

Encapsulated Season 4 Episode 2

FADE IN:

MONTAGE OF CAR WRECKS AND AIRPLANE CRASHES - THE AFTERMATH OF EVERYONE FALLING ASLEEP FOR A DAY.

NEWS ANCHOR 1 (VOICE ONLY)

-estimated death toll of 5 million after the-

NEWS ANCHOR 2 (VOICE ONLY)

-advised to stay off the road until authorities-

NEWS ANCHOR 3 (VOICE ONLY)

-unsure what caused the widespread EDS-

INT. PORTLAND AIRPORT - DAY

The airport is packed with angry customers, desperate to book flights, all of which have been canceled.

Cole and Murray are briskly walking through the concourse: Murray with his rolling suitcase, Cole with a backpack.

Murray is browsing on his phone while they walk, unfazed by the chaos around them. But Cole seems entranced, as if the crisis were a source of artistic inspiration.

MURRAY

Listen to this - they're calling it EDS, which apparently means 'excessive daytime sleepiness'. People, it's fricking NARCOLEPSY, just say, it's a mass wave of NARCOLEPSY. Gah. Idiots...

COLE

Narcolepsy sounds too whimsical. You can't say that millions died of narcolepsy.

MURRAY

Exactly, but it's the same thing either way. Call a spade a spade.

COLE

I hear you...

MURRAY

Five million people though... Shoot...

COLE

Yeah, already it's more than Covid...

MURRAY

Crazy times...

He puts his phone away as they near the main entrance.

MURRAY

So. What's your plan to get back to L.A.?

COLE

I was actually thinking, I would extend my trip, and stay here an extra week. No point in trying to fight the crowd, plus I figure, in a week, everything will be open again.

MURRAY

In a week. Back to normal.

(he laughs abruptly)

You're funny. You live in a world where people, for NO DISCERNIBLE REASON, get mass narcolepsy-

COLE

Excuse me, sir, it's EDS.

MURRAY

EDS, fine. Hippie... My point is: car traffic? Fine. But air traffic? No, no no no, not until they've got SOME idea of what happened.

COLE

I mean, realistically speaking, they can't keep flights grounded indefinitely...

Murray looks at him as if to say 'you ARE naive', then chuckles and motions for them to go outside.

MURRAY

Come on. I got you covered.

EXT. PORTLAND AIRPORT - DAY

The two of them continue strolling casually past crowds of irate, impatient customers. They seem to be the only two who aren't panicking or on edge.

MURRAY

You ever seen Planes, Trains and Automobiles?

COLE

I know about it.

MURRAY

Excellent. I will promise you now, and I truly mean no disrespect to the late great JC, but I'm NOT going to be THAT GUY. Geez, what an iconic 'I want to punch this guy in the face' sort of role to play. If I drive you crazy, for the love of Pete, TELL ME.

COLE

(chuckles)

Will do. Thanks.

MURRAY

And just to be clear, I wouldn't do this favor for any random passenger. But you seem... Level... Plus, mass, shoot, LDS? Mass LSD?

(they chuckle)

It's, shall we say, 'unprecedented'.

COLE

Ohhh... Not this again...

They chuckle again and continue walking. By this point, they're past the main terminal, and are walking along the roads leading to the airport.

COLE

Wait, so what's our plan exactly?

MURRAY

Oh. Right. My bad. We're getting a rental car, then we're driving back.

Cole looks behind them - they're walking past all the major rental car companies.

COLE

Shouldn't we...

MURRAY

Nope, they will sell out like hotcakes, if they haven't already. There's a better place, I know a guy. Oh, shoot, thanks for reminding me.

He pulls out his phone and makes a call. Cole still seems mesmerized by the chaos. On the road are dozens of smashed and damaged cars. The police and rescue crews are trying to clear the wreckage and extract the corpses.

MURRAY

Hey, Lenny! Lenny, my buddy! It's Murray! Stanton! Murray Stanton! ... I got you that loan for your house, just before Covid? ... Hey man, pretty good, feeling rested.

(laughs)

Hey, you got any rentals? A buddy and I need to get back to L.A. ... Good, good good. Yeah, agree, but be prepared, probably got a few hours until the mob finds out... Uhh... Ten minutes? Cool. Bye.

(looking around at the wreckage)

Geez... Why didn't they just pull over?

COLE

Maybe they did. Or maybe they tried to fight it.

MURRAY

Mmm... What a mess... I still can't believe we managed to land, talk about lucky...

COLE

Yeah... Do you remember the landing? I was completely out.

MURRAY

Oh, I felt it... That's about ALL I remember, was waking up for that, then I was out cold. How DIDN'T you wake up?

COLE

I'm a heavy sleeper.

(they chuckle)

So how much further? You said ten minutes?

MURRAY

Yessir. About half a mile to go.

Cole nods, then they walk in silence for a bit. Cole is fixated on the wreckage, as if he's studying it, but also is detached from it.

Murray, meanwhile, keeps shaking his head and muttering to himself about how unbelievable it all is.

INT. RENTAL CAR COMPANY - DAY

Thankfully, the lobby is empty - the crowds are still clustered at the airport, as Murray suspected. Murray is at the counter chatting with Lenny.

Cole is standing off to the side, checking his phone, and tuning out their conversation.

Suddenly he hears a thump, then another, like something hitting the glass repeatedly.

He puts his phone away and looks out the window. Outside, on the other side of the glass, facing away from Cole, there's a large black frog (the size of a person).

Except for the mysterious thumping, which doesn't actually align with anything Cole can see, the world is silent. While Cole watches the frog curiously, everything fades into the background.

The thumping gets louder, but Cole can't tell where it's coming from. Then the frog slowly and ominously pivots toward Cole, and startles him with blood-red eyes.

Suddenly, Murray taps on Cole's shoulder. He jumps and snaps back into the present.

MURRAY

Woah, eaaaasy there. You okay?

Cole nods and composes himself. He looks back outside, and in place of the frog, he sees a helpless bird flying into the window repeatedly.

MURRAY

Poor guy... Alright, ready?

(Cole nods again)

Then we are OFF. Thanks, Lenny!

(Lenny waves politely)

Come on, gotta beat the rush.

INT/EXT. RENTAL CAR, CITY LIMITS - DAY

Murray is driving, while Cole reads articles on his phone. He seems more relaxed now. Every now and then, they pass a car accident, but it's much less hectic.

COLE

Alright, so the White House released their 'official' statement.

MURRAY

Oh man. Hit me.

COLE

Let's see... We're looking into it... We're not entirely sure what happened...

MURRAY

Do they say 'unprecedented'?

COLE

Umm... Yep. Situation is unprecedented.

MURRAY

They actually - no they don't, really??

COLE

(chuckles)

Mm-hmm... They literally say 'unprecedented'.

MURRAY

Geez... Okay, so do they have ANY ideas, or is it all just the usual PR PC non-answer crap?

COLE

Let's see... Ah, here we go. Possible causes, and there's a disclaimer saying 'NOT CONFIRMED'.

(he clears his throat)

Bio-neurological warfare. Bio-CHEMICAL warfare. RUSSIAN bio-chemical warfare. Not Chinese warfare mind you, Russian.

MURRAY

Obviously. It's always the Russians.

(Cole glares at him)

Too soon?

COLE

I think we're going to cancel you now.

(they laugh)

What else... Oh, oh okay, DOMESTIC bio-chemical or bio-neurological warfare.

MURRAY

Do they actually list BOTH of them, chemical and neurological for each one?

COLE

Yep. It's basically the same list twice. Oh, OH, hold up - they are quick to clarify that it is NOT a possible side effect of the Covid vaccine.

MURRAY

Go. Fricking. Figure.

(they laugh)

Geez...

COLE

That actually makes sense though, because everybody fell asleep, but NOT everybody has gotten the vaccine.

MURRAY

Nah, I'll still blame the vaccine.

They laugh again, then Cole turns off his phone.

COLE

Okay, seriously though. What caused it? Give me your most conspiracy-theory theory.

MURRAY

Besides the vaccine?

(they chuckle)

Hmm.. I do like blaming Russians... Or the Chinese..

COLE

Which would explain why it didn't impact Russia, or China.

MURRAY

Wait, really? I thought it was everywhere.

COLE

(shakes his head 'no')

Just the U.S.

MURRAY

Intriguing... Do they have, hmm, are there any cases they've found where someone in the U.S. DIDN'T fall asleep?

COLE

Not confirmed, no. Let's assume it was everyone.

MURRAY

But just the U.S.

COLE

Right.

MURRAY

Hmm.. Well, next step after we blame the Russians and the Chinese, is to blame Reagan. Obviously.

(they chuckle)

But I don't think it was him either...

COLE

Probably not.

MURRAY

I think my final answer is... A sleep-pandemic, something viral that spread much quicker than Covid or any other disease, and makes you sleep.

COLE

Okay, see that's what I thought too, but then I was thinking, why all at the same time? Why not staggered as it spreads? It was simultaneous...

MURRAY

Yeah... Maybe it's an AI- okay, new theory, but hear me out. It was a virus created by AI, so, there's a little timer on it, because it's not a biological virus, it's a technological one.

COLE

Interesting. Like a time bomb.

MURRAY

Mm-hmm. We've actually had it in our systems for years now, they just waited for the right time, then BOOM, press the button, they all activate.

COLE

Okay... I can work with that.

(they chuckle)

So how far is it again, to Sacramento?

MURRAY

We just left!

COLE

(laughs)

You can abandon me any time.

MURRAY

(chuckles)

Nah, you're good people. About nine hours. Why, are you TIRED? Didn't get enough rest?

COLE

I might just close my eyes for a bit.

MURRAY

Fiiiiine. I promise I'll pull over if I get even a little tired.

COLE

Sounds good. Let's pray the virus was just a one-time thing.

MURRAY

(chuckles)

Here's hoping. Yeah, go for it. You mind if I listen to the radio?

COLE

Be my guest.

He closes his eyes and leans against the window, while Murray turns on the country music station.

As the smooth guitar music fills the car, Cole drifts off into sleep. Murray chuckles to himself, seeing how quickly Cole passed out, then he starts humming to the song.

INT. GENERIC FAMILY BEDROOM - DAY

The mother and father from the first episode are asleep in their king-sized bed. The mother stirs awake, and notices that their bedroom is filled with hundreds of frogs.

There's sound this time: initially, it's just the low, almost comical rhythm of the frogs ribbiting.

MOTHER

Why...?

She tries to fall back asleep, but can't. She turns toward her nightstand, and makes eye contact with a frog who's sitting on her alarm clock.

MOTHER

Good morning...

The frog ribbits back indifferently.

The mother chuckles, then slowly stands up, making sure to not step on any frogs. They scatter away as she steps across the room. The father is still sound asleep.

MOTHER
(to the frogs)
He's all yours.

She walks out of the room and down the hall, which is also teeming with frogs. You can barely see the carpet, except wherever she steps, because the frogs disperse.

At the other end of the hall is her son's room. She knocks on the door, opens it, and is surprised to see that he's already awake.

His room is filled with toys AND frogs. He's sitting on the floor, not the least bit afraid of the frogs. In fact, he's put several of them into a Lego spaceship, and he's flying it back and forth aimlessly.

MOTHER
Morning, sweetie.

BOY
Why are there so many frogs?

MOTHER
That is a GREAT question.

She sits down across from him, making sure not to squash any frogs underneath her.

MOTHER
You remember in Sunday school, when they talked about the story of Moses?
(the boy nods)
Well, I think that's what THIS is.

BOY
But first it was blood, THEN frogs. So-
(suddenly it clicks)
Ohhh... Like yesterday. Cool! So now it's frogs, and then gnats, then flies, then boils...

MOTHER

Well, HOPEFULLY it will END with the frogs.
(she stands up)
Hopefully, Mrs. Pharaoh won't be as stubborn as
the original story..

BOY

I thought Pharaoh was a HE..

MOTHER

That was the old version. This is the NEW one.
So it'll have a NEW ending, and we will be okay.

BOY

Cool.

He resumes playing happily with the spaceship. The mother,
meanwhile, suddenly has an idea. She goes downstairs and
into the garage, then looks for a large clear storage bin.

Luckily, there are no frogs inside it.. Yet. She carries it
back upstairs, then goes into the son's room again.

MOTHER

Hey, I have a special job for you.

BOY

(stands up excitedly)
Will you pay me?

MOTHER

I will. Sure. I want you to catch as many frogs
as you can, and put them in here, and then we'll
release them in the backyard.

(she hands him the bin)
I'll give you five cents for each one.

BOY

(does the math in his head)
So.. If I get a hundred, that's.. Five dollars?
(she nods)
There's probably like... TWO hundred frogs, maybe
even THREE hundred..

The mother nods again. He smiles excitedly, then proceeds to coax/scoop as many frogs into the bin as possible.

It's a comical scene, because the frogs keep jumping out... But that doesn't deter him, he just keeps at it. He learns quickly that he should keep the lid on except when he's putting one inside, and that makes it much easier.

The mother is amused and proud of herself, and after watching him enthusiastically chase the frogs for a bit, she returns to the bedroom and wakes up the father.

MOTHER

You were right about it being Moses...

FATHER

Huh? What about Moses...?

MOTHER

At least this is better than no water.

FATHER

What?

Suddenly, he notices the frogs. He recoils and panics, but the mother just giggles.

MOTHER

They're kinda cute, I dunno...

FATHER

And filled with diseases...

MOTHER

You don't know that. Come on.

She giggles again while he squirms - several frogs have taken a liking to him, and he's trying to shake them off.

The mother, meanwhile, goes downstairs. The son runs past her enthusiastically with the bin. She smiles and seems relieved at how relatively manageable this 'plague' is. Even when she discovers a frog in her coffee mug, she just laughs and isn't grossed out by it.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Cole wakes up - the car is parked, and Murray is gone. He yawns and looks around. They're at a cheap motel with a neon sign and a charming, but clearly outdated, exterior.

He rubs his eyes, then gets out and stretches his legs. Meanwhile, Murray is just returning from the lobby.

MURRAY

Hey man, perfect timing!

(chuckles)

Sorry I didn't wake you, but in my defense, there's a distinct possibility that you would have disliked the country music...

COLE

(laughs)

No, I appreciate it. Not because of the music, that's fine. I'm more of a night owl, so it worked out perfect.

MURRAY

Good to hear. Alright, here's your key. 112.

(hands him the card)

I'll be in 105.

COLE

Wait, we're not- I just thought we'd-

MURRAY

Share a room? No sir. I need my space.

COLE

What about, how much do I owe you?

MURRAY

(waves dismissively)

We'll figure it out tomorrow. I trust you.

(walks to his room)

Besides, these are UNPRECEDENTED times.

They both chuckle, then Cole grabs his backpack, shuts the car door, and heads to his room.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Cole is laying on the bed, wide awake, and tossing a rubber-band ball up at the ceiling.

Cut to him watching television. Most stations are showing some sort of coverage about the mass sleep (the EDS), with experts and politicians mindlessly debating what caused it.

He turns toward the clock: it's only 10:30. He sits up, puts on his shoes, grabs his wallet, and heads outside.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Cole knocks on Murray's door. No response. He knocks again and still nothing.

COLE

(unsure whether Murray is there)

Hey, ummm... I'm gonna, I'm just gonna find a grocery store or mini mart, or, just to get something to hold me over... You want anything?

MURRAY (FROM INSIDE THE ROOM)

Beef jerky if they have it.

COLE

(chuckles)

Beef jerky. Got it.

MURRAY (FROM INSIDE THE ROOM)

There's a store just down the street, about a two-minute walk. Can't miss it.

COLE

Thanks...

(he starts to leave)

You wanna join me?

MURRAY (FROM INSIDE THE ROOM)

Nah man, I'm asleep.

Cole chuckles again, then sets out toward the main road.

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

As Cole gets closer, he sees the panic buyers. Even this late at night, the parking lot is jam-packed, and shoppers are leaving the store frantically, with carts stacked full of water, canned goods, toilet paper, meat, pasta, etc.

COLE

(to himself)

Come on, people... Come on... We did this already...
Have we learned nothing from Covid?

He groans and braces himself as he enters the store.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Cole looks around at the chaos, sighs, grabs a basket, then proceeds calmly toward the snack aisle.

But something seems off as he looks around. Despite the mob coursing through the aisles, the shelves seem... Full...

Out of curiosity, Cole heads toward the toilet paper, and sees that all the shelves are completely stocked.

In fact, as he watches in confusion, the rolls of TP are actually falling off the shelves by themselves, without anybody taking them! Somebody rushes by and grabs a pack from the shelf, and within seconds, a new one replaces it!

COLE

What the...

He takes a closer look. It's as if there's an invisible conveyor belt on each shelf, that's slowly pushing the items off onto the floor.

Cole is bewildered. He focuses on a section of tissues, then quickly pulls every box off the shelf. It's only empty for a few seconds, when suddenly a new box materializes at the very back. A few seconds later, it gets pushed forward by another one that mysteriously appeared out of thin air.

COLE

This has to be a dream... Wake up, Cole...

He walks slowly past the other aisles. In one, there's a foot-deep layer of cereal boxes on the floor. In another, two employees are laying down plastic bags to try and contain the mess from falling glass marinara jars.

COLE

This is not real, this is NOT real... Wake up...

He keeps closing and opening his eyes intensely. It's real. He's not dreaming. Finally, he just starts laughing at how absurd it all is.

COLE

Unbelievable...

(to a passing employee)

Only in America, right?

EMPLOYEE

Right? And hey, just take what you want. Please. Don't bother paying, seriously.

COLE

Really?? No, I'm not, I don't want to be-

EMPLOYEE

Dude. Seriously. At this rate, we're literally gonna run out of space. No joke. I don't know what the hell this is. But if you want to help, take as much as you can.

COLE

Okay... Thanks.

The employee seems more concerned than Cole. She rushes to another aisle and clears a path through the clutter.

Cole, meanwhile, grabs a pack of beef jerky, then watches with awe and delight as they slowly replenish, and then spill onto the floor.

FADE OUT.