

The 2051 Project

This is my attempt to encourage some creative thought about climate change and all its interconnected issues. What will the world be like in 2051? Will we adapt and save ourselves? Will a child born today inherit an uninhabitable planet? Will we be immigrating to Mars? What will we be eating? How will we be working? Who will be in charge? The 2051 Project is my coping mechanism. I think about the future, write about issues we might face and shape my ideas into short scripts that you're free to use in any way you see fit.

Three Required Rules of Production:

1. Any person can play any part. Yes, an old man can play a pregnant person, a young person can play a border guard, again, any person can play any person. It's about make-believe, go for it.
2. Production values are beside the point. Drive a cardboard car, mow the grass with a toy mower, interview someone with a banana, learn the lines don't learn the lines improvise, film it in a swimming pool, whatever, it'll be fun.
3. Have fun. That's how we'll turn the ship around and get people thinking differently about the iceberg melting in our backyard.

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INT. CAR -- NIGHT

Our POV is from the backseat: the camera is the viewpoint of an unseen ten-year-old, who watches the adults up front deal with a very difficult situation.

Through the windshield we can see a Kentucky BORDER GUARD take a breath. Looks directly at us. The GUARD is tired of this. Very. Sticks up a finger. Indicates for us to pull forward.

As the DRIVER puts the car into gear, the PASSENGER looks back at us.

PASSENGER

Stay quiet, it'll be over soon.
Okay, Stevie?

The Passenger reaches back and gives us an assuring squeeze of the hand.

A FLASHLIGHT pierces the car's interior and the Driver shields their eyes.

DRIVER

Officer.

BORDER GUARD

Don't start. I'm on hour five of
year three, month seven, week
three, day one, I've heard it all,
I've got no feeling left, but I
play by the book. How many?

DRIVER

Three.

BORDER GUARD

Papers?

DRIVER

You have the papers, honey?

PASSENGER

I'm reaching for the papers.

BORDER GUARD

Try anything stupid, there are
shooters on every tower.

PASSENGER

Yes, sir, I understand.

DRIVER

We believe in the rules, sir,
we're the good guys.

BORDER GUARD

I said don't start. Don't. I got
no room left. Hurry up with the
papers, we've got a backlog going
on two miles now.

The Border Guard steps back and shines the flashlight beam at us. The Patrolman's Special with its 1500 lumens blinds us.

BRILLIANT WHITE

BORDER GUARD

Kid looks awful. Sick?

PASSENGER

Diabetic. We're rationing his
insulin until we get to where
we're going.

The Border Guard lowers the light leaving us with double-vision and a hazy whiteness filtered over the scene. It takes a minute for our vision to return to normal.

BORDER GUARD

And that would be?

PASSENGER

As far north as possible.

The Passenger hands the Driver the papers and the Driver hands them to the Border Guard.

BORDER GUARD

Why would anybody want to leave
the Sportsman's Paradise?
Beautiful country. I'd move down
if I could, believe me, but the
dogs, Mattie, this glorious
career, I'll stay put for now.
When I ask a question I need an
answer.

DRIVER

The flood.

BORDER GUARD

What flood?

DRIVER
You're kidding.

BORDER GUARD
I don't kid a lot.

PASSENGER
Please just answer the questions.

DRIVER
We lost everything. What you see,
that's all we could save. It
happened too fast.

BORDER GUARD
You should have prepared better.

DRIVER
How? How could we have prepared?

PASSENGER
Stop.

BORDER GUARD
You're getting a little heated.

PASSENGER
Please, we're sorry, we're
exhausted. We left Sunday night,
we haven't stopped for five days
except for bathroom breaks and to
get food. Please, sir, we need to
find a place to clean up, to
sleep, we need ice for the
insulin, it has to be kept cold or
it spoils, we can't keep going --

BORDER GUARD
Whoa whoa whoa. You're a real fire
hose. Everybody's tired. We're all
tired. You smell to high heaven.
You're bringing nothing of value.
You don't know where you're going.
Yet you want to cross into the
great state of Kentucky, but
without giving me any idea of your
plan. What's your plan, people?
Give me something to go on here.

A young voice pipes up unexpectedly.

TEN-YEAR-OLD (O.S.)
What kind of dogs?

DRIVER
Shhh!

BORDER GUARD
What's that?

PASSENGER
Please, leave the child alone...

BORDER GUARD
Ice is broken now, we're talking.

TEN-YEAR-OLD (O.S.)
How many do you have?

BORDER GUARD
Ha, too many, that's for sure.
Cost me an arm and a leg. You have
to be careful, we're losing too
many animals to contaminated food,
man, that burns me up.

TEN-YEAR-OLD (O.S.)
Are they big?

BORDER GUARD
Well they're not Pekingese.

DRIVER
Can we pass through, sir, officer,
we really need to --

BORDER GUARD
You really need to not interrupt
me at this moment, I'm having a
conversation.

TEN-YEAR-OLD (O.S.)
I had a dog.

BORDER GUARD
Did you now? What breed?

PASSENGER

This is really too much, Stevie's already traumatized, reliving it, it's cruel what you're doing.

BORDER GUARD

The flood? I'm sorry, Stevie. Don't know what I'd do if I lost mine. Two Newfs and a Bernese. Beautiful animals. Eating me out of house and home. You're headed north? Above the curtain?

DRIVER

Yes.

BORDER GUARD

You have zero plans to reside in the great state of Kentucky?

DRIVER

We will be over the border into Indiana within forty-eight hours.

BORDER GUARD

Twenty-four hours.

PASSENGER

Thank you so much.

The Border Guard hands the papers to the Driver.

BORDER GUARD

Phone.

The Driver holds out his phone. The Border Guard taps it with his.

BORDER GUARD

You have a twenty-four hour permit. The tracker will alert us if you exceed the time limit. If you exceed the time limit, you will be immediately returned to your point of departure without exception. Am I clear?

DRIVER

Yes, sir.

PASSENGER

Yes, officer, thank you.

BORDER GUARD
Stevie?

TEN-YEAR-OLD (O.S.)
Yes, sir?

BORDER GUARD
You take care of that diabetes,
now, we need brave folks like you
for the big fight coming.

The Border Guard taps the door panel. He presses a button and the gate raises. We watch the Border Guard, who waves as we drive through the gate into Kentucky.

TEN-YEAR-OLD (O.S.)
Did I do good?

The Passenger looks back at us.

PASSENGER
You did great, Stevie.

The Driver grins at us in the rearview mirror.

DRIVER
The dog thing was perfect.

EXT. KENTUCKY BORDER PATROL STATION -- NIGHT

The Border Guard watches our taillights for a moment. The Guard turns and looks directly at us. The Guard Sticks up a finger. Signals another car to pull forward. Shines the flashlight:

BRILLIANT WHITE

TITLE: The 2051 Project is at www.the2051project.com

CREDITS ROLL