

Transmission

By

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EXT. NUCLEAR WASTELAND - DAY

The gravel makes an audible noise as JONAH's boot heel touches the ground. A middle-aged man, he looks around and scans the horizon. Emptiness. What was once a city now is a barren desert. Jonah sweats profusely as he continues to look around. He wears a white lab coat. He spins around.

JONAH
(yelling)
Sam! Sam!

A YOUNG BOY emerges in front of him.

CUT TO:

INT. BUNKER

A pair of eyes open. JONAH awakens from his nightmare covered in a cold sweat. Lying on a small single bed, he sits up and buries his head in his hands, wiping away the sweat from his face. Across the bunker, a hamster, SAM runs a treadmill in a small transparent box.

JONAH
(V.O)
Do you remember what it was like?

Jonah is in a small, dark concrete bunker deep under ground. He looks disheveled, wearing a gray singlet and dark pants. A large number "14" is painted on the wall next to him, a stack of newspapers at the foot of the bed. He peers to the wall on his right and surveys a digital panel which reads: "DAYS ELAPSED: 182. DAYS REMAINING: 12, 593."

JONAH
(V.O)
The world the way it was before all
this.

CUT TO:

The single fluorescent light hanging from the ceiling goes out. In the darkness Jonah scrambles to grab a lever on the wall, he cranks it down a couple of times, an engine reignites and starts to whirl. The lights dim again, Jonah kicks the tank in frustration and the lights brighten suddenly.

JONAH
(V.O)
The world without darkness. Without
coldness.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

Jonah peers down in front of the hamster's box. He reaches in and fills up the water and food.

JONAH

Morning, Sam. Breakfast for champions.

He smiles as SAM eats the food in his box.

JONAH

You might want to get back on the treadmill when you're done here. You could probably afford a couple of ounces off.

Jonah signals to himself.

JONAH

Five percent body fat right there.

CUT TO:

Jonah slides open a large pantry on the wall. Stacked full are cans of the same baked beans. To the right a small white box is mounted on the wall labeled: "ARMORY", through the glass plate sits a Smith and Wesson revolver, next to it a hand scanner.

Jonah reaches into the pantry and grabs a can. He places it on the bench and attempts to open it with a can-opener. It jams and doesn't open.

JONAH

Dammit.

Jonah reaches for his baseball bat and smashes the can open. It splits open, but the beans go everywhere. He scrapes the beans together and has a few mouthfuls of baked beans, polishing off the can. He throws it into a large container, packed to the brim full of used bean cans.

JONAH

(V.O)

The world where you weren't alone.

He pours a cup of coffee skulls it in one gulp and slams the cup down on the bench which reads: "WORLD'S BEST DAD".

CUT TO:

Jonah presses a switch on the table and leans into a microphone.

(CONTINUED)

JONAH

This is bunker 14. Does anyone read me? This is bunker 14.

The old analogue radio in front of him outputs static. He moves the dial to change the frequency. Sam is climbing around on top of the radio.

JONAH

This is bunker 14. Bunker 14. Does anyone copy? Anyone?

JONAH

Looks like it's just you and me, buddy. Come one - we'll have fun.

Jonah collects Sam in his hand and smiles.

CUT TO:

Jonah stands in front of a blank wall with a tennis racket, he bounces a green ball on the ground and throws it against the opposite wall. He hits it back and forth a couple of times and eventually stops. The ball bounces off and rolls into the shadows.

JONAH

(V.O)

I think what I'm worried about most- is that I'll forget what it was like. Or worse- I'll get used to it.

CUT TO:

Jonah leans into the microphone.

JONAH

Knock, knock. Who's there? Major. Major, who? Major open the door, didn't I?

Jonah chuckles. The old analogue radio in front of him outputs static.

JONAH

I'll be here all week.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

Jonah stands in front of a mirror, a small cardboard box in front of him reads "TEETH WHITENING STRIPS", he removes one from the packet, puts it in his teeth. He combs his hair with a wet comb and slicks his hair back. Jonah removes the strip and smiles, admiring his pearly whites.

CUT TO:

Jonah is slumped in front of Sam's cage. He is talking to Sam who is running the treadmill.

JONAH

You got a family out there? A pretty little Mrs. Hamster? I'm sure they miss you, Sammy-boy. Here have some more water.

Jonah pours more water into Sam's cage.

JONAH

You know I never told you this but I have a son called Sam. Out there-somewhere. He'd be about nineteen now. I can't even picture what he would look like. The last time I saw him, he was ten. I know he's out there, somewhere. He's a survivor that kid. But us, well, we have each other, right Sam?

Sam runs the treadmill.

CUT TO:

Jonah is sleeping. The fluorescent lights hardly dim. He moves around, fast asleep. Sam seems to be alert in his cage.

CUT TO:

Jonah makes breakfast- baked beans from a can, again. He refills Sam's cage.

JONAH

Morning! Rise and shine. Bon appetite.

He walks over with his breakfast to the radio station. He sips his coffee as he sits in front of the radio. He presses the button on the microphone.

(CONTINUED)

JONAH

This is bunker 14. Bunker 14. Is anyone out there?

JONAH

(V.O)

I spend my days talking to an empty box hoping someone hears me. Nobody ever responds. I don't blame them. I wouldn't want to talk to me.

JONAH

Hello? Are there any survivors? If there's anyone out there- please... Please. Sam?

CUT TO:

Jonah sitting against a wall, he holds out a photograph of his son, SAM at ten years of age.

CUT TO:

Jonah, lying on his bed reaches to the stack of newspapers next to him and picks one up. He opens it to the crossword section and proceeds to erase the completed crossword puzzle. He rubs all the answers out, sweeps away the dust - the boxes are empty. He stares at "21 Down".

JONAH

(V.O)

I could never figure out twenty-one across. A five letter word meaning 'murderer'.

He throws the newspaper on his bed and walks away. The newspaper reads: "NOVEMBER 12TH 2011. NANO BOMB ASSEMBLED". Below a picture of three men, the one in the middle resembling Jonah.

CUT TO:

The digital panel reads "DAYS ELAPSED: 184. DAYS REMAINING: 12, 591." Jonah throws an empty tin can of baked beans into the container.

JONAH

Hiya, Sam. Hope we're hungry this morning.

He takes out the box of hamster feed and fills up the cage. He smiles.

(CONTINUED)

JONAH

Enjoy.

CUT TO:

Jonah lies on the ground with his feet on his bed, he does sit ups with his hands behind his head.

JONAH

Forty-nine. Fifty.

CUT TO:

Jonah sits at the radio again. He pages:

JONAH

This is bunker 14. Is there anyone out there? Can anyone hear me? This is bunker 14. Are there any survivors out there?

Static.

CUT TO:

Jonah sleeping uncomfortably. Flashes of nuclear wasteland occur in his mind.

JONAH

(V.O)

Maybe if there were other people around I would feel more hated. More despised.

CUT TO:

The box of teeth whitening strips is empty. Jonah looks at himself in the mirror. He checks his teeth. He dips the comb under water, brings it over his hair and pauses. He lowers the comb and puts it on the bench. Jonah puts his head down and messes up his hair with his two hands.

CUT TO:

Jonah opens the pantry to find no more cans of baked beans. He taps on the bench thinking about what to do. As he turns around he knocks the 'WORLD'S BEST DAD' mug off the table it smashes on the ground, coffee goes everywhere.

JONAH

Shit.

(CONTINUED)

Jonah grabs some newspapers (labeled with headlines relating to the nuclear bomb) and puts them on the spilled coffee. Out of the corner of his eye he sees Sam lying on the floor of his hamster cage. He isn't moving. Jonah races over to the cage to see Sam. Dead.

CUT TO:

Jonah picks up Sam's lifeless body out of his cage. He tries to hold back his tears as he handles the body.

JONAH

Sam, please don't do this. Sam,
don't leave me.

CUT TO:

Jonah slumps next to a wall crying. In his hand he holds Sam's treadmill. He spins it around.

CUT TO:

Jonah raises his baseball bat above his head, he smashes Sam's cage into pieces. He moves over to the radio and holds the baseball bat above it but stops.

JONAH

(V.O)

Most days, I wish I could forget
the past and undo what I did.

CUT TO:

Jonah places his hand on the hand-scanner next to the 'ARMOURY' box.

VOICE

Please state your name and title.

JONAH

Dr. Jonah Riley, Chief Nuclear
Physicist. Department of Defense.

VOICE

Access granted.

CUT TO:

Jonah writes his name in the crossword boxes: "J-O-N-A-H".

JONAH

(V.O)

Another name for a murderer.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

Jonah sits at the radio talking into the microphone. He is almost addressing the camera.

JONAH

I know what the world was like before all of this. It was a beautiful world. A world worth dying for. I'm sorry for taking that away from everyone.

CUT TO:

Close up on a bullet being slotted into the revolver.

CUT TO:

Jonah talks into the microphone.

JONAH

If there is someone out there has been listening to this. This will be my last transmission- Sam, if you can hear me...

CUT TO:

Close up the gun chamber being closed.

CUT TO:

Jonah talks into the microphone.

JONAH

...I just wish you were able to grow up in the world you were born. I'm so sorry.

CUT TO:

Jonah, kneeling on the floor cocks the gun and places next to his head. He closes his eyes. Jonah squeezes the trigger. *Bang.*

CUT TO:

EXT. NUCLEAR WASTELAND - DAY

In front of Jonah is a nineteen-year-old SAM. Jonah approaches Sam, teary-eyed.

Sam. JONAH

Dad. SAM

Jonah hugs Sam.

JONAH
It's good to see you.

FADE OUT.