

PLANET OF THE SALES APES, NEW DRAFT

JIM MOIR as THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY
ROBERT SHAW as VIC REEVES
JENNIFER ANISTON as KIRK
LORETTA SWITT as SPOCK
LARRY DAVID as GEORGE COSTANZA
AARON SPELLING as BOB MORTIMER
JOANNA LUMLEY as HERSELF
DAVID MCCALLUM as HIMSELF
JOHNNY DEPP as SAPPHIRE
BRIAN WALDEN as STEEL
CHARLIE SHEEN as CAPTAIN WILLARD
LENNY HENRY as MAN WITH GUN
BALDRICK as HIMSELF
KELSEY GRAMMER as STING
LOVEJOY as KELSEY GRAMMER
RICKY GERVAIS as THE COUNTDOWN CONUNDRUM
LADY FELSHAM as BILKO
ERIC CATCHPOLE as LABI SIFFRE
TINKER as HELENA BONHAM CARTER

EXT. PLANET OF THE SALES APES. KIRK AND SPOCK BEAM DOWN.

KIRK

What the hell are we doing here, Spock? This screenplay is not a serious drama.

SPOCK

It's my fault, captain. I did a Columbo or two and before I knew it I'd let myself become fodder for an unhinged post-rational surreal satirist.

KIRK

And you're played by Loretta Switt. What's that all about?

SPOCK

With due respect, Captain, you're played by Jennifer Aniston - I think we're both the victims of the author's malevolence here.

KIRK

We have to get out of here.

CUT TO...

INT. ROOM. MAN WITH GUN IS WATCHING A TV ON WHICH KIRK AND SPOCK HAVE BEAMED DOWN TO THE PLANET OF THE SALES APES. MAN WITH GUN CHANGES CHANNEL. IT NOW SHOWS JOANNA LUMLEY AND DAVID MCCALLUM, APPEARING ON THE PLANET OF THE SALES APES IN A

COMPLETELY UNEXPLAINED MANNER.

LUMLEY
It's started Steel.

MCCALLUM
I'm not Steel, I'm David McCallum and you're Joanna Lumley. You're being overly thespian.

LUMLEY
Either way, McCallum, it's started.

MCCALLUM
What's started?

LUMLEY APPEARS TO CONCENTRATE TELEPATHICALLY.

LUMLEY
The film. Or the dream. It's hard to say.

MCCALLUM
Where are we?

LUMLEY
We're on the planet of the sales apes. Look. I can see Kirk and Spock over there.

CUT TO KIRK AND SPOCK IN THE DISTANCE AND THEN CUT BACK

MCCALLUM
That's Jennifer Aniston and Loretta Switt in Star Trek uniforms.

LUMLEY
We're in a surreal screenplay, McCallum, things are going to get far more bizarre than the MASH and Friends stars playing Kirk and Spock.

MCCALLUM
Well then let's leave.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY APPEARS FROM BEHIND A CACTUS.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY
But you can't. You're stuck here. Until it either descends into total chaos and implodes or one of you, the characters of the film, MAN WITH GUN specifically, ends the film in the surreal and bizarre way we have come to expect from these films.

LUMLEY
Who are you?

THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY
I'm the author of this screenplay.

DAVID MCCALLUM

No you're not, you're Vic Reeves, I've seen you on television.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY

Well if you want to pick nits I'm actually Jim Moir and Vic Reeves was a character I created.

LUMLEY

Either way it doesn't help us deal with the problem at hand. But surely Jim, I mean THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY, if you're the author, you can decide how it ends.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY

I am Jim Moir, just like you're Joanna Lumley, and I'm playing the author of this screenplay, as written by the real author.

DAVID MCCALLUM

Perhaps that would be Bob Mortimer?

BOB MORTIMER

I have nothing to do with this. I don't even have any idea what's going on.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY

Look, Aaron, if you want to play Bob Mortimer you'll need to adopt a Northern English vernacular. You sound too much like a Californian. Even your lines sound Californian. It's not Bob Mortimer. Anyway, my point is I have no power over anything, even the delivery of my lines, which is left up to the imagination of the reader.

BOB MORTIMER

But I AM Aaron Spelling and, like I said, I have no idea how I ended up in this bizarre insult to tv and film producers everywhere.

MAN WITH GUN

This is getting tedious. There must be something better on.

LUMLEY

Did you hear that McCallum? That was MAN WITH GUN.

MAN WITH GUN

What the sales ape? Can you hear me Lumley?

LUMLEY

I can hear you, MAN WITH GUN.

MAN WITH GUN

You know what this means, don't you?

LUMLEY

No. What does it mean?

BALDRICK

It means the dream or film or film of a dream or dream of a film has definitely kicked off again. We're all here on the planet of the sales apes. I must be there too.

MCCALLUM

Why, where did you think you were?

MAN WITH GUN

In the limbo between dreams and realities, where blame and blamelessness are both nonexistent. Somewhere a being can get a little peace.

SAPPHIRE AND STEEL APPEAR OUT OF NOWHERE.

SAPPHIRE

Did you notice how THE AUTHOR OF THE SCREENPLAY mentioned a reader? He implied that this screenplay is not to be made into a film, merely imagined in the minds of a reader or readers.

STEEL

How does that help us?

SAPPHIRE

Don't you see? It gives us a bit of leverage. Just a small amount of control. If we encourage the readers in a certain way, they may be able to collectively end the nightmare for us, by changing the shape of reality.

STEEL

You mean with their actions and the synchronicity between their actions and a morally sound pathway between potential events on a spacetime continuum?

SAPPHIRE

Precisely.

STEEL

So what are we here for then?

KIRK AND SPOCK ARRIVE

KIRK

I think it's obvious why we're here. Surely even a fool could see.

BALDRICK

It's King Turnip again, isn't it?

KIRK

No, you dimwit. We're here to entertain millions of people and help them understand a few things about space and aliens and stuff like that. Haven't you seen Third Rock from the Sun? Sci-fi alien space comedy and drama is the only technical framework

these earth creatures have for understanding the cosmos.

SPOCK

What are you talking about? Actors don't know anything about reality or science. Our job is to bring stories to life, not to document reality. Our tv shows teach people how to talk and sound normal, that's about it. Not just their language usage but the ideas they have, the things which interest them. Whether it's a story about an army post in Korea or a starship on 'frontiers' of space the stories are usually just parochial stories told within a context which seems much vaster than the story really is.

KIRK

What, are you Constantin Stanislavsky now?

SPOCK

I'm a true blue American, sir!

SPOCK SALUTES

KIRK

But you're a Vulcan. I think you're having a flashback to MASH.

SPOCK MAKES VULCAN SALUTE.

SPOCK

Live long and prosper, sir.

MAN WITH GUN

Again I say, this is getting tedious. There must be something better on.

MAN WITH GUN CHANGES THE CHANNEL. CAPTAIN WILLARD HAS JUST CRASHED ONTO THE PLANET OF THE SALES APES IN HIS SPACE BOAT.

MAN WITH GUN

What is this, Wacky Races?

CAPTAIN WILLARD

Hey, MAN WITH GUN, you there?

MAN WITH GUN

Yes I'm here, and so is everyone else by the look of it. Looks like we're living the dream, so to speak, or perhaps more accurately the nightmare.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY

Hang on, hang on, there's surely far too many characters involved here now. How can anyone remember whom any of them are?

MAN WITH GUN

I thought I changed the channel.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY

I'm playing the author of this screenplay. It makes sense for me to shift around the different scenes with much more ease than even the main character.

MAN WITH GUN

Which would be me?

THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY

Maybe. Or maybe it is the the item of vegetation you are currently in pursuit of.

KELSEY GRAMMER ENTERS LOOKING IRRITATED.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY

Or maybe it's Lovejoy.

KELSEY GRAMMER

This is ridiculous. I shouldn't even be in this screenplay. The author has plenty of actors and characters to milk for satirical currency, my addition to this mad-house is clearly just driven by that rather unfunny sketch about me done by Bob Mortimer which itself is derived from nothing more than how silly my name can sound when placed in certain contexts, including this screenplay. It's cheap, phony comedy and unworthy of the armageddon-like style of this film and those leading up to and following it. It's weak, childish and dare I say slapstick comedy, not even remotely meaningful or capable of empowering social commentary. Benny Hill, in a word.

MAN WITH GUN

That's two words. But still, you have a point. And yet I'm glad you're here, I was getting very bored until you arrived. Of course you're totally failing to play the role of Kelsey Grammer and apparently insist on actually just being Lovejoy to the full extent of your presence in the screenplay, defying the author's claim that you are KELSEY GRAMMER.

KELSEY GRAMMER

Who the Ant and Dec are you? Wait a minute. I know that voice. You're Lenny Henry.

MAN WITH GUN

Hush, man, hush. I am MAN WITH GUN. I have the task, in this film we're in, of dealing with the baddy. The whole film is just a build up to one moment where I deal with the baddy.

KELSEY GRAMMER

And the baddy is?

BILKO SUDDENLY APPEARS, WEARING A CAPE AND A MASK.

BILKO

Why that would be me, Lovejoy.

KELSEY GRAMMER

Janey, nice to see you again. Has our antique-related double act been restored by a mad screenwriter in a post-apocalyptic world?

BILKO

No, I'm afraid I'm playing BILKO.

KELSEY GRAMMER

And I am in fact KELSEY GRAMMER but we can play this thing however we want. We can be Lovejoy and Lady Jane and make a tidy sum from some wheeling and dealing and all sip booze and eat snacks at the end, and be glad that Tinker is such a refined chap.

BILKO

The author of this screenplay may have other ideas.

MAN WITH GUN

And so might I, master sergeant. What's your game anyway? Planning some events? Going to make a load of money from getting everyone to 'do their duty' and pay their slave wages straight over to addiction barons claiming to sell various forms of 'food and drink'? It's been done Bilko - Boris Johnson, Donald Trump, George Bush - we've heard it all before. Bombing is security. Monopoly is called democracy. Gasoline prices are called a foreign policy. And the mall is called your neighbourhood. And shopping is called patriotism.

BILKO

You have me mistaken for Richard Nixon.

MAN WITH GUN

Not really. You're just a salesman. I think it's you who doesn't realise how closely you end up resembling that which you set out to destroy with your well intentioned anarchism.

BILKO

But I'm not Phil Silvers, I'm Lady Jane Felsham, and I'm exactly the sort of person whom feminazis and others trying to perpetuate the nightmare you live in hate. I hang out with people like Lovejoy.

MAN WITH GUN

Well the author seems to have identified you as BILKO and KELSEY GRAMMER.

AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY

I have done no such thing. I've kept out of this argument. I have stayed on the sidelines.

MAN WITH GUN

I don't mean you, Moir, I mean the real author, the one who really does control all we say and do, or at least appears to do so, for the author of the screenplay is no less a character in a dream than you or I, Moir.

BILKO

You admit he's Moir but you pretend I'm Bilko. That's unfair.

MAN WITH GUN

If I wasn't unfair to you, what would be Lovejoy's primary purpose in this screenplay?
If I'm already on your side there's no need for Lovejoy.

KELSEY GRAMMER

Hang on. I thought I was KELSEY GRAMMER.

LABI SIFFRE

Yeah, and I'm LABI SIFFRE.

HELENA BONHAM CARTER

But you are.

LABI SIFFRE

Oh shut up HELENA BONHAM CARTER.

HELENA BONHAM CARTER

Oy.

HELENA BONHAM CARTER DRINKS SOME WHISKY OUT OF A FLASK AND
ADUSTS HIS LAPEL.

KELSEY GRAMMER

That's not the point. The point is that I'm not just about a quick buck, nor am I just some sort of knight in shining armour here to save the ladies because Chris de Burgh, Bill Bailey and Rachel Riley are busy teaching Palestinians how to appreciate strictly come dancing without food or electricity. Sure, I duck and I dive to survive in life, but there's an underlying ideological message in what I do, it's not just the Donald Trump show or something. I'm about love, and justice, and decency.

HELENA BONHAM CARTER

Absolutely, Lovejoy, but this isn't our show. This is some sort of apocalyptic fandango. God alone knows what the purpose of this screenplay is.

LABI SIFFRE

Um, i think it's supposed to be a dream.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS SCREENPLAY

Actually I think it's a dream of a screenplay and a screenplay of a dream, kind of rolled into one.

HELENA BONHAM CARTER

The point still stands, it's up to Lenny Henry there to save the women, wheel and deal, guide the film through its plot points to the end.

KELSEY GRAMMER

Why? If I'm here, why can't I play my part. The real author of the screenplay isn't just some small time slapstick joke teller. This isn't the work of Royal Variety Show comedians. There's a coherent ideology which leans towards things like humanitarianism, socialism, honour, dignity - the stuff I stand up for, even if it has to

be spiced up with a bit of womanising and pulling fast ones with dodgy merchants and punters.

MAN WITH GUN

I agree with Lovejoy. I think this film is going to reach the conclusion we want only when we are united in our effort to get there. Previous films were too divided up - factions against factions. This is why we never escape from the nightmare and keep ending up back in it. We need to unify. We need to work towards a common goal.

KELSEY GRAMMER

Thank you Len.

MAN WITH GUN

I'm MAN WITH GUN.

KELSEY GRAMMER

Yeah and I'm KELSEY GRAMMER but who we really are to readers, viewers, dreamers, anyone involved in this mad construct, are Lenny Henry and Lovejoy.

MAN WITH GUN

Surely you're Ian McShane?

KELSEY GRAMMER

Nope, definitely Lovejoy. Go and ask the readers. They'll tell you themselves. When I speak they just see Lovejoy, the character, not McShane the actor. That is who is cast anyway. The author isn't leaving these details to chance. It's like a very finely tuned antique musical instrument.

MAN WITH GUN

Alright alright Stanislavski, but where does this get us? What do you reckon we should do Lovejoy?

KELSEY GRAMMER

So let me get this straight: we have to end the life of an imaginary plant or flower because when we do the plant or flower dreaming this dream will wake up?

MAN WITH GUN

That's about the size of it.

KELSEY GRAMMER

What do you think Jane? Should we?

BILKO

I think so, Lovejoy.

BILKO AND KELSEY GRAMMER GO ARM IN ARM TO AN SUV. LABI SIFFRE AND HELENA BONHAM CARTER GET IN THE BACK.

KELSEY GRAMMER

Trust me, Len, I have a plan. You sit tight. Give us half an hour. If we're not back by

then, sell this antique stick blender.

KELSEY GRAMMER GIVES MAN WITH GUN A STICK BLENDER FROM ARGOS.
THE SUV DRIVES OFF.