

CATASTROPHIC DISASSEMBLY

Written by

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FADE IN:

ON TV SCREEN

Many buildings burning in the dark of night. A banner at bottom of screen reads: FORT DETRICK, MARYLAND.

TV ANCHOR (V.O.)

The Secretary of Defense, Robert Dreyer, angrily denied speculation that America's own stealth bombers were responsible for the attack on the biowarfare facility at Fort Detrick, Maryland. The Chinese have accused this facility of creating the Nanovirus. The Nanovirus, jokingly referred as "Catastrophic Disassembly Syndrome" by President Stanton, has killed over 60 million people worldwide.

EXT. SUMMER STREET - DUSK

ERIC FOWLER, 28, jogs down the tree-lined sidewalk. He's wearing a full-face rebreather and holding a pistol. He dives behind a tree when he HEARS SEVERAL SIRENS converging on this street.

He makes himself as small as possible as an AMBULANCE, FIRE TRUCK and POLICE CAR stop in front of a house farther down the street.

The front door of this house opens and a COUPLE in their 30s, holding an OLD WOMAN between them, stagger out, followed by TWO CHILDREN.

The three vehicles' SIRENS WIND DOWN, though their rotating blue and red lights continue painting the neighborhood with their garish lights.

TWO PARAMEDICS get out of the ambulance. They're wearing full hazmat suits, and backpacks holding a fat cylinder.

The TWO COPS that emerge from their car are wearing full tactical gear, gas masks, and carrying automatic rifles.

OLD WOMAN

Oh, God, I can't feel my left arm!

FATHER

It's just a heart attack, mom!

PARAMEDIC #1
Do you feel any pain, ma'am?

MOTHER
She's hurting bad! Real bad!

The children start wailing.

OLD WOMAN
I can't feel anything. My arm's numb!

FATHER & MOTHER
Nooo!!!

The cops OPEN FIRE on full-auto and the adults and children collapse to the ground, limbs spasming. The shooting stops.

The Paramedics reach over their shoulders and unclip heavy nozzles attached to the cylinders. They turn the nozzles on the dead and pull the triggers on the FLAMETHROWERS.

A stunned Eric gets up and backs away as quickly as he can. Behind him, the fire truck launches a STREAM OF FIRE that engulfs the house.

EXT. FOWLER HOME - NIGHT

Eric pauses on the sidewalk, checks out both ends of the street, then crosses to the front door. He takes note of the moving blue shadow behind the curtains. The TV.

INT. FOYER - FOWLER HOME - NIGHT

Eric locks the front door behind him, catches his breath, then steps to a small table.

MONICA (O.S.)
Eric? What took you so long?

He slips off the canvas bag hanging from a shoulder and sets it on the table.

ERIC
I ran into a cleansing on Summer Street, so I had to detour.

He removes a can of baby formula powder from the bag, then stuffs the rebreather and pistol into the bag.

LIVING ROOM

The room is lit by the flickering images on the big-screen TV. Sitting on the couch in front of the TV is a grim-faced MONICA FOWLER, 29, holding baby JAMIE.

She raises her left hand and aims a heavy gun at Eric. Her hand wobbles.

MONICA

Too bad we can't buy gasoline,
anymore.

Eric sets the can down on a table next to the entrance from the foyer. He takes a pair of rubber balls from an Easter basket on the table.

ERIC

The government doesn't want us
going anywhere, Monica.

He holds the balls out in front of him and squeezes them hard, then puts them back into the basket. He gestures at the muted TV, where a disheveled ANCHOR is mouthing words.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Anything new?

MONICA

Breaking news: the president's
blaming the CDC for nicknaming the
Nanovirus the "Catastrophic
Disassembly Syndrome."

ERIC

The world's falling apart, and he's
worried about a joke nickname?
Asshole. Besides, they should've
called it The Butcher Syndrome.

Monica stands up, sets the gun down on top of the couch back, then trades the baby for the can of formula.

She and Eric kiss briefly. Eric nuzzles the baby and sits on the couch.

MONICA

How much did the baby formula cost?

ERIC

A lot. Don't know what we'll do
when we run out of cash.

Monica starts for the kitchen.

MONICA

We steal. Jamie needs to eat.

Eric UNMUTES the TV as the Anchor's image is replaced by that of a haggard 70-year-old man standing in front of an American flag, and flanked by a pair of combat-ready soldiers. The banner at the bottom reads: PRES. WILLIAM STANTON.

PRESIDENT STANTON

...the United States had absolutely nothing to do with the creation of the Nanovirus. My intelligence sources this morning presented incontrovertible proof that this artificial killer virus was created and spread by the Chinese. I will be presenting this evidence to the United Nations-

Eric MUTES the TV, holds Jamie up to his face.

ERIC

Sorry we're giving you such a screwed-up world, Jamie.

MONICA (O.S.)

(from kitchen; voice
unsteady)

Have they found out yet how the Nanovirus spreads?

ERIC

Not a clue. All they know is when the left arm goes numb, it's over.

Eric unmutes TV when the president is replaced by the Anchor.

ANCHOR

Another sign that this country is on the verge of war: America's West Coast will be blacked-out tonight. The first time that's happened since World War 2.

From the kitchen comes the sound of BREAKING GLASS. Eric jumps to his feet.

ERIC

You okay, Moni?

On TV, the Anchor draws his laptop closer to him, and reads from it.

ANCHOR

The Secretary of Defense has just released this statement: "United States Marines have commenced amphibious operations in the South China Sea."

(to camera)

For those of you who may still care about such things, World War 3 has just begun.

ERIC

Fucking great!

He turns off the TV in disgust, then has to calm down the startled baby.

Monica appears at the entrance from the kitchen, baby bottle in hand, a frightened look on her face.

MONICA

(voice wavering)

What's wrong?

ERIC

We're at war with China.

(beat)

You okay, Moni?

The bottle drops out of her hand and he starts toward her, but stops in his tracks at the terrified expression that crosses her face.

MONICA

I can't...

Her left arm slides out of the sleeve and plops to the floor, trailing a stream of blood.

ERIC

Nooo!!!

Monica, eyes on her arm on the floor, opens her mouth to scream, but before she can do that, her left leg separates at the knee and she crashes to the floor in a fountain of blood.

Eric bites back a scream and looks around the room wildly to avoid the sight of his wife, groaning, flailing on the floor.

Eric spots the gun lying atop the couch back and makes a snap decision. He picks up the gun, then crosses to the baby crib in a corner of the room. He grabs a baby bag underneath the crib and slings it over a shoulder.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Moni. I'm sorry.

He crosses back to Monica and stops short of the spreading blood lake. He wants to offer her the comfort of a touch, but it's too dangerous.

She looks up at him in anguish.

MONICA
Jamie...

Eric holds the baby tighter and tries to keep from crying.

ERIC
Jamie's good, Moni.
(beat)
I love you.

Another stream of blood erupts from where Monica's right arm disassociates itself from the shoulder. Her cry is soul-wrenching.

Eric turns his body away from Monica to shield the baby, aims the pistol and SHOOTS Monica in the head.

EXT. ERIC'S HOME - NIGHT

Eric runs out the front door, baby strapped to his chest, and disappears into the night.

The sound of SIRENS and the CLATTER of helicopters quartering the fire-tinged night sky builds to a DEFEANING CRESCENDO.

FADE OUT.