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the day after tomorrow

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"The global warming debate... is over: Global warming is here."

-- Joel Lang,
Northeast Magazine

The countries of the world will only make peace when they are threatened by invaders from outer space. Or global climate change.

--Ross Gelbspan
"The Heat is On"

FADE IN:

EXT. ANTARCTICA - DAY

We fly over an endless white landscape.

A few specks of color in the distance increase gradually in size as we approach. Eventually we can make out tents, equipment and figures moving around.

An American flag snaps in the icy wind.

SUPER: LARSEN B ICE SHELF, ANTARCTICA

A high pitched whirring sound. Two figures in arctic gear stand beside a machine for boring ice cores. It resembles an oil drilling rig only smaller.

FRANK (40s, tough as nails) stops the drill and turns the controls over to JASON, a grad student.

FRANK

You see how it's done?

JASON

Yeah, I think I've got the hang of it.

FRANK

You better. The boss will chew my head off if these cores get messed up.

Frank steps aside. Jason takes over drilling.

INT. TENT - DAY

PROFESSOR ADRIAN HALL (45) is bent over a microscope examining a THREE FOOT ICE CORE. He's a world-renowned climatologist but his accent and attitude are pure Texas roughneck.

Frank enters and sets down more ice cores in metal tubes.

FRANK

We're at twenty-six feet.

Adrian looks up from the eyepiece. He listens.

ADRIAN

You let Jason operate the drill?

FRANK

C'mon boss. He can handle it.

EXT. DRILLING SITE - DAY

Jason concentrates on the slowly turning drill. He notices a small CRACK appear in the ice directly in front of him. Concerned, he stops the drill.

A CRACKING SOUND remains. And begins to grow. Jason examines the ice before him, puzzled at how such a small crack could make such a large noise.

As he bends, REVEAL the real source of the noise:

A BIG crack in the ice has opened up several feet BEHIND HIM! This crack snakes its way through the entire camp, disappearing out of sight.

The ground trembles and the sound increases in volume.

Adrian rushes out of the tent followed by Frank.

JASON
It's not my fault!

Some other RESEARCHERS are shouting behind him. Jason turns and sees the REAL OPENING in the ice. He looks back at his feet; the smaller crack outlines the drill.

JASON (CONT'D)
Oh shit--

CRASH! The ice beneath the drill falls five feet down into a sinkhole the size of a car!

Terrified, Jason clings to the heavy drill. Adrian appears above him, shouting through cupped hands.

ADRIAN
Let go of the drill! It's gone!

Jason is too confused to listen. Adrian reaches down and hauls him out by the hood of his parka. He deposits Jason like a sack of potatoes then turns to the others.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
(shouting over the noise)
All right people, let's move. I want everything on the South bank. Core samples first.

Frank doesn't need instruction. He's already carrying an armful of the metal tubes to safety.

CONTINUED:

The others hurriedly move items as the crack opens up, splitting the camp in two. The ground shakes and the sound grows even louder as tremendous force separates tons of ice.

The gap is now several feet. Jason stands in a daze near the edge and watches the drill disappear forever.

There are still more cores on the far side but the crack is growing dangerously wide.

Adrian sees the cores and Jason standing across from them.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
Jason! Get those samples!

Jason doesn't move. Adrian races past, brushing him aside and leaps over the crevice without pausing.

Adrian scoops up the ice cores, then turns to go back.

What started as a crack in the surface has opened into a canyon five feet across and growing. Hundreds of yards below is deep, blue water.

Adrian's terrified crew urge him to drop the samples. Adrian grips them tighter, takes a running start, leaps...

And lands. Just at that moment the ice shakes violently. Adrian is thrown to the ground. He slides helplessly back toward the chasm.

Swoosh! The ice cores slide almost silently off the precipice. They tumble through space in free fall.

Adrian slides after them, scrambling desperately...

THWACK! As he pitches over the edge, Adrian drives his axe into the ice. He dangles there as the last of his precious samples hits the icy water far below with a tiny splash.

Only now do WE PULL BACK for a full overview of the scene: the scale is breathtaking. The opening stretches as far as the eye can see in either direction; the entire ICE SHELF has broken off. Two hundred and forty square miles of ice, hundreds of feet thick, is sliding out to sea.

Frank hauls Adrian to safety. All they can do is watch in amazement and humility.

PULL AWAY FROM THE EARTH'S SURFACE in ever widening SHOTS...
Antarctica... the Southern Hemisphere... PLANET EARTH.

EXT. SPACE

WE LOOK DOWN at our blue-green world from a God's eye view.

The INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION floats into frame, spinning softly. WE PAN with it for a moment and when it clears, all that's left is the infinite blackness studded with stars.

SUPER: FOUR MONTHS LATER

The SPACE STATION floats back into frame. A RUSSIAN ASTRONAUT in a space suit works on one of the panels.

He pauses to look down on our planet. A giant glowing orb suspended in space. The widest patch of blue on the surface is the Pacific Ocean. In the center is a SWIRL OF WHITE.

RUSSIAN ASTRONAUT

Parker, you remember how I tell you we watch storms from Mir?

INT. INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION - CONTINUOUS

There are three astronauts: two American and one Japanese.

PARKER

Several times, Yuri.
(imitating a Russian accent)
Mowst incredible sight!

EXT. SPACE SHUTTLE - CONTINUOUS

The Russian smiles at the imitation. It's all in fun.

PARKER (V.O.)

I've been up here six weeks now and I still haven't seen one.

RUSSIAN ASTRONAUT

Look out window. Even you could not miss hurricane this big.

PUSH IN ON EARTH.. the CAMERA begins to spin, slowly at first, then faster as we approach the storm clouds. Like we are being sucked into the hurricane's enormous vortex..

EXT. THE PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

A WP-3 Orion turboprop reconnaissance plane plows through howling winds and blinding rain.

WE COME CLOSE enough to read the lettering on the side:

CONTINUED:

"NOAA: WP3 HURRICANE HUNTER"

INT. HURRICANE HUNTER - DAY

CMDR. DANIELS pilots the specially modified plane. Four SCIENTISTS from NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) operate the high tech equipment.

The plane is buffeted by a serious downdraft.

SCIENTIST #1

Are we going to keep getting tossed around like this?

DANIELS

Not much longer. Once we dive in there's less bounce, more shake. Don't have any loose fillings, do ya?

SCIENTIST #1

Very reassuring. Thank you.

DANIELS

(into his radio)

NCEP, this is RECON ONE do you read me?

INT. NCEP CONTROL ROOM - DAY

An open bullpen with scientists moving constantly among banks of monitors, radar displays, etc.

SUPER: NATIONAL CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PREDICTION,
(NCEP) CAMP SPRINGS, MD

JANET CHU is the science officer on the radio with Daniels.

JANET

Go ahead RECON ONE.

DANIELS (V.O.)

We may lose you in a few moments. Do you have updated stats for us?

Janet sees another SCIENCE OFFICER walking toward her fast with a print out.

JANET

We're just getting them.

SCIENCE OFFICER

Take a look at this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Janet takes the paper and stares at it for a beat. Her face registers her astonishment.

DANIELS (V.O.)
Are you still there, NCEP?

JANET
Uh... RECON ONE, our readings show
windspeeds of over two hundred miles per
hour.

INT. HURRICANE HUNTER - DAY

Daniels turns in his seat.

DANIELS
Buckle up, people.

Scientist #1 is concerned.

SCIENTIST #1
How much stress can this plane withstand?

Daniels and his CO-PILOT exchange a glance. They don't answer.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

The Hurricane Hunter appears tiny as it approaches the massive storm. Radio transmitting DROPWINDSONDES are dropped from the plane to take readings.

INT. HURRICANE HUNTER - DAY

Through the windshield dark clouds obscure everything.

The plane plunges forward blindly. The speedometer creeps up as the wind pushes the plane. The instrument panel begins to shake violently.

CO-PILOT
We're at two hundred and ten... Two-
twenty... Two thirty...

Daniels struggles with the control stick.

CO-PILOT (CONT'D)
Two forty-five!

DANIELS
We go over two-fifty and the wings are
going to come off!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED :

The plane is on the verge of breaking up when..

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

The Hurricane Hunter bursts through the storm wall into the eye of the storm! A tiny silver speck against the towering walls of dark streaked clouds.

Shafts of sunlight penetrate the monumental cyclone of water droplets like it's the Grand Canyon. An awesome sight.

INT. HURRICANE HUNTER - CONTINUOUS

SCIENTIST #2
Have you ever seen spiral banding like this? Unbelievable.

SCIENTIST #1
(shakes his head)
Let's hope she never makes land.

EXT. KONA BEACH LIFEGUARD STATION, HAWAII - DUSK

A lone lifeguard station on a deserted beach. Gale force winds bend palm trees like pretzels.

A WIND METER spins furiously.

INT. KONA LIFEGUARD STATION - CONTINUOUS

The L.E.D. display shows the wind speed climbing: 80... 85... 90...

A BATTERY POWERED RADIO crackles..

HONOLULU OFFICE (V.O.)
Calling all stations: evacuate beach areas immediately. Repeat. Evacuate all beach areas immediately.

PICK UP a weathered old LIFEGUARD as he crosses in front of the RADIO. He is throwing items in a bag, hurrying to leave.

He takes a last look at the L.E.D. display. It suddenly reads zero. He taps it. Nothing. He looks out the window.

The wind meter has blown away.

INT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The lifeguard throws his bag into the cab of his PICK UP and opens the garage door. Outside, the wind screams.

CONTINUED:

He gets in the truck and turns the key. It sputters and refuses to turn over. His face registers concern. He tries again. No dice.

An aluminum trash can blows into the garage and bounces off the truck. Beginning to panic, the lifeguard cranks the engine hard a third time. To his relief, it starts.

Then... RRRRIP! The entire garage is blown apart like a stack of twigs.

The lifeguard is left completely exposed. He stomps on the gas and takes off.

As he races along the beach road, wood-frame vacation homes go down like dominoes on the ocean side.

The lifeguard doesn't stop. He drives like a bat out of hell. Until an uprooted PALM TREE flies right into his path...

SMACK! It shears off half the hood and lodges under the tires. Miraculously, the lifeguard is unharmed. He struggles out to clear the obstacle.

In the background, WE SEE his entire LIFEGUARD STATION torn from its foundations and lifted into the air.

The lifeguard is hanging onto the truck, fighting the wind, when all of a sudden he looks up...

The LIFEGUARD STATION comes down on top of him with a deafening crash!

CUT TO:

INT. ADRIAN'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Silence... WE HEAR a key in the door.

Shafts of sunlight filter through the curtains and light up floating dust particles. Books and papers clutter every available surface.

WE HEAR THREE TEENAGERS enter the house.

BRIAN (V.O.)

--no way Peterson's class is harder than Kline's.

LAURA (V.O.)

Fourteen people in her class took the AP exam.

CONTINUED:

BRIAN (V.O.)

Yeah but how many passed?

SAM (17, sullen, smart, cocky and insecure all at once) leads them into the living room. He drops his book bag carelessly on a chair.

SAM

Who cares? Do you think you'll remember whether or not you passed AP Bio ten years from now?

LAURA (17) is pretty, serious and confident she knows what she wants out of life. BRIAN is a year younger and desperate for approval.

BRIAN

Where are we supposed to sit?

Sam sweeps a pile of National Geographics off the sofa and disappears into the kitchen.

LAURA

Does your Dad know you come here when he's out of town?

SAM (O.S.)

Yeah. I'm watering his plants for him.

Laura touches the dry soil in the pot of a very dead African violet. She shakes her head, sits down and unpacks her books.

Brian admires an antique ASTROLABE.

Sam reenters with a plastic bag and some small papers.

LAURA

I think we should start with econ and then tackle art. We need to-- what are you doing?

Sam has begun rolling a JOINT.

SAM

Science experiment. Thought we could do a little research on that old short-term-memory hypothesis.

LAURA

I don't care what you got on your SATs; you don't have that many brain cells to spare.

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

Latin word for brain cells: glia.

LAURA

New York is in four days.

SAM

It's not the Olympics; they're not going to take blood tests.

BRIAN

Academic Decathlon sounds like it should be an Olympic event.

SAM

It's a ridiculous name.

LAURA

You think "Quiz Bowl" is better?

SAM

They should call it "Glorified Trivial Pursuit."

LAURA

If it's so meaningless, why'd you join the team, Sam?

Sam shrugs and lights the joint.

SAM

Because life is essentially meaningless.

BRIAN

(a la Jeopardy)

Existential philosophers for five hundred. Who is Jean-Paul Sartre.

Laura closes her book and gives Sam a hard stare.

LAURA

You want to get high, or do you want to get ready for New York?

Sam holds the hit he's just taken. He stubs out the joint and exhales.

SAM

(a high voice)

All right, all right. I'm putting it out.

EXT. U.N. BUILDING, GENEVA - DAY

A police cordon holds back crowds of DEMONSTRATORS waving placards of all sorts: pro-trade, pro-union; pro-environment... Greenpeace is here in force.

SUPER: U.N. CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL WARMING, GENEVA

INT. CONFERENCE HALL, GENEVA - DAY

Adrian addresses a panel of diplomats. He wears a name tag that identifies him as a NOAA research professor.

ADRIAN

...and so when polar ice melts, less sunlight is reflected from the earth's surface. As a result, the atmosphere warms up, melting more ice, trapping more heat, melting more ice and so on. It's what we call a positive feedback loop. It can lead to runaway warming. About ten thousand years ago it caused a major climate shift.

TERRY RAPSON (65), a frumpy English scientist standing to one side interrupts politely.

RAPSON

Excuse me Professor, but wasn't the Pleistocene event a cooling trend?

ADRIAN

Yes, but it was brought about by natural greenhouse warming that destabilized the climate.

The SAUDI delegate is hostile to Adrian's testimony.

SAUDI DELEGATE

How does what happened ten thousand years ago relate to the weather today?

ADRIAN

(patient)

I'm talking about climate, sir, not weather. The weather changes every hour. The climate changes over thousands of years.

KUWAITI DELEGATE

Thousands of years? You expect us to sign this treaty to prevent something a thousand years from now?

CONTINUED:

ADRIAN

I don't expect you to sign anything. I'm a scientist, not a politician.

A slick, silver-haired MAN sitting behind the U.S.A. placard smiles. He is BECKER, the President's Special Advisor.

BECKER

Come now, Professor; we all know that when it comes to global warming, science is politics.

ADRIAN

All I know are the facts, Mr. Becker.

Adrian ticks them off.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

The Greenland ice sheet has lost one meter per year since '92. There was open water over the North Pole in '98 and again in 2001. Now the Larsen shelf is gone. The ice is melting.

Becker stares at Adrian coolly.

BECKER

Are you aware how much this treaty would cost the industrial world, Professor Hall? Billions of dollars; that means millions of jobs. The global economy is every bit as fragile, complex and vital to human existence as the global climate. You'd do well to keep that in mind before making sensationalist claims.

ADRIAN

Well, the last chunk of ice that broke off was about the size of Rhode Island. Some people'd say that is pretty sensational.

Several members of the panel chuckle. Becker does not smile.

EXT. CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

The doors swing open and Adrian pushes through the throng of demonstrators. An ACTIVIST spots Adrian's badge.

GERARD

Professor Hall! My name is Gerard Dubois. I'm with Greenpeace.

CONTINUED:

He extends his hand. Adrian does not take it.

GERARD (CONT'D)

Would you have any interest in speaking
at our--

ADRIAN

No I wouldn't.

Adrian brushes past him. He has no use for people out to
save the world.

He is barely clear of the demonstrators when Rapson catches
up with him. He struggles to keep up.

RAPSON

I enjoyed your testimony, Professor.
Very spirited.

Adrian continues on, barely looking at him.

ADRIAN

That's what we're here for, right? Put
on a good show. God forbid any real work
gets done.

RAPSON

Hm. Quite. I hate to break that rule but
I was wondering if I could talk to you
about the paper you published two months
ago? My name is Terry Rapson.

Adrian stops in his tracks and extends his hand.

ADRIAN

Professor Rapson of the Hadley Institute?
I had no idea. I've read your work on
deep thermal currents.

RAPSON

If you're not in a rush, perhaps we could
chat about some of the overlap-- your
theory on abrupt climate shift for
instance?

ADRIAN

All right. One question though. Do you
know how to order a regular coffee in
French? They keep giving me these
thimblefuls of battery acid.

RAPSON

I might be able to help.

CONTINUED: (2)

The two head off together.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - DAY

START ON an ESTABLISHING SHOT OF MANHATTAN and PUSH IN THROUGH the window of a high rise to discover...

GARY: a young, pin-striped "master of the universe." He sits at a desk in the bullpen talking on his cordless phone.

GARY

No, no, no you listen to me. I get you two hundred shares at two and a quarter and then you thank me. That's what you do. You thank me cause I just put a hundred grand in your pocket. Do you hear what I'm saying-- hold on I've got to take this. Gary here. Kazuo? I'll call you back on the cell, all right?

Gary stands.

GARY (CONT'D)

Partridge, I gotta run. Make up your mind by noon or forget about it.

Gary rips off his headset. He turns to the broker at the desk next to his: TONY (thick-necked, dull).

GARY (CONT'D)

Cover for me.

TONY

(complains)

C'mon, man. I'm busy.

The broker at the next desk is PAUL (balding, shy).

PAUL

I'll do it.

Gary slaps him on the back and makes for the exit.

The boss, BOB (60s) steps out of the corner office.

BOB

Where you headed Gary?

Gary mimes a cigarette without breaking stride. Bob frowns as he watches him go. He turns to his secretary.

CONTINUED:

BOB (CONT'D)

Set up a meeting for me and Gary this week. I need to have a talk with him.

EXT. TOKYO - DAY

A tumble of futuristic glass and steel towers rise seemingly on top of one other from the crowded maze of concrete and asphalt below.

SUPER: TOKYO

The sky is so dark it virtually blocks out the sun.

KAZUO (Japanese businessman) stands under the awning of an outdoor noodle stand. His cell phone rings.

KAZUO

Hello... Gary? Yes, the funds are ready.
Wait a moment.

Kazuo steps into the street, trying to get better reception.

EXT. DOWNTOWN NEW YORK STREET - DAY

The sun is beating down in New York as Gary walks along the street, his phone jammed up against his ear.

LUTHER (homeless but not crazy) falls into step and starts his patter.

LUTHER

Hey man, how's it goin'? Nice shoes.
Shoes say a lot about a man--

GARY

(over him)
Are you there, Kazuo?

LUTHER

--bet your momma's proud of you. You should call her up, say hello. Never know how much time you got in this world, you know? Okay, you busy, I see that. How about helpin' a brother out with a small bidness loan? Say a dollar? Maybe two?

GARY

(irritated)
Get a job.

CONTINUED:

LUTHER

I had a job, brother. Jus' like you: shiny shoes, big office, secretaries, all that shit. I'll tell you what; it's the secretaries did me in. Take my advice man, steer clear of those secretaries.

Gary walks away from Luther.

GARY

Kazuo?

LUTHER

(after him)

Don't forget to call your momma.

GARY

Listen they're going to announce the merger tomorrow. Use multiple accounts to buy the shares on the NIKKEI.

EXT. NARROW BUSINESS STREET, TOKYO - DAY

A POLICE CAR with a BLARING LOUDSPEAKER mounted on the roof tries to weave its way through the chaotic traffic. The street is clogged with people paying no attention. The wind is blowing hard. Shop owners are boarding up windows.

Kazuo walks hunched over, phone pressed tightly to his ear, oblivious to what is going on around him.

KAZUO

(shouts into the phone)

How many shares can we get away with per account?

GARY (V.O.)

Anything over a thousand would be a red flag for the SEC. You're doing it all off shore, right?

There is a loud THUNK. The POLICEMAN gets out of his car and looks at a small crater in his hood. ANOTHER THUNK.

HAILSTONES the size of GRAPEFRUITS are falling.

A windshield shatters.

Suddenly, the policeman collapses to his knees, blood gushing from his forehead.

Horns blare. Total panic as everyone runs for cover.

CONTINUED:

Two screaming women seek shelter under a flimsy awning. Seconds later a NEON sign above explodes. Falling glass and sparks rain down on them.

A YOUNG BOY crawls under a GARBAGE TRUCK to take shelter. The truck rocks from side to side as the hail comes down in an ever faster drum roll.

The noise is deafening.

EXT. DOWNTOWN NEW YORK STREET - DAY

Gary is still on the line.

GARY

What the hell is going on there?

EXT. NARROW BUSINESS STREET, TOKYO - DAY

Kazuo is not listening. He sees where the boy is sheltering beneath the truck and makes a run for the safe spot.

He's almost there when CRACK! A hailstone the size of a bowling ball breaks his spine.

THE BOY'S POV from under the truck..

GARY (V.O.)

Kazuo? Are you there...?

Hailstones bounce around a bloody cell phone.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - SUNSET

Sudden silence. The profound silence of the deep.

SUPER: THE NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

Follow a heavy and rust covered chain from its anchor on the ocean floor up, up to a BUOY, bobbing on the surface.

WE BREAK the surface and reveal the lonely buoy blinking forlornly on a rough sea. Lightning flashes.

EXT. HADLEY CENTER - SUNSET

AN OLD CAR makes its way up a winding road. It heads toward a brick building on a remote bluff. The only remarkable feature is the large number of satellite dishes on the roof.

CONTINUED:

SUPER: HADLEY CENTER FOR CLIMATE PREDICTION AND
RESEARCH, NORTHERN ENGLAND

INT. HADLEY CENTER - SUNSET

Data run over a computer screen. A blinking warning signal flashes, it's faint bleat almost drowned by the hum of hard drives and air conditioning.

PULL BACK to REVEAL a dimly lit control room.

DENNIS (from Manchester, a soccer fan) is bathed in the dull glow of his computer monitor. A small television on his desk shows a soccer match with the volume turned down. A loud snoring sound comes from behind another computer.

DENNIS

Simon, you're snoring.

No reaction. Dennis slides his chair over to where his colleague SIMON (30s) has fallen asleep reading a book. Dennis takes the book and snaps it closed loudly under Simon's nose.

Simon jerks awake.

SIMON

I just closed my eyes for a moment.

Dennis shakes his head and returns to his place. Simon gets up and drags himself across the room to the coffee pot.

SIMON (CONT'D)

The baby kept us up all night.

The coffee pot is empty. Simon contemplates brewing a new pot. That's when he notices the faint warning bleep.

He locates the source among the banks of switches, then bends to examine the printout scrolling onto the floor.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Where is Nomad buoy forty-three eleven?

DENNIS

Georges Bank. Why?

SIMON

It's showing a temperature drop of twelve degrees.

CONTINUED:

DENNIS

That's rough seas out there. Must have knocked it about.

SIMON

We'll have to file a request to have it fixed.

Simon walks back to the coffee maker to start a pot.

The door opens and Professor Rapson enters the control room.

DENNIS

Welcome home, Professor. How was Geneva?

RAPSON

Oh you know how these scientific conferences are boys. All dancing girls, wine and parties. Anything interesting happen while I was gone?

DENNIS

We thought we detected an earthquake, but it was just Simon snoring.

Rapson laughs. In the corner, the warning light still flashes.

INT. NOAA BASEMENT OFFICE - DAY

Shelves of Arctic gear and clothing line the walls. The room opens into the freezer where the ice cores are stored.

Jason sits with his feet up on a desk reading the funnies. Frank is stowing gear. They both wear winter coats.

FRANK

You should be cataloguing those samples. The boss won't be happy if they're not done by the time he gets back.

JASON

He flies in today; he'll be completely jet lagged. No way he makes it in before tomorrow. Even Taskmaster Hall has to sleep.

Unfortunately for Jason he cannot see that Adrian has just walked into the room behind him.

ADRIAN

Are you sure about that?

CONTINUED:

Jason turns. He opens his mouth to apologize...

Adrian walks past him. FOLLOW Adrian into the freezer.

Row upon row of ice cores are stored like bottles of wine in a cellar. Adrian slides out a sample to examine it.

He turns to see A MAN in a suit striding toward him: his boss, NOAA director TOM GOMEZ. He doesn't look happy.

GOMEZ

Adrian!

ADRIAN

Hi Tom--

GOMEZ

I just spoke to Becker.

Adrian feigns innocence.

ADRIAN

Oh. How's he doing?

Gomez lets out a big sigh.

GOMEZ

Of all people... why'd you have to get on Becker's bad side?

ADRIAN

'Cause my seventeen year-old kid knows more science than he does.

GOMEZ

Yeah, but your kid doesn't control our budget. It doesn't matter if he hates you.

Gomez turns and walks away, exasperated.

ADRIAN

My kid doesn't hate me.

Adrian stares after his departing boss. A flicker of self-doubt crosses his face regarding that last statement...

CUT TO:

INT. ADRIAN'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Sam sits on the sofa channel surfing. He's smoking a joint.

CONTINUED:

Suddenly the TV shuts off. Sam turns to see his father standing behind the sofa, his suitcase in one hand, the remote in the other.

Sam coughs and sputters and stubs out the joint.

SAM

Oh, hey Dad. Shit, I forgot you were coming back. Um, how was your trip?

A beat.

ADRIAN

How long have you been doing drugs?

Sam lets out a big sigh. He rolls his eyes.

SAM

It's not drugs, it's just pot.

ADRIAN

Pot is a drug.

SAM

Don't turn this into an after school special, Dad.

Adrian stares at him for minute, uncertain how to handle this. He decides not to handle it.

He walks across the room without saying a word and begins to sort through his mail. Sam watches him.

After a few moments, Sam can't take the waiting.

SAM (CONT'D)

Okay, let's get it over with. This is the part where you're supposed to start yelling at me and acting all outraged.

ADRIAN

I'm not outraged. I'm just disappointed. That's all.

Adrian leafs through his mail. His calmness infuriates Sam.

SAM

(challenging)

You smoked pot in college.

ADRIAN

In college. A few times. But I didn't let it interfere with my schoolwork.

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

My grades are fine.

ADRIAN

If you want to settle for B's and C's that's your business.

SAM

I'm not you, okay? School's not my thing.

ADRIAN

What is your thing? Dope?

SAM

Nobody calls it dope anymore, Dad.

Adrian tosses the mail down and marches over to Sam.

ADRIAN

Listen to me, if you want to poison your body that's your choice. But I will not have a son of mine contributing money to the drug trade. Do you understand me?

SAM

I'm not contributing anything to the drug trade.

ADRIAN

Then where did you get the pot?

A beat. Sam looks down.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

I asked you a question, Sam. Where did you get the pot?

CUT TO:

INT. ADRIAN'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

The door opens to reveal row upon row of marijuana plants growing under heat lamps.

Adrian stares in disbelief. Sam looks over his shoulder sheepishly.

SAM

You never use your basement...

A beat. Adrian is at a loss.

CONTINUED:

ADRIAN

I'm calling your mother.

INT. GEORGETOWN HOSPITAL - DAY

ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN and DR. LUCY HALL strides out followed by an INTERN. TRACK WITH THEM down a corridor.

INTERN

The Pediatric ICU keeps paging; they say they need you in ten minutes.

LUCY

I need Gordon's biopsy results.

Another RESIDENT emerges from a room and buttonholes her.

RESIDENT

Can you spare five minutes, Doctor?

LUCY

Not really.

Lucy's phone rings. She hands it to the intern absently.

RESIDENT

I've got a five year-old with neoplasms of the spinal meninges...

Lucy takes a chart from him as they walk and examines it.

INTERN

(holds out the phone)

It's your ex-husband. Says he needs to talk to you.

LUCY

Tell him I'll have to call back.

INT. ADRIAN'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Adrian paces, holding the cordless phone. A pause.

ADRIAN

Tell her it's about our son.

Adrian waits. Sam watches with amused detachment.

SAM

Say I'm in jail.

CONTINUED:

ADRIAN
(covers the mouthpiece)
Did I ask for your advice?

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Lucy walks away from the bustle for a modicum of privacy.

LUCY
He's in jail?

ADRIAN (V.O.)
No, but I came home tonight to find him
smoking pot in my living room.

LUCY
He told me he was going to stop.

ADRIAN (V.O.)
You knew he was smoking pot? Why didn't
you tell me?

LUCY
Please Adrian, you've been gone for six
months. What do you expect? It's not
like you two have long father-son chats
over the satellite phone from Antarctica.

INT. ADRIAN'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

ADRIAN
(rubs his eyes wearily)
So what are we going to do about this?

LUCY (V.O.)
He's supposed to go to New York tomorrow
for the Academic Decathlon.

Adrian looks up at Sam.

ADRIAN
They made it to the finals? That's
great.

LUCY (V.O.)
I was going to suggest we not let him go.
As a punishment.

Adrian hesitates.

ADRIAN
Not let him go to the finals? That seems
a little severe.

CONTINUED:

He turns away from Sam and lowers his voice.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

After all, it's not really drugs; it's just pot.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE - DAY

PAN ACROSS A ROW OF SEATS. Brian plays around on his laptop. Laura has her books open. Sam is asleep with headphones on.

A small BUMP wakes him up. He yawns. Laura looks at him with irritation. He should be studying too.

THWUUMP! A bigger air pocket. This time the FASTEN SEAT BELT SIGN lights up with a DING.

BRIAN

If that happens again I'm going to be sick.

LAURA

Turn the other way.

SAM

Relax. The turbulence can't be that bad as long as they're still serving drinks.

BUMP, BUMP, SLAM! Glasses spill, a few people gasp. The flight attendants shove the carts toward their stations just short of a run.

PILOT (V.O.)

Folks, we seem to be passing through a bit of turbulence. Please remain in your seats with your seat belts fastened. Put your seats and tray tables in the up--

His words are cut off as a heavy JOLT goes through the plane; they drop... a sickening plunge down, down, down...

Laura instinctively clutches Sam's hand, white knuckled.

WHAM! When they hit bottom all the overhead compartments fly open. An explosion of bags, coats and burst luggage.

Oxygen masks drop. Passengers scream.

The plane skids along with teeth rattling vibrations like a shopping cart over gravel.

CONTINUED:

The plane struggles to climb out of the turbulence.

Finally it levels out and the noise dies down. Sam looks over at Laura. The color slowly returns to her face.

When she realizes it's over, she becomes aware that she is still gripping Sam's hand. She releases it. There are white marks where her fingers were.

LAURA

Sorry.

Sam rubs his hand and smiles it off.

INT. HADLEY CENTER - DAY

The control room is dim and quiet as before. Rapson is at his desk, perusing a scientific journal. He hears a faint BEEPING.

He walks over to the bank of data monitors and spots a BLINKING LIGHT. Like Simon, he bends to read the printout.

RAPSON

That's very odd. This buoy is registering a thirteen degree drop in ocean temperature.

Simon wheels his chair back from his desk.

SIMON

That went off the other day. I forgot to tell you. I'll put in a call to see if there are any ships near Georges Bank to get it.

Rapson tears off the paper and walks to a chart.

RAPSON

This buoy isn't in Georges Bank. It's just off Greenland.

SIMON

What?

Simon pushes out of his chair and comes over to see for himself. He looks over Rapson's shoulder, then goes and tears off the printout of the first buoy's data stream.

He brings it to Rapson.

SIMON (CONT'D)

What are odds of two buoys failing?

CONTINUED:

Rapson points at another red light that has begun to flash.

RAPSON

Make that three.

They are both concerned. Very concerned.

EXT. LAUNCH PAD, CAPE CANAVERAL - DAY

The SPACE SHUTTLE ATLANTIS is silhouetted against turbulent clouds. A thunderstorm rages. Lightning forks the sky.

INT. NASA MISSION CONTROL, HOUSTON - DAY

A PIECE OF PAPER is torn from a telex machine. FOLLOW the message as A JUNIOR SCIENTIST carries it down a corridor, into the main control room and delivers it to...

THE FLIGHT DIRECTOR. The Flight Director reads the paper and frowns. He turns to the COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR.

FLIGHT DIRECTOR

Get me Alpha.

INT. INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Parker is at the console when it comes to life.

FLIGHT DIRECTOR (V.O.)

Alpha, this is Houston. The launch has been delayed due to bad weather.

PARKER

Roger that, Houston. How long is it delayed for?

FLIGHT DIRECTOR (V.O.)

(pause)

Indefinitely. You might want to conserve your toilet paper.

Parker smiles. Then he glances over at the JAPANESE ASTRONAUT, HIDEKI.

PARKER

Uh... Houston, do you have any more news on Tokyo?

A beat.

FLIGHT DIRECTOR (V.O.)

That's a negative, Alpha. Sorry.

CONTINUED:

Parker looks over at Hideki sympathetically. He tried. Hideki turns and look out the window at earth..

From this distance all is so calm and peaceful..

EXT. NEW YORK - DAY

The city is sweltering.

INT. PINWOOD SCHOOL, GYMNASIUM, NYC - DAY

The bleachers are filled to capacity; on the gym floor a series of tables has been spaced widely apart facing a single podium. Everything is dramatically lit from above.

A team of three students sits at each table, their school names draped on banners over the front. Sam, Laura and Brian represent "Silver Spring High."

REFEREE

In 1532, Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro defeated this Incan Emperor at the Peruvian highland town of Cajamarca. What is his name?

The teams all huddle close to consult in whispers. Laura is the team captain; she sits in the center.

BRIAN

Montezuma?

LAURA

Montezuma was in Mexico, not Peru. No it's Ama-- something. Or Anta--?

Laura clicks her pen, straining hard to remember.

SAM

Atahualpa.

LAURA

That's it.

Laura writes excitedly.

REFEREE

Time.

At each table, a JUDGE steps from behind and takes the written answer from the team captain.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

Correct answers?

CONTINUED:

Down the row of tables only two JUDGES raise their hands: Silver Spring High and the Pinewood School.

The CAPTAIN of the Pinewood team, J.D., looks over and makes eye contact with Laura. He tips his head in salute.

Laura looks away. Above them, the scoreboard shows Pinewood and Silver Spring tied for the lead.

INT. PINEWOOD DINING HALL - NIGHT

A well-appointed wood panelled room. The kids from the competition wear jackets, ties and name tags.

A punch bowl, appetizers, big band. Not Sam's scene.

SAM

This is so retro it might actually be cool if it were on purpose.

BRIAN

(looks around)

Yeah. It's like Revenge of the Nerds.

Brian bobs his head to the music and pushes his glasses up his nose, oblivious to the fact that all he's missing is a propeller beanie. Sam watches him and shakes his head.

Laura pushes through the crowd. She looks stunning (and surprisingly hip) in an antique dress.

LAURA

Isn't this place incredible? Can you believe this is their cafeteria?

Sam tries not to stare.

SAM

I suppose it's all right for "nineteenth century robber baron" decor.

Laura notices that Sam has altered his name tag to read: "SATAN."

LAURA

I like your name tag. Very fifth grade.

Sam makes a face at her.

BRIAN

We really kicked some prep school butt today, didn't we?

CONTINUED:

Laura turns to Brian.

LAURA

We did all right. But we have to stay focused; it can all slip away tomorrow.

J.D.

I just got finished telling my team the same thing. You played a great first round.

Laura turns to see J.D.-- slick, good-looking and rich. Sam already hates him. He offers Laura his hand.

LAURA

Thanks. So did you. These are my teammates.

J.D.

Welcome to New York. I'm J.D.

SAM

J.D. You aren't named after one of the Backstreet Boys by any chance, are you?

J.D.

(deadpan)

Nice name tag. You should meet my little brother. You guys could swap booger jokes.

Laura and Brian laugh. Sam does not have a come back.

LAURA

Your school is amazing. I can't believe the wood carvings on the doors.

J.D.

You should see the library. Would you like me to give you a tour?

LAURA

That would be great.

She hands her punch to Sam and skips off after J.D. excitedly. Sam scowls after her, holding two drinks.

BRIAN

Man. You've got some serious competition.

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

Please. I am not interested in her.
She's way too uptight for me.

BRIAN

I'll bet he's really rich too.

SAM

Shut up.

INT. ADRIAN'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Adrian is in bed asleep. A steady rain falls soothingly outside. The ring of the telephone jars him awake.

ADRIAN

Who the hell is this?

RAPSON (V.O.)

It's Terry Rapson here. I'm sorry to call so early. Shall I phone back?

ADRIAN

Oh. No, Professor it's all right.

RAPSON (V.O.)

I really hate to bother you, but I'm afraid.. well, we've found something extraordinary. Extraordinary and disturbing, that is. I don't know quite how to say this but, I think the North Atlantic drift has begun to change.

Adrian sits upright.

ADRIAN

What do you mean "change?"

RAPSON (V.O.)

One of our six meter Nomad buoys registered a twelve degree drop in surface temperature the other day.

ADRIAN

Twelve degrees? Are you sure?

INT. HADLEY CENTER - DAY

Rapson's desk is covered with papers. He has circles beneath his eyes and clearly has not slept.

CONTINUED:

RAPSON

At first we thought it was a malfunction. But now four more buoys all across the North Atlantic are showing the same temperature shift. I've sent you an e-mail with the raw data.

INT. ADRIAN'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Adrian is already at his computer.

RAPSON (V.O.)

Based on your research of polar melting, the ice caps have been pouring more freshwater into the oceans every year. We must have hit a crucial desalinization point and altered the thermohaline current.

ADRIAN

Jesus. I know I've hypothesized abrupt shifts, but my fastest estimates were ten to twenty years.

RAPSON (V.O.)

I know. This is completely unexpected. There are no forecast models remotely capable of plotting this scenario. Except yours.

ADRIAN

My model re-constructs a pre-historic climate shift. It's not a forecast model.

RAPSON (V.O.)

It's the closest thing we have. You'll have to modify it. Otherwise, we're operating completely in the dark. Nothing like this has ever happened before.

A long pause as Adrian scrolls over the data on his screen.

ADRIAN

Or at least not for ten thousand years.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON A TV SCREEN

The TV shows SURFERS riding Mavericks-size waves at sunrise.

CONTINUED:

TOMMY (V.O.)

I'm reporting live from Santa Monica this morning where some of Southern California's top ranked big wave surfers have come to catch the swell generated by Tropical Storm Aweekay.

The camera WIDENS to include TOMMY (hair piece, fake tan) clutching a mic and smiling too much.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Those breakers are about fifty feet high and the wind is really blowing. I spoke with several people earlier who say this is the best surfing they've ever seen in Southern California.

PULL OFF TV TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES WEATHER FORECASTING OFFICE - DAWN

The room is crammed with equipment. Two meteorologists finish the night shift. JOHN is hyperactive, MANNY eats constantly.

JOHN

I can't stand that guy. The other day he pointed at a bunch of cirrus clouds on the satellite and called them a cold front.

Manny doesn't take his eyes from his computer monitor.

MANNY

TV weather is all about the entertainment value, man. You should watch the weatherbimbo on channel six. She's smokin'.

The phone rings. John answers it.

JOHN

Los Angeles WFO... What? I can't hear you... No, what you're seeing must be a dust devil, sir.

INT. LANCASTER TRAILER PARK - CONTINUOUS

The caller, BURT (60s) furrows his brow as he looks out his window, morning coffee in one hand, phone in the other.

BURT

Are you sure?

CONTINUED:

JOHN (V.O.)

We don't get tornadoes in Los Angeles.

INT. LOS ANGELES WEATHER CENTER - CONTINUOUS

JOHN

Thank you for calling. Really.

John hangs up.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What does this guy think this is, The Wizard of Oz?

INT./EXT. LANCASTER TRAILER PARK - DAWN

Burt hangs up the phone and steps outside his screen door. Only now DO WE REVERSE and see what he's looking at:

In the distance, a TORNADO has touched down on the horizon. This ain't no "dust devil."

BURT

(shakes his head, mutters)
Sure could have fooled me.

He goes back inside. HOLD ON the far off tornado.

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - DAWN

Tommy rides shotgun in the news VAN. He's on his cell phone.

TOMMY

You expect me to drive all the way out to Lancaster?

As Tommy talks, WE CATCH a brief glimpse of a TORNADO several miles behind the news van, in the valley.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

What if I get there and it's over?
Where is the story?

The news van rounds a bend in the road and the DRIVER suddenly slows to a halt.

Tommy turns to him in irritation; the driver's staring out the window. Tommy looks to see what the big deal is.

From the crest of the ridge, they have an overview of the LA basin at dawn. It's an unbelievable sight:

CONTINUED:

Out of the dark, low hanging clouds, the funnels of several tornadoes are spinning over the city!

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Holy shit.

INT. NCEP OFFICE - DAY

TRACK with Janet Chu and Gomez walking down a corridor. She is going over some documents with him.

Adrian approaches from the opposite direction with Jason.

ADRIAN

I need to talk to you.

GOMEZ

Not now Adrian, I'm busy.

Gomez and Janet get into an elevator. Adrian stops the doors with his hand.

ADRIAN

Gotta be now, Tom. This can't wait.

Gomez sighs, knowing Adrian won't let up. Adrian and Jason get into the elevator.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

I need you to loan me somebody from NCEP with experience in hydrometeorology, severe storms and marine currents. I need help building a global forecast model.

GOMEZ

(sarcastic)

And I suppose you want to start this project this week?

ADRIAN

Right now, as a matter of fact.

GOMEZ

I would say you've lost your mind, but you've been this way for the past twenty years.

ADRIAN

Tom. This is important.

A beat. Adrian is dead serious.

CONTINUED:

JANET

(interested)

What is this model you're building?

Adrian looks at her, inquiringly. Gomez introduces them.

GOMEZ

Janet is with the Severe Storms Lab.
Janet Chu, Adrian Hall. He's a paleo-
climatologist and I have absolutely no
idea what he's up to.

The doors to the elevator open and as they exit into...

INT. NCEP CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Pandemonium. Everybody is talking at once.

GOMEZ

What is going on here?

SCIENCE OFFICER #1

They've just issued a tornado warning in
Los Angeles!

Somebody turns on a TV and everyone hushes as a BREAKING NEWS
BULLETIN comes on:

L.A. ANCHORWOMAN (V.O.)

--the first tornado was spotted twenty
minutes ago. We have live coverage from
our Channel Two weather chopper. Are you
there, Bart?

PUSH IN on the TV as it shows...

EXT. LOS ANGELES - MORNING

A TWISTER has touched down in the Cahuenga Pass; the chopper
tracks it as it moves up into the hills.

CHOPPER PILOT (V.O.)

Lisa, these tornadoes have formed so
quickly it's all we can do to stay out of
their way!

The TORNADO reaches the world-famous Hollywood sign and
erases it from the hillside!

INT. NEWS VAN - MORNING

The VAN drives along a major boulevard, parallel to a moving
TWISTER, glimpsing it between the buildings.

CONTINUED:

Tommy shouts into his cell phone.

TOMMY

We're headed East on Sunset! We're
looking for a place to get a better shot!

EXT. LOS ANGELES - CONTINUOUS

A WIDE SHOT of the TORNADO

As it drifts slowly into the CAPITOL RECORDS BUILDING. It
chews through the concrete and steel like a chain saw through
wood. The debris is sucked into the vortex, darkening the
air.

Cars are blown around like leaves. People on the streets run
for their lives. Some stare in stupid fascination.

PULL BACK TO A WIDER VIEW: all over city, TORNADOES buzz like
a swarm of giant insects.

TOMMY'S VAN

screeches to a halt at the empty intersection of Highland and
Sunset. Tommy jumps out and shouts at his crew.

TOMMY

Let's move! Roll tape! Do a 360 around
me and get all them in one shot!

The wind is so strong he can barely stand. His hairpiece
lifts up on one side. He doesn't care: this is his dream
moment.

The CAMERAMAN circles to get Tommy's precious 360...

TOMMY (CONT'D)

This is Tommy Levinson, reporting to you
LIVE from the corner of Sunset and
Highland! The devastation and
destruction are unbelievable!

In the background, a GIANT BILLBOARD of ANGELYNE catches the
wind like a sail and flies off its frame.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

(gleefully unaware)

It looks like some sort of huge,
Hollywood special effects movie here!
Only this is the real thing!

Tommy never sees the plywood billboard flying toward him..

CONTINUED:

He's caught dead center between ANGELYNE'S absurd oversized BREASTS...

THWUUMP! Tommy is obliterated.

INT. LOS ANGELES WEATHER FORECASTING OFFICE - MORNING

A series of red blobs dot the satellite map of Southern California. John and Manny can hardly keep up with the wealth of fascinating data pouring in.

MANNY

The gate to gate shear on this thing is just incredible.

CLOSE ON a coffee cup on the desk. It begins to shake.

John notices it. Then Manny does too. A deep rumbling sound begins to grow louder. Their faces change from excited to scared.

JOHN

(points to the screen)
How far away is that from where we are?

Manny doesn't need to answer. The whole room is shaking now.

They both look over at the door instinctively.

There is a TREMENDOUS SOUND OF BRICK AND CONCRETE BREAKING. Suddenly DAYLIGHT is visible under the door!

The door tears away and WE ARE LOOKING out into space from the thirteenth floor. Then the entire wall goes!

For a brief instant Manny and John have one last chance to witness nature's awesome power.

The TWISTER stretches up into the sky outside like Jack's beanstalk. They are sucked into the storm.

WE CUT from THE ROARING NOISE to the relative quiet of...

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

A hand puts down a golf ball.

Nobody but a complete fanatic would play golf in this miserable weather: gusting winds whip the light rain into your face.

The FANATIC is a distinguished patrician in his late forties.

CONTINUED:

BLAKE

You sure a five iron doesn't have too much loft? With this wind, I was thinking maybe I need a four...

CADDY

Five's your club, sir. Trust me.

Blake lines up and swings. His eyes follow the ball as it sails beautifully and disappears over a soft hill.

Blake turns back to his caddy with a smile.

BLAKE

I should never question you, Cooper.

He turns back to follow the ball and SEES...

AN ARMADA OF GOLF CARTS coming over the crest of the hill.

Blake sighs deeply. An AIDE gets out of the first cart.

AIDE

Excuse me Mr. President, but they need you back at the White House.

PRESIDENT BLAKE hands his five iron to his CADDY.

PRESIDENT BLAKE

Maybe we can finish the back nine later.

The President follows the aide and climbs into a cart.

INT. NCEP PRESENTATION ROOM - NIGHT

Scientists and staff are crowded into a packed meeting room. A global map projected on the wall shows whirls of color representing storm systems developing around the arctic circle. Various superimposed graphs reveal how the recent weather extremes have taken the forecasters by surprise.

Too many people are talking at once. Gomez steps to the podium and motions for quiet.

GOMEZ

Listen up everybody. We have a lot to cover, so let's not waste any time. HPC?

VOORSTEEN, the director of HPC stands.

VORSTEEN

All our grid models are worthless. To tell you the truth, we're baffled.

CONTINUED:

BOOKER, the head of MPC takes a crack.

BOOKER

I don't think grid models are going to be a lot of help here. We've got serious circulation moving down from the Arctic, two super cells out in the Pacific, not to mention the system developing in the Tropics--

LANSON from Severe Storms Lab interrupts.

LANSON

Wait a minute, are you suggesting the Arctic events are somehow connected to what we're seeing on the West Coast?

BOOKER

We have to consider the possibility.

LANSON

The only force strong enough to affect global weather is the sun.

VORSTEEN

We already checked. NASA says solar output is normal.

Adrian steps forward from the back of the room.

ADRIAN

What about a shift in the North Atlantic Current?

Everybody turns to look at him. He is not a familiar face in this group. Janet stands as well.

JANET

This is Professor Adrian Hall. He has a theory that may explain this extreme weather. I think you should hear it.

A beat. They look to him expectantly.

ADRIAN

I think we may be on the cusp of a climate shift.

He walks to the map at the head of the room.

CONTINUED: (2)

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

As we know, the Northern Hemisphere owes its temperate climate to the circulation of warm tropical water carried north by the gulf stream. Take away that current and you destabilize our entire climate. Tornadoes in Los Angeles, hail the size of bowling balls-- these are all symptoms of that instability.

BOOKER

We have been getting some strange readings from our inverted echo sounders in the Atlantic, indicating the drift has weakened. But it'll be months before we have enough data to say whether or not the trend will persist. What makes you so sure about this?

ADRIAN

History. For the past three million years or so our climate has flipped back and forth between temperate and ice age conditions. Each time, there has been a critical point at which the climate changed violently. We developed a computer model that described this process as it took place ten thousand years ago. Ms. Chu has been helping us adapt it to look at conditions today.

Gomez looks to Janet.

GOMEZ

Can you really turn an historical climate model into a forecast model?

JANET

We need more time and more data. But the initial results bear out Professor Hall's theory with disturbing consistency.

VORSTEEN

Your model predicts that these anomalies will continue?

ADRIAN

It predicts they will get worse. And worse. Until eventually they build into a single circulation system so large it's fed by a heat exchange between the Arctic and the tropics. A global superstorm.

CONTINUED: (3)

Silence.

FADE TO BLACK.

CLOSE ON A TV MONITOR

The GRAPHIC reads: "THE STORM OF THE DECADE."

CNN ANCHORMAN (V.O.)

A distress signal from the Exxon Invincible a few hours ago indicated that the supertanker was breaking up in heavy seas in the North Atlantic. The tragedy threatens to hit Greenland with the most catastrophic oil spill on record..

The CAMERA PANS to another monitor showing ABC news...

ABC ANCHORWOMAN

--in the wake of devastating tornadoes, Los Angeles and Orange counties have been declared federal disaster areas...

Yet another MONITOR shows BBC news...

BBC ANCHOR

...wind gusts of up to seventy miles per hour have downed power lines and trees across the country. High winds are persisting all across northern Europe; in Paris, safety concerns have forced authorities to close the Eiffel tower to all visitors...

As WE PULL AWAY from the bank of monitors, WE SEE that news stations all over the world are reporting severe weather events in every language on the globe. We are...

INT. WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM - DAY

President Blake turns from the monitors to face his advisors.

BECKER

The FAA wants to suspend all commercial flights West of the Rockies.

PRESIDENT BLAKE

Is that absolutely necessary?

The SECRETARY OF STATE is a tough but intelligent woman.

CONTINUED:

SECRETARY OF STATE

In Europe they've already had several crashes. All the major airports are closed. The winds are simply too strong and too unpredictable.

President Blake turns to Gomez.

PRESIDENT BLAKE

How much longer is this weather going to last?

GOMEZ

We have every meteorologist at NOAA trying to analyze this, Mr. President, but so far... we just can't say.

BECKER

What shall we tell the FAA, sir?

PRESIDENT BLAKE

(frustrated)

You can't say? Somebody, somewhere must have some idea of what is going on!

GOMEZ

(hesitates)

One of our scientists does have a theory. But I'm not sure you want to hear it.

INT. HOSPITAL, PEDIATRIC WARD - NIGHT

Lucy reads a chart at the foot of a bed. Most of the children are asleep, but this LITTLE BOY has his eyes open.

PETER

Who killed the butterflies?

Lucy looks up.

LUCY

What's that, Peter?

PETER

The butterflies. Who killed them?

Peter is watching the television suspended over his bed. The sound is muted. The screen shows a reporter standing in a carpet of Monarch butterflies, killed by a sudden frost in Mexico.

CONTINUED:

LUCY

Nobody killed the butterflies. They just died. That's how nature works sometimes.

Lucy puts a comforting, maternal hand on the boy's forehead.

INT. HOSPITAL, LUCY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Lucy enters her office to find Adrian waiting for her. She scowls.

ADRIAN

Good to see you too.

LUCY

I'm tired, Adrian. Why are you here?

ADRIAN

I want Sam to come home tomorrow.

LUCY

After you insisted we let him go?
They're in the final round tomorrow.

ADRIAN

I know.

LUCY

(a beat)

I've been watching the news, Adrian. Are you going to tell me what's happening?

Adrian sighs.

ADRIAN

I don't want you to panic. But you should probably stock up on food and batteries. Keep a full tank of gas in your car. Things may get bad.

LUCY

How bad?

ADRIAN

Too soon to say. But I'm afraid that what you've seen on the news is only the beginning.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

Rain pours off the awning of a brightly lit bodega. Laura and J.D. emerge with bags of munchies. He opens an umbrella (with the Pinewood logo) for both of them.

CONTINUED:

J.D.

Ready? One, two, three!

Laura squeals as they jump a puddle together and race across the street.

INT. PINWOOD SCHOOL, DORM ROOM - NIGHT

The kids are hanging out, watching TV. Laura and J.D. enter, dripping wet, with the food.

J.D.

Ta da.

The kids tear open the bags of junk food. Sam glances over jealously. When Laura looks back at him he pretends to be absorbed in the TV.

A news report shows blizzard conditions in England.

BBC REPORTER (V.O.)

...hundreds feared dead as the storm continues to rage here. Meanwhile, the Royal family is reportedly snowbound at Balmoral Castle in Scotland..

A TEACHER sticks his head in.

TEACHER

Is there a Sam Hall here?

SAM

Yeah?

TEACHER

You have a phone call.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sam picks up the receiver.

SAM

Hello?

ADRIAN (V.O.)

Hey son, you having a good time?

SAM

Yeah, great Dad. Why are you calling?

CONTINUED:

ADRIAN (V.O.)

Listen, Sam, I hate to do this to you; but I want you to fly home tomorrow morning.

SAM

I haven't done anything.

ADRIAN (V.O.)

This isn't a punishment, Sam, it's a precaution. I'm concerned about what's going on with the weather.

SAM

There's nothing going on here. It's just raining.

ADRIAN (V.O.)

I didn't call to discuss this; you are coming home tomorrow. Period. Now write this down; your flight is Delta thirty-three out of JFK. Take a cab.

A WIDE SHOT of Sam listening and arguing on the phone. Eventually he hangs up angrily.

INT. HADLEY CENTER - NIGHT

MATCH CUT TO Simon hanging up the phone.

SIMON

They had to stop the train four times to clear snow off the tracks. They're getting on the Ferry now.

RAPSON

But they're on their way. They'll be all right.

SIMON

(masking his concern)

Oh sure. I'm just worried about Jeanette, handling the baby alone and all.

RAPSON

You should have gone with them.

SIMON

And miss all this weather? Are you kidding?

Rapson smiles. Dennis calls their attention to the TV.

CONTINUED:

DENNIS

The RAF is sending paratroopers to Scotland to get the Queen. Think maybe they'll give us a lift too, Professor?

RAPSON

We have our own generator, plenty of tea and biscuits and front row seats on the biggest weather event in human history. Where do you want to go?

They laugh gamely but the strain is beginning to show.

EXT. ENGLAND - NIGHT

Half a dozen Royal Air Force HELICOPTERS beat their way through a blizzard.

SUPER: NORTHERN ENGLAND

Visibility is almost nil, but one of the NAVIGATORS makes something out on the ground below. He points at a long line of vehicles on the ground, half-covered in snow.

NAVIGATOR

Look at those cars, Major. They're not moving.

Indeed, the cars are stopped. An endless line of them.

At this moment the snowfall lightens and the sky clears. But it happens too fast. Something is wrong.

Suddenly AN ALARM goes off.

The PILOT begins to frantically adjust switches and controls.

PILOT

We're losing power--

CO-PILOT

Something's wrong with the fuel line!

A temperature gauge shows the outside temperature falling fast.

The same desperate struggle in the other cockpits.

Keep returning to the temperature gauge-- as it drops so low the fuel in the lines begins to freeze. The engines sputter and the choppers fall one by one, like wounded birds.

CONTINUED:

From above, the crashes are strangely muted, because by now the fuel is mostly frozen.

A snowdrift cushions the crash of one chopper and by some miracle, the NAVIGATOR survives. He breaks open the cockpit door and pulls himself free of the wreckage.

But when he stands to walk away, his movements are labored. He takes a step, his foot sinking deep into the snow, then he stops moving...

PAN UP slowly up to reveal his face... he is frozen solid.

INT. PINEWOOD SCHOOL, DORM ROOM - MORNING

Brian sits on his bed watching TV. The local weather report calls for continued rain.

Sam walks back in from the shower and gets dressed.

BRIAN

Hey Sam, you want to go see some museums?
We don't have to be anywhere until four.

SAM

It's pouring outside.

BRIAN

We can take a cab. J.D. says he'll pay
for it.

Sam makes a face at the mention of J.D.'s name. He pulls out his suitcase.

SAM

No thanks.

BRIAN

What are you doing?

SAM

I'm supposed to go back to Washington.

BRIAN

Why?

SAM

Because my Dad is paranoid. It's bull
shit.

Sam slams the suitcase shut. A beat.

Sam bounces into the room trailed by J.D.

CONTINUED:

LAURA

We're going to the Natural History Museum. I can't spend anymore time glued to the TV. Sam, you're coming, right?

Sam hesitates.

J.D.

Don't make him come if he doesn't want to.

That seals it.

SAM

I'm coming.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - DAY

Paul has placed a TV on his desk to watch the unbelievable news footage from around the globe.

London under forty inches of snow.

Venice almost underwater.

Tokyo a disaster area.

The GRAPHIC now reads: "The Storm of the Century."

CNN ANCHORMAN (V.O.)

The Dow Jones tumbled a catastrophic sixty-one per cent this morning before trading was halted moments ago. To put this in perspective, the crash of nineteen twenty-nine was forty-seven per cent. In Europe and Japan, storms continue to wreak havoc...

Gary and Tony stand beside Paul, watching in a daze.

TONY

It's like the end of the world.

PAUL

Billions and billions of dollars... gone. What are we going to do?

GARY

I'll tell you what we're gonna do; we're gonna go out for a drink.

BOB (O.S.)

I think I could use one too.

CONTINUED:

They turn in surprise to see their boss standing behind them, shirtsleeves rolled up, tie loosened. Formality is gone.

INT. NCEP OFFICE - DAY

Adrian and Janet examine the data points on a computer screen. They have been working around the clock.

Frank sticks his head in the room.

FRANK

Hadley's on the phone for you boss.

EXT. HADLEY CENTER - DAY

A blizzard batters the tiny outpost. Dennis clears snow off the satellite dishes but it piles up just as fast.

INT. HADLEY CENTER - DAY

Rapson's brow is creased with concern. Simon stands behind him.

ADRIAN (V.O.)

How is it there, Professor?

RAPSON

Not good. I've just received word that several helicopters heading to Scotland went down. The fuel in their lines froze.

ADRIAN (V.O.)

(a pause)

At what temperature does--

RAPSON

Negative one hundred and fifty degrees Fahrenheit. We had to look it up. The temperature must have dropped phenomenally fast; on the ground people froze before they could get out of their cars. The authorities are doing their best to keep it out of the press.

For a moment Adrian is silent. The line crackles.

ADRIAN (V.O.)

How do you know this?

RAPSON

A second rescue team came upon them five

CONTINUED:

RAPSON (CONT'D)

the temperature had risen to negative ten by then. They contacted me looking for an explanation.

INT. NCEP OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Adrian sits on the edge of a desk.

ADRIAN

It reminds me of the Berezovka Mammoth they found in Siberia; the food it was chewing ten thousand years ago was still frozen in its mouth. Nobody ever understood how it could have been frozen like that, in mid-bite. So fast.

The line crackles again.

RAPSON (V.O.)

This connection is going. If we don't speak again, I just want to say... good luck. It's been a privilege.

ADRIAN

The privilege is all mine, Professor.

The line devolves to static. Adrian holds the phone a moment longer. He takes a breath and hangs up.

FOLLOW him back into the room where the others are working.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Janet, how high would you have to go to find temperatures in the negative one hundred and fifty range?

JANET

Negative one fifty? Upper troposphere at least.

ADRIAN

Do you think it's possible for a storm to draw supercooled air from that high all the way down to the surface?

She looks at the latest satellite images of the storm line descending from the Arctic circle.

JANET

Normally, it would warm up long before it reached ground level, but, if you had a truly massive circulation system, like what we're seeing here...

CONTINUED:

They all look at Adrian, hoping this is a hypothetical, knowing it's not.

FRANK

Human flesh freezes at twenty-five below.

JANET

A temperature imbalance that extreme couldn't last more than a few hours.

JASON

But what could survive those few hours?

ADRIAN

Not much.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - DAY

Laura and J.D. are in the lead, walking through the deserted museum. If anyone is paying attention, they will notice a Woolly Mammoth in the exhibit in the background.

BRIAN

It's really pouring out there. Do you think we'll be able to catch a cab back?

J.D.

No problem. I'll handle it.

SAM

How? Shove a little old lady out of the way?

J.D.

You didn't have to come, you know.

A huge LIGHTNING FLASH and ROLL of THUNDER outside. The lights flicker.

LAURA

Maybe we should head back. It could take a while to get back in this storm.

J.D.

All right, follow me.

J.D. leads them to a bank of elevators.

SAM

We should take the stairs.

CONTINUED:

J.D.
(rolls his eyes)
Don't be ridiculous. We're on the top
floor.

Sam ignores him and opens the door to the emergency
stairwell. J.D. holds open the door to the elevator.

Laura and Brian hesitate between the two. Another roll of
thunder.

That does it. Laura and Brian follow Sam. J.D. remains in
the elevator holding the door.

J.D. (CONT'D)
Oh, come on.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

J.D. catches up with the group as they descend.

J.D.
This is so unnecessary.

The words are hardly out when the POWER GOES OUT. They all
stop on the stairwell for a moment. In the dim light WE SEE
a small smile of satisfaction creep over Sam's face.

EXT. NYC - AFTERNOON/DARK

The storm clouds are so thick it is almost as dark as night.

QUICK SHOTS of the city as lights go out all over.

Taxis skid and crash on the rain soaked streets.

EXT. BAR - AFTERNOON/DARK

Bob and his brokers spill out into the street along with
everybody else. He looks at the chaotic scene in dismay.

BOB
My wife must be going crazy. I've got to
get back to Westchester.

He pulls out his cell phone and starts walking. In the dark
and wet his shoe slips off the curb; his ankle turns over and
he falls with a sharp cry.

Paul and Tony move quickly to help him up.

Meanwhile Gary surveys the street, his mind working...

EXT. NYC STREETS - AFTERNOON/DARK

Sam and the group run through the pouring rain. Forget getting a cab; there is a foot of water in the streets and traffic is hardly moving.

J.D. waves for them to follow him to a SUBWAY ENTRANCE.

J.D.

This way!

They run to the top of the stairs and stop short:

WATER is filling up the stairwell below!

ON the faces of the kids: it is beginning to register that they may be in real trouble. Sam snaps them out of it.

SAM

We can't stay here. Come on. Let's find higher ground.

INT. NCEP OFFICE - DAY

Adrian is browbeating an exhausted Jason.

JASON

...I've already checked the data inputs twice!

ADRIAN

Well check them again. There's no way it can happen that fast.

TRACK with ADRIAN as he walks down the hall into the MAIN CONTROL ROOM. A TV MONITOR on the wall broadcasts news:

NETWORK ANCHOR (V.O.)

The FCC has taken the extraordinary step of halting all flights. This after extreme turbulence has brought down three planes.

Adrian moves past a second TV showing a different station.

NETWORK ANCHOR #2 (V.O.)

The most recent plane to go down was Delta flight thirty-three, southbound from New York..

Adrian halts. His brain processes the words slowly. He turns and walks back to the TV.

CONTINUED:

ON SCREEN is the burning wreckage. Adrian stares.

EXT. NYC STREETS - AFTERNOON/DARK

Wind whips the rain in every direction. Erratic car headlights tell a tale of increasing confusion and desperation in the sloppy streets.

A SENEGALESE woman, JAMA and her daughter BINATA (12) seek shelter under a bus stop on Fifth Avenue.

A TAXI tries to shoot past a JEEP and loses control...

VROOOM-- POP! The TAXI hits the curb, goes up on its side, pinballs off the SUV and FLIPS into the bus stop where the mother and child are standing.

EXT. MACY'S - AFTERNOON/DARK

The CRASH of breaking glass. LOOTERS come running out.

Gary now leads the group. Tony and Paul support their limping boss.

GARY

We need to get inside. Follow me.

INT. MACY'S - CONTINUOUS

A SECURITY GUARD lies on the lobby floor with his head bashed in. The Wall Street brokers all stare. Bob covers his mouth. Only Gary is calm and collected.

GARY

You guys help Bob up to the second floor.
Look for the camping section:
flashlights, sleeping bags, stuff like
that. I'll cover this guy up.

Tony and Paul struggle to help Bob up the broken escalator.

Gary pulls the metal security grate across the doorway. Then he bends down and takes the guard's GUN from his holster.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - AFTERNOON/DARK

A city COP, CAMPBELL (40s) shields his face from the driving rain as he scans the hopeless traffic jam.

JAMA (O.S.)

Au secours! Au secours!

CONTINUED:

Campbell doesn't have to speak French to recognize a cry for help. He starts moving toward the sound until he spots the overturned and now burning taxi.

Campbell races over to the bus stop without hesitation.

The taxi DRIVER is dead but Jama and Binata are unhurt, simply trapped. The rain is knocking the flames down, but the wind is whipping them up.

A door of the taxi has come open and blocks the escape path. Campbell tries to pry it free, but it burns his hand. He pulls off his jacket and wraps it around his hand. He grits his teeth and tries again. The door comes away.

Campbell helps Jama climb to safety. Before the girl can climb free...

BOOM! A small explosion erupts from the rear of the taxi. Binata cowers. No time to hesitate. Campbell plunges into the tiny space and wraps the girl in his arms. He just manages to wiggle back out in time.

The gas tank blows! The taxi collapses where they just were.

Campbell carries the girl up the steps to the New York Public Library followed by her grateful mother.

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - AFTERNOON/DARK

A WIDE SHOT OF the STATUE OF LIBERTY against the turbulent sky. Rain slants down. Lightning crackles over the ocean flecked with white caps.

Then something unimaginable happens... the sea surges up and over the base of the STATUE! It is not a tidal wave, but a wind-driven storm surge.

It's as if the sea level suddenly rose by forty feet.

The water floods towards the unsuspecting city...

EXT. NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - AFTERNOON/DARK

Sam and the other kids come to a stop on the street corner. They huddle together for a moment. They have to shout to hear one another.

LAURA

How much further is it?

J.D.

CONTINUED:

J.D. fishes out his cell phone. Sam looks down at the water which is spilling up over the curb, ankle deep...

SAM

We have to get somewhere higher! Across the street: the library!

They step out into the street and find themselves knee deep in water. Some car headlights are already submerged, but still working, creating a strange underwater illumination.

Sam reaches the other side and starts scrambling up the wide steps. He pauses by one of the MARBLE LIONS and looks back. He freezes.

A FORTY-FOOT WALL OF WATER is pushing it's way up the concrete canyon toward them!

Laura is still in the street below, stepping carefully to keep her coat out of the water. She has no clue about the deadly wave heading toward her.

Sam shouts; she can't hear him. He glances at the oncoming water, hesitates, then races back down the steps.

He grabs Laura by the hand and pulls her forward. She steps into a pothole and ends up in water up to her waist.

LAURA

(sputtering furiously)
What are you doing, you jerk?!

Sam doesn't pause; he drags her up the steps after him.

Laura finally sees the water surging after them. She understands the urgency now.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

The DRIVER OF A CITY BUS looks in his REAR VIEW MIRROR. His eyes widen as he sees the wall of water bearing down on him. It overtakes the bus with a ROAR.

INT. MAIN LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The soaring atrium is flanked on either side by two sweeping stairways. J.D. and Brian follow the other people who are already climbing up the stairs, trying to get higher. They suddenly stop and look around for Sam and Laura...

INT./EXT. LIBRARY ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Sam and Laura just make it to the big door with the water on their heels.

The STORM TIDE looks to sweep through the lobby and carry them away but then the CITY BUS lodges across the entrance, blocking the full force of the wave and the deadly flotsam.

INT. MAIN LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Sam and Laura run for the staircase but even with the bus there, the water pours in every crack and crevice. The glass on the revolving door shatters and the water gushes in, sweeping them off their feet.

A HAND from the STAIRWELL reaches out and grasps Sam's. Sam hangs on tight to Laura and the two are pulled to safety.

Sam looks up from the helping hand and sees LUTHER-- the homeless beggar we met earlier, in what already seems like another world.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Lucy, several other doctors and nurses are gathered around a small television in the coffee room.

The INFOGRAPHIC now reads: "THE STORM OF THE MILLENNIUM."

CNN ANCHORMAN (V.O.)

Mudslides in Turkey have claimed tens of thousands of lives. And in another breaking story... I'm being told that New York has just experienced a wind driven storm surge. There are no casualty reports yet, but the damage is apparently "off the scale." I think we have some footage...

The anchorman pauses to watch the news footage coming in. He falls silent. Suddenly he's no longer an objective reporter of far off tragedy; he's somebody watching his world crumble.

Adrian walks into the room, red-eyed and haggard.

Lucy turns and sees him.

LUCY

Where's Sam?

Adrian presses his lips together and shakes his head. Lucy

INT. LIBRARY READING ROOM -- NIGHT

A large room with long wood tables and high windows. About a hundred people have taken shelter here. They are wet, cold and scared but most are remarkably quiet, in shock. Some crowd by the windows, looking at the flood which is now two stories high. Others try to call loved ones on cell phones.

J.D. closes his phone in frustration.

J.D.

All I'm getting is a busy signal.

BRIAN

The circuits are overloaded.

Sam gets up from the table. Laura follows him.

LAURA

Hey Sam.. I'm sorry I called you a jerk.
I didn't realize--

SAM

Don't worry about it.

LAURA

Yeah, well. Thank you.

Sam nods, embarrassed. They reach the information desk where a librarian, JUDITH (34) still sits at her post, trying to hold onto some shred of the familiar.

SAM

Are there any pay phones on the upper floors?

JUDITH

There are some on the mezzanine. But I wouldn't...

Sam is already heading for the stairs, trailed by Laura.

LAURA

Where are you going? The power is out.

SAM

Older pay phones draw their power directly from the telephone line. It's worth a try.

He exits into the hallway.

INT. LUCY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Adrian gazes at a framed photo of Sam as a little boy.

ADRIAN

Remember how he'd always ask to be read
one more bedtime story?

He smiles bitterly and sets the picture back down on her desk.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

(with self-reproach)
I was always too busy.

Lucy speaks hoarsely.

LUCY

We both were.

They remain silent together for a long beat.

Adrian's cell phone rings. And rings. He doesn't answer.

INT. LIBRARY HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sam stands in dark, cold water up to his waist. The water is rising.

He holds the pay phone to his ear, listening to it ring.

SAM

Come on... pick up... Dad?

INT. LUCY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Adrian stands up.

ADRIAN

Sam?! Is that you? It's Sam-- where are
you? Are you all right?

SAM (V.O.)

I'm in New York. I never went to the
airport.

ADRIAN

Thank God.

INT. LIBRARY HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sam is up to his armpits. The water continues to rise...

CONTINUED:

SAM

I only have a few seconds.

INT. LUCY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

ADRIAN

Listen to me. Don't trust the news, don't trust what anybody says. Stay inside. Stay warm. The storm could last for days. Weeks. It's pushing a thermal cycle in front of it that's pulling supercooled air down to the earth's surface. Anything exposed will be frozen. Do you understand me? Sam?

SAM (V.O.)

Yeah, I heard you. I have to go.

ADRIAN

Wait--

Adrian hands the phone to Lucy as fast as possible.

LUCY

Sam, we love you. I love you Sam. Sam?

INT. LIBRARY HALLWAY - NIGHT

The phone receiver floats on the water.

INT. LUCY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lucy hands Adrian the phone back silently. She looks at him heavily.

ADRIAN

I won't lose him again. I promise.

A harried ASSISTANT bursts into the office.

ASSISTANT

Excuse me-- is there an Adrian Hall here?

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

The lights are dimmed. President Blake and his TOP ADVISORS listen to the end of Adrian's briefing.

A projected SLIDE shows the path of ocean currents changing.

CONTINUED:

ADRIAN (O.S.)

...so as you can see, what started as a change in the ocean currents, results in a change to the entire climate. That is why the superstorm is a global event.

The lights come up, revealing Adrian standing by the projection screen.

The listeners includes Gomez, Becker, the Secretary of State and GENERAL PIERCE, head of the JOINT CHIEFS.

The room is silent for several moments.

PRESIDENT BLAKE

When will it be over?

ADRIAN

The basic rule of storms is that they continue until the imbalance that created them is corrected. In this case we're talking about a global realignment. Our forecast model projects that the storm will move down from the Arctic, covering most of the northern landmass in ice within a few weeks.

Adrian points at the map to illustrate how the poles will spread south.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

The snow and ice will reflect the sunlight, and an overall cooling trend will emerge. The earth's atmosphere will re-stabilize, with an average temperature close to that of the last Ice Age.

Another pause.

GENERAL PIERCE

What can we do about this?

ADRIAN

Head South.

BECKER

(sharply)

That is not amusing, Professor.

ADRIAN

I'm not joking.

CONTINUED: (2)

SECRETARY OF STATE

Where do you expect people to go?

ADRIAN

Anywhere South: Texas, Florida... Mexico.

BECKER

Mexico? Mr. President, this man is a climatologist. He obviously doesn't know the first thing about foreign affairs.

Adrian ignores Becker and addresses the President.

ADRIAN

If we're going to survive-- and I don't mean survive personally, I mean survive as a species-- we're going to have to stop thinking nationally and start thinking globally. It's not just Americans who are in danger, it's all of mankind.

BECKER

We are the government of the United States of America. It is our duty to protect America first.

ADRIAN

Then protect the American people-- not their national identity. All empires fall. Take a look at this from the long term perspective, for a moment. The prospects for agriculture in North America are slim to none. Now is a good time to start thinking ahead. Make alliances, ask for help. Before long, we may have to beg.

BECKER

Mr. President, he is not qualified--

President Blake holds up his hand.

PRESIDENT BLAKE

What exactly are you proposing, Professor?

Adrian walks over to a map on the wall. He draws a marker roughly along the Mason Dixon line, from San Francisco to Washington.

ADRIAN

Evacuate everybody south of this line.

CONTINUED: (3)

BECKER

What about the people in the North?

ADRIAN

(shakes his head)

I'm afraid it's already too late.

INT. LIBRARY READING ROOM - NIGHT

It looks like a refugee camp: people camped out on the long tables, trying to sleep, huddled together for warmth.

Snow falls in the moonlight outside the window.

Sam dozes fitfully, his head resting on his arms.

A DISTANT SCREECHING SOUND jerks him awake.

It grows louder and louder. Everyone wakes, exchanging puzzled and frightened looks.

They go the windows to look out into the street as the terrible SCREECHING GETS CLOSER and CLOSER.

The water outside is at least thirty feet deep. Blowing snow obscures vision but then they see it:

The huge SILHOUETTE of a CARGO SHIP glides down FIFTH AVENUE! The screeching is the sound of metal on concrete as the hull scrapes the street below and the buildings on either side.

Everyone stares in silence at the surreal sight.

INT. WHITE HOUSE, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Gomez catches up with Adrian as he walks out.

GOMEZ

Adrian... wait a moment.

Adrian stops and turns.

GOMEZ (CONT'D)

Listen, if the President decides to-- hell, even if he doesn't-- I'm sending my family South. If you want, Sam can ride with them.

Adrian smiles and swallows hard.

ADRIAN

My son is in New York.

CONTINUED:

Gomez doesn't know what to say. Adrian pats his shoulder and turns to walk away. Gomez watches him go.

INT. HADLEY CENTER - DAY

All the machines are shut off to conserve power. A few lights are left on. Dennis climbs down a ladder holding a broom stick crusted with ice.

DENNIS

The snow is over six feet on the roof. I don't know how much longer it can hold.

RAPSON

It doesn't matter I'm afraid. The generator won't last much longer.

Rapson reaches into his desk drawer and pulls out a bottle of twelve year old scotch. He pours three glasses.

SIMON

To England.

RAPSON

To mankind.

DENNIS

To Manchester United!

They laugh and drink. Just then the generator dies and the lights go out. The laughter fades out.

They sit in silence in the dark for a moment. Dennis lights a candle. Rapson refills their glasses.

SIMON

I just wish I could have seen him grow up.

RAPSON

The important thing is, he will grow up.

DENNIS

Amen.

They sit in the darkness quietly, waiting for the end.

INT. WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM - DAWN

A heated debate is raging among the advisors when Gomez walks back into the room. The President listens, undecided.

CONTINUED:

BECKER

We can't evacuate half the country because one scientist thinks the climate is shifting!

SECRETARY OF STATE

People are dying. Every minute we delay is costing lives.

BECKER

What about the people in the North?

SECRETARY OF STATE

You heard what Professor Hall said. If we send troops north we are just going to create more victims. We should save as many as we can.

GENERAL PIERCE

We take the same approach in triage on the battlefield. Sometimes difficult choices have to be made.

BECKER

I don't accept that abandoning half the country is a solution. It's easy for Hall to suggest; he's safely here in Washington, D.C.

GOMEZ

(quietly)

His son is in Manhattan.

They turn to look at Gomez for the first time.

BECKER

What?

GOMEZ

Professor Hall's son. He's in New York. I thought you ought to know that before you start questioning his motives.

Gomez glares at Becker.

President Blake looks back and forth between them.

PRESIDENT BLAKE

(a beat)

General, give the order for the national guard to evacuate as many people as possible from the Southern states.

CONTINUED: (2)

SMASH CUT TO:

CLOSE ON A TV SCREEN

News footage shows streams of cars backed up at the border crossing. New BMWs wait alongside old Datsuns.

NETWORK ANCHOR #3 (V.O.)

...as rumors spread that Mexico might close its borders, lines have begun to grow...

Another image shows desperate Americans wading across a wide river, boxes and suitcases balanced on their heads.

NETWORK ANCHOR #3 (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And in truly ironic reversal, hundreds of American refugees are crossing the Rio Grande into Mexico...

PULL OFF TV TO:

INT. LIBRARY READING ROOM - DAY

The broadcast plays on Brian's LAP TOP computer.

Campbell, the cop, watches while others crowd around breathlessly, trying to get a view. The screen goes dim.

CAMPBELL

Can you get it back?

BRIAN

The battery is too weak.

Campbell walks away from the group to gather his thoughts.

The newscast has frightened everyone. If people are running for their lives that far south, what will become of them?

Binata senses the tension in the room and begins to cry softly. Jama looks around helplessly.

JAMA

Qu'est-ce que ce passe?

Nobody understands her. Laura sees her isolation and fear and approaches.

LAURA

To vais ESSAYER

CONTINUED:

Laura's high school French isn't perfect, but they understand her. Relief and gratitude flood over the mother and daughter's faces. Any connection is a comfort.

INT. WHITE HOUSE, OVAL OFFICE - DAY

President Blake sits alone with his head in his hands. He is not sure he is up this challenge..

The doors burst open. Becker, General Pierce and the Secretary of State enter.

BECKER

The Mexicans have closed the border!

A beat. President Blake takes a deep breath.

PRESIDENT BLAKE

Have you spoken to the Mexican Ambassador?

SECRETARY OF STATE

He's dead. A tree struck his car.

BECKER

Mr. President, there is no time for diplomacy. We can open the border by force if we have to.

President Blake looks to General Pierce for a response.

GENERAL PIERCE

I'd say at least seventy per cent of our forces are immobilized. Plus, the air force is grounded. Even so, we still have significant military superiority. If the goal is to take and hold territory, a rapid strike force would have to be assembled.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Have you lost your minds? We are facing the largest ecological disaster in human history and you are talking about going to war!

BECKER

We're talking about survival. When resources become scarce, nations go to war and the winners write the history books.

CONTINUED:

SECRETARY OF STATE
What about sovereign rights?

BECKER
What about them? America was built on land stolen from the Indians. So was Mexico. The only claim nations have on the land they hold is superior firepower.

PRESIDENT BLAKE
Mr. Becker is correct; we are talking about survival. But if you look at history, the reason mankind has survived is cooperation, not competition. It is our ability to work together, to share knowledge and to act unselfishly that is our truest advantage. Professor Hall was right; we have to take a long run perspective if we hope to survive.

President Blake turns to the Secretary of State.

PRESIDENT BLAKE (CONT'D)
Get me the President of Mexico on the phone. We're going to ask for help.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

The water is frozen over and covered with snow. The container SHIP is frozen in place at forty-third street.

It's a pristine, bizarre landscape.

INT. LIBRARY READING ROOM - DAY

Luther gazes out the window watching snowflakes fall. Something moving in the street below catches his eye.

A person trudging through the snow. He looks closer: several people.

LUTHER
Hey look, man! The water froze. People be out there, walkin' around!

Several others rush to the windows to see for themselves. A procession of people has begun moving down the street.

*WOMAN #1
Where are they all going?

J.D. peers out.

CONTINUED:

J.D.

They're getting out of the city before
it's too late.

Everyone begins talking at once and crowding to see.
Campbell turns from the window and climbs up on a table.

CAMPBELL

All right everybody, quiet down!

The group falls silent, recognizing a natural leader.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

Okay, when's the last time anybody got a
signal on their cell phone?

A BUSINESSMAN raises his hand.

BUSINESSMAN

I got through to my cousin in Tennessee
about forty minutes ago. The National
Guard was moving everybody South. She
heard they'd given up on all the cities
north of Philadelphia.

Another WOMAN speaks up.

WOMAN #2

I heard the same thing about two hours
ago.

The group starts buzzing as others confirm the rumor.
Campbell whistles for silence.

CAMPBELL

All right. It seems pretty clear that we
can't wait around to be rescued. The
only way we're going to get out is on our
own feet. The water has frozen over
enough to walk on. We should start
walking before the snow gets too deep.

BUSINESSMAN

Then let's get going.

CAMPBELL

We're gonna do this in an orderly way.
We'll walk single file. I'll take the
lead. I want everybody to tie themselves
to the person in front of them: use
belts, scarves whatever. Weaker people.

CONTINUED: (2)

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

That's the most important thing, all right? Gather your stuff. We'll leave in ten minutes.

Campbell climbs down and the group begins to prepare.

Laura tries to translate for Jama. Nobody seems to question the plan. Except Sam.

SAM

This is a bad idea. We shouldn't leave.

BRIAN

Everybody else is going. Look out the window.

SAM

I think the worst of the storm is still on its way.

J.D.

All the more reason to get out now.

SAM

You don't understand. The temperature is still going to drop. Anyone caught outside will die.

Laura leaves off trying to bundle up Binata.

LAURA

How do you know all this?

SAM

From my father.

A beat. Sam returns her gaze without backing down.

LAURA

Then you better tell the others.

Sam takes a deep breath and gets up. J.D. does not understand the exchange.

J.D.

Who the hell is his father?

Sam locates Campbell helping people get ready. He tries to get his attention.

SAM

Excuse me, Officer... you're making a mistake.

CONTINUED: (3)

CAMPBELL

(distracted)

What? Look kid, you better get ready.
We're leaving in five minutes.

SAM

(raises his voice)

Everybody who goes outside now will
freeze to death.

The crowd in immediate earshot turns to listen. Campbell
stops what he is doing.

CAMPBELL

Listen, we don't have time to--

Sam speaks firmly, with much more confidence than he feels.

SAM

The storm that's approaching has a
thermal cycle so large that it's drawing
super-cooled air down from the
atmosphere. Don't ask me exactly how it
works. All I know is that temperatures
are going to drop so suddenly you won't
be able to survive outside.

People have gathered around to hear what Sam has to say.
Campbell tries to dismiss Sam.

CAMPBELL

Where are you getting this bullshit?

Laura steps up beside Sam.

LAURA

It's not bullshit. His father is a
climatologist with the National Oceanic
and Atmospheric Administration.

A beat.

CAMPBELL

Yeah, well his father isn't here. And
that snow out there is getting deeper by
the minute. We have to head south before
we get trapped.

BUSINESSMAN

He's right. We're wasting time talking.

Most of the group seems to agree with him. Judith looks at
Sam intently.

CONTINUED: (4)

JUDITH

Even if you're right, what choice do we have?

SAM

Hunker down. Try to stay warm until the storm passes.

WOMAN #3

We could die waiting.

SAM

It's a risk.

BUSINESSMAN

I'd rather die on my feet trying to save myself.

MAN

Better to take our chances leaving with the others.

CAMPBELL

It's time to get going. It's clearing up out there.

Through the window the snow does appear to be falling more lightly. Campbell faces Sam.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

You want to stay, stay. But I recommend that anybody who wants to live follow me.

Campbell walks past him to the exit. One by one, the rest of the group shuffles after him.

Sam remains standing in the same place as it thins out.

J.D. watches with increasing anxiety.

J.D.

Come on you guys. Everybody is going.

Nobody responds. Before long only a handful of them are left: Laura, Brian, J.D., Judith, Jama, Binata, Luther, JEREMY (bespectacled researcher), MR. WITHERS (retiree, with a cane), LOUIS (60s, Puerto Rican Janitor) and ELSA (feminist grad student).

J.D. (CONT'D)

Laura... come on. You're not really going to stay are you?

CONTINUED: (5)

Laura glances at Sam.

LAURA

(to J.D.)

If you're going with them, you better hurry.

J.D. turns and walks toward the exit. He is the last person in the line.

He stops at the door and watches them leave.

J.D.

Damn it!

He turns and walks back. The small group that has decided to cast its lot with Sam looks around at one another.

Luther breaks the silence.

LUTHER

Name's Luther. I don't know about you folks, but personally I just don't trust police. Generally speaking.

INT. NOAA OFFICES - DAY

People are frantically packing files and equipment as they evacuate the building.

TRACK with Adrian as he moves through the chaos.

He finds Frank carrying some boxes.

ADRIAN

Frank, where'd you store the ice climbing gear?

FRANK

The lower cabinet by your office. Why?

He looks up; Adrian is already walking away.

Frank sets down his box and runs to catch up. He forces Adrian to stop by standing in front of him.

Adrian doesn't say anything.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You can't get to New York. You know that?

CONTINUED:

ADRIAN

This is something I have to do.

FRANK

It's suicide.

ADRIAN

I've covered as many miles on the ice shelf. I reckon I've got a better than even shot of getting there.

FRANK

And then what? You don't even know where he is.

Adrian looks away impatiently; he doesn't want to listen. He tries to step around but Frank blocks him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Adrian, people are counting on you.

ADRIAN

(quiet)

So is my son.

He holds Frank's gaze for a beat. Then he steps around him. This time Frank let's him go.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, TRUSTEE ROOM - DAY

A wood panelled room with an ornate, OVERSIZED FIREPLACE at one end. Judith opens the heavy oak door and everybody follows her in.

JUDITH

The fireplace probably hasn't been used in a hundred years.

Louis walks over and opens the flue; some snow falls down.

LOUIS

It still works.

SAM

We should start bringing in books from the stacks.

Sam lifts a DICTIONARY from a stand and tosses it into the fireplace. Judith instinctively puts her hands up.

CONTINUED:

JUDITH
What are you doing?

SAM
What did you think we were going to burn?

JEREMY
(horrified)
Not books... we can't burn books!

SAM
Do you have a better idea?
A beat. No suggestions. Elsa steps forward.

ELSA
I'll gather books.

BRIAN
I'll help you.

Several others get up to follow. Sam turns to Judith.

SAM
Is there a lunch room or cafeteria?

JUDITH
Just an employee lounge with a few
vending machines.

INT. LIBRARY, EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - DAY

SMASH! Sam swings a FIRE EXTINGUISHER into the front of a vending machine. Packaged snack food topples out.

Laura and Binata sort through the broken glass to gather it.

SAM
We won't last long on potato chips and
chocolate. There's nothing else?

JUDITH
Food and drink aren't allowed in the
library.

LUTHER
How 'bout garbage cans? Always somethin'
to eat in the garbage.

J.D.
That's disgusting.

CONTINUED:

SAM
No, it's a good idea. We should check the
garbage. Why don't you help him, J.D.?

J.D.
(bristles)
Why don't you?

Laura steps in quickly to avert a conflict.

LAURA
I'll do it.

INT. MACY'S - DAY

Gary and Tony set up a tent on the floor of the camping
section. They've gathered sleeping bags, propane stoves,
etc.

Paul is wrapping an ACE bandage around Bob's injured ankle.

Gary walks over. The gun is tucked into his waistband.

GARY
Paul, go help Tony.

PAUL
I'm not finished wrapping Bob's ankle.

GARY
I don't give a shit. It's getting dark.
We need to get ready.

Paul is intimidated. He turns to Bob helplessly.

GARY (CONT'D)
Bob's not our boss anymore.

Bob takes the bandage from Paul's hand.

BOB
Go ahead. I'll be all right.

Paul gets up and leaves the two of them alone.

Bob and Gary stare at one another for a beat.

BOB (CONT'D)
You know I was going to fire you Gary.

GARY
Should've done it when you were in
charge. Bob. You're dead weight now.

CONTINUED:

Bob tries to look back at Gary defiantly, but he can't hide the trace of fear in his eyes.

INT. LIBRARY, STACKS - DAY

A labyrinth of books. The only light comes from the flicker of Jeremy's makeshift TORCH. Elsa loads books onto a cart.

Jeremy picks one up in dismay.

JEREMY

Friedrich Nietzsche? We can't burn this; he's the most important thinker of the twentieth century.

Elsa puts it back on the cart.

ELSA

Please, Nietzsche was a chauvinist pig who was in love with his sister.

JEREMY

He was not--

Brian interrupts from down the aisle.

BRIAN

Hey, you guys, come down here. There's a whole section on Tax Law we can burn.

They stop bickering and head toward Brian.

INT. LIBRARY, CLOAK ROOM - DAY

Total darkness... a sound of jangling keys and a lock turning..

Shafts of dim light pour through as the door opens. Judith and Sam enter. They slosh through freezing water to the coat rack.

SAM

We're in luck. The coats are still dry.

INT. LIBRARY, TRUSTEE ROOM - DAY

Louis stacks books by the fireplace as more are wheeled in.

Judith and Sam dump the clothing they've found on the table and everyone starts going through it.

JUDITH

Look for wool. It stays warmer than cotton even if it gets wet.

CONTINUED:

WE HEAR a FAINT CHIRPING SOUND.

LAURA

Shh. Do you hear that? Somebody's phone is still working!

J.D. pulls his phone out but it's not his. Everyone searches. The sound is coming from the pile of coats!

They tear desperately at the clothing until the CHIRPING gets louder. Sam pulls the phone out of an overcoat pocket.

SAM

Hello? No it's not-- wait! Please don't hang up! Are you there? Hello? If you can hear me, whoever you are, we need help. Call the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Get a message to Adrian Hall...

EXT. INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

From this vantage point, the changes on planet earth are dramatically visible. The entire NORTHERN HEMISPHERE is under cloud cover. Occasional bright flashes, play over the surface as electrical storms rage.

INT. INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

Parker turns away from the view out the window and floats over to check the Oxygen gauges:

Every supply tank except one is in the red.

SPENCER (female American astronaut) adjusts the radio, trying to pick up a signal. A Russian voice comes over the speaker.

SPENCER

I'm getting something.

They all come over to listen. Only Yuri can understand. They watch his face nervously for signs.

When the broadcast fades into static, Yuri looks at the others, stunned.

PARKER

Was it mission control in Korolev?

Yuri shakes his head and looks out the window at earth.

CONTINUED:

YURI

There is no more Korolev. No more
Russia.

SPENCER

What do you mean?

YURI

It was Russian nuclear sub in South China
Sea looking for orders. Nobody is left.
A half billion people...

He struggles for words. None come. The other astronauts
turn away. They understand.

EXT. NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

The snow is piling up.

INT. TRUSTEE ROOM - DAY

Binata comes running in, talking excitedly.

BINATA

*Venez, venez! J'ai trouvé une chambre
avec les lumières qui marchent!*

She runs back out. The group turns to Laura.

LAURA

She says she found a room where the
lights are still on.

INT. RARE BOOKS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Binata leads everyone in. Emergency lights are indeed still
working, revealing glass cases filled with rare books

J.D.

There must be a back-up generator to
protect the collection.

Jeremy puts his hand on a case reverently.

JEREMY

A Gutenberg Bible.

LUTHER

What's dat?

JEREMY

The first printed volume in the history
of Western Civilization

CONTINUED:

LUTHER
(unimpressed)
Look like an old book to me.

JUDITH
It's worth over two million dollars.

Luther is impressed.

SAM
We should keep moving books into the
other room.

J.D.
Oh give me a break. I'm not hauling more
books around while we've got light and
heat right here.

SAM
And when the generator runs out of gas?

J.D.
We make another fire.

SAM
We'd suffocate; there's no ventilation.

J.D.
Hey, nobody appointed you boss.

SAM
Nobody asked you to stay.

J.D.
(to Laura)
Are you paying attention? He's showing
off for you.

SAM
(mutters)
Asshole.

Sam walks past and J.D. deliberately bumps him. WHAM! The
two boys are at one another.

The others pull them apart just as quickly..

LAURA
Stop it!

Sam and J.D. glare at one another. Sam walks out.

INT. NOAA, NCEP OFFICE - DAY

Almost everything is cleared out. Adrian ponders the results of their computer model.

Jason walks up behind him.

JASON

Uh, Professor... I just a got a really strange message from some woman in South Carolina... she said she spoke to your son.

Adrian looks up sharply.

JASON (CONT'D)

He's at the New York Public Library.

Adrian stares at Jason for a beat.

ADRIAN

Thank you, Jason.

Jason nods and steps out of the room. Adrian picks up the phone.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

DOCTORS and NURSES criss-cross in front of us, moving patients and medical equipment out of the hospital.

Lucy stands at the far end of the corridor, on the phone. She just listens for several moments, nodding occasionally.

LUCY

I understand.

ADRIAN (V.O.)

Have you arranged for transport?

LUCY

The hospital is taking care of it. I'll leave once we've loaded the pediatric ward into the ambulances.

ADRIAN (V.O.)

It'll be impossible to reach each other. Leave a message for me at the American Embassy in Mexico city.

LUCY

All right. We should say good-bye.

INT. NOAA, NCEP OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Adrian grips the receiver.

ADRIAN (V.O.)

There's still so much I want to say to you--

LUCY (V.O.)

You don't have to say anything, Adrian:
I know.

Adrian nods, although she can't see him. He's not a man who lets himself cry, but he's struggling.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Lucy speaks softly and calmly through her tears.

LUCY

Good-bye, Adrian. I love you. Tell Sam
I love him too. God be with you.

She hangs the phone up gently.

INT. TRUSTEE'S ROOM - DUSK

Sam is alone, feeding books into the fire.

Laura comes into the room and walks up beside him.

SAM

Maybe my father was wrong. Maybe we
should have left with the others.

She shakes her head.

LAURA

I don't think so.

SAM

You know he took me on one of his Arctic
trips once. Thought he was doing me a
big favor. He doesn't know how much I
hate the cold.

LAURA

My Dad and I are supposed to go look at
colleges in two weeks. He wants me to go
to Harvard. I guess I don't have to
worry about that, anymore.

She laughs. After a moment her laughter turns to tears.

CONTINUED:

Sam puts a hand on her shoulder to comfort her.

SAM

Hey... don't cry. Everything is going to be all right.

She buries her face in his chest.

LAURA

No it's not.

They form a romantic silhouette in front of the giant fireplace. She cries softly; just needing to let go. Needing to be held. Sam holds her tight.

When the door opens, Brian stops short.

BRIAN

Sorry, I didn't mean to...

Laura steps apart from Sam.

SAM

It's all right.

BRIAN

The generator just died.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

A caravan of black SUVs flanked by SNOW PLOWS with flashing lights pulls out from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

A stalwart White House Correspondent gives a live report as the snow falls heavily.

WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

This is the first time since the war of eighteen twelve that the federal government has been forced to flee these headquarters. Officially this is a temporary relocation. Privately, many here wonder when, if ever, the President will return. Reporting live from Washington, D.C....

EXT. NOAA, PARKING LOT - DUSK

Adrian struggles to load a SLED into the back of his CHEVY TAHOE. It's cold and slippery and too heavy for him but he's a stubborn bastard and he won't give up.

CONTINUED:

All of a sudden another PAIR OF HANDS grasps the other side and helps him push the sled inside.

ADRIAN

Thanks...

REVEAL FRANK standing opposite him.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

You're supposed to be on a bus to Mexico.

FRANK

Jason told me about Sam.

Frank slings his bag into the back of the truck.

ADRIAN

(shakes his head)

This isn't a scientific mission--

FRANK

Don't waste your breath, boss. You ain't going alone.

At that moment Jason comes running up with a case of equipment. He tosses it in the back of the truck as well.

ADRIAN

Where do you think you're going?

JASON

Neither one of you can run the G.P.S. software worth a damn. Without me, you'll end up in Cleveland.

Adrian opens his mouth to protest but Jason and Frank are already climbing in and slamming the doors.

Adrian can't decide whether he should be angry or pleased. Doesn't matter, his team is coming with him either way.

EXT. NYC STREETS - DUSK

Campbell walks with determination through the snow. The group is still together, stretched out behind him, moving at a crawl.

All of a sudden, the snow stops falling and the wind stops blowing. It grows very quiet.

Campbell looks up. The sky clears REVEALING the GEORGE WASHINGTON looming ahead. A beautiful sight.

CONTINUED:

A look of hope comes over his face.

INT. LIBRARY READING ROOM - DUSK

J.D. looks out the window and sees the same lull in the weather. He turns to Jeremy and Elsa excitedly.

J.D.

It's clearing up. The storm is passing.

INT. TRUSTEE ROOM - DUSK

Sam notices the same change outside the window. He's concerned.

SAM

Where are the others?

BRIAN

The Reading Room--

Sam is already on his way out the door.

SAM

Nobody leave. Stoke the fire!

EXT. NYC STREETS - DUSK

A cheer goes up from Campbell's group as they see the bridge.

Then it comes...

A LOW, OMINOUS, WHISTLE. The accelerated rush of deadly, super-chilled air is invisible.

Motions slow. Feet stop mid-step. It's all over in a matter of seconds. Campbell looks up at the sky.

An expression of surprise is frozen in place on his face as a thin sheet of ice forms over his lifeless eyes.

INT. LIBRARY READING ROOM - DUSK

J.D., Jeremy and Elsa's optimism turns to horror as the people in the street below cease to move.

Elsa shivers and steps away from the window just as Sam runs into the room.

SAM

Come on!

They all feel the chill now. Nobody questions him

INT. LIBRARY CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

They move down the corridor as if chased by an invisible pursuer. On the walls around them, a film of ice is forming.

The extreme cold is sucking the moisture out of the very air!

They break into a flat out sprint.

INT. TRUSTEE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam comes barrelling through the door. As soon as the other three are inside, he slams it shut.

Everybody huddles close to the giant fireplace.

On the walls furthest from the heat of the fire, ice crystals form faster than anybody has ever seen.

JUDITH

(a whisper)

What's happening?

The window starts to turn snow white.

Louis kisses the cross that hangs around his neck and begins praying softly in Spanish.

The window crackles but the ice forming rapidly on both sides of the glass prevents it from breaking.

MR. WITHERS

Heaven help us.

A blast of cold air down the chimney almost smothers the roaring fire.

SAM

More books! Don't let it go out.

They throw more books on the flames. Laura huddles close to Sam.

They all stare at the window, watching, waiting..

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A TELEVISION SCREEN

A steady stream of vehicles is moving across the U.S.-Mexican border. U.S. and Mexican Army troops direct traffic.

CONTINUED:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

The flood of refugees from the north has slowed to a trickle. Reports describe complete devastation. Here at the southern border things are moving much more rapidly since the President struck a deal with Mexico to forgive all Latin American debts in return for free access...

PULL OFF TV to REVEAL that it plays unwatched in an empty room.

WE GLIDE DOWN a deserted hallway. It is eerily silent except for the soft hum and beep of various machines.

AS WE APPROACH the open door to the PEDIATRIC WARD, the sound of a WOMAN's voice softly reading a children's book can be heard.

INT. PEDIATRIC WARD - CONTINUOUS

Lucy sits on the edge of Peter's bed reading to him. He listens with wide, attentive eyes.

Lucy pauses as she hears FOOTSTEPS approaching. A NURSE, MARIA, sticks her head in. Lucy leaves the book with Peter.

LUCY

I'll be right back.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lucy steps outside to speak with Maria.

LUCY

Is the transport ambulance here?

MARIA

(shakes her head)

They've all gone. In the confusion... I don't know what happened. People started to panic; everybody just started climbing in cars and leaving. There's a policeman with a snowplow waiting outside. He can take us both.

LUCY

What about the children? They can't be moved without an ambulance.

CONTINUED:

MARIA

We sent word to all the private ambulance services. Maybe one of them will stop by later...

Even as she says it, she knows it's wishful thinking.

Lucy bows her head for a moment; she cannot let those children die alone, in the dark. She looks up, resolved.

LUCY

You go ahead. I'll stay and wait for the ambulance.

MARIA

Lucy... you know what you're saying?

LUCY

You should go. He won't wait forever.

MARIA

But...

LUCY

Go.

Maria blinks back a tear and nods. She gives Lucy a quick hug then turns and runs toward the exit.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Maria!

She stops and turns.

LUCY (CONT'D)

When you get to Mexico, leave word for my ex-husband at the Embassy.

MARIA

What should I say?

LUCY

Tell him I had to finish reading a little boy his bedtime story. He'll understand.

Maria nods and then exits.

Lucy opens the door to the Pediatric Ward. Peter is holding the book open for her expectantly. She smiles at him.

EXT. MARYLAND - DAY

The snow continues to fall.

CONTINUED:

The National Guard has re-routed traffic on Interstate-95 so that all six lanes are flowing south. It's still not enough.

A Chevy Tahoe crosses an overpass in the foreground. Adrian drives as Frank and Jason consult a map.

JASON

There's a service road running parallel to the interstate. Next left.

Adrian sees the turn ahead. He has to inch through the tide of cars lining up to get on the Interstate.

When he gets through, the road is clear.

ADRIAN

At least we won't have to deal with traffic going this direction.

They all smile grimly.

PULL back to REVEAL the endless ribbon of cars heading south on I-95, bumper to bumper... and one LONE TRUCK driving north.

INT. TRUSTEE ROOM - DAY

The group is camped out in a semi-circle around the fireplace. Their store of books is down by half.

J.D. shivers and pulls his coat tighter around himself.

Luther sits beside him, methodically tearing pages out of a book. He wads up each page into a ball and shoves these into his pant legs, his sleeves, etc...

J.D.

What are you doing?

LUTHER

In-sulation. Newspaper's best, but this'll do.

J.D. shakes his head disbelievingly.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

You spend some years on the street, you learn how to keep warm.

He offers J.D. a piece of paper. J.D. hesitates, then takes it. He's too cold to be proud.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA SUBURB - DAY

The blizzard has intensified to near white out conditions.

The CHEVY TAHOE creeps along, buffeted by strong winds. Frank is at the wheel.

They pass cars stuck in the snow, abandoned by their owners as they fled south. God only knows what became of them.

ADRIAN

Where are we?

Jason tries to use the GPS locator.

JASON

I can't get a signal. The cloud cover must be insane. I think we're just north of Philadelphia.

A HUGE GUST OF WIND blows them THWACK! into a snowdrift.

Everything goes white as they skid to a stop.

Frank opens the door and more snow tumbles down. He sweeps the windshield clear with his arm, earning a few feet of visibility.

Adrian slides into the driver's seat and gives a little gas. The wheels spin. He tries reverse. The truck just sinks lower.

They all get out.

The Tahoe is hopelessly buried. The tail lights are just a red glow.

JASON (CONT'D)

Should I unpack the shovels?

ADRIAN

Skip it. Unpack the snowshoes. We're walking from here.

INT. TRUSTEE ROOM - NIGHT

Sam tends the fire while the others sleep.

Laura crawls beside him and wraps a large coat around both of them. They talk softly.

SAM

Thanks.

CONTINUED:

LAURA

I can't sleep. My mind keeps going over all those worthless Academic Decathlon facts. Pretty stupid, huh?

SAM

You haven't had time to adjust yet.

LAURA

How am I supposed to adjust, Sam? Everything I've ever cared about, everything I've worked for... it's all been preparation for a future that no longer exists.

She stares at the fire.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I guess you were right all along. It's all meaningless.

SAM

No it's not. I just said that to avoid admitting the truth about the Decathlon.

She turns to him.

LAURA

Who cares about Academic Decathlon anymore?

SAM

(blushing)

I mean the truth about why I joined the team..

She is completely baffled. Sam lowers his voice even more.

SAM (CONT'D)

Because you were on the team. It was an excuse to... forget it...

Sam loses his nerve and looks away from her. Her face glows in the firelight. She just wanted to hear him say it.

LAURA

Hey, come here.

She touches his chin with her hand and guides his face back to hers.

They kiss like it's the end of the world..

EXT. SNOW COVERED LANDSCAPE - DAY

The blizzard rages. For a moment it appears WE ARE in Antarctica.

Only the half-buried Golden Arches of a McDonalds protruding from the snow tell us that this is a very different American landscape we're looking at.

After a while, we make out human shapes.

Adrian, Frank and Jason are so heavily clad in arctic gear that we can barely distinguish one from the other. They wear snow shoes and they are towing a SLED, loaded with provisions and equipment.

They communicate with hand signals because the wind is too loud. If anybody is prepared for these conditions, these guys are. The only thing they aren't prepared for is...

A low, familiar whistling sound begins to grow.

Adrian's foot sinks deep into the snow and he stops moving.

The sky lightens above and the snow stops.

All we can see of Adrian's face is his eyes: they narrow.

Jason fumbles for the thermometer around his neck and sees it start to drop.

Adrian doesn't need a thermometer; he is already ripping off his harness and signaling the others to follow.

The RUSH OF WIND GROWS LOUDER as the cold air begins to descend.

Adrian leads the race across the snow toward the buried McDonalds. It is painfully slow-- like running in a dream.

Adrian falls to his knees by a MUSHROOM-SHAPED lump on the snow-covered roof and digs madly.

A flash of aluminum: the metal ventilation whirly-gig.

Jason looks up in terror as icicles form on the ARCHES above them. They only have seconds left...

Adrian rips the whirly-gig off revealing an aluminum shaft into the darkness below.

Frank jumps in. Adrian pushes Jason through head first. He follows last just as the freezing wind hits.

CONTINUED:

An AMERICAN flag flapping beside the arches freezes in place.

INT. TRUSTEE ROOM - DAY

The group is looking pretty ragged. The adult men are starting to grow beards.

BINATA

J'ai faim.

Her mother shushes her. Sam turns to Laura inquiringly.

LAURA

She's hungry.

J.D.

(under his breath)

We're all hungry.

Sam tosses a few books on the fire. The last of the stack.

He spots a large, LEATHER BOUND VOLUME on the table and reaches for it.

JEREMY

Not that one.

Sam stops. He looks more closely and sees it is...

THE GUTENBERG BIBLE. Sam removes his hand.

He walks to the door and rests his palm against it to test the temperature.

SAM

We're out of food, we're out of fuel.
We're going to have to chance it sooner
or later.

He looks around the room for feedback. Everybody stares at the door. Nobody contradicts him.

JUDITH

Go ahead Sam. It's your call.

Sam takes a deep breath, and pulls on the heavy door. Nothing. He tugs again, harder.

The ice shatters as the door swings open...

INT. LIBRARY CORRIDOR - DAY

A tunnel of ice. Arctic conditions. But no longer deadly. Sam steps out of the Trustee room followed by the others.

INT. MACY'S - DAY

Four ice encrusted tents sit incongruously on the floor of the department store. There is no movement until...

A FIST punches through the ice from inside one tent!

The frozen fabric tears apart; Gary claws his way out.

He shivers and stretches. His face is bearded and haggard, but he's alive.

Gary breaks through the ice of the next tent and tears open a hole. Tony sits up in his sleeping bag.

A MOMENT LATER... they free Paul.

The three of them gather around the last tent. They crack the ice and pull the tent open to REVEAL...

Bob is frozen to death, his fingers still wrapped around an empty propane stove.

A beat.

GARY

I told everyone to keep your blood moving and ration your propane. He didn't listen.

PAUL

We should have made room in one of our tents. He was older. And hurt.

GARY

It's survival of the fittest Paul. We're all going to have to get used to it.

Gary walks away. Paul and Tony exchange a glance. They are afraid of Gary. And they're afraid he is right.

INT. LIBRARY READING ROOM - DAY

Jeremy piles books on a cart in the foreground; in the background Elsa looks out the window.

ELSA

CONTINUED:

ELSA'S POV - in the street outside a MAN staggers through the snow! He stumbles and falls to his knees.

JEREMY

Good Lord..

Elsa's cry has brought the others running. Sam joins Elsa and Jeremy at the window. They point to the figure in the snow.

ELSA

He just fell down..

Sam looks around. He starts yanking books off shelves looking for two the right size.

SAM

Brian, take off your shoelaces.

LAURA

What are you doing?

SAM

Making snow shoes.

Louis understands. Without another word he starts searching for a pair of books for himself.

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

Sam and Louis climb out a second story window onto a snowdrift. In spite of their makeshift snow shoes, they sink up to their knees.

The wind blows stinging ice crystals off the surface.

LAURA'S POV from the upper window - the two figures struggle slowly toward the dark shape in the street.

They begin dragging him back to the building.

INT. TRUSTEE ROOM - DAY

They set the MAN down in front of the fire and begin to warm him. His clothing indicates he's a CONSTRUCTION WORKER.

SAM

Is he alive?

ELSA

(bending over him)

There's a pulse. It's weak.

CONTINUED:

JUDITH

He has severe hypothermia. Don't put him too close to the fire. Remove his clothes and warm his body core, allowing his circulation to return slowly. Otherwise cold blood from the extremities can be driven inward causing heart failure.

They all turn to look at her, impressed.

Judith holds up the book she is reading from.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Books can be good for something other than burning.

INT. MCDONALDS - DAY

It's very dark, except for a dull blue glow. A FIGURE stands over what looks like a table top.

WE HEAR a sizzling sound.. something scrapes against metal... flap!

Frank turns on his head lamp. He is grilling a burger! He inspects it under the light.

FRANK

I think this one is done.

ADRIAN

Save your batteries.

Frank snaps his head lamp back off. A beat of darkness.

ADRIAN (CONT'D) (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Did you put cheese on that?

Frank clicks on his lantern.

FRANK

You want cheese, I need light.

It makes for a strange sight: three Arctic explorers sprawled in a deserted restaurant.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I wonder how much propane is left in this tank...

CONTINUED:

Jason stands on a chair, holding a broom handle up the ventilation shaft. He withdraws it and reads the thermometer he has taped to the end.

JASON

It's warming up there. Negative fifteen.

FRANK

You sure you don't want a burger, Jason?

Jason answers without thinking, still examining the thermometer.

JASON

I don't eat meat. Processed beef is bad for the environment.

Frank and Adrian exchange a look.

ADRIAN

Um.. Jason.

Jason looks up, realizing the pointlessness of that statement.

JASON

Can you make me a Big Mac?

INT. TRUSTEE ROOM - DAY

Judith attends to the delirious CONSTRUCTION WORKER, consulting several medical textbooks. He babbles incoherently.

FOLLOW Laura as she walks away from him and comes over to Sam, Louis, Jeremy and J.D.

LAURA

From what I can gather, he's a welder. He used his propane tanks to stay warm.

SAM

If this guy survived, others must have. Maybe we can find help.

J.D.

And food.

SAM

(nods)

Louis and I will go back out and look.

CONTINUED:

J.D.
I'll go with you. I'm going stir crazy.

LAURA
I'm coming too.

SAM
No. You should stay here.

LAURA
Why, because I'm a girl?

SAM
No, because the strongest people will
have a better chance of surviving out
there.

LAURA
Women have more body fat than men. We
can take the cold better.

SAM
Four is too many. We only have enough
really good gear for three.

Laura crosses her arms; she won't budge.

JEREMY
I'm happy to stay inside.

LOUIS
I don't like letting a girl go out there.

LAURA
I'm younger and stronger than you.

Louis turns to Sam to settle the dispute. Sam looks at
Laura for a beat.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

Sam, J.D. and Laura step under the main portico and out onto
the snow. PULL BACK TO REVEAL they are stepping through what
used to be the soaring windows above the front door.

EXT. NYC STREETS - DAY

Three figures move slowly across the white valley. The wind
comes in bursts, howling down the concrete canyons and
flinging tiny pieces of ice at them, like shrapnel.

CONTINUED:

They work their way across the street. Sam kneels and looks down through the glass windows of a first floor Cafe.

SAM'S POV - THE CAFE

is frozen underwater. Napkin holders, ketchup bottles and other objects are suspended where they were floating: like a three-dimensional Salvador Dali painting.

Sam turns away. There is no chance of getting food from any of the street level shops.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Shattering glass. The kids climb through a second floor window. Everything is coated with fine layer of frost.

Laura finds a jar of Twizzlers on a desk.

LAURA

Look!

The lid is frozen on so they just smash it. They immediately start gnawing the frozen candies like savages.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I feel guilty eating these.

SAM

We need the calories to keep moving. This isn't enough to help the group anyway. We need to find real food somewhere.

LAURA

Everything's frozen underwater. Where can we look?

They all look out the window and see...

The SHIP.

INT. SHIP - DAY

Darkness. A banging sound of steel on steel, followed by a metallic creaking as a frozen HATCH is pried open above us.

Three heads appear, silhouetted against the pale sky.

SAM

Who wants to go first?

CONTINUED:

J.D.
I'll go. Anything to get out of this
wind.

J.D. climbs down the ladder into the hold.

J.D. (CONT'D)
Okay. Hand down the torch!

Sam shelters the flame while Laura lights a torch made from
the leg of an office chair and a phone book.

They pass it down to J.D.

LAURA (O.S.)
What do you see?

J.D. climbs down a few rungs. The light from the torch
illuminates the floor below... only it's not the floor, it's
frozen water.

Staring up at us from just beneath the surface is the face of
a SAILOR, with dead eyes, mouth fixed into a cry for help!
Receding into the darkness below him, more bodies can be
seen, still grasping at the ladder.

J.D. screams and drops the torch.

EXT. SHIP - DAY

Sam and Laura help J.D. scramble back onto the deck. He
breathes heavily for a few moments.

J.D.
No good. The hold is full of frozen
water.

Dejected, they start walking back across the deck.

Laura notices a LIFEBOAT suspended off the foredeck on
pulleys. She veers off toward it. The others follow her.

Laura climbs up to the edge of the boat, brushes some snow
away and begins to tug at the canvas cover.

LAURA
Help me.

SAM
What are you doing?

LAURA
The lifeboat must have emergency rations.

CONTINUED:

They realize she's right. They tear the cover off and climb into the lifeboat.

Laura finds an OILSKIN BAG beneath one of the seats. She opens it excitedly. A cornucopia of canned foods...

J.D.

Tomato soup! Tuna fish!

LAURA

Spam!

They jump with joy. Sam hugs Laura.

SAM

You are a goddess.

In their excitement they've failed to notice that the ship has started to move slightly...

Already unstable, top heavy in the frozen river, the ship SUDDENLY YAWS to one side with a massive CRACKING and CRASHING of ICE!

The sound is reminiscent of the Ice Shelf breaking. The base of the ship slips sideways until it catches on some unseen obstacle.

All three kids are thrown to the floor of the lifeboat.

The boat's shift opens a CREVICE on one side between the hull of the ship and the ice wall that had formed against it. The crevice is directly beneath the lifeboat.

The jarring force is too much for the brittle and frozen pulley locks. They break and the ropes play out...

The lifeboat takes a sickening plunge down, down, down, fifty feet or more until... SMASH! It wedges between the smooth side of the ship and the sheer wall of ice.

EXT. NYC STREETS - DAY

Gary, Tony and Paul stop to listen as the SOUND echoes into silence. They wear Gore-tex gear purloined from Macy's.

They jog toward an opening between two buildings; they see THE SHIP a block away.

EXT. LIFEBOAT - DAY

CONTINUED:

SAM

Are you all right?

J.D.

I think I may have broken my wrist.

They look up at the deck, impossibly high above.

SAM

Okay, let's stay calm and think.

A beat. Only half serious, J.D. shouts as loud as he can.

J.D.

Help! HELP! IS ANYBODY THERE?

SAM

I'd say that's unlikely.

They all exchange a smile at the joke. Then...

GARY (O.S.)

Is somebody down there?

They look up in absolute astonishment to see three men leaning over the rail four stories above them.

LAURA

Yes! We're here! Hello!

SAM

You have no idea how glad we are to see you guys. We didn't know if anybody else survived.

GARY

You're the first people we've seen. We stayed inside until we ran out of food.

J.D.

(holds up the sack)
We found rations. Three bags!

LAURA

The lifeboat fell before we could get out. We think he has a broken wrist.

GARY

We'll pull you out. Hold on a second.

He disappears for a minute. A rope comes flying down.

CONTINUED: (2)

GARY (CONT'D)

Let's hoist the supplies up first so you can tie them on.

Sam and Laura tie the three SACKS onto the end of the rope.

SAM

All right. Go ahead.

They watch the SACKS move up, a few feet at a time as the men pull hand over hand. Finally they drag them over the rail.

The kids wait for several moments, looking up.

LAURA

Hello?

They can hear hushed, urgent discussion from above. Gary's face reappears briefly.

GARY

Give us just a second.

Gary disappears again. They wait. J.D. whispers.

J.D.

What are they doing?

The kids strain to listen, but all is silent above.

LAURA

Hey you guys! What's the hold up?

Sam's expression hardens.

SAM

They're gone.

Laura and J.D. look at him, horror struck.

EXT. LANDSCAPE - DAY

A wide vista of snow without end.

In the distance, three figures appear to rise up from the ground. As they advance, we realize they are approaching over the nearly invisible crest of snow.

ON ADRIAN as he stops to survey the road ahead. The snowfall is light. They have passed through the worst of the storm into the new world it has left behind.

Adrian consults his compass and his GPS device. He points.

CONTINUED:

JASON

Thirty clicks north-north-west.

He takes a step in the direction they are heading but Adrian stops him.

ADRIAN

Hold on. Look down.

Just in front of them, a large patch of snow has blown away, revealing that they are standing on top of the glassed-in dome of a giant shopping mall!

The building is completely covered by a thick crust of snow and ice, but right here the shops below are visible.

They look around, wondering how long they've been walking on this precarious surface.

FRANK

This roof must be supporting one hundred tons of ice.

It is impossible to see what the fastest way off is.

ADRIAN

All right, let's rope together and spread out. We have to separate our weight. We'll tow the sled a safe distance behind. Move slowly.

They uncoil rope and start inching apart. Jason glances down at the mall floor five stories below the glass.

JASON

I didn't think I could sweat in this temperature.

SEVERAL MINUTES LATER...

Adrian makes his way gingerly across the ice.

The snow cover grows thinner and thinner revealing the glass roof stretching on and on like a lake.

Adrian does his best to walk over supports wherever possible.

Twenty feet behind him Jason follows his footsteps.

FOLLOW the line back to where Frank brings up the rear.

Crunch. crunch. crunch...

CONTINUED: (2)

CRACK! The ice and glass give way beneath Frank's feet!

Adrian and Jason's heads snap back. For a moment Frank's head and shoulders are suspended above the hole as he holds himself up by the arms. Then...

CRASH! The weight of the surrounding ice is too much. Frank plunges out of sight.

Jason has forgotten they are all roped together so it takes him by surprise when the line yanks him off his feet and drags him slipping and sliding toward the opening.

Adrian tries to dig his heels in but the clumsy snowshoes prevent him.

Jason is speeding toward the hole. Adrian jerks his ice axe free and with a mighty swing THWACK! he brings them to a halt.

Jason is only five feet from the hole.

Frank dangles in space, sixty feet above a hard marble floor. He looks up... all he can see is a patch of sky and the silhouettes of the other two above.

ADRIAN
(calls down)
Are you all right Frank?

Frank calls back up with as much bravado as he can muster.

FRANK
Fine. I just dropped in to do a little shopping.

ADRIAN
Hold on. We'll pull you up. Jason, dig your feet in.

Jason is sweating with fear. He starts hyperventilating.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
Jason!

Adrian is about to yell at him again, when he realizes he's only going to panic him more. Instead he takes a calm, fatherly tone.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
All right Jason, take it easy. Take a breath and roll over onto your back...

CONTINUED: (3)

Jason follows Adrian's instructions and slowly gets a hold of himself. He sits up and grips the rope securely.

JASON

Okay. I have his weight now.

ADRIAN

Good work. I'm going to come to you.
I'll release the pressure very slowly.

Adrian carefully lets the line between them go slack. He wiggles his ice axe free and starts crawling toward Jason.

Frank tries not to look down. Adrian is getting closer, closer...

SUDDENLY THE ROPE SLICES through the glass ceiling, carving a V-shaped opening! Frank drops another five feet. The hole stops just short of Jason's feet.

Jason stares in terror but he keeps his grip.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Hang on!

There is a terrible crackling sound as the glass radiating out from around Jason spiderwebs. The whole roof is about to give from the pressure!

Frank sees it from the underside. He whips out a KNIFE...

Adrian sees what he is about to do through the glass--

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

No!

Frank looks up. For a moment their eyes meet.

FRANK

Save those kids.

He cuts the rope.

Adrian and Jason turn away and flinch. But they can't help but hear the sickening thud a moment later.

EXT. LIFEBOAT - NIGHT

The snow has begun to fall more heavily again.

Sam attempts to hack a foothold into the ice with the end of an oar. The ice is like solid rock and his progress is slow.

CONTINUED:

J.D. huddles on a bench, cradling his wrist. Pain, cold, loneliness, self-pity... it's all too much. He starts to cry.

Sam and Laura look over at him.

A beat. Sam sets down the oar and goes over to J.D.

SAM

We're not going to die here. Don't give up.

J.D. wipes his eye. He stops crying and nods.

In the bow, where Laura is searching the boat, she notices something lashed beneath a seat. She begins to tug at it...

LAURA

Sam!

Sam stops and looks over. Laura is holding up: A SPEAR GUN.

EXT. SHIP, DECK - NIGHT

THWWWWWISSSSSHH! A HARPOON with a line shoots through the railing of the ship's deck.

EXT. LIFEBOAT - NIGHT

Sam sets down the spear gun. He retracts the line until it catches. He tugs hard a few times. It holds.

SAM

That should support our weight.

J.D.

(holds up his wrist)
I can't climb.

SAM

We'll have to pull you up.

LAURA

He's too heavy for us alone. We're gonna have to go back to the library and get help.

A beat.

The blizzard is getting worse; J.D. might not last that long.

Sam stares up at the deck, thinking.

CONTINUED:

SAM

What's Archimedes famous for?

LAURA

The Academic Decathlon is over, Sam.

SAM

J.D....

J.D.

Archimedes? "Give me a fulcrum and I'll move the world." Mechanical advantage.

Sam points at the block and tackle above them.

EXT. SHIP - NIGHT

FOLLOW THE ROPE as it winds over the pulley, wraps around a post for added leverage all the way to where Sam and Laura are reeling it in, twenty feet from the edge of the deck.

They hoist J.D. up and over the railing.

EXT. NYC STREETS - NIGHT

Sam, Laura and J.D. stand beside the ship staring at a trail of footsteps heading down Forty-Third Street.

The heavy snow is filling the footsteps rapidly.

LAURA

They've got our food.

SAM

Forget it Laura. There are three of them and they're grown men. There has to be more food in the buildings around here.

LAURA

The blizzard is getting worse. We can barely move as it is.

SAM

Then we go back to the library and wait for another opening.

Laura turns to J.D.

LAURA

Would you tell him? That food is ours.

J.D. hesitates.

CONTINUED:

J.D.

We should listen to Sam. He's gotten us
this far.

Laura is dumbfounded. She turns and starts trudging back to
the library.

A FEW MINUTES LATER..

Visibility is only a few feet. Laura enters the frame. She
stops to catch her breath. J.D. walks up beside her.

LAURA

Where's Sam?

J.D.

I thought he was ahead of you?

They both look around. All they see is snow.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

Sam follows the faint footprints leading away from the ship..

INT. MACY'S - NIGHT

Gary sets the food bags protectively behind his tent.

Paul and Tony finish gobbling up the rations he's given them.
A small camping light illuminates the scene.

PAUL

(mutters to Tony)
They were just kids.

GARY

(sharply)
What did you say?

Gary walks over. The gun is prominently displayed in his
waistband. Paul and Tony both look at the floor.

GARY (CONT'D)

I don't see either of you having any
trouble eating.

Paul musters a small amount of courage to plead his case.

PAUL

One of them was a girl, Gary!

CONTINUED:

GARY

You think I wanted to leave them there?
Huh? You think I wanted to trade three
hundred grand a year and a place on the
upper East Side for this shit!

Gary kicks an empty can of spam across on the floor.

GARY (CONT'D)

The world is a harsh fucking place, my
friend. Either you can handle it or you
can't. These rations are gonna last the
three of us two weeks, tops. That's the
three of us. It's too bad those kids had
to die, but you know what: a lot of
people died. We didn't kill 'em.

A beat of silence.

PAUL

(softly)

We're turning into animals.

GARY

We were always animals.

Gary turns out the camping light.

They climb into their North Face sleeping bags.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

SAM. He has been watching them throughout from behind a
clothes rack. He settles down to wait.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MACY'S - LATER

The SOUND of deep, regular breathing comes from the three
sleeping bags.

Sam steps as softly as he can.

He can only carry one of the three food bags. He lifts it
carefully but there is a muffled CLANKING of TIN CANS.

He freezes. Gary shifts in his bag. Sam holds his breath.

Gary rolls back over. Sam creeps away.

RPHTND A RACK OF CLOTHES

CONTINUED:

Sam appears to have made a clean break. He doesn't notice when the food sack catches on a hanger...

CRASH! The entire rack of shirts is pulled to the ground!

Gary and his crew scramble out of their sleeping bags.

GARY (O.S.)

Who's there?

A flashlight beam cuts across the darkened store. A dark shape streaks through the light: Sam runs for his life.

TONY

He's got one of the food bags!

Gary draws his gun. He points to the other aisle.

GARY

Go that way.

They fan out to pursue Sam.

Pounding feet... bouncing flashlight beams... hot breath visible in the cold air as they pant...

CRASH! Sam pulls down a display rack of tennis balls to slow them down.

Tony slips and falls on the tennis balls, cursing.

Sam breaks out across an open space. Gary shines his flashlight on him and pulls out his gun...

PING! A GUN SHOT rings out in the darkness. Gary stops and sweeps his flashlight over the ground slowly, looking for a body. There is none.

Paul bends to help Tony to his feet. Gary continues the pursuit.

INT. MACY'S, OPEN CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Sam runs alongside a series of exterior windows. His adrenaline is pumping so hard he does not even notice that the windows are BLOWN OUT. Not until he glances over his shoulder and notices that he is leaving FOOTPRINTS in the snow...

He slows. The snow only stretches four or five feet from the open windows.

CONTINUED:

Sam thinks fast. He turns away from the windows and walks into another section of the store until his footprints disappear.

Then he begins to walk backward, retracing his footsteps, toward the open windows...

ON GARY

moving cautiously through A DOORWAY.

He enters the CORRIDOR and his flashlight REVEALS Sam's footsteps. He follows them along beside the window and turns with them back into the store...

EXT. MACY'S - NIGHT

Sam scrambles out of the deep snow drift he fell into when he jumped out the window. The blizzard is raging. He digs through the snow for the bag of food and shoulders it.

Exhausted and cold, he forces himself to keep moving.

INT. MACY'S, OPEN CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Tony and Paul shine their flashlights around, looking for Sam. Gary walks back from the store where the footsteps led.

GARY

He's not in the store.

TONY

He has to be. Where else could he have gone?

Gary looks at the footsteps. Then he looks at the window. He figures it out. He walks over and sees the depression in the snow outside.

GARY

Clever bastard. Let's go.

He starts to pull up his hood. Paul and Tony exchange a glance. Neither of them moves.

Gary looks at them.

GARY (CONT'D)

I said let's go.

PAUL

We still have two bags of food. Let him

CONTINUED:

Gary takes out his gun and points it at Paul.

GARY

Are you with me or not?

Paul is not a brave man, but circumstance is forcing him to become one.

PAUL

If the only way to survive in this world is to behave like a savage, then no. It's not worth it.

Gary swings the gun over to Tony. He holds his ground too. The mutiny is complete.

Gary hesitates, then turns away from them in disgust. He'll go after Sam alone.

INT. LIBRARY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The snow has piled so high, that Laura and J.D. have to bend to look under the arch of the highest window.

Laura claps her hands to warm them as she peers out into the blizzard. J.D.'s wrist is bound in a splint fashioned out of rolled paper. A torch is stuck in the snow between them.

Judith approaches from behind.

JUDITH

You should come back inside by the fire.

Neither of the kids moves.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

(gently)

Nobody could survive out there.

J.D.

(simply)

Sam told me not to give up. I'm not giving up.

Judith watches them for a beat; it breaks her heart. She turns and goes back inside.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

Sam wades through waist deep snow. His face is white with frost, his breathing labored.

... through a forest of snowflakes...

CONTINUED:

Gary walks easily through the trench Sam has left behind him. Gary is bigger, stronger and better equipped.

A SNOW COVERED TRAFFIC LIGHT dangles a few feet off the ground; the snow is that high.

Sam passes the surreal landmark. The food bag is slowing him down, but he clings to it doggedly...

ON GARY as he ducks under the traffic light. He does not even realize how close he is...

ON SAM as he looks back over his shoulder. Through the gloom, he can make out a FLASHLIGHT closing in...

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Sam cuts down the alley, looking for an escape.

Gary is closing too fast. He rounds the corner twenty feet behind Sam...

Gary's flashlight beam hits Sam. Gary points his gun.

GARY

Give me back my food.

Sam turns, defiant.

SAM

It's not your food.

Gary raises the gun slightly and fires over his head.

BOOOM! The GUNSHOT reverberates off the narrow walls.

The sound waves send SMALL CRUSTY BITS of snow rolling down the ice covered scaffolding just above Gary.

GARY

I'm not gonna say it again.

Sam glances upward. He sees what's coming...

SAM

You're right about that...

CRASH! The snow above Gary cascades down in a mini-avalanche... taking the razor sharp series of ICICLES lining the edge with it.

CONTINUED:

They come down on GARY like a set of giant, crystal fangs, impaling and burying him all at once.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Laura and J.D. maintain their vigil. They stare and stare.

Laura blinks to knock the crust of ice from her eyelashes.

And then...

LAURA
I see something!

A dark shape emerging through the storm. A figure. Carrying something over his shoulder...

J.D.
Sam!

They both race out into the snowstorm as he collapses to his knees. Sam has made it. With the food.

Laura throws her arms around him. She and J.D. half-drag, half-carry Sam the rest of the way to the library... home.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BLIZZARD - NIGHT

We could be anywhere. The snow pounds down. The wind howls.

Adrian trudges through the deep drifts on pure will power. He is roped to Jason who follows ten feet behind.

Suddenly the rope grows taut. Adrian turns to see that Jason has collapsed from exhaustion.

Adrian goes to revive him. Jason cannot go further.

Adrian takes off his pack. He removes an ice saw and sets to work. With amazing speed and efficiency, he begins constructing an igloo...

He cuts blocks of hard ice and stacks them on top of one another, sealing the crevices with softer powder.

He drags Jason inside the shelter as he finishes building the chimney.

CONTINUED:

He builds the chimney extra high, five feet, to protect against piling drifts. Then he gauges the strength of the storm and builds it even higher for good measure.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. IGLOO - DAY

Darkness. The howl of the wind suddenly drops to a distant roar. A camping light comes on.

Adrian hands Jason a cup of hot soup. Jason takes it groggily.

JASON

How long have I been out of it?

ADRIAN

Three days. I think. You got dehydrated.

JASON

Do you have any idea where we are?

Adrian shakes his head. A beat.

ADRIAN

I should never have let you come. Or Frank...

He lets that thought trail out. Jason speaks tentatively, over the rim of his cup.

JASON

You know what your problem is?

ADRIAN

What?

JASON

You think you can do everything all by yourself.

That's a bold thing to say to your autocratic boss. Adrian respects him for saying it.

ADRIAN

Maybe you're right. You know, I couldn't have made it this far without your help.

Jason smiles at him.

JASON

EXT. SNOWSCAPE - MORNING

Silence. The storm is over.

Snow has piled up around the igloo burying it completely. It is a good thing Adrian built a tall chimney...

An ICE PICK appears out of the ground. Then a hand.

Adrian pulls himself up to the surface. When he stands and looks around, he is overcome with an almost religious amazement...

He is standing on the frozen Hudson River. The ice covered tracery of the George Washington Bridge soars majestically overhead.

JASON (O.S.)

Can you give me a hand?

Adrian cannot speak. Jason struggles to poke his head out into the daylight. He sees for himself and falls silent...

WIDE ANGLE of the sun rising behind Manhattan's stark and silent skyline.

Far below, TWO TINY FIGURES, dwarfed by the BRIDGE, make their way across the ribbon of white, into the city.

EXT. NYC STREETS - DAY

Adrian and Jason walk through silent concrete canyons on snow drifts piled up to sixth story windows.

The city is a frozen wonderland. Horrible and beautiful at the same time.

The only sound is the eerie rustling of wind over loose snow.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The silence is broken by shattering GLASS. Adrian knocks out a seventh story window with his axe and peers in.

A snow-covered BODY is huddled in a chair. It is an OLD WOMAN who died clutching her CAT on her lap.

Adrian turns away, respectful of the woman's tragic and private death. One of millions, no doubt.

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

The building is completely covered by snow drifts. We might recognize the surrounding landmarks. We might not.

Adrian and Jason walk into the frame.

ADRIAN

How much farther is it to the library?

Jason consults his G.P.S. device.

JASON

It should be right...

Jason looks down at his feet.

JASON (CONT'D)

...here.

Adrian's shoulders sag. For the first time, it appears there is defeat in his eyes.

A long beat.

JASON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Adrian gazes around. There are no signs of life here. To have come this far and found nothing...

Adrian takes a deep breath. He turns as if to walk away.

Jason watches.

Adrian goes to the small sled they've been dragging and roots around. He pulls out a shovel and..

He starts to dig.

Not frantically, but methodically, with determination. This is a man who will not give up.

Jason watches the futile gesture for several moments. Finally he sighs, and goes to the sled. He gets the other shovel and starts to help..

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

They are shoulder deep. They've been digging for hours.

CONTINUED:

Adrian's shovel hits concrete. He falls to his knees and pushes snow away with his hands. Jason comes over to look.

They've hit the top of the building.

INT. READING ROOM - DAY

Dim light filters through snow piled outside the windows. The room is partially caved in from pressure.

There is a soft scraping sound and the light grows brighter.

A shovel starts to clear the snow from the very top of one of the high windows.

CRASH! Adrian and Jason slide through in a tumble of snow, ice.

They stand up in the silence of the ruined room and gaze around at the destruction.

INT. LIBRARY CORRIDOR - DAY

Adrian leads the way. The building has the air of an ancient tomb.

Adrian presses doggedly on. Then he sees something...

A warm glow comes from the partially open door...

He and Jason both stop in their tracks. A beat.

Adrian takes a deep breath to steady himself before peeking in...

INT. TRUSTEE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Most of the group is asleep or resting. Lack of food has left them with little energy to move.

Sam sits by the fireplace, his back to us. He throws a book on the fire.

Adrian steps into the room quietly.

Sam turns. His face is hollow with hunger. It takes him a moment to recognize Adrian.

It is so far beyond the realm of imagination... beyond hope... Sam stands slowly.

Laura's eyes flutter open. She sees a man in the doorway.

CONTINUED:

LAURA
(dreamily)
Who's there, Sam?

SAM
(in a whisper)
My father.

Laura watches a waking dream as...

Sam and Adrian walk toward one another. They fall into an embrace.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - DUSK

WE ARE on a hill, overlooking a valley. It is raining.

SUPER: AMERICAN REFUGEE CAMP, MEXICO

Tents as far as the eye can see... motor homes... huts...

People are everywhere.

AN AMERICAN MARINE passes through a long food line in a hurry to deliver a message.

FOLLOW HIM to a CONCRETE BUILDING sign-posted as NOAA's temporary headquarters.

INT. NOAA COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

THE YOUNG MARINE weaves his way through a corridor clogged with scientists and staff.

HE ENTERS a room that is buzzing with activity. Gomez looks up from his cluttered desk.

YOUNG MARINE
Mr. Gomez, Sir! A message just came in for you over the short wave radio.

GOMEZ
What is it?

YOUNG MARINE
It's from New York, sir!

Everybody looks up at this piece of news.

EXT. MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

A jeep pushes through the overcrowded streets.

Refugees are everywhere. Many still carry their luggage.

The JEEP is driven by the young MARINE. Gomez rides shotgun.

The MARINE honks his horn several times.

Armed guards part the crowd pushing and shoving around the gates to the American Embassy. The gates swing open to let the Jeep through.

EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - NIGHT

An AIDE is waiting for them. As soon as Gomez gets out, the Aide leads him into the building.

INT. HALLWAY, AMERICAN EMBASSY - NIGHT

Gomez and the Aide move quickly down the corridor.

INT. OFFICE, AMERICAN EMBASSY - NIGHT

Gomez walks in and sees a MAN standing by the window.

When he turns, WE RECOGNIZE President Blake.

GOMEZ

Sir, I've just received word from Professor Hall. He made it!

PRESIDENT BLAKE

He made it where?

GOMEZ

New York. He says there are survivors.

President Blake begins to get excited as well. He turns to General Pierce who is seated across the room.

PRESIDENT BLAKE

How long before we can mount a rescue mission?

GENERAL PIERCE

The Air Force says it will be a few days before the winds die down enough to fly.

CONTINUED:

GOMEZ

Excuse me, sir. We have a pilot who can make the flight right now. If you give the okay...

EXT. NEW YORK - DUSK

Cmdr. Daniels' Hurricane Hunter sweeps over us.

FOLLOW its contrail and REVEAL the whole length of Manhattan stretched out below, under a thick blanket of snow...

The sky is a deep blue.

EXT. NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - DUSK

The plane passes above the library, recognizable only by the head of a marble lion protruding through the snow.

INT. TRUSTEE ROOM - DUSK

The room is empty. A wisp of smoke comes from the charred books in the fireplace.

The drone of the plane's engines fades in the distance.

INT. HURRICANE HUNTER - DUSK

Gomez looks out one of the windows and shakes his head. He is amazed anybody could have survived down there.

Suddenly he catches sight of a group of small dark shapes moving on the white ground. He points excitedly at Adrian's group heading for the rendez-vous point.

EXT. HUDSON RIVER - DUSK

Adrian and Sam lead the group toward the Statue of Liberty, half-buried under snow. They all turn to look at the sound of the plane's rotors.

The P-3 makes a wide low sweep overhead before gently touching down and gliding to a stop on its skids.

The door opens and Gomez steps out first. He trots over.

ADRIAN

It's good to see you.

They hug one another.

After a moment, Gomez walks over to Sam.

CONTINUED:

GOMEZ

It's unbelievable that you survived up here.

SAM

Looks like we're not the only ones.

Sam is staring at the Manhattan skyline which looms behind them. Gomez turns to look. So do the others.

One by one they see what has caught his eye:

In the gathering dark, everywhere as far as the eye can see, small flickering lights have appeared. More are appearing.

It takes them a moment to realize what is happening. There are more survivors. They've heard the plane, and they are signalling!

People hold candles in windows, wave torches from roof tops...

There must be hundreds of them.. thousands unseen.

Smiles spread across the faces of the group as they recognize this proof of the indomitable human spirit.

INT. HURRICANE HUNTER - NIGHT

They are in the air, headed south.

PAN OVER the exhausted faces of the survivors.

J.D. has fallen asleep; his head rests on Luther's shoulder.

Gomez takes a seat beside Adrian.

GOMEZ

The President has ordered C-130s up to New York with Army search and rescue teams. They're going to hit the other major cities as well.

Adrian nods, pleased. He turns in his seat to face Laura and Sam.

He notices Laura staring morosely out the window.

ADRIAN

(gently)

What are you thinking?

CONTINUED:

LAURA

It's just... Western Civilization is completely destroyed, isn't it?

Adrian bites his lip. He does not know what to tell her.

SAM

Not completely.

Sam reaches across the aisle and gently lifts something from Jeremy's arms without waking him.

He carefully unwraps an ancient leather-bound book... the Gutenberg Bible.

A beat.

Laura hesitates, then touches the cracked surface lightly, as if it were something magical.

She smiles. Adrian and Sam smile too. It's not going to save the world. But it might help rebuild it.

EXT. LANDSCAPE - MORNING

The Hurricane Hunter flies overhead. As WE SLOWLY LOSE the PLANE in the distance, WE CONTINUE TO FLY over an endless white landscape as we did in the opening.

White... endless white...

FADE OUT.

The END

The events depicted in this film are fictional.

Global climate change is not.

On March 7, 2002, the Larsen "B" Ice Shelf did in fact, collapse. Experts had estimated the process might take twenty years. It happened in one week.