

NIGEL THORNBERRY'S ANIMAL WORLD

Pilot

December 12, 1994



"NIGEL THORNBERRY'S ANIMAL WORLD"

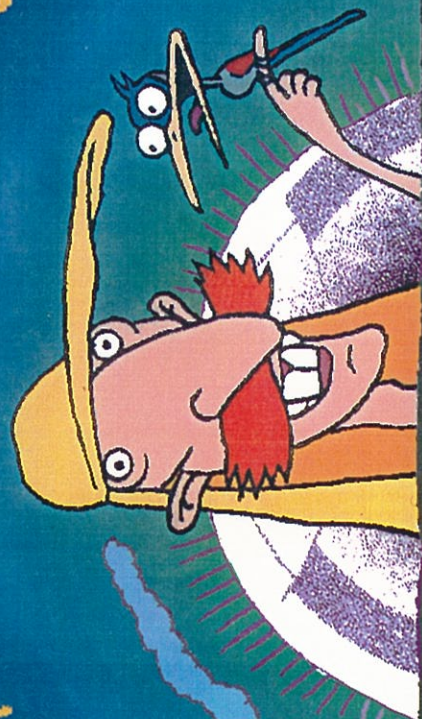
PILOT EPISODE

written by

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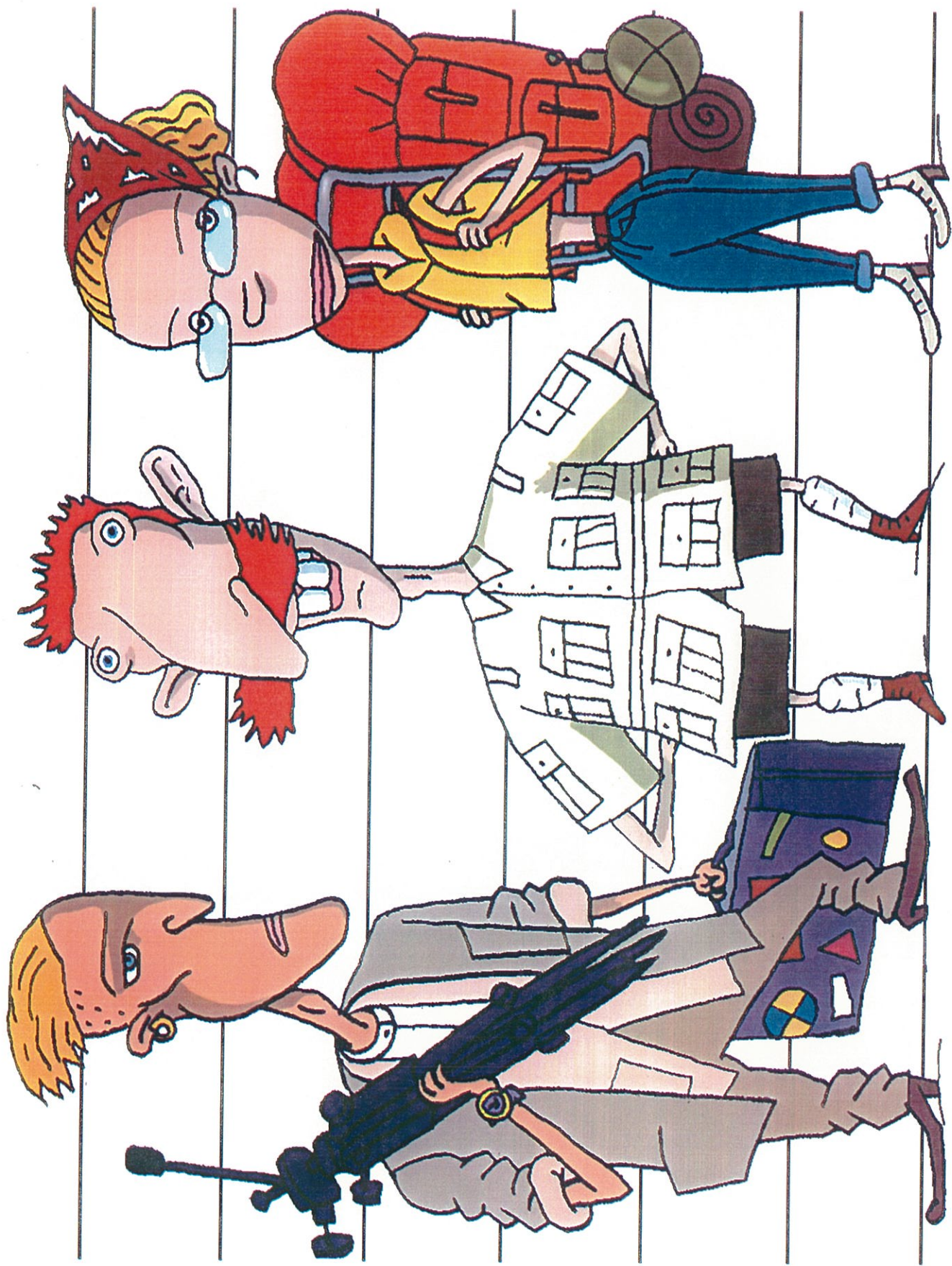
Thornbergs



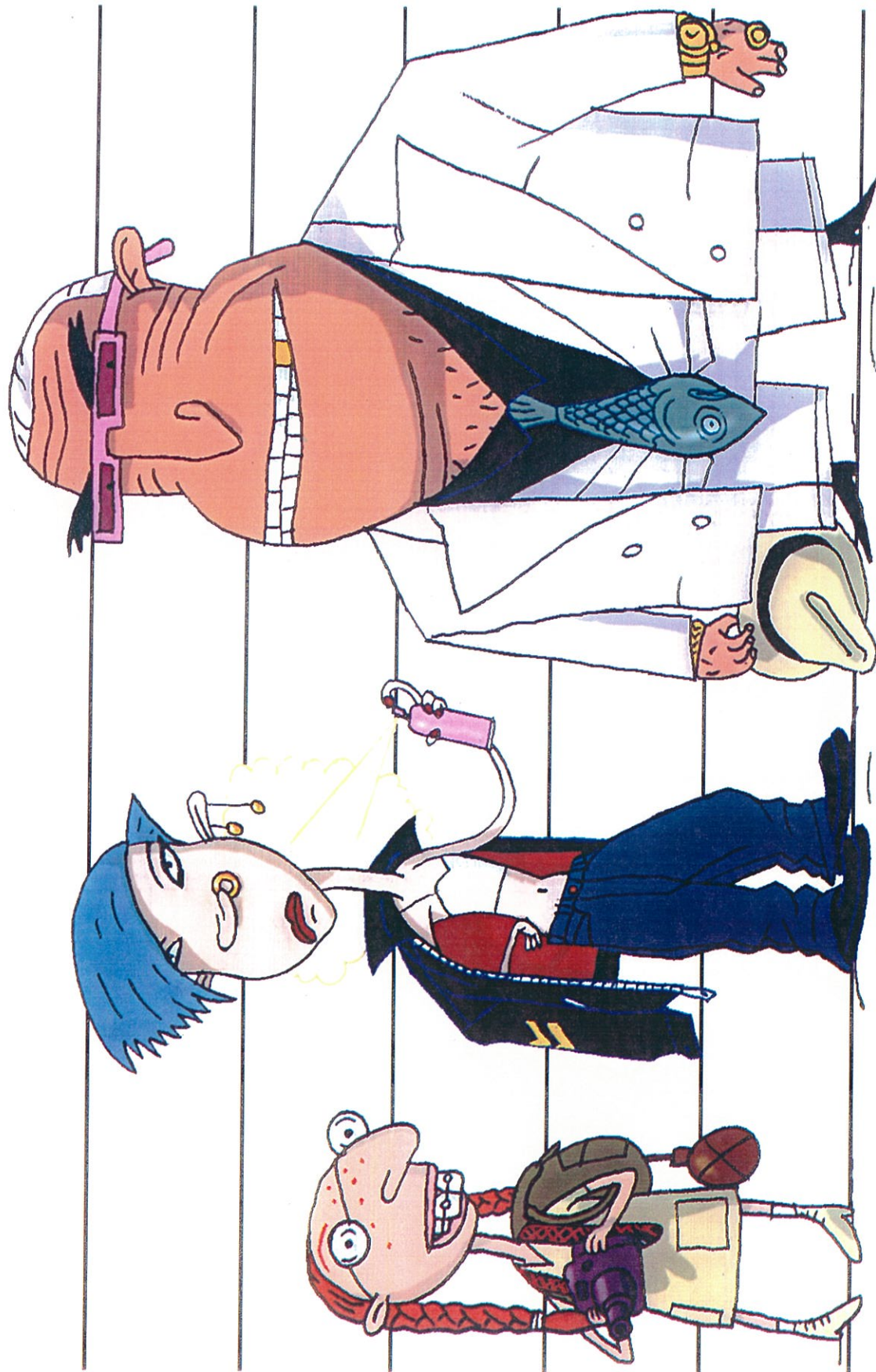
ANIMAL WORLD



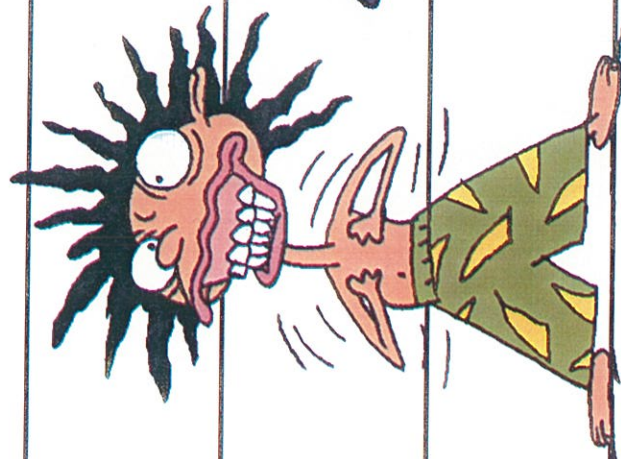
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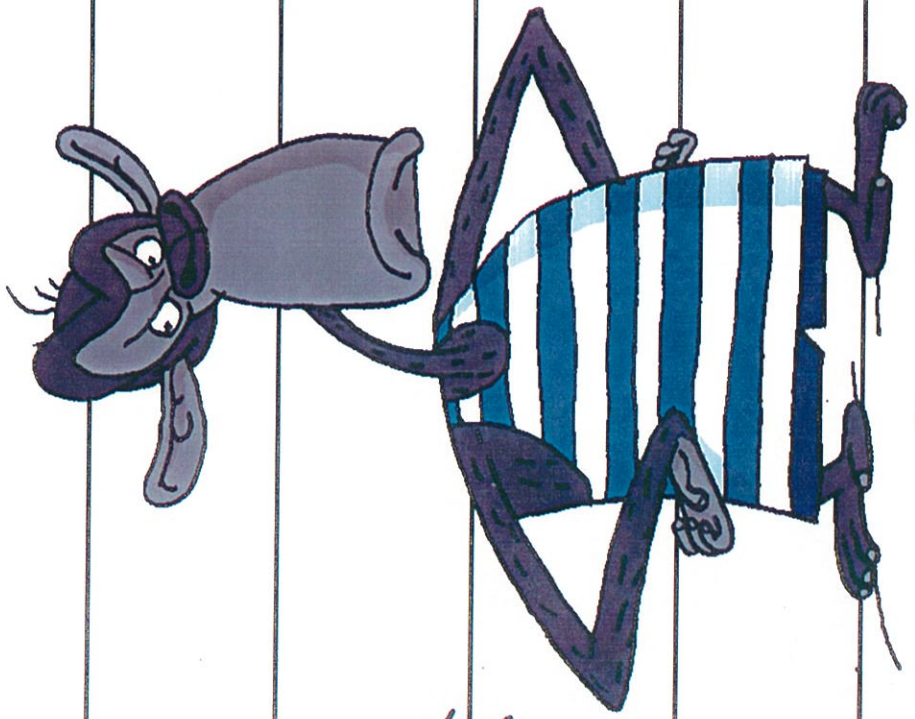
Carson Nigel Marianne



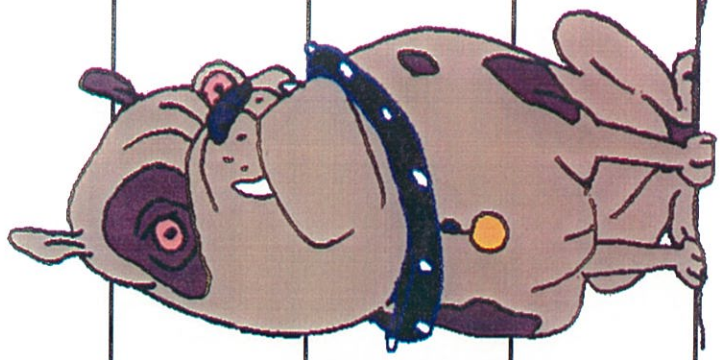
Alex Debbie Uncle Walt



Donnie

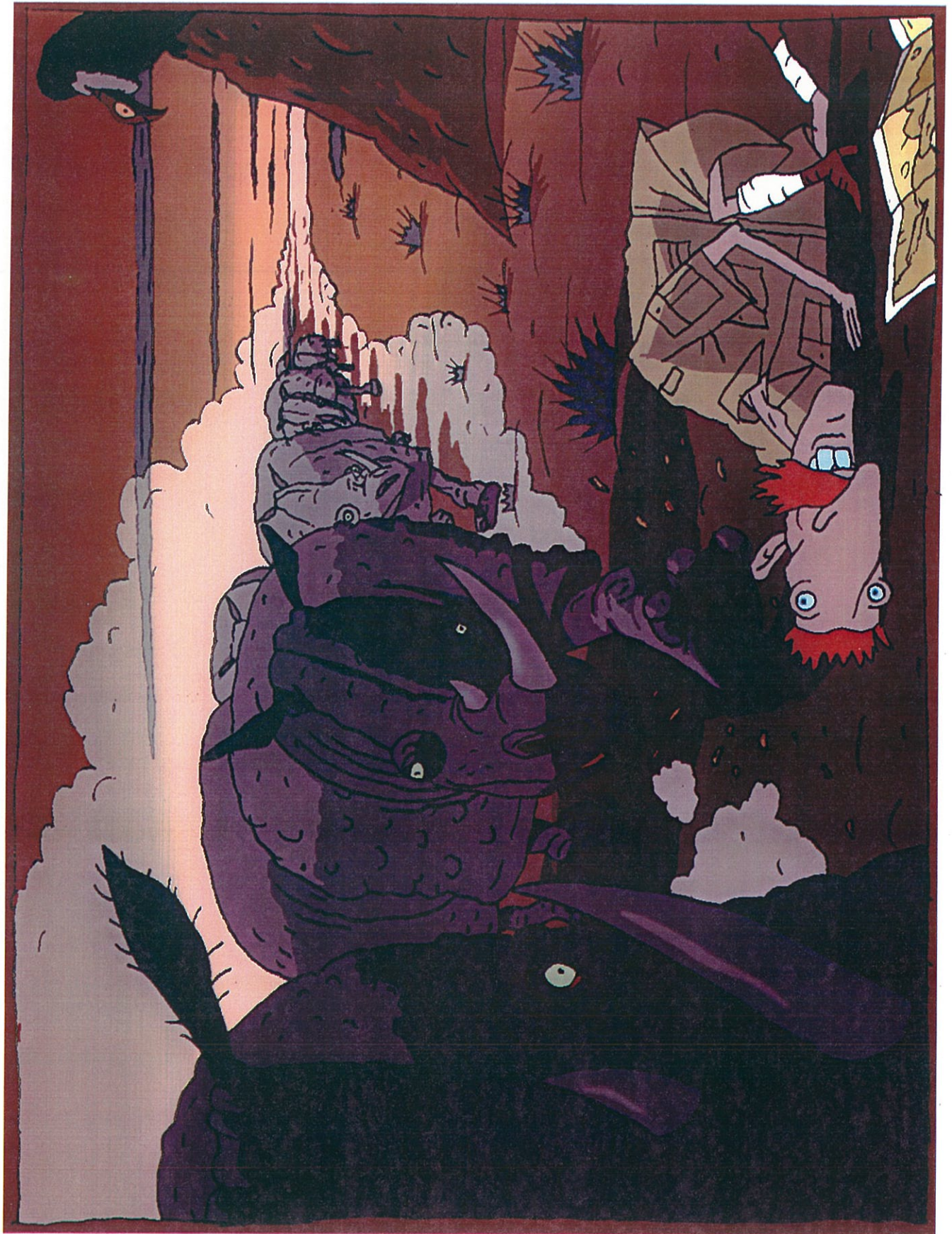


Bobo



Monty





"NIGEL THORNBERRY'S ANIMAL WORLD"

COLD OPENING

EXT. AFRICAN SAVANNA - DAY

The CAMERA PANS across a majestic landscape as we see a series of odd animals, GAZELLES, BIRDS, ZEBRAS, and finally a LARGE NOSE appearing from behind a bush. We hear NIGEL THORNBERRY'S voice.

NIGEL (V.O.)

Nigel Thornberry's the name.

I'm sure you recognize me - I
host a weekly wildlife TV show
called, oddly enough, "Nigel
Thornberry's Animal World."

CAMERA REVEALS an APE, who's scratching his butt against a tree.

NIGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That's not me - I'm over here!

CAMERA QUICKLY PANS to reveal NIGEL, 38, an energetic, yet scattered Tim Curry-type, who's on his hands and knees, examining the ground. A 16mm movie camera is next to him.

NIGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Right! Anyway, a while back I
was attempting to film the
African Black Rhino. Actually,
they're not black at all. More
of a grey, really.

CLOSE ON Nigel's head, as he puts it on the ground, and listens. He shouts to someone off screen.

NIGEL

They're five miles away! Maybe six!

Suddenly, a rhino foot stomps Nigel's head into the ground. We PULL BACK as a herd of RHINO'S tramples him.

NIGEL (CONT'D)

(BEAT) They're getting closer...

INT. JUNGLE HOSPITAL - DAY

NIGEL'S P.O.V. - FROM THE OPERATING TABLE

A bright light shines overhead. Several NATIVE DOCTOR HEADS pop into view, the last being a WITCH DOCTOR. They wear surgical masks.

NIGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Fortunately, my skull was
crushed in only fourteen places.
I was rushed to the finest
hospital in the Congo.

We REVEAL that this is an unsanitary, open air hut with a thatched roof. The surgical light turns out to be a bare light bulb hanging from a wire. We hear FLIES BUZZING. The HEAD DOCTOR steps up to examine Nigel's head, then reaches his hand out to the NURSE for an instrument. She slaps a fly swatter into his hand, and he swats a nearby fly, which falls into Nigel's open head wound.

HEAD DOCTOR

(A COMMAND) Head plate.

The nurse rushes over to a "Head Plate Dispenser," which hangs on the wall, next to a couple of SHRUNKEN HEADS. The dispenser indicates "empty."

NURSE

We're out, Doctor Umgabi.

She puts out her cigarette in a filthy copper ashtray. The doctor observes.

HEAD DOCTOR

Wait!

He takes the ashtray, spits into it and wipes it off. CLOSE ON the ashtray, which has "Nairobi Hilton" written on it.

EXT. ARCTIC - MONTHS LATER

Nigel is setting up his movie camera.

NIGEL (V.O.)

A few months later, I was in the arctic...

A KANGAROO hops by.

NIGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

No, wait. It was Australia.

An AUSTRALIAN BACKGROUND drops in behind the kangaroo, covering the arctic scene.

NIGEL (V.O.)

Right! Anyway, something rather strange happened.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

(AUSTRALIAN ACCENT) Look at the bloke with the big nose!

Nigel turns to see who spoke, but only sees a MOTHER KANGAROO. A BABY KANGAROO pops up out of her pouch. It SCREAMS, and ducks back into the pouch.

NIGEL (V.O.)

It appears the copper ashtray stimulated certain unused neurons in my brain, causing me to understand animal language!

CAMERA PUSHES THROUGH Nigel's forehead during the above, into his brain, passing the dead fly, coming up to the ashtray. We see sparks as the neurons bounce off the ashtray, which still has one cigarette butt stuck to it. We then PULL BACK OUT to see Nigel's face as he talks to the camera.

NIGEL (CONT'D)

As it turns out, animals have always understood humans, even the Irish (LAUGHS), but never let us know. They were afraid we'd put them to work.

INT. FAST FOOD HAMBURGER JOINT - DAY

We see a bunch of ANIMALS in paper hats struggling to wait on the noon rush hour crowd, cooking burgers, mopping the floor, etc. An APE sets a tray down on the counter.

CUSTOMER

I said no ketchup, you stupid ape!

EXT. JUNGLE

We see quick shots of Nigel and his family at camp.

NIGEL (V.O.)

And now, with the support of my family, I continue to travel the world, gaining even greater insights into the animal mind.

We see a quick succession of animals talking to Nigel, in different locations, the first being an EAGLE high up in a tree, in a nest surrounded by several SMALL EAGLES.

EAGLE

You mean, you let your kids stay at home for eighteen years? We give ours three months. It's called tough love. Watch.

The eagle pushes one of the smaller ones out of the nest.

EXT. HIGH IN THE ROCKIES

Winter scene. A WOLF is chewing on some bones.

WOLF

Nursing homes, huh? Well, we
have a different way of dealing
with our elders. (OFFERING
BONE) Want some grandpa?

EXT. JUNGLE

Nigel interviews a SILVERBACK GORILLA.

GORILLA

Unlike humans, we've never felt
the need to mate for life - that
comes from your Judeo/Christian
concept of morality. Makes you
wonder who evolved from who.

Other gorillas nearby start laughing and hooting, as Nigel
turns to the camera.

NIGEL

Animals are endlessly
fascinating, eternally mystic...
(SNAPPING) Will you buggers
knock it off?!

FADE OUT:

END OF OPENING CREDITS

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. AFRICA - DAY

The edge of the savanna, where it meets the jungle. Two MALE JACKALS watch as several ZEBRAS run by.

FIRST JACKAL

No... Not that one... Too

big... Too fast... No...

A VERY OLD ZEBRA limps along behind the pack. It stops, wheezing for breath. The jackals exchange a look.

SECOND JACKAL

That one!

The jackals pounce on the old zebra, killing it. Nigel pops out of a bush as the jackals begin eating.

NIGEL

Rather unsporting, picking on
the old ones, don't you think?

FIRST JACKAL

We don't always kill the old.
Sometimes we kill the babies.

SECOND JACKAL

We're doing the herd a favor,
weeding out the weak and feeble.
(LAUGHS) Ever hear of Darwinism?

NIGEL

Well, at least this poor zebra
will live forever on film.

Nigel turns and sees his monkey, BOBO, (vain, ALF-like

voice) standing next to the camera, with the camera facing the other direction. Bobo eats a sandwich.

BOBO

I thought we were on a break.

(BURPS) By the way, we're out of beer.

NIGEL

Bobo, please pay attention.

(THEN) Good God, you've gotten mustard all over the lens!

Nigel starts cleaning the camera, as Bobo looks indignant.

BOBO

Hey, I, Bobo, belong in front of the camera, not behind it.

FIRST JACKAL

(MOUTH FULL OF ZEBRA) What - you're an actor? Have I seen you in anything?

NIGEL

Don't get him started...

BOBO

(INDIGNANT) I'm not just an "actor," I'm a star.

FLASHBACK to a TV screen. The Fox logo DISSOLVES TO the title of the show, "Priscilla, Queen of the Jungle." Bobo swoops into frame wearing a dress, swinging from tree to tree on vines, applying lipstick as he sails along. He crashes into a tree. Two other credits run under this: "Starring Bobo," and "Created by Sherwood Schwartz."

BACK TO SCENE

NIGEL

After his show was cancelled,
his trainer let him go free.

BOBO

(DROPPING HIS COOL) Free my
ass! He stole all my money and
left me here to die! And the
show's not cancelled! It's
being retooled.

SECOND JACKAL

(TO NIGEL) You want us to eat
your monkey?

FIRST JACKAL

Seems we'd be doing you a favor.

Bobo hides behind Nigel. He grabs a roll of his stomach flab.

BOBO

See this? All fat. And I have worms.

Nigel's bored-beyond-her-years daughter, DEBBIE, 15, (Sara Gilbert voice) ENTERS. From her POV, she sees Nigel conversing with the animals. The jackals and Bobo make animal noises while Nigel responds in English. None of it makes sense to Debbie.

NIGEL

(OFF BOBO'S JABBER) Bobo, if
you're going to use that kind of
language, I'll let them eat you.

DEBBIE

(TO HERSELF) Why couldn't he
just be a drunk, like other dads...

Debbie crosses towards the group.

BOBO

(TO NIGEL) Hey boss, it's
sweetlips. How do I look?

Bobo squirts breath freshener in his mouth, then breathes
into his palm and smells it. He also sniffs his armpits.

NIGEL

(TO THE JACKALS, PROUD) Guys,
this is my daughter, Debbie.
She's going to be a zoologist
like me some day.

DEBBIE

Dad, the lithium doesn't work
unless you take it every day.

NIGEL

Good one!

Nigel lets loose an odd British laugh (which sounds
something like " Wah-ha, wah-ho!")

DEBBIE

I just came to tell you and
Bonzo that your boss is flying
in today.

BOBO

Bobo! The name is Bobo!

NIGEL

Great! He must be bringing the
new cameraman. And just in time
- I have a fantastic idea for
our next episode...

Debbie cuts him off, and points at her face.

DEBBIE

Dad, look at this face. No
interest.

She stomps off, accidentally running into a spider web. She
disgustedly knocks the huge SPIDER out of her way, and
continues on.

EXT. MAIN CAMP IN JUNGLE - LATER

The family's old, beat-up RV is parked to one side. Nigel's
wife MARIANNE, 38, frazzled, (Holly Hunter in "Raising
Arizona") edits film on a moviola. Her wild-looking son
DONNIE, 5, (think Feral Kid from "Road Warrior") sits
nearby. He growls, not having yet learned how to talk.

MARIANNE

(RE FILM) This is amazing
footage. A jackal in her den
giving birth. We'll build the
whole episode around it.

Her POV. We see footage of a FEMALE JACKAL about to give
birth. Suddenly, the camera is jerked to one side and Bobo
starts mugging into it. Nigel starts wrestling Bobo for the
camera, then it hits the ground and it goes black. BACK TO
SCENE. Marianne looks frustrated.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

That stupid monkey! That does
it - he's a seat cover.

Donnie grabs a nearby LIZARD and pops it into his mouth.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Donnie, spit that lizard out, now!

She pries Donnie's mouth and takes the lizard out, finding it bitten in half. The remains wiggles in her hand.

ALEX (O.S.)

(MUFFLED) Hey, Mom! Try to
find me!

She looks OFF SCREEN and screams. We REVEAL a PYTHON with a big lump in its stomach. Marianne runs over and pulls ALEXANDRA, 8, (big nose, braces, nasally voice), out of the python's mouth.

MARIANNE

Alex, please don't play with
anything big enough to eat you.

ALEX

I was just petting him and
everything got dark. Did you
know pythons eat bats?

Alex snuffles as she holds up a BAT, which flies off, almost getting tangled in Marianne's hair.

MARIANNE

(FRAZZLED, TO HERSELF) I have
to calm down, I have to take
deep breaths, I have to stop
talking to myself...

Debbie returns to camp.

DEBBIE

Life blows. Why can't we just
be a normal dysfunctional
family? I wanna have friends,
ride a Harley, watch MTV, be
anti-social and turn inward. I
want to go out with a boy who
doesn't have a bone in his nose.

She pulls a LARGE BUG out of her hair, which she throws down
in disgust. Marianne puts her arm around Debbie.

MARIANNE

You'll be going to college soon,
try to enjoy yourself. Donnie!
Get out of that tree right now!

Donnie drops into frame from above with a BIRD in his mouth.
Marianne catches him, and yanks the bird away.

DEBBIE

Mom, forget college. Why does
Dad think I want to be a
zoologist like you guys, anyway?

MARIANNE

Because - you always said you did?

DEBBIE

That was when I was a kid. I'm
almost sixteen - I'm a mature
adult. (STOMPING HER FEET) I
want to be a beautician.

Debbie storms off.

MARIANNE

This is going to kill your
father. (BEAT) Wait - I'm
talking to myself, again. Stop
it. Stop it.

EXT. SKY OVER THE JUNGLE - DAY

A huge helicopter glides through the sky. On the side of the helicopter is printed "International Geographic Society. (motto - Preserving Our Animal's Cherished Heritage - P.O.A.C.H.)" We hear a man speak with a Texas accent.

UNCLE WALT (O.S.)

Too bad yer gonna miss the "Save
Our Oceans" barbecue. They're
makin' me their Man of the Year.

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME

Inside is Nigel's bombastic boss WALT CHAVIS, 50, (think Randy Quaid in "LBJ"). Walt's suck-up, weasely nephew CARSON, 30, (Phil Hartman) is with him. A bearskin rug is on the floor, and animal heads are mounted on the walls. Walt wears a fur coat and smokes a cigar. The cabin is filled with smoke.

CARSON

Nobody deserves it more than
you, (COUGHS) Uncle Walt.

UNCLE WALT

It'll be a hum-dinger. We're
even gonna git a bunch of them
baby seal pinatas for the
kiddies to take a whack at.

He holds one up.

UNCLE WALT (CONT'D)

Full 'a red licorice. My idea.

Walt rips the head off the baby seal pinata, and starts eating a strand of licorice. Carson pulls two bottles of "Redneck Beer" out of the ice chest. Walt bites off his cap, then spits it out. Carson attempts to mimic him, but spits out a bloody tooth, instead. Carson toasts his uncle.

CARSON

Here's to the coolest, smartest
yummiest uncle ever. And your
skin is so soft. I'll never forget
that you gave me my first job.

Walt does a spit take with his beer, spraying Carson.

UNCLE WALT

You're thirty, and this is your
first job? (THEN) Figures. My
sister was still breast feeding
you when you were thirteen.

CARSON

Yes. Well, I'm really excited
about the (WITH DISTASTE)
cameraman job. (SMARMY) You
know what this show really
needs? A handsome, virile host.
Say - a younger, sober version
of you.

He mimics his uncle's wide grin.

UNCLE WALT

Replace Thornberry?! Forget it.

The public loves that Limey.

His show makes me more money
than my puppy mills.

Walt inadvertently puts his cigar out on the back of Carson's hand, which is next to the ashtray. Carson holds in a scream.

CARSON

You're right... Who cares if
people mock you, for hiring
someone who "talks" to animals?

Carson chuckles. Walt throws the door open, grabs Carson by his collar, then dangles him out the open door.

UNCLE WALT

I told you to forget about that
job! God, I hate it when people
don't do what I tell 'em.

CARSON

I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

Walt tosses Carson back inside. He chugs the last of his beer, then heaves the empty bottle out of the window.

EXT. MAIN CAMP IN JUNGLE - SAME

Nigel and Bobo return to camp, lugging their equipment.
They hear a high-pitched whistling sound.

BOBO

(LOOKING UP) Incoming!

Bobo dives out of the way, as Nigel gets hit on the head with the beer bottle. The wind starts kicking up. Dust and leaves blow. The RV canopy collapses, as the helicopter comes in for a landing. From Alex's POV, we see that the

helicopter is going to land on top of her.

ALEX

(SNIFFLES) Cool...

She tries to take a picture. Marianne grabs Alex and pulls her to safety. The helicopter lands, and Walt swaggers off. Nigel goes up to greet him.

NIGEL

Welcome to Botswana, Mr. Chavis.

UNCLE WALT

I ain't staying - the hunting
stinks here. Meet my nephew,
Carson - your new cameraman.

(MOCKING) This is his first job!

He strikes a match off of Nigel's face, lights up a cigar, then pushes a button. A door at the back of the chopper opens, and Carson's HUMVEE rolls out. It has a satellite dish on top, a CD player and TV inside, and animal horns mounted on the front. Carson steps out carrying his pull-out car stereo, followed by his bulldog, MONTY (who's always at Carson's heels). Carson presses the remote burglar alarm. WE HEAR the alarm set "Beep Baap Boop ."

CAMERA DOLLIES UP to Debbie's face, a la Spielberg, as she looks at Carson in awe. HER POV: Carson is surrounded by a brilliant white light, and appears to be Michelangelo's David, wearing only a figleaf and carrying a pull-out car stereo. Angels sing.

BACK TO SCENE - Nigel walks up to Carson.

NIGEL

Welcome aboard! This is my
wife, Marianne. She's a Yank -
mixed marriage, you might say!
(PROUD) She's my producer.

MARIANNE

(EXHAUSTED) Also the editor,
researcher, audio mixer, writer,
lab technician, auto mechanic,
and tutor to our kids.

NIGEL

Makes a great cup of coffee, too!

He laughs, as Marianne gives him a look. Carson turns on the smarm as he nudges Nigel.

CARSON

Uncle Walt didn't tell me you
were married to a goddess...

BOBO

"Goddess," what a joke. (THEN,
OFF NIGEL'S LOOK, CASUAL) I
mean, I can see it.

Carson hears a LOUD SNIFFLE, then looks down to see Alex.

ALEX

Hi mister, I'm Alex! (SNIFFLES)
Some day I'm gonna get an
ashtray in my head and talk to
animals, just like my Daddy!

Embarrassed, Debbie grabs Alex by her large nose and tosses her to one side, then smiles sweetly at Carson.

DEBBIE

I'm Debbie. I'll be eighteen in
less than two and a half months.

MARIANNE

(CORRECTING) Years.

Donnie looks up at Carson and makes a disgusting hacking sound.

NIGEL

Oh, yes, and this is Donnie.

He's horking up a furball.

MARIANNE

(PICKING DONNIE UP) Honey, you

have to stop licking the monkey.

Donnie coughs up the furball, which flies past Carson.
Debbie looks embarrassed.

DEBBIE

He's not a blood relative.

NIGEL

Right! He's adopted. Poor
bugger was stolen as a baby by
dingoes.

EXT. AUSTRALIAN OUTBACK - FLASHBACK

A naked and slightly younger version of Donnie is surrounded
by dingoes. He gnaws on a bone.

NIGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Fortunately for us, he was more
than they could handle.

A distraught MOTHER DINGO watches from nearby.

MOTHER DINGO

A baby ate my dingo!

CUT TO the dingoes carrying Donnie, bound and gagged. They
drop him at the doorstep of Nigel's RV, knock, then run.

EXT. MAIN CAMP IN JUNGLE - BACK TO SCENE

MARIANNE

We don't treat him any different
than any other member of our
family. (THEN) Alex, take your
brother for a walk.

Alex hooks Donnie up to a leash. Donnie spots a FERRET, and
chases after it, dragging Alex along. Nigel pulls Walt to
one side.

NIGEL

I have some very exciting news,
sir. You know my theory that
there might be elephants living
in the Kalahari desert?

UNCLE WALT

Yeah, you're an idiot. So what?
Everyone knows that's a myth.

NIGEL

But I finally have proof they
exist. A baboon told me. This
would be the greatest discovery
ever - it could put Africa on
the map!

Walt cuts Nigel off by putting him into a friendly but
painful headlock. He tosses his cigar aside, which starts a
small fire. Marianne quickly puts it out.

UNCLE WALT

Yeah, yeah, and the ratings
would be bigger'n yer nose and
I'd make more money than a cow
makes manure - except for one
little problem. Desert
elephants don't exist!

(SQUEEZING HARDER) Say it, and
I'll let you go.

NIGEL

But they do... (IN PAIN) ...not
exist. Not! Not!

Walt lets Nigel go.

UNCLE WALT

Now, finish that jackal episode
- we got sweeps week comin' up.
Research shows that people love
jackals, especially men 18-35.
Remember - this is television.
We don't take risks.

NIGEL

(DEFEATED) Whatever you say, sir...

UNCLE WALT

Good. One thing I've always
admired about you, Thornberry -
you're too gutless to disobey me.

Walt climbs into his helicopter and flies off, plowing through a flock of BIRDS. The screen fills with feathers.

EXT. SAVANNA - EDGE OF JUNGLE - LATER THAT DAY

The group is set up to film. Debbie is wearing much more make-up than usual, obviously for Carson, who has his pull-out stereo with him. Nigel is playfully wrestling around on the ground with one of the jackals from earlier. A few other JACKALS are nearby. Marianne passes by carrying a clipboard and a light meter.

MARIANNE

Nigel, we're starting to lose
the light. There'll be time to
play with your jackal, later.

She walks away. The jackal sits on Nigel's chest, with Nigel flat on his back.

NIGEL

Quite right. (TO THE JACKAL) I
feel rather odd asking this,
Stan, but could we possibly film
you and the missus, uh, mating?

FIRST JACKAL

(ABACK) Just what kind of a
film are you making here, buddy?

SECOND JACKAL

I'll nail her for ya. (LEERING)
Wouldn't be the first time.

A fight breaks out between the jackals, which Nigel attempts to break up. Donnie starts sniffing around the female jackal, but Marianne pulls him away. ON CARSON, who sits off to one side talking to his dog Monty. Carson puts a dog biscuit in his mouth, then lets Monty snatch it from him.

CARSON

Here's the plan, Monty. We
trick Nigel into disobeying my
uncle, he gets fired, we take
over the show. Don't tell Nigel.

Carson laughs mockingly, then freezes when he hears Alex's
trademark sniffing sound. She is standing behind him.

ALEX

Hey mister, dogs can't talk.
Are you daft? That means
"goofy" in England.

Nigel crosses over, as Alex wipes her nose on her sleeve.

NIGEL

Alex is right. Dogs are the only
animals who have no language.
Too many years of inbreeding,
I'm afraid. Can't dance, either.

Nigel laughs.

CARSON

I was just trying to tell Monty
how spectacular an episode on
desert elephants would be.

NIGEL

Yes! It's always been my dream
to discover a new species.
(SADLY) But your uncle told me
rather painfully to forget it.

CARSON

(TEMPTING) Too bad. Somebody
will discover them some day.
But at least you'll have the
satisfaction of knowing the
fame, glory and rewards should
have been yours.

Marianne observes Carson's manipulations and walks over.

MARIANNE

Carson, our RV isn't up for a
trip into the desert. It's due
for its four-hundred-thousand
mile check-up.

CARSON

Okay. (THEN) I guess it
doesn't matter if people back at
H.Q. laugh at Nigel, for thinking
elephants could live in a desert...

This rankles Marianne, as Carson knew it would.

MARIANNE

Who's laughing at him? Helen in
accounting? That bitch. If
Nigel says they exist, then they
do. (BEAT) Most likely.

EXT. EDGE OF THE KALAHARI DESERT - LATER

The RV and Humvee are parked at the edge of the immense
desert, with the group gazing at it. Nigel consults a map.

ALEX

Where are the elephants, Daddy?

NIGEL

(EXCITED) Well, according to
the baboon, they're somewhere
near Certain Death Flats!

MARIANNE

(RELUCTANT) Well, we have been
talking about taking a second
honeymoon...

We PUSH IN on Carson's smug face.

INT. AUDITORIUM - CARSON'S FANTASY

This is the Emmy's. A snarling Roseanne is at the podium.

ROSEANNE

The winner for best wildlife
show and stuff goes to "Carson
Chavis' Animal World," for the
episode "Tigers Killing
Monkeys... Part Four."

A euphoric Carson sets down his pull-out car stereo and
holds up his award. AND WE:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. EDGE OF THE KALAHARI DESERT - LATER

The group is getting ready to head out into the desert. Donnie and Monty square off over a bone. Donnie wins. Bobo scratches himself, and looks over at Monty disgusted.

BOBO

(TO NIGEL) I hope that mutt's
not going with us - he's giving
me fleas.

Carson sits nearby, clutching his pull-out car stereo. Alex approaches him.

ALEX

Why do you always carry your car
stereo, mister? We're in the
middle of nowhere.

CARSON

(HOLDS IT TIGHTER) No reason...

He glares suspiciously at her, seeming psychotic. Marianne watches this with concern. Nearby, Nigel has a map and a compass spread out on a rock. Two GIRAFFES stand next to him.

NIGEL

According to this map, we need
to go straight West...(POINTING)
which is that way.

GIRAFFE

Hey, you, Vasco Da Gama. That
rock is lodestone. It's magnetic.

Nigel picks up the compass, and the needle swings over ninety degrees.

NIGEL

Right! I meant, we need to go
that way.

He points in a different direction, then laughs. The giraffes shake their heads. Debbie passes by Marianne.

DEBBIE

I'm going to ride with Carson.
Don't wait up!

She and Carson hop into the Humvee and take off, showering Alex with sand, nearly burying her.

MARIANNE

What's gotten into Debbie? Even
an idiot can see that guy's a
smarmy jerk.

NIGEL

Carson? I think he's a fine
fellow! Snappy dresser, too.
(THEN) Remember, your folks
weren't too happy when you
started going out with me.

MARIANNE

(FONDLY) True. They thought it
was wrong, a student dating a
professor...

RIPPLE DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY - DAY - ESTABLISHING

INT. LAB CLASS - DAY

Several STUDENTS dissect frogs. We see that a YOUNGER NIGEL is one of the students, and that a YOUNGER MARIANNE is the professor. She walks down the aisle.

YOUNGER MARIANNE

All right, class. You have five
more minutes to finish
dissecting your frogs.

She pauses in front of Nigel. There is no frog in front of him. He sweats.

YOUNGER MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Lose another frog, Mr.
Thornberry?

YOUNGER NIGEL

Jeremiah ran away... (QUICKLY)
I mean, it ran away.

We hear a "ribbet," and see something moving under Nigel's shirt. Nigel looks busted.

YOUNGER MARIANNE

(A BEAT, COY) Be more careful
next time...

She moves on. Nigel watches her and smiles, obviously in love. The frog under his shirt makes it look like his heart's pounding. RIPPLE DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT - BACK TO THE PRESENT

The fiery sun overhead in the noon day sky. TILT DOWN to family chugging along in the RV somewhere in the middle of the desert. (Note: The humans sweat throughout all of the following desert scenes)

INT. RV - SAME

In the back, Alex works on her bug collection, pinning them

to a board. When she turns to get another, Donnie lifts one up by the pin and eats it, like an hors d'oeuvres off a toothpick. Marianne sits next to Nigel, who drives.

NIGEL

Thanks for agreeing to this, dear.

Not every wife would follow her husband to Certain Death Flats.

MARIANNE

(STRESSED) Let's just not talk about it! (THEN) I'm going to develop some film.

Marianne opens the bathroom door. She discovers Bobo in the shower.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Nigel! Your monkey's using up all of our water!

She boots him out. Bobo walks up to the front, indignant.

BOBO

It's hot. Besides, I, Bobo, have an image to maintain. What happens if we run into any paparazzi?

Bobo shakes off like a big dog, spraying Nigel.

NIGEL

Buck up, sport. We're all suffering.

INT. HUMVEE - SAME

Carson has his air-conditioner cranked up so high that icicles are forming overhead. He and Debbie are wearing jackets and mittens. Debbie wears headphones, and bops to music, as Carson secretly makes a call on his ham radio.

EXT. MASSIVE OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

We see a sign out front, "International Geographic Society."
A GARDENER is spraying several trees with a can marked
"D.D.T." SQUIRRELS fall dead out of the trees.

INT. WALT'S OFFICE - SAME

It's decorated much like the helicopter, with animal heads
on the wall. Walt sits down to a catered meal. He takes a
bite, then disgustedly spits it out.

UNCLE WALT

You call that Komodo Dragon?

It's burnt - bring me another.

WE REVEAL a CHEF who stands nearby. He holds the rest of
the Komodo Dragon on a platter, with an apple in its mouth.

CHEF

Sorry, sir. This was the last
one. In the world.

UNCLE WALT

Dry it out. We'll use it for jerky.

The chef exits. The radio-phone rings. Walt picks it up,
as he lights a cigar.

UNCLE WALT (CONT'D)

What is it?

INT. HUMVEE - SAME

CARSON

(TEARFULLY) Nigel's gone nuts,
Uncle Walt! He disobeyed you
and made us drive into the
desert to look for elephants.
And he said you were fat.

INT. WALT'S OFFICE - SAME

UNCLE WALT

(ENRAGED) You tell that big-nosed weirdo foreigner if he doesn't have that jackal episode done by Thursday, he's finished.

INT. HUMVEE - SAME

Carson gives Monty a thumbs up. Debbie is oblivious.

INT. RV - SAME

Alex walks up to the front of the RV. Bobo is in the passenger seat.

ALEX

(BIG SNIFFLE) Dad, am I ugly?

NIGEL

What ho? Of course not!

ALEX

Then how come Carson likes Debbie way more than me? Is it because my nose is too big?

Nigel pulls her up into his lap. Beads of sweat drip off Nigel's nose onto Alex's nose, then run off of hers. ALEX'S POV through fish-eye lens of her father's face. His nose looks even bigger.

NIGEL

Nonsense! When I was your age, I was insecure about my looks. But look how I turned out!

Alex starts to cry and sniffs louder. Nigel looks helpless.

BOBO

Watch out - she's gonna blow!

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE DESERT - LATER

The Humvee is parked. Carson sets up a bazooka, as he ignores Debbie, who sits nearby yammering. She flips through channels on his TV, transfixed.

DEBBIE

I feel so out of it. Which
stars went into rehab this year?
What are kids piercing these
days? Isn't Pauly Shore hot?
Whatever happened to "Nirvana?"
It's like they disappeared.

CARSON'S POV - We see that he's setting his sights on an empty beer can. BACK TO SCENE.

CARSON

(BITTERLY) This is for you,
Mom. You could've lied and kept
me out of reform school...

He fires the bazooka, DESTROYING the entire sand dune the can had rested on. Nigel's RV skids to a stop near them.

MARIANNE

What's going on here?!

DEBBIE

We're talking - whats it look like?

NIGEL

(RE SAND DUNE) Appears to have
gotten somewhat out of hand!

He laughs. Marianne sees into Carson's open trunk, which is brimming with guns, rifles, and rocket launchers. Carson quickly closes the trunk, then goes into the Humvee.

MARIANNE

Debra, you're too young to be running off all day with an older, well-armed, somewhat unstable man like Carson.

DEBBIE

Of course, that would be too much fun. God - I wish I could leave for beauty school, now.

NIGEL

Beauty school? I hardly think you'll have time for that and your zoology courses.

DEBBIE

Dad, try to get this through your ashtray. I'm not going to be a zoologist, I'm going to be a beautician.

NIGEL

(BEAT) You're a bright girl, dear. You have an IQ of 150. You can be whatever you want, EXCEPT A BEAUTICIAN!

Debbie runs off, upset.

EXT. DESERT - LATER THAT DAY

The vehicles travel slowly together with Debbie sunning herself on the hood of Carson's Humvee. Both Monty and Donnie hang their heads out of their vehicle's windows.

INT. RV - SAME

Nigel stews while he drives. Marianne sits next to him.

NIGEL

She used to always talk about working with us some day. Blast it, I'm going to hold her to it!

MARIANNE

Honey, we can't hold her to something she said when she was five. (LAUGHS) Remember, she also said she wanted to marry Bobo.

BOBO

(TO NIGEL) Hey, she could do a lot worse. We're only a couple genes apart - it'd practically be natural.

MARIANNE

(CONTINUING) Let her make her own mistakes. You can't force your kids to follow in your footsteps.

NIGEL

That doesn't mean we shouldn't try!

Nigel looks out the window at Debbie. RIPPLE DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUNGLE - YEARS AGO

A YOUNGER DEBBIE, five-years old, sits on Nigel's lap (he is also younger). SENTIMENTAL MUSIC PLAYS.

DEBBIE

You're the smartest daddy in the
whole world! I want to be a
zoologist and work with you my
whole life!

A white dove gently lands on Debbie's extended finger. A FULL GROWN DEBBIE enters the picture and kicks the younger Debbie off of Nigel's lap. The music abruptly STOPS.

FULL GROWN DEBBIE

I was never like that, Dad! Get real.

RIPPLE DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT - BACK TO PRESENT

We see the blazing sun, then PAN DOWN to see the vehicles travelling across the desert off in the distance. A bush in the foreground bursts into flames. The group in the RV looks through the window as they pass a bunch of dead vultures.

BOBO

(TO NIGEL) Dead vultures... Is
that a good or a bad sign?

Donnie looks out the window and smacks his lips.

EXT. DESERT - SAME

The group is stopped at the remains of a previous expedition. An old RV (which looks remarkably like Nigel's) has a faded sign painted on the side "William Shatner's Wide World of Wacky Animals." Several human skeletons lie on the ground (one with a toupee), along with a film camera. Carson surreptitiously lifts a ring off a skeleton's finger.

NIGEL

(BRIGHTLY) See, honey? It appears I'm not the only one who believes in desert elephants.

MARIANNE

Now you are - these people are dead, Nigel! (DEEP BREATH, THEN CALM) Sorry. I just can't believe we're so close to Certain Death Flats.

ALEX

(SNIFFLES) Hey - we're here!

REVEAL ALEX, standing next to a sign that says "Certain Death Flats." Behind it, Monty walks by carrying a skull.

DEBBIE

There's something missing here - I can't quite put my finger on it. (BEAT) Oh yeah, there's no elephants!

NIGEL

(SADLY) Buggers. If you can't trust a baboon, who can you trust?

Marianne puts her arm around Nigel as Alex watches. Carson turns around and tries to stifle an evil laugh.

EXT. DESERT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Nigel is depressed, as the group sits down to dinner. Marianne hands out plates of hamburgers. Bobo drools, until Marianne sets down a bunch of bananas in front of him.

BOBO

Bananas? Man! That's the worst
kind of stereotyping.

Bobo switches plates with Donnie. They're both happy.
Donnie starts eating the bananas without peeling them.

NIGEL

Attention everyone. I'm afraid
I have a spot of bad news.

Debbie leaps up, euphoric.

DEBBIE

We're going back! We're going
back! (THEN) Sorry, Dad. I
know how much this meant to you.

MARIANNE

(SYMPATHETIC) It's just as
well, honey. We're nearly out
of water, thanks to your monkey
taking three showers a day.

Bobo makes an Italian "up yours" gesture towards her.

BOBO

You know, I have a name...

NIGEL

(SIGHS) Mr. Chavis is going to
be furious - we didn't even
finish the jackal episode.
Perhaps if I get on my knees and
beg, he won't fire me.

CARSON

Don't lower yourself, Nigel.

Remember your dignity.

Marianne looks around, then panics.

MARIANNE

Oh my God - where's Alex? Debbie,
you were supposed to watch her.

DEBBIE

Chill out, Mom. She couldn't
have gotten far - she left her
nasal spray.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE DESERT - LATER THAN NIGHT

The group follows Donnie, who sniffs the ground like a
bloodhound. Marianne acts pensive.

MARIANNE

Are we doing the right thing,
raising kids in the wilderness?

NIGEL

Think of the education they're
getting! Traveling and meeting
new cultures. Plus, how many
kids know how to build a shelter
out of a buffalo carcass?

DISSOLVE TO LATER - Nigel speaks to a CAMEL.

NIGEL

Pardon me, sir. I'm looking for
an eight year old girl.

CAMEL

(REPULSED) You make me sick, fella.

NIGEL

No, it's not that. She's my daughter.

CAMEL

That's supposed to be better?!

NIGEL

Never mind! (TO MARIANNE) Why is it that camels always assume the worst in people?

DISSOLVE TO LATER - Nigel is off to one side talking with a TARANTULA that sits on a cactus.

TARANTULA

Sorry, haven't seen her. Maybe she went out to find a mate.

NIGEL

She's only eight.

TARANTULA

By the time I was eight, I had nine hundred kids. Luckily, Lou started shooting blanks.

She indicates her husband, who sits nearby. ON MARIANNE.

MARIANNE

Listen!

The groups quiets down. Beat. They hear a snorting/sniffing sound in the distance. Donnie runs to the top of a dune, and starts howling. The others follow.

DEBBIE

There's the little dweeb.

REVEAL Alex standing beyond the dune, blowing her nose. The group runs up to her. Marianne hugs and kisses Alex.

MARIANNE

Alex, don't ever run off! I'd tell you to be more like your brother and sister, but... I'm not sure I want that, either.

ALEX

I just wanted to prove that Dad's ashtray still works.
Look, elephant tracks!

She points her flashlight down, revealing the tracks. A QUICK PUSH IN on Carson, who looks worried. MUSIC STING.

EXT. DESERT - THE NEXT DAY

The two vehicles travel side by side, following the elephant tracks. An unhappy Debbie rides in the RV.

INT. HUMVEE - SAME

Carson drives, with Monty at his side.

CARSON

Okay, God, if you really exist -
and this is a test - help me
destroy Dr. Doolittle and steal
the show so I can be host. Amen.

He pushes a button on the dashboard.

EXT. VEHICLES - SAME

One of the Humvee hubcaps lifts up, and a SPINNING KNIFE

extends from inside, a la "Ben Hur." The knife jabs into the side of the RV and locks into place, causing the Humvee to flip over upside down. Both vehicles stop. Nigel leans out the window.

NIGEL

What happened, ol' chap?

CARSON

I must've hit a pothole...

EXT. DESERT - THAT NIGHT

The group is parked for the night. Carson is away from camp, using a broom to erase the elephant tracks. He then straps on a pair of fake elephant feet, and walks over to the edge of a steep rocky dropoff.

CARSON

A lifetime of watching cartoons

is finally going to pay off!

(TO MONTY) Want a biscuit, pal?

He puts it in his mouth for Monty to snatch out. Monty jumps on Carson with such force it knocks him backwards. Carson rolls down the steep grade, bouncing off the sharp rocks, etc.

DISSOLVE TO morning. A battered Carson has finally managed to make it back up to the top of the steep grade. Monty waits for him. Carson is about to choke his dog, when Nigel's RV skids to a stop at the edge of the dropoff. Startled, Carson falls backwards down the steep grade again.

NIGEL

I told you Carson didn't run

away. He couldn't wait to get

started this morning!

We see Carson sprawled at the bottom of the dropoff. The ground underneath the RV gives away, and the RV goes sliding down the hill towards Carson, who watches in terror. The RV passes over him safely and crashes into a rock beyond. Carson hops up, excited.

CARSON

My plan worked! I'm a genius!

Carson is struck from behind by the Humvee, driven by Debbie, which has also slid down the dropoff.

DEBBIE

Sorry! My fault! Sorry!

DISSOLVE TO LATER. Nigel and Marianne examine the damaged RV.

NIGEL

Drat. And we were so close to
the elephants!

Marianne looks at Carson suspiciously.

MARIANNE

I guess we could've called for
help, if somebody hadn't broken
off our antennas last night.

CARSON

(INNOCENTLY) Vandals. They're
everywhere. (THEN) Don't worry,
I'll go get help.

NIGEL

You're a good man, Carson! Let
me get my map and pinpoint our
exact location.

CARSON

(DISMISSIVE) I'll remember.

He and Monty jump into the Humvee. Debbie starts to follow
but the Humvee takes off, showering the group with sand.
Donnie chases after the Humvee trying to bite the tire.

INT. HUMVEE - SAME

Carson chuckles to Monty.

CARSON

Here's the plan. We'll go film
the desert elephants and take
all the credit. Then, in a year
or two, we'll send a rescue
party for the others. Maybe.

He laughs diabolically, as Monty stares blankly.

EXT. DESERT - SAME

Back at the RV, a sandstorm is starting to kick up. Debbie
turns to Nigel, angry.

DEBBIE

Great, I finally meet someone I
like, and he thinks I'm poison
'cuz my dad's insane.

MARIANNE

Your father isn't insane,
Debbie. He's eccentric. We've
been over this.

DEBBIE

He's not rich enough to be
eccentric! You don't really
believe he talks to animals, do
you Mom?

Nigel looks at Marianne, expectantly.

MARIANNE

(ON THE SPOT) Well... if he
can't, he certainly has a good
rapport with them.

DEBBIE

See, Dad? Even Mom thinks
you're...

She drums her lips with her finger, "babababababa," then
walks off in a huff. The sandstorm swirls around Nigel as
we PULL BACK.

NIGEL

I can understand animals, blast
it. Why doesn't anyone believe
me?

BOBO

I believe you, boss. (BEAT) Of
course, I'm part of the problem.

Nigel and Bobo disappear into the sandstorm. AND WE:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT - LATER

The sandstorm has ended and nearly buried the RV. The family is sunburned, faces red from exposure. They are huddled in the shade of the RV.

NIGEL

That wasn't so bloody awful now, was it? Hardly seemed like three days.

MARIANNE

(NOT AMUSED) Nigel, it's a hundred and thirty degrees, we're out of food, and we've only got two more days of water.

Bobo walks out of the RV, drying himself off with a towel and wearing his shower cap. Marianne looks pained.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

One more day...

NIGEL

Relax, dear, I have a plan that will not only save us, but prove to Debbie I'm not daft. A few days ago I sent a tortoise off for help!

They look about twenty feet away from camp, and see the TORTOISE inching his way off into the desert. It looks back at Nigel, out of breath.

TORTOISE

I'm going, I'm going...

ON DEBBIE, who gazes out into the desert sadly.

DEBBIE

Carson'll come back for me - I
know he will. He said I could
pierce his nose.

NIGEL

Of course he'll be back. He
knows how grave our situation is.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE DESERT - SAME

Carson's Humvee flies over a sand dune, becoming airborne.

CARSON (O.S.)

Wheeeeeee!

INT. HUMVEE - SAME

The air conditioning is cranked up, as before. The Humvee
lands hard, causing Carson to spill his drink.

CARSON (CONT'D)

Damn - that was my last margarita.

(THEN) Man, this bites. How
hard should it be to find
elephants in a desert?

The temperature gauges on the dashboard go into red, and the
Humvee begins to rumble. We hear a loud clanking sound as
it breaks down.

EXT. DESERT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Carson gets out of the Humvee and looks under the hood. The
engine is glowing red.

CARSON (CONT'D)

Seems fine to me. Maybe I'll
just loosen this radiator cap...

He unscrews the cap, and a geyser of steam blasts him in the face. He screams.

EXT. DESERT - THORNBERRY CAMP - SAME

ON BOBO, who observes the steam rising in the distance, much like a nuclear mushroom cloud.

BOBO

Looks like another country has
the bomb...

Nigel turns to the others.

NIGEL

Perhaps I should send a faster
animal for help.

DEBBIE

How about the vultures who are
eating your tortoise?

ANGLE ON the tortoise. VULTURES are, indeed, eating it.
Nigel crosses over to them.

NIGEL

I hate to bother you while
you're supping, but could one of
you chaps go summon help?

FIRST VULTURE

(EYEING THE OTHERS) And miss
the buffet?

SECOND VULTURE

(CHUCKLES) We'll see who's at
the top of the food chain in
about two days, pal.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF DESERT - LATER

Carson and Monty stumble along. Carson carries his camera
and car stereo. They come across a set of footprints.

CARSON

Someone else is on the trail of
my elephants! Come on, Monty!

They start running. We PULL BACK very high to see that
Carson has stumbled across his own footprints, and is now
running in a circle. CUT BACK to ground level. Carson
winds up back where he started.

CARSON (CONT'D)

Now there's two of them!

He pulls out a gun and starts randomly firing. A bullet
ricochets off a rock, then hits Carson's beloved pull-out
car stereo, destroying it. Carson looks at it in horror.

CARSON (CONT'D)

Nooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo...!

EXT. DESERT - THORNBERRY CAMP - LATER

Alex is dressing up a miserable Bobo in girl's clothes.
Bobo makes a fist like he's going to punch her. Bobo
notices Marianne watching him. He smiles wide, and pats
Alex on the head, instead. Bobo then crosses to Nigel.

BOBO

I've been thinking, boss. We
could build a small airplane out
of junk from the RV, and you
could fly out for help.

NIGEL

Sounds a bit far-fetched, even
coming from a monkey in a dress.

BOBO

Come on! I built a plane
before. Trust me, it'll work!

MONTAGE (SET TO MUSIC)

Nigel and Alex bend aluminum framing from a tent to make the airplane frame.

Nigel sews the nylon tent to cover the wings.

Debbie rips the driver's seat out of the RV. She breaks a fingernail and starts whining.

Bobo in the shower, singing.

Marianne takes the motor off a small gasoline generator.

Donnie pops a SPIDER into his mouth. Beat. He spits it out in pain. His tongue swells up like a beach ball.

END MONTAGE

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE DESERT - LATER

Carson is really losing it. His clothes are torn, and his lips are blistered. He stops and points ahead.

CARSON

(RASPING) A desert elephant!

He starts to film it. CAMERA POV, as it comes into focus. We see that Carson is filming a LIZARD. Monty pounces on the lizard and eats it.

CARSON (CONT'D)

(FREAKS) Monty, don't eat the
desert elephant - they're rare!

EXT. DESERT - THORNBERRY CAMP - LATER

The airplane is finished. The family gathers around Nigel as he prepares to leave.

ALEX

Good luck, Dad. Be careful!

MARIANNE

Yes, and don't do anything stupid. (BEAT) What am I saying? You're about to fly off in an airplane designed by a monkey.

DEBBIE

Try not to die or anything.
That would, like, really suck.

Nigel hugs her, overjoyed.

NIGEL

Did you hear that, Marianne?
She does care! (THEN, TO
DONNIE) Son, take care of your
mom and sisters. You're the man
of the family, now.

Donnie sadly horks up a furball, then offers it to Nigel. Nigel pockets it. Bobo tugs on Nigel's sleeve.

BOBO

Can I go with you, boss? The
skirts'll eat me if you leave me
behind.

NIGEL

Attention, everyone. Bobo has
courageously offered to
accompany me.

DEBBIE

(BUMMED) Then what are we
supposed to eat?

BOBO

(TO NIGEL) Told ya!

Bobo climbs on board with Nigel and they take off.
Miraculously, the airplane flies!

EXT. SKY - MINUTES LATER

Up in the air, the plane handles roughly. Bobo places his
hand to his face.

BOBO

Uh-oh, here it comes. Here it comes.

NIGEL

Here what comes?

Blood gushes out of Bobo's nose.

BOBO

Nosebleed. This always happens
when I fly.

EXT. THE DESERT - SAME

The crazed Carson stumbles over a sand dune, with Monty
following him. Carson gasps with surprise.

CARSON (CONT'D)

Monty, look! More desert
elephants! We hit the jackpot!

He runs towards them, filming. We see that he has actually wound up back at the Thornberry camp. Carson feels the side of the RV.

CARSON (CONT'D)

My God - their skin feels just
like aluminum siding.

He faints. Debbie sees Carson and runs over to him.

DEBBIE

I knew you'd come back! Now I
can pierce your nose.

She whips out a large needle and jabs Carson's nose. He screams.

EXT. SKY - SAME

The airplane continues to fly along very erratically.

NIGEL

Bobo, are you sure you built an
aeroplane before?

BOBO

Absolutely. We did it five
years ago on our season opener.
We buried "Murphy Brown."

NIGEL

You mean, you did it on your TV
show? You didn't do it for real?!

The plane starts to come apart. Nigel and Bobo both scream, as they plunge towards the ground.

BOBO

I can't die like this! I, Bobo,
was nominated for an Emmy once!
Okay, the show was. It was for
best lighting, but so what? I
was the one they were lighting!

Nigel spots an oasis below and heads for it.

EXT. OASIS - SAME

They make an amazingly soft landing. They both get out of
the plane and kiss the ground.

NIGEL

Right! That wasn't so bad.

Behind them, the plane EXPLODES into flames. Beat. A
shadow falls over them. Nigel looks up, and is stunned to
see DESERT ELEPHANTS (which are much skinnier than normal
elephants) standing over them. Nigel stares in awe, unable
to speak, at these immense and beautiful creatures.

STONER ELEPHANT

(AFTER A BEAT) Whoa, man...

flying monkeys. What a trip!

EXT. DESERT - THORNBERRY CAMP - LATER

Carson starts to freak. He now has a stud in his nose.

CARSON

We're doomed - doomed, I tell
you! Unless... we eat our dead.

MARIANNE

No one has died, Carson.

Carson jerks his arm. From under his sleeve a gun pops out
a la "Taxi Driver." Marianne easily takes it away from him,
then knocks him down. Carson reveals his true colors - a

weak, sniveling, coward. He rolls up into a ball.

CARSON

I don't wanna die. I don't
wanna die. But most of all, I
don't want to suffer.

Marianne and Debbie look down at the pathetic sight.

DEBBIE

He is so cute.

EXT. OASIS - LATER

The elephants bathe and squirt each other with water as Bobo and Nigel watch from the sidelines.

BOBO

Hey, hey, hey! No peeing around
the water hole. You've got a
whole desert out there! Geez!

NIGEL

So! What made you blokes decide
to leave the jungle?

RADICAL ELEPHANT

We were oppressed, man. The
older generation tried to force
their trip on us. You know,
job, 2.3 kids... We wanted to
do our own thing, so we split.

The other elephants agree "Yeah!" "Right on!"

STONER ELEPHANT

Yeah. Plus, they wanted us to send us to war. Well, it wasn't our war, man, it was their war.

RADICAL ELEPHANT

(ANNOYED) There wasn't any war.

(TO NIGEL) Don't mind Cheech.

He licked a lot of toads back in the Sixties.

NIGEL

(INCREDULOUS) You mean, you've suffered out here for thirty years, just because you couldn't "do your own thing" back home?

STONER ELEPHANT

There's way more to it than that, man.

RADICAL ELEPHANT

Yeah, like, well... (DRAWING A BLANK) We don't have to explain ourselves to you.

NIGEL

Seems to me you'd be better off in the jungle. There's plenty of water, food, shade, toads...

STONER ELEPHANT

Dude's right.

The other elephants start to murmur agreement.

RADICAL ELEPHANT

Don't give up the dream,
comrades, he's just messing with
our heads! Sure, life would be
easier back home, but we have
something better - our freedom!

EXT. DESERT - THORNBERRY CAMP - LATER

The family members huddle together, watching Carson.

CARSON

(BABBLING) Take me with you,
Daddy... Mommy's boyfriend
makes me wear a dress...

DEBBIE

This sucks. I've spent my whole
life in the armpits of the world.
Now I'm going to die a virgin.

MARIANNE

(HUGGING DEBBIE) Thank God!

ON ALEX, who's happily covered with SCORPIONS.

ALEX

(REACTS O.S.) Hey, it's Daddy!

She brushes the scorpions off. WE REVEAL Nigel and Bobo riding on the elephants, coming to the rescue. They are backlit with a blazing white light which makes them look heroic. We hear them singing "Born to be Wild."

MARIANNE

(TO HERSELF) They do exist. Nigel
isn't nuts. (BEAT) Now if I
could just stop talking to myself...

CARSON

Ahhh! Giant lizards!

He runs off, as Nigel and Bobo hop down off the elephants.

MARIANNE

Honey, I'm so glad to see you...

BOBO

I always knew you wanted me.

He gives Marianne a big kiss on the lips. She pushes him
away, disgusted.

ALEX

I knew you'd find the elephants,
Daddy! Can we keep 'em?

NIGEL

No. They offered to take us
back to the jungle, but they'll
only stay long enough to score
some toads.

MARIANNE

We'd better get some film of
them. And a stool sample.
That'll be your job.

They turn and see that Debbie has started filming the
elephants with Carson's camera. A big smile crosses Nigel's
face. He crosses over to her.

NIGEL

Fascinating, aren't they? Did you know these fellows have thirty-four words for "water?"

DEBBIE

Don't get your hopes up, Dad. Somebody has to film these guys since Carson got all weird. I'm still gonna be a beautician.

NIGEL

(WITH DIFFICULTY) Right. Well, I won't stand in your way. You obviously have good (GULP) taste...

DEBBIE

(BEAT, TESTING HIM) You know, I was also thinking about opening my own tatoo parlor.

NIGEL

(SWALLOWS HARD) Even better!

Debbie walks away, confused. Marianne comes over to Nigel.

MARIANNE

I'm glad you decided to let her screw up her life in her own way.

NIGEL

Well, I figure if I stop trying to
force my zoology trip on her,
she won't do something drastic
just to spite me. And it'll give
me more time to work on Alex.

MARIANNE

(EXPECTING A PAT ON THE BACK)

And what brought on this change?

NIGEL

The elephants, of course! They
made me realize...

MARIANNE

(COVERS HIS MOUTH) Don't say it!

She kisses him.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE DESERT - LATER

The family rides various elephants, one of which who pushes
the RV. Bobo pesters his elephant.

BOBO

C'mon, faster. Faster.

The elephant, annoyed, grabs Bobo with his trunk and flings
him away.

EXT. RAIN FOREST - LATER

SUBTITLE - "MONTHS LATER" The group watches Walt on
Carson's satellite TV, accepting an Emmy. Footage of the
desert elephants plays behind Walt.

UNCLE WALT (ON TV)

I'm proud that y'all saw fit to
honor my show. People laughed
when I said desert elephants
existed. Them pinheads ain't
laughin' now. Sometimes ya just
gotta follow your dreams.

The audience applauds. Nigel also claps.

NIGEL

Rather inspiring, don't you think?

MARIANNE

(ANGRY) Nigel, he stole your
dream - that award should be ours.
That drunken bloated redneck
couldn't produce a bucket of
spit! (TO CARSON) No offense.

CARSON

None taken.

Carson turns his back on the others and clicks off a small
cassette recorder. He replays part of the tape.

MARIANNE

(VOICE ON TAPE) "That drunken
bloated redneck couldn't produce
a bucket of spit!"

Carson laughs evilly, as we FREEZE FRAME.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

CREDIT TAG

We see "bloopers" underneath the final credits.

INT. RV - DAY

Alex sits on Nigel's lap.

ALEX

(BIG SNIFFLE) Daddy, am I ugly?

A beat, then Nigel cracks up, unable to answer. We hear the crew laughing OFF CAMERA.

NIGEL

(NO ACCENT) I'm sorry. Could
somebody get this kid a Kleenex?

EXT. DESERT - CERTAIN DEATH FLATS - DAY

Nigel and family sit next to the "William Shatner's Wide World of Wacky Animals" RV. Skeletons are nearby.

NIGEL

I have a plan that will not only
save us, but (FORGETTING LINE)
Dammit. (PUTS ON TOUPEE FROM
SKELETON) Beam me up, Scotty!

Debbie, Alex, Donnie and Carson break character and laugh, as does the crew again. The Marianne actress is not amused.

EXT. MAIN CAMP IN JUNGLE - DAY

Marianne picks up Donnie.

MARIANNE

Honey, you have to stop licking
the monkey. (OUT OF CHARACTER)
I'm sorry, is that supposed to
be a joke? Where are the writers?

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

We're behind schedule, Alison.

Could you just say the line?

MARIANNE

I think it hurts the emotional
validity of my character...

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Say the line!!!

EXT. OASIS - DAY

Nigel and Bobo get off the plane and kiss the ground.

NIGEL

Right! That wasn't so bad.

They wait a beat for the plane behind them to blow up.
Beat. A little puff of smoke comes from the plane. Bobo
walks over towards it.

BOBO

(OUT OF CHARACTER) You call
that an explosion? Where's the
effects guy?

The plane BLOWS UP, knocking Bobo down. The camera jiggles,
as a bunch of CREW PEOPLE run over to help Bobo.

CREW GUY

Call an ambulance - he's not
breathing!

DIRECTOR

Will somebody turn that camera off?!

A hand goes in front of the camera, the screen goes black.

THE END