

Encapsulated Season 4 Episode 1

FADE IN:

The world is silent. A field of wheat stretches endlessly in all directions.

In the middle is a lone art gallery. The walls and ceiling are made entirely of glass. A completely transparent box, twenty feet high, a hundred feet on each side.

Inside are vibrant modern sculptures. Some on display, others still in progress. It's part gallery, part studio.

And then it begins to melt.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

COLE (31) stirs awake to the sound of the seatbelt light turning off.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (INTERCOM)

Ladies and gentlemen, we've now reached our cruising altitude of 35,000 feet. Feel free to move about the cabin at this time.

The plane is mostly quiet, with scattered conversations here and there. Cole unbuckles his seatbelt, as does his seatmate, MURRAY (40). Murray sighs with relief.

MURRAY

Finally...

(turns to Cole)

Oh hey, you're up. I'm Murray.

COLE

(they shake hands)

Cole.

MURRAY

Yeah, I didn't want to wake you.

(Cole chuckles)

You from Portland?

COLE

Nah, I'm from L.A.

MURRAY

Same. Were you... Was it business, or...

COLE

Vacation. Needed to clear my mind.

MURRAY

Right on. Yeah, I was in town for a conference, business mixer, which apparently we're allowed to start having again...

(Cole chuckles)

I used to travel alllll the time for work, before all the, you know... Man, I can't tell you how ready I am to go back to normal, now that this 'pandemic' is finally 'over'.

(Cole chuckles again)

Nah, I know it's real, I just like to see how people react... Weed out those who can take a joke from those who can't, you know? Anyways... You can tell I haven't been out much since it started.

(they both laugh)

Crazy times... Hey, I'm sorry man, don't let me keep you from your nap.

COLE

No, no no, I wasn't - I don't like taking off, so I always do that til it's over.

MURRAY

Ah. Been there, man. No worries.

(pause for a few seconds)

So, what do you do? You travel at all for work?

COLE

No, this was just for fun. I'm an artist.

MURRAY

Fucking liberal. Figures you were in Portland...

(they laugh)

Really though, that's cool, so like, but what's your JOB?

COLE

An artist.

MURRAY

Oh. I didn't think... You actually make money??

(Cole nods)

That's impressive, man. What sort of art?

COLE

It's... Hmm... If I told you it was part Vautier,  
part Hammons, does that mean anything?

MURRAY

Not. At. All.

COLE

(chuckles)

Fair enough. Basically it's... I do sculptures and  
installations that have some commentary, so not,  
not like really abstract or avant-garde art that  
people make fun of. It's still 'modern', but I  
try to make it easy to understand.

MURRAY

So like...

COLE

Like... Like one time, I put signs along a bridge  
with phrases like 'Meaningless Political Slogan'  
or 'Mass-Produced Outrage' or-

MURRAY

Oh, like the sign literally said, 'mass-produced  
outrage', or 'meaningless slogan'. Gotcha.

COLE

Right, yeah. It was a meta commentary on those  
sorts of phrases. Like one of them just said:  
'I'm angry with the other side... Or so I'm told'.

(Murray laughs)

So yeah, that sort of art.

MURRAY

That's awesome, man. I love it.

COLE

Thanks. Yeah, it's still 'art', but it's more- hopefully it's the sort of stuff that really sticks with people.

MURRAY

Right on. So... GOOD art?

COLE

(chuckles)

What about you? What was your conference for?

MURRAY

Oh, that's- not NEARLY as exciting. Banking.

(Cole nods)

I couldn't do art or anything like that, I'm a sucker for stability.

COLE

But isn't- I mean, is banking, after the whole housing crisis, isn't it-

MURRAY

No, it's rock solid. I mean, SPECIFIC banks will come and go like any business, but on the whole, no, it's not going away.

(he chuckles)

Although we do get a lot of flack. There's this one guy right now - you know, we haven't exactly won the PR battle, so there's always somebody online or in politics blaming us.

(they chuckle)

But this one guy, he literally is calling himself the Modern Moses, he's been posting all sorts of videos where he just attacks the big banks, and the CEOs, and just completely goes OFF on them. Not just banks, but like EVERYTHING: politicians, big industries, lobbyists... And man, he will just RAIL on them. It's super fun to watch.

(they chuckle again)

But yeah, you should check out his videos, just search for 'Modern Moses'. He believes that his 'divine role' is to free the everyday American from their 'bondage' to 'big corruption'.

COLE

Interesting... Nothing new under the sun, right?

MURRAY

Amen. History has taught us that history has taught us nothing.

(they chuckle)

Although I will say. He's a white man, and I'd think that a real 'Modern Moses' would be played by a black woman. Just saying. Bonus points if she's also gay or trans.

COLE

Wow... You're really toeing the line with these 'see how people react' comments.

(they chuckle)

You'd be a good artist.

MURRAY

Nah, I'd be a good COMEDIAN. Maybe. I'd probably get canceled on the first night.

(they laugh)

Anyways... Modern Moses. Check it out.

COLE

Will do. That actually... Hmm...

(sighs)

I love it AND hate it when I get an idea for a new exhibit, because I can go weeks without any ideas and then, boom, it hits me. Modern Moses. How would people react? That's it.

MURRAY

What, you mean like- I don't follow.

COLE

I mean... Ahhh...

(he groans and puts his head in his hands)

Sorry, I just, this would be perfect, okay...

(turns toward Murray excitedly)

You'll be my focus group.

MURRAY

Hit me.

COLE

So, modern Moses unleashes PLAGUES, and the exhibit is about how people react to them.

MURRAY

Oh shoot. He actually talked about 'judgements', says that if the 'elite' don't let his people go, he'll unleash them. So yeah, okay, I'm tracking. Modern Moses with modern plagues.

COLE

Right. So like, water to blood, I could do like... Would it work better as paintings or sculptures... But of course, people panic buy, like with Covid, except they're fighting over soda and juice because all the bottled water is bad now.

MURRAY

Yeah yeah, I like it so far. What are the other- I remember frogs. I failed Sunday school.

(chuckles)

Frogs... Hail, I think? Locusts?

COLE

Yeah, I'd have to revisit it. But, so-

(yawns)

Excuse me. So it was ten plagues, so each one is its own display.

(thinks quietly for a few seconds)

Thank you, by the way.

MURRAY

Oh yeah, I will take FULL credit, because I was clearly TRYING to inspire you. Obviously.

(they laugh)

No man, that's awesome, that's the sort of art I'd want to check out, like you said, cause it's still ART, but it's got a point. Where's your-

(yawns)

Sorry. Geez, that was-

COLE

Forget your coffee?

MURRAY

(chuckles)

No, actually. I forget a lot, but not that.

(yawns again)

Geez... Two for two...

(Cole yawns, then they laugh)

Don't you hate it when that happens?

COLE

Yeah, it's like a domino effect.

MURRAY

For real. But no, your-

(tries to think of the words)

Your gallery. Is it, what part of L.A.?

COLE

It's in the downtown area.

(yawns a third time)

Now I might actually need a nap... Oof...

MURRAY

Yeah man, go for it.

(also yawns a third time)

Man alive, something HIT me.

COLE

Same, and that's fine by me.

MURRAY

(reaching down to his carry-on)

Here, you want a pillow?

(he pulls one out and hands it to Cole)

I don't need it.

COLE

You sure? If you need to rest too-

MURRAY

No, no I'm- I don't sleep on planes. I never, never even get tired on them...

Cole graciously takes it and rests against the window. Murray seems on edge and is fighting his grogginess.

Suddenly, the flight attendant makes an announcement.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (INTERCOM)  
Ladies and gentlemen, we appear to have-  
(she yawns)  
We appear to have an anomaly with the-  
(she yawns again)  
Excuse me. With the cabin pressure. The pilots  
have assured me-  
(she can't stop yawning)  
There's no cause for alarm, but to be safe, we're  
deploying the oxygen masks.

The masks abruptly pop out of the overhead panels, and there's a commotion as everyone scrambles to put them on.

MURRAY  
I knew something was off..  
(quickly puts his mask on)  
Hey. Yo. They dropped the masks.

Cole groggily reaches up, puts it on, then falls asleep.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (INTERCOM)  
I repeat, there is no cause for alarm. We-  
(yawns)  
We also will be headed back to Portland for-

The transmission cuts off. Several people loudly complain, refusing to put their masks on.

Murray leans into the aisle, as do several others, to see what's going on. He gasps. The attendant is passed out on the floor near the cockpit.

MURRAY  
What the-  
(yawns)  
Alright, don't panic, it's fine, it's just the  
oxygen pressure, stay awake..

Suddenly, the plane lurches forward. People scream, and several overhead bins pop open. It quickly levels off, but then lurches again. More screaming. More panic.

Murray is getting more anxious as he tries waking up Cole.

MURRAY

Hey, hey - come on. Something's wrong.

COLE

(mumbling)

Wake me when we get there...

MURRAY

We're not getting there, we're-

(yawns)

We're going back.

COLE

(suddenly wakes up)

What? Why are, what's going on?

They both jolt forward as the plane lurches again.

MURRAY

Stay here. I'm going up front.

Cole looks anxiously out the window. The turbulence seems better now, the plane has stabilized. But Cole is worried and takes deep breaths through his mask.

Meanwhile, Murray walks through the aisles. The passengers seem to have calmed down, but Murray is horrified to see that even with their masks on, most are asleep.

Murray himself is stumbling, trying to stay awake.

MURRAY

You can do it, you can- Come on, just-

He collapses in the aisle. Only a few passengers notice, the ones like Murray who are actively fighting the sleep.

Cole is hyperventilating, gripping the armrest, and watching their descent, which is becoming more erratic.

COLE

Stay awake... Stay awake... Stay awake...

INT. GENERIC FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

A stereotypical MOTHER (29), FATHER (31), and SON (8) are sitting around the table eating breakfast and having a lively conversation.

However, the world is silent, except for the sound coming from the mini TV on the counter.

The TV program is a morning talk show, which the family is barely watching while they eat.

HOST

Joining us today, please welcome, Gen-Z CEO  
Pauline Simon, and activist Lynn Duvall.

PAULINE (41), a white woman, and LYNN (37), a black woman, smile and wave to the studio audience. The audience cheers as the women walk onstage and take their seats.

And a reminder: there's no sound coming from the family watching the show, even though they're talking and eating. Just the audio from the show itself.

The audience quiets down. The women are sitting opposite each other, with the host in the middle.

HOST

Good morning, ladies, thrilled to have you.

LYNN

Good morning!

PAULINE

Pleasure to be here.

HOST

Now, I think it's fair to say, you two have a...  
Bit of a feud going on, right?

There's an awkward pause.

PAULINE

Well, I think we certainly have our differences.

LYNN

Here we go...

PAULINE

What does that mean?

(Lynn rolls her eyes)

No, tell me, Lynn. We have an audience now, so let's get this all out. What do you mean?

LYNN

I mean, you're the queen of equivocating, and true to your role as a CEO, you are an expert at verbally dancing around issues instead of just addressing them head-on. You use phrases like: 'we certainly have our differences', but really, you mean: 'we don't get along'.

PAULINE

I just don't see why we can't be civil.

LYNN

And I don't see why you can't be HONEST.

(the audience cheers)

You say, 'let's have a dialogue', which means, 'we WON'T have meaningful action'.

(more cheering)

You say, 'your concerns are valid', which means, 'I'm not actually addressing them'.

(louder cheering)

You say, 'we're looking into it', which means, 'we're not doing a god-damned THING about it.'

And the American people are FED. UP.

Lynn is staring daggers at Pauline, who seems embarrassed, but tries to brush it off. The audience is clearly on Lynn's side, and the host has to calm them down.

HOST

Alright everyone, let's-

LYNN

Let's have a DIALOGUE?

(the audience laughs)

There's a surprise. Keep kicking the can.

PAULINE

See, I take offense to that, Lynn. You want my honest opinion? I'm offended. I am here, willing and ready to talk, and you-

LYNN

You're ready to talk, but not to LISTEN.

(the audience cheers)

We've BEEN talking, Pauline. We have talked for almost a MONTH now. I have outlined very specific and tangible ways that businesses like yours can make meaningful, practical, POSITIVE reforms, which you and other CEOs have IGNORED.

PAULINE

And as I've said before, we're looking into it. Change doesn't happen overnight.

LYNN

Which really means, 'it doesn't happen at all.'

(the audience cheers and boos at Pauline)

You know what? I'm done talking. Done. We need action and change NOW, and that very clearly is not coming from you.

(the audience boos at Pauline louder)

So I'll take action, whether you like it or not. And if you don't like it, then feel free to make those changes you've been 'looking into'.

PAULINE

Now you're just threatening me. Our company and our coalition of businesses is open to having meaningful, productive dialogue to address-

LYNN

(turning to the camera)

To everyone watching at home, take a good look: this is your oppressor. Right there.

(the camera pans to Pauline)

Through her inaction and equivocation, she has left you no choice. She leaves ME no choice.

(she looks sympathetically at the crowd)

I'm truly sorry for what's about to happen, and I sincerely hope that she'll end this quickly.

The audience cheers and continues booing at Pauline, while the host fumbles to salvage the situation.

HOST

Well, certainly, this has- some heated, we-

LYNN

I'm done. This is a waste of time.

She stands up, unclips her mic, glares at Pauline, then walks off set. The audience cheers as she leaves.

Pauline looks both distressed and annoyed, but sits and waits calmly, while the host awkwardly signals for the producers to cut to commercials.

As it's about to go to commercials, the mother turns off the TV. The son runs upstairs, and the father puts their dirty dishes in the sink.

Even as he and the mother chat, and he washes the dishes, the world is eerily silent, except for a faint rumbling that's gradually getting louder.

Suddenly, the father panics. The water in the sink is red! He recoils, as does the mother. They turn it off, but when they turn it on again, it's still red.

The boy comes back downstairs with his backpack, and is curious about the smell. The parents try to distract him, but then the mother panics when she sees the waterbottle in his backpack pocket. It's also red.

The rumbling is getting louder. She empties the bottle into the sink, then refills it from the fridge dispenser, but that water is bloody too. She rushes upstairs, the dad hurries to another room, and the son is left alone in the middle of the kitchen, confused.

SWITCH TO THE AIRPLANE CABIN.

Cole is sound asleep against the window. The rumbling is from the plane, which is descending erratically. An alarm starts going off, but nobody panics - they're all asleep.

SWITCH TO THE FAMILY.

The father is testing the water in the bathroom - both the sink and the toilet are contaminated with the blood.

In the kitchen, the son is curious about what's happening. He fills up a glass from the sink, smells it in disgust, but still takes a sip.

The mother rushes back downstairs, sees the son drinking the blood, angrily takes the glass and empties it, then immediately apologizes and hugs him. She reassures him, despite being terrified herself.

SWITCH TO THE AIRPLANE.

As the plane gets closer to the airport, there are fires, accidents, and virtually no moving traffic on the ground.

SWITCH TO THE FAMILY.

The parents wait for the son to get on the bus, wave and smile as if nothing's wrong, then hurriedly get in the car and drive to the supermarket.

Already, the parking lot is nearly full, and people are rabidly panic-buying. The father drops the mother off by the entrance, and she runs inside frantically.

She quickly realizes that all the drinks are affected: everything from bottled water to soda to juice, even milk, has turned to blood. Every label she reads on a drink has 'water' as one of the ingredients.

Overwhelmed, she collapses in the aisle, hyperventilates, and tries to keep calm while everyone swarms around her. After a few seconds, she has an idea, and rushes to the produce section to buy fresh fruit.

SWITCH TO THE AIRPLANE.

As the plane makes a rough landing on the tarmac, Cole, Murray, and the other passengers barely react. The plane careens down the runway, the alarm keeps blaring, and the rumbling becomes deafening.

GO TO BLACK. SILENCE.

SWITCH TO THE FAMILY.

That evening, the family is sitting around the TV, while drinking juice from the fruit they bought. The sink is on in the background, a slow trickle of blood coming out.

Like before, the only sound is from the TV. But this time, they're all paying close attention, even the son.

Lynn is being mobbed by the media in a downtown area.

LYNN

While it's certainly disheartening to hear that Pauline and her cohort won't do anything in response to my wake-up call, and while I still believe that change must come from the top, certainly the many shouldn't be made to suffer for the sins of the few.

(she looks directly at one of the cameras)  
Pauline - read my lips. This. Is. Your. Fault. And this fight is just beginning. But for now, the American people deserve a break. And if you won't give them one, I will.

The reporters immediately bombard her with questions, but she brushes them off and gets in her car. Several people harass her and bombard her car as she drives away.

Back in the house, the mother immediately jumps up, goes to the sink, turns up the water pressure, and waits. The son and father watch with anticipation.

After a few seconds, it sputters, and clean water starts flowing instead. Everyone is relieved. But while the son and the father eagerly fill up their glasses with water, the mother goes directly to the bathroom.

Once inside, she locks the door, turns on the sink, and starts filling the bathtub. Also, it's as if the sound has returned to the scene: the calming rush of running water, and the sound of her sobbing as she sits on the counter, trying to process everything.

SWITCH TO THE AIRPLANE CABIN.

The worst is over. The plane has stopped. Luggage is strewn about the cabin, and the passengers are slowly waking up.

Cole is still out of it, but Murray is awake. He returns to his seat, a bit groggy, and wakes up Cole.

MURRAY

Hey... Hey... We're here.

COLE

(waking up)

What did, where are-

(yawns)

What happened?

MURRAY

I dunno, man, but we had to land in Portland.  
Everyone fell asleep.

(Cole is confused)

Also, it's Tuesday.

(he shows him the date on his phone)

Guess we were out for a whole day.

COLE

What do you- no, that was just a dream, that,  
that can't- how could we-

MURRAY

No idea. Look, stay here, I'm gonna try and  
figure out what's going on.

Murray starts making the rounds, waking people up, and asking what they remember. Nobody seems to know why they inexplicably fell asleep. Even the pilots are in the main cabin area trying to get answers.

Meanwhile, Cole is looking pensively out the cabin window. In the distance, there's a tailfin of a crashed plane, jutting above the trees. And on the tarmac, hundreds of passengers from other flights are evacuating their planes and wandering in a daze towards the main terminal.

FADE OUT.