement to Noah.

INT: BEE FARM BOARDING HOUSE — NIGHT

NOAH and JOANNA are talking as they eat dinner in the commons. Everyone around them is chatting away.

NOAH

I'm starting to be able to tell these bees apart. They actually have very distinct personalities.

JOANNA

Noah. I'm leaving tomorrow.

NOAH

I'll come with you.

JOANNA

No. It's too dangerous.

NOAH

So. Just like that. That's it?

JOANNA

That's it. You're a sweet boy. Stay outta trouble. But in case you get in a fix, take this.

She hands him a slip of paper.

EXT: BEE FARM - DAY

Noah is working on the landscaping. He looks lost, downcast and listless.

INT: BEE FARM BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

NOAH is in his room taking off his work clothes. KEVIN knocks, then sticks his head in the door.

KEVIN

Noah? We want you to feel at home here. But you know this is ... a highly secret location.

NOAH

Of course. I understand.

KEVIN

Then you shouldn't be getting personal mail here.

Noah immediately sees it's a letter from his father.

NOAH

This is bad. Very bad. I don't know how--

KEVIN

Don't panic. We just have to be very careful.

INT: BEE FARM MANOR – DAY

NOAH is in the QUEEN's chambers.

QUEEN

Are you sure?

NOAH

I'm sure. Something is screwed up. Someone knows I'm here. It's best all around.

QUEEN

Thank you for all you've done, young man. Every bit helps. My boy, I have something for you.

One of her attendants hands Noah a gift-wrapped box.

INT: TRAIN – DAY

Noah is taking a train to Los Angeles. There are people camped along the sides of the tracks, remindful of the hobo camps of the Great Depression. There are drones and helicopters overhead. He takes the gift from the Queen out of his duffel bag. It's a bottle of honey and a note.

Bee honest

Bee clean

Bee true to yourself

I am your Queen.

EXT: HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD – DAY

Noah walks around taking in the sights. All of the usual crazies are there – Elvis, Spiderman, Batman, the Devil. There are a lot of panhandlers, bums, homeless families. One guy kills a pigeon and tries to eat it whole. Also, there are men in sunglasses and black suits, talking into headpieces and mobile radios. Noah gets the evil eye one too many times and leaves.

EXT: BEVERLY HILLS RODEO DRIVE – DAY

NOAH is looking around in wonder. Lots of cosmetic surgery. Several women walk past him with identical faces and 42DDs.

Noah sees headline of today's L.A. Times in a news rack ...
'10,000 Predicted at Federal Building Political Protest'

He puts in four quarters but news rack won't open. Someone comes up and kicks the news rack. It pops open and the guy takes a paper. Noah starts to reach for one, then a BEVERLY HILLS COP comes out of nowhere.

BEVERLY HILLS COP

It's 25 cents.

NOAH

I already put four quarters in.

BEVERLY HILLS COP

It's 25 cents.

Noah pulls out an orange \$1 bill.

NOAH

Have you got change?

The cop grabs the \$1 bill, puts it in his pocket, reaches over and hands Noah a newspaper, then kicks the news rack shut. Noah walks away reading the article.

EXT: WILSHIRE BOULEVARD FEDERAL BUILDING - DAY

NOAH is there early. He's in disguise and has on a ZZ Top moustache and beard. But he's having trouble getting them to stay stuck to his face. Protesters are arriving carrying angry protest signs. News reporters and their cameramen are everywhere.

Noah wanders over to a very young couple, hippie types ala Sonny & Cher. He watches the SONNY BONO PROTESTER organize his signs. The guy looks up just as a gust of wind blows Noah's beard off. He briefly stares at Noah then freezes. The kid is pulling out a poster that says ... 'Here's your answer!' There are two photos on the poster. One is a huge explosion of some sort. The other is Noah.

SONNY BONO PROTESTER

Awesome, man! Friggin' awesome! I can't believe it's you. I'm Roland.

NOAH

Thanks, uh, Roland. Good luck with the thing today. Gotta go.

Noah high-tails it as fast as he can without drawing too much attention to himself.

INT: HOLLYWOOD MOTEL ROOM – DAY

Noah is sitting there at a loss.

DISSOLVE TO: Later Noah is laying back on the bed thinking. Every tiny sound makes him jump. Then he remembers to look in his backpack.

EXT: HOLLYWOOD INTERNET CAFÉ – DAY

Noah walks past a couple hookers and enters.

INT: HOLLYWOOD INTERNET CAFÉ – DAY

Noah sits down. There are a few of emaciated, unkempt guys sitting at other terminals, apparently with nowhere else to go. He pulls out the slip of paper that Joanna gave him:

http://217.345.111.042
narcissist000napalm

Noah gets the sign-in screen, enters the password and gets three questions. He types in his nonsensical answers.

- Q. How could a tail wag the dog?
- A. We live in a fairy tale world.
- Q. Addition is to subtraction as ice is to...?
- A. Orange marmalade.
- Q. True or false: the 80s spelled the extinction of proper diction.
- A. Can I take these stones out of my mouth?

A pop-up opens: 310-555-7777. Noah writes it down, then checks his email. There's a message from Naomi. As soon as he goes to retrieve it, IM window opens.

Naomi says:
OMG! Noah? Is that you? Are you really there?

Me:
Yes! It's Noah. I haven't been online for so long! I'm paranoid.

Naomi says:
You should be.

Me:

Are you still being watched?

Naomi says:

24 hours a day.

Me:

Will you do me a favor?

EXT: STREET IN FRONT OF NAOMI'S FLAT - DAY

NAOMI comes out and walks over to the black van parked across the street. She raps on the window, it rolls down.

NAOMI

Listen, dickhead. Noah wanted me to--

FBI AGENT

We got it. He's not coming back here and we should go fuck ourselves.

The window rolls back up and the van drives away.

INT: HOLLYWOOD MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

NOAH dials 310-555-7777. He gets voice mail, "There's no E in Tim." Then it hangs up and there's a dial tone. Noah looks confused. He lays down on his bed and switches on the television with a remote. There are violent scenes of the demonstration at the Federal Building. Phone rings. Noah mutes the TV and answers.

IOU GUY (as V/O)

You really shouldn't go wandering around like that. There's still a lot of heat, you know.

NOAH

I know. I gotta get out of here.

IOU GUY (as V/O)

We need 24 hours to put it together. Don't disappear on us.

EXT: NEVADA DESERT ROAD - DAY

A truck drops NOAH at the entrance of the Burning Man Festival. People in cars, trucks, vans, RVs and buses are streaming in by the thousands.

DRIVER

Now don't forget. Four days here.
Then you stay at this place in Reno.

Driver hands Noah a slip of paper.

DRIVER cont.

Listen. No hookers. The Feds love to
use hookers.

NOAH

No hookers. Got it.

DRIVER

And take this. It's IOU. Completely
secure. Don't be afraid to use it.

Driver gives Noah a cell phone, drives away.

Noah Burning Man enters, amazed by the wondrous sights and
sounds. He comes to an RV. They're expecting him.

EXT: NEVADA DESERT BURNING MAN FESTIVAL – DAY/NIGHT

Noah wanders among the dreamlike structures and mind-
boggling art configurations.

MULTIPLE QUICK CUTS:

Over the next four days, Noah dances, meditates, parties,
drinks.

EXT: NEVADA DESERT BURNING MAN FESTIVAL – NIGHT

NOAH is in a dense crowd at the CoCoMo stage, Burning Man's
trance club. NOAH hears a male voice directly behind him.

TIM

Nice lobe stretchers. Tibetan
meditation balls? Hey listen ...
there is no E in Tim.

Noah whips around. There is TIM, dressed disco circa 1977,
Andy Gibb polyester shirt, ass-hugger stretch pants, patent
leather shoes, sideburns, soft feminine skin that has never
seen the sun, inverted bowl Flowbee haircut, leather string
headband with beads. He's smiling away. Noah pushes past
two girls who are feverishly making out, to get to him.

NOAH

I'm Noah. Some people call me the bus bomber. I hope you don't mind my asking. But I have a feeling you are ... you are famous.

TIM

It's my pleasant duty to meet you, Noah. I am in certain privileged circles referred to as the person to whom you are indeed referring. Now I'm counting on you to keep our little secret secret, but otherwise stay honest. Honesty is the fifth element. I forgot the other four. I should move on now to fulfill my sacramental search, since apparently you can't put the E in Tim. Bye for now, Noah, also known by some people as the bus bomber.

Tim walks over to a very beautiful, very stoned girl.

TIM cont.

Why hello, sweetheart. There is no E in Tim.

DISSOLVE:

INT: WHITE HOUSE – NIGHT

A cameraman focuses his camera, the director gives his cue, and we cut to the PRESIDENT. He's in his pajamas, sitting on the floor of the Oval Office, surrounded by a half dozen children, also in pajamas. Two of the children are his own, the others borrowed. A Hispanic, an Asian, one that's some indeterminate shade of brown, the last child a lily-white Caucasian. On the President's lap is a book.

PRESIDENT

I thought tonight that you, my fellow Americans, would like to join me as I read one of my favorite stories to my two kids and a few of their friends, who happened to stop by.

He starts to read "The Little Engine That Could". We see him begin, then a CROSSFADE takes us to:

President is singing his version of the John Denver song by the same title. As the song is ending, he prods the reluctant, bored children to join in on the closing lines.

PRESIDENT (singing)

Though this ends the story it will
do you lots of good / To take a
lesson from the little engine that
could / Just think you can / Just
think you can / Just have that
understood / And very soon you'll
start to say / I always knew I could
/ I knew I could / I knew I could /
Yeah!

The First Lady, also in her jammies then comes in and leads the children out of the room. President walks over and sits behind his executive desk.

PRESIDENT cont.

Sometimes when I can't sleep, I come
down here just like this. I sit here
and I think. I think about you. I
think about our nation. Then I ask
myself, 'What's best for America?
What can I do to make things
better?' I'm so glad that I have the
opportunity to make a difference. So
darn glad. Really really glad.

President momentarily drifts. Then snaps back.

PRESIDENT cont.

My fellow Americans. I want to take
this special occasion and this
special moment to thank every one of
you. You are all very special to me.
Special. Thank you. Good night! And
God bless this great nation!

CUT TO: BILL MOYERS in TV studio. He looks dumbfounded.

BILL MOYERS

And there you have it. The President
of the United States of America.

EXT: REMOTE PART OF THE DESERT – NIGHT

Tim is kneeling. He's crying. AGENT #1 and AGENT #2, two surly federal agents, are standing over him.

AGENT #1

Court is in session. You have been accused of acts of treason against the United States of America.

AGENT #2

Aw! Look at the little guy now. Crying like a baby. Not such a big bad terrorist after all.

AGENT #1

We take your disgusting blubbering as a confession of guilt.

AGENT #2

Jury has met. Verdict is unanimous. Guilty as charged. Sentence?

Agent #1 shoots him point blank in the back of the head.

INT: MOTEL ROOM – DAY

Noah is in another sleazy motel. He looks incredibly bored. The television is on the news and it's being reported that Congress has just allocated \$1.2 trillion to tear down the Pentagon and replace it with a Crucifix-shaped building.

EXT: MOTEL – DAY

Noah leaves. It's obvious he's in Reno. There's the gambling casinos. The tawdry architecture. It's dusty and it's bleak.

INT: COFFEE SHOP – DAY

NOAH is eating a nutritionally bad meal. He can't finish it. CYAN, a lovely young girl starts to walk by, but comes back. She's very sweet and innocent looking.

CYAN

Hi. Can I join you? I don't know anyone here.

NOAH

Sure. Want to finish this dog food?

CYAN

Ugh! No wonder everyone is so fat.
I'm Cyan.

NOAH

I'm Noah. Cyan. That's different.

CYAN

My real name is Penelope. But I
really hate it.

NOAH

Why Cyan?

CYAN

I worked at an Office Depot for
three months. It was the name of one
of the color printer cartridges.

INT: MOTEL ROOM – DAY

NOAH and CYAN are naked. They just finished making love.

NOAH

Whoa! That was amazing.

Cyan gets out of bed and starts getting dressed.

NOAH cont.

Are you leaving? I thought you--

CYAN

That's two hundred bucks.

NOAH

What's two hundred bucks?

CYAN

You owe me two hundred bucks.

NOAH

You're a hooker?

CYAN

You thought I was a school teacher?

EXT: IN FRONT OF MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Noah is talking on the cell phone IOU gave him.

NOAH

I feel so stupid. So fucking stupid!
I had no idea she was a hooker.

IOU GUY (as V/O)

She walks up to you in a restaurant,
thirty minutes later you're doing
the dirty deed. You had no idea she
was a hooker. What did you think she
was? A school teacher?

NOAH

It won't happen again. I'm sorry.

IOU GUY (as V/O)

Look. There's a 99% chance she's
just a working girl. But we can't
take any chances. She knows where
you are. We'll take care of this.
Please keep the horse in the barn
till we get back to you.

INT: MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Noah is just laying there. He can't sleep.

EXT: IN FRONT OF MOTEL ROOM – DAY

Noah is restless. He shuts the door and starts walking.

INT: COFFEE SHOP – DAY

The television set behind the counter is tuned to Fox News.
A panelist is ranting about what a wimp the president is,
and how we "should nuke all those damn godless socialist
Scandinavian countries – Sweden, Denmark, Norway – and be
done with it." Noah finishes his coffee. Leaves.

EXT: BEST BUY – DAY

Noah enters.

INT: BEST BUY – DAY

Noah is in the computer department. He looks around. There
are no sales clerks in sight. He steps up to a tricked-out
desk top and Googles 'terrorists most wanted', finds link
at government ATF site. Clicks "10 Most Wanted Terrorists".

He is number eight. He pulls the plug on the computer and makes a beeline for the exit.

EXT: IN FRONT OF MOTEL ROOM — DAY

Noah approaches his room. There's a box leaning against his door. He picks it up and takes it inside.

INT: MOTEL ROOM — DAY

In the box is a beer bottle with a rag hanging out of it, a note tucked inside. The note presents a challenge. He can't shake it out. He tries to coax it out with a toothbrush. Finally, he puts it in a paper bag and smashes it on the edge of the bathroom sink, then reads the note.

He immediately starts to pack his bags.

EXT: RENO USED CAR LOT — DAY

Noah is shaking the hand of a salesman. He gets in a beat-up old car and drives away.

EXT: INTERSTATE HIGHWAY — NIGHT

Noah sees a billboard for a motel. He exits.

EXT: INTERSTATE HIGHWAY — DAY

Noah is driving. He has to detour around a collapsed freeway overpass. The police directing traffic are all dressed up in battle gear. There are combat troops and military vehicles.

EXT: TRUCK STOP — DAY

Mechanic is shaking his head. The beat-up old has had it. Noah takes his bags out.

EXT: TRUCK STOP SERVICE RAMP — DAY

Noah is hitchhiking. Truck pulls over and he gets in.

EXT: HIGHWAY — DAY

Noah again is hitchhiking. A sign says 'Detroit 85 Miles'. College-age kids pick him up. The car is covered with bumper stickers for legalizing marijuana. When they open the door to let him in, a huge cloud of smoke billows out.

EXT: FERRY STREET DETROIT – NIGHT

College-age kids drop Noah off at the Inn on Ferry Street. He enters the hotel.

INT: YUPPIE COFFEE SHOP – DAY

Noah is looking at a bulletin board. He sees a poster for a teach-in sponsored by a Queer Studies campus organization. It's at 8 pm that evening at Scramblers on Napoleon Street.

EXT: NAPOLEON STREET DETROIT – NIGHT

Noah is in front of a warehouse in a very bad part of town. There's a hand-painted sign hanging on the steel door that says 'Scramblers'.

INT: DUMP COFFEE HOUSE/BAR – NIGHT

Scramblers is on second floor of a small warehouse space. It's filled with cheap mismatched diner tables, old wood and metal chairs in varying states of disrepair. The ceilings and walls are painted absorbent flat black, the entire space inadequately lit by four bare bulbs hanging from the steel-beam rafters. There's no "teach-in". It's all surly angry-looking guys. Smoking. Staring. Brooding. Punk and anarchy meets hip hop and guerilla warfare.

NOAH gets some fries and bad coffee from the bar, sits down and tries not to stare or look conspicuous. All of a sudden three guys flip their chairs around, sliding them up to his table. They lean within inches of his face. Sal and Kenny sit on either side of him. TREY sits directly across from him. He's intense, intelligent but extremely rough looking.

TREY

What do you want?

Noah looks at Sal and Kenny, points to his fries.

NOAH

I'm not going to eat these. You want them? Go ahead.

TREY

What the fuck are you doing here?

NOAH

Uh ... Lot 49.

TREY

Did I hear you right?

NOAH

Don't know. Did you? I said Lot 49.

Instantly they are on their feet. Noah is being carried out.

NOAH

I haven't paid for--

TREY

Don't worry. I'll put it on my tab.

INT: '72 CHEVY NOVA - NIGHT

Noah is sandwiched in the back seat between Sal and Kenny. They pull up to a building that looks all but abandoned.

INT: RUN-DOWN COMMERCIAL BUILDING - NIGHT

They are in an office with plate glass viewing windows. The building is full of trash. NOAH is in an old executive chair on wheels. Sal and Kenny are spinning him around. They stop. Noah is dizzy but looks at them like he thinks this all might be a joke. Sal hits him with a left hook. Noah is seeing stars but is still conscious. He starts crying.

TREY

Lot 49, eh? I don't think you're a cop. How do you know about Lot 49?

NOAH

I'm looking for Joanna. Joanna Templeton.

TREY

There's nobody around by that name.

NOAH

I worked with her in Alabama and Louisiana. Then I got a note from her.

TREY

You got a note from Joanna. Did she pass it to you in history class?

Sal is massaging and clenching his fist. Trey gives him a nod. He hits punches Noah again in the face.

NOAH

Fuck! Fuck! Oh god! That hurts.

TREY

He's just warming up. You better do some serious explaining. Right now!

Trey gives Noah and the chair a big shove. It rolls back until it hits a desk. It bounces and Noah falls forward onto his hands and knees. He curls into a protective ball.

NOAH (muffled)

Has anyone here got a smart phone?

TREY

What the fuck did you say?

NOAH

Has anyone here got a smart phone?

TREY

Yeah. What of it?

NOAH

Google January 30. Bus. Indianapolis.

TREY

This better be good. We're not fucking around, you know. You've stepped in some deep shit here.

NOAH

Not once have I thought you were fucking around.

The three thugs study the iPhone. Trey looks at the screen. Then looks at Noah.

TREY

Is this you?

NOAH

That's me.

TREY

You're the guy who did this?

NOAH

I don't know who I'm running from
but I'm running.

TREY

We know. Believe me. We know.

They haul Noah to his feet and drag him out.

EXT: FERRY STREET DETROIT – NIGHT

Nova pulls up in front of Noah's hotel. Noah is shoved out.

TREY

Tomorrow. 12 noon. No funny stuff.
If you're not here, we'll find you.

INT: HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Noah is on his secure cell phone.

IOU GUY (as V/O)

Where the hell are you?

NOAH

It's all good. I got the message in
a bottle.

IOU GUY (as V/O)

Message in a bottle? What are you
talking about? We've been trying to
reach you for days. Where are you?

NOAH

Detroit.

IOU GUY (as V/O)

Nice. For what? Looking to buy some
abandoned buildings?

NOAH

I'm trying to find a girl. Joanna.

IOU GUY (as V/O)

Who's Joanna? Whatever. Since even
we couldn't find you, you must be
off everyone's radar. At least for

now. Do what you have to do. But no
hookers. Got it?

NOAH

It never crossed my mind.

EXT: INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT DETROIT – DAY

Trey, Noah, Sal and Kenny are driving through the worst industrial area in Detroit. There are abandoned vehicles, burned out buildings, piles of rubble and trash everywhere. Noah is in the front seat with Trey. They pull up to a property surrounded by a high corrugated steel fence. Sal and Kenny jump out and remove the chain from a swinging chain link gate. They park in a sprawling dirt parking lot. There are a number of expensive cars, a Mercedes Benz, BMW, one Rolls Royce. They get out and approach a heavy-duty steel door. Trey punches in an entry code on the security box. Door opens and they enter.

INT: HIGH-TECH NIGHT CLUB – DAY

Lot 49 is the disco night club version of the Starship Enterprise. Futuristic. Waiters and waitresses are dressed like space explorers. Ten men in street clothes are sitting in plush chairs and love seats in front of two tables against a wall. They are well-dressed mobster types, surly and crude. NOAH is directed to sit down. TREY points to three crystal bowls on the tables which are full of pills.

TREY

Those are acid. Those ecstasy. Those are probably Valium or something like that. I would go easy unless you really know what you're doing.

NOAH

Damn. I actually thought they were breath mints.

There are two gigantic flat-panels screens. Everyone is staring at one or the other. On one screen, 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' is playing. The sound is off. The other screen is a live commodities chart. But it's only charting one item. Gold.

ELEMENT is the boss. He is famine-poster thin, clean-shaven but has a number of razor nicks on his neck and chin, his jet black hair in the slick style of a 40s movie gangster.

Pale as wax paper, his skin still has a healthy glow. He's typing. It appears in a chat box window on the screen.

Element: Tell that fuckwad he's gonna
get us all busted. Just stay
with the plan. Or I'm out.

G-Spot: I agree. Got it. Burial at sea.

Element pops open another window. It's a spread sheet. Boxes are alternate blinking red or green. Element moves the cursor over a red box and clicks it. New frame opens, 'Execute' or 'Cancel'. Element clicks 'Execute'. The price candle drops halfway down the screen, hesitates, comes back up slightly, then drops another huge amount. Element types.

Element: Their assholes must be feeling
the pain and I don't even have
my dick in the whole way.

He reaches over to one of the bowls and takes an orange pill between his index finger and thumb. With dramatic flourish he tips his head, then slowly brings it down and places it on his tongue. He glances over at Noah.

ELEMENT

Hey, Trey. I thought you killed this
piece of shit.

NOAH

A woman sent me. She promised she'd
meet me here. Early 30s. Beautiful.
Looks like Charlize Theron.

Now everyone staring at the other screen is mesmerized. A huge army of oompah loompahs are dancing in formation and candies are swirling in a psychedelically rainbowed vortex.

NOAH cont.

Element, sir. Mr. Element. Your
highness. Oberführer ...

Element waves his hand before his eyes looking for trails.

NOAH cont.

Her name's Joanna. Joanna Templeton.
She's a terrorist. Like me. I have
to find her.

ELEMENT

A terrorist, eh? That's not good. We don't believe in terrorism here. Or as Karl Marx famously said, 'Capital is money, capital is commodities. By virtue of it being value, it has acquired the occult ability to add value to itself. It brings forth living offspring, or, at the least, lays golden eggs.' Eggs. Not bombs. He also said, 'Revolutions are the locomotives of history.' See where I'm coming from?

NOAH

I think so. To make a locomotive, sometimes you have to break a few eggs.

Element's brow furrows. With a dismissive flick of his hand, the conversation is over. Trey, Sal, Kenny stand up. They hustle Noah toward the exit. One of the waitresses rushes ahead and assumes a perky happy-hostess pose next to the door.

WAITRESS

Thanks for coming to Lot 49! Please come again sometime.

NOAH

What are the specials here?

WAITRESS

Coffee, tea, or LSD.

INT: TELEVISION STUDIO — DAY

It's the weekly news program, the McLaughlin Group.

JOHN McLAUGHLIN

Things just keep getting weirder with this President. His recent appearance on national television reading from the toddlers's tome, "The Little Engine That Could", may go down in history as one of the most bizarre events in presidential history.

PAT BUCHANAN

He's scrambling. He's got no ideas. So he's trying to put on some sort of cartoon show to distract the American public.

ELEANOR CLIFT

This is an election year. He's got to play down the bad news – and there sure is a lot of that – and try to charm the voters.

JOHN McLAUGHLIN

What's charming about looking like a full-tilt lunatic?

SUSAN FERRECHIO

What gets me, and I think this is the question just about everyone inside the beltway is asking, is when is this President going to start campaigning? It's August. And this guy hasn't made a single campaign appearance. Sure, he'll get the nomination. But he needs to start getting his message out to the people.

PAT BUCHANAN

This President is MIA. He's missing in action on every front. Why, I barely made it to the studio tonight. There's so much garbage piled up on the curbs.

MORTIMER ZUCKERMAN

I saw patients in their beds lined up out in the street in front of George Washington University Hospital. I'm serious. Patients on the side walk. Some of them even had I-V bottles.

ELEANOR CLIFT

Maybe the President should read a bedtime story to them.

JOHN McLAUGHLIN

Prediction: This president is no dummy. I say he's playing rope-a-dope and will pull something out at the

last minute. Look for an October surprise. You heard it first right here. That's it for this edition of the McLaughlin Group.

INT: YUPPIE COFFEE SHOP — DAY

NOAH is eating muffins and drinking a latte. The place is full of students, wannabee hipsters, geeks, all engaged in frivolous conversations. Suddenly, TREY comes rushing through the door. He walks directly over to Noah.

TREY
You're still here.

NOAH
I fell in love with Detroit. I'm thinking of starting a family.

TREY
Element wants to see you.

NOAH
He wants to see ME? Why?

TREY
You got me. Normally we just deep six guys like you. I think the old man is getting soft. Too much acid.

INT: HIGH-TECH NIGHT CLUB — DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

Staff is getting the place ready for an evening of disco. ELEMENT is alone, staring at the gold futures screen.

ELEMENT
I don't know why I'm helping a pathetic pissant like you. But we found your Joanna Templeton.

Element minimizes the charts, opens a browser. There's a video of a special MSNBC segment on counter-terrorism. The DHS is claiming the capture of what it called a "high-value target, a young woman who represents a grave danger to the American public." There is video footage of her being taken into custody by federal marshals, handcuffed and manacled. It's Joanna. NEXT: She's surrounded by FBI agents as they walk from the courthouse where she has just been arraigned. NEXT: They're attempting to load her into the back of a

black sedan. She's struggling and obviously in a fit of rage, letting loose such a continuous stream of expletives, that with all of the bleeping, it sounds like Morse code.

ELEMENT

Okay. Noah Tass, hunted terrorist, bomber of buses. Your business is done here. So I'd really appreciate it if you got the fuck out of Detroit. Trey. Set this bozo up with the swami.

INT: DUMP COFFEE HOUSE/BAR – NIGHT

TREY and NOAH are going up the stairwell to Scramblers.

TREY

'I'd really appreciate it if you got the fuck out of Detroit.' Amazing. Element has taken a liking to you.

NOAH

I sure wouldn't want to see what he's like when he hates someone.

TREY

That's right. You wouldn't.

NOAH

If we're such bosom buddies, why is he so anxious to get rid of me?

TREY

He thinks you're dangerous.

NOAH

Me? Dangerous? Has he looked in a mirror lately?

Trey walks them over to a table where THE SWAMI is sitting on a chair in lotus position. He's in his 60s, is wearing wire-rim glasses, a Nehru jacket over a white silk kurta, an Indian turban. He's very congenial and high-spirited.

THE SWAMI

Namaste. Bless you. We are all one with the great cosmic oneness. And I am one with the revolution.

NOAH

Revolution? What revolution?

THE SWAMI

You humor me. You insurrectionists
are so very funny. My friend ...
Pennsylvania is absolutely lovely
this time of year. You know?

NOAH

I do now.

INT: HOTEL ROOM – DAY

Phone rings and Noah answers.

DESK CLERK (as V/O)

Your taxi to the station is here.

EXT: FERRY STREET DETROIT – DAY

Noah gets into taxi in front of the Inn on Ferry Street.

INT: TAXI DETROIT – DAY

Taxi driver is an OLD BLACK MAN. They pull up to Amtrak
Station. Driver takes money, then hands NOAH an envelope.

OLD BLACK MAN

Some guy came up while I was waitin'
for you back there. I'm supposed to
give you this.

NOAH

Who?! Who gave you this?

OLD BLACK MAN

Didn't ask.

NOAH

What did he look like?

OLD BLACK MAN

He was a white guy.

NOAH

Okay. That narrows it down a bit.
But really. What did he look like?

OLD BLACK MAN

White. All you white folks look the same to me.

Noah opens the envelope. It's another note from his father.

Hey! Those Detroit Tigers really suck, eh?
By the way, thanks for everything.

Wyatt Grayson Tass

INT: CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY

The PRESIDENT is again meeting with his group of nerdy young advisers. Everyone looks mortified.

NERD #1 (CARL)

Mr. President, do you really want an honest answer to that?

PRESIDENT

I take my truth straight up. Go for it, Carl.

NERD #1 (CARL)

No repercussions?

PRESIDENT

No repercussions.

NERD #1 (CARL)

I'll still have my job?

PRESIDENT

Goddamit! I'm a big boy. I think I can handle it. Just spit it out!

NERD #1 (CARL)

According to our most recent polling data, 96% of voting-age Americans think you're a complete idiot.

PRESIDENT

Hmm. I see. So I have a bit of an image problem.

NERD #1 (CARL)

That would be a vast understatement, sir.

PRESIDENT

Well thank you, Carl, for your frankness. That wasn't so bad now, was it? By the way you're fired. (Pause) Just kidding, Carl. Just kidding. Now listen up, everybody. Let's put those thinking caps on. I want some ideas! I'm counting on you. We've got to win this goddamn election!

The President gets up and leaves. His Chief of Staff is waiting in the hall. They walk a couple doors down to a highly secured conference room.

President enters. There are five high-ranking officials, the President's special core group. They all look serious, self-important, bloated with power.

Director of Internal Security and Surveillance is tapping his pipe in an ashtray. He is condescending, quietly amused by everything that goes on at the meeting but never speaks. He is Wyatt Grayson Tass, Noah's father.

PRESIDENT

Okay gentlemen. Let's get some work done. What's the word?

DIR. OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Fear, Mr. President. The word is fear. It never fails and it's recyclable.

PRESIDENT

Mr. Director, I can always count on you to state the obvious. But I sense, and please correct me if I'm wrong here, I sense the country is suffering fear fatigue. For sure, everybody's pissed off, some are even certifiable. Most seem rather confused and unpredictable. But I'm not sensing much on the fear front.

The SEC. OF DEFENSE speaks like he's towing a humvie using a rope he has clamped between his teeth. He gives a dirty look to the Director of Homeland Security.

SEC. OF DEFENSE

We've played the terrorism card a little too often, thanks to the one-trick pony boys over at DHS. That's why I say we have to go cosmic.

PRESIDENT

Cosmic? What's that supposed to mean? Angels and ghosts. Metaphysical shit.

SEC. OF DEFENSE

No, Mr. President. I meant it in the literal sense. The cosmos is a great untapped resource. An alien invasion would be perfect. But there are way too many technical issues with that.

PRESIDENT

What are you suggesting?

SEC. OF DEFENSE

I'm talking about our own cosmic event. One that we invent and have total control over. One that we own.

The Secretary of Defense is clenching and unclenching his fist like he's methodically working an exercise ball.

SEC. OF DEFENSE cont.

Something really big.

The President's and the Secretary of Defense's eyes lock.

PRESIDENT

An event we invent. For example?

SEC. OF DEFENSE

It's been narrowed down to three which are technically feasible with current technology. Comet, asteroid, or black hole.

PRESIDENT

It'll be convincing?

SEC. OF DEFENSE

It'll look so real, people will shit their pants.

PRESIDENT

Elegantly put.

The President takes a moment to think.

PRESIDENT cont.

My gut says go asteroid.

SEC. OF DEFENSE

That's fine. It doesn't matter which. The plot is the same. Earth is doomed. You save the planet and the human race from total annihilation.

PRESIDENT

I'm liking this.

SEC. OF DEFENSE

And we're performing our patriotic duty in the process. The country is coming apart. Citizens are at one another's throats, isolated, angry, disunited. We will bring them together with a shared sense of fear, then a shared sense of pride. America will be united again. America will be strong again.

PRESIDENT

And I'll get re-elected.

EXT: COUNTRY HOUSE — DAY

Noah walks into beautiful yard full of majestic old trees. There is an enormous old house with hundreds of plants on the porch. Cynthia comes out with a very pregnant Ginger and greets him, gives him a big hug and takes him inside.

EXT: GROUNDS — DAY

Cynthia shows Noah their marmalade stand.

NEXT: They walk into a shady grove. A few people are meditating. A couple are eating lunch. Brodie, early 60s, big old hippie, is playing guitar. Everyone is much older than Noah but are very amicable.

NEXT: They walk up to a beautiful standalone building, with a sign on the door: 'Green Tambourine - Violins For The Sheer Fun Of It'. Through the windows can be seen more than a dozen folks at work benches with violins in all states of completion.

INT: WORKSHOP - DAY

Noah is working alongside Casey in a large rustic wood-paneled work space. Casey is showing him the fine points of mounting a tailpiece. Others are busy sanding, glueing, stringing, varnishing. Everyone is cheerful.

INT: COUNTRY HOUSE - NIGHT

Several people are in the den. Cynthia is buzzing around serving refreshments. Noah is sitting next to Louise, who at 35 or so is the youngest. Across from them, Carmichael, at 72 the oldest, and Gil are sharing a joint. They offer it to Noah and Louise, but they take a pass.

LATER: The chairs and couches have been moved back. Brodie is playing guitar, Casie and Ginger fiddles. They're trying to teach Noah how to square dance. Lots of laughs.

INT: COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

NOAH is standing in the kitchen eating a sandwich. CYNTHIA is tidying up, doing dishes.

NOAH

I don't get what this place has to do with revolution.

CYNTHIA

Revolution! Green Tambourine?

NOAH

The Indian swami said he's one with the revolution, then he sent me here.

CYNTHIA (laughing)

You mean Clark? He's not Indian.

NOAH

But he was all dressed up--

CYNTHIA

He's such a character. Clark is Italian. I think. Anyway, he's from Idaho. I went to high school with him. We had this 60s band.

NOAH

So you're not doing anything political? Not planning the overthrow of the government?

CYNTHIA

Look around you. Does this look like some terrorist camp? Clark called me and said you were in trouble. That a lot of people want to kill you.

NOAH

You take in complete strangers? Guys in the crosshairs?

CYNTHIA

Just the nice ones.

INT: COUNTRY HOUSE – NIGHT

Noah is in his bedroom, laying in bed, looking at a laptop. A book lies open next to him. He looks happy.

INT: WORKSHOP – DAY

NOAH is working with BRODIE, sanding an old violin.

NOAH

Why do you say that?

BRODIE

It's plain as the day on your face. She's got a posterior motive.

A few chuckles slip out but everyone is trying to contain their amusement at Brodie's convoluted misspeak.

CARMICHAEL

Big presidential address tonight. Eight sharp!

DENCH

Got it. Wouldn't miss it for all the guacamole in Guadalajara.

BRODIE

So like I was sayin', if God intended fish to fry, he would've given them gills instead of wings.

NOAH

But fish have gills. And they don't have wings.

BRODIE

Jesus Christ, boy! Everyone knows that. Hey, Gil. Could I bum one of those mint tar cigarettes?

Everybody laughs. Noah's been had. He flushes but smiles.

INT: COUNTRY HOUSE LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Noah enters the huge living room. The others are already sitting around, drinking beer, making jokes, having a good time. A big old console TV set sits at one end.

CASEY

Why are we watching this?

CYNTHIA

'Cuz we're masochists.

LOUISE

I wonder what story he's going to read tonight.

CARMICHAEL

I heard he's going to sing some Chuck Berry tunes.

GINGER

I'm sure this is very important. Like that time he sat in the Rose Garden with the leadership of both houses of Congress and signed the bill that limited the number of items in the express checkout lane to eight.

GIL

Or the time he stood on the steps of the Supreme Court with the Postmaster General and announced that lickable postage stamps would now come in four flavors. Peppermint, tutti frutti, vanilla shake, and tequila sunrise.

BRODIE

He's a one-armed wallpaper hanger and his hunting dog is sniffing the glue.

[EVERYONE]

What?

From the TV we hear the dramatic introduction, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States of America." Everyone turns to watch.

CUT TO: PRESIDENT speaking from the Oval Office.

PRESIDENT

My fellow Americans and everyone joining me tonight all across the planet. I wish I could say I was here to offer some breathtaking good news. Unfortunately, I bear perhaps the most somber message a person in my position has ever had to deliver to his fellow man.

I don't how to put this gently or diplomatically. So I will just tell it like it is. Using optical, radar, and high-resolution infrared and ultraviolet imaging telescopes, astronomers and NASA scientists have determined that a massive asteroid is headed our way. They have determined the location and course of this enormous object. They have checked and re-checked their calculations.

The asteroid, the size of Omaha, Nebraska has a trajectory which will put it directly in the path of the Earth in a little over six weeks. It will smash into our planet, in fact, into our very own nation, on November

3rd of this year. As it gets closer, we will be able to determine to the minute and second, the exact time it will hit the surface.

They know the center of impact will be Knoxville, Tennessee, though to be so precise is meaningless, since most of the eastern half of the U.S. will be a crater of fused geological debris, the entire North American continent will be destroyed, and life on the planet for hundreds of years will no longer be sustainable. What is at stake here is nothing less than the survival of the human race.

The best scientific minds of this great nation are meeting as I speak, to see what can be done to save the planet from this awful catastrophe. But I'm a realist, not inclined to wishful thinking. As President, I owe it to you to never offer false hopes or feel-good fantasies. Our lives and the future of all mankind are on the line here. I'll always treat you with the dignity and respect you deserve. Just know this. We are doing and will do all that we possibly can. May God be with us all in the coming weeks. Good-night and God bless America!

BACK TO: Country house living room.

It's deathly quiet for a few moments. Finally ...

CARMICHAEL

I wonder what's on HBO tonight.

INT: OVAL OFFICE - DAY

It's not evident yet who he's talking to but PRESIDENT is on the phone with the POPE, who sounds like a Mafia thug.

POPE (as V/O)

What the fuck are you doing? Is this for real? Or another one of your idiotic stunts?

PRESIDENT

What can I say?

POPE (as V/O)

You could say what's really happening, that's what! The heavens are kind of our area of expertise, if you know what I mean. My guys say there ain't no asteroid.

PRESIDENT

Not to rub it in. It took your guys over 300 years figure out Galileo was right.

POPE (as V/O)

I see where this is going. But let me at least say, next time you've got news like this, maybe you could show a little courtesy and give us a heads up before you put the whole damn world in a hissy.

PRESIDENT

In a hissy. Ha ha ha! I like that. Where do you come up with this stuff?

POPE (as V/O)

I speak seven languages. What about you, Mr. Hotshot Hifalutin Leader of the Free World? English and Ebonics [Pig Latin]? Alright, I'm outta here. Have your people call my people. Keep me in the loop, goddammit. No more fucking surprises!

PRESIDENT

No more surprises. Till the next one anyway. Hey, how you guys doing in soccer this year? Spain still kickin' your ass?

POPE (as V/O)

How should I know? I don't have time for that shit. Oh yeah! I almost forgot. Thanks for that gold standard thing. We made a killing! We had all long positions when gold futures shot

through the roof. Anyway. Arrivederci!
Don't worship any false gods.

PRESIDENT

Don't take any wooden nickels. Thanks
for calling, Your Holiness.

QUICK CUT: Pope hangs up the phone.

POPE

What an asshole!

INT: WORKSHOP — DAY

Everybody is there. NOAH is working alongside BRODIE.

BRODIE

So, young man, what's your take on
the comet thing?

NOAH

Comet? Comet is my bathroom cleanser
of choice. By golly. It disinfects
while it cleans. Bathtub rings. Shit
stickies. Hot damn, it's great in the
kitchen too! Although caution is
advised. Because of its intrinsic
abrasiveness, it can dull the finish
of even the hardest porcelain
surfaces.

BRODIE

You got me there. So I guess it's an
asterisk, right?

NOAH

I think you mean asteroid.

BRODIE

That's what I said. Well, since
you're not talkin', let me give
you some Brodie instincts on the
situation. I'm an old man, in case
you couldn't tell.

NOAH

How old are you, Brodie?

BRODIE

62. I think. Or is it 59? Up there somewhere. Anyway. I've always had a simple, straightforward credo. If everyone lived by this, we wouldn't be in the skim milk we're in.

NOAH

I'm a young guy, in case you hadn't noticed. So I'm always up for good advice from someone like yourself, who's been there and seen life from the belly up.

BRODIE

You sure talk weird. Is this the way everyone your age expresses themselves?

NOAH

I grew up in Missouri.

BRODIE

You have my hard felt condalliances. So here it is. Ready? I always say ... take off your pants if you're gonna piss into the wind.

NOAH

I see. That's Socrates, right?

BRODIE

No. That's Testiclese.

Brodie starts laughing so hard he might bust an artery.

INT: COUNTRY HOUSE — NIGHT

NOAH is standing in the center of the living room watching the television. Wolf Blitzer from CNN reports on the huge government crack down now underway. He's talking by phone to an unidentified spokesperson (NOAH'S FATHER).

INT: TELEVISION STUDIO — NIGHT

WOLF BLITZER

You say this has been going on quite some time.

INSERT: Video footage of the raids and arrests. There's a siege using tanks razing Quicksilver's house. He's covered in blood, on a gurney being put into an ambulance. We see the Queen and her workers hauled off, hand-cuffed, cut and bleeding.

NOAH'S FATHER (as a V/O)

This is a huge and well-organized terrorist army. We had to keep this under wraps in order to assure a successful completion of the mission. We've busted a lot of the satellite operations. One was near our research facility at Area 51 in Nevada. We rounded up some wackos who were planning on hijacking an ICBM in North Dakota to start World War III. We now have in custody cyber saboteurs who, if you can believe this, had as a front a bee farm. These anarchists are spread throughout our society like vermin.

WOLF BLITZER

We're looking at footage now of the ATF/FBI raid on that bee farm. You can see the huge computer facility they had underground.

BACK TO: Wolf Blitzer in the studio.

WOLF BLITZER cont.

So tell us now about this recent incident, one involving a suspect you have been trying to capture for several years.

NOAH'S FATHER (as a V/O)

The suspect had been terminated. We don't know who killed him. We found his body laying in the desert.

WOLF BLITZER

Your agents just happened to be walking through a remote part of the desert and stumbled on the body?

INSERT: Night video footage of Tim's body laying in the desert, big pool of blood around his head.

NOAH'S FATHER (as a V/O)
You're a real comedian, Wolf. No, some local yocal found him. Maybe the guy was riding his burro or snake hunting. He reported it to his county sheriff's office and they called us.

WOLF BLITZER
You then flew immediately out to investigate. You don't fool around. There must have been something which made this such a high priority.

NOAH'S FATHER (as a V/O)
You could say that. This guy could have been of enormous value to us. If he was who we believe him to be, he was the genius behind the most sophisticated domestic cyberterror sabotage to date. The top dog. We would have loved to pick his brain, but seeing how it's scattered all over the desert in Nevada, that's not going to happen.

WOLF BLITZER
So what's next?

NOAH'S FATHER (as a V/O)
None of these anarchist punks are going to get away with it. Their days are numbered. Not weeks. Days. We're taking them down.

WOLF BLITZER
I know this isn't your department. But aren't you concerned about the asteroid? Aren't you worried?

NOAH'S FATHER (as a V/O)
I don't get paid to worry. The best scientific minds in this country are working on the problem. That's all I can say.

BACK TO: Living room of country house.

Noah is horrified and angry. He starts to pace.

NOAH

They killed Tim. They fucking killed
him in cold blood.

He runs upstairs.

NOAH'S COUNTRY HOUSE BEDROOM

Noah grabs his secure IOU cell phone and starts punching
buttons. It's not working. He's getting nothing except an
error message: 'No network connection'.

INT: WORKSHOP — DAY

Everyone is there. NOAH is working by himself. He looks
confused, dispirited, afraid.

GINGER

Are you okay?

NOAH

I'm not sure.

Noah gazes out the window. Something catches his eye.

EXT: GROUNDS — DAY

NOAH scrambles into the yard and looks up. There's the
sound a helicopter somewhere in the distance. He starts
back to the workshop, whips around, and now he spots it.
It's very high but hovering.

He runs into the country house. Now CYNTHIA and CARMICHAEL
wander out of the workshop, wondering what's going on. Noah
comes running back out with his bags.

CYNTHIA

Noah! Where are you going?

NOAH

They're coming for me. I'm sure of
it.

CARMICHAEL

Are you sure you're not being
paranoid?

NOAH

I'm a liability. I've got to get away from here. It's for your own good.

By now almost everyone has come out. They look mortified.

NOAH cont.

Everybody. I'm sorry. I'm going to miss all of you. You're the best in the whole world.

EXT: DIRT ROAD — DAY

Noah is making his way down a dirt road. He sees ahead in the distance a rising plume of dust. Then military and urban assault vehicles crest the road. He dashes into the adjacent forest and watches the first few armored vehicles go by. Then he starts running through the woods back to the grounds of Green Tambourine.

EXT: (LONG SHOT) GROUNDS — DAY

Noah arrives too late. The siege has already begun. They are setting the buildings on fire with flamethrowers. When the people come running out, they are mowed down in cold blood by machine gun fire. Noah sobs uncontrollably.

EXT: WHITE HOUSE PUBLIC AREA — DAY

PRESS SECRETARY and an ASSISTANT are standing in front of the White House.

PRESS SECRETARY

How's it going?

ASSISTANT

I never thought it would be this hard.

PRESS SECRETARY

That's all I hear. 'Why would I go? What a waste of time!' The press. What a bunch of traitors.

Assistant stops a passing tourist.

ASSISTANT

Excuse me. Would you like to attend the President's press conference? It starts in fifteen minutes.

Tourist begs off and hurries away.

PRESS SECRETARY

Well, keep trying. We've got to get some bodies in there.

INT: WHITE HOUSE PRESS BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Assistant is escorting a LADY and a MAN into the room. He pins an ID tag on each of them that says 'Press' and points to a couple chairs. They sit down next to a HIGH SCHOOL GIRL and now there are five people. There is an older black man in a custodian uniform who is nodding off, and an Arab guy wearing a ghutra. The briefing room looks very empty.

LADY

This is so exciting? Isn't this exciting, Harold? Hmm. I thought there would be more people here.

MAN

To hear this joker?

LADY

Oh, Harold! You're such a pill.

She turns to the high school girl.

LADY cont.

Are you from the Washington Post?

HIGH SCHOOL GIRL

Actually, I go to Eleanor Roosevelt H.S. I'm in the journalism club.

LADY

That's wonderful, young lady! And now you get to interview the President.

MAN

It's a press conference.

Lady turns around to the Arab.

LADY

And you're not from here, are you?
I'll bet you're one of those guys
from ... what's it called, Harold?

MAN

Al-Qaeda.

HIGH SCHOOL GIRL

Al Jazeera. He means Al Jazeera.

LADY

Are you from Al Jazeera?

The Arab just shrugs, smiles and looks at her blankly.
PRESIDENT arrives with Press Secretary, a few assistants
and his dog. The Press Secretary pulls the covering off of
a sign next to the podium: 'Just Say No To Flab!'

PRESIDENT

Lean and mean! That's the America
we now see emerging. The latest
statistics from our friends at the
CDC in Atlanta have shown a dramatic
reversal of the longstanding,
disturbing trend of an America with
too much jelly around the belly.
Still, the war on fat, the battle
of the bulge, has only begun. So I
am pleased to announce some great
news in America's patriotic crusade
against obesity. The First Lady,
bless her heart, as a part of our
new Just Say No To Flab strategy,
will be leading the nation each and
every morning in a fitness exercise
regimen. Here in the Rose Garden at
9:00 am every day, she will head up
a stretching and toning class. It
will be simulcast on television
stations across the entire nation.
So America, let's tone those abs,
firm those butts, slim down that
waistline. Pump up the fitness and
bring down the weight. Together we
can build a strong, hale and hearty
citizen class, soldiering on into
the greatest days of our history.

HIGH SCHOOL GIRL

Mr. President. What about the asteroid?

PRESIDENT

Hmm. The asteroid. Glad you asked that. It seems to be on everyone's mind now, doesn't it?

HIGH SCHOOL GIRL

Since it means the end of the world, yes. Everyone's talking about it. At least where I go to school, there's a lot of talk.

PRESIDENT

Understandable. Very understandable. We're all worried. I just want you to know that. And I want you to tell the American people. We are worried too. Having said that, I can assure you we are doing all we can. And Americans can do their part too. Think positively. Send out positive energy. Visualize a world without asteroids. That's it. That's what we all need to do. Together we can lick this asteroid problem. Okay! Thanks, everyone! Have a nice day, folks. And oh yes. God bless America!

The President and his contingent leave the room. He looks pissed. On the way out, he leans into his Press Secretary.

PRESIDENT

I don't recognize her. Who's she with? New York Times? Huffington Post? The Nation? Find out and pull that bitch's press credentials. And be sure to tell Homeland Security to keep an eye on her.

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD WEST VIRGINIA – DAY

Noah is walking. He is dirty and tired. He sticks out his thumb and gets a ride from a farmer on a tractor.

EXT: GROVE OF TREES WEST VIRGINIA — NIGHT

Noah is crouched in some bushes. There is the sound of a helicopter in the distance.

INT: TELEVISION STUDIO — DAY

It's the weekly news roundtable, This Week with GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

This week Cokie Roberts is with us, George Will, Sam Donaldson, Matthew Dowd, and joining us shortly by satellite linkup will be Secretary of Defense, Walter Belvedere. The President two weeks ago dropped the biggest bombshell in human history on the world, the announcement that an asteroid the size of Omaha, Nebraska is on a collision course with the Earth. Day of doom is November 3rd. Then just yesterday, he appeared at the White House briefing room telling the nation that he's just issued Executive Order No. 213779, requiring all school age children to wear uniforms. What's going on here?

GEORGE WILL

A very strong case can be made for the fact that the President has become completely unhinged. Recall the initial warning signs. His expletive-laced State of the Union Address, his reading to the nation of "The Little Engine That Could".

COKIE ROBERTS

There certainly seems to be a disconnect. If we are to take him at his word, school uniforms and just about everything else will be a moot point if that asteroid hits Earth.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

Here's a graphic issued by the NSA Geophysical Mapping Bureau. This

gives us some idea what we're looking at here.

Graphic depicts the asteroid hovering above Knoxville, TN, where it will impact. It looks like an army tank poised over a box of breath mints.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS cont.
I'd say that looks pretty bad.

MATTHEW DOWD
But here's something else that's totally baffling. This stuff has been all over the news. Yet there's been virtually no reaction from the public. I mean, nothing. People are just going on about business as usual. No one seems fazed or the least bit frightened. Talk about a major disconnect.

GEORGE WILL
People have shut down. They're overloaded. This administration has no credibility. Even within the Beltway, no one takes the President seriously. I'll bet people don't even know he's up for re-election. The American people have hit the mute button.

MATTHEW DOWD
Granted. The public has been numbed up by so much bad news and dumbed down by a lot of bad television for so long, they seem incapable of reacting.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS
Bad television. I hope you're not referring to this show.

MATTHEW DOWD
No comment.

GEORGE WILL
I'm inclined to think it hasn't registered yet. An asteroid this size? The magnitude of this calamity

is too big to grasp. It's just an abstraction. It's not like the world ends every day. Maybe people need to see it on a reality show to believe it's happening.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

Let's go now to our guest, Secretary of Defense, Walter Belvedere. What do you make of all this, Mr. Secretary? Why is the public so calm?

SEC. OF DEFENSE

American citizens are smart. They're tuned in. But no, that's not good enough for you bloodthirsty vampires, always sensationalizing everything, keeping the public in a constant state of panic.

COKIE ROBERTS

Sensationalizing? We're talking about the end of the world, the complete annihilation of the human species. How do you sensationalize that?

GEORGE WILL

Mr. Secretary, it doesn't do you or your president any good to attack us. We're just the messengers.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

We're running out of time. Let's cut to the chase. What is going on, Mr. Secretary? We hear nothing from the President. Are we doomed?

SEC. OF DEFENSE

We're working the issue. These things take time. Listen up, you propagators of pessimism. If there's a way to knock this thing out of the sky, then we'll damn sure figure it out. So stop crying like a bunch of sniveling wussy-ass vapor sacks.

EXT: FLEABAG MOTEL WEST VIRGINIA — DAY

Noah approaches an old run-down motel.

INT: FLEABAG MOTEL WEST VIRGINIA – DAY

Noah is in his room and looks like hell. He collapses on the bed in his filthy clothes and falls asleep.

EXT: TIMES SQUARE – NIGHT

A ROVING REPORTER is interviewing people in Times Square asking them what they think about asteroid.

PEDESTRIAN #1

Same 'ol same 'ol.

PEDESTRIAN #2

You should visit my neighborhood in the Bronx. It's already completely destroyed.

PEDESTRIAN #3

Asteroid? What asteroid? Do you see an asteroid?

PEDESTRIAN #4

It's a charade. They're just trying to raise our taxes.

PEDESTRIAN #5

Just more lies. The only time they stop lying to us is when they take a break to think up a new batch of lies. Excuse me. I'm late for my yoga class.

ROVING REPORTER

And that's what we've been getting, Carter. People can't be bothered. They don't have time. It's just not real. Wait! Something's going on.

He turns around to look at a huge television screen in the Square, where there is breaking news: 'Scientists release first video of the approaching asteroid.' Asteroid looks huge and ominous. People just watch and stare dumbstruck.

QUICK CUTS:

VARIOUS INT/EXT – NIGHT

People are staring mesmerized at the television image of the asteroid.

NEXT: In homes.

NEXT: In a tavern.

NEXT: On a giant video screen at a major sporting event.

NEXT: Through a store window in the street.

BACK TO: Roving reporter in Times Square.

People are still looking up, not moving, just staring at asteroid. Suddenly all at once hysteria breaks out. Everyone is running and screaming in utter panic.

ROVING REPORTER

Oh my god! They are--

Roving reporter is overwhelmed. Feed goes dead.

EXT: VARIOUS NEWS REPORTS (QUICK CUTS) – NIGHT/DAY

News videos show rioting around the country, torching of buildings and police cars, looting, fires and smoke, tear gas, troops, emergency vehicles, sirens, flashing lights.

INT/EXT: FLEABAG MOTEL WEST VIRGINIA – NIGHT

NOAH is sitting in his room on the floor eating a plate of slop. He finishes, gets up and takes the empty plate to the old man owner who is in his cabin behind the motel. Old man owner is adjusting the rabbit ears on his tiny old TV set, video footage of the approaching asteroid shows showing on the television. The old man looks frightened, lonely.

NOAH

Thanks. Best meal I've had in days.

With a shaky hand the old man owner points at the screen, looks like he's about to cry, makes the sign of the cross.

EXT: FLEABAG MOTEL WEST VIRGINIA – NIGHT

NOAH is talking on a payphone in front of his motel.

NOAH

Operator, I've been trying dial a number. It's a long distance call to Missouri, but I'm getting nothing.

OPERATOR (as V/O)

I'm sorry, sir. But service for much of the nation is down. Please try your call again later.

INT: TELEVISION STUDIO – NIGHT

It's the DAVID LETTERMAN Show. PAUL SHAFFER is there.

DAVID LETTERMAN

Okay, folks. Here are the top ten reasons the asteroid will not destroy the world on November 3rd.

PAUL SHAFFER

The top ten reasons the asteroid will not destroy the world. Okay!

DAVID LETTERMAN

#10 – Kim Kardashian has not made the balloon payment yet on her silicone breast implants.

#9 – There are so many grease balls in Knoxville, Tennessee the asteroid will just slide off the planet and keep going.

#8 – CBS has guaranteed me five more seasons. It's right in my contract.

#7 – The President has made the destruction of the planet and the annihilation of the human race an official campaign promise. We all know what happens with campaign promises.

#6 – The greatest scientific minds in the country have been working on this. They are sure they can finish the big trampoline by November 3rd.

#5 – Donald Trump has plans to turn

the asteroid into an exclusive new casino and hotel called Trump's Gaudy Lump For The Common Chump.

#4 - Dick Cheney says they aren't through looking for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction on the asteroid.

#3 - Pfizer has announced they have developed a new ointment which totally relieves a person from any discomfort caused by asteroids. It's called Preparation A.

PAUL SHAFFER

A? I thought that was for assholes.

DAVID LETTERMAN

You're thinking of Preparation H.

#2 - Rumor has it that riding in the trunk of the asteroid is over half million illegal immigrants. Knoxville is now crawling with INS officers.

#1 - The President and all members of congress are all going to stand at the foot of the Washington Monument, look up, and make a speech. The hot air will deflect the asteroid. The only danger is the moon might get blown out of orbit.

And there you have it.

EXT: [STOCK FOOTAGE]

We see the launch of four huge military payload rockets, Atlas 5s and Delta 4s.

INT: TELEVISION NEWS STUDIO - DAY

There's an ominous graphic in the corner of the screen counting down the days till asteroid impact.

COUNTDOWN REPORTER

With only five more days before Earth impact, and chaos and panic continuing throughout the nation,

the White House has announced that four military rockets, each bearing enormous thermonuclear devices, have just been launched. Here's the President's announcement.

PRESIDENT speaks to the nation from the Oval Office.

PRESIDENT

Just yesterday, four of America's most powerful military rockets were successful launched on a course to intercept the asteroid. They are all carrying hydrogen bombs, the largest ever assembled, each with the destructive capacity of 450 megatons of TNT. Just one of these gigantic weapons is sufficient to destroy the asteroid. This is our best and only shot. In the event our efforts to destroy it fail, NASA scientists are now saying the impact event will occur between 9 and 9:30 pm EST. I thank our scientists for their hard work and dedication. Our prayers are with you for a successful outcome. For now, my fellow Americans, we can only wait and hope.

BACK TO: Television news studio.

COUNTDOWN REPORTER

The asteroid will be within striking distance of the hydrogen bombs about an hour before it impacts the Earth. We'll have live video coverage from cameras onboard one of the missiles. God be with us.

INT: FLEABAG MOTEL WEST VIRGINIA — DAY

Noah is in a small utility room washing his clothes in a sink. Old man owner sticks his head in the door. He has an envelope in his hand. He still looks lonely, vulnerable.

EXT: FLEABAG MOTEL WEST VIRGINIA — DAY

Noah is standing with his back to the camera, looking off in the distance. He looks down at something in his hands.

CLOSE-UP: It's another letter from his father. A NARRATOR begins to read the letter aloud.

DISSOLVE TO:

Noah is sitting around a campfire with old man owner of the motel. They're having beers and Noah is entertaining the old guy, who no longer looks so frightened and helpless, but is laughing and thoroughly enjoying the company.

NARRATOR (as V/O)

The Mayor of Pulnick was walking down Main Street. Suddenly he saw a steaming brown pile in the middle of the sidewalk. He bent over and stuck his finger in it. He put it up to his nose. 'Hmm. Sure smells like horseshit.' Then he rubbed it between his finger and thumb. 'Sure feels like horseshit.' He stuck his finger in his mouth. 'Yup. Sure tastes like horseshit.' He smiled his big mayor smile. 'Boy! Am I glad I didn't step in it!' Wyatt Grayson Tass.

INT: FLEABAG MOTEL WEST VIRGINIA - DAY

Noah is laying on his bed staring into space. His duffel bag is next to him packed. We hear a helicopter landing outside. Suddenly the door is kicked open by three NSA jackboots. Noah calmly gets up and walks out with them.

EXT: MILITARY BASE - DAY

Helicopter lands. Noah is taken out and handed over to two bulky secret service guys. They are all business. They put Noah in a black Lexus and drive away.

INT/EXT: STREET WASHINGTON DC - NIGHT

Noah is in the back seat. They are making slow progress. Thousands of people are in the street. People are pounding on the car, several are in front of it taunting them. One of the secret service agents steps out, shoots and kills two people. Crowd backs away. They drive on.

NEXT: They pass through a security check point. Noah is taken into an imposing government building.

INT: EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT BUILDING – NIGHT

NOAH is escorted down a hall that dead-ends with a single door. The area is teeming with military guards and secret service men. He's taken into a medium-size conference room. There are a number of people, mostly seated, chatting away. Almost all men. Noah passes a wall-mounted clock. It says 8:06 pm. Noah is directed to a chair at the very back of the room. NOAH'S FATHER is sitting in the next seat.

NOAH'S FATHER

Glad you could make it. Not that you had a choice.

Noah eyes him suspiciously. Then a look of recognition and anger crosses Noah's face.

NOAH

You were on CNN. On the phone with Wolf Blitzer. My god, you killed--

NOAH'S FATHER cont.

So? You want my fuckin' autograph?

Suddenly everyone stands up as the PRESIDENT and the First Lady walk in. They take seats front-and-center before the huge theater-size flat-screen video monitor covering most of the front wall. President shares some private joke with her, then turns around with a big grin.

PRESIDENT

So what's the movie tonight? Hope Jon Voight isn't in it.

Everyone laughs a little too hard. Suddenly the screen jumps to life, filled with a space shot of the asteroid, a big nasty chunk of iron and nickel, dark and ominous. Then the magnification backs off and the asteroid recedes into the starry backdrop of space. Now there's a flash around the edges of the camera shot and everything shakes. Almost immediately can be seen the huge plume of rocket thrusters filling the entire screen. As the missile pulls away, it heads directly for the asteroid. It accelerates quickly and soon it's only the tiny tip of a butane torch against the vast black of space. Then it disappears entirely. A few more seconds pass. Suddenly in a flash that instantly fills

the entire screen, a ball of hot plasma expands creating a billowing cloud of vaporized asteroid. Then the wall of fire overtakes the video camera. The screen goes to electronic snow. The President stands up.

PRESIDENT

Well, isn't this one joyous occasion?
We just saved the planet. All in a
day's work I say. Let's get a beer.

As the President and First lady start to leave, his PRESS SECRETARY pulls him aside.

PRESS SECRETARY

We have a satellite hook up. The
world wants to hear a few words from
the man who saved the human race.

PRESIDENT

Should I start wearing blue tights
with a red cape and an S on my chest?

PRESS SECRETARY

You might want to spend some time in
the gym first.

PRESIDENT

Sometimes honesty is not the best
policy.

People drift out. Noah is totally appalled and in shock.

NOAH

It was fake.

NOAH'S FATHER

How do you know?

NOAH

Come on.

NOAH'S FATHER

Real is what people choose to
believe.

NOAH

You guys conned the entire world.
Aren't you special.

NOAH'S FATHER

There are a lot of pleased voters
out there tonight.

Noah glares at his father, seething with anger and hatred.

NOAH

What do you want with me? Why am I
here?

NOAH'S FATHER

Come with me.

Noah's father leads him out into the hall. Noah grudgingly follows. They walk through several corridors, then down a number of floors in a stairwell. The guards posted on every landing salute as Noah's father passes.

INT: EXECUTIVE OFFICE – NIGHT

NOAH'S FATHER leads NOAH into a magnificent office with a huge executive desk. There's beautiful art on the walls, tables, covered with computers, exotic electronic devices. The wall behind the desk is filled with Certificates of Commendation, Awards for Meritorious Service, and photos of Noah's father with Congressman, former Presidents and other notables. Noah takes a moment to take it all in.

NOAH

You haven't answered my question.
What do you want with me?

NOAH'S FATHER

Do you understand what's been going
on? What I do?

NOAH

Apparently you kill innocent people.

Noah's father has a twisted smile.

NOAH'S FATHER

Like you don't have blood on your
hands, eh?

NOAH

What's that supposed to mean?

NOAH'S FATHER

You're lucky to be here. You were on a short list for termination. But then things flipped. You became valuable. You became the gift that kept on giving.

NOAH

What are you talking about?

NOAH'S FATHER

We have some very very smart people working for us. But for some reason, a lot of times these guys can't put their hands in their pockets and locate their own dicks.

NOAH

And?

NOAH'S FATHER

You took us places we needed to go. You were the best hunting dog money could buy. And you were free.

NOAH

What! You're saying I led you to--

NOAH'S FATHER

Like a homing pigeon.

NOAH

You murderer! None of those people deserved to die.

NOAH'S FATHER

They were all terrorists. Traitors. That freaky tattooed animal girl destroyed property and people's livelihoods. Those idiots at Area 51. The fat bee queen sabotaging the internet, breaking into people's bank accounts. That violin bitch, Cynthia. Now she's a work. Thought she was some kind of a witch. That whole scene was like the Manson family. And that Joanna girl you screwed--

NOAH

I knew them. They were good people.
They weren't--

NOAH'S FATHER

Listen, young man. I care about this country. Everyone here deeply cares about this country. Which is why we can't leave it to you and your wacko friends, or even the typical idiots out there with their 2.4 children and their SUVs, to ruin. What we did – what we do – is beyond yours and 99.9% of the public's ability to grasp. But in the end, it all turns out for the better. In the end, you are the beneficiaries of our hard work, our vision. The President is always taking it in the ass. The man may be a political animal. He might even be considered a tool. But he serves a greater cause, a noble mission that keeps this country from turning into a compost heap.

NOAH

Those same words could have come out of the mouth of Goebbels. Him and his visionary buddy Adolph.

NOAH'S FATHER

Ah! The expert. Grows up surrounded by a bunch of Bible-belt dimwits, gets a third rate education. Now he's an expert on everything – sociology, history, politics.

NOAH

I know right from wrong! I know evil when I see it. I know--

NOAH'S FATHER

You saw how the public reacted when they heard about the asteroid. Like beasts in the jungle. They destroyed half of the country. Come on. Grow up, for crissakes!

NOAH

The asteroid. The asteroid. The big fake. A con job. You knew people would lose it. You guys caused the riots. This is supposed to be a free country. Why should we put up with your lies and manipulations?

NOAH'S FATHER

That's the price of freedom.

NOAH

The price of freedom? From what you say, no one is free. Not even you. Certainly not you. You are a slave to your own delusions of grandeur. Of world control. You're a junkie. Going from one power fix to another. Fuck you! People want to make their own choices.

NOAH'S FATHER

People have no idea what they want. Unless we tell them.

NOAH

People want a decent life. They want to--

NOAH'S FATHER

People want good television. That's what we gave them. The asteroid looked great! Who can argue with that? The best reality show this season. Best ever, goddamnit!

NOAH

You and your elite corps of assassins sit here playing God, playing judge and jury, deciding who lives and who dies. You're just two-bit killers. Cheap thugs with Rolexes and shit for morals.

NOAH'S FATHER

Have some respect!

NOAH

Respect? Because you have this fancy office. And some important sounding title. That doesn't change a thing. You're a murderer. You're a sick--

NOAH'S FATHER

Noah, I'm your father!

Deathly silence.

NOAH'S FATHER cont.

Don't look so happy, you little fuck! I'm 56. I could retire right now. I gave up everything to do this. I've done my part, given my best years to my country--

NOAH

Exactly. Your best years. What's left now? The scraps? You want to share the scraps with the son you never had. That you abandoned. I'm not your son! You stopped being my father a long time ago.

NOAH'S FATHER

You know, there's a sanctioned hit out on you. All signed and sealed. It's on hold for now. But that could change with a single keystroke.

NOAH

The way you deal with everything. Play ball or die.

NOAH'S FATHER

I'm just trying to--

NOAH

Go ahead. Kill me. Kill me!

His father's face hardens into an impenetrable mask.

NOAH'S FATHER

You're not worth the bullet.

Noah gets up to leave. When he gets to the door, he turns back around.

NOAH

I saw what you did. Your big lie.
Aren't you afraid I'll tell?

NOAH'S FATHER

No one will believe you.

EXT: STREET WASHINGTON DC – NIGHT

Noah is out and about. The same people who were angry and rioting wildly are now happy and celebrating wildly.

QUICK CUTS: HEADLINES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

U.S. Missiles Destroy Asteroid!!
World Is Saved!

American President Hailed As Greatest Man In History

Pope Says God Heard Our Prayers:
"The Holy Ghost guided H-bomb to target."

Saved Planet Becomes Investor Paradise
Stock Prices Skyrocket

America Again Proves It's #1!
USO Dollar Soars

Lady Gaga Releases New Song and Video:
"We Saw, We Went, We Kicked Some Assteroid!"

Americans Flock To Malls For Record-Breaking
Christmas Shopping Spree

EXT: VARIOUS LOCATIONS – DAY/NIGHT

There are celebrations all over the world, streets full of ecstatic people, fireworks, parades. The President is seen in many scenes waving to adoring audiences.

EXT: WEST FRONT U.S. CAPITOL – DAY

President is taking his Oath of Office.

CROSS-FADE WITH TITLE: 'FIVE MONTHS LATER'

EXT: APARTMENT BUILDING GREENWICH VILLAGE – DAY

Establishing shot of Noah's and Naomi's new apartment.

INT: TELEVISION NEWS STUDIO – DAY

We join an announcement in progress on CNN.

CNN REPORTER

... Secretary of Defense Walter Belvedere and Director of Internal Security and Surveillance Wyatt Grayson Tass resigned today amidst the allegations. Anonymous sources have told us to expect more such resignations in the next few days at the very highest levels of this administration. Also, several members of Congress have reviewed the evidence and now claim they have undeniable proof that the asteroid scare, announced just weeks before the election, which put the whole world in a state of shock and turmoil, was a fabrication and a hoax. The President and his staff are accused of planning and implementing the entire doomsday scenario purely for political advantage. The time frame for the start of the official impeachment hearings will be announced Monday.

INT: SMALL APARTMENT – DAY

Noah clicks off the television, picks up his book bag and kisses NAOMI good-bye.

NAOMI

I've got dance class tonight, so
I'll be home late.

He heads out the door.

EXT: NYU CAMPUS – DAY

Noah makes his way through Washington Square, then enters academic building.

INT: NYU CLASSROOM – DAY

Professor Lucas is standing at the head of the class. A large projection screen hangs behind him.

PROFESSOR LUCAS

So let's pick up where we left off. For those of you who were at Starbucks last class, we're looking at the short films each of you have submitted as your final course project. This next one is from our friend from the cow-tipping grasslands of Missouri, where women are women and sheep are sheep and the men can't tell them apart.

Lights dim. Film starts. It's an animation. We see the enormous leg and foot of Godzilla in a forest. Ominous music is playing. There are four twig-like limbs sticking out from under the giant reptilian foot, those of poor little Bambi who has been crushed under the humungous weight of the monster. But the legs start to wiggle. Then they withdraw completely under the big foot. Now we are under the foot in a close-up of Bambi and can see that he isn't dead at all. Bambi is crouched low in a slight indentation in the ground beneath the massive scaly paw. Though shaken, Bambi is fine. He now raises one of his tiny paws and starts tickling Godzilla's foot. We hear the first burbling hints of a deep throaty giggle. Bambi then lays on his back and uses all four of his pointy little limbs to tickle the monster. We begin to hear the huge thunderous roar of Godzilla laughing. Now there is a long shot which takes in the entire height of the towering superlizard. He has reared back his oversized head and is laughing uncontrollably. He lifts up the tickled foot and tries to grab it with his front paws. They flail away but they are too short to reach the foot. He begins to lose his balance. Still laughing hysterically he starts to fall. He struggles but it is too late for him to recover and his gigantic body goes over backwards. As he crashes to the ground, his head hits the jagged edge of a mountain range. It splits open. In a massive avalanche, his bloody brains spill out and bury a nearby village. Now there is a close-up of Bambi crawling out of the hole, shaking himself off. He smiles, then bounds off into the low scrub of the forest. Butterflies and birds fill the screen as the pleasant sound of gentle flute music and birds playfully chirping swells under the closing credits.

Godzilla Meets Bambi
Produced and directed
by Noah Tass
The End

Lights come back on. The other students look around at one another, looking for some clue as to how they should react.

PROFESSOR LUCAS

Hmm. Interesting. Mr. Tass, what do you have to say?

NOAH

Well, sir. It's an allegory.

PROFESSOR LUCAS

An allegory. Okay. We know what we've seen. But perhaps you were meaning to reach much deeper. Maybe an extended allegory with mythological sub-themes drawn from the classical Greeks. Or perhaps the Romans? Possibly even a Biblical theme. David and Goliath?

NOAH

Actually, just Bambi and Godzilla.

PROFESSOR LUCAS

Rocky Balboa and Apollo Creed?

NOAH

I'll stick with Bambi and Godzilla.

PROFESSOR LUCAS

Not exactly the stuff of legends.

NOAH

Bambi has a sizable youth fan base. Godzilla is big in Japan.

PROFESSOR LUCAS

Godzilla is big wherever he goes.

Professor Lucas thinks his joke is hilarious. Students force themselves snicker politely.

PROFESSOR LUCAS cont.

So. An allegory of what, Mr. Tass?

NOAH

Life itself, sir.

PROFESSOR LUCAS

Aha! Life itself! Hmm. Interesting.
Interesting. Anyone else here want
to comment?

The other students are pathetic sycophants.

STUDENT #1

Interesting.

STUDENT #2

Yes. Interesting.

STUDENT #3

Interesting indeed!

STUDENT #4

It was most definitely interesting.

STUDENT #5

It's interesting how interesting it
was.

CLOSE UP: Back of Noah's head. Camera slowly comes around 180 degrees as closing music fades up. It's Frank Sinatra singing "That's Life". When camera is squarely on Noah's face, he looks directly into it, puts on sunglasses, and smiles an easygoing, self-satisfied, but slightly ironic smile.

CUT TO BLACK — ROLL CREDITS

Later in the credits, we hear a different "That's Life", this one the 1962 hit performed by Gabriel & the Angels.

THE END.