

Encapsulated Season 4 Episode 6

FADE IN:

INT. MURRAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Murray sets the timer on his microwave for 30 minutes, and puts a pasta bake into the oven. He cleans the dishes that he just used to make the pasta.

His apartment still has an excessive amount of boxed food and supplies, but at least he can walk through the piles, which are all organized by type.

Once he's done washing dishes, he goes to the living room and lays on the couch. He checks his phone: 6:33 PM, then reads a Youtube notification.

There's a new video posted on the Modern Moses channel: 'The Sixth Judgment: Layers of Disorientation'.

Murray swipes the notification away, yawns, stretches, then closes his eyes for a quick nap.

EXT. CITY BLOCK - DAY

A crowd is out in the gold streets, chipping and hammering away at the gold. Murray surveys the crowd - he himself doesn't have any tools. After some observation, he spots a burly guy with a pickaxe: BIG SIMON (45).

MURRAY

Yo! Big Simon!  
(the man turns toward him)  
What's hanging, man?

BIG SIMON

Eyyy... How you doin' Murray?  
(they side hug)  
Shoot man, I don't think I've seen you since,  
when did we last...  
(they think it over)  
Was it before Covid?

MURRAY

I think so... Cause you quit in... 2019?

BIG SIMON

Yeah... Damn... Been too long. You still there?

MURRAY

Oh yeah. I'm a sucker for stability.

(they laugh)

Hey, I hate to be that guy who... I don't want to sound like a freeloader, but...

BIG SIMON

You want to use this?

(Murray nods)

Absolutely, man. I need a break anyways.

(he hands Murray the pickaxe)

Besides, I never really paid you back for that recommendation you gave me... New job is waaaay better fit. Much more flexible. No offense.

MURRAY

None taken.

(he starts chipping at the gold)

They letting you work from home?

BIG SIMON

Yeah man. You guys?

MURRAY

Please.

(they laugh)

I don't mind though. I like the office.

BIG SIMON

Did I tell you, I got regional manager?

MURRAY

No way! Wait, why are you out here then?

(Big Simon is confused)

Wouldn't that be better pay? You don't need this for like, extra cash, do you?

Big Simon laughs and pats Murray on the back patronizingly.

BIG SIMON

Who said I NEED any of this?

Now Murray is confused. He glances at a large bucket that Big Simon has filled with gold clumps.

MURRAY

I don't follow...

BIG SIMON

Look, this is basic supply and demand. Gold is only valuable because it's scarce. BUT, now that we have an oversupply...

MURRAY

The price will go down...

BIG SIMON

Mm-hmm. Which means-

(he holds up a piece of gold)

This'll be worth SHIT tomorrow.

(he chuckles)

But these idiots don't know that.

(gestures to the crowd)

So, I'm gonna sell my stash to people like you-

No offense-

(Murray chuckles)

People who want it and don't have the tools to get it. I'll wait until most of the road gets torn up, then they'll start getting desperate. And then I make ACTUAL money selling it to them.

MURRAY

Son of a... See, that's why you left, you're too smart for us.

(Big Simon laughs)

Well, speaking as one of the idiots-

(they both laugh)

I'll just keep these as souvenirs. Get to tell people I was part of the gold rush of 22.

BIG SIMON

(like a timer going off)

**BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!**

Murray sits up on the couch, rubs his eyes, then rushes to the oven, turns it off, turns off the timer, and takes out the pasta bake.

Just in time, too - there's a knock at the door.

MURRAY

One minute!

He carries the pasta bake to the table, hurriedly lights a candle in the center, runs to the bathroom, combs his hair, sprays on some cologne, then rushes to the front door, while the guest continues knocking.

MURRAY

Coming!

He stops just short of opening it, catches his breath, adjusts his hair again, then smiles and opens it.

It's ASHLEY (37), the woman he danced with at the bar. She's excited to see him, although she immediately seems a bit concerned by all the boxes.

ASHLEY

Hey there...

(looking around)

Oh god... Please tell me you're not a hoarder...

MURRAY

What? Oh, OH, no no no, that's-

(he chuckles)

It's all from last week, when the, during- it-

(fumbles for the words)

When the stores had all the food. I thought I'd stock up, free groceries, right? Don't worry, it's all, not stuff that goes bad.

ASHLEY

Ohh... But you have a job, right?

MURRAY

Yeah. Yeah, of course. I'm just cheap, but I'll use all of this eventually.

ASHLEY

Okay... Promise you're not a hoarder?

MURRAY

Promise. Two weeks ago, this place was spotless.

(chuckles)

And in a month or two, it'll be spotless again.

Do you want to come in?

ASHLEY

Oh, yeah. Sorry. I just. It threw me, is all.

(she giggles and steps inside)

Hi! Sorry about that. Good to see you again.

MURRAY

Likewise. You find the place okay?

ASHLEY

Mm-hmm. I tell you, have you been out driving since this morning?

MURRAY

No, not yet. I was out earlier just to get in on the action, Why, is it pretty crazy?

ASHLEY

Well, I mean the roads are just GONE, it's all dirt and mud now... At least the PEOPLE are gone, but still...

MURRAY

Yeah, it's crazy. Hey, speaking of...

He quickly runs into his bedroom. Ashley looks around at the boxes, and seems convinced that it really is just a stockpile of actual food and supplies, not junk.

She also notices the TP throne, which makes her giggle. Murray returns with a few large pieces of gold.

ASHLEY

Oh wow. Is that from today?

Murray nods and hands one to her. She's mesmerized by it.

MURRAY

Yeah, I'm keeping them just for fun.

(she's confused)

Well cause, you know, the value will go down since everyone has it now...

(she understands)

It's basic supply and demand.

ASHLEY

That's a good point, actually...

MURRAY

Thanks. I make those every now and then.

(they chuckle)

So. Shall we eat? I have a LOT of pasta.

ASHLEY

I didn't want to say anything.

(they laugh, then kiss for a few seconds)

And then after that, we can...

MURRAY

Or... We can start now...

ASHLEY

You know, normally I like to eat first, helps me settle into it.

(they kiss again)

But this is the apocalypse. Who knows how long we'll have left...

MURRAY

Mmm... We could die any second.

(kissing passionately)

We wouldn't want any regrets.

They continue making out. They both drop the gold pieces onto the floor as the kissing intensifies. Soon, they're all over each other, and they proceed into the bedroom. Murray slams the door, and things continue to escalate.

The camera slowly pans away from the bedroom door to the gold pieces on the ground. Except they're not gold anymore. They're clumps of asphalt.

INT. GENERIC FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

The mom is watching TV by herself. She's covered in sores, and has a bottle of lotion on the table, which she's continually applying to her skin.

On TV, Lynn and Pauline are debating via a video call, and they're also covered in sores.

LYNN (TV)

Thoughts and prayers. Thoughts and prayers.  
Because ACTIONS and CHANGES are too hard.

PAULINE (TV)

I think it's ironic that you're blaming ME for my inaction on these... 'Judgments'... When YOUR action is sending them on innocent people! So yes, Lynn, my thoughts and prayers DO go out, because I'm saddened by what you're doing. Truly.

(she chuckles)

At least this time, you're letting yourself be part of it. I'm glad to see you're not immune from your own terrorism..

LYNN (TV)

Nor are you. How does that feel, Pauline, not being insulated from reality? Huh? This must be an unsettling feeling for you especially.

(she scoffs)

And I would love nothing. More. Than. To stop. Give people the meaningful change they deserve, and I'll call all of this off.

PAULINE (TV)

Give me a break...

LYNN (TV)

Excuse me??

PAULINE (TV)

You enjoy this, don't you? Nothing I do will convince you that 'meaningful change' is really taking place. You like that things are broken, because it justifies your outrage.

LYNN (TV)

Pauline. Trust me when I say, if the system actually WORKED, I wouldn't BE outraged.

(the mother chuckles in agreement)

If you spent even a FRACTION of the effort that you put into your sanitized PC press releases, your speeches where you admit NO culpability, even a FRACTION, and put it towards actual, tangible change - I would relent.

PAULINE (TV)

I have taken action! What is this right now? What are we doing right-

LYNN (TV)

This is ALL you're doing. Because if you can just TALK your way out of it, people will-

PAULINE (TV)

Excuse me. Excuse me, Lynn. You're saying that I am only doing this for the publicity, so that I don't look like the bad guy? And yet, YOU are explicitly trying to justify the INDISPUTABLY harmful actions YOU'RE taking! By blaming ME!

(Lynn glares at her silently)

Wow. You should be ashamed. And it kills me that people like you have such a victim mentality, you're unable to take any responsibility for-

LYNN (TV)

People like ME? Why, because I'm BLACK??

PAULINE (TV)

Oh my gosh, this is NOT about RACE! I meant, radical activists who think that-

LYNN (TV)

Who have a victim mentality? Who think that the rich white people are evil and would rather blame them than fix their own problems? Right?

PAULINE (TV)

Unbelievable. That's completely- no, nope, that's not what I meant. And I'm done for today.

Pauline turns her camera off. Lynn gasps, as does the mom, who's clearly on Lynn's side.

LYNN (TV)

Ah yes. Hide behind the excuse of 'the angry black woman tried to make it about race, so therefore I can't keep talking to her'.

(she sighs)

Well, I'm sorry everyone. I really, truly am. Not in a 'thoughts and prayers' way. It-

(she tears up a bit)

It HURTS me to see all the suffering, and it PAINS me that these judgments are what it takes to rouse the upper class from their-

(she sniffles)

And it doesn't even work. She won't even have a dialogue anymore. You saw it yourself.

(she sighs)

I really am sorry. I'm sure by now, you all know what's coming next... All I can say is, be safe, and pray that some people come to their senses...

The mom nods and clicks off the TV.

MOTHER

Amen...

She looks around the house, still scratching her sores and wincing at the pain. After a few seconds, she looks up an article on her phone called: '10 ways you can prepare for the hail and thunderstorm'.

She reads through the recommendations (straightforward and factual tips, nothing sensational), then calls the father.

MOTHER

Hey, quick question - you're planning to get plywood for the windows, right? Moses and Pharaoh STILL aren't getting along, so...

FATHER (PHONE)

(chuckles)

Go figure. Yeah, that'll be my next stop after the grocery store.

The mother is relieved, then confused.

MOTHER

Grocery store? Aren't you at the pharmacy...?

FATHER (PHONE)

I was, they were out of everything.

MOTHER

Even aloe vera?

FATHER (PHONE)

Yep. They had a sign on the door.

MOTHER

So you didn't actually CHECK the store?

FATHER (PHONE)

No, I did. But I mean, the sign was RIGHT, everything was sold out. But yes, I did check.

MOTHER

Okay. Just making sure.

(she sighs)

Check EVERYWHERE. Even the discount aisle, maybe there's some there that people overlooked.

FATHER (PHONE)

Copy that. And I'm gonna stock up on batteries and food too. Figure, everyone's buying lotion, so they might have other stuff in stock again...

MOTHER

Good thinking. Okay. Love you.

FATHER (PHONE)

Love you too. Bye.

She hangs up, takes a few deep breaths, and tries to stop scratching at the sores. She can't help it though, and she groans from the pain as she starts scratching again.

Similarly, she's not comfortable with the silence, and she 'scratches the itch' by turning on the TV again.

Cut to the timelapse of the gold rush (the video that Cole made in the previous episode). Except it's in reverse.

It starts in the evening, at the height of the chaos, when the road has been completely destroyed. But as it goes backwards in time, the crowd thins out, and the street becomes more and more intact.

INT. COLE'S STUDIO - DAY

Cole pauses the video. He's sitting at his desk, watching the video on his laptop. He clicks forward a few frames, freezing it on a perfect shot: in the foreground, a man with a pickaxe is in mid-swing.

Cole applies a black-and-white filter, then sepia, then leaves it in color. Then he plays the video, going from start to finish this time, pausing occasionally.

Suddenly, there's an earthquake! Cole is knocked violently out of his chair, and he braces himself under the desk. After a few seconds, it stops. Back to normal.

COLE

That can't be it...

He gets out and looks around at the aftermath. His shelves have fallen over, and there are books and paint supplies scattered on the floor. There's also some broken glass in the kitchen area. But nothing supernatural.

Cole sighs, then sits back at the computer and keeps editing the video. Suddenly, he does a double take.

The time isn't showing on his screen. There's a section where it usually displays the date/time, but it's blank.

He checks his phone: it doesn't have the date/time either. Then he checks the kitchen area - the microwave and stove are both flashing 12:00.

He smiles excitedly, turns to his computer, and looks up 'current time' on the internet. No results. The websites with the time are all broken.

COLE

Thaaaat's more like it.

He chuckles, impressed, then calls Murray.

MURRAY (PHONE)

(groggy)

What?

COLE

It's time.

(pause)

It's time.

MURRAY (PHONE)

For what?

COLE

Check your phone. What time is it?

MURRAY (PHONE)

Umm... It doesn't say.

COLE

Do you have any clocks at your place?

MURRAY (PHONE)

(yawns)

Yeah, gimme a sec.

Cole paces excitedly and waits for Murray to check.

MURRAY (PHONE)

Umm... 12:01.

COLE

Where does it say that?

MURRAY (PHONE)

My stove. It's flashing 12:01

COLE

Murray, that means it reset.

MURRAY (PHONE)

Oh. Ohhh, duh. Wait, what time is it then?

COLE

I don't know. That's my point.

MURRAY (PHONE)

What's your point?

COLE

He made the time, all the- Never mind, I can explain it in person. I'll be over in five.

MURRAY (PHONE)

(yawns again)

Okay. See you soon.

INT. MURRAY'S APARTMENT - DAY

There's a knock at the door. Murray looks like he just rolled out of bed. Ashley is gone, and his place is a mess (all the boxes have fallen everywhere, from the quake).

Murray seems oblivious to everything though, since he's still waking up. He puts on a shirt and answers the door.

MURRAY

You're up early... Come on in.

COLE

(stepping inside)

It's like ten o'clock...

MURRAY

Wait, I thought you didn't KNOW what time it is...

COLE

It was about ten when the earthquake hit, then the clocks shut off.

MURRAY

Earthquake?

COLE

Yeah. You slept through it?

MURRAY

I guess so...

(he notices the asphalt clumps on the floor)

What the-

COLE

Oh, that's probably your gold. Did you get gold, from the street?

(Murray nods)

Well, it's... Street. Again.

(he chuckles)

This dude is INSANE. I love it!

MURRAY

Oh. Oh, because, the streets. I gotcha.

(yawns)

When was the earthquake?

COLE

I told you, around ten. But that wasn't part of the next plague. It's TIME.

He sits comfortably on the couch, while Murray sits nearby on the TP throne.

COLE

So, on his video, he talked about how we've all been rewired for a modern life, and how it's not natural or healthy, and we gotta go back to how things USED to be. Specifically, he wanted to disorient us, he didn't say how, but he said there would be 'layers of disorientation'.

MURRAY

Okay... Tracking so far.

COLE

Now, there may be more to it, I don't know what-

(he has an idea)

Wait. So we don't know what time it IS, but we can still TRACK time, in theory... I wonder if...

He pulls out his phone, opens a stopwatch app, and presses the 'start' button. Nothing happens.

COLE

Ohhh... Okay...

MURRAY

What?

COLE

That's fantastic... Go check the microwave, try to set the timer.

MURRAY

On it.

He heads into the kitchen, and Cole can hear the beeping from the keypad.

MURRAY (FROM THE KITCHEN)

The hell?

COLE

It doesn't work, does it?

MURRAY

(returning)

Nope.

COLE

Let me check online...

(he tries an online stopwatch. It's broken)  
So. We've lost the frame of reference, that's the first layer. And now we can't reset it, we can't time anything... Which is the second layer.

(Murray yawns again)

I just realized - I woke you up. Didn't I?

(Murray waves his hand dismissively)

I am so sorry about that. I will not keep you.

MURRAY

You're good. I'm up now.

(laughs)

And I got nowhere to be.

COLE  
(chuckles)  
Late night?

MURRAY  
Very. Good one, though.  
(he smiles as he thinks back on it)  
Just a one-night thing.

COLE  
Oh. I'm sorry. Well, I don't know if, I guess-  
Were you hoping it would be more than one night?

MURRAY  
(shrugs)  
Yeah, but I wasn't expecting it. She wanted to  
'explore her options' now that we're living in  
the apocalypse...

COLE  
Mmm. Sorry about that.

MURRAY  
Eh. At least she actually TOLD ME as much, and  
she didn't ghost me. So there's that...  
(pause)  
Anyways. Time. So that's the next one, is just...  
We don't know what time it is.

COLE  
Yep.

MURRAY  
Well, that'll mess up, let's see...  
(starts listing them off)  
Businesses. Commerce. Flights. Travel. Um,  
fricking conference calls.

COLE  
Anything with a schedule.

MURRAY  
Mm-hmm. Oh! Sports. Because now they can't time  
the game, so...

COLE

Oh yeah, I hadn't thought about that...

MURRAY

And, and and - appointments! Oh wait, you said 'schedules' already. Sorry.

COLE

(chuckles)

No, you're good. What else would-

Suddenly, there's another earthquake. Same as the first, it only lasts a few seconds (and since everything in the apartment has already fallen, there's less damage).

MURRAY

You good?

COLE

Yeah. Alright... What else...

MURRAY

I mean, pretty much anything, right? Cause like, EVERYTHING has a clock or a timer in it, even fricking micro electronics...

COLE

Exactly. It really is layers of disorientation.

MURRAY

Yeah...

(pause)

Welp. Wanna go walk around and see if anybody's panicking in the streets?

COLE

(stands up excitedly)

It's like you read my mind.

MURRAY

Alright. I just gotta freshen up. I'll be ready in five.

(he pauses, and they both laugh)

Oh shoot. Geez, this'll be a long day...

EXT. CITY BLOCK - DAY

Compared to the gold rush, the city is much quieter, and nobody is outside panicking.

Cole and Murray are walking in silence, when suddenly, Murray notices something in the sky.

MURRAY

Hey. You came over around ten, right?

(Cole nods)

That's... Never mind.

COLE

What?

MURRAY

Well...

(pauses)

I'm not an expert. And I know that we can't actually track how long we've been outside, but... It's barely been an hour, right?

COLE

Yeah, that's my guess. Maybe a little more?

MURRAY

So, generously, we'll say it's noon.

COLE

Okay...

MURRAY

And again, I'm no expert, but it doesn't feel... I've just, the sky doesn't feel like noon, it's, it feels more like LATE, like three or four.

COLE

(thinks for a few seconds)

Ohh... Woah, you're right... That's- so maybe, maybe time's moving faster?

MURRAY

Or we skipped a few hours?

COLE

Maybe. Maybe it's-  
(it clicks)  
Oh. No way. THAT is...  
(he bursts out laughing)  
Ho-ly holy holy...

MURRAY

What??

COLE

The earthquakes. That makes SO much sense.  
(Murray doesn't get it)  
Okay. If the Earth suddenly - it's already  
spinning really fast, right?  
(Murray nods)  
So... What happens if it speeds up?  
(no response)  
Physics, Murray. If it ACCELERATES, what would  
that feel like to us?

MURRAY

If it... Oh. Oh! Like a jolt!

COLE

Mm-hmm. And now it's speeding up, and then it  
reaches a new speed, and then it DECELERATES.  
We'll assume it now is FASTER, but it's not  
accelerating anymore. What would we feel when  
it DECELERATES?

MURRAY

Another jolt?

COLE

Yep. So the third layer, is, the days and nights  
are faster now. So even if we could track them...

MURRAY

It wouldn't matter... So like, in a few hours,  
maybe an hour, it'll be dark? Geez...

Murray shakes his head in disbelief and laughs to himself,  
while Cole just seems to be in awe.

BEGIN SEQUENCE.

This bit is silent. It cuts between shots of Cole/Murray, and the family at home (the family members are all covered in sores).

The father pulls the truck into the garage - he's brought back groceries and several sheets of plywood. The mother comes out to help him unload everything.

Cole and Murray are strolling nonchalantly through the downtown area as the sun sets. Everyone they pass seems confused by how early it is, but they aren't fazed.

The son comes home from school, scratching his sores, and runs upstairs to his room. The mother follows after him with the bottle of lotion, while the father rearranges the growing stockpile in their pantry.

It's night in the city, and several bars/clubs are open. Cole and Murray are waiting in line to get into one, chatting and laughing with the other patrons.

The son is taking a bath and telling the mom about his day, while she scrubs at his sores with a washcloth, and also scratches her own.

Cole and Murray are drinking and dancing with the crowd, everyone grinding against each other in a slow-motion neon fever dream.

The mother is laying face-down on the bed while the father rubs lotion on her back. They both look exhausted, weary, ready for the pain to end.

FADE OUT.