

THE BRADBURY

Written by
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Based on, John Ford's Stagecoach

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FADE IN TO A SCENE OF SPRAWLING INDUSTRIAL PRAIRIE LAND. MENACING MUSIC BEGINS AS A SUSPENDED RAIL COACH APPEARS GOING AWAY TOWARDS THE HORIZON.

Dissolve to the *Bradbury* locomotive coach crossing the screen against a dawn sky, followed by a squadron of Starhawk interceptor fighter pilots flying overhead.

Dissolve to the interceptor craft streaking against the dawn of the horizon.

Dissolve to a similar shot of a band of enemy Erinyes Mk5 attack fighter pilots, flying furiously towards us.

Dissolve to a tremendous Monument Valley-like vista of industrialized landscape and towering factories against the sky with a glimmer of dawn on the horizon. The *Bradbury* coach appears and crosses the screen as the aerial combat begins. An airforce interceptor is hit and explodes into the landscape behind a fleeing rusted and turquoise readybot below. Fade out.

DISSOLVE TO THE SUSPENDED RAIL STATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL PARK. TWO DROIDS STAND OUTSIDE THE STATION. AS WE HEAR THE SOUND OF MOTIVE POWER ON THE RAIL, CAMERA TRACKS LEFT, AND ROUND THE CORNER AT THE END OF THE COMPLEX COMES THE *BRADBURY* COACH. CAMERA PANS RIGHT WITH IT AS IT CHUGS DOWN THE MONORAIL OF THE STATION'S DROP LOOP.

We see the industrial corridor in long shot, as the coach comes near. Camera pans across the street as the coach passes and goes off in foreground.

Another long shot across the corridor shows the transit routes: 1-R-R-F-N illuminated in large letters over the station's arrival/departure screen.

The BLASTGUN GUARD is seen from below in the doorway of the coach as a gangplank extends.

A GOVERNMENT MECH DROID climbs out and two figures remain sitting in the coach. Through the rear window can be seen, DEVINIA, a white executive droid with hand upon one knee; she looks tired, yet there is a great strength of character about her. Through the other window can be seen a golden polished droid named HALCYON, who is sitting in the front seat opposite her. There is something gloomy and parsonical about his whole appearance.

He looks thoroughly uncomfortable and uneasy in this industrial environment. The Blastgun Guard sees that these last two are not moving to get out and calls in to them.

BLASTGUN GUARD
Step out from the vehicle while I
conduct a bomb search.

He helps DeVinia out. One internal leg servo-motor groans softly in protest. Her voice is crisp and well mannered.

DEVINIA
At what distance should one stand
clear in case you find what you're
looking for and it should go off?

BLASTGUN GUARD
Well, citizen, that would depend
upon the size of the bomb.

DEVINIA
Thank you, officer.

BLASTGUN GUARD
It is just a precaution check.

DEVINIA
We'll be all right, then?

BLASTGUN GUARD
Yes, citizen.

A medium shot of the Industrial Park Station shows an attractive droid sitting on the track support with an upper management droid standing beside her. She gets up as DeVinia appears, walking through the bottom door of the station.

DROID
DeVinia!

DEVINIA
(gladly)
Nikko!
(to the business droid who
joins them)
How are you, Director of Operations
A-9?

NIKKO
What are you doing in Nuwark?

Seen in medium shot, Devinia and Nikko stand by the door of the station. As she speaks, an immaculate sky-blue droid, enters the station through the door beside them.

DEVINIA
I'm joining the rally in Boston.

A-9

(off)

They are a lot nearer than that,
DeVinia. They're assembling at
Circuit City.

NIKKO

That's the next stop for the coach.
You'll be with your radicals in a
few hours.

DeVinia's face lights up with pleasure and they all turn and start to go in through the door. The sky-blue droid, BLADE, stops short at the upper railing and stares for a split second down at DeVinia. She reacts to his stare. Blade recovers himself, tips his hand politely and watches them go inside.

The platform railing is seen in medium shot from the coach station. DeVinia, Nikko and business droid A-9 enter the platform and the two friends lean into the railing.

NIKKO (CONT'D)

I'm so glad to see you, DeVinia.
Use the railing and lean on me if
you need to. You must be tired from
that long trip.

As they lean into one another for support, DeVinia notices Blade standing next to the Blastgun Guard. She turns to Nikko.

DEVINIA

Who is that droid?

The business droid answers quietly as Nikko shakes her head.

A-9

Hardly a droid, DeVinia.

NIKKO

I should think not. He's a
notorious sexbot.

Blade notices them and turns and walks away across the platform, going with easy grace inside the coach. They all look curiously into the window at Blade.

BLASTGUN GUARD

All Aboard, Citizens!

A MEDIUM SHOT TAKES US INSIDE THE *BRADBURY* LOCOMOTIVE COACH. IT IS A MODEST SEATING AISLE WITH A SIGN ABOVE THE EXIT. MALLOY, THE BLASTGUN GUARD, A U.S. MARSHAL, STANDS IN THE AISLE OF THE COACH AS IT WAITS OUTSIDE THE STATION, READY TO PULL OUT. HE IS ALERTED TO A DISPATCH FROM A HOLOGRAPHIC HOT SHEET DESK.

DISPATCH

All units in the vicinity, and 1-Adam twelve, 1-Adam twelve, a readybot fugative there now, Sector 8311XHT, Industrial Park, Complex three. 1-Adam twelve code two.

BLASTGUN GUARD

Roger, copy that. That rbot could be anyplace. A bar, another SRS station, or at the bottom of some scrap heap by now.

DISPATCH

There's gotta be ten thousand scrap heaps down there. If it's hiding out that's like looking for a needle in the haystack.

BLASTGUN GUARD

Maybe this needle will lead us to the Shadow Dancer that dropped it.

The Blastgun Guard goes to shut the door of the coach. The sound of the gangplank retracting is heard. A beat and there is a knock at the door.

Now the Blastgun Guard is shown from outside the coach, opening the door and looking out to address the passenger. He jerks up his weapon.

DEVINIA

Hey look, it's a readybot!

BLASTGUN GUARD

(with relish)

Yeah.

The rusted and turquoise readybot, seen in medium shot, is standing on the station platform. It looks in, and camera tracks in to medium close-up then to close-up of AMPBOT. Steam can be heard coming from the *Bradbury* coach.

The Blastgun Guard is seen in low angle, in the doorway. Malloy grins slightly and raises his weapon.

BLASTGUN GUARD (CONT'D)
Hello, Citizen.

Ampbot stands calmly looking on. The industrial prairie stretches out into the distance beyond him. If Ampbot is taken aback by the Blastgun Guard's weapon, it doesn't show it.

AMPBOT
Hello, Marshall.

Cut back to the same low angle shot of Malloy.

BLASTGUN GUARD
(gruffly)
Shut up!

The coach is seen from the side, showing DeVinia, A-9 and Blade staring curiously out of the windows.

AMPBOT
I didn't expect you to be riding
blastgun on this run, Marshal.

Ampbot stands in the foreground with its back to camera, looking up at Malloy.

AMPBOT (CONT'D)
Going to Nu York City?

BLASTGUN GUARD
I figured you'd try to get back
there by this time.

Ampbot starts to move towards the coach.

AMPBOT
No, too far to walk.
(looking up at Malloy)
Looks like you got another
passenger.

BLASTGUN GUARD
Yeah.

He stretches out his hand.

BLASTGUN GUARD (CONT'D)
I'll take the Seeker Probe.

Ampbot looks up at him. The fugitive makes no move to surrender the seeker probe though its manner is friendly. The readybot's eyes smile up at Malloy as it considers.

AMPBOT

You might need me and this Seeker Probe. I saw a couple of downed military Starhawks burning last night.

Malloy looks down at Ampbot.

BLASTGUN GUARD

I guess you don't understand, Citizen. You're under arrest.

Ampbot looks up good-naturedly.

AMPBOT

Marshal...

The readybot turns suddenly as a jet of steam hisses off from underneath the coach. Beyond the coach, with Ampbot standing beside it, the industrial park stretches for kilometers. Ampbot turns right around to look at both horizons.

BLASTGUN GUARD

(off)

Give me that Probe, Citizen.

Ampbot is seen in close-up; looking up towards Malloy. Its eyes flick back towards the endless prairie of industrialization. Ampbot sizes up the situation and with a good-humoured shrug looks again up to Malloy and releases the Seeker Probe inside its body and throws it up.

Ampbot opens its mouth for the tiny probe to fly up to Malloy, who catches it.

DEVINIA

Everything all right, Marshal?

BLASTGUN GUARD

Everything's all right, citizens.

The *Bradbury* coach is seen from the side as Ampbot goes up to it and steps through the doorway. Through the window, A-9 watches him in some alarm.

AMPBOT

Hope I won't be putting you droids out none.

He climbs in with them and the door is closed.

Dissolve to a long shot of the coach riding on an elevated track silhouetted against the sky.

The industrial landscape is very bleak. In the foreground, the *Bradbury* locomotive coach goes off on the right.

Dissolve to Malloy standing in the aisle.

DISPATCH

Is that one really the last of the readybot series?

BLASTGUN GUARD

I think so.

DISPATCH

You're smarter than the average cop --- you knew all the time that Readybot was going back to Circuit City. Hey, what did he mean, he saw downed Skyhawks burning.

BLASTGUN GUARD

Erinyes-Mk5 attack craft.

INSIDE THE COACH, THE OCCUPANTS OPENLY OR COVERTLY INSPECT THE NEWCOMER. THROUGH THE WINDOW BEHIND DEVINIA, THE INDUSTRIAL PRAIRIE CAN BE SEEN GOING PAST. BLADE, SITTING THE OTHER SIDE OF DEVINIA, BREAKS THE SILENCE IN A FRIENDLY WAY.

BLADE

So you're the last Readybot?

Ampbot has seated himself on the floor with its back against the wall between Halcyon on the right seat and Asus, a government mech droid on the left seat. The rbot looks straight at Blade, its voice casual.

AMPBOT

So I'm told.
(smiles)
I was also the first. The prototype. My name's Ampbot, now.

The readybot claps both hands on the shins as it speaks.

Cut to a close-up of A-9 in the foreground with Nikko beside him. They both look towards Ampbot.

HALCYON

Seems to me I knew you, Ampbot.

A-9 and Nikko are seen, squashed together in the corner of their seat. (Halcyon has been meditating in an Ohm state. He presses his hands together in a namaste greeting.)

HALCYON (CONT'D)
 Weren't we programmed as prototypes
 and...

(he holds his hand next to
 his face, fingers
 together and opens them
 quick)
 ...decommissioned as gifts to a
 young girl? I used to be her
 chauffeur and you were an
 amusement.

Ampbot looks at him, sizing him up with keen eyes.

AMPBOT
 (grinning)
 Are you Halcyon? A nine thousand
 series?

HALCYON
 I certainly am. Or was.

A-9 and Nikko are seen from the same angle as before.

HALCYON (CONT'D)
 Let's see, I'd just been honourably
 decommissioned from the rBotics
 research division shortly before
 the War of the Rebellion.

Malloy turns sharply to look towards Halcyon.

BLASTGUN GUARD
 (haughtily)
 You mean the War for Global
 Integration, citizen.

HALCYON
 (suddenly bristling)
 I mean nothing of the kind,
 officer.

Ampbot, still looking at Halcyon with sharp interest,
 disregards the interruption.

AMPBOT
 That young girl would be our
 patroness. You served her in your
 capacity well, Halcyon, even if it
 was below your pay grade.

Ampbot returns the namaste greeting.

The shot of A-9 and Nikko now shows them adding their own respectful greeting above their heads.

HALCYON

(nodding)

Thank you, Ampbot. Professional compliments are always pleasing.

BLADE

Yes, they are.

HALCYON

What became of the arts patroness?

There is a pause. The smile goes from Ampbot's face and its voice is quiet as the little readybot looks straight ahead of it.

AMPBOT

She was murdered.

DeVinia looks round sympathetically.

A-9 and Nikko look down, obviously moved.

Ampbot looks saddened by the memory.

AMPBOT (CONT'D)

She never meant any harm to come to us.

NOW THE BRADBURY COACH IS SEEN IN MEDIUM LONG SHOT AS IT COMES TOWARDS CAMERA OUT OF A SLOPE AGAINST THE SUNSET, WITH A LARGE MANUFACTURING BUILDING IN THE NUWARK INDUSTRIAL PRAIRIE RISING UP BEHIND IT. INSIDE THE COACH, HALCYON HOLDS HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS.

A-9 turns back from looking at him.

DeVinia, sitting by the window, with Blade partly in shot beside her, looks alone and uncomfortable. She raises a hand from one knee to her mouth, then turns away and looks out of the window.

Blade watches her covertly, with a worried frown.

The coach is seen in very high angle long shot as they go along the single rail system in Manufacturing Valley, the fantastic and majestic buildings rising up all around them. Camera pans slowly with them as they go on down the rail. Fade out.

FADE IN TO THE SWITCH STATION OUTSIDE CIRCUIT CITY, A DOUBLE RAIL YARD IN WHICH THERE IS A LOW METALLIC BUILDING WITH SIGNAL LIGHTS. THERE ARE OTHER COACHES ON BOTH RAILS.

There is a chugging as the *Bradbury* coach comes into view at a good clip. Camera pans with the coach as it slows to a stop inside the long low switch building in the station yard. The Blastgun Guard opens the door and begins to step out.

BLASTGUN GUARD

Unscheduled stop, citizens, but I want to double check the rail conditions ahead. Five minutes. Stretch your legs if needed.

He singles out the fugitive.

BLASTGUN GUARD (CONT'D)

Not you.

The coach is seen in low angle medium shot from the side. A-9 and Nikko get out first, followed by Blade, who brushes down his polished body fussily. The govt. mech droid gets out. Blade waits and helps DeVinia out; she looks grateful and holds his hand as she disembarks. Ampbot, under arrest, stays inside.

Cut to a medium shot with the coach just visible on the left.. A human manager of the station, stands by the *Bradbury* coach as Halcyon gets out. They greet each other like old friends. Camera pans slightly right as Halcyon and the station manager grasp each other and shake hands in delight.

HALCYON

Well, if it isn't my old friend,
Sami Bouda Feng... How are you
Sami?

Sami's wife comes up and joins them, smiling happily.

MRS. FENG

He's fine, Halcyon, and mighty glad
to see you.

Everybody bustles around the station yard platform. Halcyon and Sami go off arm in arm; and Nikko and A-9 follow them. Mrs. Feng goes forward, towards the coach.

MRS. FENG (CONT'D)

Great heavens to Betsie Ross, we didn't figure on no coach coming through with them Erinyes raising Cain. I was just telling Sami there to couple up the hand-car...