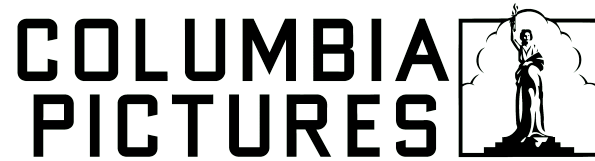


NUCLEAR REACTIONS

Written by

Jeff Hause & Dave Hines



WGAw #399352

Steve White c/o  
Warden, White & Kane  
8444 Wilshire Blvd.  
Beverly Hills, CA. 90211  
4th floor  
(213) 852-1028

**RASTAR**

Sony Pictures Studios  
10202 Washington Blvd.  
Culver City, CA 90232  
(310) 244-7871

NUCLEAR REACTIONS

FADE IN:

INT. TV STATION - CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on a television screen as a flowery orchestral version of the 'National Anthem' plays over a BLACK AND WHITE montage of patriotic scenes: cars roll off an assembly line... Air Force jets scream through the sky... endless fields of wheat sway in the breeze... Joe DiMaggio strokes a hit... Marines raise the flag on Iwo Jima... John and Jackie Kennedy smile and wave... a glowing mushroom cloud rises... and an American flag waves crisply in a stiff breeze as the song comes to an end. A voice-over announcer speaks solemnly.

JACK (O.S.)

KBOB now ends its broadcast day.  
Transmitting out of Fairvale,  
California on VHF channel twelve,  
KBOB is owned and operated by the  
Ramsay Broadcast Group. We will  
resume broadcasting this morning at  
eight a.m. Until then, goodnight.

As the announcer speaks we PULL BACK to reveal the control room of KBOB - TV. JACK RAMSAY and WALTER HARRIS sit at the control panel, putting the finishing touches on the sign off tape. Jack, 39, provides the voice-over. Walter is in his mid-fifties, balding, with a calmness that is in contrast to Jack's boundless energy.

JACK (CONT'D)

(leans back)  
So? What do you think?

WALTER

I don't know - it seems a little  
flashy.

JACK

Well, it beats the hell out of what  
we've got now. A still photo of the  
American flag with Biff doing his  
voice-over... "This concludes our  
broadcast day. Go to bed now. The  
end." Come on.

Walter stands, stretching tiredly as Jack punches a few buttons on the control board.

WALTER

It's to the point.

JACK

So's a bankruptcy hearing, Walter.  
If we're going to compete with  
bigger stations we've got to start  
acting like one. What time is it,  
anyway?

WALTER

(looks at watch)  
Good lord, it's 1:30. I didn't know  
it was this late. The wife's going  
to kill me.

JACK

Not me. Jan's too smart for that.  
If she killed me she wouldn't be  
able to complain about me anymore.

EXT. TV STATION - NIGHT

Jack and Walter step out the front door of KBOB - an old  
house converted into a TV station. They walk to their cars,  
past the transmission tower which rises from the front yard  
next to a rusted out swingset.

JACK

That's the problem with Jan - she  
doesn't understand what's going on  
here. We're pioneers, on the  
cutting edge of technology. You  
think Lewis and Clark's wives  
complained they weren't home for  
dinner every night?

WALTER

Probably.

JACK

Did I tell you I've got a new idea  
for a game show?

Walter sighs, uninterested.

WALTER

We already have a game show.

Jack frowns, muttering under his breath.

JACK

'Name That Wood'.

WALTER

'Name That Wood' is a very popular show. It's been on this station since we first began broadcasting. It's a tradition.

JACK

It's a show for yokels.

WALTER

You've only been running this station for six months, Jack. You need to get a better feel for the people in this town. The biggest thing that ever happened here was when Sutter discovered gold eighty miles away - and then everyone left!

JACK

(ignoring him)

I'm talking about a game show with a broader appeal. One that could pull in some real ratings. It's called 'Eat This'.

WALTER

(winces)

'Eat This'?

JACK

It'd be great. We make contestants eat disgusting things for money. It'd have to be food and all, but I've been reading about all kinds of foreign dishes. Do you know that in Japan they eat monkey brains right out of the skull?

Walter unlocks his car door.

WALTER

Goodnight, Jack.

JACK

In India they eat insects and sheep eyes but they won't eat cows! Figure that!

WALTER

(grins)

Go home and go to bed, you're delirious.

JACK

Sure, that's what they say about  
all geniuses.

WALTER

And people who don't get enough  
sleep.

Jack laughs as he and Walter climb into their cars.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSING TRACT - NIGHT

Jack's car rolls through a typical early 1960's housing development, passing row after row of identical, boxlike homes before pulling into a driveway. Jack climbs out of the car, closing the door as quietly as possible as he starts up the walkway. But instead of going in the front door, he steps around the side of the house.

EXT. RAMSAY HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Moving behind the house, Jack checks the windows, making sure no one is up. Satisfied, he hurries to the family fallout shelter, which is buried under the back lawn. Unsealing the lid, he climbs down inside.

INT. RAMSAY BOMB SHELTER - NIGHT

Jack turns on the light - a bare bulb hanging from the ceiling. Old furniture, bikes, and boxes filled with clothes are piled everywhere. Jack opens a small box with the words 'FIRST AID' stenciled across the lid, removing a toothbrush, tube of toothpaste and plastic cup. Pumping distilled water from a rusty metal drum into the cup, he begins to brush his teeth. As he does he steps to a metal cabinet on the wall, the words 'OPEN IN THE EVENT OF NUCLEAR ATTACK' printed in bold letters. He opens it, pulling out a pair of pajamas.

EXT. RAMSAY HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Jack emerges from the shelter, now wearing his pajamas and carrying his clothes under his arm. He quietly moves to the back door of the house, sneaking inside.

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack tiptoes into the room, where his wife is asleep in her single bed. He weaves his way through the dark, skillfully avoiding every piece of furniture as he hangs up his suit and deposits his shirt in a clothes hamper. He sinks onto the mattress of his bed, closing his eyes with a contented sigh.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ANDERSON HOUSE - DAWN

As the first rays of sunlight appear in the east, Jack's neighbor EARL ANDERSON steps proudly into his front yard, his seventeen year old son DWIGHT following tiredly. Moving to a flagpole, Earl unfolds an American flag, running it up the pole as Dwight blows a ragged version of 'Reveille' on his bugle. The neighborhood dogs begin to howl along.

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN

At the atrocious sound of the bugle Jack's wife stirs, sitting up in bed. JAN RAMSAY is an attractive woman - not beautiful, but what might be called 'housewife pretty'. Pulling herself to her feet, she moves to the window, shaking her head as she watches Earl and Dwight's morning ritual.

JAN

They've been doing that for the  
past six months. You'd think he'd  
have learned to play it by now.

She turns to Jack, who doesn't respond, sound asleep. Jan smiles - until she notices Jack's feet sticking out from under the covers. His shoes are still on, grass stuck to them. She frowns in disgust.

JAN (CONT'D)

Every night...

She steps to Jack's bed, calling to him over the sound of the bugle.

JAN (CONT'D)

Jack - wake up.  
(he doesn't stir)  
Jack!

When he still doesn't awaken Jan glances around the room, spotting a vacuum cleaner resting in the corner. She plugs it in, turning it on with a roar. Jack doesn't stir. She bangs the vacuum against the side of the bed. Nothing.

She finally unhooks the extension and holds the hose to his cheek - creating a horrible sucking noise on contact. Jack jumps up, prying the vacuum hose from his face.

JACK

Ow! What are you doing? I'm trying to sleep here!

JAN

(turns off vacuum)

You worked all night again, didn't you? If you paid as much attention to your family as you do to that station you'd be another Ozzie Nelson.

Jack sits back down, rubbing his face gingerly - a perfect, round hickey on his cheek.

JACK

Yeah, well I don't look good in a crew cut and cardigan.

(takes a calming breath)

Look, I'm sorry, but I'm trying to run a TV station. It takes a lot of work to get it off the ground. Think of it as paying dues.

JAN

You said that six months ago when we moved here. You're almost forty years old. At what point does this stop being dues paying and start being our lives?

CAROL RAMSAY, 10, appears in the doorway. She looks at her parents tiredly.

CAROL

What's happening?

Jack and Jan turn, surprised. They quickly put on fake smiles.

JACK

(too cheerful)

Nothing's happening, sweetie. Does it look like anything's happening?

CAROL

It's six in the morning, mommy's vacuuming, you're wearing black shoes with your pajamas, and you're yelling at each other.

Jan steps to Carol, escorting her out of the room as Jack pulls off his shoes.

JAN

See? Nothing's happening. Now go wake up your brother and get ready for school. I'll start breakfast.

As Jan starts down the hallway Jack calls after her.

JACK

Wait a minute, where are you going? I thought you wanted to talk.

JAN

(sticks head into room)  
I don't want to talk now. Go to sleep.

She slams the door behind her. Jack falls back onto his bed, quiet for a moment.

JACK

(aggravated)  
Now I can't sleep!

Outside the window we can see Dwight Anderson blowing so hard that the bugle shoots out of his hands, flying across the yard and hitting his father in the head.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Jan busily prepares breakfast while Jack tries to stay awake by reading the morning paper, a photo of President Kennedy on the front page. Lowering the newspaper, Jack studies ELLIOT RAMSAY, his 17 year old son. An earnest young man, Elliot has an obvious fondness for turtleneck sweaters and Kennedy pompadours. He grins at his father - bearing an eerie resemblance to the photo in the paper.

JACK

(playfully)  
There's a pretty harsh editorial here about your hero.

ELLIOT

The press should leave the president alone. If he's not free to act as he sees fit this country could be in real trouble.



JACK

Right. Next thing you know we'll be living in a democracy.

Jan steps up, placing a plate of toast on the table. Jack beams a friendly, peace-offering smile. Ignoring him, she calls up the stairs.

JAN

Carol! Get down here this instant and eat your breakfast! People are starving in...

She looks to Elliot for help.

ELLIOT

India, Pakistan, and throughout Africa. Is there any jam?

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - CAROL'S ROOM

Carol doesn't hear her mother call. Little Eva sings 'The Loco-motion' on a pink, portable record player as Carol dances around the room, chewing gum and smoking a cigarette. She follows a drag on the cigarette by blowing a bubble, popping it with her finger and watching the smoke waft away.

INT. KITCHEN

Jan sets a platter of scrambled eggs on the table in front of Jack, ignoring his grin and wink. Elliot speaks passionately, jam around his mouth.

ELLIOT

That's why I want to join the Peace Corps. It's this country's duty to bring the American way of life to primitive cultures. I mean, if they've got a food shortage then we should be there building missions and supermarkets.

A horn sounds outside. Jan calls to Carol again.

JAN

Carol! It's your bus! Hurry!

Trudging into the kitchen, Carol grumbles sullenly, Elliot mouthing her words exactly.

CAROL

I can't go. I feel sick.

Jan hands Carol her 'Elvis Presley' lunchbox.

JAN

That's because you didn't eat any breakfast. Have some food on the bus. I made goulash casserole and a banana for your lunch.

CAROL

Why can't I have a tuna sandwich like the other kids?

Carol frowns as Jan kisses her on the forehead and points her toward the door. Carol exits, Jan sniffing the air questioningly.

JAN

Jack, are you smoking again? Remember to put on a fresh shirt before the dedication this afternoon.

Jack stares at her blankly.

JAN (CONT'D)

The community bomb shelter dedication. The one you're grand marshall of. The one your daughter's taking part in. The bomb shelter you single-handedly forced them to build with all those cold war editorials you ran on the air.

JACK

I didn't force them to do anything. I was just trying to get ratings, I can't help it if they believe everything they hear on TV. Besides, the news tickers are arriving today. I have to get them hooked up in time for tonight's news.

Jan frowns, annoyed. Sensing trouble, Elliot finishes eating, jumping out of his chair.

ELLIOT

I'm late. Is my lunch ready?

Jan hands Elliot three sacks.

JAN

Here. Oh, wait a minute - I forgot the sterno can.

ELLIOT  
Not fondue again!

JAN  
(handing him the can)  
Don't lose the forks.

Elliot takes the can, kissing his mother on the cheek.

ELLIOT  
Okay. 'Bye, mom.  
(turns to Jack)  
'Bye, dad. See you tomorrow at  
breakfast?

JACK  
Do me a favor - see if they can do  
something in english class about  
that New England accent you've  
developed.

Elliot laughs as he leaves. Jan turns to Jack sourly.

JAN  
The dedication is at three o'clock.  
Don't be late, I don't think the  
parade people are as gentle and  
understanding about those things as  
I am.

JACK  
Don't be mad, honey. Once the  
tickers are installed the station  
will run itself. I'll be home all  
the time. I'll be home so much  
you'll beg me to spend more time at  
work!

Jan steps up behind him, draping her arms around his neck.  
She speaks softly, kissing his ear.

JAN  
You know I'd never do that.

JACK  
(smiles)  
I know, I was just teasing you.  
(kisses her)  
Just like when I said I'd be home  
all the time. I mean, I'll still  
have to spend a lot of time at the  
station, at least until things get  
broken in...

Straightening, Jan sighs, frowning at Jack regretfully.

JAN  
 You really know how to preserve the  
 moment, Jack.

Jack watches as she exits - his hand moving unconsciously to the fading hickey on his cheek.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

A city limit sign stands by the side of the road leading into town. It reads:

WELCOME TO FAIRVALE, CALIFORNIA!  
 FRESHEST AIR ANYWHERE!

The main sign is nearly obscured by smaller signs for the Elks, Moose, Rotary and various other clubs that have been nailed to it. Jack's car drives past.

INT. JACK'S CAR

As Jack cruises into town we see that Fairvale is a small, secluded mountain community. Jack rolls down his window as the car radio plays.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
 This is radio 690, serving our  
 listeners from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
 every day. It's 1 o'clock and 67  
 degrees in Fairvale, the fourth  
 best town in the San Francisco  
 area...

The theme from 'A Summer Place' begins to play, Jack smiling at the familiar tune.

EXT. ROADSIDE

The car motors past a small factory, the words 'LANCASTER DECALS' painted over the entrance. To one side stands a sign featuring a photo of an elderly, white-haired man, the words 'OWNED BY HARLAN LANCASTER - MAYOR OF FAIRVALE' printed underneath.

## EXT. FAIRVALE - MAIN STREET

Jack's car turns onto Main Street, rumbling underneath a banner announcing, 'BOMB SHELTER DAYS! OCTOBER 22 - 28, 1962!'. The music continues over the radio as he passes by the 'Stardust Movie Theatre', the marquee advertising 'THE ALAMO - 104th SMASH WEEK!'

Continuing down the street, Jack passes 'Ralph's Hardware', waving to owner RALPH KENDALL, who stands out front, hanging a sign which reads 'MILES OF TILES' in the window of his store.

He quickly turns, waving to CARL WENK - who stands across the street in the doorway of his hardware store, where he hangs a sign advertising 'PAILS OF NAILS'.

## EXT. TOWN SQUARE

The car slows to a stop at the town's only traffic signal. In the midst of the town square's quaint old wood-and-brick buildings stands a monstrosity made of corrugated metal. A small billboard announces 'GRAND OPENING! COMMUNITY FALLOUT SHELTER! AVAILABLE FOR CLUB FUNCTIONS AND DANCING!'. A sign to one side features a photo identical to the one seen in front of the decal factory, the words 'DONATED BY HARLAN LANCASTER - OWNER OF LANCASTER DECALS' printed underneath. Jack frowns his disapproval as two men set up folding chairs for the dedication ceremony this afternoon. As he sits at the light, Jack is approached by CRAZY CLINTON, the town bum. Dressed in old clothes and cardboard, Crazy Clinton carries a bucket of water and a rag.

CRAZY CLINTON

Hello, Jack. Clean your windshield for a quarter?

JACK

(uncomfortable)

Uh, sure, Clinton. That'd be fine.

As Clinton begins to clean the windshield, Jack looks to the other side of the street, where BOB MARTIN stands at the curb polishing a new red Corvette. Bob is smooth, sophisticated and smarmy - Fairvale's equivalent of a business tycoon. He looks up, smiling at Jack.

BOB

Hey, Jack. How's the television business?

JACK

Just fine, Bob.

BOB

Heard you were having a little trouble attracting advertisers. Have you ever considered putting on better shows? What about 'Bonanza'? Everyone watches that. You'd have to fight sponsors off with a stick.

JACK

'Bonanza' is a network show. The networks already have affiliates in San Francisco.

BOB

(casually)

You know you've got that big balloon payment due on the station on Monday. Hope you'll be able to make it - I'd sure hate to have to foreclose on you.

Jack looks up at the storefronts lining the street, signs identifying them as 'BOB'S DINER', 'BOB'S GROCERY', 'BOBS FIVE AND DIME', and, looming overhead, 'BOB'S SAVINGS AND LOAN'.

JACK

(smiles knowingly)

Yeah, I bet it'd break your heart...

Crazy Clinton steps to the drivers window, wringing his rag into the bucket.

CRAZY CLINTON

All done, Jack. Just perfect.

Jack reaches into his pocket, pulling out all his spare change. He hands it to Crazy Clinton.

JACK

There you go.

CRAZY CLINTON

You know, I've been having a few thoughts about your station, Jack. You shouldn't devote all your time to fishing shows and 'Name That Wood'. You've got to tell people about the coming apocalypse - the end of all things. Raging hellfire, Jack. Death and destruction!

Jack smiles feebly.

JACK

I'm not sure it'd really work as a family show, Clinton. But thanks for the suggestion.

CRAZY CLINTON

How about 'Bonanza', then?

Sighing, Jack looks up to find the windshield covered with a thin layer of mud from Crazy Clinton's rag. He turns on the windshield wipers to try and clear the glass as he pulls away from the light.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

CLOSE on a television monitor. We watch in BLACK AND WHITE as EDNA, a motherly woman in her 60's, bustles about a small kitchen. A VOICE-OVER ANNOUNCER speaks offscreen.

VOICE-OVER

... And now, 'Cooking With Edna' - brought to you by Bob's Grocery Store, located downtown between Bob's Gas, Bob's Diner, and Bob's Savings and Loan. Remember - 'If it says Bob's, it must be Bob's'.

Edna looks up, forcing a smile.

EDNA

Welcome. Today we were going to prepare venison from the 'Hunting With Hank' show. But seeing as Hank couldn't manage to bag a deer...

(under her breath)

... or a rabbit or even a squirrel...

(normal voice)

... we have to settle for what Hank could manage to catch...

She pulls a tray from under the counter, holding it up for the camera.

EDNA (CONT'D)

... weenies and beans.

PULL BACK to reveal Edna on a television monitor in the control room of KBOB. Walter sits with a young technician (BIFF BARNEY) at the control panel, monitoring the show as Jack steps into the room.

JACK  
How's it going, guys?

Biff stands, speaking to Jack nervously.

BIFF  
I'm glad you're here, Jack. We had a little problem during 'Fishing With Fred' this morning.

JACK  
What kind of problem?

Biff shifts uneasily, Walter turning away from the control board and answering for him.

WALTER  
A fish-cleaning accident. There's fish guts all over camera #2 and Fred's at the doctor getting his hand stitched up.

BIFF  
It wasn't my fault - he asked me to help him! Those fish were at least a week old. They exploded like hand grenades.

Jack frowns, exasperated.

JACK  
Can't I leave for a couple of hours without some kind of disaster taking place? Last time I took a night off you nearly burned down the entire station during 'Barbecuing With Barney'!

BIFF  
Kerosene ... gasoline - they sound so similar...

JACK  
(sighs)  
Have the tickers arrived yet?

BIFF  
(brightening)  
Yes, sir. They came and set them up. Said all we had to do was plug 'em in.

JACK  
So did you?



BIFF  
I was afraid...

Jack rolls his eyes heavenward, stepping out the door. Biff follows hesitantly. Walter turns back to the control board, where Edna is still on the monitor, placing a hot dog in a bun.

EDNA  
... Once the bun is open, place the hot dog inside, positioning the weenie lengthwise for the best fit...

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM

The new Teletype machines have been bolted to a desk in the news room (which has been converted from a den). Jack steps in, grinning at them proudly as Biff follows him into the room.

JACK  
A.P. and U.P.I. news tickers. Do you know what this means?

BIFF  
I'm not allowed to touch them?

JACK  
Besides that. We're a real TV station now. We can finally produce a real newscast - no more reading day-old stories from the newspaper.

BIFF  
Not even the comics? I like 'Peanuts'.

JACK  
Where's the outlet in this room?

Biff points to a half dozen extension cords trailing through the door and across the floor.

BIFF  
Just follow the wires from the living room.  
(following cords)  
Here we go. Behind the desk.

JACK  
Is there a free plug?

Grabbing the plugs from the Teletype machines, Biff crawls behind the desk eagerly.

BIFF

Should be - I hooked up an octopus extension last week... Here we are, no problem...

There is a flash of sparks from behind the desk, the room suddenly going black as every fuse in the station blows. A moment of silence - then:

BIFF (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Are they working?

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

At the start of the 'Bomb Shelter Days' parade route, people mill about impatiently. Jan stands next to a convertible, a sign on the door reading 'GRAND MARSHALL - JACK RAMSAY & WIFE'. She looks up and down the street for any sign of Jack, who is nowhere in sight. The PARADE ORGANIZER steps up, in a panic.

PARADE ORGANIZER

He's not here yet? If he doesn't get here soon we'll have to start without him. We're on a very tight schedule, you know.

JAN

(nods, embarrassed)

I know. I'm sorry. I can't imagine what's holding him up.

The Parade Organizer gives her a stern look as he moves off.

JAN (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Come on, Jack. For once in your life, only be a little late.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM - DAY

The desk supporting the Teletypes pulled away from the wall, Jack lays on his back, busily rewiring the blown outlet. Emergency lights glow brightly, casting stark shadows as Biff and Walter watch Jack, handing him tools.

BIFF

I'm sorry, Jack. I didn't know twelve plugs in one outlet was too much.

JACK

Well, now you do. Let's just try to learn from our mistakes, okay Biff? Today's lesson - why it's bad to knock the station off the air by blowing every fuse in the building.

Biff nods eagerly. They all look up as the lights begin to dim.

JACK (CONT'D)

What now?

BIFF

Generator must be getting low on fuel. I'll go fill it up with more kerosene.

Biff hurries out the door, Jack returning to the job at hand. After a moment he pauses, looking up at Walter uncertainly.

JACK

Did he say kerosene or gasoline?

There is a sudden explosion outside, all the lights going out once more. A beat.

WALTER (O.S.)

I think he said kerosene...

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

The parade - a typical, small-town production - is in progress, citizens cheering as it passes beneath the 'BOMB SHELTER DAYS' banner. The high school band marches past, playing 'You're A Grand Old Flag'. Earl Anderson, the Ramsay's next door neighbor, leads the local gun club in a tight formation. A man dressed as Uncle Sam ambles by on stilts, while a man dressed as the Russian Bear runs along the parade route, scaring children in the crowd. The Grand Marshall's convertible cruises past, with Jan sitting alone in the back seat, waving to the crowd self-consciously. Jack's name has been crossed off the sign on the door, which now reads, 'GRAND MARSHALL - WIFE'.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM - DAY

Jack is still working on the blown outlet, Walter standing over him, holding a flashlight in the darkened room.

JACK

I wonder if Edward R. Murrow started this way...

WALTER

He would've if he'd worked with Biff.

Jack sighs, shaking his head.

JACK

It's hard to run a TV station when you're trying to extinguish flaming employees. How's he doing?

WALTER

Fine. More surprised than anything. He won't have eyebrows for a while...

As he works on the outlet, Jack glances at his watch - eyes going wide with surprise.

JACK

Oh, Christ!

Jack jumps up, tossing the tools to Walter.

JACK (CONT'D)

I'm late! Finish with the wiring, would you Walter? I'll be back in time for the news. And if I don't come back have the police put out an A.P.B. on Jan - I think she's going to kill me.

Grabbing his coat from a chair, Jack races out the door. Walter watches him go, glancing at the tools in his hands uncertainly.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The parade over, Earl Anderson and the gun club stand beneath the town square flagpole, each man with a can of beer in hand. As the crowd filters into the park from the parade route, Earl calls out forcefully.

EARL

Ten-hut!

As one, the men all set down their beers and snap to attention.

EARL (CONT'D)

Thirteen gun salute! Ready...  
aim...

The men aim their rifles skyward.

EARL (CONT'D)

... Fire!

They all fire - blasting gaping holes in the flag overhead. Earl shakes his head in disgust as he bends to retrieve his beer.

EARL (CONT'D)

Nice shooting, boys - why don't we  
go blow all the windows out of city  
hall while we're at it?

EXT. MAIN STREET

CLYDE FORD stands beside his car, which is parked at the end of the parade route. A government salesman, he dresses and acts more like a used car salesman. No one stops as he calls to the passers-by, pulling gas masks and silver radiation suits from his trunk.

CLYDE

... I've got gas masks and asbestos  
suits for sale here! If the bomb  
drops you don't want to be left out  
in the cold! I'm authorized by the  
United States government to sell  
everything you'll need for your  
post-atomic lifestyle...

Crazy Clinton wanders up, rummaging through the car trunk. Clyde looks at him suspiciously.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Uh, can I help you?

CRAZY CLINTON

Yeah - you got any plutonium? See,  
I'm building this alien death ray  
and I could really use some...

Clyde takes a nervous step away from Clinton, resuming his sales pitch.

CLYDE

I'll build you a bomb shelter in  
your own home. I've got hair  
replacement kits...

CRAZY CLINTON

Come on, just a little - I only  
need a pound or two...

EXT. COMMUNITY SHELTER

A small stage has been set up in front of the community fallout shelter, a banner overhead reading 'BOMB SHELTER DEDICATION'. Jan and Elliot sit in the audience, watching an elementary school play onstage, Jan continually looking over her shoulder for any sign of Jack. Children are dressed in various costumes - a hydrogen bomb, a mushroom cloud, Uncle Sam and Fidel Castro. A teacher sits to one side, playing a piano while the children sing to the tune of 'If You're Happy and You Know It Clap Your Hands'.

CHILDREN

If the atom bomb explodes, duck and  
cover...

(they do)

If the atom bomb explodes, duck and  
cover...

(again)

If you always duck and cover -

It's less likely that you'll suffer -

If the atom bomb explodes, duck and cover!

Carol steps to the front of the stage, wearing a boulder-like papier-mâché costume covered with glitter. She speaks unenthusiastically to the small audience.

CAROL

I am radioactive fallout - which is  
what your hair will do if I touch  
you. After a bomb drops, you must  
be sure to hose me off the ground  
or sweep me up and throw me into a  
metal trash receptacle.

The children sing once again.

## CHILDREN

If fallout is descending, hold your nose...

(they do)

If fallout is descending, hold your nose...

(again)

If you shield your mouth and nose -

It will lessen all your woes -

If fallout is descending, hold your nose!

Skit over, the children all step forward, taking a group bow as Mayor HARLAN LANCASTER steps onstage, clapping along with the audience. The children leave the stage, Lancaster pulling a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket and beginning his speech, gesturing to the shelter behind him.

## LANCASTER

As mayor of this fine city, I declare this a proud day in Fairvale. This is more than just a bomb shelter. The key word here is 'community'.

(squints at speech)

Applause.

The mayor pauses - no response.

## LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Gregarious teenagers often have no after school hang-out where they can relax with sodas and play the jukebox. This shelter serves such purposes admirably, as well as becoming a safe haven in time of nuclear attack for seventy-five of our fastest citizens.

Now the audience applauds. Satisfied, Lancaster continues.

## LANCASTER (CONT'D)

And now, to dedicate this shelter, it is my pleasure to introduce the winner of Fairvale High School's 'Cold War, Warm Hearts' essay contest with her inspiring poem 'If Khrushchev Was a Democrat' - Carrie Dunbar.

CARRIE DUNBAR steps onstage - all the boys in the audience sitting at attention. She is an amazing beauty, with an air of mystery about her. She begins to recite her poem.

CARRIE

If Khrushchev was a democrat - How  
different things would be...

Carrie is interrupted by the sound of tires squealing. Everyone turns to see Jack jump out of his car and race toward the stage. Lancaster gestures to him as he runs up.

LANCASTER

And, of course, our own Grand  
Marshall and host of 'Name That  
Wood' - Jack Ramsay.

The crowd applauds as Jack steps onstage, out of breath. The mayor covers the microphone with his hand, looking at Jack questioningly.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

You're late.

JACK

(under his breath)  
Thank god the bomb didn't drop  
before I got here.

Jack steps to the mike, still panting.

JACK (CONT'D)

Thank you. That's 'Name That Wood',  
channel twelve on your dial, every  
night at 7:30!

Spotting Jan and Elliot in the audience, Jack gives them a wink as the mayor hands him a champagne bottle.

EXT. AUDIENCE

A WOMAN leans forward, whispering to Jan, who is feeling humiliated by Jack's late arrival.

WOMAN #1

You must be very proud of Jack.

JAN

(coolly)  
Must I?

The Woman looks at Jan, taken aback.

EXT. STAGE

Jack and Carrie hold the champagne bottle triumphantly.



JACK

And now, we officially christen  
this shelter - a symbol of our  
country's strength and greatness!

Jack and Carrie take an exaggerated wind-up before bringing the champagne bottle down on the shelter wall. There is a sickening thud as the corrugated metal gives way, the unbroken bottle becoming wedged in its own indentation.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM - DAY

Lights back on, Walter stands next to the rewired outlet, Teletype plugs in hand. He looks at the handful of workers gathered around him.

WALTER

Okay - are we all ready? Who has  
the fire extinguisher?

A man holds it up.

STATION MAN #1

Right here, Walter.

WALTER

Is someone at the power switch?

The MAKE-UP GIRL stands by the fuse box, hand on the cut-off switch.

MAKE-UP GIRL

I'm ready, Walter.

WALTER

Who's holding Biff?

A man stands by Biff, who is covered with soot, his hair standing straight up and wisps of smoke curling up from his clothes. The man keeps an iron grip on Biff's arm.

STATION MAN #2

I've got him.

Satisfied, Walter leans down, wincing as he cautiously inserts the plugs into the outlet. The lights dim momentarily before the tickers come to life. Everyone cheers, Walter looking at them sternly.

WALTER

All I did was jerry-rig this for the time being. Nobody is to touch this outlet until we can get someone in here to fix it for real, is that understood?

Everyone nods, muttering their agreement.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(glances at watch)

Okay, let's get 'Sewing With Sally' on the air and... somebody put out Biff - he's starting to smolder again...

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY SHELTER - DAY

Jack, Jan, Elliot and Carol are part of a group being led on a guided tour of the community fallout shelter. Jack looks uncomfortable wearing a plastic crown and sash which reads 'GRAND MARSHALL'. Jan is giving Jack the cold shoulder as they follow the TOUR GUIDE, a young woman dressed in a bright orange uniform with a Civil Defense patch on the chest. She resembles a tour guide at Disneyland - chirping away cheerfully as she leads the group through the shelter.

TOUR GUIDE

... This stylish new development in civil defense has been built of steel and concrete, designed to protect our citizens in the event of nuclear catastrophe without looking like ground zero. It features enough food to last seventy-five lucky survivors three months, as well as a two month supply of oxygen.

Moving into the shelter, the group enters the living area, which resembles a YMCA youth center. A jukebox stands in the corner, while a soda fountain takes up one wall. Folding metal chairs have been set up around a central television set.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

The living area has been outfitted with all the comforts of home - so even when the bombs are falling outside, you can be inside having 50 megatons of fun!

(MORE)

## TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

You'll be informed of events in the outside world...

(turns on TV - static)

... from the latest news to your favorite episode of 'Bonanza'.

Jack scowls at the mention of 'Bonanza'. He speaks up, pointing to the television.

JACK

Why isn't the station coming in?

TOUR GUIDE

(cheerfully)

The concrete and steel walls also prevent television signals from penetrating the structure. But there are already plans to install a TV antenna on the roof.

ELLIOT

(whispers to Jack)

But wouldn't the bomb knock the antenna off the roof?

Jack frowns, shrugging as the Tour Guide holds up a small metal canister.

TOUR GUIDE

This is a waste disposal canister. Since inhabitants will be cut off from the outside world for an extended period of time, all excretions must be stored in these containers - which can be stacked and used as seats and end tables.

A potbellied man calls out, concerned.

TOUR MAN #1

Now wait just a minute, here - we're supposed to crap in a jar?

TOUR GUIDE

We prefer to use the word 'excrete'. Since plumbing can be disrupted by an atomic blast, inhabitants will be required to forego some of the amenities they've grown accustomed to.

JAN

Like privacy and hygiene.

TOUR GUIDE  
 (smiles sweetly)  
 That's the spirit!

Reaching the end of the shelter, the Tour Guide stops, calling out brightly.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)  
 That concludes the tour of our very own community fallout shelter. Are there any questions?

Jack takes Jan by the arm, dragging her away from the rest of the group. He speaks softly.

JACK  
 What's the matter? I told you I was sorry. I just lost track of the time.

JAN  
 You're always losing track of the time.  
 (scoffs)  
 'Grand Marshall - Wife'... pretty humiliating, Jack.

Jack frowns, insulted.

JACK  
 I remember when you used to like being called my wife...

Jan rolls her eyes, knowing it will do no good to try and explain her feelings to him now. She steps back amongst the tour group, where Elliot is asking a question. He kicks at the concrete wall suspiciously, knocking lose some plaster.

ELLIOT  
 Will this building really survive an atomic blast?

The tourists all nod their heads, muttering their concern.

TOUR GUIDE  
 Theoretically it will shield anyone inside from the fallout, firestorms and heat of a nuclear attack. Provided they're standing in the center of the structure at the time.

CAROL  
 How hot does it get?

## TOUR GUIDE

The temperature at ground zero is in excess of three hundred thousand degrees. But there's no need to worry...

(gestures to wall vent)

... this shelter is equipped with the latest in air conditioning technology.

CUT TO:

## EXT. TV STATION - EVENING

Jack's car roars into the driveway, Jack climbing out angrily. He pulls the plastic crown off his head, stomping it into the dirt before ripping off his 'Grand Marshall' sash and heaving it into the yard.

## INT. TV STATION - KITCHEN

Biff stands at the window, an amused look on his face. He motions to Walter as he passes by.

BIFF

Hey, Walter. Looks like Jack had another fight with his wife.

Biff and Walter watch Jack through the window.

WALTER

Yup. He's displaying all the classic signs. Mumbling to himself...

BIFF

... punching the air...

WALTER

... pretending he's swinging a hatchet...

BIFF

Look - a new one... it looks like he's pumping a 12 gauge shotgun...

Walter sighs worriedly.

WALTER

Terrific. Our first real newscast and he's going to be all upset because of his wife.

BIFF

I wouldn't worry. He won't let it affect his work.

WALTER

Of course not. Like last week, when he opened with, "Our top story tonight - Mrs. Jack Ramsay is a selfish bitch."

BIFF

(shrugs)

It was news to me.

INT. TV STATION - ENTRYWAY

Jack steps through the front door as Walter hurries to meet him.

JACK

I'm not a violent man, but I could be persuaded to hire one...

WALTER

We're on in five minutes. Are you sure you're up to giving a newscast tonight?

JACK

Of course. My work is my life.

WALTER

What about your wife?

JACK

She is my death.

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM

Jack and Walter enter the news room.

WALTER

You're sure you're not too upset to go on tonight. No "Giant boulder crushes Mrs. Jack Ramsay as thousands cheer".

JACK

Don't be ridiculous. I don't want to ruin the newscast and I don't want to hurt the ratings.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

And I especially don't want to sleep in the garage for a week again.

(calls out)

Make-up!

Biff steps into the room, carrying two gas cans which he has clearly labeled - one 'GASOLINE', one 'KEROSENE'.

BIFF

I finished labeling the cans, Jack.

JACK

(preoccupied)

Great, Biff. Good job.

As the Make-Up Girl works on Jack, Biff steps to the news tickers, a story coming over the wires. Reading the story, the excited smile on his face quickly fades. He glances around uncertainly. Setting down the gas cans, he rips the story out of the Teletype machine, moving to Jack at the news desk.

BIFF

Uh, Jack... ?

JACK

Not now, okay, Biff?

BIFF

I think this is kind of important, Jack.

Turning, Jack sees the tear sheet in Biff's hand. He grabs it impatiently, frowning.

JACK

Damn it, Biff. I thought we agreed - you're not supposed to touch anything combustible.

BIFF

I know, but...

Walter calls to Jack from beside the camera, staring at the clock on the wall.

WALTER

Twenty seconds, Jack.

Without glancing at the tear sheet, Jack practices smiling while having the finishing touches put on his make-up.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Remember, Jack - you want a real TV station, it starts here.

Jack nods, clearing his throat and practicing his best newscaster voice.

JACK

Good evening. KBOB today completed an entire newscast without a single malfunction or screw-up of any kind. Hundreds of shock victims were rushed to area hospitals...

Walter stares at the clock, counting down to air time.

WALTER

... five... four... three... two... one... you're on!

Jack smiles into the camera, the unread tear sheet in hand.

JACK

Good evening. This is Jack Ramsay, and this is the news.

(reads tearsheet)

In a speech to the nation delivered this evening, President Kennedy revealed that the United States has discovered offensive missile sites in Cuba...

Jack pauses, frowning as he re-reads the information. He quickly regains his composure, looking back into the camera.

INT. TV STATION - CONTROL ROOM

Biff sits at the control panel with a technician as Walter enters, their heads snapping up in surprise as Jack continues over the monitor.

JACK (ON TV)

... which sits just 90 miles off the Florida coast.

Biff looks to Walter, whispering impatiently.

BIFF

But what about 'Peanuts'?



WALTER

Ssssssh!

CUT TO:

INT. BOB'S DINER - EVENING

In town, the dinner crowd at Bob's Diner goes quiet, everyone listening to the console television at the far end of the room.

JACK (ON TV)

The President revealed that missiles launched from these sites would be capable of striking most of the major cities in the Western Hemisphere.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOB'S TV AND APPLIANCE - EVENING

A group of people gather outside Bob's TV and Appliance store on Main Street, watching the television sets stacked in the front window. Crazy Clinton staggers up, bottle of cheap wine in hand. They listen to Jack's muffled voice coming through the plate glass window.

JACK (ON TV)

President Kennedy went on to state that the purpose of these bases can only be to provide a nuclear first strike capability. He also asserted that the U.S. will not shrink from the risk of worldwide nuclear war to protect its interests.

The crowd can only stare at the bank of TV's, stunned. Clinton gestures to the televisions in disbelief.

CRAZY CLINTON

What, are they crazy?

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY SHELTER - EVENING

The Tour Guide stands in the living area, calling out the door as someone installs a TV antenna on the roof. Bits of plaster fall from the ceiling as the picture of Jack on the TV fades in and out.

## TOUR GUIDE

A little more to the right... hold  
it... do you have to walk so  
hard... ?

The picture begins to come in clearly, the Tour Guide  
stopping and listening as Jack continues.

## JACK (ON TV)

To counter the Soviet-Cuban action,  
the government is taking a series  
of initial steps, the first being a  
strict quarantine of all offensive  
military equipment under shipment  
to Cuba.

A VOICE calls down from the roof outside.

## VOICE (O.S.)

How does it look? Is it working  
yet? Hello... ?

The Tour Guide doesn't answer, watching the television  
intently.

CUT TO:

## INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Earl and Dwight Anderson, the Ramsay's next door neighbors,  
watch TV in their living room. Dwight polishes his trumpet  
while Earl finishes folding his American flag.

## JACK (ON TV)

Taking a hard line approach, the  
President stated that, quote, "It  
shall be the policy of this nation  
to regard any nuclear missile  
launched from Cuba against any  
nation in the Western Hemisphere as  
an attack by the Soviet Union on  
the United States requiring a full  
retaliatory response upon the  
Soviet Union," unquote.

An odd grin on his face, Earl jumps up from his easy chair,  
hurrying to the telephone. He dials excitedly as Dwight  
watches, confused.

## EARL

(into phone)

Hey, Bobby - are you watching the  
news?

(MORE)

EARL (CONT'D)

Call the rest of the guys, I want a meeting tomorrow... Yeah, nuclear war with the commies... I'll bring the beer...

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Jan, Elliot and Carol sit on the couch, watching the TV in silence.

JACK (ON TV)

President Kennedy concluded his speech by stating, and I quote, "Let no one doubt that this is a difficult and dangerous effort on which we have set out. The cost of freedom is always high, but Americans have always paid it."

Obviously shaken, Jack looks up, a strained smile on his face as he glances off-camera for guidance.

JACK (ON TV) (CONT'D)

Well... I think it's about time for a message from our sponsor... but when we return, we'll tell you all about the lukewarm reception at today's big community fallout shelter dedication, and tomorrow's weather, if any...

A commercial for 'Bob's Knick-Knack Emporium' appears onscreen, the family looking to one another uneasily. Jan smiles wanly.

JAN

I'm sure it sounds worse than it really is. These things get blown up all out of proportion.

Carol looks to Jan worriedly, still wearing her 'radioactive fallout' costume.

CAROL

Is dad going to come home tonight?

JAN  
(unsure)  
He'll be here. He'll be sure to  
come home on a night like this...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FAIRVALE - NIGHT

The town is completely silent, save for the church bell chiming midnight. But no one is sleeping. Lights burn in the windows of houses as the townspeople attempt to get through this long, restless night with their families.

INT. BOB'S DINER

Walter sits at the counter, sipping coffee while Jack hangs up the phone and takes the seat besides him. A few other customers are scattered around, staring quietly into their coffee cups. Walter seems unnerved by the President's announcement, while Jack seems to be a little wired.

JACK  
I still can't get through to Jan.  
The circuits are all busy.

WALTER  
(shakes head)  
It's incredible to think that we  
could be at war with Russia any  
minute.

JACK  
Hell of a lead-in. Too bad there  
aren't more stories like that.  
Really hooks the viewers.

Walter looks at Jack in disbelief.

WALTER  
Jack, do you understand what's  
going on here? The entire country  
could be obliterated in twenty  
minutes.

JACK  
Yeah, but think of the ratings for  
those last twenty minutes.  
(Walter scowls)  
I'm joking! Nobody's stupid enough  
to start a nuclear war.  
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

We should be thinking of ways to take advantage of this situation.

WALTER

I guess you're right. Wouldn't want the destruction of civilization to interfere with the running of the station.

JACK

I'm serious. A TV station is the most vital source of information available to the public. We have an obligation to serve our community in this time of crisis. It's not something I take lightly. It's a position of power, of responsibility. It's something I'm very proud to be a part of.

The COOK steps out of the kitchen, refilling Jack and Walter's coffee cups. He grins as he recognizes Jack.

COOK

Hey! I know you... you're that TV guy...

(pounds on countertop)

... 'Name That Wood!' 'Name That Wood', right? Can you name this wood? What kind of wood is this counter made of?

Jack looks up at him coldly.

JACK

Fuck off and die.

EXT. BOB'S DINER

Jack and Walter exit the diner, walking to their cars. Jack seems reluctant to call it a night.

JACK

Hey, are you sure you don't want to go back to the station? It's only 1:30, we could work on some more voice-over stuff or something...

WALTER

Go home, Jack. She's your wife. You've got to talk to her.

Reaching their cars, Jack looks at Walter with a nervous grin.

JACK

You're lucky. All you have to worry about is nuclear annihilation.

WALTER

Go. I'll see you tomorrow.

As Walter climbs into his car Jack takes a deep breath. He exhales, glancing up at the night sky uneasily.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jack sneaks quietly into the house through the sliding glass door. Wearing his pajamas, he carries his clothing under his arm. Everything is quiet as he moves up the stairs.

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM

Jack opens the door, stepping silently into the room. He tiptoes across the carpet, never noticing Jan and Carol laying in one of the beds, watching him.

CAROL

Hi, daddy.

Jack jumps in shock - shoes flying from his hands and out through the open window. He turns to Jan and Carol, eyes wide.

JACK

Jeez, Carol. Never scare daddy like that... what are you doing in here?

JAN

She and Elliot have been in here all night. They were too scared to sleep.

Jan turns to Elliot, who is curled up in Jack's bed, sleeping soundly. She climbs out of bed, shaking him by the shoulder.

JAN (CONT'D)

(irritated)

Elliot, wake up!

Elliot wakes with a start, looking up at his mother tiredly.

ELLIOT

Aw, c'mon mom - let me sleep.

JAN

No. You're too nervous.

(to Jack)

We were terrified when we heard the news about Cuba. Carol's been so upset that I'm going to have to keep her home from school.

Hiding behind Jan's back, Carol flashes a devious smile at Elliot. He glares back at her angrily, tossing a pillow at her head.

JACK

Will everyone please settle down? Nothing's going to happen. The government has everything under control.

JAN

Where were you tonight? A war could break out at any minute and you didn't feel like you should at least come home?

CAROL

The men on the real TV stations said the Russians called it an act of war.

Jack reaches out, stroking Carol's hair gently.

JACK

Nobody's crazy enough to start a nuclear war. Not even the Russians. Why doesn't everyone hop back into their own beds and try to get a little sleep.

Elliot and Carol hop out of bed, heading for their own rooms. Glancing out the window, Jack calls to Elliot as he leaves.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh, Elliot - run down to the back yard and get my shoes, would you?

ELLIOT

Sure, dad.

Alone, Jan looks to Jack accusingly.

JAN  
I don't believe you.

JACK  
What do you mean?

JAN  
I shouldn't have to handle these situations alone. They need a mother and a father.

JACK  
Right. Which one am I again?

JAN  
Lately? Neither.

Stung, Jack turns and steps out the door. Jan watches him go, a look of sadness on her face.

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Jack comes down the stairs as Elliot steps through the sliding glass door with his shoes.

JACK  
Come here, Elliot. I want to show you something.

Moving to a desk, Jack opens the bottom drawer, pulling out a yellow pamphlet.

JACK (CONT'D)  
When we bought the house the real estate agent gave me this. It's a government pamphlet that explains what to do in case there's a nuclear attack.

Elliot takes the pamphlet, flipping through it idly.

ELLIOT  
Cool.

JACK  
I don't think anything's going to happen, but just in case it does and I'm not home...

ELLIOT  
It's okay, dad. John Fitzgerald Kennedy would never lead his country into disaster.

(MORE)



ELLIOT (CONT'D)

Not unless he has a really good  
reason, anyway.

Yawning, Elliot turns and heads up the stairs.

JACK

Maybe we should just live in the  
bomb shelter...

He looks out the sliding glass door into the night as we...

CUT TO:

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the A.P. Teletype machine as the following story is  
typed out:

A.P. - TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23 - POLLS REVEAL THAT 3 OUT OF 5  
AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT "SOME SHOOTING" IS INEVITABLE IN THE  
U.S. QUARANTINE OF CUBA. 1 OF 5 BELIEVE THE QUARANTINE WILL  
LEAD TO WORLD WAR III.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY BOMB SHELTER - DAY

Darkness. There is a loud creaking sound as the lid to the  
bomb shelter is opened, light filtering in through the dust  
in the air. Jan pokes her head inside, grimacing at the sight  
of all the junk stored below.

JAN

Terrific. The bomb'll drop and all  
our junk will be saved.

She starts down into the shelter as the theme from 'A Summer  
Place' plays once more, continuing over the following  
montage.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANDERSON HOUSE - DAY

Earl Anderson installs storm shutters to the front windows,  
calling into the house.

EARL

Dwight - are you about done in  
there? We don't want any fallout  
leaking into the house.

INT. ANDERSON LIVING ROOM

Dwight nails a piece of plywood over the fireplace, having trouble holding it in place as he hammers.

DWIGHT  
I'm getting it...

Remembering something, Dwight drops his hammer, pulling the plywood aside. Reaching into the fireplace, he pulls several girlie magazines from their hiding place. Blowing away the soot, he shoves them up his shirt, glancing around nervously.

CUT TO:

INT. BOB'S GROCERY - DAY

Bob storms through the back door of the grocery store, glaring at the young CLERK that lets him in.

BOB  
What's going on? Why'd you call me over? This store should have been open ten minutes ago.

The Clerk points nervously to the front of the store, Bob's gaze following to see at least two dozen women milling about outside, waiting for the store to open.

CLERK  
We didn't know what to do. There's never been a crowd outside before.

Bob quickly takes two pens from his pocket, handing one to the Clerk.

BOB  
Okay, we've got to work fast - you mark up the price on the canned foods and juices, and I'll get the light bulbs and toilet paper.

CLERK  
Mark up? How much?

BOB  
Whatever the price is? Double it.

CUT TO:

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the U.P.I. Teletype machine as the following story is typed out:

U.P.I. - TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23 - IN RESPONSE TO THE U.S. QUARANTINE, HOUSEWIVES ACROSS THE NATION STAMPEDE SUPERMARKETS, CLEARING THE SHELVES.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY SHELF - DAY

Hands desperately pluck canned milk off the store shelf.

INT. ANOTHER GROCERY SHELF

is being stripped of cereals and Ovaltine.

INT. YET ANOTHER GROCERY SHELF

is cleared of Sominex and various other over-the-counter tranquilizers.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Jack sits in front of a microphone, recording a promo voice-over for the station.

JACK  
(somberly)  
In this time of national emergency,  
when you think of nuclear  
annihilation, think of us. KBOB,  
channel 12 on your dial.

He looks up, Biff giving him an enthusiastic thumbs-up sign.

CUT TO:

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the A.P. machine as it types:

A.P. - TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23 - AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN A CROWD OF 8000 CONSERVATIVE PARTY MEMBERS BOO THE PRESIDENT.

THEY DEMAND AN IMMEDIATE INVASION OF CUBA, CHANTING "FIGHT, FIGHT".

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Crazy Clinton stands on the stage in front of the bomb shelter, preaching to a small crowd gathered below him.

CRAZY CLINTON

..It's the politicians who have brought the world to this sorry fate! Because of their petty interests and egomaniacal posturing the missiles will be launched... bombs will rain down on this great green planet of ours, killing and destroying millions!

Engrossed in the speech, people turn to one another, concerned. Crazy Clinton pauses, looking around pointedly.

CRAZY CLINTON (CONT'D)

... And that's when the aliens will come.

There are groans, people filtering away and workmen beginning to dismantle the stage as Clinton continues to ramble.

CRAZY CLINTON (CONT'D)

They'll disembark their spacecraft and mate with cattle, creating a super-race of cud-chewing little green men with udders who'll develop a taste for dead grass and world domination!

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMSAY BACK YARD - DAY

Jan struggles to pull a full-sized canoe out of the bomb shelter. Dirty, sweaty, and breathing heavily, she calls out tiredly.

JAN

Carol - could you give me a hand out here?

INT. CAROL'S ROOM

Carol sits on her bed, drawing in a pad as the record player blares in the background. She calls to Jan out the open window, trying to sound as traumatized as possible.

CAROL

No, mom! If I come outside the bomb might hit me!

Carol turns back to her drawing, which features her school as it is about to be hit by a missile. She chuckles to herself, lighting up a cigarette and laying back on the bed.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Jack watches 'Cooking With Edna' on the monitors while Biff and Walter sit at the control board. Walter reads a copy of 'Profiles in Courage' - Biff thumbing through a pamphlet entitled 'How to Speak Russian'.

EDNA

(on monitor)

... Now let's discuss which foods are appropriate to serve after a nuclear attack...

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - BEAUTY SALON - DAY

A sign in the front window of 'Pinky's Beauty Salon' advertises 'THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL - H-BOMB BOUFFANTS'. The door to the shop opens, a woman sporting a hairdo shaped like a mushroom cloud stepping out. She is followed by PINKY GOMER, who plucks a cigarette out of her beehive and lights it as she speaks.

PINKY

... Well I've seen the inside of the shelter and it's just boring. I tried to convince the mayor to go for a more upbeat, contemporary look - more vinyl, some throw pillows, a floor lamp or two. Anything to give it a little flair...

CUT TO:

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the U.P.I. Teletype machine as it types:

U.P.I. - TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23 - ASKED ABOUT THE U.S. QUARANTINE OF CUBA DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE PENTAGON, SECRETARY OF STATE ROBERT McNAMARA INSISTS THAT THE UNITED STATES IS READY TO "GO TO THE BRINK ON THIS ONE".

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - HARDWARE STORES - DAY

The town's two hardware stores compete for the suddenly booming shelter supplies business by trying to out-rhyme each other. A sign outside Ralph's Hardware reads 'A PREFAB SHELTER SO YOU WON'T SWELTER'. Across the street, a banner in the window of Carl's Hardware promises 'ALUMINUM SIDING FOR COZIER HIDING'. People exit both stores carrying tools and building supplies, some carting them out in wheelbarrows, while others back their cars up to the entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Biff watches Jack on a monitor, giving a news update. We PAN TO the rest of the people in the room watching Walter Cronkite give an update on another monitor.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY BOMB SHELTER - DAY

Jan looks around the shelter, which has been totally cleared out. A satisfied smile on her face, she pulls off her Playtex rubber gloves, climbing out of the shelter.

EXT. RAMSAY BACK YARD

Stepping into the light, Jan's smile fades as she sees all the junk that was stored in the shelter now piled on the lawn. She lets out a groan as the theme from 'A Summer Place' comes to an end.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

An assembly is taking place. The entire student body is gathered in the gym to watch a series of 'duck and cover' films. As the people onscreen demonstrate what to do in the event of a nuclear blast (flatten yourself against a wall and cover your head with newspaper), Elliot and Dwight sit at the back of the auditorium with a small group of boys - all sporting Kennedy pompadours. They whisper conspiratorially.

ELLIOT

So okay. So if the Russians are going to drop the bomb, we've got some important questions to deal with here.

The other boys nod seriously,

DWIGHT

Yeah. Life and death. The end of the world...

ELLIOT

No - what girls are we gonna do it with before the big blast.

DWIGHT

What?

ELLIOT

We can't do anything about the end of the world. But I guarantee if we're all gonna die I'm not going out a virgin.

The other boys all nod their heads in solemn agreement.

BOY #1

So who do you guys want to do it with?

They all whisper in unison.

BOYS

Carrie Dunbar.

They glance at one another, frowning. As one, they turn to where Carrie Dunbar is sitting, watching the Civil Defense films. She is as beautiful as before - the unattainable object of every geeky sixteen year old boy's dreams.

ELLIOT

Wait a minute. We can't all have Carrie Dunbar.

BOY #2

Why not?

ELLIOT

Don't be gross. The guy with the most in common with her should get to pork her. It's only civilized.

DWIGHT

I don't even know that much about her, really.

ELLIOT

Cool. You're out. Anybody...?

The boys mutter amongst themselves.

BOY #3

Nobody knows much about her. I mean, she's a cheerleader, I have her in history class, but that's it.

BOY #1

I don't even know where she lives. She doesn't take a bus. I've seen her dad come and pick her up every day after school.

The boys look up as TOMMY IRVING laughs. Captain of the football team and resident B.M.O.C., Tommy is everything these boys are not - popular, handsome, confident. Sitting in the bleachers behind them, he has overheard their conversation.

TOMMY

You're dreaming, Ramsay. You wouldn't have a snowball's chance of getting Carrie Dunbar even if you were the only two people to survive the bomb.

ELLIOT

(defensive)

I would too!

TOMMY

You twirps are doing this wrong anyway. You can't plan this stuff out. Now me, if I hear the bomb's coming I'm gonna screw the first girl I see.



ELLIOT

Gee, I hope your mom's out of town.  
It could get a little creepy...

The boys snicker, Tommy pointing at Elliot threateningly.

TOMMY

Hey! Don't give me any of that  
weird Democrat talk, Ramsay, or  
I'll kick you and your beatnik butt  
all up and down this school.

Dwight shakes his head, looking at the others disgustedly.

DWIGHT

I can't believe you guys would  
rather be making it with some girl  
than killing commies. Where are  
your priorities?

Everyone turns, staring at Dwight blankly.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

You better be prepared for the  
Russian invasion. You sit here  
talking about girls - have you seen  
what communism does to women? They  
bloat up forty pounds overweight  
and grow mustaches!

ELLIOT

(thinks a moment)  
You mean all Russian women look  
like your dad?

Dwight frowns grimly.

DWIGHT

Can you think of any better reason  
to fight communism?

The boys all shake their heads thoughtfully as onscreen an  
animated film shows the effects of radiation, a cartoon man's  
hair falling out in tufts.

CUT TO:

INT. PINKY'S BEAUTY SALON - DAY

Jan sits at Pinky's station, looking at herself in the mirror  
as Pinky examines her hair. Cigarette dangling from her  
mouth, Pinky drops a fine layer of ashes onto Jan's head as  
she speaks.

PINKY

You haven't been in in a while,  
Jan. Your hair's gotten long.

JAN

I know, I've been busy. Jack's been  
spending all his time at the  
station lately, so I've been stuck  
at home acting like mother, father,  
judge, jury and executioner.

Pinky gives a hacking laugh, nodding knowingly.

PINKY

So Jack's never home, huh? My  
Buford was that way once. He'd be  
gone all hours of the day and night  
- smoking, drinking, always  
obsessed with his work.

(laughs)

He even used to change into his  
pajamas in the basement when he'd  
come home late so I'd think he got  
home at a reasonable hour. Can you  
believe it?

Jan squirms uneasily.

JAN

I can't imagine.

PINKY

But now he's a real homebody. He  
just putters around, working in the  
garden, fixing up the house,  
recovering from tuberculosis...

Jan cuts in, interested.

JAN

How did you handle it when he was  
always gone? What did you say to  
him?

PINKY

Nothing. It just worked itself out.  
Things always do.

JAN

(hopefully)

Really? It just took care of  
itself?

PINKY

Oh, sure. 'Course the kids won't talk to us anymore and sometimes I feel like maybe I missed out on my youth, but those are little things.

Jan frowns worriedly.

JAN

Yeah...

PINKY

But on the good side, I feel like we're finally getting to know each other. You should see us, curled up under the oxygen tent, snuggling and acting like a couple of kids again.

(pats Jan's shoulder)

It'll be like that for you one day. You'll see.

Jan looks at Pinky in the mirror, a barely concealed look of horror on her face.

JAN

You're kidding.

PINKY

(winks)

You trust old Pinky. You remind me of me when I was younger.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM - DAY

Walter and Biff hover around the Teletype machines anxiously, reading the latest news as it comes over the wire. Cigarettes dangle from their mouths, the room filled with smoke as Jack steps in.

JACK

Anything new?

WALTER

Nothing. It keeps repeating that the naval quarantine begins in seventeen hours. We got a couple of really boring news tickers.

BIFF

Here's a new one...

Everyone turns to Biff eagerly as he reads the story.

BIFF (CONT'D)

... The quarantine now begins in sixteen hours...

A collective groan. They all bend over the Teletype machines, waiting for the next report as Jan pokes her head into the room.

JAN

Jack?

Jack looks up, surprised to see her.

JACK

Jan! What are you doing here?

JAN

Can we talk, or are you too busy working to speak to your wife?

Jack looks to Walter and Biff, embarrassed.

JACK

The wife - what a kidder...

He follows her into the hallway, tossing his cigarette into the wastebasket.

INT. TV STATION - HALLWAY

Jack steps out to find Jan holding the First Aid kit from the bomb shelter, along with his pajamas.

JACK

What's this?

JAN

Pajamas and bathroom stuff that you were hiding in the bomb shelter. I thought you could use them here tonight.

Through the doorway behind them we see the trash can that Jack tossed his cigarette into burst into flame. Biff quickly tries to stamp it out.

JACK

Why? Just put them in the house and I'll use them when I get home.

JAN

I think it'd be better if you didn't come home for awhile. It's tough enough raising two kids without my husband being a third.

Biff takes his foot from the trash can. It is on fire.

JACK

Look, if this is still about last night - I swear, if the bombs would have been dropping I'd have come right home. And if you're worried about the kids, don't be. You do a great job with them.

JAN

That's your job, too, Jack.

Walter tries to smother the fire on Biff's pants with Teletype paper. It catches fire.

JACK

This is my job. This is what almost pays the bills. You don't realize what would happen to this place without me around.

JAN

Right. I suppose they'd burn the place to the ground if you weren't here. Fine. Your family obviously doesn't need you as much as this place. So why don't you just stay here permanently, drink and smoke and get tuberculosis.

Walter grabs the fire extinguisher, spraying Biff's chest thoroughly. His leg is still on fire.

JACK

What? What does that mean?

JAN

(tiredly)

We've been living like strangers for the past two years, and like enemies for the last six months. It's not doing the kids any good. The only thing we do with any passion anymore is fight - and I don't even have enough passion for that lately.

Biff finally pulls off his pants, he and Walter stamping out the flames.

JACK  
So you're kicking me out of the house?

JAN  
I'm not kicking you out - you leapt out six months ago.

JACK  
It just seems like... don't you think we should talk about this some more?

JAN  
No, Jack. Don't spoil the only spontaneous thing either of us has done in years.

JACK  
Did I mention how nice your hair looks?

Staring at him blankly, Jan hands him his bed things and walks away, leaving Jack staring after her in shock. He calls out angrily.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Go then! What do I care! But if the bomb drops tomorrow don't come crawling back to me!

Walter steps into the hallway, red faced. He frowns, seeing Jack's things in his hands.

WALTER  
What's going on?

JACK  
Good question.  
(gestures to newsroom)  
Anything happen?

WALTER  
(innocently)  
Not a thing.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Kids pour out of the school, some heading for cars in the parking lot, most filing onto buses. Elliot and Dwight begin their walk home, books tucked tightly under their arms.

DWIGHT

My dad says the Russians will attack because they know Kennedy's afraid to drop the bomb.

ELLIOT

The bomb's a last resort. Kennedy will use conventional force before blowing everybody up. Remember the Bay of Pigs?

DWIGHT

That's the other reason my dad says the Russians will attack.

A voice calls out behind them.

TOMMY IRVING (O.S.)

Hey, jerkoffs!

They turn to see Tommy and several other large boys drive past in his convertible. They laugh as they speed away.

DWIGHT

It's nice to be noticed...

Elliot looks up to see Carrie Dunbar as she is picked up by her father. She is surrounded by a number of boys, each handing her the book they were carrying for her as she climbs into the car. Elliot watches her longingly.

ELLIOT

Do you really think Carrie Dunbar's out of our league?

DWIGHT

I don't know. The Senators are in the same league as the Yankees. I guess it's kind of the same deal here.

Another voice calls out behind them.

EARL (O.S.)

Hey, jerkoffs!

They turn as Earl drives past in his pickup, waving and laughing, hunting cap perched on his head. Dwight calls after him, embarrassed.

DWIGHT

'Bye, dad.

ELLIOT

What's it like living with just your dad?

DWIGHT

(shrugs)

It's not so bad. Sometimes he's out hunting for days and I get the house to myself. And when the gun club comes over I get to drink whatever beer's left in the cans lying around. Plus when they get real drunk I hear all sorts of interesting information.

ELLIOT

Like what?

Dwight grins evilly, looking around to make sure no one's listening.

DWIGHT

Like there's a nudist colony in the woods outside of town. My dad even tried to join, but he scared too many of the women with his shoulder holster.

ELLIOT

(laughs)

I've heard about that place. A few months ago the city council tried to make them wear underwear. We should check it out.

DWIGHT

You? You won't even take showers in P.E.

ELLIOT

Not to join. Why join a nudist colony when you can bring binoculars and hide in the bushes?

Suddenly a school bus looms up behind them, the DRIVER hitting the horn as he yells out the window.



DRIVER  
Out of the way, jerkoffs!

Elliot and Dwight step aside, letting the bus pass. The kids inside laugh as it drives away.

ELLIOT  
(sighs)  
I hope we're not called that in the yearbook, too...

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - RIFLE SCOPE P.O.V. - DAY

We sight down through the rifle scope on a pair of moose antlers sticking up from behind a clump of bushes. As the crosshairs come to a rest on the antlers we hear the rifle safety clicked off. There is a tremendous blast as the hunter fires - a man jumping from behind the bushes wearing a pair of antlers on his head. He calls out angrily.

BARNEY  
That's it! I quit! It's somebody else's turn to be the moose!

EXT. WOODS

The gun club emerge from the woods, all carrying hunting rifles. They groan, disappointed as Barney removes his antlers. Earl steps forward, speaking forcefully.

EARL  
Okay, okay. That's enough hunting for today, men.

BO  
Aw, come on, Earl. Barney's the first big game we've seen in months.

EARL  
Barney can wait. I called this meeting for something a little more important - like planning our strategy for the upcoming invasion by the Russian hordes.

The men grunt their agreement as Earl moves to a 'PRIVATE PROPERTY' sign at the base of a tree.

He twists it to the right, a couple of bushes parting to reveal the secret entrance to an underground shelter. Unsealing the lid, he and the others climb down inside.

INT. GUN CLUB BOMB SHELTER - NIGHT

Later. The gun club members all sit in folding lawn chairs, huge mugs of beer in hand. They listen drunkenly as Earl addresses the troops. He reads from a school notebook, the words 'END OF THE WORLD' scrawled on the cover.

EARL

... Along with ammunition and Playboy magazines, this shelter has been completely stocked with enough supplies to last us six months. I've personally seen to it that the storage room is filled with beef jerky, k-rations, and sixteen kegs of good American beer.

The members cheer their approval, a gun going off by mistake. They turn to the perpetrator, who shrugs, embarrassed.

BILL

Sorry...

Another member, who sits with three bloodhounds at his feet, raises his hand.

BUFORD

We should stock up on dog food, too. We'll need chow for the canine corps.

EARL

(jots note in book)  
And after tonight I think we'll have to restock the beer supply...

BO

It'll be fun to have some Russians to shoot at, seeing how we hunted all the wildlife out of these woods two years ago...

Barney raises his mug, crying out enthusiastically.

BARNEY

Let the Russians try to invade!  
We'll teach those commies a lesson!

EARL

Let 'em try and blow us up! We'll  
be here to preserve the American  
way of life!

(lies down across chairs)

Shotgun!

The men cheer wildly as Barney and Bo stand over Earl,  
opening up their rifles and pouring beer down the barrels  
into Earl's mouth.

EXT. WOODS

Moon rising over the trees, we can hear muffled hoots,  
hollers and the occasional gunshot from underground as the  
meeting continues into the night.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY BOMB SHELTER - NIGHT

Jan putters about, trying to make the shelter look as much  
like a typical living room as possible. Patio furniture has  
been arranged exactly like the furniture inside the house.  
Windows have been drawn on the metal walls at regular  
intervals - glossy photos of outdoor scenes pasted behind  
lacy curtains. Jan arranges a line of cutely decorated  
containers on a shelf, labeled 'DRIED MEAT', 'CEREALS',  
'POWDERED MILK', and 'HUMAN WASTE'. She looks up as Carol  
peers into the shelter from above.

CAROL

Mom? Are you in there?

JAN

Come on down, honey. Watch your  
step.

Carol climbs into the shelter. Jan gestures around her  
proudly.

JAN (CONT'D)

Well? What do you think? Could you  
spend eternity down here?

CAROL

(looks around)

There's no record player.

JAN

That's because I'll have to spend  
eternity down here, too.

Carol pokes through a box of canned foods.

CAROL

Daddy didn't come home for dinner again.

Jan turns to Carol, uncomfortable. She knew this moment was coming, and she wasn't looking forward to it.

JAN

Your daddy isn't going to be coming home. He's going to live at the station awhile.

CAROL

How come?

JAN

Well, we thought it might be best...

CAROL

(cuts in)

Because he stays out late and he's not around very much?

Jan is taken aback by Carol's directness.

JAN

Uh... it's a little more complicated than that, but that's basically it.

Carol nods, thinking it over a moment.

CAROL

You figured by giving him the boot maybe he'd quit taking things for granted.

JAN

Maybe.

CAROL

Think it'll work?

Jan smiles, shrugging helplessly. Carol puts a comforting hand on her mother's shoulder.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Want me to tell Elliot?

JAN

That's okay, I think I can handle it.

Carol nods, looking at her mother seriously.

CAROL

I hope it works. He's still a pretty good dad, considering. I don't want him to be one of those guys who likes to roam, picking up chicks in bars and partying until dawn every night.

JAN

(surprised)

Where do you pick this stuff up?

CAROL

My rock and roll records.

JAN

(laughs)

That settles it - we're definitely not bringing a record player down here.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - JACK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jack sits behind his desk, a pensive look on his face as he stares at a family photo of he, Jan and the kids which sits on his desktop. Walter walks by the open door, waving to him.

WALTER

I'm going home, Jack. See you tomorrow.

JACK

Wait a minute, Walter.

Walter steps into the room, Jack standing. Pulling a pack of cigarettes from his pocket, Jack offers one to Walter before taking one himself. He speaks excitedly as they light up.

JACK (CONT'D)

Listen, I think that as a public service we should stay on the air 24 hours a day. I could read any bulletins that come in...

WALTER

I thought we couldn't afford to broadcast after midnight. We can barely afford to broadcast before midnight.

JACK

(puts out cigarette)

This isn't about money, Walter. It's bigger than that. It's our civil duty to keep the public informed. But you want to talk about money? The network affiliates all shut down at midnight. We'd get all the attention, and all the advertising. Not to mention critical and public support. I'm talking awards and publicity, Walter.

(lights another cigarette)

Plus my fucking wife kicked me out of the goddamn house.

Walter puts his hand on Jack's shoulder, frowning compassionately.

WALTER

I'm sorry, Jack. I should've known something was wrong when you asked Biff if he needed someone to share the rent until his roommate gets out of the burn ward.

JACK

(puts out cigarette)

That's not important. This is our opportunity to make our mark in television.

As they speak Jack removes the family photo from his desktop, dropping it in a drawer.

WALTER

What would we show all night - a 'Name That Wood' marathon? There aren't enough kinds of wood.

JACK

(lights another cigarette)

We could borrow atomic awareness films from the high school.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

And run Hollywood movies dealing with nuclear preparedness, like 'Tarantula' or 'The Amazing Colossal Man'.

Jack takes another family photo from the wall and deposits it in the drawer.

WALTER

I can't stay here with you, Jack. I think if I even suggested it the wife would move in with Jan. Do you think you can run this place on your own?

Jack pulls a wedding photo off the bookshelf behind his desk, tossing it in the drawer.

JACK

According to Jan it's about time I accepted some responsibility. Actually, my life will be a lot easier without a wife, or kids, or a home that I have to go to every night.

WALTER

Sounds like your life before you got kicked out.

JACK

Yeah, but now nobody's going to bitch at me about it.

Jack snatches a 'WORLD'S GREATEST HUSBAND' plaque from the wall, dumping it into the drawer.

WALTER

I guess we should give it a shot.

JACK

(slaps Walter on the back)

We could be the first station on the air to announce Armageddon. Just think what it'll do for our ratings.

Walter smiles weakly as he leaves, closing the door behind him revealing a batch of Elliot and Carol's old crayon drawings taped to the back. Jack can only stare at them sadly.

CUT TO:

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the A.P. Teletype machine as the following story is typed out:

A.P. - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24 - THE U.S. QUARANTINE OF CUBA BEGINS AT 10 A.M. EST. AMERICAN WARSHIPS TAKE POSITION IN THE WATERS OFF CUBA, PREPARED TO STOP ANY RUSSIAN VESSEL ATTEMPTING TO CROSS THEIR LINE.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

A churchbell chimes, notes hanging ominously in the air. The streets are empty, the town silent. Many of the shops are closed for the day.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

A repairman kneels on the roof of the bomb shelter, patching a foot-sized hole in the roof near the new TV antenna. A jet roars overhead, the repairman glancing up uneasily. He lets out a sigh of relief as it passes, returning to work.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM - DAY

Jack and Walter stand over the Teletype machines expectantly. They jump, startled, as they spring to life, spewing out paper. Jack tears it out of the machine, reading excitedly.

JACK  
(disappointed)  
Nothing...

He slumps tiredly.

WALTER  
Why don't you get some rest? You haven't slept all night.

JACK  
I can't sleep.

WALTER  
Try. I'll wake you if anything breaks.



Jack nods, running his hands through his hair.

JACK

Yeah, all right. But remember - if the end of the world comes, don't let me sleep through it.

WALTER

I promise.

INT. JACK'S OFFICE

Jack enters, flopping onto the couch tiredly. He closes his eyes for a moment, muttering to himself.

JACK

I can't sleep.

He stands, moving to the desk. Taking a seat in the leather swivel chair, he spins around a few times. The chair slowly twirls to a stop, Jack nodding off until his head hits the back of the chair, waking him with a start.

JACK (CONT'D)

I can't sleep...

Glancing at the phone on the desk, he picks up the receiver, dialing a number.

JACK (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Hi, Carol, honey... is mommy there?

(waits - tone changes)

Hi, Jan. This is your husband. You know - Jack. I wanted to call and tell you that I'm not going to stay at a motel or anything. I'll be here at the station if you need to reach me.

He listens, frowning.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh, you won't need to reach me? Fine. That's not why I called anyway... Why? I'll tell you... where's my goddamn mouthwash? It was in the bomb shelter. What the hell did you do with it?... I am not trying to pick a fight, you cow. I want my mouthwash back!

Wincing, Jack holds the phone away from his ear. We can hear Jan yelling on the other end. He pretends to talk to someone in the room.

JACK (CONT'D)

Wait a minute, Jan, someone's calling me. What's that? Oh my god! Jan - the missiles are coming! Run for shelter, they'll hit any minute! Run for the shelter and don't come out for anything! Run, Jan, run!

We hear Jan scream, hanging up the phone. Jack listens to the dial tone, laughing as he hangs up the receiver.

JACK (CONT'D)

Mouthwash-hoarding witch.

He leans back in the chair, smile fading. Hand still on the phone, he stares at it sadly.

JACK (CONT'D)

I miss you.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RAMSAY HOUSE - NIGHT

Blue light from the television flickers through the front windows of the house.

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Elliot and Carol sit in front of the TV - Elliot on the couch and Carol stretched out on the floor. They watch their father onscreen as he hosts 'Name That Wood'. Carol turns to Elliot, concerned.

CAROL

Daddy looks like shit.

ELLIOT

Yeah, I know. And he's mumbling a lot and keeps blowing the names of the wood.

CAROL

I think he wants to come home. Do you think mom'll let him?

ELLIOT

I doubt it. She was pretty mad  
after hiding in the bomb shelter  
for two-and-a-half hours.

Carol looks to the TV thoughtfully, then back to Elliot.

CAROL

We've got to do something, then.

ELLIOT

(scoffs)

Right. Like what - kick mom out of  
the house so she has to live at the  
station, too? Then maybe they'll  
talk?

They both turn back to the TV, 'Name That Wood' coming to an  
end as Jan steps into the room, drying her hands on a kitchen  
towel. She stands and watches Jack onscreen.

JACK (ON TV)

...Well, that's all the wood we  
have time for tonight on 'Name That  
Wood'. We'll see you next time...  
God willing.

There is canned applause as Biff's voice is heard.

BIFF (V.O.)

'Name That Wood' is brought to you  
by Bob's Lumber. Remember, if it's  
lumber and it says Bob's, it must  
be Bob's Lumber. The end.

Carol looks up at Jan.

CAROL

Daddy looks tired.

JAN

He should. If I pulled tricks like  
he does I'd have trouble sleeping,  
too.

Jan takes a seat on the couch as Jack reappears on the TV  
screen, weaving slightly from exhaustion. A glittery sign  
hanging behind him reads, 'THE \$100,000 DOLLAR MOVIE'.

JACK (ON TV)

Tonight on the hundred thousand  
dollar movie we are proud to  
present a very special film dealing  
with post- nuclear etiquette.

A scratchy movie begins to play, the title card for 'The Day The World Ended' flashing onscreen. Carol looks to Jan, wide-eyed.

CAROL

Are we going to die in a nuclear war, mommy?

Elliot rolls his eyes disgustedly.

ELLIOT

Oh, please. I can't believe she's still pulling this...

JAN

Elliot, be quiet.

(to Carol, softly)

We're not going to die in an atomic war, honey. Don't worry.

ELLIOT

Yeah. Besides, if there was a war they'd just blow up the major military and government centers then take over the country and send us to labor camps.

Jan turns to Elliot, frowning.

JAN

Elliot, you're not helping here.

ELLIOT

It's the truth...

JAN

I think it's time the two of you went to bed. I don't want you watching this movie.

ELLIOT

Why? You gave me fifty cents to go see it in the theatres.

JAN

Upstairs.

Sighing dramatically, Elliot and Carol slowly head upstairs. Jan looks to the TV as the movie is interrupted, Jack appearing onscreen with a tear sheet from the Teletypes in hand.

JACK (ON TV)  
 This is a KBOB update with Jack  
 Ramsay. Here's the latest on the  
 naval quarantine of Cuba...

Jack's eyes suddenly glaze over, head tilting back as he  
 dozes off in mid- sentence. Jan stands, stepping to the  
 television.

JAN  
 Goodnight, Jack. Sleep tight.

She hits the on/off button, the screen going black.

CUT TO:

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the U.P.I. Teletype machine as it types:

U.P.I. - THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25 - SCHOOL CHILDREN IN MOSCOW  
 HOLD A DEMONSTRATION OUTSIDE THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. SEVERAL  
 HUNDRED CHILDREN HURL BOTTLES OF INK WHILE SHOUTING "HANDS  
 OFF CUBA! IF YOU TOUCH CUBA WE'LL KNOCK YOUR TEETH IN."

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Elliot and Dwight hike up a hill, slowly making their way  
 through the underbrush. Elliot breathes heavily.

ELLIOT  
 How much further is it?

DWIGHT  
 I don't know. If you wanted to live  
 in a nudist colony how far from  
 town would you go?

ELLIOT  
 Considering that my parents live in  
 town, I'd say Canada.

Dwight stops, bending to examine something in the brush.

DWIGHT  
 We must be on the right track.  
 There's been hunters around here.

ELLIOT  
 How can you tell?

DWIGHT  
 (holds up beer bottle)  
 Let's try up over the hill...

EXT. WOODS - HILLTOP

Climbing to the top of the hill, Elliot and Dwight look to the valley below. Several cabins are visible in a clearing, people moving about outside.

DWIGHT  
 That has to be it. What are those people doing down there?

ELLIOT  
 (squints)  
 It looks like... volleyball.

The boys exchange excited looks, pumping their fists in triumph.

ELLIOT & DWIGHT  
 Yes!

Pulling binoculars from their coats, they scurry down the hill. Squatting in the brush they peer through the binoculars, focusing their lenses anxiously.

EXT. NUDIST COLONY - BINOCULAR P.O.V.

Through the binoculars, the boys watch as middle-aged men and women frolic unashamedly in the nude - dancing, playing checkers, gardening, swimming in a pond, and even bouncing on a trampoline.

EXT. BUSHES

Dwight lowers his binoculars, letting out a primal scream. Elliot quickly clamps his hand over Dwight's mouth.

ELLIOT  
 Shut up! You want to get caught?

DWIGHT  
 (whimpering)  
 But Elliot - nude volleyball! How can body parts shake that much without hurting?

Wicked smiles on their faces, Elliot and Dwight lift their binoculars, once again fixing them on the nudist colony below.

EXT. NUDIST COLONY - BINOCULAR P.O.V.

Scanning the colony, Elliot and Dwight whisper delightedly.

DWIGHT (V.O.)

It's like a National Geographic version of Northern California!

ELLIOT (V.O.)

Yeah, but where are the golden sun goddesses you talked about? These people are all... old.

DWIGHT (V.O.)

Wait a minute... to the right... the girl with the jump rope...!

The binoculars PAN to the right, stopping on a tanned, blonde-haired girl jumping rope with her back to us.

ELLIOT (V.O.)

Oh man oh man oh man...

EXT. BUSHES

Elliot and Dwight gawk in appreciation, leering through their binoculars and nudging each other with their elbows.

DWIGHT

What a babe! Huh, Elliot?

ELLIOT

Oh man oh man oh man ...

DWIGHT

Come on, turn around... just turn around...

EXT. NUDIST COLONY - BINOCULAR P.O.V.

A volleyball rolls toward the girl, stopping at her feet. She stops jumping rope to retrieve the ball. As she turns we see that it is none other than Carrie Dunbar, smiling brightly as she tosses the ball back.

DWIGHT (V.O.)  
Holy Christ - do you see what I  
see?

EXT. BUSHES

Elliot lowers his binoculars, a dazed look in his eyes. His mouth moves, but no sound comes out. Dwight looks at him, concerned.

DWIGHT  
Elliot? Are you okay? Say  
something!

Mouth wide, Elliot lets out a primal scream - first soft, quickly growing in power as it echoes through the hills.

EXT. NUDIST COLONY

Hearing the scream, the nudists all stop whatever they're doing, looking up curiously.

NUDIST #1  
Did you hear that?

NUDIST #2  
It sounded like an air raid siren!

The nudists scurry for cover, racing around in panic.

EXT. BUSHES

The bushes shake as the boys race up the hill, Dwight all but dragging Elliot by the arm.

ELLIOT  
Oh man oh man oh man...

DWIGHT  
I hope the Russians don't drop the  
bomb - I think I've got a reason to  
live...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

People file into the community shelter, a banner over the door reading, 'CIVIL DEFENSE FORUM TONIGHT'.



## INT. COMMUNITY SHELTER

Folding chairs have been set up for the town meeting, the shelter nearly full as people settle into their seats. Jan, Elliot and Carol sit near the front, waiting for the assembly to begin. Carol fidgets restlessly, while Elliot seems preoccupied, staring blankly into space.

CAROL

But I don't want to go back to school. What if the bombs come tomorrow?

JAN

They won't. And the school is prepared to deal with it if they do. Right, Elliot?

Oblivious, Elliot continues to stare, muttering to himself.

ELLIOT

Oh man oh man oh man...

Jan gives him a peculiar look as a Woman leans forward, speaking to Jan.

WOMAN #1

Where's Jack tonight?

JAN

(smiles woodenly)

Oh, you know Jack - always work, work, work.

The Woman chuckles, the smile vanishing from Jan's face as she turns to see Mayor Lancaster step onstage to sparse applause. Raising his hands for silence, he moves to the podium.

LANCASTER

Welcome to the Fairvale Civil Defense forum.

He smiles broadly to no applause.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

I've invited a man here tonight to instruct us all in proper methods of Civil Defense. Here from the Bureau of Holocaust Preparedness is Mr. Clyde Ford.

There is polite applause as Clyde Ford trots energetically to the podium, carrying an easel and many large illustrations.

He wears the same tacky suit we saw him in at the shelter dedication. The first board on the easel bears the words 'HOW CAN I SURVIVE AN ATOMIC BLAST?'

CLYDE

Thank you. You know, many people ask me...

(points to easel)

... "How can I survive an atomic blast?" The answer is simple. One species of life has survived atomic blasts - even thrived on them! And that species is...

He pulls away the first board to reveal a drawing of a cockroach.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

... the insect! You may ask, "What does that have to do with me, Clyde?" I'll tell you. The answer is that I can help you to survive like those insects. How? First...

He pulls away the second board, revealing an illustration comparing people in a bomb shelter to bugs under a rock.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

... insects live under the ground, where it is safe. I have been licensed by the United States Government as a bomb shelter contractor, and I can build you an underground abode in your backyard, or we can even convert that dusty old basement into a modern new combo rec room/fallout shelter.

He looks into the audience expectantly, receiving uncertain stares in return. Undaunted, he presses on.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Point number two - insects wear protective shells.

He uncovers a drawing of a man in a radiation suit standing next to a horned, heavily armored beetle.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

I sell full-body suits with gas masks and goggles. Heck, you almost even look like a bug while wearing it.

(MORE)

CLYDE (CONT'D)

And it's so comfortable you can still go shopping or take in those last nine holes of golf without any problems. Are there any questions?

A man raises his hand, calling out.

AUDIENCE MAN

Yeah - I think everyone's overreacting to all this nuclear war stuff. Why would the Russians want to bomb here?

CLYDE

(smiles, prepared)

Because Fairvale is of strategic military importance.

The audience mutters in shock. Clyde removes the fourth board on the easel to reveal a Russian map which features the city of Fairvale (labeled 'Fairvaleski') circled in red as a prime target.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

A local company - Lancaster Decals - has a contract with the U.S. Government to provide decals for army weapons. Including atomic bombs.

Mayor Lancaster stands, speaking defensively.

LANCASTER

What? Don't be ridiculous. We just make stickers...

CLYDE

It doesn't matter. You're on file in Washington D.C. as a military supplier, and all military suppliers are on the Kremlin's first-strike list.

Confused, Lancaster sits back down while the rest of the audience whispers to one another. Moving in for the kill, Clyde paces, speaking with the force of a revival preacher.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Now I think some of you might still be thinking, "Clyde, we don't need all this.

(MORE)

CLYDE (CONT'D)

There will never be an atomic war."  
Well, they said there'd never be a  
light bulb, or a telephone, or an  
airplane, but man overcame those  
obstacles, too. And we have to be  
ready for it.

Pulling out a pad of receipts, Clyde steps toward the audience, grinning like a shark.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Now - can I interest anyone in a  
little survival?

As one, people rush the stage, nearly trampling Jan and the kids, who remain in their seats, The townspeople call to Clyde eagerly as we...

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM - NIGHT

A hotplate, coffee pot, electric heater, easy chair and cot are spread around the room. Eyes bloodshot, Jack stands over the tickers in his bathrobe, more asleep than awake. He looks up as Walter steps into the room.

WALTER

You look terrible, Jack. You could  
carry groceries in the bags under  
your eyes.

(gestures to appliances)

What's all this?

JACK

I snuck home and got a few things.

WALTER

You can't live here, Jack. This is  
a TV station.

JACK

This is where I belong. The big  
story could come any minute and I  
will not miss it. I'm even using a  
porta-potty - out of camera range,  
though...

A cooking timer on the table buzzes, Jack turning it off as he wanders out of the room.

JACK (CONT'D)

Watch the tickers - my dinner's ready.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

The dinnertime installment of 'Cooking With Edna' is in progress on the monitors, Edna cheerfully addressing the cameras.

EDNA (ON TV)

... And in honor of 'Nuclear Preparedness Week' here at KBOB, we'll top off our k-ration casserole with a tiny American flag. Remember to keep plenty of these on hand for after the holocaust, when national pride will never be more important ...

We see Jack wander onto the set behind Edna, oblivious to the show in progress. Grabbing an oven mitt, he pulls a TV dinner out of the oven and wanders off again. Edna continues with the show, glancing after Jack angrily.

INT. HALLWAY

Jack heads back up the hallway with his TV dinner as Walter runs up to meet him.

WALTER

There's a new story, Jack. It's coming up on the tickers now!

JACK

(excited)

Get to the control room and tell them to switch over to the news desk in thirty seconds.

Tossing his TV dinner aside, Jack bolts for the newsroom, ripping off his robe to reveal a rumpled suit underneath.

INT. NEWS ROOM

Jack races to the tickers, tearing the story out of the machine. He dives behind the news desk as a camera is pushed forward, ready to roll. We hear Walter's voice over the intercom.

WALTER (V.O.)

... And now, Jack Ramsay with a news update...

JACK

(gravely)

This just in from New York - as the standoff with Cuba nears its third day, the attention of the entire country hangs on each new development. Reports from around the country reveal panicked citizens in major cities fleeing to desert rendezvous points or lining their walls with tin foil to block the radiation from a nuclear blast. In Fairvale, California, TV station owner Jack Ramsay has vowed to remain on the air 24 hours a day in hope of being first to announce the end of the world. Apparently lunacy is not restricted to the major cities...

Jack stops, taking in what he's just read. He looks back up at the camera, a strained grin on his face.

JACK (CONT'D)

Heh, heh. This is Jack Ramsay, signing off...

The red light on the camera blinks off. Seething, Jack glares at the crowd which has gathered behind the camera.

JACK (CONT'D)

Okay - who called the wire services?

Everyone turns to Biff. He smiles apologetically.

BIFF

I thought everyone should know about your sacrifice, Jack. And it seemed like a good story... just think of the ratings!

Jack cradles his head in his hands, moaning softly.

CUT TO:

INT. BOB'S DINER - NIGHT

Earl enters the diner, stepping to the counter where the Cook is busy testing his new gas mask. Seeing Earl, he points to the far corner, voice muffled as he speaks through the mask.

COOK  
They're at the usual table.

EARL  
Septic tank back up again, Frankie?

Earl laughs, moving to where the gun club sit - bullet holes in the windows and walls around them.

EARL (CONT'D)  
Hello, men.

Wearing gas masks, they raise their rifles in greeting. Earl sits, disgusted.

EARL (CONT'D)  
Not you guys, too.  
(sees Barney not wearing  
mask)  
Good for you, Barney. At least you  
didn't panic.

BARNEY  
Well... the guy ran out of gas  
masks. He said he'd be back in a  
couple of days.

EARL  
You guys were suckered. The  
Russkies will be aiming for the  
military installations and big  
cities, like San Francisco and  
Sacramento.

Bill lifts his mask, frowning.

BILL  
Yeah, but what about the decal  
factory?

EARL  
I gotta think they'd want to keep  
it standing so they could  
manufacture all their commie  
propaganda decals when they take  
over.

Bo rips off his gas mask angrily.

BO  
 Commie decals pasted to our  
 schools, churches and car bumpers?  
 I'd die first!

Pulling a piece of paper from his jacket pocket, Earl speaks guardedly.

EARL  
 Exactly.  
 (unfolds paper, spreads  
 it on table)  
 That's why I made a list of things  
 we should do before heading  
 underground. If the commies think  
 they're gonna bomb us out without a  
 fight they've got another think  
 coming...

The gun clubbers remove their masks, grinning conspiratorially as they huddle over the paper on the table.

DISSOLVE TO:

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the A.P. Teletype machine as it types:

A.P. - FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26 - A PENTAGON SPONSORED STUDY  
 REVEALS THAT IN THE EVENT OF NUCLEAR WAR, AMERICA HAS ONLY  
 ENOUGH SHELTER SPACE FOR 112,000 PEOPLE.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

It appears to be an ordinary Fairvale day. Women shop downtown. Cars rumble down Main Street. Old men exchange stories on the bench in front of the barber shop.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

Mayor Lancaster stands in front of the community shelter with members of the city council, all staring at their watches.

LANCASTER  
 ... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1... now!

The air raid siren suddenly sounds. A loudspeaker on top of a tall pole, the horn can be heard blaring all over town.



## EXT. MAIN STREET

At the sound of the siren, every car on the street pulls over in orderly fashion, drivers ducking calmly under their dashboards.

## EXT. SIDEWALK

Pedestrians also take cover in a composed, dignified style. A woman crouches next to a brick building, ducking and covering with her purse over her head.

## EXT. BARBER SHOP

The elderly men in front of the barber shop each grab a section of newspaper, covering their heads as they climb under the bench.

## EXT. STREET

Crazy Clinton grabs a woman standing next to him, pulling her over himself as he drops to the ground.

## EXT. BOB'S SAVINGS AND LOAN

Bob Martin hurries out of the Savings and Loan wearing a designer asbestos suit, the name 'BOB' printed on the back. He unzips his car cover, climbing into his Corvette and zipping himself inside.

## INT. PINKY'S BEAUTY SALON

Pinky and the other beauticians scurry to the dryers, jumping into the chairs and covering their heads with the clear plastic domes. Out of habit they each grab a magazine, crossing their legs as they read.

## INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Siren blaring in the distance, Elliot and Dwight dive under their desks with the other students. Dwight taps Elliot on the shoulder, pointing eagerly to the girl in front of them - able to see up her dress as she huddles under her desk. They exchange grins.

## INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

On her hands and knees on the floor, Carol glances up, prying the most recent wad of gum from underneath her desk and popping it in her mouth. Hearing whispers, she looks behind her, where she sees several boys grinning as they look up her dress. She blows a bubble, grinning back at them.

## INT. TV STATION - CONTROL ROOM

Crowded under the control board, Jack, Walter and Biff are all looking up the dress of the Make-Up Girl, who kneels nearby. They look to one another, grinning like schoolboys.

## INT. HIGH SCHOOL - LOCKER ROOM

Earl Anderson paces up and down a row of lockers, glaring at a line of nervous boys as the air raid siren wails outside.

EARL

... I don't care what your social studies teachers have been tellin' you - a real man does not duck and cover. A real man stands up proud for his country. Would you rather die on your feet or live on your knees?

The boys look to one another uncertainly.

## EXT. TOWN SQUARE

Citizens file placidly into the community shelter - many wearing radiation suits bought the night before. Men step aside to allow women and children inside first, tipping their hats politely.

## INT. COMMUNITY SHELTER

People mill about, smoking and chatting happily. In one corner a makeshift Red Cross station has been set up, patients with simulated wounds lying peacefully on the floor as Jan and other volunteer nurses administer to them. Approaching a man made-up to look as though he's been badly burned Jan kneels, offering a tray.

JAN

Hi, I'm a volunteer nurse. Can I interest you in some juice or a donut while you're waiting for a doctor?

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

The mayor still stands with the city council, looking at their watches.

LANCASTER

... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1... now!

The siren winds down, horn dwindling to silence. Everyone climbs out from under benches and against buildings. People wander out of the bomb shelter, the citizens of Fairvale breaking into spontaneous applause. Beaming proudly, Mayor Lancaster holds up his hands for silence.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Well done, everyone. Well done! First of all, I'd like to thank everyone for making this disaster such a success.

(applause)

I'm sure if we're ever forced to face this situation in real life we'll be able to face the end of civilization proud of the fact that we conducted ourselves like true Americans - calmly, obediently, and without question.

There is more applause as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Carol stands in front of the school with friends, waiting for their bus. She looks up to see Jack arrive in his car. Pale, with dark rings forming under his eyes, he calls to her cheerfully.

JACK

Carol! How're you doing? How'd you like a ride - you won't even have to hold down a transmitter dish this time. Ha ha.

Carol's friends look at Jack, frightened.

CAROL'S FRIEND

Do you know that guy?

CAROL

Sort of. He's my dad.

Carol moves to the car, climbing in beside Jack.

INT. JACK'S CAR

Jack and Carol ride in silence, the atmosphere a little tense. Jack tries to break the ice.

JACK

So, how's school?

Carol looks at him incredulously.

JACK (CONT'D)

Sorry, dumb question...

(another pause)

I suppose mom's told you all about her and me.

CAROL

Yeah, we already had one of these talks.

JACK

How did it go?

CAROL

(thinks it over)

She was very good.

JACK

(feeling pressure now)

Damn.

CAROL

I think you're both being very childish.

JACK

Thanks, but let's try to keep our roles straight here. You're the child, I'm the adult. Quit treating me like the ten year old.

CAROL

(laughs)

Being a ten year old isn't so bad, daddy...

Jack smiles, taking her hand and squeezing it fondly.

CAROL (CONT'D)

...so long as you're not forty.

Jack frowns, stung.

JACK

Have I ever told you that you're growing up to be just like your mother?

CAROL

No.

JACK

That's because I was hoping against it.

(haltingly)

Listen, Carol... the reason I wanted to talk to you was to let you know that I'm still your dad, and I love you very much.

CAROL

(smiles)

I know.

They ride in silence a moment. Jack finally looks to Carol curiously.

JACK

Speaking of your mother, what exactly did she say about me when you had your little talk?

CAROL

She complemented you. She even called you... 'an asexual dynamo'.

Jack nods, a knowing grin on his face.

JACK

That's mommy, all right.

CAROL

She also wants you to come to dinner tomorrow night.

JACK

(brightening)

She does? Why didn't she ask me herself?

CAROL

You know mom.

(looks up as they park in  
front of house)

Good talk, daddy.

JACK

Yeah, not bad for a couple of ten  
year olds.

EXT. RAMSAY HOUSE

Jack's car pulls up in front of the house, Carol climbing  
out. She waves to him as she heads up the driveway.

CAROL

'Bye, daddy. See you tomorrow.

Jack returns her wave. Seeing Elliot playing a game of touch  
football in the front yard with his friends, he calls out.

JACK

Elliot! Come here for a minute.

Tossing the ball to Dwight, Elliot jogs over to the car.

ELLIOT

Hi, dad.

JACK

I suppose you know about your mom  
and me.

ELLIOT

Yeah. Carol explained it to me.

JACK

(nods)

I know the feeling. Look, just  
because your mom and I are having  
troubles, I don't want you to think  
that you can't come to me with any  
problems, or...

ELLIOT

Can I have ten dollars for the  
dance tonight?

Jack reaches for his wallet, pulling out a ten dollar bill.

JACK

Uh, sure... ten dollars...?  
(hands bill to Elliot)

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

But don't be afraid to go to your mother, too.

ELLIOT

Thanks, dad. Did Carol tell you about dinner tomorrow night?

JACK

Yeah, six o'clock. Should be... interesting.

He waves to Elliot as he drives away. Elliot watches him go, speaking to himself.

ELLIOT

That's one way of putting it.

He trots back to the front yard, where his friends wait to resume their game. Dwight calls to him impatiently.

DWIGHT

Come on, Elliot - it's time to let someone else be John for a while.

ELLIOT

No - I'm John, you're Bobby, Jim is Teddy and Curt is Rose.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

The community shelter is lit with colored lights as teenagers file inside, dressed in their finest high school dance attire. A sign over the door reads 'ELK'S CLUB MIXER. YOUNGSTERS - TOMORROW'S GROWN-UPS'.

INT. COMMUNITY SHELTER

The dance is in full swing, kids bouncing awkwardly as the jukebox blasts Dion and the Belmonts' 'Teenager In Love'. In a far corner of the shelter, Elliot and Dwight sit on large metal storage drums labeled 'MEAT' and 'CORN ON THE COB'. They watch the other kids dejectedly.

DWIGHT

This dance is dead.

ELLIOT

What do you expect when they hold it in a bomb shelter?

They perk up as a GIRL steps out of the dancing mass, standing in front of them. Elliot nudges Dwight, motioning him to talk to her. He reluctantly hops off the barrel, stepping up beside the Girl.

DWIGHT

Hi.

GIRL

Oh, hi Darryl.

DWIGHT

My name's Dwight. Listen, I was wondering if you might want to dance or something. I mean, it could all end tomorrow, so we should enjoy tonight.

GIRL

(preoccupied)

Uh-huh. See you in school Monday.

She moves back into the crowd. Dwight turns, climbing back onto the barrel next to Elliot.

ELLIOT

Hey, don't worry about it. if at first you don't succeed... but I'd drop the 'It could all end tomorrow' line, personally.

DWIGHT

I could've told her her hair was on fire, she wouldn't have paid attention. Which is kind of an appealing thought. Why are we here, anyway?

Elliot's eyes light up as he sees Carrie Dunbar appear in the shelter doorway.

ELLIOT

We're here to see Carrie Dunbar, remember?

(nudges Dwight excitedly)

Look! Isn't it great - nobody knows about her but us.

As she steps inside Carrie is immediately surrounded by every boy at the dance. Elliot looks to Dwight knowingly.



DWIGHT  
 (sheepishly)  
 I only told a couple of guys in gym  
 class...

Elliot is distraught as he watches the other boys - most notably Tommy Irving - fawn over her.

ELLIOT  
 Great. I can't compete with all  
 these guys. I had one advantage and  
 you had to go blab it away. Now  
 I'll never stand a chance with her.

DWIGHT  
 (pats him on the back)  
 Look on the bright side. Even if  
 she doesn't want to go out with you  
 - we can always go back and get  
 pictures.

Tommy Irving leads Carrie past the metal drums to the refreshment table, flashing Elliot and Dwight a smug grin. Elliot glares at him angrily as we...

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM - NIGHT

Jack sits in his easy chair next to the Teletype machines, making paper airplanes with the tear sheets and sailing them around the room. He perks up as Walter enters, hands behind his back.

JACK  
 What're you still doing here? Let  
 me guess - your wife told you she  
 doesn't love you anymore, and  
 kicked you out.

WALTER  
 Nothing that dramatic. I thought  
 you might like to talk.

Walter produces a bottle of Jack Daniels and two glasses from behind his back. Jack grins, lighting a cigarette.

JACK  
 Gonna get me drunk and make me tell  
 you my troubles? You're a  
 masochist, Walter.

WALTER

I looked it up in a thesaurus.  
Masochist is an acceptable  
substitute for the word friend.

(pours drink, hands it to  
Jack)

And as a friend, I've got to tell  
you - you look like hell.

Jack takes a slug of whiskey, speaking softly.

JACK

I'm going to lose the station. The  
mortgage is due Monday and I'm not  
going to be able to pay it. How's  
that for a kick in the pants?

Taking a drink, Walter looks up, surprised.

WALTER

Christ, Jack. I didn't know that.

Jack nods, lighting another cigarette.

JACK

The problem with this country  
nowadays is that you have to make  
money before you can be a  
visionary.

WALTER

Does Jan know?

JACK

I haven't told her yet. She's got  
her own problems. And apparently  
I'm one of them.

(laughs)

Marriages and missile crises are a  
lot alike. You don't know there's a  
problem until it's a catastrophe.

Jack sluggishly lights another cigarette, three now dangling  
from his mouth. He removes them, exhaling a huge cloud of  
smoke.

JACK (CONT'D)

Jan wants an easier life. A big  
house, perfect kids, a husband who  
works nine to five. Christ, what's  
so easy about that? It may be easy  
for her, but not for me.

WALTER

I've been married twenty-six years, Jack, and it's rarely easy. Things are too complicated. We're not starving, so we worry about our lifestyles. We're not at war so we worry about the communists. We're in love so we worry we're missing something better. Maybe this bomb scare isn't so bad - at least we're all worrying about the same thing.

Jack takes the cigarettes from his mouth, speaking thoughtfully as he smothers them in the ashtray.

JACK

Women. Can't live with them...  
can't live with them.

Walter laughs, looking at Jack fondly.

WALTER

You're delirious.

JACK

Sure, that's what they say about all geniuses.

Walter stands to leave.

WALTER

And people who don't get enough sleep. Goodnight, Jack.

JACK

Leave the bottle, Walter.

Walter puts the bottle on the floor beside Jack's chair before leaving. A story clatters over the Teletypes, Jack tearing the sheet from the machine. He reads it, beginning to fold it into another paper airplane as we...

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN ON:

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the U.P.I. Teletype machine, as it types:

U.P.I. - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27 - AT THE U.N. BUILDING IN NEW YORK, ADLAI STEVENSON REVEALS THAT IF THE RUSSIANS CONTINUE WORK ON THEIR MISSILE BASES IN CUBA THE UNITED STATES WILL BOMB THE SITES.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMSAY HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

A weary Jack steps onto the porch in a rumpled suit, nervously adjusting his tie and smoothing down his hair. He starts to doze off, snapping awake as he falls against the doorbell, which buzzes loudly.

JACK  
(muttering)  
Okay, let's get this over with. How bad can it be? She invited you, she must want you here...

The door opens to reveal Jan, who stares at him in surprise.

JAN  
What are you doing here?

JACK  
I'm... uh... here for dinner?

Jan laughs in disbelief.

JAN  
Dinner? What makes you think you can just traipse in any time you want and I'll fix you a meal?

JACK  
I thought I was invited...  
(getting angry)  
... and considering that I paid for this house and all the food...

Just then Elliot and Carol rush up, calling to Jack happily.

CAROL  
Daddy! You're home!

ELLIOT  
Hi, dad. C'mon in!

Carol grabs Jack's hands, dragging him into the house. He and Jan exchange knowing looks.

JACK  
I think we've been set up.

JAN  
I think you're right.

JACK  
If you want me to leave...

JAN  
No, no - you're here, you might as  
well stay.  
(looks at him seriously)  
You look terrible.

JACK  
I'm using the old sympathy ploy.

Jan closes the front door, sighing and shaking her head in exasperation.

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - KITCHEN

Jack, Jan, Elliot and Carol sit at the kitchen table, eating in silence. The television drones in the background, 'Godzilla' playing onscreen as everyone exchanges uncomfortable smiles. Exhausted, Jack starts to nod off, Elliot piping up brightly to wake him.

ELLIOT  
I got a letter today from my pen  
pal in Pakistan.

JACK  
(startled)  
Oh - that's great. What does he  
have to say?

ELLIOT  
I don't know, it's written in  
Pakistani.

Everyone nods, silence once again descending. Jack turns to Carol.

JACK  
Uh, could you pass the potatoes,  
please Carol?

Carol obliges, flashing her father a huge grin.

CAROL

Sure, dad. Mom sure makes good potatoes, doesn't she?

ELLIOT

(picks up cue)

Mom's potatoes are the best ever. What do you do to make them taste so good?

Jan stares at Carol and Elliot uncertainly.

JAN

Mash them.

ELLIOT

Mmmmmmmmm! Sure are good. Better than you could get someplace else - right, dad?

Nodding off once more, Jack grabs the gravy boat, pouring it into his coffee cup when Elliot's voice snaps him back into consciousness.

JACK

Uh... yeah... did I...?

Jack pauses as the movie on TV is interrupted, Biff diving into the seat behind the news desk. He speaks to the camera excitedly.

BIFF (ON TV)

This is Biff Barney with a special bulletin on the latest from Cuba...

The family all lean toward the set, listening anxiously as Biff scans the tear sheet in his hands. He looks up, smiling apologetically.

BIFF (ON TV) (CONT'D)

... Nothing new to report. This has been Biff Barney with a special news bulletin. The end.

He leaps up, racing off camera, the movie resuming play onscreen. Jan, Elliot and Carol look to Jack questioningly. He shrugs.

JACK

I didn't have a choice, he was the only one there when I left. I really should get back...

He starts to stand, freezing when he sees everyone staring at him icily. He smiles sheepishly, sitting back down.

JACK (CONT'D)  
... in a little while.

JAN  
When was the last time you got some sleep, Jack?

JACK  
About thirty seconds ago, I think...

JAN  
Don't you realize what you're doing to yourself, Jack? To all of us...?

Jack tries to listen, but is unable to ignore the television as the film playing onscreen suddenly stops and begins to melt.

JAN (CONT'D)  
... You're basically a caring person, but you let your obsessions get in the way of your better judgment.

Jack nods absently, one eye on the TV as a 'TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES - PLEASE STAND BY' sign flashes onscreen. His upper lip is beginning to sweat.

JAN (CONT'D)  
... It's not fair to me or the kids. The station will be fine - it's time you showed a little concern for your family.

Jack is no longer listening to Jan as he watches the 'Technical Difficulties' sign catch fire, burning up onscreen. He stands, unable to take any more.

JACK  
I have to go.

Before Jack can start for the door Jan stands, grabbing the bowl of potatoes as Elliot and Carol duck beneath the table.

JAN  
Of course. Would you like to take some food with you?

She dumps the bowl over Jack's head, grinding it down over his eyes. She smiles sweetly.

JAN (CONT'D)  
They're mashed.

EXT. RAMSAY HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Jack picks the last of the potatoes out of his hair as Elliot and Carol stand by the drivers window.

JACK  
I know things don't look very good,  
but your mom and I still love each  
other. If we didn't she'd have hit  
me with the pot roast.

ELLIOT  
Next time you come over I'll be  
sure we're not having shish-kebabs.

Jack laughs, giving Elliot and Carol a smile.

JACK  
I appreciate what you tried to do.

Elliot and Carol nod as Jack starts the car.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Thank mom for the dinner.

Jack pulls out of the driveway. As Elliot and Carol watch him drive away, Dwight trots over from next door. He speaks to Elliot anxiously.

DWIGHT  
Borrow your mom's car. The football  
team's having a big party at Tommy  
Irving's house.

ELLIOT  
(depressed)  
I don't think this is the best time  
to ask.

Dwight just smiles at Elliot.

DWIGHT  
Carrie Dunbar's going to be there.

CUT TO:



EXT. TOMMY IRVING'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The street is lined with cars as the Ramsay station wagon pulls up in front of Tommy Irving's house, Elliot and Dwight in the front seat.

INT. STATION WAGON

The boys stare nervously at the house, the party in full swing. Elliot pops a breath mint into his mouth as he speaks.

ELLIOT

I don't know about this, Dwight.  
Crashing a football team party can  
be hazardous to your health.

Reaching under his jacket, Dwight pulls out a nudist magazine.

DWIGHT

No problem. I stole this from my  
dad. I've been learning all about  
nudists. I know all the good nudist  
terms - 'back to nature', 'full-  
body tan', and 'free love'. Have  
you heard of 'free love'? This girl  
is worth any risk, Elliot.

Looking at the smiling nude woman on the magazine cover, Elliot pops a few more breath mints into his mouth, letting out a nervous sigh.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM - NIGHT

Dressed in a suit coat and tie - over pajama bottoms and slippers - Jack pours an entire can of coffee into his coffee pot, followed by a bottle of No-Doz. He moves to where Biff lies asleep in the easy chair, clutching a fire extinguisher to his chest, dried foam stuck to his clothes and hair. Jack reaches out, touching his shoulder.

JACK

Biff - wake up. It's my shift.

Biff wakes with a start, firing a short burst from the fire extinguisher.

BIFF

Huh? What? I didn't do it ...

JACK

Biff, go home. I can handle things here.

Coming to his senses, Biff pulls himself out of the chair, disappointed. The back of his jacket is charred and tattered.

BIFF

Jeez, I didn't even get to announce anything good.

JACK

That's the problem with newscasting. You never do. See you tomorrow.

Biff pauses, giving Jack an odd look.

BIFF

It's weird. You get to watching the tickers and you almost start hoping for a war.

Jack laughs, giving Biff a wave as he leaves. He looks to the coffee pot, which is not percolating. He feels the side of the pot, which is cold. Puzzled, he pulls up the cord to find that it's unplugged.

JACK

No wonder...

He reaches down behind the desk, plugging the coffee pot into the overcrowded outlet which powers the Teletypes. Yawning, Jack rubs his eyes in exhaustion - not noticing as the lights dim ominously.

CUT TO:

EXT. FAIRVALE - NIGHT

The church bell chimes midnight, the streets quiet and empty.

INT. BOB'S DINER

Mayor Lancaster presides over a meeting of the city council, who all stare at the television, bored. They watch as the 'National Anthem' plays, Lancaster droning on obliviously. A POLICEMAN sits in a corner booth, drinking coffee.

LANCASTER

... Well, that concludes our meeting, unless anyone has any questions.

One of the councilmen raises his hand, irritated.

COUNCILMAN #1

Yeah. How come we have to hold our meeting in a stinking diner when we could be using the bomb shelter? I thought that was one of the reasons we built it.

The others all grunt their agreement.

LANCASTER

Because the 'Housewives Against Nuclear Holocaust' club is busy setting up for a luncheon tomorrow.

COUNCILMAN #2

Those old luses? There goes the wine supply in the storage room.

The men grumble angrily. Bored, the Cook steps out from behind the counter as the 'National Anthem' comes to an end on the TV, picture switching to static. He twirls the dial, the only station broadcasting being KBOB, which is showing a scratchy copy of 'Attack of the Crab Monsters'. The Policeman calls to the Cook, irritated.

POLICEMAN

Isn't there anything else on?

COOK

(shrugs)

That's all there is.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSING TRACT - NIGHT

Everything is quiet and dark. Except for lights burning in a few of the houses, there are no indications of life at all.

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Earl, wearing only his boxer shorts and a t-shirt, pries loose the plywood covering the fireplace. He reaches inside, frowning as he gropes around.

EARL  
Where is that damn magazine,  
anyway?

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - CAROL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carol huddles under the covers of her bed with a record player, softly playing 45's while she reads a copy of 'Mad' magazine by flashlight.

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM

Jan lays in bed, asleep. She tosses and turns restlessly.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRIS HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walter and his wife (MARY) climb into bed. They kiss goodnight, Walter then nibbling at her ear. Mary laughs, pulling away.

MARY  
You're playful tonight...

WALTER  
I'm just happy to be home with my  
wife.

They lay back, Mary slipping Walter's arm around her.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Watching Jack this week really  
makes me appreciate our marriage.  
If you think this situation with  
Cuba is unstable you should see  
Jack - it's a race to see which one  
will blow up first.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM - NIGHT

Jack staggers around, exhausted - the No-Doz has worn off with a vengeance. Opening a can of soup, he dumps it into a saucepan and sets it on a hotplate as he rants and raves to himself.

JACK

She's not even giving me a chance.  
We're married nineteen years, as  
soon as she decides we've got a  
problem I'm out the door...

He plugs the hotplate into the rewired outlet. He turns away, not noticing the flash of sparks from the plug, the Teletype machines stopping.

JACK (CONT'D)

... Fine! If that's the way she  
wants it I'm going to enjoy myself.  
I'll grow a mustache and leave the  
toilet seat up all the time!  
I'll...

Seeing the tickers have stopped, Jack's voice trails off. Hurrying to the quiet Teletype machines, he smacks the sides, trying to restart them. Nothing. His eyes go wide as he reads the last message to come over the tickers.

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the A.P. Teletype machine:

A.P. - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28 - SOVIET UNION LAUNCHES ATTACK ON  
NEW

INT. JACK

rips the page out of the Teletype machine, reading the partial message in disbelief.

JACK

Holy shit ... HOLY SHIT!

Jack lunges for the camera, tripping over every appliance that he's scattered around the room. Switching on the camera, he dives behind the news desk, speaking breathlessly.

JACK (CONT'D)

It's happening! The tickers  
stopped! New York has been wiped  
out! The missiles are coming! HIDE!

INT. BOB'S DINER - NIGHT

Mayor Lancaster is busy berating the Cook, holding a plate of food in front of his face.

LANCASTER

I realize you're in a hurry to get out of here, but a well-done steak shouldn't be cooked in a toaster.

Behind him the councilmen and Policeman are gathering around the TV set.

COUNCILMAN #1

Holy shit! Harlan, you better get over here...

Lancaster and the Cook turn to see Jack onscreen.

JACK (ON TV)

The missiles will arrive any second! Run for cover! Run for the shelter!

(pauses, screams)

I SAID RUN!

Dazed, Lancaster steps forward, raising his hands for silence.

LANCASTER

All right, now, everyone stay calm. Let's handle this just like the drill.

The Policeman bolts out the door as everyone in the restaurant immediately panics - running in circles, screaming, tearing the place apart. The Cook jumps onto the counter, calling to Mayor Lancaster.

COOK

You want well-done, you pompous asshole? How's this?

He drops his pants, squatting over Lancaster's plate. Before the mayor can react he is trampled by the councilmen as they rush out the door.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

The Policeman sets off the air raid siren, crossing himself as its scream cuts through the calm night.

EXT. FAIRVALE

At the sound of the siren lights blink on in houses, doors thrown open as groggy citizens stand on their porches, uncomprehending.

Then, realizing what is happening, they begin to scurry about, bumping into one another and yelling incoherent instructions.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jan wakes slowly to the sound of the siren. Realizing what is happening, she jumps out of bed.

JAN  
Holy shit! Jack - get Carol, I'll  
get Elliot.

She looks to Jack's bed, realizing that he's not there. She lets out a groan as she grabs her robe, pulling it on as she hurries out of the room.

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - CAROL'S ROOM

Carol is still under the covers, unable to hear the siren over the music from her record player as Jan bursts in.

JAN  
Carol, get up! We have to get into  
the shelter.

Carol pulls the bedspread from over her head, giving Jan a guilty look.

CAROL  
Sorry, mom - I'll turn it down...

JAN  
Who cares? The missiles are coming!

CAROL  
Holy shit!

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Jan races downstairs with Carol - who is quickly adjusting to the situation.

CAROL  
(jumping happily)  
No more school! No more school!

Jan turns on the TV, where Jack is rambling incoherently.

JACK (ON TV)  
 ... I'm broke, my wife kicked me  
 out of my own house and now the  
 world is ending. What a week I'm  
 having...

Jan rushes to the desk, rummaging through the drawers. Carol  
 looks around the room.

CAROL  
 Where's Elliot?

JAN  
 (gasps, terrified)  
 Oh my god - he must still be at  
 that party.

CAROL  
 Maybe we should go get him.

Pulling herself together, Jan takes the civil defense  
 pamphlet from the drawer, scanning it quickly.

JAN  
 We don't have time - Elliot knows  
 what to do. You and I have to...  
 (reads)  
 ... 'unplug all electrical  
 appliances, unscrew all lightbulbs,  
 and close drapes and shutters to  
 shield the house from radioactive  
 fallout'.

She turns to the TV, where Jack is staring at his watch with  
 great concentration.

JACK (ON TV)  
 ... So if the east coast was  
 destroyed three minutes ago, that  
 means the missiles should arrive  
 here in about twelve minutes...

JAN  
 (tosses pamphlet away)  
 Screw it. Let's get to the shelter.  
 Math was never Jack's strong point.  
 Carol. . .?  
 (looks around)  
 ... Carol... ?

She glances around to find that Carol is nowhere to be seen.

CUT TO:



INT. TOMMY IRVING'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The lights have been turned down low, romantic music playing softly as couples make out all over the room - except for Elliot and Dwight, who sit in the corner, thumbing through the nudist magazine. Elliot sighs glumly as Carrie Dunbar grapples on the couch with Tommy Irving.

ELLIOT

They're still kissing. Fish can't even go that long without air.

Dwight cocks his head, listening.

DWIGHT

What's that whining noise?

ELLIOT

I can't help it. I'm heartbroken.

DWIGHT

Not you - outside.

Elliot listens, tensing as he recognizes the sound of the air-raid siren.

ELLIOT

Oh no...

Elliot steps over groping couples as he hurries to the TV set. Switching it on he flips the channel selector, finding static on every station but KBOB, where Jack holds his head miserably.

JACK (ON TV)

... So if New York's gone that means Chicago and L.A. are next. Can you believe it - I'll have the highest rated program in the country in ten minutes and I won't be around to enjoy it. Fucking commie bastards!

ELLIOT

Holy shit!

The other kids have all stopped making out, looking to the TV, puzzled.

PARTY KID

This is a joke, right? He's gotta be wrong. Turn on the radio or something.

ELLIOT  
The local station shuts off at  
midnight.

There is a beat before Dwight screams in horror.

DWIGHT  
We're gonna die!

Everyone panics, jumping to their feet and screaming. Elliot  
calls out over the din.

ELLIOT  
Quiet! Calm down! I read about this  
- everyone grab all the food and  
supplies you can carry and take  
cover in the basement. We don't  
have time to get back home...

The kids all stand frozen until Carrie Dunbar grabs some  
party food off the table and hurries for the basement.  
Everyone quickly follows suit. Dwight stashes the nudist  
magazine down the front of his shirt, following them down.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSING TRACT - NIGHT

The gun club has mobilized. They ride in the bed of Earl's  
pick-up truck, hooting and hollering and shooting everything  
in sight - blowing pink flamingos off lawns, blasting any  
lawn jockeys or ceramic gnomes that get in their way. Earl  
calls back to them.

EARL  
Calm down, boys - this is a  
military maneuver. Save your ammo  
for the commies.

The 'troops' raise their beers, unified.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jan races into the kitchen, calling out desperately.

JAN  
Carol? Come on, Carol, we've got to  
get to the shelter...

Her daughter nowhere to be found, Jan heads back out, but not before stopping to grab the blender.

JAN (CONT'D)  
 ... We might need this...  
 (then the toaster)  
 ... and this. Carol - let's go!

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Frightened citizens hurry downtown, just as in Friday's drill. Dressed in bedclothes, raincoats, some even wearing their radiation suits, they carry with them their most prized possessions - clothes, pets, a few lugging major appliances.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

Townspeople are beginning to arrive at the community shelter, where Mayor Lancaster, the city council and the police pound on the closed shelter door. A man pushing a console television in a wheelbarrow screams at the mayor.

MAN WITH TV  
 What's the matter? Open the door  
 and let us in!

LANCASTER  
 We can't. The 'Housewives Against  
 Nuclear Holocaust' have sealed the  
 door from the inside.

MAN WITH TV  
 What are they doing in there?

LANCASTER  
 Setting up for their annual 'Spirit  
 of Cooperation' luncheon.

Another man pushes the Policeman anxiously.

PANICKED MAN  
 Shoot it open, then!

POLICEMAN  
 It's bulletproof, idiot!

Several cars pull up, naked people climbing out and hurrying for the shelter.

LANCASTER  
 Oh, shit - nudists!  
 (pounds on door)  
 Let us in, you cowardly witches!

There is a sudden, thundering explosion. Everyone turns to see a fireball rise into the night sky just outside of town. They gasp, horrified.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)  
 That was the decal factory!

Lancaster begins to pound on the door with renewed vigor, joined by the rest of the townspeople.

EXT. DECAL FACTORY

Crouched in the woods a few hundred yards from the flaming factory, the gun club grin patriotically as they watch the building burn.

BO  
 Jeez, Earl - where the hell did you get all that dynamite, anyway?

EARL  
 (smiles crazily)  
 Government salesmen sell more than just radiation suits.

He laughs wildly as he and the others rush into the woods, shooting their guns into the air.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM - NIGHT

Jack continues his ranting, now hiding under the desk, out of view.

JACK  
 It's half past midnight and we're all about to be killed by atomic weapons... Why do these things always happen late at night?

Jack suddenly pops back up into camera range, his voice urgent.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 Jan - can you hear me? Wake the kids and get into the shelter!  
 (MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

Elliot, Carol - your dad loves you very much. Remember to duck and cover when the bomb hits. I don't know exactly how you can duck from an atomic bomb, but do it anyway.

Jack moves around the desk, stepping closer to the camera. He speaks passionately as he covers himself with paper, cue cards, and anything else he can find.

JACK (CONT'D)

And Jan, honey, please don't stay mad at me about this week. Next to you, this station means nothing. I thought if I could just make this place more successful it would make everything better... easier... quieter. I wanted to be able to give you things, buy you gifts - a nice car, a mink coat, pay the gas bill... anything I could to make you smile and shut up and be proud of me. This is just a job...and what with the world ending I don't see much of a future in broadcasting now anyway. You've got to know that I love you more than anything in this world, and if anything happens to you... why am I talking to this fucking camera?

(thinks)

Sorry, everybody. I'm going home. You're on your own...

Jack races out of the news room, paper and cue cards flying everywhere.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMSAY HOUSE - NIGHT

Jan bursts out of the house, her arms filled with various knick-knacks and small appliances, still searching for Carol. She shouts out in frustration.

JAN

Goddammit, Carol - this is no time to be precocious! Come out and help me find the fondue set.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Whatever calm and reason was left in the townspeople vanished at the sight of the fireball. They run in circles and fight in the street. Some scream in panic while others simply sit down and cry. Cars crash into buildings as they swerve to avoid crazed nudists.

EXT. BOB'S SAVINGS AND LOAN

Bob Martin rushes out of the bank and into the riot on the street, throwing money from the bank vault into the air.

BOB

Money means nothing! We're all  
going to die!

He laughs hysterically as he runs down the street.

EXT. MAIN STREET - HARDWARE STORES

Ralph and Carl frantically change the rhyming signs in the windows of their stores. Carl's reads, 'AFTER THE WAR DON'T LOOT MY STORE', while Ralph's proclaims 'DIG OUT OF THE RUBBLE? 1/2 OFF ALL SHOVELS'.

EXT. CHURCH

Townspeople file into the church, a sign outside identifying it as 'BOB'S CHURCH'. A smaller sign underneath reads, 'SUNDAY'S SERMON - JESUS THE CARPENTER: DID HE TURN A PROFIT?'

INT. CHURCH

The pews are full, the worshipers wearing bulky gas masks as they sing a muffled version of 'Onward Christian Soldiers'.

EXT. ALLEYWAY

Crazy Clinton crawls out of his refrigerator box house into a smaller box with the words 'BOMB SHELTER' scrawled on the side.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRIS HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walter and his wife sleep soundly, oblivious to the siren wailing outside - as well as the screams, squealing tires and gunshots.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMSAY HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Jan stands in the front yard, calling out anxiously. Her legs tremble under the weight of everything she's carrying.

JAN

Carol! Where are you? Carol!

Jack's car pulls into the driveway. He climbs out, calling to Jan.

JACK

What are you doing out here? You should be in the shelter!

JAN

What are you doing here at all? I thought you were on the air.

JACK

I had to decide between facing an A-Bomb hugging a news ticker or hugging you. You'll never guess who won.

Jan drops her armful of household items, facing Jack defiantly.

JAN

I didn't give you permission to use this bomb shelter...

JACK

Isn't death by atomic radiation kind of a harsh penalty for working late?

JAN

(sighs, softening)  
Help me find Carol.

JACK

Great - I'm gone three days and you've already lost one of the kids!

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)  
 (looking around)  
 And where's Elliot?

JAN  
 He's at a party. And I didn't lose  
 Carol... she's got to be around  
 here someplace.

CAROL (O.S.)  
 I'm up here...

Jack and Jan jump at the sound of Carol's voice. They look up to see Carol perched on the roof with a sandwich and a glass of milk, staring through a pair of binoculars at the burning decal factory.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
 ... looking for more explosions.

JAN  
 Carol, get down here this instant!  
 We've got to get in the shelter.

Rolling her eyes, Carol begins to climb down from the roof. Halfway down she trips on the telephone wires, skidding the rest of the way down on her chest. She manages to catch hold of the rain gutter to keep from falling to the ground. Frightened, she calls out.

CAROL  
 Daddy!

Jack runs to the spot beneath where she dangles, calling up to her.

JACK  
 It's okay, sweetie. Just let go,  
 I've got you.

Closing her eyes, Carol releases her grip - dropping into Jack's arms. He looks at her, concerned.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 Are you okay, honey?

Carol grimaces, crossing her arms over her chest.

CAROL  
 I'm okay. I don't think I'm going  
 to be able to grow boobs, though.



JACK  
(to Jan)  
I've got her. Let's get into the  
shelter.

Jan gives Jack a grateful smile as they head for the back  
yard.

JAN  
I'm glad you came home.

JACK  
Me, too. I just hope Elliot's okay.

CUT TO:

INT. TOMMY IRVING'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Elliot and Dwight sit in a corner of the basement, reading  
the nudist magazine by flashlight as the football players  
make out with their girlfriends in the darkness.

DWIGHT  
This isn't exactly how I pictured  
the end of the world.  
(whispers)  
You know what? I'm really scared,  
Elliot.

ELLIOT  
Yeah, I am too.

DWIGHT  
I can't believe this is what my dad  
has spent his whole life looking  
forward to. This is nuts.

Elliot perks up, looking across the room as Carrie Dunbar  
suddenly sits up. Embarrassed, Tommy Irving apologizes  
profusely.

TOMMY  
I'm sorry... it's just ...

CARRIE  
It's okay - impending nuclear  
disaster can have that effect on  
some men.

Carrie glances across the room, her eyes meeting Elliot's.  
She crawls over to where he and Dwight sit.

CARRIE (CONT'D)  
You're Elliot Ramsay, right?

Elliot nods in disbelief.

CARRIE (CONT'D)  
I really like the way you took  
charge up there when we heard the  
siren. You were the only one who  
knew what to do.

ELLIOT  
(dumbly)  
Uh-huh.

Carrie looks around the basement, disappointed.

CARRIE  
This isn't exactly how I pictured  
the end of the world... Have you  
ever heard of 'free love', Elliot?

Dwight gulps loudly. Elliot thinks for a moment, frowning.

ELLIOT  
Gee, I don't know if this is the  
right time. I wonder what John  
Fitzgerald Kennedy would do in this  
situation?

A sly grin spreading across his face, Elliot reaches out,  
grabbing Carrie and giving her a passionate kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY SHELTER - NIGHT

A hurricane lantern casts a dim light over the shelter. Jan  
and Carol sit on a cot in the corner. There is a sudden  
whirring sound, Carol grabbing Jan's hand nervously.

CAROL  
What's that noise?

JACK (O.S.)  
Relax, Carol. It's only me. I just  
turned on the air pump.

Jack moves into the light, crouching next to Jan and Carol.

CAROL  
(in tears)

...

(MORE)

CAROL (CONT'D)

I won't see any of my friends  
anymore, or play records, or even  
see stupid Elliot again...

Jan kisses her daughter on the top of the head, tears in her eyes as well. She turns to Jack.

JAN

How long now?

JACK

I don't know. I've never been in a  
nuclear war before. It could be any  
time...

Jan rests her head against Jack's shoulder sadly.

JAN

I love you, Jack.

Jack smiles, putting his arm around her tightly.

JACK

I love you, too.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN ON:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Dawn breaks on Fairvale to find the town nearly demolished in the frenzy of the night before. Air raid siren still wailing, Main Street is littered with glass from broken shop windows and debris from smashed cars. Bob Martin is busy pounding his Corvette into scrap with a large sledgehammer.

A shiny new Cadillac cruises slowly down the street, Clyde Ford behind the wheel. Mouth agape, he surveys the damage, unable to believe his eyes. He slams on the brakes as a naked 60 year old man runs into the street, screaming.

CLYDE

Holy shit!

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

The Cadillac reaches the Town Square, where Mayor Lancaster and the city council are still pounding weakly on the shelter door. Climbing out of his car, Clyde hurries over to him.

CLYDE

Harlan, what's going on? Was there  
an earthquake?

LANCASTER

(voice hoarse)

The bombs! The bombs are coming.  
The Russians destroyed New York.

Clyde shakes his head, looking at Lancaster as though he's  
lost his mind.

CLYDE

What are you talking about? The  
Russians haven't attacked New York -  
or anyplace else, for that matter.

COUNCILMAN #1

But we saw the explosion. We saw  
the bomb hit the decal factory!

CLYDE

(laughs)

If an A-bomb hit the factory  
there'd be nothing left of this  
town.

Councilman #2 feels the top of his head gingerly.

COUNCILMAN #2

It had to be the bomb. Look - my  
hair is falling out! I have  
radiation poisoning!

LANCASTER

(sighs)

You've been losing your hair since  
you were fifteen, Mel.

Unable to contain himself, Clyde bursts into gales of  
laughter as Lancaster slowly turns and walks across the  
street to his office. Townspeople begin to gather up their  
belongings and head home while Clyde rolls on the ground in  
hysterics, tears streaming down his cheeks. Lancaster emerges  
from his office carrying a shotgun. Taking careful aim he  
pulls the trigger - blowing the air raid siren from the top  
of its pole.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY BOMB SHELTER - DAY

Jack stands at the top of the steps, about to open the shelter door. Jan and Carol look up at him nervously.

JAN

Jack, you can't go outside! We don't know what it's like...

JACK

I don't think anything happened. If the bomb dropped I'm sure we'd have felt the impact.

He opens the door, light streaming in as he climbs out of the shelter.

EXT. RAMSAY HOUSE - BACK YARD

Resealing the lid, Jack looks around, surprised to see everything intact, unchanged. He moves cautiously to the sliding glass door, stepping into the house.

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Jack enters the living room. The TV still on, we see the empty KBOB news desk onscreen. Confused, Jack turns the channels - all of which play their regular programming. He stops on a football game, the Giants playing, live, from New York. A grimace spreads across his face as he drops onto the couch numbly.

JACK

Oooops.

CUT TO:

INT. TOMMY IRVING'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

Tommy Irving's parents fling open the basement door, looking as though they were caught in the riot downtown all night. MR. IRVING calls out uncertainly.

MR. IRVING

Tommy? Are you down there?

Light pours into the room through the open doorway, revealing Elliot sleeping contentedly with Carrie Dunbar - and all the other girls - now cuddled close to him.

The football players all lay asleep around Dwight, the nudist magazine spread open on his chest.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS ROOM - DAY

Jack enters the news room, followed by Walter. He steps in front of the camera, smiling weakly.

JACK

Uh, hello everyone. I'd like to announce that this has all been a false alarm. No missiles were launched by the Russians at America. We're all safe. We regret any inconvenience this may have caused...

(thinks)

... And remember to tune in tonight for an all new episode of 'Name That Wood' at seven-thirty.

Walter turns off the camera before stepping to the Teletype machines.

WALTER

It looks like you blew a fuse or something. Why were you using this outlet - you knew it wasn't stable.

JACK

I didn't know that! I thought you fixed it!

WALTER

All I did was jerry-rig it. I'm no electrician.

Jack groans in exasperation as he unplugs the hotplate from the rewired outlet. Taking a box of fuses from the desk drawer, he steps to the fuse box, replacing the blown fuse with a new one. He hits the breaker switch, the Teletypes springing to life once again.

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the A.P. Teletype machine:

A.P. - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28 - SOVIET UNION LAUNCHES ATTACK ON NEW

The rest of the message is typed:

DISSIDENT GROUPS IN EAST BERLIN. SECURITY FORCES AT THE  
BERLIN WALL ARE INCREASED.

INT. JACK AND WALTER

read the message, Jack slumping against the desk dejectedly.

JACK

Great. We're dead.

WALTER

It was an honest mistake. It could  
have happened to anyone who hadn't  
slept for four days because his  
wife kicked him out of the house so  
he spent all his time at work where  
he stayed on the air 24 hours a day  
and...

CUT TO:

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the U.P.I. Teletype machine as it types:

U.P.I. - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28 - RUSSIA AGREES TO REMOVE ALL  
MISSILES FROM CUBA. NAVAL QUARANTINE ENDS.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

The theme from 'A Summer Place' plays once again as  
businesses along Main Street clean up after the rioting. A  
street-sweeper rumbles along, clearing the rubble from the  
roads as shop owners sweep off the sidewalks.

EXT. BOB'S GROCERY

The grocery Clerk backs a car out of the front window of the  
market.

EXT. BOB'S SAVINGS AND LOAN

Bob Martin tearfully tries to reassemble his Corvette, not  
having much luck.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE

Crazy Clinton saunters along casually - reaching through the broken front window of the liquor store and grabbing a couple bottles of whiskey. He slips them beneath his coat and continues on his way, whistling happily.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

Mayor Lancaster slaps a 'CONDEMNED' sign on the door of the community shelter. The music comes to an end as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INSERT - TELETYPE MACHINE

CLOSE on the A.P. Teletype machine as it types:

A.P. - OCTOBER 29, 1962 - NAVAL QUARANTINE OF CUBA OVER, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT RETURNS TO BUSINESS AS USUAL.

AT THE REQUEST OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT THE U.S. PLEDGES TO SEND WEAPONS TO HELP IN THE CONTINUING BORDER WAR BETWEEN INDIA AND RED CHINA.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Monday. Elliot and Dwight move through the cafeteria, lunch trays in hand as they look for a seat.

ELLIOT

... So I've been thinking - maybe the Peace Corps isn't for me after all. I've read National Geographic, the people in Kenya seem pretty happy without the American way of life. What do they need supermarkets and bomb shelters for, anyway?

They take a seat - Elliot smiling and waving to Carrie Dunbar across the room. She waves back.

DWIGHT

I think I'm going to enlist in the Marines. Be a Green Beret or something.

Elliot looks to Dwight, laughing in disbelief.



ELLIOT

That's crazy. You're not the type.

DWIGHT

I mean it. I want to get stationed someplace safer. Somewhere so remote they've never even heard of atomic bombs. My dad says they're sending advisors to someplace called Vietnam. The whole country is a jungle. Maybe I'll luck out and get sent there.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - JACK'S OFFICE - DAY

Jack sits behind his desk, smiling pleasantly as Bob Martin stands before him. Bob fidgets nervously, trying to sound as humble as possible.

BOB

... So you see, Jack, with the money that was taken from the Savings and Loan, and the number of claims filed to my insurance company since yesterday, I'm in a real financial bind.

JACK

Look, Bob, I know the mortgage is due today, but I can't pay it. I just don't have the money.

Bob leans forward, hands on Jack's desk, a desperate look on his face.

BOB

How much can you give me? I don't want this station. The way it loses money it's the last thing I need... I'll take half and call it even.

They both turn as Walter bursts into the office breathlessly.

WALTER

Jack - you won't believe what just came up on the tickers.

JACK

(warily)

Do I want to hear this?

WALTER

Governor Brown just declared  
Fairvale a disaster area.

JACK

Great. I'm so proud.

WALTER

Don't you get it? We qualify for  
federal aid. Everything will be  
refinanced and rebuilt - the town  
will look better than new...

(laughs)

You could end up a hero for all we  
know!

Jack stares at Walter, unbelieving. Slowly he begins to  
smile, then chuckle, finally breaking into gales of laughter.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jack sits at the kitchen table, Carol beside him as Jan  
serves dinner. She places a steak dinner in front of Jack,  
giving him a kiss on the ear.

JACK

Looks great, honey.

CAROL

I can hardly wait to smother it  
with ketchup.

JAN

(gives Carol a look)

Thank you, dear.

Jack looks across the table to Elliot's seat, which is empty.  
He calls into the living room.

JACK

Elliot! Off the phone. You can talk  
after dinner.

Through the doorway we see Elliot draped over a chair in the  
living room, talking on the phone. He motions to his dad that  
he's wrapping it up.

JACK (CONT'D)

How was school today, Carol?

CAROL

Rotten! I hate my teachers and I hate the kids! It's not fair - why couldn't the school have blown up instead of the decal factory?

JACK

The usual, eh?

Elliot takes his seat at the table, a big grin on his face.

ELLIOT

I won't be home for dinner tomorrow night, mom.

JAN

(grins)

Why? Was that a girl you were talking to on the phone?

ELLIOT

It was Carrie Dunbar. She invited me to dinner with her family.

Jack laughs, teasing Elliot.

JACK

Uh-oh, going to meet the folks, huh? Must be pretty serious. What are you going to wear?

Elliot squirms in his seat, smiling weakly.

ELLIOT

She said it's casual.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMSAY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack turns down his bed, whistling the theme from 'A Summer Place' as Jan steps out of the bathroom. Wearing a sexy negligee, she stands in the doorway seductively, the light silhouetting her body beneath the lace.

JAN

So, Jack...

Jack turns, perking up as he watches Jan glide across the room to her bed, where she reclines enticingly.

JACK

Yes, dear?

JAN  
How was work today?

Jack laughs, stepping to the bed and laying next to her. He kisses her as he speaks.

JACK  
Work was fine. We're starting a new series of shows to spark local interest, like 'Rebuilding With Bill'...

(kisses her neck)  
... And I hired Biff Barney to read the news. He seems to like it more than I do, and it keeps him away from anything explosive...

(Jan laughs - he kisses her shoulder)  
... And I worked out a deal with Bob so I can keep the station after all.

Laying back with her eyes closed, Jan suddenly sits up, confused.

JAN  
Keep the station? Why wouldn't you be able to keep the station?

JACK  
No reason. Goodnight, dear.

He gives her a peck on the cheek before climbing into his own bed, turning off the light. Jan watches him, smiling coyly.

JAN  
You're going to sleep now?

JACK  
Mmmmmmmmm-hmmmmmm. I have a lot of catching up to do.

He closes his eyes. Jan stops smiling.

JAN  
Jack Ramsay, if you think you're going to sleep...

Jack begins to snore. Angry, Jan climbs out of bed, grabbing the vacuum cleaner. She drags it over to Jack's bed, flipping it on and pressing the hose against his cheek. There is a loud sucking noise as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMSAY HOUSE - NIGHT

Outside the house, we slowly PAN up into the hills. The night is cold and dark, wind rustling through the trees.

INT. GUN CLUB BOMB SHELTER

The shelter is overcrowded, the gun clubbers grumbling angrily.

BILL

Who cut the cheese?

BO

In here two days and we're out of beer already.

BARNEY

Buford's damn dogs are peeing in the corner.

BO

I knew we shouldn't have given them that beer...

Earl sits in a corner, the batteries in his flashlight slowly dying as he tries to pick up a signal on the radio.

BARNEY

Anything on the radio yet, Earl?

EARL

Nothing. It can't pick up anything through the steel and concrete.

BO

So how long do we have to stay down here, anyway?

Earl takes a government pamphlet from his hunting vest, shining the fading flashlight beam onto the pages. He looks to Bo grimly.

EARL

Six months.

The flashlight blinks out, leaving the shelter in pitch blackness.

**THE END**