

IN THE LIGHT

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Logline: Five years after a supernatural pandemic that has forced people to remain in the light, a family in Colorado adjusting to the new normal stumbles across a conspiracy that threatens their entire town.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

MICK HALEY (Late 30's, fit and bearded) pulls into a WALMART SUPERCENTER parking lot. He dons a t-shirt with a blacked-out American flag on the sleeve. He's listening to a podcast while unconsciously nodding in agreement, being a newfound expert on constitutional law.

PODCASTER

...and we're supposed to go on with this scam for how long? We're thirty days in now wondering when those promises of normalcy will come to be. If it were up to me, you'd see some results. What's their endgame? We're shown some blurry videos that could've been AI, and we're supposed to change our lives? We all know these Deep State actors are trying to end our freedoms because they want to -

The truck stops on a line between two empty parking spaces. Mick drums on the steering wheel and hops out.

EXT. WALMART PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The parking lot is lit up like a nighttime football game. Mick walks up to the entrance where he is stopped by a security guard.

GUARD

Hold on, buddy. Need your headlamp.

MICK

(looking around at the lights)
C'mon man. It's 8 in the afternoon out here.

GUARD

Statewide mandate. If you want to come in, you need your lamp.

MICK

You're really saving lives here.

GUARD

I didn't make the rules.

Mick rolls his eyes and walks back to his truck.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK -CONTINUOUS

Mick leans in and grabs an old HEADLAMP out of the center console.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Mick walks past the guard and holds up the headlamp while giving a sarcastic smile. The guard nods.

GUARD

Thank you, Sir.

Mick pulls the headlamp down around his neck and tosses the light over his back.

INT. WALMART - CONTINUOUS

The crowd feels sparse, at least for a superstore. The shoppers seem uncomfortable, obligated even, and don't waste time moving through the store.

Mick strolls the grocery aisles tossing a few items into his hand basket. Six months ago, he would've blended in. Now he looks entirely too casual.

Another customer glares at him.

CUSTOMER

You're not wearing that correctly.

MICK

I don't even need it, so who cares.

CUSTOMER

It's for the rest of us.

MICK

You'll live.

He strolls to the end of the aisle where a few other customers browse the end caps.

Nearby, an unwatched young girl makes her way down the cereal aisle, swinging her headlamp around on her arm.

She sees a marshmallow filled cereal with a cartoon mascot and sets her headlamp down on the shelf to pick it up. She blindly yells out into the store, as kids do.

GIRL

Mommy, can we get this? Mommy?

Her Mom is not even in the aisle. Mick sees her and continues past the end caps.

The lights in the store BLINK off and on.

A few customers pause their shopping, deserting their carts in the aisles and head for the front doors. The other customers all turn on their headlamps, despite the lights still being on.

Mick shakes head and mutters to himself.

MICK
Goddamn morons.

The lights FLICKER again. The remaining shoppers freeze, exchanging glances.

A VOICE comes over the loudspeakers.

O.S.
Attention Walmart shoppers. There is no need to worry. We are addressing the issue with the lights. Please continue with your business and the problem will be -

The power goes out.

A few startled customers yell out. Headlamp BEAMS dart all around the store as patrons try to find their way to each other and head toward the front. It's a disco of chaos.

Mick groans.

MICK
They've got back up generators, people. You don't have to flip out.

He continues on shopping and reaches around to his back for his light when a person in the next isle SCREAMS out.

CUSTOMER O.S.
They're in here!

ANOTHER VOICE O.S.
Over there!

Lights dart wildly trying to spot something in the dark. A display of cans tips over and bangs on the floor nearby.

CUSTOMER O.S.
Get to the front! Run!

Mick gets more agitated.

MICK

Unreal. You're all sheep! There's
nothing in here!

Mick fumbles for his lamp as he continues down the aisle. The strap is caught on his collar.

Focused on his headlamp, he runs into an abandoned cart.

The guard by the door calls out over a megaphone.

GUARD

Please make your way quickly to the
main entrance. We are closing the
store momentarily. If you cannot
see, please follow the sound of my
voice.

Cursing, Mick kicks the abandoned cart and keeps walking.

MICK

This is ridiculous. Gonna have to
stand outside for an hour and -

A loud CRASH nearby stops him in his tracks. An entire shelf has fallen over and is blocking the path forward.

Mick backs up down the isle. Ahead, chip bags crinkle and pop as SOMETHING steps over the shelf. This is slow, different from the panicked shoppers.

A silhouette comes into view maybe 15 feet away? It's nearly impossible to tell in the dark. It's tall and spindly.

Mick tugs at his headlamp as the shadow moves closer. Heavy footsteps THUMP on the floor in front of him.

It's closing in. Mick is tugging harder at his headlamp strap. The screams from shoppers become background noise. Everyone is now running toward the exits.

Mick keeps jerking at his headlamp. He yanks it forward and turns it on. The figure has disappeared. The aisle is empty.

He pauses for a moment, shaking off the irrational situation.

Piercing animal-like shrieks ring out from another aisle causing him to spin around. A voice nearby cuts through the panic.

GIRL

Mommy! Mommy!

Mick drops his shopping basket and jogs toward the girl who is standing alone in the dark aisle holding her cereal.

He finds her and squats to her level.

MICK

Hey, where's your mom? Did she just leave?

GIRL

I don't know.

MICK

Do you have a light?

GIRL

I don't know where it is.

MICK

Alright. I got you. Come on.

The two start to make their way down the aisle at a brisk pace, still not panicked. The girl trips over items that have spilled on the floor.

As Mick helps her back up, a man comes barreling down the aisle, running into Mick and bouncing off into the shelves.

MICK (CONT'D)

What the hell, guy?

RUNNER

Get out of the aisle!

MICK

Are you kidding me?

Mick pushes the man as he tries to stand back up.

The man kicks at him and scrambles to his feet. Mick blocks the girl from the crazed man with one hand out.

The man lunges at Mick.

RUNNER

Get out of the w-.

And he is gone. The man is yanked violently backwards into the darkness. Not just down the aisle, but out of existence.

Mick is frozen, attempting to process what his eyes just witnessed but his brain is unwilling to accept.

A SHRIEK rings out behind them, snapping Mick out of his momentary brain melt. Fight or flight kicks in.

MICK

Come here.

Mick throws the girl over his shoulder and starts running for the exit.

MICK (CONT'D)

It's probably just a prank. Nothing to worry about.

The girl sees something behind them and screams. Mick looks over his shoulder. Nothing there.

The girls screams again.

GIRL

They're right behind you!

Mick runs faster and darts through the stand alone displays.

The exit is in sight. People are pouring out.

Something to Mick's side growls and with three fast THUMPS, it runs up to him. He spins, covering the girl with his body. A WOMAN running by grabs Mick's shoulder.

He turns to shake her off and watches her severed arm fall to the ground.

Mick points his headlamp all over and continues out the exit.

EXT. WALMART PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Out in the well lit parking lot, he sets the girl down. They both look back into the front doors. Beyond the reach of the street lamps, the store is an abyss inside.

A hysterical WOMAN comes running over.

WOMAN

Jodie! Come here baby.

The woman grabs the girl and hugs her.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

You can't wander off. Are you ok?

GIRL

I didn't know where you were.

The woman looks up at Mick, who appears stoic.

WOMAN

Thank you.

MICK

Maybe stay with your kid.

The woman gives a fake smile, knowing his type.

Mick walks away from the moment trying to hold his composure.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Mick climbs into the driver's seat. He lets out a deep sigh and hits the ignition. His hands are shaking.

He puts the car into Drive, checks the rearview and pauses. He turns on the interior lights, then drives away.

SUPERIMPOSE - FIVE YEARS LATER. SILVER, COLORADO.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

MATT (early 40's) stands beside a pickup truck parked on the street. It's a large new development community with no through traffic.

The side of the truck has an image of mountains and reads LCU. Below in smaller lettering it says LIGHT CONSERVATION UNIT.

Matt wears a T-Shirt with a matching emblem on the chest. He holds an iPad with a heavy case that indicates it's company issued.

Throwing the iPad under his arm, he makes his way down the street on foot.

MONTAGE

- Matt reads the electric meter outside a home and makes a note on his iPad.

- Matt reads another electric meter on a different house, marking his iPad.

- Matt checks the bulbs on the exterior lights of another home.

- Matt walks around the side of another home and finds a tall fence blocking the backyard.

END MONTAGE

Matt sets his iPad down and tries to peek over the fence. He is able to find a crack in the boards, allowing him to see through.

Inside, he can see a patio with string lights hung low.

Matt makes his way to the front of the house and knocks on the door.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

A thick looking MAN with a flat brimmed hat answers the door.

MATT

Hi, sir. I'm with the Light Conservation Unit. Just doing routine inspections.

HOMEOWNER

So what do you want from me?

MATT

Well, I see that you have string lights in your backyard, which are not permitted in this neighborhood due to grid capacity regulations.

HOMEOWNER

What are you doing in my backyard?

MATT

Like I said, just inspections.

HOMEOWNER

Well I don't know what you're talking about. But I'd appreciate you guys staying off my property.

MATT

No problem. You're going to have to remove the extra exterior lights though.

HOMEOWNER

My wife just put up decorations. I don't know what's back there.

MATT

Sure. But out of respect for your neighbors, I'm asking you to take them down.

HOMEOWNER

I'll go look later.

MATT

Immediately, please. Or I'll have to fine you.

HOMEOWNER

Get off my property.

MATT

Are you taking the lights down?

HOMEOWNER

I don't even know what lights.

Matt remains silent, staring at the homeowner.

HOMEOWNER (CONT'D)

They're LED's. They're not doing shit.

MATT

Take them down. Or I leave a ticket.

HOMEOWNER

Fuck Off.

The man slams his door in Matt's face. Matt prints out a ticket from his iPad and sticks it to the door. He shakes his head and walks off.

EXT. BACK OF NEIGHBORHOOD - SHORTLY AFTER

Matt has reached the end of the neighborhood where there is still development occurring. Construction equipment and supplies sit out amongst dirt piles. A few homes are half built.

Matt stops here and leans against a TRACTOR. He pulls out a PROTEIN BAR and takes a bite, enjoying minute of solitude.

As he sits chewing, he spots something out of place. The last finished house on the street remains unoccupied, indicated by a FOR SALE sign.

From that house, runs a long EXTENSION CORD directly into the unfinished house next to it.

Matt shoves the wrapper from his bar into his pocket and goes to check out the cord.

EXT. YARD BETWEEN HOUSES - CONTINUOUS

The extension cord is plugged into an exterior outlet on the For Sale house. Matt traces the cord up to the neighboring house where it runs into an open window frame.

INT. UNFINISHED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Inside the house, Matt finds the cord coming in the window and follows it through the framework up to the second floor.

INT. SECOND FLOOR OF UNFINISHED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The cord leads to the top of the steps, where Matt finds a family of three sitting on the bare floor. They have sleeping bags, a suitcase, and some fast food trash scattered around them.

In the center of the floor, the extension cord connects a lamp with no lampshade, just an exposed bulb.

The family remains frozen upon Matt's discovery, as if he won't see them if they don't move. The room is tense as the silence hangs in the air for what feels like an hour.

The husband stands up and blocks his family from Matt.

HUSBAND

We're...the new owners. Just settling in, you know?

Matt looks at the clearly frightened family, and then at the extension cord.

HUSBAND (CONT'D)

OK. We're not the owners, but we're heading west and just needed...It's been a long road. Please.

Matt looks down at his iPad and back at the family.

The wife moves herself in front of their daughter. She looks like a young teenager, and mortified by the situation.