

A LITTLE PIECE OF HISTORY

A Short Script
Written by

Ron Houghton

FADE IN:

EXT. MAIN STREET USA - DAY

The sun shines over a small town. It's your typical post apocalyptic scenario. Shattered windows. Abandoned cars. Not a soul in sight.... Oh wait, there's one.

A WOMAN lumbers along the street. Outstretched arms. Ragged appearance. Constant drooling. Yes, my friends, we have ourselves a ZOMBIE.

SUPER: AFTER

Zombie woman wanders close into frame. A loud horn blares.

She turns, just as ---

-- A black, monster truck with fiery painted flames on the side, reading "BLACK BETTY", and equipped with a protracted grill, SLAMS into her. The impact decapitates her. Her head bounces off the windshield.

BEN (O.S.)

Whoa!

INT. BLACK BETTY - DAY

Driving the truck is BEN (30). Black. Lean. A little crazy.

BEN

This ain't no crosswalk lady!

Ben turns to his passenger --

-- A white, scrawny, dude named JOHNNY (20). Quiet. Reserved.

BEN

See that head pop off?

He didn't. He shut his eyes.

JOHNNY

Are you sure about this? We should have told the others.

BEN

I already know what they would've said. Is it worth it? Can we do it? Then they want to form a committee to discuss it. Screw that, we'll be done and back before they know it.

JOHNNY

How can you be sure it's safe?

BEN
Trust me kid. It's well protected.

EXT. MAIN STREET USA - DAY

As Betty exits the town -- she runs over a ratty sign lying in the middle of the road. It reads

Welcome to Historic Culpeper Virginia.

EXT. MAIN GATE - DAY

Betty drives through the open gate, up a curved green hill, toward some large facility.

Tall grass blocks the majority of the granite sign. The only visible part reads --

GRESS
onservation
ony Road

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Betty stops outside the primary entrance. Tipped cars litter the sidewalk leading up to the door. All the windows are boarded up. Barricaded.

A DOZEN ZOMBIES loiter nearby.

INT. BLACK BETTY

Johnny peels a banana. Takes a bite.

JOHNNY
(mouth full)
Umm, I don't think we're getting in that way.

BEN
Let's try the back.

EXT. BUILDING REAR - DAY

Betty turns onto the grass. Drives up a small hill. Crosses over the green to the rear of the building, which for the most part, has been constructed deep into the hillside.

A three story, semicircular, concrete structure. A terraced arcade, covered with creeping ivy. An oval wading pool lies in front. It is like some cross between a Federal government building and a college campus.

DOZENS OF ZOMBIES, mostly students, roam about the area.

I/E. BLACK BETTY - DAY

Ben and Johnny gaze at the imposing structure.

BEN

At one time it was a Federal Reserve. One of the most secure vaults in the whole country. Uncle Sam stored billions in there. The front entrance used to have a machine gun nest.

JOHNNY

What happened?

BEN

When they couldn't find use for it anymore, they gave it to Congress.

Johnny, still eating, stares at the parade of flesh eaters.

JOHNNY

There sure is a lot of them.

(pause)

You sure this is worth it?

Ben shoots him a stern look - *You bet your ass it is.*

They step out of the truck.

Ben is wearing camouflage cargo pants and undershirt, topped with a black beret. A machete hangs from his hip, a holstered Beretta on the other.

Johnny wears a ripped plaid button down over a "Beck" concert shirt. He's armed with a hockey stick. The blade has been shaved down to a sharp spear.

Ben retrieves a teargas gun from the bed of the truck. Loads up a cannister. Points it away from the building. Fires it.

Shooom!

BEN

Follow the birdie.

The cannister sails through the air -- lands on the grass.

The smoke grenade emits a hazy, pink cloud.

The smoke diverts the zombies attention. They drag their feet away from the building toward the pink mist.

BEN
They sure do love that pink shit
don't they?

JOHNNY
(mouth full)
Umhf uhh.

BEN
Why're you always eating?

Johnny takes a last bite. Tosses away the peel.

JOHNNY
Potassium.

They hop back into Betty. In a low gear, they quietly drive toward the arcade, which is now free and clear of zombies.

EXT. ARCADE - DAY

Ben and Johnny walk across the arcade's lower terrace. Enter the building through one of the many blown out windows.

INT. GRAND LOBBY - DAY

Natural light streams through the open three tiered space. Beech wood panels line the walls from ceiling to floor.

BEN
This way.

Ben heads past a large staircase. Johnny follows close.

JOHNNY
How do you know your way around?

BEN
I took the tour here once.

They walk toward an antiquated in-house

MOVIE THEATER

The white marquee heralds William Cameron Menzies - "The Shape of Things to Come"

Film posters hang behind glass frames -- Tourneur's "I Walked with a Zombie" - Vincent Price's "The Last Man on Earth".

TWO ZOMBIES loiter about, waiting for the next screening.

Ben takes out his machete. Jogs toward the zombies.

BEN

It was 1966. Ten guys from
Pittsburg, who didn't have a pot to
piss in, or a window to throw it
out of.

In fluid motion, he swings his blade, slicing the first
zombie's head clean off --

BEN

But each one managed to scrape
together six hundred bucks... And
with that...

-- He plunges the machete into the second zombie's skull.
Thwack!

BEN

They changed history.

HALLWAY

They move briskly down an empty hallway.

BEN

The selection process started in
88. Only twenty-five entries a year
were chosen. Those deemed worthy of
cultural significance.

ADJACENT HALLWAY

Ben opens the door to the stairwell.

BEN

It made the list in 99. The last
year before the new millennium.

(pause)

A final warning cry.

They step inside.

INT. CONCRETE STAIRWELL

Walking down. Johnny stares up at the dim emergency lights.

JOHNNY

I don't get it. How does this place
still have power?

BEN

At the height of the cold war, this
place was used as a possible
fallout shelter. At one time it
could support five hundred people
for an entire month.

JOHNNY

Wait!

They stop. Ben turns.

JOHNNY

How do we know it's not. Maybe
there's people holed up down there?

BEN

I gotta doubt it. The shit all went
south too fast.

Ben takes another step. Stops.

BEN

But stay frosty.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY

Ben pokes his head out the stairwell door. A cold, long,
empty hallway. Dimly lit. Clear of the undead.

They walk. Ben whispers.

BEN

It first premiered, October 1, 68.
Nobody had ever seen anything like
it. The first audiences went wild.

They turn a corner into a small space filled with FOUR
ZOMBIES. Past employees: dressed shirts, ties, and lab coats.

Across the room, Ben spots a door marked - *Record Room*

Ben taps his machete against the wall. Tink, tink.

The zombies turn. Move toward them.

Ben readies his blade.

BEN

It struck a chord like nothing
before. The word began to spread.

Ben slices the head of ZOMBIE 1. Snatches the dead woman's
long hair before the lopped head can drop.

Swings it like a bowling ball --

BEN

This was something different.

-- Splattering the head of ZOMBIE 2.

BEN

The man was a genius, influencing a whole generation who followed him.

Johnny swings his stick/spear into the neck of ZOMBIE 3.

Zombie 4 lunges for Ben. Too close for his comfort.

He sticks the machete blade into the creatures mouth --

Pushes the zombie's back toward the wall.

BEN

Craven.

Wham! The impact slices off the top off his head. Shhwink!

BEN

Hooper.

The body drops to the floor.

BEN

Carpenter.

Ben turns to Johnny.

BEN

It all started with him.

INT. RECORD ROOM

A small space. Rows of ordered keys line one wall. A dusty computer desk in the corner. Ben checks the computer, but the system remains dormant.

Ben finds a dusty binder marked - *Film Catalog*

BEN

Nobody realized it was a warning call from the future.

Ben moves to the desk. Opens the binder.

BEN

Nobody listened.

He flips through the pages. Finds the record list.

BEN

They're listening now.

He runs his finger down the registry. Stops.

BEN

Found it! Vault room 242.

He swivels the chair around. Jumps up from his seat. Searches the wall of keys. Finds the corresponding vault key.

Holds it up to Johnny.

BEN

Magic.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT - CORRIDOR

They enter a cold, long corridor. Fifty doors on each side. Very militaristic. Bunker like. Dim emergency lights.

JOHNNY

This place is massive.

BEN

Ninety miles of fortified underground tunnels. You could drop a nuke on this place, and it would shake it off.

They creep along another long corridor.

BEN

Should be right around here.

They round the corner where --

-- DOZENS OF ZOMBIES roam the corridor.

They quickly step back out of sight.

BEN

I guess we know what happened to everyone who was holed up.

JOHNNY

There's too many. What now?

Ben checks his pistol. Pulls out the magazine.

BEN

Come too far now.

It's only half full. He reloads it. Finds an extra full clip.

JOHNNY

Is that all the ammo you've got?

BEN

Yup.

Ben readies himself. Turns the corner --

Points the Beretta -- Blam! Blam! Blam! Blam!

Four for four. All head shots. Each zombie drops to the floor. Unfortunately, every other zombie moves toward him.

Ben releases the magazine. Pulls out the fresh new clip.

Loads it. Pulls the slide. Flashes a crazy smile.

BEN
Freaky Deaky.

Ben walks toward them. Fires his pistol. Screams defiantly.

BEN
You! You! You! You! You! You!

Blam! Blam! Blam! Blam! Blam! Blam!

SIX ZOMBIES drop to the ground.

Johnny, in awe, watches this courageous display.

Ben continues to fire -- Drops TWO MORE.

And then... CLICK! The magazine is empty.

One FINAL ZOMBIE lunges forward.

Ben reaches for his machete, but he's too late.

The zombie clasps Ben's throat. Dives in! And then --

-- Johnny plunges his spear through its skull. It falls.

BEN
(sighs)
Thanks kid.

A loud gurgle. A ZOMBIE HORDE comes around the corner they just came from -- Another GROUP comes the other way.

BEN
Move!

They race down the corridor. Ben checks the door numbers.

The zombies converge on them -- Twenty-five feet away.

They stop. There it is - Vault Door 242.

TWENTY FEET AWAY

Ben turns the knob. It's locked.

FIFTEEN FEET AWAY

JOHNNY
The key!

Ben fumbles with keys. Drops them.

TEN FEET AWAY

JOHNNY

Hurry!

FIVE FEET AWAY

Ben fits the key. Turns the handle. They rush inside.

INT. VAULT ROOM

Johnny slams the door closed. Presses his back against it. Gazes at the room. Lined with vertical shelves. Twenty cubbyholes a shelf. Each cubby filled with film cannisters.

JOHNNY

How are we supposed to get out of here?

Ben ignores him. Searches the reels. His fingers flies across the cannisters.

BEN

C'mon, baby ...where you at?

And then his eyes light up. He finds it

BEN

Here it is!

He holds it with a biblical reverence.

BEN

The harbinger of our times...

INSCRIBED ON THE CANNISTER:

Catalog #242 - Night of the Living Dead (1968)

BEN

...The Grail.

JOHNNY

That really it?

BEN

Damn right it is. This here...

Ben holds it up to the dim light.

BEN

This here's a little piece of history.

He takes the remaining reels. Tucks them into an army surplus canvas bag. Throws it over his shoulder.

Ben moves to the door.

JOHNNY

What if they're still out there?

BEN

Oh, they're out there.

JOHNNY

They're gonna tear us apart.

Ben reaches down. Grabs something from his pocket.

BEN

Not if they don't see us.

He opens the door. Tosses a smoke grenade out. Slams the door closed. Waits a beat.

BEN

Ready?

INT. SUB-BASEMENT - HALLWAY

The vault door creaks open. Ben and Johnny peek their heads out. The pink mist fills the hallway making it impossible to see what awaits them.

JOHNNY

What do we do?

BEN

We go slow.

They creep down the hallway. Johnny points his stick/spear ahead of him, while Ben, machete at the ready, walks backward, covering their rear. Neither one has more than two feet of visibility.

Ben, compulsively, continues his lecture. Whispers.

BEN

The first company who owned it. The Walter Read group. They faked incompetence. Pretended they didn't know what they were doing.

A ZOMBIE appears out of the mist. Ben slashes him down.

BEN

They purposefully never put a copyright seal on it. Claimed it was an accident...

Another zombie appears. Johnny spears him through the mouth, up into its brain.

BEN

It was no accident. This was a film
which needed to be seen.

TWO ZOMBIES come up from behind.

BEN

They tried to tell us...

Ben takes both of them down.

BEN

But we took their warnings, and
turned them into entertainment.

They finally reach the doorway. Johnny turns to him.

JOHNNY

Got some pretty cool shows though.

Ben frowns.

Johnny, looking the other way, opens the door. A ZOMBIE HAND lunges out for his throat.

BEN

Watch it.

Ben swings his machete. The arm drops at Johnny's feet. Ben swings the door open. Finishes him off. Smiles at Johnny.

BEN

They're coming to get you Johnny.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

They climb the stairs back up.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

They're back in front of the theater, where THREE ZOMBIES are now prowling the area.

Ben takes out ZOMBIE 1 with a hard kick. The zombie flies into the framed film poster. It shatters. A shard falls, wedging deep inside the monster's brain.

Johnny spears ZOMBIE 2 in the stomach. Swings him around, slamming the creature into ZOMBIE 3. Knocking them over.

Ben climbs on top of them. Cracks both their heads open with the butt of his blade.

A FOURTH ZOMBIE

Appears out of nowhere. Right behind Ben. The zombie lunges forward. It's teeth at Ben's neck.

Johnny slides across the slick floor. Winds back --

JOHNNY

Duck!

Ben does. Johnny swings like Gretsky. Driving the pointed blade into the zombie's eye socket. It drops to the ground.

BEN

Nice one.

Johnny helps Ben back on his feet.

JOHNNY

I think I'm finally getting the hang of this.

BEN

I think so too.

Johnny puts his foot on his spear. Pushes down, removing the punctured eye-ball of the fallen zombie.

INT. GRAND LOBBY - DAY

They're back at the blown out window they came in through.

They peek outside.

The pink mist has now dispersed. The ZOMBIE HERD has returned, wandering about, blocking them from reaching Betty.

JOHNNY

(re. the gas gun)
Fire up a grenade.

BEN

I can't.
(pause)
I had to use the last one down there.

JOHNNY

So, we're trapped?

BEN

Kinda looks like it.

Johnny stares at Betty, then the zombies, then at Ben.

JOHNNY

I've got an idea.

BEN
Spill it junior.

JOHNNY
I run like hell. They chase me. You
hop in the truck, and pick me up.

BEN
(chuckles)
You know, that's almost stupid
enough to work.

JOHNNY
Stupid is, as stupid does.

Ben looks out at the zombies.

BEN
You sure you can outrun em'?

JOHNNY
Yeah, just don't take your time.

Johnny psyche's himself up. Turns to Ben. Cracks a smile.

JOHNNY
I still can't believe I let you
talk me into coming here?

Ben smiles back.

BEN
Me neither cracker barrel.

EXT. ARCADE - DAY

Johnny races out the door. Screams at the top of his lungs.

JOHNNY
Aaaahhhhh!!!

All the zombies turn their heads. Follow after Johnny.

Ben races to Betty. Watches Johnny tear across the lawn.

BEN
(yells)
Run, white boy, run!

Ben opens the door. Throws the canvas bag on the seat. Jumps
inside. Fires her up. Drives toward Johnny.

JOHNNY

Sprints through the wading pool, then across the green area.

THE ZOMBIES

Converge on him from all directions.

Johnny has a good lead on his undead pursuers.

BETTY

Speeds over the green hill. Pulls up alongside him. Ben yells out the passenger window...

BEN

Get in!

Ben slows the truck down to jogging speed.

Johnny runs along side the door.

Ben leans over -- opens the passenger door.

The door swings open.

Johnny's fingers skim the door frame. He's got it. Holds tight. He's all clear. Smiles --

-- And then he SLIPS on his discarded BANANA PEEL, and

TUMBLES hard to the ground.

Ben hits the brakes. Looks in the

REARVIEW MIRROR

Johnny lies on the ground. Struggles to stand.

The ZOMBIE HORDE heads straight for him.

BEN

Get up kid, get up.

But it's too late -- the zombies swarm him.

Johnny reaches out his hand.

JOHNNY

Agghhh!

Ben watches in horror. Winces, as his friend is eaten alive.

BEN

Sorry, kid.

(long beat)

You know, I never did get a chance
to tell you why all this was so
important to me.

Ben puts Betty into gear. Drives away.

BEN

It was the first time I ever saw a
movie where the black dude survived
in the end.

EXT. FRONT GATE

Black Betty speeds past the gate.

Heads for the horizon.

FADE TO BLACK.

END TITLE:

Dedicated to the preservation of film, and the one and only
George Romero.