

Seventy Five Percent

By

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FADE IN ON:

INT. MIRANDA LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A flickering TV illuminates the dark room.

On it, an energized REPORTER waves to a picture of a STAR MAP, superimposed split screen.

An animation circles one dot in red. The STAR pulses bright, visually enhanced.

Though, not as bright as the eyes which watch it all.

Four family members stare at the TV... in various degrees of attention and shock:

FREDDIE MIRANDA (40s, Latino). Button down corporate, not a hair out of place.

CINDI MIRANDA (40s) Casually dressed in "mom" working clothes. Still striking, despite her age.

ANDREW MIRANDA (14). Andrew texts furiously. His eyes flit between his cell and TV almost with REM speed.

LYNN "CUELLO" MIRANDA (2) - curly spit curls frame an angelic face. She doesn't understand the reporter's words, but on-screen movement keeps her rapt.

On the space map: animation waves simulate a signal, extending to a blue/green dot. Earth.

Powered by adrenaline, the breathless reporter narrates.

REPORTER

...the constellation known as Aquarius. The two signals astrophysicists have detected originate from a planet known as TRAPPIST-1. Notably distinct from other naturally occurring signals such as quasars, the pattern of these "pulses" immediately indicated intelligent design. The first message seemed at first indecipherable, until overlapped with the second, what experts are now calling the "Rosetta Stone." A matrix translation key, as it were. When unencrypted, what technicians found was, well, difficult to be believed...

Talk about a cliff hanger! The Miranda family gawks. Little Lynn gurgles. Cindi hands her a pacifier.

CINDI
Mami, shhhhh!

The reporter waves at the star map, like a game show host.

The inset morphs to blurred video of a... CREATURE.

There's no way to see the fuzzy details. But whatever it is, it's intelligent and alien. Not human... at all.

The creature speaks; a series of hiccups and burps. Under the video, English, Chinese, Russian and Spanish subtitles streak by.

ALIEN CREATURE
Welcome, inhabitants of Earth. We are the T'Chram - the children of the planet you call Trappist-1. But which we name Mother-Chram-of-Soil-and-Future-Blood. The cradle of our civilization, but not its future. That path is no more. Thanks to rapid development of our technology, our planet has been rendered uninhabitable. We therefore must leave. Now. In our search, we have determined your home world is best suited for our use.

Andrew looks up from texting, sneers.

ANDREW
Dag. As a trailer for a new SF-flick, this gimmick's off the hook!

Cindi and Freddie swing towards their son, disapproving.

FREDDIE
Andrew, don't interrupt!

The alien image continues its presentation.

ALIEN CREATURE
Given your current level of evolution, the T'Chram have clear right to claim your Earth as our own. As such, we would be best served to exterminate all trace of your species...

ANDREW
What is this, Independence Day 3?!?

CINDI
Shhhhh. Baby, please.

ALIEN CREATURE

But in the interest of peace, we instead offer you a non-negotiable alternative. In one month, we will arrive at your planet, and populate whatever habitable areas we prefer. As a gesture of good will, we will share with you portions of our medical science; under supervision, of course. Such gifts will include a cure for the genetic malfunction you call cancer...

CINDI

(whispers to Freddie)

Honey, it's a miracle. Your mother -

ALIEN CREATURE

...as well as various technology to enhance your species' quality of life. Long-term, we shall terraform the planet you call Mars, and then leave your species to develop further on your own. But in return -

The Miranda family leans forward, hangs on every word.

ALIEN CREATURE

We require you terminate 75% of the current human population. A compromise which we are sure you view as fair. You will have one month to comply. Otherwise, we will erase your species. By humane and swift means, of course.

The image dissolves. Replaced by the TV reporter's stunned face.

REPORTER

...so far, all forensic examinations of this transmission confirm it was not doctored in any way. Nor did it originate from Earth. Bursts of energy from the Aquarius Constellation indicate something large exited that solar system recently. Where it's gone since, is not known.

Someone offscreen slips the newscaster a file. The anchor reads the update, and reports...

REPORTER

It appears a third transmission has now been detected: blueprints for genetic manipulation. A cure for cancer some guess?

The transmission cuts to an insipid commercial. Andrew grabs his cell phone and crows.

ANDREW

Fuck! This hoax is better than War of the Worlds!

Cindi and Freddie exchange looks.

CINDI

But baby... what if it's not?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

The halls bubble with energy. The usual dose of hormones, overlaid with a "the world is ending, who gives a shit about school?" Vibe.

Andrew leans against a locker besides SUZIE (14).

His smile and body language say it all - Andrew views this girl as well worth his time.

Nearby, hapless administrator VICE PRINCIPAL REDINBACKER (50s) attempts to herd teen crowds.

VICE PRINCIPAL REDINBACKER

Listen up, people! Despite what you may have heard, this is NOT the end of the world! You all have class to attend to.

A JOCK strolls by and snickers.

JOCK

Class? We have that, Veep. You don't!

VICE PRINCIPAL REDINBACKER

(gulps)

Even if this inexplicable event was somehow real... who do you suppose aliens would keep alive? A high school dropout? Or someone with a 4.0 GPA?

A TEEN with piercings trips the Vice Principal, who face-plants on tile and yelps.

VICE PRINCIPAL REDINBACKER

You! To detention, Clark!

TEEN WITH PIERCINGS

You think *aliens* are gonna care?

Nursing embarrassment, Redinbacker slinks off.

Andrew laughs and leans closer to Susie.

ANDREW

I know this is just some Spielberg joke,
but if aliens were *really* gonna kill off
75% of the world, don't you wanna have
fun before we go?

Susie slams an open locker door into Andrew's face. He
screams. Did that just break his nose?

His yelp mingles with another angry voice. Shoving away
the locker door, Andrew sees...

Students HASAN OMAR and JONNY CARLIN squaring off. Both
look pissed - enough to lash out.

Other teens circle the combatants. With Redinbacker MIA,
there seems no Mad Max limit to where this conflict goes.

CARLIN

(spits at Omar)
Terrorist rag head!

OMAR

Rag head? I'm from Milwaukee, you fucking
redneck douche!

CARLIN

So what? You're all the same. We gotta
wipe alla you off this planet. Give the
aliens'll plenty of space. Survival of
the morally fittest, sand monkey!

Carlin whips out a knife, and slashes at Omar, who ducks.
Though a wound on his cheek opens.

Carlin lunges forward for a gut-stab next.

Andrew darts from the lockers...

Pins both Carlin's arms in a bear hug. Carlin struggles.

CARLIN

Let go of me, fucktard!

ANDREW

Get a grip! No-one needs to die for a
friggin' movie!

CARLIN

You think this is fake news? Lemme go!

Carlin breaks free, beelines for Omar. And he's still got that knife.

CARLIN

Time to meet Allah, Omar.

Susie tosses Andrew a heavy textbook. Andrew whacks Carlin in the face.

CARLIN

Ow!!!

Blood streaming from his nose, Carlin crumples. Andrew grins down at the bully, writhing on the ground.

ANDREW

Dude, I know how that feels. Ow.

He turns and winks at Susie. Some teens in the hallway cheer. Others boo. Carlin stares up at Andrew, snarls.

CARLIN

Sure. Take his side. Fuckin' wop.

ANDREW

(beat)

You know that's an *anti-Italian* slur?

CARLIN

Don't matter. Either way, you're next.

INT. DAYCARE - LATE AFTERNOON

Your average NYC daycare. Crayon drawings on walls. Kiddie-colored tablets. 5th Avenue opulence. No expense spared.

YOUNG CHILDREN play and laugh - unaware of what horrors face them... in just one month.

The expressions of PARENTS betray concern.

Cindi scans the crowd of youngsters. Spotting Lynn, she quickly scoops her up.

Other MOTHERS do the same. Most of them: white, very affluent. A Societal Slice of Who's Who.

Or rather: "Who Matters When the Aliens Touch Down?"

Cindi cuddles Lynn, breathes a sigh of relief.

CINDI
Who's my baby girl? Who's so special?
You!!

White and forty something, JESSICA snatches up toddler BENJAMIN and shoots Cindi the stink eye.

JESSICA
"Baby girl"? You sexist! Who says your
child deserves more than mine!

Other mothers and fathers grab kids, too. This is turning into a flash mob. Cindi blinks, confused.

CINDI
Wait. What's wrong with what I said?

Clutching Benjamin, Jessica covers her boy's ears and hisses at Cindi.

JESSICA
Don't pretend you don't know.

CINDI
Excuse me? I... really don't.

JESSICA
Today. On Morning Joe! They said the
President's commission is debating
whether women should be favored over men
in the coming population cull.

CINDI
The population what?

JESSICA
The cull! Killing three quarters of the
population for the aliens! They say
children under 6 should be sacrificed,
because they can't take care of
themselves. And they can always be
replaced.

CINDI
(gasps)
That's monstrous!

JESSICA
Well, not entirely. But I'll be damned if
they kill my boy - and protect your
"special girl"!

CINDI
What??

JESSICA
(spits hatred)
Because my Benjamin can't "repopulate the planet after they leave for Mars!" That's what they said. You think that's fair?

Dark murmurs from other parents fill the air. Each one clutches their children as if they're gold.

Holding Lynn, Cindi backs towards the door.

CINDI
NONE of this is fair.

JESSICA
My child deserves to live. More than yours!

INT. NURSING HOME - BETSY'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Freddie sits across from BETSY MIRANDA (70s), holds her hand. In a wheelchair and riddled with cancer - it's unclear Betsy hears his words. But Freddie tries.

FREDDIE
Mama, I know it seems, uh, insane. But according to the news - even CNN - the aliens are coming. And they... want some people to die. And clear space. No-one knows what'll happen one month from now. But the Miranda family will stick together. With no-one - not you - left behind. I hear they have a cure for cancer, so...

A tear trickles down Betsy's frozen face. Until -

A CRASH outside interrupts. Freddie races outside.

INT. NURSING HOME - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

NURSING AIDE KIRK GREEN (30s, African American) stumbles drunkenly past terrified RESIDENTS, a shotgun in his beefed up arms.

GREEN
Fuck this shit. It's time to get real and make hard choices! Bitches, you've lived your lives. If anyone deserves another 20 years, it sure ain't rotting corpses like you!

He fires a random round into the air.

A RED HAIRED WOMAN howls and shields her 90 YEAR OLD MOTHER with her body. Broken plaster rain down on both.

RED HAIRED WOMAN

Don't touch my mom!

GREEN

Who deserves to live more - your mother
or my baby daughter? Huh? Time to swallow
some sacrifice, and like the taste!

Green swings the shotgun at the old woman. His finger tightens on the trigger.

But just *before* it clicks...

An adrenaline fueled Freddie tackles Green; a desperate, flying hit from the side.

The two struggle with the shotgun: life or death.

Freddie takes a punch. His cheek splits open.

Through a daze, he sees Green level the shotgun for a killing blow.

Until JANITOR CAPE LUND (30s, African American) whacks Green with a metal lunch tray from behind.

Multiple residents cheer as Green's knocked out, cold.

Cape steps over Green's unconscious body, and holds out a hand to Freddie.

CAPE

Heroic job, pal. Well done.

FREDDIE

(gasps)

Well, someone had to. Didn't know I had it in me, though.

CAPE

(rolls his eyes)

Yeah. Hey, you and I both know most of the folks here don't have much time left. But 86ing them in cold blood? That ain't never right! Now, as for the prisons...

Awkward silence. A befuddled Cape looks around.

CAPE

I mean, everyone here is *innocent*. But criminals? Those guys knew the rules, and screwed up. We may as well just kill 'em all. That's a win-win for the whole world!

Staring at Cape, Freddie makes a choice.

INT. MIRANDA LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cindi, Lynn and Andrew hover over the TV. The screen replays the alien video on a loop.

In the upper corner of the screen - a countdown in red digits blinks.

"ARRIVAL DATE: 29 DAYS." It's impossible to ignore.

The front door CREAKS open. Three sets of eyes turn to see.... Freddie wheels in Betsy, in her chair.

CINDI

Honey, you didn't -

ANDREW

Grandma's here?

FREDDIE

Time for an emergency family meeting. The Miranda family's got to talk.

Onscreen, the reporter's returned, talks as well.

REPORTER

With now only 29 days to alien colonization, the globe is already reeling from the shock. Religious war has broken out between India and Kashmir. Early accounts show a surge in Israeli/Iran conflicts. Racial riots have erupted in Louisiana. The governor spoke this morning, and requested the national guard.

The TV displays a protestor waving a White Supremacist sign. The man turns towards the camera, screams:

PROTESTOR

When those aliens and god touch down, we gotta greet them with the BEST of humanity, right? We ARE the 25%. White power. Time to rise!

Freddie steps in front of the screen, blocks it. Backed by the TV's glow, his is a dramatic silhouette. He points to each member of his family.

FREDDIE

Look. There's four of us.

ANDREW

Five. You gotta count Grandma.

FREDDIE

I love you, son. But shut up.
Statistically, that means only ONE in
this household survives? I refuse to
accept those terms. Or odds.

The room falls silent. Cindi clutches Lynn. Shivers.

FREDDIE

I've made an executive decision. Tonight,
we head upstate, to some area where no-
one looks. If the aliens are coming, it's
gonna be all of us who greet them. No
"sacrifices" allowed. The Miranda family
will survive as one. Who's with me?

Freddie holds out his hand. Hesitation. Then Cindi adds
her hand to his. Andrew follows next.

Lynn gurgles. Attracted by the movement, she clutches at
air over the family bond. Freddie grins, and grabs
Betsy's wheelchair.

FREDDIE

Then it's settled. Let's roll!

ANDREW

(snickers)
Great choice of words, dad.

FREDDIE

Grab what you need. Let's go!

The family springs into action, scoops up clothes,
phones. In the background, the reporter rattles on about
"Historic First Contact." But in the Miranda household,
no-one's listening anymore.

FINAL FADEOUT: