

I SCREAM, YOU SCREAM

Written by

Anthony J. Russo

[ajrscreenworks@verizon.net](mailto:ajrscreenworks@verizon.net)

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**FADE IN:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

CLOSE UP on a television news broadcast. The FEMALE ANCHOR (40's) gazes soberly into the camera.

FEMALE ANCHOR (ON TV)  
Welcome back to this special news report on the anniversary of the COVID-nineteen crisis. On March sixteenth, two-thousand-twenty, the United States began to shelter in place. It was only the beginning of a harrowing new existence for the entire world.

A FEMALE SCIENTIST (40's), perched on a stool near a counter in her lab, gestures animatedly with her hands.

FEMALE SCIENTIST (ON TV)  
We had never seen a family of viruses like this. Highly contagious. Extremely adaptable. Pumping out copies faster than we could manufacture vaccines.

A MALE JOURNALIST (50's), ensconced in a plush home office, opines wistfully.

MALE JOURNALIST (ON TV)  
America was not ready. The science was there. But society could not meet the moment. And in many ways, our leaders handed us over to it.

INTO FRAME comes a hairy hand holding a remote control. The television SNAPS OFF.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL a flat TV screen on a stand. Under the stand is a VCR. The hand presses the EJECT button and out pops a tape. Written on the label is the word POSTERITY.

**INT./EXT. GARAGE - DAY**

The automatic garage door rumbles upward, slowly revealing a cul-de-sac. Disheveled semi-attached homes form a ring around the asphalt and concrete.

Near the door to the home stands a MAN. He faces the outdoors, dressed in a Tyvek suit and a full-face respirator connected to an air tank on his hip.

The garage is empty, save the electric vehicle plugged into a charging station, and a locked weapons cabinet on the wall.

The man removes a rifle and a hunting knife from the stash.

**EXT. HOUSE - DAY**

A beautifully dominant blue sky with thin strips of white. Luminous rays, courtesy of our home star, pierce the azure.

The man walks to the side of his house. Inside a locked cage sits a two-ton fan unit retrofitted with negative ion packs. The hum of the compressor means that all is well.

The man jerks the padlock on the gate. It's secure.

**INT. MAN'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY**

The vehicle moves past an abandoned home, the vegetation now at the top of the first floor windows.

**MAN'S POV (THROUGH WINDSHIELD)**

A one-up, one-down road through suburban decay... leading to nowhere. A telephone pole toppled... a vehicle abandoned.

A family of deer, scaled from big to small like The Partridge Family, wiggle their way across the road.

The man slams his brakes and stops inches from the brood.

**INT. MAN'S CAR (STOPPED) - DAY**

The vehicle idles in a supermarket parking lot.

The man changes the channel of the CB radio... and the ham radio on the passenger seat crackles from static.

FEMALE VOICE (ON CB RADIO)  
Breaker, breaker. Chief lady will  
give the location of the latest  
napalm bomb. Tune to triple-nickels  
at thirteen-thirty. Ten-four.

The dashboard clock reads 12:30.

**EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - DAY**

The man stands in front of many rows of outdoor lockers. He keys in a code and removes a shrink-wrapped box of groceries.

**INT. MAN'S CAR (PARKED) - DAY**

The man reaches under his seat and retrieves a map. The ham radio on the passenger seat flashes green and snaps to life.

BOOGALOO BOB (ON HAM RADIO)  
 Hey, a good day to all you  
 sandbaggers still survivin',  
 Boogaloo Bob comin' at you from a  
 location undisclosed.

The man picks up the radio and holds it in his right hand.

BOOGALOO BOB (ON HAM RADIO)  
 You got the news, lady chief gonna  
 tell you where the next powder bomb  
 gonna be. Got some intel, sources  
 say it's quadrant forty-zero-two.

**INT. MAN'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY**

The car moves slowly through a small town...

BOOGALOO BOB (V.O.)  
 So we had no choice but to follow  
 the Swedish model, man! Open the  
 fuck back up or face fifty-percent  
 unemployment. Acceptable level of  
 casualties!

Past an abandoned book store...

BOOGALOO BOB (ON HAM RADIO)  
 Summer crowds, man! Festivals!  
 Twenty-twenty-one. Twenty-two. They  
 knew! They knew we were going to  
 exterminate ourselves. We were  
 aerosolizing this thing in massive  
 quantities!

Past an abandoned library...

BOOGALOO BOB (ON HAM RADIO)  
 God bless, sisters and brothers, if  
 you can live on your stashed cash,  
 pressing buttons to have the world  
 come to you. The new order, man.  
 Used to be about money and power.  
 Now it's all about filtration. Just  
 a different way of getting rid of  
 the unwashed masses.

Past an abandoned cafe...

BOOGALOO BOB (ON HAM RADIO)  
 Look, they're going to tell you the  
 top epidemiologists in the world  
 couldn't have predicted it. But  
 that's b.s., man! It's a well-known  
 fact that trees can get viruses.

The man folds his arms atop the steering wheel and slowly and  
 wearily lowers his head onto them.

**INT./EXT. MAN'S CAR (PARKED) - DAY**

The man sits stone-faced at the curb, opposite an abandoned  
 movie theater. The marquee still says GREAT VALLEY CINEMA.

The dashboard clock reads 1:32.

The pavement is white. The asphalt is white. The mulch in the  
 tree islands is white. The man's windshield is white.

PRESIDENT HARRIS (ON CB RADIO)  
 Crops and smaller flora seem to be  
 responding to the viricidal agents.

The wipers sway as the water slowly dilutes the powder.

PRESIDENT HARRIS (ON CB RADIO)  
 Our hope is that the trees, which  
 show evidence of lambda and sigma  
 variants, will respond as well.

An image moves through the field of the watery windshield.

PRESIDENT HARRIS (ON CB RADIO)  
 As you know, our efforts to move  
 those without means into filtration  
 camps have been hampered by  
 sectarian uprisings and violence.

Through the hazy windshield the man sees a WOMAN in a hazmat  
 suit in the middle of the drive lane.

The man zeroes in on the woman's suit... she's covered in  
 white powder and there's a large slit in the forearm. And a  
 hairline crack in her facemask.

PRESIDENT HARRIS (ON CB RADIO)  
 But we must not lose hope.

The man locks eyes with the woman... she's been crying. She's  
 been exposed. Not to one killer, but two.

PRESIDENT HARRIS (ON CB RADIO)  
 Soon, the life-giving oxygen  
 provided by our forests, farms and  
 gardens will no longer taint the  
 very air we breathe.

The woman implores the man with her eyes. She puts her hands  
 together in a prayer sign... and nods her head.

PRESIDENT HARRIS (ON CB RADIO)  
 The U.S. Government has now focused  
 exclusively on producing ion  
 technology to combat the virus.

A tear forms in the corner of the man's eye. He communicates  
 with his eyebrows - REALLY?

PRESIDENT HARRIS (ON CB RADIO)  
 Soon, anyone without a way to  
 filter air into breathable form  
 would be able to survive.

The woman, a picture of sadness, nods - YES.

PRESIDENT HARRIS (ON CB RADIO)  
 This virus will no longer become a  
 death sentence.

The man reluctantly throws the car into reverse.

**INT. EXT MAN'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY**

The man backs the car up about forty feet...

The woman stands in the middle of the road. She closes her  
 eyes, spreads her arms wide and raises her head to the sky.

He brings the vehicle to a halt... and throws it in drive.

**MAN'S POV (THROUGH WINDSHIELD)**

The engine ROARS and the tires SCREECH as the vehicle closes  
 in on the woman.

The vehicle strikes the woman with a sickening thud... and  
 continues right over top of her.

**INT. MAN'S CAR (PARKED) - DAY**

The man rests one arm atop the wheel. He collapses his head  
 onto it, tears streaming down his cheeks.

BOOGALOO BOB (ON HAM RADIO)  
Sisters and brothers... we do hold  
out hope that dear Mother Nature  
will heal herself. But what will be  
left by the time she does?

The man slowly lifts his head and looks out the driver's side window. He notices exhaust rising from between two buildings.

**EXT. ALLEY/STREET - DAY**

The man approaches the source of the smoke. It's a functioning ion filtration system.

He retreats back toward the sidewalk, and notices that it services an old-fashioned ice cream shop.

He tries the door knob. It turns.

**INT. ICE CREAM SHOPPE - DAY**

Abandoned... at least for the moment. The power is on. The man hears the low, steady HUM of the compressors from the refrigerated cases. Keeping the ice cream frozen and ready.

There's everything here... chocolate and vanilla, of course. Pistachio. Butter pecan. Banana peanut butter fudge.

The sign on the wall behind the counter reads: LARGE CUP - \$30. Next to it, the obvious: WANTED - IONIZERS.

The man steps behind the counter. He grabs a large cup and a scooper. He goes straight for the peanut butter fudge.

He sets the cup on the counter. He reaches for his head gear... and stops.

**EXT. ALLEY - DAY**

The man stands next to a side door into the ice cream shop, transfixed on the ion filtration system.

He takes a closer look... compressor, check. Filter, check. Hoses... no holes. The clamps affixing the duct to the building... everything looks good.

**INT. ICE CREAM SHOPPE - DAY**

The man stares at the ice cream, rapidly melting in the cup.

He reaches one hand to his head gear... undoes one snap. Then another... and another... and finally exposes his head.

He swipes his hair, matted in sweat, away from his eyes.

He's in his forties, but it's clear that survival at any cost has aged him prematurely.

His eyes are sunken. He's tired. Physically and emotionally.

A ray of sun refracts through the sidelight in the door.

The man steps into the sun spot... he throws his head back and closes his eyes... euphoria seldom felt these days.

He turns his attention back to the ice cream. He retrieves it from the counter with one hand, and scoops up his mask with the other, securing it under his arm.

He approaches the door of the shop... he reaches for the knob... turns it, but doesn't yet push.

One more look around the bucolic past that was an innocent little sweet shop selling tasty treats.

MAN

Ground control to Major Tom.

**EXT. PARK - DAY**

The man - sans protective suit - sits on a park bench. He crashes the spoon into the delectable dessert.

He guides the spoon to his mouth... and takes a full hit of the most delicious taste on the planet.

He closes his eyes, and basks in the radiant glory that is a gorgeous, perfect Summer day.

**FADE OUT.**