

COLD OPEN

EXT. AMERICAN WASTELANDS - EVENING

The hilly landscape is burnt, scarred, and completely dead. Swirling black clouds hang in the sky and block out the sun. A destroyed city is on the horizon. A road sign barely hangs onto its metal supports. It reads "WELCOME TO OHIO" with the word "ARMAGEDDON" spray painted over it.

A CARAVAN marches by on foot along the cracked highway. A dozen PRISONERS hoist a golden FORD WINDSTAR on long bars, like they're transporting Cleopatra. Hundreds more captives trail behind them, several groups of them pulling along trucks and cars full of supplies. A PLATOON of leather-clad BANDITS guard them on either side -- armed with rifles.

They look like they're right out of MAD MAX. The bandit leader, SPIKE FACE, leads the caravan on foot.

SPIKE FACE

Stop! Stop! Full stop! Hold here!

The long caravan of prisoners grinds to a halt. Among them is DONALD FISK, 33. He drops the cable and sighs.

SPIKE FACE (CONT'D)

Lord Dalgarr has been kind and merciful to his subjects! But his kindness has not been returned!

DONALD

(whispering)

I heard his real name is Craig.

SPIKE FACE

It is time that proper appreciation was expressed to our glorious leader!

Spike Face signals to his men. They each produce stacks of paper and distribute it among the rows of prisoners. Donald is passed a sheet of paper and examines it a beat.

DONALD

Where'd you guys get a dot matrix printer?

GUARD

Prisoner! Be silent!

DONALD  
 Sorry! All hail Lord Dalgarr!

Donald jumps back, his eyes on the guard's gun trained on him. He takes a closer look, quizzical.

SPIKE FACE  
 Let us begin! You all read the parts marked "prisoners," got it?

DONALD  
 (eyeing the gun)  
 Where's the ammo clip...?

SPIKE FACE  
 (reading)  
 "Who was it that saved you from the harsh realities of this world ravaged by war and destruction?"

ALL PRISONERS  
 "It was no other but Lord Dalgarr the Brave. He rescued us. We don't mind the slave labor at all. Actually, it's a pleasure. That's how much we love Lord Dalgarr."

Donald is distracted. He scans over every guard. All the guns have an empty slot where an ammo clip should be.

DONALD  
 None of their guns have any ammo...

SPIKE FACE  
 "If there was only one man who you would choose to rule this broken nation, who would it be?"

ALL PRISONERS  
 "Obviously it would be Lord Dalgarr. That's a no brainer--"

DONALD  
 NONE OF THEIR GUNS HAVE ANY  
 BULLETS! RUN! EVERYONE RUN!

Donald sprints away from the caravan. He signals for the other prisoners to follow him. No one moves.

DONALD (CONT'D)  
 ...Guys?

GUARD  
 Prisoner! Get back in line!

The guards raise their guns, training them across the line of prisoners. Beat. The prisoners look back at their scripts.

ALL PRISONERS

"That's a no brainer. Lord Dalgarr can do anything he sets his mind to."

Donald reacts to the guard approaching him with his gun fixed right on him. He hesitates -- bolting for the far away hills, running like all hell away from the caravan.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AMERICAN WASTELANDS - MORNING

Donald crosses through the charred terrain, tired and beaten.

DONALD

Current situation... not preferable...

Donald stumbles for a few more steps and drops to his knees in defeat. After a beat, he spots something in the distance--

A patched-together steel wall, twenty feet high surrounding an area a few miles wide. The tops of buildings behind it.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Huh?

Donald pulls himself to his feet with some struggle. He rushes towards the wall.

EXT. OUTSIDE TOWN WALL, GATE - LATER

Donald walks towards the gate. The wall is imposing, pieced together from scraps, topped with long spikes.

DONALD

(calling out)

Hello? Is someone there? Hello?!

Donald spots a camera tracking his movement. He waves.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Hi. What's going on? I'm Don, by the way. How are you?

(waits, no response)

I've gotten all my zombie vaccinations. I tested negative for the Legacy Virus...

(MORE)

DONALD (CONT'D)  
(searching)  
I'm not a cyborg...

A loudspeaker crackles as it is switched on.

VOICE (O.S.)  
How did you get here?

DONALD  
Uh, well. I was a prisoner of Lord Dalgarr, and I managed to escape, so I kept running. And here I am.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Did you say Lord Dalgarr?

DONALD  
Why? Do you know him?

A loud metallic CLANK from the gate. Gears grind as they turn -- the gate raises slowly. Donald reacts with disbelief at the appearance of lush, fresh-cut grass on the other side.

Gate fully raised, Donald approaches the other side with skepticism. He passes through the door -- agape at:

A picturesque American small town straight out of a Norman Rockwell painting. Trees, KIDS playing, a MAIN STREET with shops and offices. And TOWNSFOLK, carrying on as normal.

DONALD (CONT'D)  
No way...

SHERIFF BYRON JOWERS, late 50's, a big man with a brush moustache, walks up beside Donald. He's wearing a perfectly pressed tan uniform and wide brim hat.

JOWERS  
Donald, I'm Sheriff Byron Jowers.

Donald reaches out for a handshake.

JOWERS (CONT'D)  
Welcome to Bliss, Ohio.

Absently, Donald takes the man's hand and shakes it, still occupied with his new surroundings.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONEEXT. BLISS, FRONT GATE - MORNING

Donald turns to Sheriff Jowers. He takes in the idyllic small town atmosphere of Bliss.

DONALD

Wow, this is... this is beautiful.  
One small thing, though. All of  
this doesn't really match up...

He points to beyond the gate -- the blackened post-nuclear wasteland.

DONALD (CONT'D)

...to THIS! How is this possible?!

Jowers laughs genially and pats Donald on the back.

JOWERS

I know what you're thinking -- this  
is too good to be true.

Donald grabs Jowers by both arms, deadly serious.

DONALD

Is this the Matrix? Are you an  
agent?

JOWERS

(laughs)

Nope. We're just good, honest,  
hardworking folk finding a way to  
carry on in hard times. C'mon.  
Let me show you around, Donald.

Jowers leads him on. Donald follows, with hesitation.

EXT. BLISS, MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Donald follows Jowers, glaring with suspicion at the various TOWNSPEOPLE going about their days. They pass a barber shop. FRED THE BARBER sticks his head out from the store window.

FRED

Howdy stranger!

Startled, Donald jumps away and covers his head.

DONALD

I DON'T HAVE ANY BATTERIES!

Panting, Donald remembers where he is. Everyone stares.

DONALD (CONT'D)  
 Sorry about that. Force of habit  
 (beat)  
 Howdy there ... stranger.

FRED  
 (chuckling)  
 You must not be from around here!

A beat. Donald looks down at his tattered clothing.

DONALD  
 Yeah.

FRED  
 Well, you know what they say -- a  
 stranger is just a friend you  
 haven't met yet!

Donald nods slowly as he steps away from Fred, who is still grinning at him. He joins Jowers several feet ahead.

DONALD  
 Is that guy autistic? I don't  
 understand...

JOWERS  
 Just being friendly. Everyone's  
 friendly here, Donald.

DALE THE ICE CREAM MAN stands outside his shop as Jowers and Donald pass.

DALE  
 Oh, a new neighbor! Would you  
 like some ice cream?

Donald stops. He turns to Jowers in amazement.

DONALD  
 You have ice cream?

JOWERS  
 We have everything anyone would  
 ever want.

Dale chuckles, returning to his shop. He comes back out with an ice cream cone and hands it to Donald. Donald gazes out in astonishment.

DONALD  
 Holy shit...

Almost hesitating, Donald slowly puts his mouth up to the ice cream. He licks. Savors the taste.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

Fiendishly, Donald goes back in, demolishing the cone, eating as fast as he can. Tears stream down his face.

JOWERS

Are you crying?

DONALD

(mouth full)

I'm sorry -- I just never thought I would ever eat ice cream again!

DALE

And there's a lot more where that came from!

In pure bliss, Donald walks to the middle of the street, arms outstretched. He's spinning.

DONALD

I can't believe it! This place is amazing!

He runs over to a WOMAN pushing a stroller.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Look at this! It's a fucking baby! When's the last time anyone saw a fucking baby?! It would otherwise be completely irresponsible, but look at it! Wow!

Donald rushes back over to Jowers, he grabs him for a tight embrace and releases him.

DONALD (CONT'D)

This place... this place is perfect!

Donald jumps over to a nearby lamp post in an attempt to swing from it, Singin' in the Rain-style. He grabs it and it TEARS IN HALF. Donald and the top half of the lamp post hit the ground with a THUD.

DONALD (CONT'D)

(collecting himself)

Is this made out of styrofoam...?

Jowers panics. He grabs Donald, helps him up.

JOWERS

You got some strong arms on you,  
huh? Let's get you cleaned up.  
Nothing to see here!

Jowers hurries Donald away as he tries to look back.

INT. BLISS SHERIFF'S OFFICE - LATER

A single-room sheriff's office. Jail cells occupy a far wall. A pair of desks in the center. Jowers hands Donald a cup of coffee.

JOWERS

I know you have a lot of questions.

DONALD

Well, yeah. How does this even  
exist? How do you have food?  
Power? This shouldn't exist.

Jowers nods over to a big 80's style tube box TV set near the wall. He opens a desk drawer and retrieves a VHS cassette.

JOWERS

Here. You should watch this.

Jowers walks over to the TV, loading the cassette in the VCR. He dims the lights.

-- The screen goes black. A video title card fades in as pleasant music plays: "BLISS, OHIO WELCOMES YOU!" Fade to a montage of Americana: flags, baseball, families, fighter jets, eagles...

VIDEO NARRATOR

America! The greatest country on  
Earth.

-- A softball game plays on screen. Everything dissolves into dust as a mushroom cloud erupts in the background.

VIDEO NARRATOR (CONT'D)

At least it was until the year  
2018. Looks like nuclear  
proliferation was a bad idea after  
all!

-- A graphic comparing Earth's prewar population with the estimated current population, dramatically lower.

VIDEO NARRATOR (CONT'D)  
 But just because America and most  
 of Earth's population is dead  
 doesn't mean the American Dream has  
 to be!

-- An American flag is pulled slowly up a flag pole. As it  
 reaches the top, Bliss is revealed.

VIDEO NARRATOR (CONT'D)  
 Here in Bliss, Ohio -- the American  
 Dream lives on -- in you!

-- Montage of Bliss's pig, animal, crop, and windmill farms.  
 Citizens smiling and going about their daily business --  
 fairs, parades, picnics. Good old fashioned American fun.

VIDEO NARRATOR (CONT'D)  
 A completely self-sustaining  
 community that harkens back to a  
 day when things were simpler!

-- Several before / after shots of Bliss going from abandoned  
 town to vibrant community.

VIDEO NARRATOR (CONT'D)  
 Bliss was founded in 2021. Seeking  
 refuge from the harsh wasteland, we  
 worked hard to reinvigorate and  
 bring back to life an old town. And  
 with the help of Bliss's Wall of  
 Safety, our citizens can live in  
 safety without worry of the horrors  
 outside.

-- A map of the former United States fades in. The lines are  
 completely redrawn between Warlords and competing factions.  
 The entire west coast is submerged under water. A super-fast  
 scroll lists the many present dangers.

VIDEO NARRATOR (CONT'D)  
 So enjoy your stay in Bliss!  
 "Don't ask questions -- just let it  
 happen!"

-- The video ends. In small print the end card reads  
 "COPYRIGHT 2025 THE FOUNDERS." Jowers raises the lights.

JOWERS  
 There. I hope that answered all of  
 your questions.

Jowers approaches him, leering over.

JOWERS (CONT'D)

Donald, this town means a lot to me. And I will do anything in my power to preserve it and it's safety. Do you understand?

DONALD

You're suddenly very threatening.

The door swings open. EMILY JOWERS, 28, enters -- the personification of a ray of sunshine. Donald rockets up.

EMILY

Well, hi there!

JOWERS

Donald, this is my daughter, Emily. She's with the New Neighbors Office. She'll be helping you get acquainted.

DONALD

Oh. Hi. Yes. Hello. Good. I'm sure she will. Help me get acquainted, that is. With the town. Not with her--

JOWERS

You can stop talking.

DONALD

Understood.

Emily motions for Donald to follow her out the front door.

EXT. BLISS, MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Donald and Emily walk down the street. Donald is making attempts to appear cool and casual.

DONALD

So. What brought you to Bliss?

EMILY

Besides the nuclear war?

DONALD

Yes. Besides that.

EMILY

My dad and I came here a few years ago, I think. Everything's a little hazy before that.

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

But now it's our home. And what a great place it is!

They pass by an overweight man in a rumpled business suit, GARY, sitting on a bench. He's snapped.

GARY

Not right. It's -- it's not right...

Emily keeps walking. Donald stops.

DONALD

Are you okay?

GARY

It's not right, okay?!

DONALD

What isn't right? What's the matter with him?

EMILY

Gary's been having problems. We should just keep going.

DONALD

Nothing affects your mood, huh?

EMILY

Why should it?

As they walk, Donald sees that the broken lamp post has been replaced WITH A NEW ONE. He reacts.

INT. NEW NEIGHBOR OFFICE, SCREENING ROOM - LATER

Donald sits up in his chair as Emily enters the room.

EMILY

Great news! You've passed your screening and you're approved to become a citizen of Bliss.

DONALD

Oh, that's awesome! Great! But what would happen if I didn't pass?

EMILY

Pardon?

DONALD

What if I failed the test?

Emily stares blankly a beat.

EMILY

We've also placed you in a career.  
You're going to be a Soda Jerk at  
Roth's Drug Store!

She's excited. He's not.

DONALD

Oh, but I used to be a vet tech.  
Is there anything like that  
available?

EMILY

We don't need a vet tech. We need  
a soda jerk. That's what the  
computer says.

DONALD

There's a computer?

EMILY

Yep.

DONALD

And it tells people what jobs they  
should do?

EMILY

Exactly.

DONALD

Who made the computer?

EMILY

The computer has always been here.

DONALD

It's not the Ark of the Covenant.  
Someone had to have made it.

EMILY

Well, you can report to the drug  
store tomorrow morning. I really  
should be heading out.

She goes for the door. Donald stands.

DONALD

Wait. Do you think maybe you'd  
want to get a bite to eat or  
something later? Get to know each  
other a little better?

EMILY  
Why would we do that?

DONALD  
You know, forget I said anything.

Emily shrugs. She continues out the door.

INT. ROTH'S DRUG STORE, COUNTER - AFTERNOON

Dressed in a white shirt, bow tie, paper hat, and apron, Donald wipes the counter clean with a rag. A LONE MAN, mid-50's, sits at far end of the counter. The "door opening" bell rings. A jovial man, ELMER, strolls in.

ELMER  
Howdy there, stranger! You must not be from around here!

Elmer reaches out a hand as he takes a seat at the counter. Donald shakes it.

DONALD  
Hey, name's Don. Nice to meet ya.

ELMER  
Well, you know what they say! A stranger is just a friend you haven't met yet!

Donald reacts.

DONALD  
It's so weird. I could have sworn that everything you just said to me has been said by someone else here.

ELMER  
Nope. Must be imagining it.

GUS, a farmer, comes through the front door and takes a seat at the counter a few seats away from Elmer.

GUS  
Hey there Elmer.  
(to Donald)  
Oh, howdy there stranger!

DONALD  
Uh. Hey.

GUS  
 You must not be from around here.  
 You know what they say--

ELMER  
 (teeth clenched)  
 Abort! Abort!

DONALD  
 Wait. What'd you say?

GUS  
 Hey! You know what! I just  
 forgot! My pigs need their  
 gizzards cleaned.

ELMER  
 Oh! Let me help you with that!

The two men nod to Donald as they excuse themselves from the counter. They walk briskly out the door.

DONALD  
 Pigs don't have gizzards...

The man at the counter gets up, clearing his throat as he walks out the drug store. Donald walks over to the man's spot at the -- a note has been left there, folded up:

"MEET ME AT THE BEACON. AT YOUR CONVENIENCE."

He reads the note, now even more confused. He looks out the window, searching for a sign of the man outside the store.

His attention is diverted by a BOY, about 11, walking past with a few other KIDS.

DONALD (CONT'D)  
 Wait a second...

Donald rushes out from behind the counter to the door.

EXT. BLISS, ROTH'S DRUG STORE - CONTINUOUS

Donald bursts out through the front door, jogging a few steps to see where the boy went. He stops, seeing no sign of him. Beat. Donald looks through the front window at Elmer and Gus sitting at the counter. He frowns. Turning around, he spots a sign: "BLISS BEACON NEWSPAPER OFFICE."

He marches across the street towards the office.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Donald steps inside the small newspaper office. The place is littered with garbage and loose papers. Several howling cats populate the room.

DONALD

Hello?

Donald steps in further, trying to avoid the mess on the floor.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Is anyone here?

The man from the counter, D.C. MULLIGAN, 55, wild hair and beard, unkempt, a cat in his arms steps into the doorway.

MULLIGAN

You came. I knew you'd come.

DONALD

Yeah, you left me a note asking me to.

MULLIGAN

Exactly. The name's D.C. Mulligan. I run the newspaper here.

Mulligan swipes a newspaper from off the cluttered desk. He hands it to Donald.

MULLIGAN (CONT'D)

Read this. Tell me what kinds of stories you see.

Donald flips through the paper, scanning it.

DONALD

"Mrs. Beverly's cat comes down from tree." "Fourth of July Parade another resounding success." "Gossip section: Are the Davises building an addition onto their house?"

MULLIGAN

What are all those stories to you?

DONALD

I dunno. Normal. Kinda boring.  
Why?

MULLIGAN

"Boring." Boring is right. That's because if I talked about the stuff that was really going on here, I'd be long gone. Believe me, brother.

DONALD

(suddenly intrigued)  
What kind of stuff do you mean?

Mulligan rushes toward Donald, grabbing his shirt. He shakes him vigorously.

MULLIGAN

Don't you see?! It's all just a cover! I can't report on what's really going on -- or they'll--  
(whispering)  
--or they'll silence me.

Mulligan releases Donald.

DONALD

Who's "they?"

MULLIGAN

SHHHHH!

Mulligan goes around the room, shifting around garbage and checking the walls for bugs. He sneaks back over to Donald, leans into his ear.

MULLIGAN (CONT'D)

They are the ones responsible for this town. They've created this town to lure unsuspecting people in. If they don't go with the program, they brainwash them... or worse -- replace them with robots -- and establish a New World Order! There have to be hundreds of fake towns like this one! And once the NWO is established, they're going to use our brain matter to satiate the hunger of our demon god!

Mulligan places his index finger to his lips: "Shhh!" Beat.  
Donald turns to walk back out the door.

DONALD

Okay. Thanks anyway.

Mulligan darts over to get between Donald and the door.

MULLIGAN

No-no-no-no! Look! Wait.

DONALD

No thanks, crazy town. I'm good.

MULLIGAN

Just -- there's a town meeting tonight. Go, and you'll see what I mean. I promise.

Donald looks at Mulligan skeptically. He nods as he exits the office.

INT. TOWN HALL, MEETING ROOM - EVENING

Donald sits on a folding chair among a crowd of HUNDREDS filling the large meeting hall. MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT, TOWN COUNCIL PEOPLE, and other OFFICIALS sit at a series of long tables facing the crowd. MAYOR JAMESON HART, 51, handsome in a Mitt Romney sort of way, approaches the podium.

HART

I think we can begin the meeting, everyone. Thank you.

Donald reacts. He leans over to the PERSON next to him.

DONALD

Is that... the president?

HART

Mayor Jameson Hart presiding over the Bliss Town Council meeting. To start things off, yes, everything is in order for the Tribute next week, so that is completely taken care of. But first order of business -- we have a new neighbor, everyone. If you'll please, join me in welcoming Donald Fisk.

The audience applauds enthusiastically.

DONALD

I'm sorry. Do you mind? I just have a question.

HART

Go ahead. We're all neighbors here.

DONALD

It's just... who let you be mayor?

HART

Well, I was president. I have the most experience to lead. Don't need a computer to tell you that. Even though it was actually a computer that told me that.

DONALD

You caused a broad scale nuclear war that killed most of the Earth's population!

HART

I didn't say I was a good president.

DONALD

No one else has a problem with this?

Across the room, Fred the Barber stands.

FRED

We should support our leaders -- no matter what!

Murmurs of agreement fill the hall.

DONALD

No! We don't! You know what? Nevermind. Continue.

Donald takes his seat.

HART

Ooooookay.

Hart flashes a knowing "this guy's crazy" look to the rest of the town. The crowd laughs.

DALE

(calling out)

"Donald?" More like Daffy, right?

Everyone bursts into uproarious laughter. Donald folds his arms and sighs.

HART

Anyway. I think we'll all be happy to know that Mrs. Beverly's cat has finally been retrieved from that maple tree. Just thank Richie Taylor and those long arms of his.

Everyone applauds.

HART (CONT'D)

Also, has anyone else noticed how weird Gary's been acting lately? I hope nothing happens to him.

Choruses of agreement and discussion break out through the hall. Donald reacts -- he can take no more.

DONALD

Excuse me! Do you mind if I say something else?

The auditorium goes silent. Everyone's eyes are on Donald. Hart sighs.

HART

Whatever. Go ahead, Daffy.

DONALD

Everyone has been really nice to me since I got here. And I really appreciate it. Everyone here seems really great.

They applaud his compliment.

DONALD (CONT'D)

But I spent two years as a prisoner on the outside. And you can't just wall yourself in and shut out what's going on out there! We can't bury our heads in the sand.

Everyone is silent a long beat. Finally, Sheriff Jowers stands up from his chair and makes his way to the podium.

JOWERS

We all have to forgive our new neighbor here. When you're used to things being so bad, it can be confusing when they're so good. The outside world is a dangerous place, but Bliss is safe. We're protected, by our wall and by our community.

The audience greets Jowers with a round of applause. Donald storms out of the meeting hall.

EXT. BLISS, TOWN HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Donald descends the stone Town Hall staircase. He's a little shaken up by what's happened.

Maybe Mulligan's right. Maybe this place is crazy. Maybe everyone's a zombie! It's nightfall -- am I gonna get eaten?

KEVIN (O.S.)

Uncle Don?

Donald stops in place. He spins around to see KEVIN FISK, 11, the boy he saw earlier -- thin, geeky, standing at the top of the staircase.

DONALD

Kevin?

Donald walks up the steps.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Kevin, what are you doing here?  
Where's your mom?

KEVIN

We, uh, we got separated about a year ago. Where's my dad?

DONALD

He -- we got separated, too. Are you okay? How'd you get here?

KEVIN

I don't know. It just sort of happened. Can I come live with you, though? My foster parents are... I don't want to live with them anymore.

DONALD

Why? What's wrong with them?

KEVIN

I mean, they're nice and everything...

JUDITH, 40, looking like the perfect 1950's housewife, pushes through the Town Hall's front doors. She spots Kevin.

JUDITH

Oh! There you are! You can't just go running off like that, Michael!

KEVIN

My name is Kevin. You can't just rename me, I'm not a dog.

Harriet rubs Kevin's hair to comfort him. She locks onto Donald with distrust.

JUDITH

You shouldn't talk to strangers.

KEVIN

This is my Uncle Don. He's not a stranger.

JUDITH

Well, you know what they say, a stranger is just--

DONALD

I've heard.

WARD, 45, dressed like a golf pro, exits the town hall.

WARD

Ah! There you are, Mikey!

KEVIN

My name is Kevin! Michael's not gonna stick!

WARD

It was getting a little boring in there, huh? How about go home and throw the ball around?

Judith takes Kevin by the hand. She and Ward lead him down the steps. He turns back to Donald and mouths: "HELP ME!"

EXT. BLISS, MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Donald walks down the sidewalk from the town hall.

On his way, he spots the restored lamp post and stops. He walks over to it and touches it. He knocks -- CLANK! CLANK! He tries to shake it -- it's solid metal.

Donald eyes it skeptically a beat and continues ahead.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. ROTH'S DRUG STORE, COUNTER - AFTERNOON

Donald wipes down the counter. Kevin comes in the front door and takes a seat at the counter.

DONALD

Hey, bud. Can I get you something?

KEVIN

Will it be free?

DONALD

No.

KEVIN

No.

Donald leans in towards Kevin. He looks to see if anyone can hear.

DONALD

Are you okay living with those people? They're not touching you in weird places or anything, are they?

KEVIN

What? No. They're just... weird. They're too nice. Everyone here's so nice and I can't figure out why.

DONALD

It definitely seems like something very weird is going on in this place. I don't know what it is. But it's just too perfect. And everything seems like it's just... off.

(leaning in, whispering)

Has anyone here seemed... robotic to you?

KEVIN

In what way?

DONALD

In the way that they might be a robot.

(looking outside)

Huh. What's going on out there?

Kevin looks out at the COMMOTION OF TOWNSPEOPLE gathering outside. He shrugs and heads towards the door. Donald hesitates, following him out.

EXT. BLISS, TOWN SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

Donald and Kevin approach the LARGE CROWD gathered in the town square. Emotions are high. As Donald makes his way to the center, he finds Emily, Farmer Gus, and DOCTOR WICK, 61, standing around a sick pig laying on its side.

DONALD  
What's going on?

EMILY  
I don't know. Apparently, Farmer Gus was making a delivery and the pig just sort of stopped moving.

Donald walks up to the pig. He crouches down to take a closer look.

GUS  
Maybe it's something with its gizzards.

DONALD  
Pigs don't have gizzards.

The pig wheezes and coughs. The crowd looks on as Donald places an ear against its chest. Worried murmurs.

DONALD (CONT'D)  
Do we have any antibiotics here?

WICK  
Well, it's not like I carry them around on me.

DONALD  
But the town has them?

WICK  
Yeah, I guess so.  
(beat)  
What are the thing that you said?

Donald stands up.

DONALD  
He has a respiratory infection.  
Give him antibiotics and some rest  
and he'll be fine.

GUS

Really? Wow! Thanks! How does a soda jerk know so much about pigs, anyhow?

DONALD

I'm not a soda jerk. I'm a veterinarian. Well, almost. The school I got into exploded.

WICK

He's a much better vet than he is a soda jerk. Maybe... the computer can be wrong sometimes...?

Worried murmurs and hushed whispers throughout the crowd. Beat. Jowers cuts through the crowd of people.

JOWERS

Donald! You need to come with me.

Jowers grasps Donald by the arm and cuffs him. The crowd gasps.

JOWERS (CONT'D)

Donald here has been selling our secrets to Lord Dalgarr!

Astonished gasps and screams from the crowd. Urgent, worried whispers. Donald can't believe what he's hearing.

DONALD

Lord Dalgarr? Wait, you mean Craig?

Jowers shoves Donald along, out from the town square.

JOWERS

He might be a friend to animals, but not to humans, apparently.

FRED

Friend to animals! Enemy to humans!

TOWNSPEOPLE

(chanting)

Friend to animals! Enemy to humans! Friend to animals! Enemy to humans! Friend to animals! Enemy to humans!

As Donald is led away, he and Kevin exchange fearful glances.

INT. BLISS SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Donald sits in his jail cell, looking absolutely defeated. Jowers is at his desk, browsing an old, pre-bomb pornographic magazine.

DONALD

What do you got there? Juggs?  
Good pick...

Jowers gets up from his desk and walks over to the bathroom. Donald sighs. He is plucked in the head by something. He clutches his forehead, seeing a small pebble that has hit the floor.

MULLIGAN (O.S.)

Psst! Out here!

Donald looks up at the barred window above him. He looks over at Jowers and carefully stands and steps onto his bunk to peer out the window--

Mulligan stands in the alley at the other side with a hand full of pebbles.

MULLIGAN (CONT'D)

It took me like twenty minutes to  
make one in.

DONALD

(whispering)  
What are you doing here?

MULLIGAN

I'm busting you out of the clink --  
you're welcome, by the way. What  
did I tell you about telling these  
people the truth? And now you're  
paying the price for it.

Mulligan picks up a nearby duffel bag.

MULLIGAN (CONT'D)

I got you a rock hammer and a  
poster of Rita Hayworth!

DONALD

Oh, like The Shawshank Redemption?

MULLIGAN

The what?

DONALD

Look, I'm not gonna be able to bust out of here like that! I have another plan! They're going to deliver me to Lord Dalgarr tomorrow. I need your help--

MULLIGAN

Lord Dalgarr? I'm not messing with that guy!

DONALD

No, it's okay! None of his guys have any bullets in their--

CREEK! The sheriff's office door opens.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Shit! Somebody's coming!

Donald collapses immediately to lie down on his bed. He sees Emily make her way to his cell. He sits up.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Oh. Hey. What brings you here?

EMILY

I just wanted you to know that I believe you. I don't think you sold any of our secrets to anyone.

DONALD

So you're going to tell your dad not to deliver me to Lord Dalgarr? Just wait for him, he'll be out in a minute.

EMILY

No, I can't do that. This town has to stick together. We need to stand behind my dad.

DONALD

Why?

Emily doesn't know how to process this.

DONALD (CONT'D)

I notice you're having trouble with "why" questions.

EMILY

I don't know what you mean.

DONALD

Why don't you know what I mean?

Emily's confused again.

DONALD (CONT'D)

See! That's what I'm talking about!

EMILY

I'm sorry. I was really looking forward to getting to know you.

DONALD

Oh. Really? Me too. I thought we really could have had something special, actually.

EMILY

(oblivious)

What do you mean?

DONALD

Oh. Uh. You know...

EMILY

Oh, you mean like we would have sex.

DONALD

Among other things.

EMILY

Oh, no thank you. I'm not sexually attracted to you at all.

DONALD

Oh. Okay.

EMILY

It's just that I look at you and I feel nothing.

DONALD

I don't remember asking for an explanation.

EMILY

But that doesn't mean we can't be great friends.

DONALD

I'm pretty sure it does mean that, actually.

EMILY

Listen. I better go. I'll see you tomorrow though, okay?

Emily leaves a defeated Donald in his jail cell.

MULLIGAN (O.S.)

That was very awkward to listen to.

EXT. BLISS, TOWN WALL - MORNING

Jowers manhandles Donald, pulling him along the field as they approach the town's front gate.

DONALD

I think this whole thing is a tad extreme, don't you?

JOWERS

I will not let you endanger this town! These people don't need to worry any more than they do. You've been poisoning this town ever since you got here. We don't need people like you.

The two arrive at the gate. Jowers approaches the mechanism.

JOWERS (CONT'D)

I'm sounding the alarm. I want everyone here to see this.

Jowers hits a button on the wall's gate mechanism. After a beat, sirens blare from inside of town, all over.

JOWERS (CONT'D)

We don't need people with ideas like yours disrupting the order of things here. Bringing radical ideas, questioning the computer -- we're a simple people here, Donald. And we need to keep it simple.

DONALD

And you made up this whole thing just to get rid of me?

JOWERS

We need solidarity in this town. You are from the outside. That's where you belong.

A mass of hundreds of townsfolk approach the wall.

JOWERS (CONT'D)

And I'm gonna tell these fine citizens that if we don't hand you back to Dalgarr, the town will be destroyed.

The crowd of TOWNSFOLK forms around the gate. Mayor Hart steps to the front.

HART

Are you sure about this, Byron?

JOWERS

Everything is under control, everyone. No need to worry. I just wanted everyone to see this.

Jowers pulls the lever to open the gate. It cranks open to reveal Dalgarr's gold Ford Windstar with a compliment of a DOZEN GUARDS, including Spike Face. Gasps and screams overtake the onlooking crowd.

JOWERS (CONT'D)

Our new neighbor Donald recently escaped from Lord Dalgarr and has been acting as a spy for him. But Dalgarr says that if I don't turn him over, he'll destroy this whole town!

The crowd panics. Jowers raises a hand to quiet them down.

JOWERS (CONT'D)

I think this should be a lesson to us all about the importance of being safe and secure. And in Bliss, we have all the safety and security we need!

Thunderous applause from the crowd. Donald reacts. He locks eyes with Kevin. Spike Face approaches. He's reading lines off the palm of his hand.

SPIKE FACE

Yes. That's right. Hand over our prisoner or else we will shoot our guns at your town!

Donald looks from Spike Face to Jowers.

DONALD

Wait! Hold on. The only reason I was able to escape from these guys was because I was reasonably sure that their guns didn't have any ammo. And I am still reasonably sure of that. You all have to believe me!

SPIKE FACE

Lies! Each of our guns has hundreds of REAL BULLETS that will kill you!

Donald looks among members of the crowd for his emotional appeal.

DONALD

C'mon! You gotta believe me. If they had bullets, why wouldn't they just take the town by force anyway? What would stop them? It's much better in here than out there. It doesn't make any sense.

(beat)

Look. I know we all got off on the wrong foot. But what happened to being neighbors? About caring about your community? Do me a solid here.

JOWERS

I know the people of this town. They don't like change!

DONALD

Well, maybe that can change. And if you can change... and I can change... everybody can change!

(beat)

Okay, granted, that was from Rocky Four, but it was true in the eighties and it's true today.

Farmer Gus comes forward.

GUS

Well, my pig is feeling a lot better already! It should only be a few days until it's healthy enough to be slaughtered and eaten!

Murmurs of agreement and approval. Mulligan steps out to the front of the crowd.

MULLIGAN

And listen to this newspaper story  
he wrote about the town council  
meeting!

(reading)

"Bliss is a quaint hamlet where  
people know what they like and  
stick to it. The people are  
friendly and considerate. I can  
think of no greater glory than to  
bask in a life of comfort and  
friendship with these amazing  
people."

HART

Daffy, you wrote that?

DONALD

(lying)

Sure. Yep. That was all me.

Kevin rushes to Donald's side.

KEVIN

If you shoot my Uncle Don, you have  
to shoot me, too! He's the only  
family I have left.

Donald pats Kevin on the shoulder approvingly.

HARRIET

But Michael, you have a family--

KEVIN

Kevin! How many times are we going  
to go through this? KE-VIN!

HART

Well, you know what? I say we  
stand with Daffy. He seems pretty  
sure of himself on this. So, what  
the heck, right?

JOWERS

No! We can't afford to take this  
risk. We'll lose everything.  
These men are dangerous. Think of  
what you're throwing away!

Donald turns to Spike Face and his men.

DONALD

Do it. Shoot me. Kill me with  
your loaded guns. Come on.

Spike Face and others exchange worried glances. Beat. They all make a run for it to the outside wastelands. They speed past the Ford Windstar sitting outside the town.

A passenger door slides open. A slovenly man in sweat pants, CRAIG, climbs out. He's infuriated.

CRAIG

Hey! Where are you going?! Hey,  
fuck you, you guys! Fuck! You!

Hart turns to Donald.

HART

Hey! Three cheers for Daffy!

The crowd shouts praise for Donald.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(chanting)

Friend of animal! Friend of human!

TOWNSPEOPLE (CONT'D)

Friend of animal! Friend of human!  
Friend of animal! Friend of human!

Out of the corner of Donald's eye, he spots an angry Jowers slipping away. He turns back around -- Mulligan is right next to him.

MULLIGAN

You owe me one.

Mulligan slaps Donald hard on the ass.

END OF ACT THREE

TAGEXT. BLISS, MAIN STREET - DAY

In soda jerk uniform, Donald strolls down the street as the townsfolk go about their days as normal. Emily approaches.

EMILY

You were really brave out there.

DONALD

You thought I was brave, huh?

EMILY

Oh. This doesn't mean you're sexually attractive, though.

DONALD

Of course not.

Donald spots Kevin walking to school, his backpack slung over his shoulder. He jogs over to him, catching up.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Kevin! Thanks for sticking up for me out there.

KEVIN

We're family. It's what we do.

DONALD

I made a promise to your dad that whatever happened, I would make sure that you would be safe. For right now, I think we're okay here.

(beat, surveying)

You know, maybe I misjudged this place. Maybe it is that perfect.

Donald motions for Kevin to follow him. Behind them, Gary wanders up and down the street.

GARY

This is bullshit! Do you know what this place really is?! This is no town!

A steel hatch opens up from the nearby gras. TWO MEN IN YELLOW HAZMAT SUITS climb out from it and rush over to Gary, subduing him with an injection to his neck. They carry him, take him down the hatch, and seal it shut behind them.

END OF SHOW