



An Original Short Script

by

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. NOWHERESVILLE - MORNING**

Like a delirious bird on the wing, we soar through town on a frenetic, swooping trajectory.

A jaunty 1950s POP TUNE plays along, breezy and light as the winds that carry us.

There's a drive-in diner with a Studebaker parked out front. A red brick schoolhouse, where an American flag flaps proudly atop its pole. Sensible tract homes with pristine lawns.

It's idyllic. Nostalgic. The Great America.

But it is also deserted. Not a soul about.

We descend toward one of the homes. Curtains flutter from an open window. The music fades as we sail inside.

**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING**

A family seated at breakfast. DAD in his business suit, MOM in a wholesome, flowered sundress, and young BILLY in jeans and a baseball cap.

But this is no ordinary family.

Their movements are stiff and unnatural as they mimic the act of dining. There is no food on their plates. Their forks lift nothing at all. They sip from empty cups.

These are LIVING MANNEQUINS going through the routine motions of a daily life.

On the wall, a CUCKOO CLOCK marks the hour, and the family pushes their plates away in unison.

Billy leaps from his chair. He looks to Mom, who gives a nod of approval, then Billy rushes outside.

Dad stands and lifts a briefcase. He bends stiffly to kiss Mom on her polymer cheek, then he follows the boy outside.

**EXT. HOUSE - DAY**

From the sidewalk, Dad watches Billy toss a squeaky bone toy to their plastic, unmoving family dog.

Dad then waves to the MAILMAN across the street.

The Mailman returns the greeting, then stoops to peer into a mailbox. The Mailman freezes in this position.

Dad takes a few steps, then he also freezes in mid-stride.

Billy freezes into position alongside his pet.

**INT. HOUSE - DAY**

Mom gazes through the open window at her family. The faint traces of a smile crease her features.

They are truly blessed.

She moves to the couch and sits. She smooths the creases from her dress. Then she, too, freezes into position, watching her blank and silent television.

**EXT. NOWHERESVILLE - DAY**

The town is now populated by dozens of mannequins. Each is perfectly still. Each frozen into their unique role.

And so begins another day in Nowheresville.

**WIDER**

Pulling back -- high now and into the sky above -- reveals the unique nature of this peculiar town.

It is but a tiny oasis, lost in the immense desert flatlands of Nevada.

A single road snakes from the far horizon to the town.

An Army transport vehicle leaves plumes of swirling dust as it rumbles down this lonely road to Nowheresville.

**INT. TRUCK - DAY**

GENERAL CARUSO, a well-chewed cigar clenched permanently in his teeth, stares from the passenger window at this desolate landscape. Young PRIVATE LOGAN is at the wheel.

A bushy-haired scientist, DR. IVAN KIPPLE, is wedged between these two military men.

**EXT. TRUCK - DAY**

The truck rolls through a weathered gate, its rusted chain-link all but collapsed, choked with pigweed and sandburs.

Faded signs warn of radiation danger. Other signs inform trespassers they will be shot without warning.

**EXT. NOWHERESVILLE - DAY**

The truck rolls to a stop in the middle of the street.

Dad and the Mailman watch in still, stony silence as Kipple and the soldiers climb down from the truck.

Caruso points out a few features of the town, then turns to speak to Kipple -- but like all characters in this story, Caruso's words are an unintelligible garble of sound.

Caruso's voice is grating, almost painful to the ear. He sounds like a spoon stuck in the garbage disposal.

Kipple takes in the surroundings. He seems pleased.

Kipple nods in the affirmative, and responds with a voice in the form of staticky snips and snatches of conversation, like a poorly-tuned radio station.

Logan is less enthused. This place clearly gives him the creeps. As he steps back, a loud SQUEAK startles him.

He looks down, then lifts his heel from a squeaky bone toy.

He picks it up. Looks around. Mom stares at him through a window. He doesn't remember noticing her there before.

With a shudder, he tosses the toy to Billy and his dog.

**EXT. TRUCK - DAY**

The truck rumbles back through the gate, leaving town.

**INT. TRUCK - DAY**

Logan catches a blur of movement in the rearview mirror.

A double-take. He stares. But nothing there.

**EXT. TRUCK - DAY**

Dad and the Mailman peer from behind a pile of boulders as they watch the truck pull away.

**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

The family quietly partakes of their foodless supper.

**INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Mom and Dad in bed, stiff and fully-clothed atop the sheets.

Dad's eyes are alert, however, as STRANGE SOUNDS echo from outside -- rolling trucks, grinding gears, metallic clanks.

**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING**

Billy gazes out the window as Mom and Dad enter. He turns back to them, confused by what he sees outside.

Dad steps over and pulls back the curtain.

**IN THE STREET**

A menacing six-foot monstrosity of polished steel and copper plating sits in the middle of the road.

Thick steam pours from vented plates in rolling plumes that gather at its base. Its interior glows with the orange heat of a toaster oven.

It is a bomb, the likes of which the world has never seen.

**AT THE WINDOW**

Mom and Dad exchange looks of concern.

**ON THE BOMB**

A low, BUZZING HUM like angry wasps issues from deep within, and steadily grows in volume and intensity.

**CUT TO:**

**AN ELECTRONIC CONTROL PANEL**

A pair of hands efficiently flip switches and twist knobs.

**EXT. TEST SITE - DAY**

Kipple stands at this blinking control panel set into a stainless steel cabinet as tall as he is, the technology incongruous in this desert landscape.

Behind him are bleachers stuffed with VIPs, sweating in their suits and dresses and sunglasses.

One conspicuous group of black-suited men surround a man who is decidedly plump and orange. This man flamboyantly waves his arms while speaking nonstop, his voice reminiscent of the nasal *whonk-whonk-whonk* of Batman's nemesis, the Penguin.

**WIDER**

Nowheresville glimmers in the far distance, now a mere speck where the horizon meets the sky.

**AT THE CONTROL PANEL**

Kipple turns another knob, but frowns as a dial drops to zero. Then, one by one, all the dials drop to zero.

He is flummoxed, flipping switches off and back on.

Kipple bonks a side panel with his fist, as if this were an uncooperative television with a poor signal.

Kipple then stiffens at the approaching sound of Caruso's ANGRY O.S. GARBLE behind him. Kipple turns slowly, wide-eyed and exasperated.

Caruso steps into Kipple's personal space and continues to GROWL, punctuating each (probable) expletive with a stiff poke of his finger into Kipple's chest.

Cigar smoke billows from Caruso's nostrils as he turns and spots a new target for his ire. Private Logan.

The growling Caruso points to Logan, then he points to the distant town, then he points back to Logan.

Logan gulps, nods, and salutes. He runs off, but clearly he isn't too happy about this sudden turn of events.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. TRUCK - DAY**

Logan is alone at the wheel as the truck lumbers into town and approaches the inexplicably dormant bomb.

**EXT. NOWHERESVILLE - DAY**

Logan climbs down from the cab and examines the situation.

Clearly visible, a large cable dangles loose and unplugged.

Logan finds this odd, but he reconnects the cable and the device immediately roars back to life, with roiling steam and its warm, orange glow.

He pulls a walkie-talkie from his hip, keys the mike, and reports in with a voice like crisply popping bubble wrap.

He winces and pulls the device from his ear as an angry stream of Caruso garble spews from the speaker.

Logan responds briefly, reattaches the walkie-talkie to his hip, and turns back to the truck.

But something SQUEAKS underfoot. He looks down.

It's the squeaky bone.

Confused, he stoops to lift the toy.

When he looks up, disbelief, then shock, etch his face.

The population of Nowheresville stands before him. An angry mob, but silent and still and resolute.

The bone toy slips from his hand. Squeak.

**EXT. TEST SITE - DAY**

Caruso peers through a pair of binoculars.

**CARUSO'S POV**

The truck rumbles back through the gates of the testing site, plumes of dust trailing behind it.

**BACK TO SCENE**

Caruso lowers the binoculars and turns to Kipple, who examines the dials and gives him a thumbs-up.

Caruso smiles now, then turns and gives a big thumbs-up to someone else, somewhere distant, who remains unseen.

Caruso's signal triggers an automated, feminine voice that booms from everywhere all at once, like the mighty OZ.

The only voice we'll actually understand.

COUNTDOWN (O.S.)  
Commencing ignition protocols.  
Please ensure that eye protection  
is firmly in place. Thermogenesis  
will commence in 1 minute.

**EXT. NOWHERESVILLE - DAY**

The inhabitants are gathered in the street, in a circle, hands held, like Whos in Whoville.

Billy looks up at his mother. She looks down to him.

**EXT. TEST SITE - DAY**

A smiling Caruso approaches the cab of Logan's truck.

COUNTDOWN (O.S.)  
Thermogenesis in 30 seconds.

Reaching the window, Caruso stops, thoroughly confused.

That's not Logan behind the wheel. It's a plastic man.

Perfectly still, hands on the wheel, it's Dad.

COUNTDOWN (O.S.)  
20 seconds.

Now Caruso turns at the sound of commotion from the back of the truck. Kicking and muffled screams.

Caruso steps to the cargo area in back and lifts the tarp.

The cigar drops from his lips.

COUNTDOWN (O.S.)  
10 seconds.

Logan is there in the back, bound and gagged.

Behind Logan, the bomb buzzes and steams.



**EXT. NOWHERESVILLE - DAY**

The townspeople remain linked in a circle. But there is no bomb there in their street. They all look to the horizon.

COUNTDOWN (O.S.)

5...

**EXT. TEST SITE - DAY**

Logan locks terrified eyes with Caruso.

COUNTDOWN (O.S.)

4...

Caruso looks back to Kipple, busy with his knobs and dials.

**EXT. THE BLEACHERS - DAY**

All but one of the spectators are in protective eye-wear.

COUNTDOWN (O.S.)

3...

The grinning orange man still has his goggles atop his head.

**EXT. TEST SITE - DAY**

Kipple turns as he hears Caruso screaming O.S.

COUNTDOWN (O.S.)

2...

Caruso runs toward him flailing maniacally.

**DAD**

Still in the truck, he closes his eyes. A single tear rolls down his plastic cheek.

COUNTDOWN (O.S.)

1...

**MOM**

She closes her eyes.

Her face is flooded with light.

**EXT. NOWHERESVILLE - DAY**

The townsfolk watch in unison as a fierce explosion blossoms on the horizon. The sound reaches them a moment later, and howling winds a moment after that.

From afar, it is a beautiful, perfect hemisphere of blinding, white annihilation.

**MOM**

A single tear rolls down her cheek. A match for Dad's.

She opens her eyes and fiery Armageddon is reflected there.

**FADE OUT.**