

THEY ARE NOT US SO LET'S BOMB THE SH*T OUT OF THEM
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NOTE

Like most New Zealanders, I was outraged when I saw the leaked script for "They Are Us". The script was in horrifically poor taste, has potential to retraumatise the victims and takes significant liberties with the historical facts.

Then I realised that actually this was an opportunity to cash in on Hollywood's desire for tacky depictions of tragic terrorist attacks written by people with absolutely no knowledge of the circumstances or place in which such events occurred.

As such I am proud to present to you my epic retelling of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

I hope you enjoy this script as much as Hollywood enjoys cashing in on genuine human suffering.

EXT. HOUSE IN SUBURBAN NEW JERSEY. DAY.

The camera slowly pans up the white picket fence at JOHN VICTIMSON'S idyllic suburban abode. Behind him his son TIMMY is raising the American flag on a flagpole.

JOHN: Raising the flag today, Timmy? This isn't the fourth of July, it's the eleventh of September, 2001!

TIMMY: Well pa, that may be true but when you love America as much as I do every day is like the fourth of July. I love America almost as much as I love Jesus.

The window opens behind them as MARY VICTIMSON places a hot apple pie on the windowsill.

MARY: Do you love America as much as apple pie, Timmy? Come inside and get some while it's still hot!

JOHN: Oh no, I just remembered - I have that important business meeting down at the World Trade Centre today. But don't worry, I'm sure I'll be back in time to enjoy that apple pie so don't put it away!

TIMMY: Be careful, dad!

JOHN: I don't need to be careful, Timmy because this is America. I'll be home safe and sound before you know it!

JOHN opens the door to his car which is probably a Cadillac or maybe a pickup truck. It's definitely American anyway.

JOHN: If there's one thing I know for sure, it's that nothing bad will happen today and I'm definitely not about to die in a major national tragedy!

MARY: (sighing) Why does he always say that before he leaves for work each day?

FADE TO

EXT. CAVE IN AFGHANISTAN SOMEWHERE.

Foreboding, discordant music plays. Alternatively, I will accept 'The Imperial March' from Star Wars if you can't find any discordant, foreboding music.

We only see OSAMA BIN LADEN in silhouette but it's clear that he's up to no good. We might get some shots of his beard so the audience knows that not only is this guy evil, he's also less than concerned about his personal hygiene.

OSAMA: Today is the day! We will attack those foolish American infidels and take away their precious freedom once and for all!

AL QAEDA MINION #1: Sounds great boss but why are we speaking English, the language of the infidels right now?

CLOSE UP of OSAMA's hand slapping AL QAEDA MINION #1 with enough force to topple him backward.

OSAMA: Never you mind, you fool! I am the evil genius here, you will not question your master!

CUT to AL QAEDA MINION #1 crawling on the floor.

AL QAEDA MINION # 1: I'm sorry my lord! Please forgive me!

OSAMA: You are just lucky that I happen to be in a joyous mood today because today I will get my sweet revenge against those pesky Americans, with their awful maple syrup and hockey!

AL QAEDA MINION #2: Sir I think you might be thinking of Canada.

OSAMA: Don't contradict me! Now tell me... are our men ready to hi-jack those planes?

AL QAEDA MINION #2: Yes, everything is in place.

EXTREME CLOSE UP on OSAMA BIN LADEN'S hands. He is twiddling his fingers menacingly.

OSAMA: Excellent, my evil plans are finally coming to fruition...

CUT to

INT. BOSTON AIRPORT

HI-JACKER #1: Does everyone remember the plan?

HI-JACKER #2: Sure do! I can't wait to fly my plane over the World Trade Centre!

HI-JACKER #1: (smacks his forehead in frustration) For the last time, we're planning to fly INTO the World Trade Centre, not over it!

HI-JACKER #3: Never mind that, when do we get our 72 virgins?

HI-JACKER #4: Some translations say the reward is 72 grapes, not 72 virgins.

HI-JACKER #3: Well whatever, I'm so excited I could barely sleep last night.

The hi-jackers approach airport security. Each of them has a knife strapped to their leg as they approach the metal detector.

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD #1: Oh dang it! The metal detector has stopped working again! If only the Clinton Administration hadn't cut our budget to pay for free saxophone lessons in schools we'd have better airport security.

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD #2: Yes, like I always say, if we have a terrorist attack or a plane hi-jacking, it'll all be Bill Clinton's fault.

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD #1: Well yes, that is something you say frequently. It's a good thing we have a new President, I just hope he can pass the PATRIOT Act in time to save America!

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD #2: Me too, but it's not looking good. (Pulls out a newspaper, the front page reads 'AMERICAN AL QAEDA PARTY WINS SEATS IN CONGRESS'). If the Democrats and the Al Qaeda Party have their way, we'll be out of jobs - they want to abolish airport security altogether!

While the guards are having this conversation, the four HI-JACKERS merrily stroll through the disarmed metal detector, toward the gates.

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD #2: Hey, wait a minute!

He rushes toward the HI-JACKERS but is pulled back by AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD #1.

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD #1: What are you doing?

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD #2: They looked suspicious! I wanted to give them additional screening.

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD #1: That's crazy! You can't just target people or racially profile them and subject them to humiliation and extra screening randomly!

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD #2 shakes his head wearily.

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD #2: When will America learn? Those liberals, they're killing our country!

SLOW FADE to

INT. WORLD TRADE CENTRE.

We see JOHN VICTIMSON sitting by the window, a panoramic view of NEW YORK CITY behind him. There is a voice speaking in a low, droning mumble about stock prices and business stuff.

CLOSE UP on JOHN'S face. He clearly looks miserable and bored.

EXTREME CLOSE UP on a locket that JOHN is fidgeting with, containing a photo of his wife and son eating apple pie with the American flag in the background.

JOHN'S BOSS: Mr. Victimson, do you have anything to add to this?

CUT to JOHN'S BOSS who is looking at him impatiently.

JOHN: No sir, I -

JOHN glances out the window. A low pitched foreboding sound slowly grows in volume as it becomes clear that something isn't right.

First we have an extreme close up of JOHN'S eyes then we jump cut to his POV: An aircraft is flying right toward the window. The sound grows to a crescendo.

JOHN: Everyone get down! Terrorists are coming!

There is a huge explosion as the nose of the aircraft plunges into the meeting desk, with chaos everywhere.

JOHN'S BOSS is trapped underneath the nose and JOHN tries desperately to pull him free.

Meanwhile we enjoy several slow motion shots of other people in the meeting burning to death or falling out the window. JOHN himself is caked in blood but has a look of determination on his face.

Just as it looks like JOHN is going to make it, the plane's engine comes flying through the window, sucking him in and grinding him into a bloody paste.

CUT to MARY VICTIMSON planting a tree in her garden. She has no idea that JOHN is dead, but the audience does, so now the audience feels like it's smarter than she is.

CUT to WORLD TRADE CENTRE TOWER 2 (the one which hasn't been hit by a plane yet).

BARNABY shakes his head as he watches the tower next door slowly disintegrate into flames.

BARNABY: That's a shame. I always liked that tower. Still, it's lucky that it's them and not us.

Just as he finishes his sentence the room is shaken by a large explosion - just above them the second plane has hit their tower.

BARNABY'S BOSS: Goddamnit Barnaby! Next time keep your mouth shut!

For the next seventeen minutes there will be a long, gruesome montage of people being crushed, dying and falling out of the buildings. I recommend playing the song "It's the End of the World" by REM during this scene.

At the end of the montage we CUT to a shot of the statue of liberty. It's started to rain and the rain makes it look like there's a tear in her eye. Yeah. The statue's crying. This is a sad day for America.

The scene slowly FADES TO BLACK.

After a few seconds of silence we fade into the next scene.

INT. A SCHOOL IN FLORIDA. DAY.

GEORGE W. BUSH is reading MY LITTLE GOAT with a deliberately diverse group of young American children.

An ADVISOR approaches him just as one of the children is overheard speaking.

CHILD: Mr. Bush, when I grow up, I want to be the Prime Minister of America, just like you!

We CUT to a close up of the advisor whispering into BUSH's ear and we see the colour slowly drain from BUSH's face as he realises the magnitude of the tragedy that is unfolding.

BUSH is a strong and decisive man, a man of action. He immediately gets to his feet, his avuncular expression changing to one of stern determination.

BUSH: Children, this is the part of the job I hate. I have to leave you now, because America needs me.

The children applaud him as he leaves the room, flanked by the SECRET SERVICE and sweeping, patriotic music begins to play.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE.

We see a CLOSE UP of GEORGE W. BUSH staring out the window of AIR FORCE ONE looking forlorn. Although he a strong man, we see a single tear stream down his cheek as he reflects on the horrible events in New York City.

CUT to a CLOSE UP of an envelope in BUSH'S hand marked PATRIOT ACT. It's clear that despite the tragedy, he has a plan.

CUT to a shot of a hand gently clamping down on BUSH'S shoulder. While the two men are of very different temperaments, it is clear

that there is a strong bond between BUSH and his deputy DICK CHENEY.

BUSH: Has there ever been a day like this in American history?

CHENEY: You know back home in Wyoming, the Native Americans have a saying that I'm quite fond of in situations like this.

BUSH: What do they say?

CHENEY: They say "If you fly a plane into a building, it'll probably fall over."

For the first time all day BUSH smiles.

BUSH: Those Native Americans sure do have a lot of wisdom. They know things we never could.

CHENEY pauses, looking uneasy.

BUSH: What is it, Dick?

CHENEY: (slowly, nervously) I... I've been thinking. What if I'm responsible for the attacks on the World Trade Centre.

BUSH: What do you mean?

CHENEY: Well... as you know, in the past I've made several speeches criticising the architects of the World Trade Centre, saying it's only a matter of time before those buildings fall over because they were too tall. What if... what if that's what inspired the terrorists?

CHENEY begins to break down in tears and BUSH cradles him in his strong, manly arms.

BUSH: I won't hear of it, Dick. The men who did this are fiends and I have a plan to stop them!

CHENEY: What you propose we do now?

CLOSE UP on BUSH's face. He is frowning slightly but he knows what to do.

BUSH: Take me to the White House. I need to address the American people.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT: I'm sorry Mr. Bush but we can't land at the White House right now.

BUSH: (looking angry) Why not?

SECRET SERVICE AGENT: We haven't done enough security today. We think those terrorists might hi-jack another plane... maybe even Air Force One!

Right at that moment a HI-JACKER emerges from the back of the plane, brandishing a pair of tweezers menacingly.

BUSH leaps from his chair heroically and karate chops the HI-JACKER until he falls to the floor unconscious.

BUSH: Not on my watch! For as long as I'm Prime Minister of America, there will be no more terrorism!

The camera zooms in BUSH'S face.

BUSH: I am going to declare a war on terror!

Patriotic music plays and then slowly fades out as DONALD RUMSFELD appears.

RUMSFELD: Did someone say war? I think that's a great idea. And I know just who is behind these attacks too...

SECRET SERVICE AGENT: Osama Bin Laden?

RUMSFELD: No... he's just a pawn. The real enemy is... Saddam Hussein!

BUSH: Of course! It all makes sense!

RUMSFELD: What we need is to convince Congress to invade Iraq... and maybe Afghanistan too if it's on the way.

CHENEY: No, Your Majesty, don't listen to Donald Rumsfeld! What we need to do is protect American freedom by passing the PATRIOT Act to massively curtail civil liberties!

RUMSFELD: You're a fool Cheney and you have been since the day you were born! We have to strike back!

CHENEY: No, the real battle must be fought here at home.

ZOOM IN on BUSH'S face as the sounds of CHENEY and RUMSFELD arguing slowly fade into silence. A look appears on his face - he has made a decision.

BUSH: Gentlemen, stop! This is America, we never squabble over petty differences in this country!

CHENEY and RUMSFELD: (dejected) Sorry sir.

BUSH: The truth is, you're both right! We need to fight back but we also need to change the law so we can protect our citizens' freedom by spying on them.

Sweeping patriotic music slowly begins to play as we see the great city of WASHINGTON DC appear behind them in the window of AIR FORCE ONE.

BUSH: There's something you might not know about me. You've always known me as George W. Bush, but have you ever asked what the W stands for?

CHENEY and RUMSFELD shake their heads.

BUSH stares out the window. We CUT to a shot of Washington DC and close up on the famous statue of George Washington that they probably have there somewhere.

BUSH: It stands... for Washington!

The patriotic music reaches its crescendo and the scene begins to fade out.

We CUT to a shot of Air Force One landing on the White House Lawn and hear a voiceover for some comic relief.

RUMSFELD: I thought it stood for Walker, like your dad?

BUSH: I swear to god, Rumsfeld, one more word from you and I will throw you out the fucking plane.

FLASH FORWARD several weeks.

INT. CONGRESS.

It's a busy day at the American Parliament and SPEAKER TIP O'NEILL is banging away with his favourite hammer.

SPEAKER: Order! Order!

BUSH is standing opposite JOHN KERRY, the leader of the Democratic Party. KERRY is handsome, electable and well tanned after spending many years sunbathing in Vietnam.

KERRY: (jeering) Hello, Mr. Bush. Are you ready to lose the debate today?

BUSH: Oh you'd like that wouldn't you?

KERRY: Yes. Yes I would.

KERRY then turns away laughing with his fellow Democrats who all look like high school jocks for some reason.

BUSH shakes his fist in frustration.

BUSH: Kerrrrrryyyyy!

SPEAKER O'NEILL: I would like to invite the Prime Minister, President Bush, to address the House with his plan to stop terrorism happening again.

Emotional music begins to play.

BUSH: My fellow Americans. The other day, on September 11th, our great nation was attacked by terrorists who hate freedom.

Therefore I would like to propose that we start two wars and pass legislation to limit our freedoms, before the terrorists even have a chance to do the same thing themselves!

BUSH pauses expecting applause but there is stunned silence.

JOHN KERRY steps up to speak.

KERRY: I agree with the Prime Minister when I say that terrorism is bad and should be stopped. But he forgets the real threat to America which is global warming!

And what causes global warming? Skyscrapers! If we had never built the World Trade Centre, we wouldn't be in this mess! I propose that we demolish every building in New York in order to prevent tragedies and save the planet!

The Democrats all cheer, as do the members of the Bull Moose Party who are also in attendance.

BUSH: He's wrong! That's what the terrorists want us to do!

BUSH makes eye contact with his real arch nemesis, LIBBY MCLIBERAL the leader of the Al Qaeda Party who polls show were now almost as popular as the Republicans.

LIBBY: I'd like to ask why we saw Prime Minister Bush standing on Ground Zero with an American flag. If there was a terrorist attack in Turkmenistan, would you treat them with the same respect? No - you favour over America because you're racist. And that's why I can't support your measures to stop terrorism because frankly I think they were right. I hate America!

The chamber erupts in applause - LIBBY MCLIBERAL is extremely charismatic and BUSH sits down looking defeated.

SPEAKER: Do you have anything to say Prime Minister, before we take the final vote?

BUSH sighs and looks up to see the American flag waving. He looks at the portrait of George Washington. Finally he looks at his adversaries.

BUSH: I have... one more thing left to say. What happened on 9/11 was very very bad. But there's something we need to remember about the people who carried out those attacks.

BUSH pauses. There's silence, suspense. It cuts to close ups of several people in the chamber, waiting with baited breath to hear what he will say next.

BUSH: The thing we must remember is that... They are not us and therefore we should bomb the shit out of them. I rest my case, your honour.

There's a moment of silence. Has he convinced them? Will the PATRIOT Act and plans to start two wars pass?

Suddenly everyone except LIBBY MCLIBERAL gets to their feet and cheers while she slowly slinks away into the background looking bitter and defeated.

KERRY shakes BUSH'S hand.

KERRY: That was such a convincing speech that I'm going to deliberately run a bad campaign in 2004! You're a great man, Mr. Bush!

BUSH smiles and slowly walks out of the chamber, looking up at the sky as the camera zooms out and an American flag comes into view.

THE END