

After a perfunctory knock on his dressing room door, the show's producer stormed in wearing a headset. "Tom, I'm sorry, we're—" He recoiled. "What the hell are you wearing?"

"Seriously?" Tom's pulled at the purple neckline, eyes narrowing. "You guys wanted me to—"

The producer put up a hand. "It doesn't matter. We're scrapping the current rundown. There's been an attack." He flicked on the TV mounted in the corner.

On screen, a newscaster spoke silently before the producer turned up the volume. "...the cause, but we *can* tell the devastation is absolute. What you're about to see is video taken by an airline passenger who landed safely in Denver just minutes ago. Their post has already gone viral. We should warn you, some viewers may find the imagery disturbing."

A vertical strip of video played over a darkened, blurry background. The passenger aimed her camera through a white-framed oval window, down at Las Vegas. "I think that's the Bellagio," a woman's voice said. "Or maybe the MGM? Which one's the pyramid?"

"I dunno," another woman said off-screen. "Oh!"

The window filled with a blinding flash. "Wow, that's bright," the first voice said, then gasped. "Oh my God!"

During the flash, a stem of cloud had erupted from the ground with a growing, fiery mushroom cap. Dusty waves radiated from it, engulfing street after street in fire and smoke.

Tom's hand flew to his mouth as a hole formed inside him, sucking away his breath.

"Oh my God!" the women repeated, "Was that a nuke?"

The newscaster returned as the video repeated in a muted thumbnail next to him. "We have not yet been able to confirm but our team here at MWNB can only agree: a nuclear weapon appears to have been detonated in Las Vegas, Nevada. *Everything* is gone."