

Encapsulated Season 4 Episode 4

FADE IN:

INT. COLE'S ART STUDIO - DAY

The song from the previous episode is still looping, and Cole looks like he didn't get any sleep.

Nonetheless, he's up at 7AM, doing push-ups and sit-ups, and humming along with the music.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE PARKING LOT - DAY

The father from the generic family parks his truck near the front of the store. It's mildly busy, and there are a few panic buyers - but it's not chaotic or overly crowded.

The father tucks the cuffs of his jeans into his boots before opening the door. Then he cautiously steps out onto the pavement, which is swarming with lice.

He curses to himself, shuts the door, locks the truck, and hurries inside. Unlike the frogs, the lice don't disperse wherever he steps, and he has to keep brushing them off.

BACK TO COLE

Cole is humming nonchalantly to the song, and taking down the paintings from his last exhibit. He glances at the traffic outside - the drivers seem angrier than usual, and most of them are honking and shouting in frustration.

BACK TO THE FATHER

Inside the store, the father finds an employee, who's casually sweeping the lice outside. The floors inside are much more lice-free than the pavement or sidewalk.

FATHER

Excuse me. Um, bug spray? Where's that at?

EMPLOYEE

We're sold out.

FATHER

Figures... Okay, what about, like, fly paper, or bug screens, some sort of repellent.

EMPLOYEE

Look, buddy, you think you're the first one to figure out it's Moses all over again? We sold most of that stuff DAYS ago. Try to keep up.

BACK TO COLE

Cole is in the back room now, carefully packaging and boxing the paintings. And still humming with the song. He's trying not to let it bother him.

BACK TO THE FATHER

The father is discouraged as the employee walks away, but then he follows after him.

FATHER

Hey, hey!

(the employee turns around)

Look... If you were in my position, and you had a family to take care of... What would you buy?

(the employee seems indifferent)

Come on. Just... Help me out. Please. What would help get rid of the flies, once they come? Something you're NOT sold out of?

EMPLOYEE

(thinks it over)

I dunno... Maybe a box fan? Won't get rid of them, but at least it'll keep 'em out of your face.

FATHER

Yeah... True... Perfect, thank you. Appreciate it.

He starts to leave, then pauses, and turns to the employee.

EMPLOYEE

Aisle four.

The father nods, thanks him again, then heads to the aisle.

BACK TO COLE

Suddenly, the music ends. Cole is mid-packaging, but he immediately stops and starts laughing with relief.

A few seconds later, Murray texts him: *FINALLY!!!*

Cole smiles, then finishes packing in blissful silence.

INT. MURRAY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Unlike Cole's studio, which was generally organized, clean and open, Murray's apartment is crammed full of food and miscellaneous supplies. There are towers of food boxes, cases of beer, and a stack of unopened TP rolls.

Murray is sitting at the table, blithely eating a bowl of cereal in his pajamas and reading the newspaper. There's a knock at the door.

MURRAY

Come in!

COLE (OUTSIDE)

(tries the knob)

It's locked!

MURRAY

Oh. Right. Just a second!

He takes another bite of cereal, then gets up, navigates his way through the maze of boxes, and unlocks the door.

MURRAY

It's quiet again. I don't know if you heard.

(they chuckle)

Come on in. I guess I should say, I don't know if you HAVEN'T heard. Because it's quiet.

COLE

Good point.

(looks around in confusion)

Wow. This is... Umm... Hoarder much?

MURRAY

Huh? Oh, no no no, this is all from-
(bursts out laughing)
Hoarder... Yeah, I guess it kinda looks like that...

COLE

Yeah... This is all from the other day??

MURRAY

Mm-hmm. I'm doing my 'civic duty', man.
(Cole rolls his eyes)
No I'm serious, cause of all the, cause like,
this'll all end up in a landfill if somebody
doesn't take it. So... I stocked up on all the
non-perishables that I WILL need.

COLE

You're saying you'll use ALL of this?

MURRAY

Eventually, yeah. You want any?

COLE

Why don't- just give it to the homeless, or like
a foodbank or something...

MURRAY

The homeless deserve what they've got. Actually,
I had to fight some homeless people for this.
(Cole is mortified)
I'm kidding. Cole. Buddy. It was a joke.
(Cole is relieved)
Apparently the foodbanks had an overflow too,
wasn't just the stores. So they're doing FINE.
(he chuckles)
You know, if anything, I should be TAKING stuff
from the foodbanks. Anyways... Have a seat, man.
Find a spot in the cornucopia. Let me just clear
this off...

Cole chuckles and sits at the table. Murray grabs the
cereal bowl, and walks it over to the sink while he
finishes eating. Cole, meanwhile, is still incredulous at
Murray's stockpile.

Once Murray is done, he loudly tosses the plastic bowl into the sink, which startles Cole. Then he returns and sits across from Cole at the table.

MURRAY

So... The song... The new national anthem...

(they both chuckle)

You know they're suing the dude who wrote it?

Big national lawsuit, claiming he caused an 'unprecedented' level of emotional duress.

COLE

I'm pretty sure he's dead...

(realizes Murray is joking)

Oh. Nice. Although I wouldn't put it past us to actually do that...

MURRAY

Right? Gotta sue someone...

(he gets up again)

Sorry, where are my manners, um - you hungry?

Coffee, juice, anything?

(Cole shakes his head 'no')

I got PLENTY. I don't know if you noticed.

COLE

(chuckles)

I'm good for now. I might take something on my way out though.

MURRAY

(sits back down)

Good thinking. Yeah, help yourself. Please.

COLE

Thanks. But yeah, the song... You get any sleep?

MURRAY

What do you think?

(chuckles)

Did YOU? You said you're a heavy sleeper.

COLE

No, not through this.

MURRAY

Rough. So much for the DAY of sleep...

COLE

Yeah, seriously...

(they chuckle)

I think I hated it after... The tenth time? I was actually good til then. I really like the song.

MURRAY

Oh wait, it's an actual song?

COLE

Yeah... That's why I, when earlier I said, the guy who wrote it died...

MURRAY

Ohhh... I thought YOU were kidding TOO.

(laughs)

So it's a real song? What's it called?

COLE

It's called Gnossienne, it's a classical song.

MURRAY

Mmm. Well, I guarantee nobody will be listening to it forever... Literally, it'll be at the top of the 'hundred most hated songs in America' list.

(they chuckle)

I think I got sick of it after the third time, you're a stronger man than I am.

COLE

It's because you're a corporate sell-out, and I'm an artist.

MURRAY

Got 'em. You're not wrong...

(they chuckle again)

Well... Now what? Has he posted the next one?

COLE

Let me check... He hadn't as of this morning, but maybe now that it's over...

Cole pulls out his phone and checks the Youtube channel. While he does that, Murray gets up, goes to the kitchen, pours himself a cup of coffee, and returns.

MURRAY

Anything?

COLE

Not yet...

(refreshes the page)

Yeah, just the one about the noise.

MURRAY

I mean, he made his point, now we'll see if anything comes of it...

COLE

Yeah... Let's see how the media is reacting..

He looks up headlines, then starts reading them aloud.

COLE

Okay, we have: 'Unknown bio-neurological terrorist strikes again'... 'Experts unsure what caused the mass AUDITORY HALLUCINATION'...

MURRAY

I like that one.

COLE

(chuckles)

'Russia has begun a new phase of psychological and social warfare'... 'White House consulting with acoustic specialists to determine the cause'... Here's a good one, you'll especially like this: 'Videos of Gnessin become the most downvoted in Youtube history'.

MURRAY

Nice!

COLE

And... Nothing about Moses, or- oh wait! Hold up, we've got a possible media sighting!

MURRAY

Oh?

(leans closer)

Wait, don't tell me... Drudge Report?

COLE

Even better - Fox.

MURRAY

About time... What happens when you search specifically for him? Anything?

COLE

Let's see... No, just Fox and some smaller blogs, none of the main outlets.

MURRAY

I guess it's a start. What is Fox saying?

COLE

Oh, basically that he seems to be behind it, confirmed that the videos were all released before the actual events. But, they also suspect that he has ties to the Chinese government, and he's Xi Jinping's mouthpiece. So...

MURRAY

Hey, publicity is publicity, right?

(chuckles)

Auditory hallucination... Geez... I thought, and I'm no doctor, mind you... Aren't hallucinations always just for the one person?

COLE

Usually... I think there are some documented-

(pauses)

'Documented' cases where it's a mass thing, but usually it's just the one person. And it wasn't, like - obviously it wasn't loudspeakers, because no matter where you were, it was the same volume... So it, I guess it HAS to be neurological, right?

(pauses)

What do you think? How would you explain it?

MURRAY

Honestly, man, I'm just writing it off as supernatural. I don't even care which God or religion it is, but I'm not gonna waste time speculating or coming up with other theories. Clearly this Moses guy is in touch with some... Plane of existence... That lets him do all this...

COLE

So, only HE can access it? This spiritual plane?

MURRAY

I dunno. Maybe other people can too, but he's, like WITHIN that plane, he's on a higher level.

COLE

Okay, so he's NOT working with China.

MURRAY

Nah, he transcends global politics.

(chuckles)

And there's no way they let Xi anywhere CLOSE to that plane. It's only enlightened people.

COLE

Well, that would explain why I'm not on it... Seems like you have to 'light up' for that sort of en-'light'-enment...

(they laugh)

Are you on it? Is that how you know about it?

MURRAY

Nah. I'm only a level 3 lava lamp... They don't let you in until you're level 12.

COLE

Mmm. Better get a move on, then.

(they chuckle)

Personally, I think there is a rational, non-spiritual explanation... But... It may be years or even centuries before we understand it, so, for now, I'm with you, I'll just group it in the 'things we don't quite understand yet, but we will someday' category.

MURRAY

That's a very reasonable, clear-headed approach.
You just got demoted one lava lamp.

(they laugh)

Anyways... You're welcome to stay, I'm off today,
they're letting us take some R&R...

COLE

I guess Moses got what he wanted.

(Murray is confused)

Big corporation treats its employees better?

MURRAY

Ohhh... Yeah, I guess he did...

(chuckles)

But yeah, I'll probably binge-watch something.
Or maybe try to organize all this shit.

COLE

Thanks... I think I'll take off. I just figured,
now that we're apocalypse-friends...

MURRAY

Yeah, for sure, man. Let's regroup whenever he
posts the next video.

COLE

Sounds like a plan.

(stands up, Murray escorts him to the door)

Have fun with all this.

MURRAY

Oh wait, you want any?

COLE

Nah, maybe next time. Thanks though.

MURRAY

No worries. Hit me up. Enjoy the quiet.

COLE

Will do!

Cole chuckles, they wave goodbye, then he heads back home.

BEGIN SEQUENCE - GO TO BLACK. THERE'S A FAINT BUZZING,
THEN A CLICK, THEN A WHIRRING, LIKE A FAN TURNING ON.

INT. COLE'S STUDIO - DAY

Show various scenes of Cole pulling out canvases, paint,
and brushes. While he sets up his workspace, the sound of
the fan is overlaid with Pauline and Lynn.

PAULINE (VOICE ONLY)

Let me reiterate, we do NOT, repeat, do NOT
negotiate with terrorists, even if we may agree
with their agenda. And we agree with Ms. Duvall.
The American people deserve a change.

INT. MURRAY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Similar to Cole, there are scenes of Murray re-stacking,
grouping, and sorting through his surplus. He even takes
some of the excess down the block and distributes it to
the homeless (in exchange for marijuana).

LYNN (VOICE ONLY)

Pauline, you have eyes, but you don't see, and
your ears are stopped up. In your ten years as
a CEO, you've done virtually NOTHING to improve
your employee's conditions, wages, or benefits.
Why should we believe anything you say?

BACK TO COLE'S STUDIO

Cole is sound asleep. His studio is a mess. The sun is
starting to set through the glass ceiling.

PAULINE (VOICE ONLY)

I hear your concerns, Ms. Duvall, but I'm also
not the one punishing innocent people on behalf
of my supposed agenda to HELP them.

BACK TO MURRAY'S APARTMENT

Murray is sitting on a throne of TP rolls, smoking a blunt,
and contentedly surveying his stockpile (which is smaller,
more contained, and more organized now).

LYNN (VOICE ONLY)

It pains me that I have to resort to these drastic measures to get your attention, Pauline. It pains me more that they haven't worked.

INT. GENERIC FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

The mother and father are seated at the table, watching a live debate with Pauline and Lynn on their TV.

The house is full of flies - like a thin fog everywhere, crawling and buzzing on everything. The only empty space is over the table, because they have two large box fans blowing the flies away.

LYNN (ON TV)

You're still not moved. You're still RE-moved. History won't look kindly on you, or your type, when this is all over. Mark my words, this-

The mother turns off the TV and puts her head on the table. They sit in silence, except for the whirring fans and buzzing flies. Finally, the father breaks the tension.

FATHER

Well... Hopefully it'll be over tomorrow, at least they only last a day...

MOTHER

(lifts her head up)

Really? That's where your mind goes, 'it's fine, it's only a day...'?

FATHER

I didn't mean-

MOTHER

Oh if it's just a DAY, then why get upset? Really, we should be GRATEFUL that these women can't agree, because we only suffer for a DAY, which is COMPLETELY manageable.

FATHER

That's not what- I'm sorry if-

MOTHER

You want to know where MY mind goes?

(the father is silent)

Well, this is clearly the story of Moses, right?
Which means that, sooner or later - next Friday,
at the rate of ONE DAY that we're going now,
that'll be the TENTH plague, which is...

(she takes a deep breath)

So then I'm thinking, it's okay, we just need to
buy a LAMB before then. But then the FIFTH one,
that's when all the ANIMALS get sick, so then,
I'm thinking, THAT won't work, because it'll die
before we need it. Right?

(another breath)

So basically, we're stuck, because if anybody has
a lamb that DOESN'T die, probably from overseas,
you know that they'll be selling the blood for
THOUSANDS of dollars, which we can't afford, so,
we won't be able to stop it. We'll-

She's interrupted by the son running downstairs. He seems
happy as ever, unfazed by the bugs. The mother tries to
hide her distress.

MOTHER

Hey sweetie, what're you up to?

SON

I'm gonna make a SPACE SUIT!

MOTHER

A space suit? Wow, that's a good idea. I think
we've got some old costumes in the garage.

SON

Cool. You know what would REALLY help? The frogs.
Because they eat flies.

MOTHER

That's true, that's very true. Hey, you should go
to the lake and see if you can find any.

SON

Okay!

He runs excitedly out the door. The mother watches through the window until he's out of sight, then starts sobbing.

FATHER

Hey, hey... It's alright.

MOTHER

It's NOT. It's- what part of ANY of this is REMOTELY alright? This is-

(sobbing)

I don't think I could- I think it would kill me... I can't even think about-

She sobs harder. The father gets up, kneels next to her, and holds her tightly.

FATHER

Okay, let's talk this out. Even though the plagues themselves are like Moses, Moses and Pharaoh are different. So it's already not a perfect parallel, right?

MOTHER

I know what you're- please don't.

FATHER

You know, I've been thinking about this too, I'm trying to explain why I'm not stressed about it. Especially after the flies, it actually makes me feel a lot better.

MOTHER

Why, because they don't bother HIM?

FATHER

(chuckles)

No, although that is a plus. Could you imagine if we had a daughter?

(the mother bursts out laughing)

No. The thing about the flies is, that in the original story, that was the first one where the plague DIDN'T affect the Israelites. The three before that affected everyone. But the flies in OUR version are everywhere, right?

MOTHER

Well, just in the U.S.

FATHER

Right. But supposedly, this gal, Lynn, she says she's fighting for the working class, right? But... The working class still got flies.

(he gestures around them)

Everyone did. So it's not a perfect parallel to the original one. So to ME, that means, maybe it won't END like the original one, either.

MOTHER

But the actual PLAGUES are the same. Actually, that means it's WORSE, because she's sending them on everyone, even the last one.

FATHER

But maybe she's doing that to- maybe her plan is to make the first ones WORSE than in Exodus, but then Pharaoh will cave in sooner.

MOTHER

So we might not make it to ten... And in exchange, we'll suffer even WORSE. That's encouraging.

FATHER

I'm just saying, it's already starting different, so maybe it'll end different.

(he strokes her hair)

Plus, Lynn seems sort of empathetic.

MOTHER

Yeah... I think if we made it that far, she would give people a way out...

(chuckles)

She probably wouldn't even want to kill SHEEP...

FATHER

Probably not... Whatever happens, he'll be okay. I promise I won't let anything happen to him.

He continues consoling her, while the flies buzz around the outskirts of their protective bubble.

INT. COLE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Cole slowly wakes up. The room is cloaked in grays, and everything is shrouded in shadows. Even the moonlight through the ceiling seems grayed out.

Cole groggily grabs his phone, checks the time (1:19 AM), and sees the Youtube notification that the Modern Moses posted another video.

COLE

What've we got...

He sits up, goes to the sink, pours a glass of water, and is about to look up the video, when he does a double take.

COLE

No way... No way...

He excitedly turns on the light. Like the moon, the light is a bright gray. The room lights up, but the color's gone. Everything is black, white and gray.

Cole is grinning from ear to ear. He runs outside, and marvels at the grayscale cityscape, which looks like a picturesque scene from an old-style movie.

FADE OUT.