

THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT
by Chris DelliCarpini

FADE IN:

INT. ROADHOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY

PORTIA, fresh from the L.L. Bean Winter Catalogue, leans across the table and holds up her credit card.

PORTIA
Exhibit A. This card has an expiration date of "Eleven-Oh-One." Which means?

Across the table, LELAND--Orson Welles without the talent--goes along:

LELAND
November, Two-Thousand-One.

PORTIA
Exactly! No cash register ever crashed because it read this as "Nineteen-Oh-One."

Leland dismisses the argument with a wave. As he reclines you can hear the chair groan.

LELAND
So American Express has its act together. You saying every other electronic device out there is kosher?

Seated beside Portia, AJAY--looks like New Delhi, talks like New Jersey, dresses like New Money--chimes in:

AJAY
Actually, most companies have either bought new software or had their proprietary code corrected. We did.

Now Leland leans in, over his gut.

LELAND
It's not just software! Every electric device has a chip in it somewhere, and no one's even trying to fix those.

At Leland's side sits IKEA, pretty as a Playmate. Her eyes dart from speaker to speaker as she struggles to understand a word or two.

PORTIA

So my toaster's gonna attack me when I get home? Like in that God-awful Stephen King movie?

LELAND

"Maximum Overdrive." An underappreciated gem.

PORTIA

Luddite suspicions and bad taste in film are no substitute for evidence.

LELAND

You want evidence? Consumer goods with built-in obsolescence? Government and military hardware made by the lowest bidder?

PORTIA

All of which have been dealing with these dates for years, and nothing has happened.

LELAND

Wait 'til tomorrow.

PORTIA

Oh, I can't wait.

Ajay picks up the check off the table.

AJAY

Okay, enough friendly banter! Let's hit the road.

Ajay and Leland pull out their wallets. Leland examines the check.

LELAND

Mind if I put this on my card?

PORTIA

In case the credit card company computers wipe out at midnight?

LELAND

You never know.

PORTIA

You never know.

Ajay throws down some bills.

AJAY

No problem.

IKEA
What's the "K" stand for?

Everyone just looks at Ikea.

IKEA
In "Y2K?"

Everyone's stunned: is she for real?

PORTIA
It stands for "Thousand."

IKEA
Oh.

Ikea reflects on this while the other put on their coats.

IKEA
"Thousand" starts with a "T."

INT. ROADHOUSE CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

The four enter from the Dining Room through the double-doors and browse down an aisle.

LELAND
What is the difference between
"Y2K-Ready" and "Y2K-Compliant?"

AJAY
"Y2K-Compliant" means that your
electronics will work after
midnight--

PORTIA
And "Y2K-Ready" means you've got
enough water and ammunition, just
in case.

Leland stops, picks a pack of matches off a shelf.

LELAND
They sell waterproof matches? I'm
getting these.

PORTIA
Now you'll be ready for the
apocalypse.

IKEA
Get some of that freeze-dried
astronaut ice cream, too.

AJAY
 You guys stock up; we'll gas up
 the car.

Ajay escorts Portia to the exit.

PORTIA
 And when you say "we?"

AJAY
 I mean it's your turn to pay.

PORTIA
 Good thing my credit card works.

Ajay opens the door for Portia. He accidentally bumps CARL, a cross between Grizzly Adams and Lenin, dressed in an Army jacket and a red knit cap.

AJAY
 Pardon me? You all right?

Carl nods as he rubs his nose and limps inside. Ajay and Portia watch a half-dozen SURVIVALISTS follow Carl in, same clothes, same limp. The couple giggle as they exit.

As he rings up Leland's goodies, WAYNE eyes the new arrivals. Ikea points to under the counter glass.

IKEA
 You can buy guns here!

LELAND
 Right next to the chewing tobacco.

The Survivalists casually take positions throughout the store.

LELAND
 It's like Wal-Mart for the militia
 set. Or is Wal-Mart Wal-Mart for
 the militia set?

IKEA
 What?

LELAND
 Never mind.

Carl and his cohorts open their jackets, undo their pants, and pull out hunting rifles.

On the checkout line, ISAAC, the youngest of the Survivalists, does likewise despite Ikea's notice.

Carl waves his rifle around as he tries to hitch up his pants with his free hand.

CARL
Everybody down! On the floor,
now!

The few other PATRONS look around; all the Survivalists hold their pants up as they hold rifles.

CARL
This is a stickup! Down! Now!

The Patrons comply. Isaac levels his rifle on Wayne. Leland dives to the floor without a thought for Ikea, who belatedly follows.

IKEA
Is this the big disaster you were talking about?

LELAND
In a very personal sense, perhaps.

Only now does Carl remember to pull his knit cap/ski mask down over his face--which he can barely do with a rifle in one hand and his pants in the other.

CARL
Liberate the provisions!

Some Survivalists scurry with empty rucksacks to different aisles. At the freeze-dried foods, REBECCA searches the selection, then shakily reports:

REBECCA
They don't have the Carbonara.

CARL
What?

REBECCA
Spaghetti Carbonara. They're out.

CARL
What do they have?

The other Survivalists look to each other in confusion.

REBECCA
Uh... "Beef Boorginyon," Chicken Tetrazzini, Sweet & Sour Pork--

ISAAC
Get whatever!

REBECCA
We said no products of animal exploitation!

ISAAC
Carbonara has bacon in it!

CARL
(to Isaac)
Hey! Nobody changes the plan
unilaterally!
(to the Survivalists)
All in favor of Chicken Tetrizzini
instead of the Carbonara, raise
your hand.

A few Survivalists raise their hands.

ISAAC
Are we taking a vote in the middle
of a holdup?

Behind the counter, Wayne slowly pulls out a shotgun.

CARL
This is a popular liberation! And
the rule of the people will be
respected! Now who wants Sweet &
Sour Pork?

Wayne springs up; grabs Isaac's rifle; brains Isaac with
the butt of the shotgun; yanks free Isaac's rifle. As
Wayne turns his shotgun on the Survivalists, Carl finally
notices.

CARL
Fire!

All the Survivalists aim at Wayne and fire. Leland and
Ikea cling to each other as the shots ring out.

Wayne ducks. He stands up, looks around: where did the
bullets hit?

The Survivalists all fumble as they reload their bolt-
action rifles while they hold their pants up--or don't.

At the sight of these idiots, Wayne lowers his shotgun,
sighs.

WAYNE
Bang!

The Survivalists scream like schoolgirls and run for the
door. Wayne rounds the counter and pursues them.

Leland and Ikea cautiously lift their heads.

EXT. ROADHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

Ajay's Hummer sits beside a gas pump. Portia closes the driver's door and takes her card to the pump.

PORTIA
Keys are on the floor.

Ajay reads a sign posted on the pump.

AJAY
Did you reenter the car after
exiting?

PORTIA
Why?

Ajay takes Portia's free hand, plants it on the car.

PORTIA
Ow!

AJAY
Just prevented a static
electricity fire. You can thank
me later.

Portia swipes her card--repeatedly--without success.

PORTIA
Didn't know pumping gas could be
so hazardous. Not that I'm
successfully pumping anything yet.

AJAY
Pay at the pump may be a little
much for these country folk.

Portia heads for the Roadhouse.

PORTIA
Probably have to pay inside.

The Survivalists flee across the parking lot to a painted-over "short bus." Surprised, Portia freezes, gets caught in the stampede.

As the Survivalists pile in, the bus rumbles to life and lurches forward.

It almost runs over Ajay and Portia as it rolls out of the lot and onto the main road.

Wayne rushes up to watch the bus accelerate away. He aims and fires. The rear bumper of the bus falls in the road as the bus pulls away.

WAYNE
Did you get the license?

PORTIA
What?

WAYNE
The license plate! Of the bus!

PORTIA
I--No. I couldn't see it.

WAYNE
How 'bout the driver's face?

Leland huffs up to the car, Ikea close behind, bags in their arms.

LELAND
You're not gonna believe what just happened!

AJAY
I bet we are.

LELAND
(to Wayne)
Why didn't you shoot 'em inside when you had the chance?

Wayne squares off against this idiot with the big ideas.

WAYNE
You ever scrape buckshot and human tissue out of drywall?

LELAND
(gulps)
Would you believe me if I said "yes?"

WAYNE
It's something to avoid.
(to Portia)
You gotta stay and make a report to the police.

PORTIA
But I didn't see anything!

WAYNE
They almost ran you over--twice!

PORTIA
I recall nothing of the incident. I have nothing to contribute to a police report.

WAYNE

I guess I'll just have to pay attention when they come back for dinner!

PORTIA

Well maybe if your pump worked I would've had time to "I.D." the "perps."

WAYNE

That pump works fine.

Portia waves her card.

PORTIA

Uh, no, it doesn't.

Wayne snatches the card, examines it.

LELAND

Your card doesn't work?

WAYNE

Your card won't work.

Wayne hands the card back. The four pause at this news.

PORTIA

Why not?

WAYNE

We don't take American Express.

Once this registers, everyone exhales a nervous laugh-- except Wayne, who just walks back.

LELAND

What did he say about them coming back?

PORTIA

Good point.

Portia whips out another card, swipes it; the pump beeps.

EXT./INT. CABIN - DAY

The cabin sits in a clearing atop a wooded hill. Ajay exits the front door, returns to the Hummer. He opens the passenger door, where Portia sits half-asleep.

AJAY

You're in luck; we left you some stuff to carry in.

Portia rolls out onto her feet, stretches, yawns loudly.

PORTIA
We really are in the middle of
nowhere.

Ajay turns her around to face the canyon, as spectacular as just about any of its neighbors in the American Southwest.

AJAY
That's the point. A couple of
days in the fresh air, and you're
gonna forget about Vegas.

PORTIA
If I wanted fresh air, I wouldn't
live in L.A.

Ajay leads Portia to the rear of the Hummer.

PORTIA
And what happened to our romantic
New Year's Eve together?

AJAY
We're still together.

PORTIA
With Leland and his "special
friend."

Ajay tosses Portia a duffel bag; she catches it with an Oof!

PORTIA
How much is she costing him?

AJAY
They are genuinely dating! And
he's casting her in his next film.

Ajay grabs the rest of the luggage, slams shut the door.

PORTIA
Ah. And what is the deal with her
name?

The two walk to the front door.

AJAY
"Ikea?"

PORTIA
Is that her "stage" name?

AJAY
She doesn't look Swedish to you?