

Nature vs. Merger

Act One	Silicon Sally	Plastic Plateau Double-0-2
Act Two	Friendly Fallout	Candy Forest Realtime
Act Three	Escape from Calicorpia	CCC Y3K
Epilogue	Habitat for Lizardity	Upper Cretacia 65 million BC

LEFT BEHIND CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Song 'n' Dance Numbers:

Zak 'B' Nimbo

Main Street Parade

It's the End of Education as we Know it

Rain Dance

NATURE VS. MERGER

Act One

“Silicon Sally”

Scene One

(The audience, comprised of several dinosaurs, sits in the grassy outdoors. The stage is a classroom with a few student desks and a blackboard, which reads, in beautiful script: “The only war that matters is the war against the imagination” --Diane Di Prima)

(On the teacher's desk is an apple, and some old fairy tales and nursery rhymes. The schoolteacher, Ms. Primer, writes, in cursive letters, “Writing Prompt: In the Future...”)

(Al, a man in rumpled hair and clothing, walks across the stage and addresses the audience.)

AL: Has anyone seen my screwdriver? I seem to have misplaced my screwdriver....

(He wanders off, scratching his head distractedly.)

(Four students sit at desks. Gretel, a girl in two braids, oversized plume in hand, scribbles in a diary furiously. Zak, an obese boy, wearing a conference pass, sits playing a hand-held device, zoned out. Two surfer boys, Wax and Wayne, sprawled in casual poses, are reading “1984” and “Fahrenheit 451.”)

MS. PRIMER: Today’s writing prompt:

(Gretel stands up from desk, faces the audience, and prepares to read from diary.)

MS. PRIMER: In the future...

GRETEL:

Books and paper will be banned
It will be illegal to write with your hand
Poets will be outlaws!

Human beings will merge with machines
A computer chip will update your spleen
Just blink on the OKAY button!

In the future there will be no trees
The groundcover will be plastic debris --
A museum of artifacts at your feet

Subversives will communicate
By camouflaging cursive words
On plastic snack packaging

The work force will be nestled in
Sugar plum cubicles with
Movie screen walls

Where fingers move to the beat of 80 words a minute
Prozac drips dreamily into the brain and
Tummy tubes flow forth with sugarshakes

No need to move a muscle, now that's progress!

Children will be drafted to war stations
That look just like play stations
Bombing away the day on the screen

We'll forget what it feels like
To touch a face
What it means to be
part of the human race

To run in the grass
Climb a tree--

(pause—looks around)

dance in the rain
Write poetry---

(As Gretel reads from her diary people walk onstage and put their signs on students' desks, which are transformed into booths at a conference. Gretel seems confused by the ruckus and finally stops reading amid the disruption. The classroom goes silent.)

(The following characters walk slowly into the classroom, each carrying a sign, and putting it on a child's desk, converting it into a convention booth.)

SQUISHYSOFT CELLWARE (manned by MR. SQUISHY)
ZONEY CORP. (manned by MR. ZONEY and CHIPPER)
SPINTAX (manned by SALLY)
CAN & WILL (manned by two SPEECH SECURITY in dark suits)
HFC CO. (manned by STEPMOTHER)
PHO CO. (manned by FATHER)
ZAK 'N' DA BOX (manned by MR. POCKETS)

(A banner is walked onstage announcing the technology conference titled “Nature vs. Merger.” The audience serves as the audience for the technology conference. There are protesters with signs.)

(Speech Security approaches Ms. Primer and the children.)

(Ms. Primer quickly puts the “Perpetual 3:00 Cozy” atop the stack of books.)

(Wax and Wayne jump up, grab their boards, and run off, yelling:)

WAX AND WAYNE: Cowabunga!

SPEECH SECURITY #1: Excuse me, ma’am
Can I see your
conference pass please?

MS. PRIMER: I need a pass to stand in my own class?

(Speech Security walks Ms. Primer offstage)

SPEECH SECURITY #2 (in reference to Gretel's plume): What’s that you’re wielding?

(Gretel clutches her plume and diary and runs quickly off, as he chases her.)

(Zak is passed over, as he is wearing a pass round his neck. He remains still and absorbed.)

(Representatives stand at their booths.)

THE SIGNS:

HFC: HIGH FRUCTOSE CORNSYRUP CO.
HFC MEANS HIGH FIBER CONCENTRATION!
DRINK FROOCTY JOOCE!

PHO: PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED OIL CO.
PHLUFFY PHOO FEELS GOOD FOR YOU!

SPINTAX: CIRCULAR SOLUTIONS TO
LOGISTIC IMAGE PROBLEMS

(Mr. Zoney throws a sheet over the chalkboard. Now it is a promotional poster for Zoney Corp. It has a picture of a giant chipmunk, Chipper, skateboarding while drinking out of a supersize cup with a straw, eating fries, and playing a hand-held device. Slogans say, “Reach for the Fries!” and “Get the Chip!”

(At this, Zak looks up and sees the poster.)

ZAK: Chipper!

(He then returns to playing the hand-held, oblivious to any outside stimuli.)

(Wax and Wayne return with their surfboards as protest signs. Wax's says, "Health Hazards of HFC." Wayne's says, "Just say No to PHO.")

WAX: Childhood obesity!
Tooth decay!
Type II diabetes!
Osteoporosis!
Malnutrition!

WAYNE: Childhood obesity!
Cancer!
Depression!
Heart disease!

(They turn their boards around. Wax's says, "Products containing HFC." Wayne's says, "Products containing PHO.")

WAX: Soft drinks
Yogurt
Sandwich bread
Juice box drinks
Catsup
Jam

WAYNE: Skippy peanut butter
Frozen pizza
Slim Fast bars
Saltines
Top Ramen noodles
Girl Scout Cookies

(The Speech Security rush them off the stage.)

HFC REP (STEPMOTHER): Free fruity juuce!
Cherry bomb or atomic lemy!

PHO REP (FATHER): Free phluffy phoo!
Chips or fries?

(Children rush to the booths, sample the products, find them delicious, and walk offstage, engrossed in their snacks.)

CHILDREN'S CHORUS: Yum! Yum! Yum!

(P.C. Green, a stylish and vapid anchorwoman, is the media rep hosting the event.)

P.C. GREEN: Good afternoon, viewers! You're with me, P.C. Green, in Bezerkeley California, host of the annual Globalglom Technology Symposium. This year's theme is Nature vs. Merger, and could it be more exciting or relevant? Amidst speculations (shh!) of an upcoming merger between Zoney Corp., manufacturer of the all-purpose Handie, a quintillion dollar industry (holds up her own bright-colored Handie) –

ZAK: (suddenly looks up) Handie??!

P.C. GREEN: and Squishysoft Cellware, an embedded technology firm, rumored to have developed a chip in a baggie that can “interoperate” with the human cell. Talk about smart drugs! Wetware is everywhere!

PROTESTOR: (Wearing headband and tie-dye)

You're all complicit in a conspiracy to dumb down the masses and manipulate them with research-proven propaganda and behavioristic mind control using media imagery and repetitive messages, supplanting natural desire ---(muffled)

(Protester is hauled off by Speech Security.)

P.C. GREEN: (chuckles) Apparently somebody still thinks it's the 60s!

But back to our agenda, folks, here to give the first presentation of the day are representatives of the DOJ. The Department of Justice shocked the conference by sending us two convicted felons on community service duty! And the two parolees are strange cell-fellows, indeed! Doing soft time for their merger scandal crimes are...the infamous Wired Piper –

PIPER: (with a bow) For aiding and abetting...

P.C. GREEN: And the defiant Ms. Primer!

PRIMER: (fist in air, ironic tone) For resisting!

P.C. GREEN: Well, “Mr. Piper,” we've been missing your face on billboards along the Bayshore Freeway!

PIPER: (Oozing charisma) I'll bet you have.

P.C. GREEN: So, how does it FEEL to be yesterday's IT Guy?

PIPER: Hey, at the height of my heinous heyday...

P.C. GREEN: And Mrs. Primer –

PRIMER: That's Ms.

P.C. GREEN: I see you've changed out of that unbecoming pink slip you wore to your mug shot.

PRIMER: I am proud to have been a teacher at Zak in da Box Jr. High for 20 years!

PIPER: (Stepping in front of Primer) Those of you plugged in for a PowerPoint Presentation are in for a (takes off his hat and pulls something out) surprise!

PRIMER: (Stepping in front of Piper, opening scroll) In accordance with Article 2, Subsection E of the judge's consent decree, our community service presentation must be done without using any products manufactured by the named defendants.

PIPER: (Another magic trick, resulting in a disappearance.)

Products of which there are none!

PRIMER: Thus, our talk shall be a Capella, if you will...

PIPER: So, folks, pull your thumbs from your Handie
(rocks a pendulum)
Download my brain candy..
Relax and feel dandy...
(mesmerizing tone)

The cautionary tale I am here to tell is set in a mythical land called Silicon Valley...

P.C. GREEN: The Valley! Oh-ma-GAWD! It all started out as a garage band...
Then everyone caught Silicon Fever! Ingenuity! Prosperity! Wine, cars, and corporate culture!

PRIMER: And birthplace of...the chip!

PIPER: (mimic-fondling of his Handie) The precursor to the very chip found inside my latest, light, sporty, bright, all-in-one TV, movie screen, music box, computer game, cell phone, internet, calendar, clock, and best friend...

ZAK: Handie!!!! (Rushes up to Piper, drops the Handie he is already playing, reaches out, and is handed a new one)

P.C. GREEN: So, how does it FEEL to fondle the new Handie called the Chipper Companion?

ZAK: Chipper!!! (Sits down, handling it, mesmerized)

PIPER: Silicon Valley....It was life in the carpool lane...until the dot.com crash of double-0-2...

PRIMER: And I'm here to discuss the cause of the crash. When and where did we go awry? Was there a time when we were wise?

(The beating of drums is heard from the audience.)

PIPER: Yes, yes, we'll explore that and more in my tale of yore...which begins with the last of the dinosaurs!

PRIMER: (Opens scroll) Wait! That's not in the script! This is so typical of him!

PIPER: Upper Cretacia, 65 million BC, was a community on the cusp of change...

(There are dinosaurs scattered about the audience, and they gradually stand up and recognize their presence. They are restless.)

P.C. GREEN: It was a time of flesh-eating giants!

DINOSAUR 1: And look who's come for lunch! (Chases P.C. GREEN offstage.)

PRIMER: Unfortunately, the cretaceous community did not survive their own crash.

DINOSAUR 2: Bo-ring! (Chases Primer offstage)

(A few audience members scream. The actors stay frozen in position. The dinosaurs storm the booths and begin chugging/stuffing Froocty Jooce, Phluffy Phoo, and fries. Some dinosaurs are carrying club-sized "trees," with which they rush the conference in a raucous fit, laughing, chasing people from booths. Each rep picks up his/her sign and runs.)

(Only ZAK remains unscathed, oblivious, still in position.)

(A young dinosaur, Rex, runs up to the wishing well, looking back and forth, and snatches off the satellite, and strikes an aggressive pose.)

REX : Take that, J.R. the Velociraptor! You don't own this fort! You think you're so smart!

(Rex puts the satellite dish on his head. He does a little dance, waving club, tough guy stance.)

J.R.: (Hollers from near distance) Oh, great! What have you done to my satellite dish?!

(Rex is gesticulating behind J.R., getting the audience to laugh with him.)

(J.R. is always holding a screwdriver)

J.R.: (To the audience) My problem is this! They don't believe in the dish! Those superstitious dopes think their daily soap just "magically" appears when the sunbeam hits the wishing well. Some joker always ends up wearing my dish as a hat!

REX: (Waving) Yo, J.R.!

J.R.: Hey, it's not a lampshade, you dimwit! (Runs up and grabs it off Rex's head.)

REX: Hey, can't you take a joke?

J.R.: Can't you see, the sun's about to shine on the well! I've got to reconnect the dish before the grownups go on another rampage!

REX: (following him) What's your beef?

J.R.: Look, if you're gonna follow me around, at least be useful. Hand me the duct tape.

DINOSAUR 3: It's time for our sitcom!

(The DINOSAURS gather in front row seats.)

REX: So what IS it then if it's not a hat?

J.R.: I found it a pile of rocks when I was building this "fort."
It's a dish that picks up reception from this exact spot, but a time far, far away.
I think this well may be a portal, or wormhole, to the future!

REX: Huh?

J.R.: Look, I don't have time to explain. Just one more adjustment. Hold my tail?

(Rex holds on and J.R. reaches forward.)

DINOSAUR 4: Hey, where's our show? (Dinosaurs begin to chant "Silicon Sally!
Silicon Sally!")

(Rex turns his head at the noise and, distracted, lets go of J.R.'s tail.)

J.R.: (Reaches with a screwdriver) Voila! Here we goo...oooo...woahhh! (Falls into well.)

REX: Oops. (Peers over into well. Runs to where the dinosaurs are seated.)

Help! Help! J.R.'s fallen in the well!

(Somewhat simultaneously):

DINOSAUR 5: Quiet!

DINOSAUR 6: Shhhhh!

DINOSAUR 7: Our show's about to start!

DINOSAUR 8: Sit down and shut up!

(DINOSAUR 9 pulls REX down by the scruff into an empty seat.)

DINOSAURS ALL: (Chant) Silicon Sally! Silicon Sally!

(DINOSAUR 10 passes Rex a tub of fries. Rex begins to eat, completely forgetting about J.R., and soon he joins in with the chanting.)

(Zak remains onstage alone, playing his Handie, oblivious.)

Act One

Scene Two

(Dinosaurs remain in chairs watching their Soap.)

EXTERIOR: A wishing well with a satellite dish where the dipper should be on a traffic island. Traffic (Children's Chorus) races around the island at a frenetic pace.

SIGNS:

Arrow: Carpal Tunnel

Street sign: Freeway Vista.

Town: Plastic Plateau.

Population: Over

INTERIOR: A family room.

DINOSAURS ALL: (Chanting) Silicon Sally! Silicon Sally!

P.C. GREEN: (A bit disheveled from the chase)

Hello, viewers, it's me, P.C. Green, live from Freeway Vista in Plastic Plateau, Calicorpia, in the year double-0-2, and have I got a great show for you!

DINOSAURS ALL: Shhhh! It's starting!!

(Zak has not moved. He is now playing Handie in the living room floor. His father, Al, is rummaging around distractedly.)

AL: Has anyone seen my glasses? I swear, there's a hole in the time space continuum...

DINOSAUR 1: Ha! Ha! He lost his glasses again!

HILLARY: (Screeches in delight, and runs past her father, waving his glasses. He picks her up and holds her upside down. She giggles. She puts his glasses on his face and tries to grab his Handie.)

Gimme Handie!

AL: You're too little for Handie, here's your dollie (hands her the doll).

HILLARY: No dollie! (hurls it with contempt into the audience)

(The door opens and Sally trips into the room in high heels and a business suit, disheveled from being chased out of the conference, somewhat slapstick, carrying a supersize bucket (which she'd grabbed from the Zak in da Box booth) of fries and a Handie. In something of her appearance the poet in her shines through.)

(The dino audience applauds at her entrance.)

SALLY: Honey, I'm home!

(She takes off one pump and throws it. Hillary runs after it, retrieves it, jumps on Sally and tries to grab her Handie.)

HILLARY: Gimme Handie!

SALLY: No no. Handies are only for three and up.

(Walks over to Zak playing his Handie.)

ZAK: Guess what, Mom? I made it to level seven!

SALLY: (Pats him on the head and hands him a big bucket labeled "large.")

Good Boy! And every good boy deserves fries!

ZAK: (Grabbing fries) What a good boy am I!

AL: Hi honey, how was the conference?

(Goes up to embrace his wife. The musical ring of her Handie goes off as he touches her. They both jump.)

Hey, it's dinnertime! You said you'd stay offline!

(While Al is distracted Hillary grabs his Handie and gleefully runs offstage, with father in hot pursuit. Zak remains in the same place, playing his Handie.)

AL: Hey, you munchkin!

SALLY: (Into Handie)

Spintax!

MR. ZONEY: Sally, we've got a situation! An article in the Mall Street Journal. It'll hit the site by sunrise.

(MR. ZONEY saunters by holding an open newspaper in front of his face. Sally grabs the paper from him. Sally and Mr. Zoney continue talking into their Handies.)

SALLY: Scientific study of schoolchildren....

(Zak walks by her playing his Handie, pacing under her nose.)

Repetidigititis! Numb Thumb! Lame Boy! This is a disaster!

MR. ZONEY: It's a deal breaker, is what it is. And we're counting on you to fix it.
You're the top public opinionist in Plastic Plateau. We need a counter-campaign
by dawn!

SALLY: I'm on it!

AL: (Walking onstage in oven mittens, thumbs up, holding a casserole dish.)

Dinner!

ZAK: (Stands up stiffly, stretches, puts his Handie up high where Hillary can't reach,
and follows his father, both thumbs sticking up grotesquely.)

(Music crescendo.)

SALLY: (Hands to face, gasps)

Re-pet-i-dig-i-ti-tus!

AL: Dinner!

(Looks from side to side in guilt, then runs offstage to the dinner table.)

SALLY: Re-pet-i-dig-i-tit-us!

Act One

Scene Three

(That evening, in the children's bedroom, Sally reads from a book of nursery rhymes to both children, tucked in bed. Old-fashioned, cozy ambiance. Candlestick burning.)

SALLY: (Accompanied on xylophone)

Jack and Jill went up the Hill...

(She talks into her handie):

Hmm... I wonder...did that nursery rhyme have a subliminal effect on my choice of names...Zachary and Hillary....Jack and Jill....Zak and Hill...

Oh, well, there ya go. Jack and Jill went up the Hill, to fetch a Pail of Water.
Zak fell dumb and broke his thumb – his crown! (she hits the side of her head)
And Hill came tumbling after.
Hmmm...

Jack be Nimble, Jack be Quick, Jack jumped over the Candlestick.

(Kisses both children good night.)

Hmm...(into handie):

Zak "B" Nimbo
Zak "B" Kwik
Zak jump ova da can-do-stick

(switches handie into other hand)

Guy!! Gather up the top gymnasts in the area! I'll meet you at the studio!

(With a couple jump ropes PIPER leads sleepy children into studio. They are rubbing their eyes and wearing loose pajamas. They have bed head and look GAP-ish. Two children start turning the jump rope in rote, chanting, then start to wake up and become animated. A child jumps into the turning rope. Sally comes in and places the candlestick in the middle of the stage. A child (or children) begins to jump over it. They get more elaborate, doing cartwheels, flips, and other acrobatics over it.

CHILDREN: (turning rope – chant)

Zak "B" Nimbo
Zak "B" Kwik
Zak jump ova da can-do-stick!

(A couple rappers walk in with Handies to front stage.)

RAPPERS: I flex ma thumb
Cuz I so young
Daddy don't know
Cuz he so ode
I jump ma thumb
Cuz I da one
Momma won't say no
Cuz she so slow
I flip ma thumb
Cuz I ain't dumb
Teacher don't care
Cuz she so square

OTHER CHILDREN: (Bend and stretch, reaching arms up, chanting in rhythm with rappers)

(Hillary sneaks in from bed and joins in.)

Gimme Handie!
Gimme gimme Handie!
Gimme Handie!
Gimme gimme Handie!

(There is a choreographed tapestry of jumping rope, two chants, and acrobatics.)

P.C. GREEN: Good morning, Calicorpia! Here's a sneak peek at the hot new Handie commercial. I see youth – elastic and defiant!

CAMERAMAN (FATHER): It's a wrap!

P.C. GREEN: Give 'em a big hand, folks!

(The audience applauds, the kids take a bow.)

PIPER: New Handies for everyone!

(Kids line up with hands outstretched. PIPER hands each a Handie. They begin to play and walk offstage in a line like zombies, thumbs distorted.)

Act One

Scene Four

(A party celebrating the merger of Zoney Corp. and SquishySoftCellware. Festive Zydeco music playing. A Caribbean theme. Balloons, streamers, and banners reading “Da Merger” and “Merger Madness.” A crowd mills about in cocktail attire with drinks, chatting, laughing, dancing.)

(Mr. Squishy and Mr. Zoney are lying down next to each other in lounge chairs, smoking “after” cigars.)

P.C. GREEN: They’re dubbing it “The Perfect Merger!”

CAMERAMAN (FATHER): If you please, gentlemen.

(Mr. Zoney and Mr. Squishy stand up, cigars in teeth, shaking hands, “thumbs up” in triumph, pose for photograph. Then they gesture for Sally to join them. She stands in between them, hands held and raised. Mr. Squishy turns away.)

MR. ZONEY: We couldn’t have done it without you, Sal! Brilliant campaign!

SALLY: (With a big sloshy drink)

Yeah, you saw the headline: “The data don’t matta”
Now facts are irrelevant!
The masses are such asses!
Consumers are face cadets, following whatever image they are flashed
(raving, a little drunk)
It’s how our brains are wired! We’re imprinted imagistically!

(Zoney puts his hand over Sally's mouth and steers her away from P.C. Green.)

P.C. GREEN: (Stopping a couple – Gretel's parents)

Tell us, as Handie consumers AND concerned parents, how do you FEEL?

STEPMOTHER: Oh, at first we were so worried about those stories on the news...about how Handies cause...crippled thumbs (wipes a tear).

P.C. GREEN: Re-ped-i-dig-i-ti-tus, folks! (moves her thumbs up and down)

STEPMOTHER: ... but our child just wouldn’t believe us! She kept chanting that Handie commercial, “Don’t say no!”

P.C. GREEN: “To ma Handie, yo!” (laughs, thinks clever)

FATHER: My child actually had the audacity to say, “Whatta you know? Yo so ode!”
What could I say to that? Look at this belly!

STEPMOTHER: My child challenged me to do the splits!

ZONEY: (Sidling up to the microphone and pushing the parents aside)

Thanks to caring parents making smart parenting decisions, My Handie sales rose 200% in the last quarter!

PIPER: And the revolutionary new Handie version, the “Chipper Companion,” which works with embedded chip technology, aka “wetware,” will be released in time for the holidays!

SALLY: And my stock options are soaring!

(She twirls with her arms outstretched, spilling champagne and tripping.)

SQUISHY: (Walking up and catching Sally by the arm, off balance. He makes a squishy sound as he walks, and wears a lab coat. His speech is slow and sinister.)

Sally, your upcoming “Get the Chip” campaign is ingenious! Welcome to the new team!

SALLY: I’m honored, Mr. Squishy!

SQUISHY: (laughing, turns her away from the crowd)

“Reach for the Fries!” It’s so very clever, and even better, just cleared by my legal team. (Can & Will give the thumbs up.)

So a kid reaches into a supersize bag of fries, and ZAP! The chip is in!

(He makes a shhh! gesture and laughs, blows gunpowder off his thumb.)

SALLY: (Suddenly sober)

Uh, “zap,” sir?

SQUISHY: Oh, posh, you semantical syntactical types! Fret not, lamb, I’ll put some tranquilizer in the cocktail so they won’t remember a thing.

What’s your background by the way? Marketing?

SALLY: Uh, poetry, actually...but I never made a cent, couldn’t pay the rent...(ba-dump!)

(Sally sways and as Mr. Zoney steadies her from behind Mr. Squishy stealthily

cuts a hair from Sally's head and puts it in a baggie.)

SQUISHY: Whatever. (Walks off)

SALLY: (Raving to herself, to the audience)

Well, what other choice did I have? What kind of life is there for a poet in Plastic Plateau?

If only I'd come of age in the "Young" generation or the "Beat" generation or the "Now" generation, or the "Me" generation, but no, I was born in to the "Pepsi" generation, the "Revenue" generation.

AL: Time to come home now. (leads Sally offstage by the hand)

SALLY: (Turns back to address the audience)

Well, I have dependents! I need the benefits! My husband is a lay...sizzicist!

Act One

Scene Five

(It is night. Sally is lying in bed, tossing and turning. Unseen is a young girl, Gretel, lying next to her, representing Sally's younger self.)

(The classroom is set up as usual with the Perpetual 3:00 Cozy.)

(The Wired Piper plays Spooky music.)

(At front stage dancers with streamers run back and forth at front stage to indicate night falling, and dreams.)

(Gretel arises from bed, puts a coat over her nightgown, gets her books and plume, and walks to school.)

(The schoolteacher, MS. PRIMER, stands still, reciting):

PRIMER: 'I think the poet is the last person who is still speaking the truth when no one else dares to' – that's Diane di Prima.

(She is wearing giant shoes that appear glued to the spot.)

(Monsters walk out of the closet and shadows. Creepy music. Pace of dream in slow motion. MR. SQUISHY is an evil scientist in a lab coat with tubes hanging out. He laughs into a hankie. He carries a huge syringe in each pocket, one bright pink, one bright yellow. MR. ZONEY has hypnotic glasses that swirl. MR. PIPER is wearing boxers with an open trench coat lined with Handies. He keeps "flashing." Wires hang out from his coat. They all make their way to the classroom.)

(GRETEL sits at a small desk, opens a notebook, and contentedly writes with a huge plume. The principal, MR. POCKETS, marches in. He is wearing giant diapers over a shoddy suit, wearing a patriotic hat, and carrying a baton.)

MR. POCKETS: (bellows) What's this?!

(He brings the baton down sharply on the blackboard. MS. PRIMER cowers, ducking the blow, and tries ineffectually to cover the blackboard with the sheet containing the picture of Chipper and the slogan, "Reach for the Fries." This was the backdrop for the booth at the technology conference. Chipper is skateboarding while playing a Handie and eating fries. MR. POCKET drop-kicks a large old book to the floor.)

(The teacher's desk is transformed into a fast food counter. A new sheet is thrown over the chalkboard: Meet Chipper! and Win a New Handie! A supersize container of fries is placed on the desk. PIPER leads a line of children into the

classroom; they are each holding on to one of the wires from his coat. The book is placed like a stool in front of the desk for each child to stand on. CHIPPER comes out in costume. It is a scary chipmunk with giant teeth.

PIPER: Children, come play Wish ‘n’ Chips! Your bag of fries might have a prize!

(He holds a Handie just out of their reach. Like zombies the CHILDREN'S CHORUS shuffles in line toward the desk, hands outreached. MR. ZONEY’s swirling eyes draw them along hypnotically. MR. SQUISHY hovers in the sidelines, giggling.)

PROTESTER: Shame on you, Mr. Principal, for serving fatty food in school! You’re force feeding our children obesity and diabetes!

(Speech security haul off.)

PIPER: Children, if you ask Chipper into your thumbs, you can play the new Handie version, the Chipper Companion!

CHILDREN: Chipper!

PIPER: (Each statement in a different pose)

Can I take your order? Would you like some fries? Would you like a drink with that? You might get a surprise!

(Holds a giant plug, puts into socket – ZAP!)

MR. SQUISHY: (Holding up the syringes)

A squirt of Belly Jelly? Cherry Bomb or Atomic Lemy?

(PIPER holds Handies out of reach. CHIPPER dances and waves. Children shuffle up, reach for fries, ZAP!, slump, MR. SQUISHY shoots with syringe, MR. ZONEY hauls off. GRETEL in a daze has sleepwalked and joined the line, but she continues to write in her diary without noticing what is happening. As she advances MR. POCKETS pounces on her and grabs her diary and pen.

MR. POCKETS: (Toots whistle)

Alert! Alert! A terrorist handwriting act!

GRETEL: My diary! (begins to scream and resist)

MS. PRIMER: (frozen in place, mouths Run! Run! but no sound comes out.
Holds up a piece of paper that says Run! – in fancy cursive)

(All characters advance upon GRETEL.)

MR. SQUISHY: (laughing)

Cherry bomb or atomic lemy? (He sticks her with the syringe and she is dragged off, screaming.)

PIPER: (ding!)

That's over one billion served!

MR. SQUISHY: You mean implanted! With my label!

MR. ZONEY: My license!

MR. SQUISHY: My program!

MR. ZONEY: My password!

(All monsters laugh)

GRETEL: (Screaming)

SALLY: (Sits up in bed and screams as one with Gretel.)

(The dream monsters scatter and hide back in the shadows, and SALLY is alone, sitting up in bed. Her family runs in.)

ZAK: Mom, what's wrong?

SALLY: My God, what have I done?

AL: You had a nightmare.

SALLY: I looked into the face of evil!

HILLARY: (Spies a monster, who makes a "shh" gesture.)

Monsters?

SALLY: I've got to make it go away!

ZAK: Here, mom, hold my Handie.

HILLARY: Gimme Handie!

(They all hold hands for a moment, SALLY and ZAK holding ZAK's Handie between them.)

SALLY: Oh, I can't bear it!

AL: There's only one thing to try. It's a long shot, the bugs haven't been worked out...
change the reality setting on your Handie.

SALLY: (Spies a monster, gasps. She drops ZAK's Handie in a faint. AL supports her slumped form.)

(HILLARY pounces on ZAK's dropped Handie and runs outside.)

HILLARY: Handie! Handie!

ZAK: (Chasing her)

Third button from the left! And give it BACK!!!

AL: (Chasing the kids and pulling SALLY along)

Everybody stay in the same force field! Try to grab hands!

(The monsters chase behind SALLY, who looks back and sees them, but nobody else looks back.)

(HILLARY runs to the well.)

(As "Ring around the Rosie" is played on the xylophone, the characters lunge toward each other, touch hands, do a Ring around the Rosie, get thrown off balance, untwine, and scatter offstage.)

Act Two

FRIENDLY FALLOUT

Scene One

(The corporate backdrop is unfurled to reveal a bucolic country setting. A bucket of water is hung on the same stone wishing well replacing the satellite dish. There is a ring of rocks serving as campfire. The pace is slowed down. Hillary, who is now a quail, wanders onstage, looking around.)

QUAIL: Chirp!

DINOSAURS ALL: Boo!

DINOSAUR: Hey, what is this? The Partridge Family?

P.C. GREEN: It's Silicon Sally, the NEW Reality Show. Live from Candy Forest!
Same characters! Same time slot!

DINOSAUR: Same shoes?

PIPER: Sorry bout dat...the writers insisted on Birkenstocks.

P.C. GREEN: (looks down and notices that she is wearing a hippie dress – gasps!)

I demand to talk to wardrobe! Wardrobe!! (runs offstage to change)

QUAIL: Chirp. (flaps wings)

(The rest of the family members wander onstage, dazed and confused.)

SALLY: (Staggers up to the well, ladles out a drink, sips, brightens.)

Wow! So now I'm the woman at the well!

AL: The homeless woman at the well, from the looks a things.

(Characters have a look around and take in the scene. Sally dips into more water, shares.)

SALLY: Oooh, can this be water? It tastes so good! I wonder what it's sweetened with...

(ZAK is now free of fat. In fact, he is an apple tree, with an apple in each hand. SALLY is wearing hippie garb. AL remains exactly the same in his rumpled attire.
HILLARY the bird is chasing a bunny around with ZAK's Handie.)

ZAK: Where's my Handie?

SALLY: Where's MY Handie?

AL: (To ZAK) Here's a new Handie version, called the Compass. Go ahead, hold it. Walk with the W, and to return back home, follow the E.

SALLY: Here, bring some water with you. (She hands him a canteen.)

ZAK: I wish I had Handie...I miss Handie...

(He walks, a compass in one hand, and apple in another, and he begins to munch.)

HILLARY: (Chasing a bunny) Chipper!

(As soon as ZAK is out of sight, she waves his Handie in triumph.)

Nyah, nyah, nyah, nyah, nyah! I got your Handie!

(AL walks around with his and SALLY'S Handies, a la Star Trek with sensors, trying to pick up signals.)

SALLY: (Begins stretching, twirling, enjoying how her body feels in a hippie skirt and bare feet. There is some drumming in the background. She spies a diary on the edge of the well.)

What's this? Paper! (She caresses it.) Is that a capital cursive X? (turns diary upside down.) Let's see if I remember anything from my class in ancient calligraphy.

Dream: First they wrested my writing plume from my hand. Then a man in a lab coat injected me with a day-glo goo he called Jelly Belly. I awoke in a land called Panda Bear Forest. I soon discovered, however, that this was a magical fantasy created with holographic images. I figured this out A) because pandas are not bears and B) pandas are extinct. I was actually trapped in a tiny cubicle. My thumbs were magnetically drawn to a keyboard. Screwed into my belly button was a large plastic plug. Instead of the expected panic, I felt a warm, happy sensation spreading throughout my body.

Gasp!

(She holds the diary behind her as if to hide it.)

AL: I'm picking up some distortion. (Puts binoculars to his eyes.) Is that some sort of a compound in the distance?

SALLY: (Wavers shakily. Holds on to side of wishing well.)

AL: Sally! You haven't seen my glasses anywhere....?

DINOSAUR: Ha, ha, he's lost his glasses again!

(Cut to HILLARY pulling out AL's glasses and putting them on her nose. She adjusts the glasses over her eyes, looks out, and surprise! She sees a little dinosaur crawling out of the well. He looks back and forth, then heads for the bushes. HILLARY takes off the glasses, puts them back on, and he is gone. She runs to the well, peers in, and the glasses fall in, plunk!)

HILLARY: Uh-oh!

(Cut to ZAK walking west, holding the compass in front of him and looking around.)

ZAK: I seem to be walking with the sun.

J.R.: (Rustle. Walking with or behind a bush, screwdriver in hand.)

Psssst!

ZAK: Huh?

(They look at each other in awe.)

ZAK: (soft voice) Are you hungry? (He holds out an apple.)

J.R.: Am I in the future?

ZAK: You are extinct.

J.R. I am J.R. the Velociraptor.

(They sit down and commence eating.)

J.R.: Yummm....what is this food?

ZAK: It comes from the trees.

J.R.: I love the future!

(pause)

You have the same eyes as Zak, but –

ZAK: How do you know who I am?

J.R.: It's a long story. I landed in your well.

ZAK: You're from the Cretaceous period.

J.R.: But I want to know the future!

ZAK: I've got bad news for ya, bud.

(They start walking.)

Well, I've got to turn around before the sun gets down. What about you? Do you have to be home for dinner?

J.R.: Oh, the village won't even miss me. (sarcastic) That is, not until the sunbeam hits the well. And that I would rather not witness. I want to stay in the future!

(They turn around.)

(Cut to SALLY, leaning against a tree, reading to HILLARY, her back to the well.)

SALLY: Little Jack Horner, sat in a corner, eating his Christmas pie. He put in his thumb, and pulled out a plum, and said, "What a Good Boy am I!"

Hmmm...pulled out a plum...where's my Handie? Oh, wait! (she reaches for the notebook, plucks a feather out of Hillary the bird, dips it into a plum, and begins writing.)

AL: (Walks out with oven mittens) Dinner!

(SALLY puts the notebook and plume on top of the well, then follows AL to the campfire, where he has a fry pan.)

(ZAK and J.R. approach the well.)

J.R.: I'll show you how it happened. C'mon.

(Both climb to the top of the well, and J.R. pulls ZAK in.)

Act Two

Scene Two

(Gretel's bedroom. The wishing well is outside the window.)

(The classroom, with desks and chalkboard. The stack of books are covered by the Perpetual 3:00 Cozy.)

P.C. GREEN: (Now in a very stylish '50s-'60s era getup.)

Hello, viewers! You're with me, P.C. Green, in Insta Township, and the population is growing!

(GRETEL is lying in bed. STEPMOTHER and FATHER approach door, singing sweetly, arm in arm.)

PARENTS: (Accompanied by xylophone)

Wake up, wake up, you sleepyhead.
It's time to go to school.
Wake up, wake up, you sleepyhead.
It's time to learn the golden rule...

FATHER: Bye, sugarplum! I'm off to work!

(Blows an affectionate kiss goodbye, tiptoes out.)

STPMOTHER: (Shakes GRETEL awake)

Gretel! Gretel!

(Discovers diary under pillow)

What's this?! (flips through pages madly. Gretel wakes up and is cowering.)
Handwriting!!! "My – stepmother – is – a – witch"?!

GRETEL: No!

STPMOTHER: That does it, missy! No language in my home!

(Tosses the diary out the window, it lands in the well.)

GRETEL: Stepmother!! My diary!!! (She folds into her hands and cries)

STPMOTHER: Wipe that smirk off your face! (Marches off)

(from a distance, in sing song)

Your eggs are getting cold! You'll be late for schoo-ool!

GRETEL: Now my eyes are all red... (still sniffing)

(She takes off her robe to reveal a miniskirt outfit. Puts on a coat. Takes off bunny slippers and puts on go-go boots. She picks up a fancy bottle of perfume labeled "Eau de Woe" and sprays. She picks up a leather book bag, pulls out a giant plume from under her pillow, puts it in, climbs out her window, and is handed an apple from a tree in passing—Zak. She begins to munch the apple. Her spirits lift, and she begins to skip. Her braids bounce with ribbons.)

(GRETEL skips to the classroom door and does a secret knock.)

GRETEL: (Sings out)
Ms. Primer!

MS. PRIMER jumps at the noise, puts the CHIPPER sheet over the blackboard and puts the clock cozy on.)

GRETEL: It's just me, Ms. Primer!

PRIMER: (Whips off sheet and cozy, relaxes.)

Good morning, Gretel!

(GRETEL hands her teacher an apple. Throws off coat.)

PRIMER: Why, thank you! (takes a bite. Pauses. Sniffs.)

Oh, no, do I smell Eau de Woe?

GRETEL: (Suddenly in tears, rushes to hug teacher.)

That witch confiscated my diary! I was in the middle of writing down a dream!

PRIMER: Here! (hands her a black test notebook.)

GRETEL: (Suddenly brightens.) Lov-e-ly!

(Sits at desk, begins to write furiously.)

(Sound of sharp shoes and a knock with a baton at the door. MS. PRIMER covers the board with CHIPPER, puts the 3:00 clock cozy over the books. Enter MR. POCKETS, dressed with patriotic enthusiasm, a bounce in his step, carrying a baton. He quickly scans the room, but is in a good mood.)

MR. POCKETS: (Blows the whistle around his neck.)

Attention, everyone! School wide field trip today!
Zak in da Box Jr. High is marching in the Main Street Parade!

(Thrusts a pile at MS. PRIMER.)

Hand out song sheets! Get your students in line!

(He makes a military corner turn, stamps his feet, and walks off.)

MS. PRIMER: (scanning the song sheets)

Plum for Everyone!

Push your thumb in da Pie!

God Bless McAmerica?

Oh, my, my! (Puts her head in her hands.)

MR. POCKETS: (Back with a line of children, one of whom plays the triangle along with the beat.)

A – B – C!

Follow me!

Consolidated Compliance Corp.

C – C- C!

SCHOOL CHILDREN: (Chant along)

(The Children's Chorus is wearing patriotic hats. PIPER is marching. They stream out into an outdoor setting, where there are crowds of marchers, banners of local entities, and musical instruments. Banners include: Worst Western, STALL-ART, First Square Church, Coke High School, Barns 'n' Yokels, Zak 'n' da Box Jr. High. Sign: Main Street, McAmerica.)

GRETEL'S PARENTS: (Waving) Hi Gretel!!!

(Wearing silly hats, waving pinwheels, with camera.)

GRETEL: (Throws her coat closed.) Omigod. (Turns her back to them.)

P.C. GREEN: Spirits are running high across McAmerica on millions of Main Streets in

thousands of townships where enthusiastic crowds are poised to jump on the bandwagon and get a piece of the pie!

WIRED PIPER: (Holds out a piece of pie to P.C. Green.)

P.C. GREEN: Sugar plum pie for everyone!! MMmmm...I think I'll have myself a little taste...

WIRED PIPER: (With megaphone. He is doing hand motions with exaggerated thumbs. People join with him in a conga line.)

Consolidated Compliance Corp.

C – C- C!

Put your thumb in da pie!

A plum for me!

(Approaches GRETEL'S father. Carrying a stack of flyers. "Lifts" GRETEL'S coat from around her shoulders and puts it on to look businesslike.)

Why, sir, you look like a smart businessman who stays in step with the times!

FATHER: (flattered) Why, yes!

PIPER: Let me clue you in. Assets are no longer "in"! Assets are a liability! Assets are inconvenient! Assets are for asses!

FATHER: Well, I'm no ass!

PIPER: Sign up with us and we'll do all your chores
Fix the roof and put in French doors
We'll give you all the cable channels.
Your lovely wife will be on a constant holiday
Any holographic cubicle she wants:
Tahiti, Tahoe, or Santa Fe

FATHER: You can still type, right dear?

PIPER: We'll assume your debts, neuter your pets
Serve all your meals in a 24-hour casino buffet
With all you can eat shrimp!

MOTHER: All you can eat shrimp??!! (looking excited)

PRIMER: Read his lips! It's all a trick!

PARADE: (led by principal)

I want a piece of the pie!
A plum for me!
Consolidated Compliance Corp.
C – C – C!

(kids are marching, repeat)

(Folks are reading from brochures passed out.)

FATHER: Company Car!
Pressed suits!
Golf days!
I win!

(As each person chants their lines, they throw the brochure in the air.)

MOTHER: Townhouse!
Maid service!
Open bar!
I'm in!

SCHOOLKID: Antibiotics!
Inhalers!
Immunizations!
Ritalin!

P.C. GREEN: Botox!
Diet pills!
Pheromones!
Vicadin!

PRINICIPAL: Free shrimp!
Dialysis!
Diapers!
Whee! (tosses hat into air)

ALL: Consolidated Compliance!
C – C – C!

(To the tune of: “No more pencils, no more books, no more teacher's dirty looks.”)

FATHER: No more mortgage
No more bills

PRINCIPAL: No more paying for my pills

P.C. GREEN: Dubbed “The Last Merger,” Consolidated Compliance Corp. is now the sole global supercorporation, the controlling parent of all existing entities.

MOTHER: What about France?

P.C. GREEN: Second World subsidiary!

PRIMER: We’re not merging on down the road, here, folks, we’re being acquired!
We won’t be free, we’ll be corporate assets!

MOTHER: (disgust) Those lazy crazy activists!

FATHER: Don’t they have a job?

PIPER: Follow me for your quick fix
A weensie wittle computer chip
In a wittle wet squishy bag
A fast download and you’ve been tagged.

Come one and all!
For your quick install!
You may win the Chipper Companion!

Get the advantage!
No more clunky plastic cards!
Have the world at your fingertip!
One simple system!
One easy solution!
One wittle chip!

P.C. GREEN: According to the polls, predicted to be on the bandwagon today are all banks, churches, schools, unions, insurance companies, and families like you!

PRIMER: You’ll need a chip to get on a plane!
Shop at a store
Go the hospital
Open a door!

P.C. GREEN: That’s right! Consolidated Compliance promises a “quick fix” for all of us who get the chip. (like puppets talking, wistfully) Right, Mr. Thumby?

MR. ZONEY: (Smiles at P.C., kisses her thumb.) Don’t worry! It won’t hurt!

P.C. GREEN: Getting the chip is the smart business choice! Consolidated Compliance promises to forgive student loans and car payments, wink, wink.

(links arms with ZONEY)

So why dontcha buy me a Lexus while the buying's good!

(They saunter off arm in arm)

PRIMER: (Calls after them)
They promise you a plum, but you'll end up with a lemon!

MOTHER: CCC will take care of my credit card payments!

FATHER: How does this program sound? Virtual Caribbean! A cruise ship cubicle for two!

MOTHER: Ooohh...little umbrellas in the drinks!

FATHER: Virtual waves!

MOTHER: Outside darling little portholes!

(They walk off in satisfaction, slipping off their coats to reveal Caribbean attire, they put on hats and sunglasses.)

(Principal is leading the march back to the classroom. The children are in line, chanting.)

SCHOOLCHILDREN: No more pencils
No more books
No more teacher's
Dirty looks

PRIMER: Now what? (She looks around the classroom, feeling anxious)

(The children enter the classroom. Some are erasing the blackboard and clapping erasers. Some are gathering evidence and handing it to the PRINCIPAL, who tosses it in the trash can. All papers, books, pencils, etc. are thrown away violently. Desks are overturned. GRETEL hides her plume in her shirt.)

PRIMER: It's the end of education as we know it!

(Just like in the dream, the "Chipper" sheet is thrown over the blackboard, the desk serves as a fast food counter, the books as a stool for the victims. PIPER carries in a bucket of fries and places it on the desk. He stands behind the counter.

WIRED PIPER: I'll do a read through of my lines.
Would you like some fries? (She pushes a switch. ZAP!)
Next please!

(to the audience)

See, it's totally voluntary! Calling me a pusher was just plain unfair!
"Reach for the fries!" "Get the Chip!"
I'm only an actor reading my script.
How else was I supposed to survive as "talent" in Plastic Plateau?

Kids, come get your Handies!

(Students form a line, mesmerized like zombies, and one by one step up on the big book.)

PIPER: Would you like some fries? Reach in for a big surprise!

(One by one, students reach out with one hand for the Handie PIPER is holding, and with the other hand into the container of fries. ZAP! MR. SQUISHY sticks 'em with the syringe, they slump, and MR. ZONEY hauls 'em off, aided by Speech Security and Can & Will.)

(Meanwhile, they wheel in a TV, throw a pink slip over the teacher, and drag her out.)

PRIMER: Run, Gretel, run!!!

(While everyone is distracted by MS. PRIMER struggling, GRETEL makes a dash. PRIMER is popped with a syringe, slumps, and is dragged out.)

GRETEL: Ms. Primer!

PRIMER: Run!

(GRETEL, holding her plume to her breast, dodges and runs out fast, toward the well, where she climbs in and hides.)

Act Two

Scene Three

(In a country scene devoid of people Gretel climbs out of the well. It has a hanging bucket of water. The apple tree stands by.)

(GRETEL climbs out of the well and looks around in confusion. She is wearing AL's glasses, all catty-wonky. She takes them off.)

GRETEL: Ah, that's better.

(She drinks some water. She finds Sally's journal sitting on the edge of the well.)

GRETEL: My diary! But...where am I?

I'd better gather kindling for a fire before it gets dark.

Too bad I don't have a crust of bread for making a trail of crumbs...Oh, I know... I'll make a paper trail...

(She walks along, ripping empty pages from the diary as she goes, reading aloud from the entries SALLY has added.)

The earth will hold me. I don't need to hold myself up with my shoulders...

(With a splash of water two young surfers in singed wetsuits crash into the tree or well and stagger forward, holding their boards. One has a net bag with bananas. One has a strapped-on guitar. A couple fish are lodged in funny places.)

WAX: Tubular tsunami, dude!

WAYNE: Did you catch that tidal wave!

WAX: I rode Moby Lip!

WAYNE: Vegas is SO gaawwn!

WAX: Now Elvis is really dead!

WAYNE: Northern California is finally its own state...

WAX: What a sunset...

(They both recline and eat a banana.)

GRETEL: (Upon her return, she walks up to the boys, carrying kindling.)

I see you've got some fish to fry!

WAX: Want a banana?

GRETEL: Listen, I'm out of my element here...do I – uh- need the chip or anything?

WAYNE: Are you a spy?

GRETEL: Nay, a runaway.

WAX: We're castaways.

WAYNE: No chips.

WAX: No tubes.

WAYNE: Conscientious objectors.

WAX: Kicked outa school.

WAYNE: Deleted from the database.

WAX: We were heading for the Lost Coast.

WAYNE: We hitched ourselves a long...ride...

GRETEL: (Talking aloud as she writes into her diary)

I don't even want to ask what a tube is...

(WAX & WAYNE are totally chillin. From behind a tree the WIRED PIPER plays Kumbaya. They strum a guitar and sing Kumbaya. GRETEL is arranging kindling in the ring of stones. She holds out AL's glasses.)

GRETEL: Aha! Let's see if I can start a fire with these...

(Cut to ZAK and J.R. walking along.)

ZAK: (Turning over canteen, empty) I'm so thirsty...

J.R.: Wait – I smell water! (disappointed) Saltwater...

ZAK: Look, a paper trail! (picks up some scraps and examines.)

What are these squiggly lines?

J.R.: A language from the future!

(They walk along the trail, to the tune of Kumbaya, and hear the noise of someone gagged and struggling in the well, which is off a ways from the campfire site. ZAK spies his Handie resting on the edge of the well.)

ZAK: Handie!!!! (He rushed up and embraces it to his chest.)

J.R.: (leaning into the well) A little help here....?

(They pull a out a girl, V1, and untie her. She is “mod” in go-go boots. She has a bare midriff with a big, decorative “gut plug.”)

V1: Thank Bill! If I had to hear Kumbaya one more time!

(Cups mouth with hands, hollers) Hey, Seal dudes! Take a break!

(They walk toward the music)

So, I’m Version 1.0, call me V1, and (turning to J.R.) you are WHAT? A mutant?

J.R.: Nope, pureblood Velociraptor.

V1: But you don’t have any thumbs. Where are your chip implants?

J.R.: Are you from the future?

V1: Listen, Velosa-hoozitz, I’d love to stand around and shoot the breeze, but I’m starved. Anybody got a tube of jelly belly?

WAX: Want a banana?

V1: A whata?

(WAX tosses a banana into his mouth. V1 recoils and gags.)

V1: Now that is just obscene!

WAX: Well, as far as I can tell, you’re at least half primate.

V1: (turning to GRETEL)

You haven’t complimented me on my Gut Plug! Louis Vitton! You like? Where’s yours?

GRETEL: Ummm...confiscated.

V1: And my favorite belly jelly flavor is Atomic Lemy. What’s yours?

WAYNE: Mashed banany. A vintage flavor. (He mashes it into a tube. V1 unscrews her

gut plug, and it does the trick.)

(He has remnants on his fingers, and holds out an index finger near her mouth.)

Want a taste?

V1: I wish I could remember what taste is!

WAX: Now this is taste! The salt water on my face!

J.R.: And this is the future I was searching for! Surfin' USA!

(As J.R. poses on the surf board, a surf tune is played, fish is fried over the fire, GRETEL sits writing in her diary, V1 dances.)

V1: (Sobers suddenly) We better put out that fire now. Do you know how close we are to corporate headquarters? They'll see the smoke and be back to check on me before long.

GRETEL: Who is they?

V1: My daddy. MR. SQUISHY to you.

And except for one of his cronies, it's all dronies in the compound, plugged into a virtual reality program...all day long in a cubicle drooling...

By now Daddy has probably locked up my sister. I've got to hack my way back in before they turn her into one of the dronies...

Now, I bet they've amped up the security code...

J.R.: I've got an idea. Zak, hand over your Handie. We'll need the batteries.

ZAK: Not my Handie!!

(J.R. and Zak struggle.)

V1: You've got to help me save my sister!

(Zak lets go.)

J.R.: I might be able to find a way to disrupt their power source.

Everyone! Wield you weapons of mass deconstruction!

(Gretel grabs the frying pan (using oven mitts). V1 has ropes. Zak has apples. J.R. has a screwdriver and a Handie. Wax has a banana in each hand. Wayne has a surfboard.)

(They strike a Mod Squad pose to mod music.)

V1: Let's storm the Gates of Calicorpia!

INTERLUDE:

(While the scenes are changing...Sally is walking around with the watering can calling for Zak. Al is walking closer to the compound, picking up signals. Hill is still chasing a bunny.)

Act Three

Escape from Calicorpia

Scene One

(The scene is devoid of natural beauty. Debris covers the ground. Plastic toys, bottles, bags, and diapers are kicked around.)

(There are two doors, “War Room” and “Play Room.” There is a sign for the corporate headquarters for CCC. By the door are two kegs of “Jelly Belly” and “Fluffy Foo”:
Ingredients: HFC, PHO.)

(The “War Room” door is opened to reveal Mr. Squishy, Mr. Zoney, and Sally 2.0 in a meeting. Sally is dressed in a sexy corporate suit, with high heels. Father and Stepmother are drooling at keyboards.)

SQUISHY: Mr. Chairman, you remember Sally of Spintax. This is Sally, Version 2. Much improved.

SALLY: (fondles him in some creepy way) Thank you, Mr. Squishy.

Hello, Mr. Zoney. (a dainty bow) How can I serve you? (hands him a coffee cup.)

MR. ZONEY: Sally 2.0...! Where the first version went, I don't wanna know...I like the way you operate. Your last campaign was brilliantly great.

SALLY: Thank you, Mr. Zoney.

MR. ZONEY: “Friendly Fallout!!” How to keep the masses inside?

CHORUS: Friendly Fallout!

MR. ZONEY: How to keep children from wanting to play outside?

SALLY: Fear, Mr. Zoney.

MR. ZONEY: Yes, but what was the process in your pretty little brain?

SALLY: Well, it was the rain. I was sitting there, sipping tea, listening to acid jazz...and rain drops on the roof. Acid jazz, acid rain, sitting by the friendly fire place...

CHORUS: Friendly Fallout!

MR. SQUISHY: And those faux nuclear explosions!

SALLY: Climate change is bringing such unexpected events.

CHORUS: Out-a-Luck-a-Yucca!

SALLY: Only a few Burning Men straggled over to check out the site. What would you believe? The mushroom clouds on TV, or some crazy naked painted people?

MR. SQUISHY: It's ingenious because radiation can't be detected by human sensors!

SALLY: It only took a billion bucks to make Geiger counters controversial.

MR. SQUISHY: P.C. Green has everyone convinced, including herself, that it won't be safe to step outside for at least a generation!

(P.C. GREEN creeps around the window with a gas mask on, and a microphone. She is wearing a mod outfit a la Version 1.0 and Version 2.0.)

MR. ZONEY: And that's all the time we'll need.

SALLY: So what's next for me?

MR. SQUISHY: A massive population downsize. Of a scale grander than Influenza or the Black Plague. We've got the Third World under our thumbs, the children's campaign is going strong.

MR. ZONEY: Yes, I see the kids sure love their new game cubicles. We call them RBDP stations -- Remote Bomb Drop Play stations.

CHILDREN'S CHORUS: RBDP! RBDP!

MR. ZONEY: The next release, scheduled for Christmas, is Remote Powered Activation Blast.

CHILDREN'S CHORUS: RPAB! RPAB!

MR. SQUISHY: But back to the downsize -- what to do about our own?

SALLY: Meaning?

MR. SQUISHY: The thinkers, the suspicious – those threats to security...
the fat, the masses...all those mouths to feed...

SALLY: Oh, you mean Americans!

I've got it! The Healthy Headcount Initiative! They'll be so thrown off by mass random reactions they won't know what hit 'em!

MR. ZONEY: Healthy Headcount! I like it!

CHORUS: Healthy Headcount!

SALLY:

(With a blue plaid gingham homemaker style chart.)

OK – the kickoff to the Seven Days of Destruction!
Just kidding.

First, offer free mandatory upgrades—install a time-release radiation bomb—let's call it a green energy conservation chip--in every microwave, TV set, air conditioner...

MR. ZONEY: Promising a \$100 rebate from PG&E!

SALLY: Then, an appliance a day, until they rest.

Begins reading chart:

Microwave Monday
TV Tuesday
Wal-Mart Wednesday
Thirsty Thursday
French Fry Friday

MR. SQUISHY: So on Monday morning you open the microwave to pop in your frozen breakfast burrito--!

SALLY: Or warm up your coffee...

MR. ZONEY: Silent radio-blasto!

MR. SQUISHY: By lunchbreak 25% of the work force will be feeling queasy in their cubicles...

SALLY: On the second day, everyone will be glued to the nightly news....to watch the breaking story of a new terrorist flu strain...from U-puke-istan...

MR. ZONEY: 10:00, blast-off!

MR. SQUISHY: That's half the pop!

SALLY: On the third day, millions of low-price shoppers will breathe in cool, contaminated, conditioned air...

MR. ZONEY: Anyone who shops at Wal-Mart deserves it!

SALLY: On the fourth and fifth days, McDonald's soft drinks and french fries should

finish off the rest.

MR. SQUISHY: Yes, but how will you get the intellects?

SALLY: Let me finish.

Computer Screen Saturday!

MR. SQUISHY: Sallybuns, send out a warning bulletin to my million dollar contributor list!

SALLY: Yes, Mr. Squishy...whatever you say...

MR. ZONEY: And on the seventh day....?

SALLY: Have a great day!

Act Three

Scene Two

(Sally is outside the window watering plants.)

(Version 1.0 is leaning against the window. Version 2.0 is sitting on a twin bed.)

V2: Onesy, get away from the window and come to bed. Daddy said.

V1: Mmmm...listen to the rain. Don't you love the sound of rain?

V2: It's not rain! It's fallout!

V1: (Breathes in dreamily and sighs.) I just love the smell of rain...

V2: Don't sit on the sill! Don't inhale!

(V1 climbs up on the sill and sticks her face out.)

V1: Mmmm...don't you love the feel of soft rain on your face!

V2: Version 1, don't, I'm afraid you'll fall out!

V1: Shhh...Twosey, don't shout.

V2: Please...V1...it's not rain...it's fallout...

(P.C. Green sidles up next to the window outside with a gas mask on.)

V2 and P.C. GREEN (simultaneously):

It's radiation! It's poison! If you go out, you'll die! Stay alive, stay inside!

V1: Don't you just wanna feel the rain drops on your skin?

V2: No!

(There is a huge cackle. The lights go out. The lights go back on. V1 is gone.)

V2: (Screams)

(The lights go off and on again. Now V1 is lying in bed asleep.)

V2: (Screams)

(Mr. Squishy runs in.)

MR. SQUISHY: Toodles!

V2: Oh, Daddy! One-ie was gone!

MR. SQUISHY: But here she is, I see her.

V2: No, she vanished! I saw her!

MR. SQUISHY: My poor thing, you've had a bad dream...

V2: But a dream so real...

(He holds her)

MR. SQUISHY: Now just hold still....

(He gives her an injection with a huge syringe, and she drops off.)

(The children's chorus comes in dancing, dressed as pandas. Version 1.0 rises and joins in the panda dance, clearly part of the program.)

V1: Look, Two-Two! Panda bears!

CHILDREN'S CHORUS: Panda bears!

Act Three

Scene Three

(The children's chorus walks in, holding on to the Wired Piper's wires. They sit in cubicles and are plugged in to the machines and the kegs of Belly Jelly and Fluffy Foo.)

(The gang approaches with exaggerated caution, posing with motley assortment of “weapons.”)

(Meanwhile, everyone is converging. P.C. Green is snooping around with her mic. Sally is calling for Zak, walking with her watering can. Al has two sensors out—they're beeping.)

(The Wired Piper and Ms. Primer are now dressed in stripes—offstage at a table playing Go Fish.)

(The children's chorus sit like zombies, occasionally making vocalizations.)

CHILDREN'S CHORUS:

Pow!

Ka-boom!

Lo-ser!

Toast!

Spa-zam!

Gotcha!

Gook!

Ka-blam!

(The gang nears the entry.)

J.R.: What's the best way in?

ZAK: Or maybe out?

WAX & WAYNE: (Holding surfboards out front)

We'll bust the door down!

V1: (laughs) It's not a matter of forcing the doors! We need to make it disappear.

J.R.: Ah---we have to disable their power source.

V1: Yeah. It's mostly a hologram. Self included. I've been on the run for a while. Daddy's merely enhanced.

(Mr. Squishy pats wig or whatever overthetop getup he's wearing.)

(Zak puts his branch arm with an apple through V2's window. We hear a gasp.)

V1: Sissy's alive.

(Wax & Wayne put boards down, sit down, and eat bananas.)

WAX: Hmmm...to stimulate the taste buds...

WAYNE: A new vintage flavour.

V1: Yeah, that Jelly Belly Banany's not bad.

(She scoops some and puts it in her navel. Wax picks up a little piece of banana and places it near her mouth. She eats it.)

(The Wired Piper begins playing the guitar.)

(Al walks up with his two Handies out.)

J.R.: Oh, good! With three and a bit of magic we can temporarily interrupt the power flow.

(They aim three Handies at the door.)

P.C. GREEN: (Kerchief fashionably loose over mouth)

Breaking news! Intrepid intruders have infiltrated or escaped from the inner chamber of the compound of Consolidated Compliance Corp., CCC!

SALLY: Zak! Oh, wait, now where'd I leave Hill?

(She walks an alternate route into the Gates, without seeing anyone.)

Oh, well. Zak?

(The Wired Piper is playing a happy tune.)

(Sally wanders into the Play Room without anyone noticing. She is totally nonplussed by

all the zombie children, as she is used to it.)

SALLY: Zak Horner, are you in here?

(Temporary blackout! Only Mr. Squishy (unenhanced version) and Version 2.0 remain visually in front of a blackdrop. Version 1.0 disappears, as do the Pandas.)

(There is a lot of screaming.)

(Al and J.R. give each other high-fives.)

(The set comes back. Mr. Squishy spies Sally, who gasps, so he chases her.)

(Sally runs with the watering can tilted, so that it showers upon some people, who follow it.)

P.C. GREEN: The Gates have been penetrated!

MS. PRIMER: (Looks up from reading a thick ol book.)

(Assesses the situation. Stands up and cups her mouth.)

RUN! RUN!

(P.C. Green screams and runs away.)

CHORUS (following Sally): Water water on my skin! Lightly raining on my face!
Sweetest I shall ever taste!

(repeat)

GRETEL: (Looks around, sees Mr. Squishy chasing Sally. She runs up to him and bangs him on the head with the frying pan. He falls.)

(Sally is enjoying the happiness of all the children around the water shower. She dances with it, and the children begin to do a rain dance, with the Wired Piper happily playing guitar, almost as a dance partner.)

(Mr. Zoney sits alone, playing his Handie, oblivious.)

(The Parents skip out squirting each other with little water guns.)

(J.R. is posing on the surfboard.)

(Al walks up and sees his screwdriver and his glasses. He nonchalantly picks them up.)

AL: There they are.

(Everyone join in with dance, instrument, song!)

Epilogue

CONSTRUCTION SIGN: “HABITAT FOR LIZARDITY” with a picture of Jimmy Carter

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT MAP: METEOR SHELTER (with a picture of a bomb shelter.)

P.C. GREEN: (Outfit reminiscent of Wilma or Betty.)

Yabba dabba what do ya know, folks, you're here with me, P.C. GREEN, in Upper Cretacia, 65 million BC. Talk about Global Warming! (wipes her brow)
Whew!

(Mr. Squishy and Mr. Zoney, wearing stripes or orange jumpsuits and hard hats, walk up and begin doing hard labor with hammers.)

(Everyone else joins in in their way: Sally walks up with a book of fairy tales or nursery rhymes and begins reading aloud, serving as lector. These are the final words of the play, the denouement. Gretel is writing these words in her diary with Sally's quill. The Wired Piper is serenading, accompanying Sally's spoken word. Wax is passing out bananas. Zak is passing out apples. J.R. and Al are engineering. Wayne carries out building materials like a surfboard. Version 1.0 and Version 2.0 sit side by side, with their arms around each other's shoulders, feeding each other. Mr. Zoney sits playing a Handie. Ms. Primer paints handwriting on a sign or wall.)

(Dinosaurs wander up to check out the construction.)

DINO 1: Whattaya think, Bob?

DINO 2: Crazy. Like that Noah guy.

DINO 3: Yup.

P.C. GREEN: (Soap Suspense)

Will the dinosaurs survive? Will Sally write any good poetry?
Will Version 1.0 and Version 2.0 like bacon? Stay tuned with me,
P.C. Green, for a few more million.

THE END

(Potluck ensues)