**The Twilight Zone** Episode

“The Shelter” Script by Rod Serling

**ROD SERLING:** You're traveling through another dimension- a dimension not only of sight and sound, but of mind, a journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination.

Your next stop, the twilight zone.

**JERRY HARLOWE:** Ladies and gentlemen ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention, please? Now, no birthday celebration is complete without an after-dinner speech.

**WILLIAM STOCKTON:** Oh, no, Jerry.

**JERRY:** And so, let's get to the business at hand, the honoring of Dr.

William Stockton.

**WILLIAM:** Now, Jerry Harlowe, you sit down.

**JERRY:** Who today is one year older and admits to being over 21.

And who, in the short space of 20 years has taken care of not only us, our children, but even our grandchildren.

Whose grandchildren? As a matter of fact, i doubt if there's anyone in this room who still does not owe the good doctor for a visit or two.

What about the hammering at all hours of the night? That's another thing we owe him for.

Ah, yes, yes, the good doctor's bomb shelter.

**JERRY:** Well, I'm afraid we'll have to forgive him for all that despite the fact that what he sees as farsightedness has been a real pain in the neck to the rest of us, what with all the concrete trucks and the nocturnal hammering and all the rest of it.

That's better.

Well, at any rate, when grace mentioned that it was the good doctor's birthday, we all decided to take a hand in the proceedings.

I had an idea something was going on.

No, you didn't.

Oh, yes, i did.

And doc, as a little personal aside, i'd like to conclude this way.

That'll probably be the best part of the speech.

Doc, you're a very beloved fellow and rightly so.

And you may not have the biggest practice in medical history that's true.

but there isn't a single sawbones in the entire 50 states whose patients have such a regard- such affection, such respect- for their man with the little black bag as we do for ours.

Well done! You dirty dog.

First a surprise party, which i abhor, and then that sloppy, sentimental speech.

You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

I thought it was pretty good, bill.

Let's take our coffee in the other room, huh? Pop, pop! Yes, paulie, what is it? The picture went out on the tv set.

Then there was some goofy announcement.

Hold it, everybody.

Shh, shh! What did you say, paul? The announcer said something about turn to the conelrad station on the radio.

Are you sure that's what you heard? I didn't hear wrong, pop.

He said, "turn to the conelrad station" and then everything went completely blank.

Direct from washington, d.

c.

Repeating that: Four minutes ago, the president made the following announcement.

I quote: "At 11:04 p.

m.

Eastern standard time "both our distant early warning line "and ballistics early warning line "reported radar evidence of unidentified flying objects "flying due southeast.

"We have been unable to determine "the nature of these objects, "but in the interests of national safety, we are declaring a state of yellow alert.

" The civil defense authorities request that if you have a shelter already prepared, go there at once.

Come on, marty.

If not, use your time to move supplies of food, water and medicine to a central place.

Keep all windows and doors closed.

If you're in your home, go to your prepared shelters or to your basement.

**SERLING:** What you're about to watch is a nightmare.

It is not meant to be prophetic, it need not happen.

It's the fervent and urgent prayer of all men of goodwill that it never shall happen.

But in this place, in this moment, it does happen.

This is the twilight zone.

**WILLIAM:** Fill up as many as you can, grace.

I'm going to check the air filter down there.

We'll get the rest of the stuff later.

Looks like we'll lose the power any minute now.

**GRACE:** Bill, there's hardly any water coming through this tap.

**WILLIAM:** Easy, honey.

Easy.

Now make believe it's perfume, and it cost a hundred dollars an ounce.

Maybe in an hour or so, it'll be worth even more than that.

What else, pop? You got all the canned goods down, paulie? Yeah, all i could find.

How about the fruit cellar, paul? I put those in, too.

Uh, go up to my bedroom and get my bag and put that in, too.

Wh-what about the books and stuff? Paul! Your father told you to get his bag.

There's time, grace.

There's plenty of time.

And we'll need books and things.

I don't know how long we'll have to stay down there.

What about lightbulbs? Where do you keep the lightbulbs? Oh, on the top shelf here of this cupboard, bill.

Oh, we don't have any.

I ran out.

Well, i was going to buy some at the store yesterday because there was a sale on and oh, bill, i'm talking like some idiot.

Now, how much more time is there? There's no telling, grace, honey.

Conelrad says from the first alarm we might have anywhere between 15 minutes and a half an hour.

Fif-fifteen minutes? I'm just winging it, grace.

I don't know for sure.

I don't think anyone does.

Now keep filling them.

Bill?! There's no more water.

It doesn't make any difference anyhow.

I think we've got enough water.

You bring a jug with you, gracie.

Paul and i will get the rest.

Now, you two stay here.

I'll get the rest of the water.

No, wait a minute.

I've slipped.

Paulie, there's a small tool kit in the garage.

Will you get it? Right.

I'll get the rest of the water.

Grace.

Now, if it is a bomb, there's no assurance it'll land near us, and if it doesn't but if it does, bill, new york is only And new york's going to get it, we know that.

So we'll get it, too, all of it- the poison, the radiation, the whole mess.

We'll get it.

We'll be in a shelter, grace, and with any luck at all, we'll survive.

We've got food and water enough to last us for two weeks- maybe even longer if we use it wisely.

Then what, bill? Then what? We crawl out of here like gophers to tiptoe through all that rubble up above? The rubble and the ruin and the bodies of our friends? Oh, bill, why is it so necessary to survive? What's the good of it? Wouldn't it just be better and easier, just quicker if we just i got the tools, pop.

Anything else you need from out here? Grace, that's why we have to survive.

That's the reason.

He may only inherit rubble now, but he's 12 years old.

He's only Now.

This is conelrad, your emergency broadcasting station.

Paulie.

I got the tools, pop.

Good- put it down over there.

I'll get the rest of the water.

Remain tuned to this frequency.

We repeat our previous announcement how's it going, bill? It's going fine, jerry.

We're collecting water which is what you should be doing.

Well, we collected about 30 gallons and then the water stopped.

You better get into your shelter- into your basement- and i'd board up the windows if i were you.

You got any wood? Bill, we don't have any cellar, remember? The advantages of modern architecture.

We got the only brand- new house on the block.

We got everything at your fingertips- even got an electric laundry room.

All the wonders of modern science taken into account except that thing that's heading for us right now.

Jerry, come on.

Can i bring martha and the kids over here? Over here? We're sitting ducks over there- no protection at all.

Oh, jerry.

You can use our basement.

Your basement? What about your shelter? It's the only place we can survive! I don't have any room, jerry.

There's not near enough room or supplies.

It's designed for three people.

Well, we'll bring our own food and water.

We'll sleep standing up.

Bill, you've got to help me.

You've got to keep my family alive.

We won't use any of your stuff.

What about air? That's a 10x10 room, jerry, with an air filter designed for three people.

Will you bring your own air? Well, just give us a chance.

No, no, no.

then we'll get out.

When that door gets closed and locked it stays closed and locked, jerry.

There'll be radiation and heaven knows what else.

I'm sorry, jerry, as god is my witness, i am sorry, but i built that for my family.

What about mine? What'll we do? Just rock on the front porch while we burn to a crisp? That's no concern of mine.

Right now it's my family i have to worry about.

Do you think i'm going to stand by and watch while my wife and children die in agony? I'm not going to do it, you understand? Bill, i'm not going to do it! I'm sorry, please forgive me.

I kept telling you, jerry- all of you- get ready, build a shelter.

Forget the card parties and the barbecues for maybe a few hours a week, forget them, and make the admission to yourself that the worst was possible.

But you didn't want to listen, jerry.

None of you wanted to listen.

Please, bill to build a shelter was to admit to the kind of age we lived in, and none of you had the guts to face that.

So now you've got to face something far worse, jerry.

So, god, please, god protect you, jerry.

It's out of my hands.

It's simply out of my hands.

It's got to be god.

It's got to be god.

They're already in the shelter.

Marty, i told you.

He's locked himself in.

He's got to let us in.

We have no windows in half the basement and i don't have anything to plug them up, either.

And the basement won't help, anyway.

I can't help you, marty.

He's downstairs? Yeah, yeah.

Bill, bill bill, it's marty.

We've got the kids with us.

Marty! Bill! Bill, please let us in.

Marty, please.

Come back and get us please! Bill- bill, it's marty.

Please let us in.

Marty, i would if i could.

Do you understand? I swear to you, i would.

Bill, please.

Please, bill.

It's marty.

I can't, marty.

Don't stand there asking me.

I can't! I can't and i won't! I feel sorry for you, then, bill.

I really do.

You probably will survive, but you'll have blood on your hands.

You're a doctor! You're supposed to help people! That was a million years ago a million years ago.

Marty! Get out of here! Do you hear me? Get out of here, marty! Marty! Then he slammed the door right in my face.

Well, go back! Jerry, ask him again.

Let's go.

Jerry, ask him again! Ask him again! Please, i don't want to be here.

Please, frank, let's go home! There's no time! It's no use, frank.

He won't let anybody in.

What'll we do? We ought to find one basement and go to work on that.

Pool all of our stuff.

It just isn't fair! He's perfectly safe while our kids have to sit around and wait for a bomb to drop! Why don't we just go down there and break down the door! Frank, frank- wait a minute, frank! Frank, wait a minute! We can't all fit in that bomb shelter.

We'd be crazy to even try.

Why don't we pick out one family- draw lots? I keep telling you, he won't let anybody in.

We could all go down there and tell him the whole street is against him.

What good would it do? Even if you break down the door, we can't all fit.

We'd be killing everybody.

If it saves even one of my kids it's worth it.

Jerry, you know him better than any of us.

You're his best friend.

Go down there again.

Talk to him, plead with him.

Tell him to pick out one family.

We'll draw lots or something.

One family meaning yours, marty, huh? Why not? I've got a three- month-old baby.

Is your baby any more precious than one of my kids? I never said that.

Look, if you're going to argue about who deserves to live you shut your mouth, weiss.

Take it easy.

Let go! That's the way it is when the foreigners come over here- pushy, grabby, seml-american! Why, you garbage-brained idiot! Marty- marty, please! What's the matter with you? Weiss, for my dough, you're at the bottom of the list! Keep it up, you'll slaughter each other! Marty marty marty, please.

Go down to the shelter.

Ask him, marty, please.

I've already asked him.

It won't do any good! Searchlights.

Let's go take a look.

Anything new on the radio? No.

What are you doing out here? Doc's got himself locked in that shelter.

You know what i'm going to do? I'm going down there and get him to open up that door.

That's the only thing left to do! Frank's right.

Come on, let's do it.

No, wait a minute! Martha, keep those kids in the kitchen.

Bill! Bill stockton! You've got a bunch of your neighbors outside who want to stay alive.

Now, you can open that door and talk to us and figure out with us how many can come in there or you can just keep on doing what you're doing, and we'll bust our way in there! Bill, can you hear me? This is jerry.

They mean business out here.

I mean business in here.

I've already told you, jerry.

You're wasting your time.

You're wasting precious time you could use for figuring out how you can survive.

Why don't we get some kind of battering ram? Yeah, let's go to bennett avenue.

Phil klein has some heavy pipe in his basement.

No, no- that would get him into the act, too, and who cares about saving him.

If we do that- if we let all those people know about the shelter on our street- we'd have a whole mob to contend with.

A whole bunch of strangers.

What right have they got to come over here? This isn't their street.

This isn't their shelter.

Oh, oh, this is our shelter, huh? And on the next street, that's another country.

Patronize home industry.

You idiots, you fools, you're insane.

All of you.

Maybe you don't want to live.

Maybe you don't care! I care- believe me, i care.

I want to see the morning sun come up, too.

But a mob doesn't have any brains.

You're proving it! I say let's get that battering ram and we'll tell klein to keep his mouth shut.

Wait a minute.

I agree with jerry.

We should stop and think a minute.

Now, i think that nobody cares what you think- you or your kind.

I thought i made it clear.

Yes, but i think that jerry has i think the first order of business is to get you out of here.

Marty, marty! Let's get that battering ram and break down that door.

You've had your chance, stockton, remember that! You've had your chance! Come on, marty, come on.

Bill who are those people? Those people those people are our neighbors, our friends, the people we've lived with and alongside for 20 years.

Come on, paulie, we better get up some of this furniture so we'll have some protection in case that door goes through.

Come on, let's get it in there.

Come on, over it.

Over it.

Now! It's through! Put it down! This is conelrad.

Remain tuned for an important message.

The president of the united states has just announced that the previously unidentified objects have now been definitely ascertained as being satellites.

There are no enemy missiles approaching.

There are no enemy missiles approaching.

The objects have been identified as satellites.

They are harmless, and we are in no danger.

The state of emergency has officially been called off.

We are in no danger.

There is no enemy attack.

Thank god.

Marty? Marty? I, uh i went off my rocker.

Well, you can understand that, can't you? I just went off my rocker.

I didn't mean any of those things i said to you.

We were we were, all of us so scared, so confused well, it's no wonder, is it? I mean, you can understand why we all blew our tops a little.

Well, i don't think marty's going to hold it against you, frank.

Just like i don't think bill is going to hold all this against us.

We'll pay for the damages, bill.

We'll take up a collection right away.

We we could have a block party tomorrow night or something.

A big celebration, huh? I think we rate one now.

Hey, that's a great idea- a block party.

Anything to get back to normal, huh? Normal? I don't know.

I don't know what normal is.

I thought i did once.

I don't anymore.

I told you we'd pay for the damages, bill.

Damages? I wonder.

I wonder if any one of us has any idea what those damages really are.

Maybe one of them is finding out what we're really like when we're normal- the kind of people we are just underneath the skin.

I mean all of us.

A lot of naked, wild animals who put such a price on staying alive that they'll claw their neighbors to death just for the privilege.

We were spared a bomb tonight, but i wonder.

I wonder if we weren't destroyed even without it.

No moral, no message, no prophetic tract.

Just a simple statement of fact: For civilization to survive, the human race has to remain civilized.

Tonight's very small exercise in logic from the twilight zone.

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