

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Written by

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FADE IN:

OVER BLACK:

SUPER: SOMETIME IN THE NOT SO DISTANT FUTURE

EXT. HIGH STREET - NIGHT

Damaged houses line either side of the street. The road is littered with rusting vehicles. A few street lamps flicker erratically.

JENNY (V.O.)

Due to a packaging error, stores across the country have been forced to withdraw peanut butter from sale. The reason, well get this; They do not include a warning that the product contains peanuts. What do you think of that Dan?

DAN (V.O.)

(sarcastically)

Well Jenny, I don't know about you but I don't need a warning on bleach to tell me it just might have bleach in it!

A fierce wind is blowing, sending trash and old newspapers swirling down the street.

JENNY (V.O.)

(not serious)

But what if you saw a bottle of Bleach Butter for sale? What then?

DAN (V.O.)

Then maybe I would be confused!

(beat)

You know Jenny, back in my day I didn't know a single person who was allergic to peanuts, now it's as common as the sun coming up in the morning.

CLOSE ON a Newspaper with the headline, "IS THIS THE END OF MANKIND?"

JENNY (O.S.)

(joking)

Maybe, but back in your day you didn't even have mobile phones!

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A PALE MAN sits in a futuristic chair. He is thin, bald and has a deathly pallor on his worn face.

DAN (O.S.)

True! We had to communicate via  
smoke signals!

His whole body is connected to the chair via tubes and wires. White liquid courses through the tubes into his body and his breathing is controlled via a mask which makes a rasping noise.

Surrounding the pale man is a holographic display array on which can be seen various virtual screens depicting TV programs and movies.

One larger screen is displaying a news program which pauses. It shrinks and recedes back into the array.

His bloodshot eyes scan the images.

PALE MAN - POV

He focuses on one screen which is displaying a comedy sitcom.

The image slides out from the others, expanding until it encompasses his entire vision.

INT. AMERICAN APARTMENT - DAY

STYLE - AMERICAN SITCOM

JOEY (32) is sat in a leather chair in front of a large plasma screen TV.

Joey's attention is focused on the TV while he stuffs his face from various snacks strategically placed around him.

The front door opens and in walks CHANDLER (33). He's wearing a long dark coat which is wet from the rain. The live audience CHEER.

Chandler nods, smiles at the audience briefly before; back in character he focuses on Joey.

CHANDLER

(sarcastically)

So tell me, how does it feel to be  
top of the food chain?

Joey notices chandler, he smiles in greeting with a mouth full of food.

JOEY

Dmn gfd!

CHANDLER

(sarcastically)

I'm sorry buddy. I didn't quite hear that due to your mouth containing a year's supply of pretty much everything.

The audience LAUGHS. Joey chews desperately.

CHANDLER (CONT'D)

That's OK man, I'm not in any rush.

Joey manages to swallow the food. He washes it down with a large chug of beer.

JOEY

Damn good!

The audience LAUGHS. Joey BURPS loudly sending the audience into further hysterics.

The action FREEZES.

PALE MAN - POV

The sitcom image recedes into the array. The Pale Man focuses on another showing a nature documentary.

The image slides out from the others, expanding until it encompasses his entire vision.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

STYLE - NATURE DOCUMENTARY

A documentary presenter, JULIE (23) is a petite, naturally pretty woman wearing sensible outdoor clothing. She is examining the leaves on a tree.

JULIE

(to the camera)

The battle for survival has been fought since the emergence of life on this planet. Over millions of years the balance can constantly shift. Species can develop a natural defence, only to see their predators develop a counter measure in just a few hundred generations.

Julie walks around the tree, we FOLLOW.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Take this tree for example.

A CU on the leaves reveal berries on the branches.

JULIE (V.O.)

Its main predator is the Cedar  
Waxwing who eats the berries.

A CU on a flying Cedar Waxwing. It lands on a branch and  
pecks at a berry.

JULIE (V.O.)

Millions of years ago these  
branches were plain, ordinary. Then  
over time it developed thorns  
which, through painful experience,  
taught this predator to avoid the  
tree and look elsewhere for food.

The bird flies away and we are back FOLLOWING Julie around  
the tree.

JULIE

The equivalent of a heartbeat of  
time in evolutionary terms and the  
Cedar Waxwing developed improved  
eyesight and tougher claws. Berries  
were back on the menu again; for a  
time anyway.

The Cedar Waxwing is back on the branch pecking away at the  
berries.

JULIE (V.O.)

The next step in this evolutionary  
duel was the tree developed a toxin  
which, in essence, made the berries  
taste bad. Again the bird had to  
seek its lunch elsewhere.

The bird flies away but moments later lands back on the  
branch and resumes it's meal.

JULIE (V.O.)

Over time it developed immunity to  
the toxin and the fight is now back  
in the tree's corner.

(beat)

These cycles are repeated  
throughout the whole of nature,  
apart from one species.

EXT. SKYSCRAPER ROOFTOP - DAY

It is a sunny, clear day. Julie is stood overlooking a large  
city.

JULIE

Mankind.

(beat)

We have no natural predator yet prey on everything. Man's only enemy is man, and yet even here we see ourselves developing weapons and defences following a similar cycle as the birds and the trees. Only we manage to do it in a much grander scale and for much more trivial reasons than food.

The day passes by in a blink of an eye. Julie remains on the rooftop as day becomes night and the lights of the big city turn on.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Yet can we ignore the evolutionary lessons that exist all around us?

(beat)

And what will we do if Mother Nature decides she's had enough and decides to evolve defences of her own?

The action FREEZES.

PALE MAN - POV

The sitcom image recedes into the array. The Pale Man focuses on another showing a classic black and white movie.

The image slides out from the others, expanding until it encompasses his entire vision.

INT. BANQUET HALL - DAY

STYLE - SILENT MOVIE

A party is underway. Seated around tables piled high with food are Hollywood legends from the silent movie era; LARRY, CURLY and MOE while opposite them sits LAUREL and HARDY.

Moe scoops up a handful of mashed potato and throws it at Larry. Larry ducks and it hits Moe in the face.

Larry and Moe laugh. They are hit square in the face by two apple pies. They wipe the pie from their faces, scowling furiously.

They glance over at Laurel and Hardy. Hardy acts innocently while Laurel nervously plays with his bow tie.

Laurel inconspicuously points towards Hardy but Hardy notices his actions. He smacks Laurel around the head. Hardy scolds Laurel as Laurel cries openly.

Hardy's face is splattered with custard. He wipes large blobs of the stuff from his eyes and glares at the Three Stooges who are eating their food innocently.

Furious, Hardy stands up. He grabs two full plates of food. The Three Stooges do likewise. Suddenly a full food fight breaks out.

Food is flying through the air. Hardy, Larry, Curly and Moe are covered in food but do not give up flinging even more back and forth. Laurel is unscathed but crying while rubbing his hair.

Laurel ducks as a plate of food flies over his head. He ducks and avoids a second. He ducks to avoid a third but none appears. He rises to take a peek just as a pie is flung. It hits him right in the face.

Laurel drops to the ground screaming and clawing at his face in agony. The camera dips slightly but keeps running as the production crew run to his aid.

The food fight ceases. The actors look on nervously as a PRODUCER wipes Laurel's face with a towel. The producer gasps, taking a step back.

Laurel has had an allergic reaction. His cheeks are huge and his eyes are swollen shut.

The action FREEZES.

PALE MAN - POV

The black & white movie image recedes into the array. The Pale man focuses on another showing a more modern, color movie.

The images slides out from the others, expanding until it encompasses his entire vision.

INT. BURGER BAR - DAY

STYLE - PULP FICTION

Two very cool looking dudes are eating burgers. One is black, VINCENT (40) and the other, JULES (35) is white. Both are wearing identical black suits, ties and shades.

JULES

So how's the new pizza burger?

VINCENT

It's OK I guess. I can't say it remotely tastes like pizza or a burger for that matter, but you know I can't resist trying the new shit.

Jules laughs

JULES

Why man?

He waves his plain looking burger in Vincent's face.

JULES (CONT'D)

You should stick with what you know. Then, my friend, you won't be disappointed. As you always are I might add.

Vincent glares at Jules. Jules shrugs and chomps into his burger. Vincent wipes his mouth with a napkin.

VINCENT

(calmly)

Maybe I am seeking to widen my culinary experiences, release my pallet from the day-to-day masticating chores of the bland and the grisly, the parts of animals which no-one likes to acknowledge goes into our food.

(beat)

Or maybe I've simply been blinded by the antics of a very annoying, yet at the same time deeply disturbing clown, who distracts my mind while the marketing demons insert subliminal messages into my subconscious.

Jules pauses, frowns in concern.

JULES

Hey man, I didn't mean anything...

VINCENT

(angrily)

Or maybe I'm just sick of eating the same old shit motherfucker!

Several customers and members of staff glance over at the duo. Jules holds his hands out in submission.

JULES

OK, OK man! I didn't mean no disrespect. I was just fuckin with ya.

Vincent seems appeased, he continues his meal.

JULES (CONT'D)  
All I'm saying man...

Vincent pauses, raises an eyebrow at Jules.

JULES (CONT'D)  
All I'm saying is you try every new dish they bring out and you always say it tastes OK at best. I on the other hand know exactly what I'm going to get so I'm never let down.

Vincent pauses mid chew. He spits out the rest of the food and dumps the remains of the burger.

Jules offers him the rest of his burger. Vincent looks seriously for a moment, then smiles and accepts the offer. He takes a big bite, chews then swallows contentedly.

VINCENT  
Now that's what I call a tasty burger.

JULES  
(smiling)  
That's what I'm talking about man! Good old reliable mystery meat on a bun. Beats a McCockroach with cheese any day!

Their meal finished, Vincent checks his watch.

JULES (CONT'D)  
How we doin'?

VINCENT  
It's nearly time. Let's take a walk.

The duo leave the diner together.

EXT. BURGER BAR - DAY

Jules and Vincent exit the burger bar and strut down the road together. We FOLLOW.

VINCENT  
You know, you may be eating such delicacies sooner than you think.

JULES  
What?

VINCENT  
A McCockroach with cheese.

Jules laughs.

JULES

Yeah, like a guy stuck in a small bamboo cage in the middle of Vietnam. I'm sure a McCockroach with cheese would sound real good round about now.

VINCENT

You may mock my friend but I'm serious man. Most of the population of this planet eat cockroaches, ants; all sorts of insect shit on a regular basis. It's only us Westerners who can't stomach the idea.

Jules looks sick. He rubs his stomach.

JULES

Thanks man. Thanks to you expanding my world wide culinary knowledge, insects aren't the only thing I may not be able to stomach at the moment.

VINCENT

Get used to it. There simply isn't enough cattle to support our population growth. Someday soon we'll be forced to put insects on the menu.

They reach a parked car and open the boot. They both stare at something inside.

JULES

Where the fuck do you learn this shit?

Vincent turns to face Jules.

VINCENT

The internet isn't just for Hentai Tenticle porn you know.

Vincent reaches inside the boot, pulling out a silver Desert Eagle Magnum.

JULES

(sarcastically)  
What can I say? I love the artwork!

Jules retrieves an identical gun of his own.

They both check the ammo clip, slap it back in and holster them under their jackets.

VINCENT

Let's do this.

Jules nods. They both head towards an apartment block.

The action FREEZES.

PALE MAN - POV

The movie image recedes into the array. The Pale Man focuses on another showing a reality TV show.

The images slides out from the others, expanding until it encompasses his entire vision.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

STYLE - 'COPS' TV SHOW

A FEMALE COP (25) is driving the car while a MALE COP (24) is sat in the passenger seat. A CAMERAMAN is in the back filming the action while a PRODUCER sits next to him chatting to the Male Cop.

The BAD BOYS THEME TUNE is playing in the background. It fades out.

FEMALE COP

Yeah we've been called to a disturbance over at Chan's place over on 23rd Street.

MALE COP

We are getting a lot of these type of calls lately.

PRODUCER (O.C.)

What calls?

FEMALE COP

Food disturbances. Every Town has a food joint that's rumored to have cats or dogs on the menu. It's kind of an Urban Legend. But with the current err crisis, the legends are becoming a reality.

MALE COP

I'm partial to a bit of meow with fried rice myself.

The Female Cop glances at her partner disapprovingly before focusing back on the road.

FEMALE COP

So now if any restaurant or cafe starts to use, let's say 'illegal alternative' ingredients then the Animal Rights Activists soon turn up looking for blood, closely followed by the Survivalists. Then all hell breaks out.

The car comes to a halt.

MALE COP

Here's where the fun begins.

EXT. CHAN LEE'S RESTERAUNT - DAY

The Cops exit the vehicle. The Cameraman focuses on a small crowd of chanting Animal Right's Activists who are protesting nearby.

They are holding various banners, one reads, "WE ARE NOT ANIMALS!", another reads, "PROTECT OUR PETS"

The Cameraman follows the two cops as they head towards the building with their hands resting on their gun holsters.

FEMALE COP

(to Cameraman and  
Producer)

You guys stay here and we'll bring him out. We need to get this done quick and clean.

The cops enter the building. The Cameraman pans back towards the crowd as a number of trucks arrive.

Several tough looking men dressed in combat gear exit the vehicles. The Animal Rights Activists react angrily to the new arrivals. Their chanting grows louder.

The cops exit the resteraunt with MR CHAN(60), an Asian man wearing a dirty cooking apron. He is in handcuffs.

MR CHAN

(to Female Cop)

But I have done nothing wrong?

FEMALE COP

This is more for your protection sir until we can sort this out.

(to Male cop)

Now lets get him down to the station quickly.

A PROTESTOR notices something.

PROTESTOR

(shouting)

Hey look! He's got a dog collar!

Hanging out of Mr Chan's pocket is a strip of cloth.

FEMALE COP

Oh shit, back into the restaurant,  
call for backup!

The cops drag Mr Chan towards the restaurant as the  
Protesters surge forward.

The Survivalists charge in, attacking the protestors.

The Cameraman is caught right in the middle of the conflict.  
There's chaos, fighting. The Cameraman goes down. Someone  
kicks the camera.

The signal is lost.

The action FREEZES.

PALE MAN - POV

The image recedes into the array. The Pale Man focuses on  
another showing a News Report.

The image slides out from the others, expanding until it  
encompasses his entire vision.

INT. TV STUDIO

STYLE - NEWS BROADCAST

DAN JENNINGS (55) is a silver haired, smartly dressed news  
veteran. In the studio with him is JENNY FOX (22), the token  
eye candy of the show.

DAN JENNINGS

According to the latest Hoover  
report, by 2030 70% of the  
developed world will have some form  
of cancer while that figure is 90%  
in the undeveloped world. At the  
same time we are seeing an  
exponential rise in allergies and  
the immergence of mystery illnesses  
such as Fibromyalgia.

JENNY FOX

And I don't even know what that is!

Dan laughs.

DAN JENNINGS

Indeed. However, what do you think could be causing this Jenny? Pesticides, GM Foods or could it be climate change?

JENNY FOX

Well Dan, according to our viewers on Twitter, most believe the problem is simply because people don't have God in their lives.

DAN JENNINGS

Well there you have it folks! The answer is right there in social media.

JENNY FOX

Amen!

DAN JENNINGS

More on this later, but next we'll be reporting live at this year's transgender hot dog eating contest in California; right after these important messages.

EXT. PARK - DAY

STYLE - TV COMMERCIAL

An AVERAGE MAN(25) is sat on a bench facing away from us. A stunningly beautiful WOMAN(21) is walking towards him.

VOICE OVER GUY (V.O.)

It's summer time! When nature is at her peak and all can feel the call of the wild!

The Woman taps the Average Man on the shoulder. He turns around but she gasps in shock. The Average Man's face is all red, inflamed. His eyes and nose are running.

She quickly walks away. The Average Man appears miserable.

VOICE OVER GUY (V.O.)

However, with the pollen count at its highest ever, summer can be Hell can't it?

The Average Man nods.

VOICE OVER GUY (V.O.)

Try new Allerpon 3000!

The Average Man catches a bottle of Allerpon 3000.

VOICE OVER GUY (V.O.)  
 A powerful hay fever reliever  
 combined with Zerocollemur to  
 counter allergic reactions from  
 food, smells and stings.

The Average Man opens the bottle, he takes a large swig and swallows. He spins around and SUDDENLY his face is all clear. He beams with satisfaction.

Rising from the bench he runs off in the direction of the Woman.

VOICE OVER GUY (V.O.)  
 Allerpon 3000! Helping to put the  
 spring back into summer!

The Average Man is walking in the park with his arm around the woman. He gives a thumbs up to the camera before placing his hand on her backside.

VOICE OVER GUY (V.O.)  
 (very quickly and quietly)  
 Before taking Allerpon 3000, tell  
 your doctor or pharmacist if you  
 are allergic to it; or if you have  
 any other allergies. Side effects  
 include vomiting and impotency. Not  
 recommended for women who are  
 pregnant, young children, the sick  
 and the elderly. Allerpon 3000  
 should only be used once a month.

The action FREEZES.

PALE MAN - POV

The commercial image recedes into the array. The Pale Man focuses on another showing a comedy stand-up routine.

The image slides out from the others, expanding until it encompasses his entire vision.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

STYLE - STAND-UP COMEDY

A scruffy looking COMEDIAN(34) is on stage in the middle of his routine.

COMEDIAN  
 So what's with all this weird shit  
 with our food and everything eh?

The audience shout YEAH in agreement.

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

I reckon I'm safe though because I'm a vegetarian.

The audience BOO.

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

It's not my choice! My girlfriend is a vegetarian so of course I'm suddenly a vegetarian.

There's a short burst of LAUGHTER from the audience.

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

Officially it's because I care for animals and realize mankind can survive in the modern world without eating meat. Unofficially it's because if I so much as look at a pork chop with the faintest hint of hunger in my eyes, I don't get a blowjob for a week.

The LAUGHTER is longer, louder.

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

(speaking quickly,  
passionately)

You know what I want to see? vegetable slaughter houses! I want to see pictures on TV of workers dragging potatoes into the slaughterhouse. I want the worker to say, "They know what's going to happen, it's as if they can smell death."

The Comedian paces across the stage. The audience is CHEERING.

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

I want to be in a world in which carrots develop a cute smile or an apple screams out when you peel it. I want to see a documentary about illegal turnip farms which shows hundreds of turnips caged up in atrocious conditions. I want to see men in black masks hunting wild Soya beans. Men who pretend there is some danger and honour in the hunt when we all know the only reason they do it is because they know the beans can't fight back.

(beat)

(MORE)

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

I want all these things because most of all, I want to see what the fuck the vegetarians of the world will eat next. I want them to try and find something that isn't alive, doesn't have feelings, isn't cute and tastes good. I want to walk up to my girlfriend and say, "Hey honey, what's for lunch? The cute carrot, the pork chop or the old guy from next door because there's fuck all else?"

The audience breaks into a huge ROUND OF APPLAUSE. They stand up.

The Comedian raises a fist into the air.

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

Soylent green is people!

The audience ROARS.

The action FREEZES.

PALE MAN - POV

The image recedes into the array. One by one the images collapse until only one remains.

The image expands until it encompasses his entire vision.

INT. TV STUDIO

STYLE - NEWS BROADCAST

Dan and Jenny are back but this time without the benefit of make-up or hair products. Their appearance is dishevelled, their skin pale.

Jenny's eyes are watering. She uses a tissue to wipe them dry.

DAN JENNINGS

The latest Hoover report list another 700 products which is deemed unsafe. Please download the latest Podcasts and update your Biopods accordingly.

(beat)

The question on everyone's lips is why and what can we do to reverse the situation?

JENNY FOX

Maybe we should pray Dan.

Dan sighs, rubs his face. He notices blood on his hand. He grabs a tissue and presses it against his nose.

DAN JENNINGS

Yes Jenny, maybe we should.

Jenny reaches out and grabs his other hand.

The action FREEZES.

PALE MAN - POV

The image recedes then collapses. An ALARM activates. A new screen launches showing a flashing time. It reads 4:00PM.

The Pale Man focuses on his front door. His breathing becomes erratic.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

A MYSTERIOUS MAN dressed in a long dark coat limps down the street. His head is covered with a helmet while on his back is a futuristic back-pack with several tubes connected to his body.

He stops in front of a house, surveys the street from side to side. Satisfied he extracts a key from his pocket and enters the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Mysterious man enters the Pale Man's apartment. He pauses a moment to catch his breath.

He walks slowly over to the Pale Man.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

That's enough for today.

The Pale Man's arms are tied to the armrests on the chair. His breathing is frantic and he is shaking.

The Mysterious Man presses a button on a panel. The white fluid stops flowing. He removes the side panel on the chair.

Within can be seen a plastic chamber. Inside is a partially digested leg and a tongue. They are both floating in the white liquid.

The Mysterious Man checks the Pale Man's restraints. In addition to his arms, one leg is also tied to the chair while the other is missing from the knee downwards.

MYSTERIOUS MAN (CONT'D)

Should be enough for another month or two.

He replaces the panel, then disconnects the main tube and plugs it into his own backpack.

Pressing a button on the panel, the white fluid flows into his backpack. The tubes from the backpack into his body fill with the white liquid.

The Mysterious Man sighs in satisfaction.

He removes the Pale Man's breathing mask to REVEAL this is an older version of the person who portrayed Joey in the sitcom.

His eyes are wide in fear, he opens his mouth to say something but the stump in his mouth reduces this to a strangled gurgle.

A single tear drips down his face.

The Mysterious Man removes his helmet to REVEAL a pale and older version of the ACTOR who portrayed Chandler.

ACTOR

So man.

(pauses to catch his  
breath)

How does it feel to be top of the  
food chain?

FADE OUT.