



The Wheel
Of
Auldoid



a screenplay
by
russ woody

The Wheel Of Naldoid

By

Russ Woody

EXT. PRESIDIO TERRACE - NIGHT

FONT: "San Francisco 2085"

CAMERA SWEEPS bird-like down the curves of a dark tree-lined street, wet still from a recent rain. We pass FUTURISTIC CARS of the 2080s parked along the street beside MANICURED ESTATES. CAMERA finally STOPS at the foreboding black steel of a MASSIVE WROUGHT IRON GATE.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Now remember, children, Grampa is very sick. And, well... he probably won't be with us much longer.

The gate YAWNS OPEN to a sweeping driveway that wends up to a VICTORIAN MANSION, lit in the cold of night by a few GLOWING WINDOWS. A FORD MAGNETICRAFT FLOATS past the gate and up the driveway.

FATHER (V.O.)

So it's important you put on a brave face when you see him.

INT. CAR - SAME TIME

Back seat, THREE CHILDREN, wide-eyed, terrified -- TWO BOYS (12 and 10) and their LITTLE SISTER, FRANCIE (8).

FRANCIE

Do we have to go?

The MOTHER and FATHER exchange a look. The Mother's SEAT PIVOTS to face the back.

MOTHER

Sweetheart, this is very important to your grandfather.

JOE

But why?

MOTHER

Well, Joe... he wants to tell you something.

HENRY

Aw man, what?

MOTHER

He wouldn't say exactly. He just said it was a secret he "needed" to share with you.

She exchanges a concerned look with her husband as the Ford stops in front of the MANSION'S ENTRANCE.

EXT. MANSION - LATER

CAMERA moves slowly to the LIGHT of an UPSTAIRS BEDROOM. We hear Grampa COUGH and HACK. Then,

GRAMPA (V.O.)

Now... I'm gonna tell you kids about something that happened long ago. It's the most important story that's ever been told. Ever!

INT. GRAMPA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Henry, Joe and Francie stand now like frozen chickens beside their GRANDFATHER'S bed.

GRAMPA

It happened in 1989, the year before I was born! A kid named Leo traveled to a strange land called Nuldoid. And if he hadn't, you'd all be dead!

JOE

What's Nuldoid?

GRAMPA

A strange land. What'd I just say?

HENRY

But where is it?

GRAMPA

What's your name, son?

HENRY

You know my name. It's Henry.

GRAMPA

I thought you were Joe.

JOE

I'm Joe.

GRAMPA

Well, I'm not gonna argue with you.
Francie, you're still Francie, right?

Francie nods and smiles, revealing a gap where her tooth had been. Grampa draws back in disgust.

GRAMPA (CONT'D)

What inna hell happened to you?

FRANCIE

My baby tooth fell out.

GRAMPA

Then stop smiling. Anyway, this kid
Leo was about your age, Henry.

JOE

I'm Joe.

GRAMPA

Don't start that again.
(off them standing)
What'dya got someplace to go? Sit.

They stiffly oblige.

GRAMPA (CONT'D)

Now... Leo was a student in my
father's sixth grade class. My father
wrote all about it in his journal.
Which is here... somewhere.
(looks around)
Where did I...

JOE

Is that it there? On your lap?

GRAMPA

Huh? Ah, right where I left it.
Okay, where's my glasses?

FRANCIE

On your head, Grampa.

GRAMPA

I know that.
(he moves them down)
Now, if you're through interrupting,
I'm going to tell you kids the story
of Nuldoid.
(opens the old journal)
October 1989. The year before I
was born. There was a huge
earthquake. Right here in San
Francisco. 1989. Go ahead, look it
up, if you don't believe me!

HENRY

We believe you, Grampa.

GRAMPA

I don't care if you believe me or not, it happened!

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO 1989 - MID-AFTERNOON

A LONG SHOT of the city, highlighting the PAN AMERICAN BUILDING, COIT TOWER, PIER 39, LOMBARD STREET and of course a TROLLEY CAR.

GRAMPA (V.O.)

The third game of the World Series was about to begin...

EXT. CANDLESTICK PARK 1989 - SAME TIME

BALLPLAYERS warming up in the outfield, MILLING FANS in the stands getting situated.

RADIO (V.O.)

Hi, everybody. Welcome back to beautiful Candlestick Park. A few scattered clouds, but a pleasant seventy degrees out...

EXT. WARREN'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

RADIO CONTINUES OVER a LONG SHOT OF WARREN'S HOUSE, a small Victorian, wedged between similar homes, all slashed by the severe slope of the street -- a typical lower middle-class neighborhood in San Francisco. An aging CHRYSLER is parked in front, PROPPED UP BY A JACK.

RADIO (V.O.)

With the Goodyear Blimp overhead, Bob Welch is down by the A's dugout, heating up the ol' pitchin' arm...

The CAMERA PUSHES PAST THE CAR toward the house.

INT. WARREN'S KITCHEN - SAME TIME

A TRANSISTOR RADIO sits on the table, where WARREN WORST, attractive, mid-thirties, is marking school papers.

GRAMPA (V.O.)

My father was grading papers...

RADIO

...Ken Oberkfell is taking up third base for the Giants today. Matt Williams moves over to shortstop, since Jose Uribe was benched...

A light breeze LIFTS THE CURTAIN over the sink.

GRAMPA (V.O.)

While something very strange was
going on just outside of the city...

EXT. HILLSIDE - SAME TIME

TWO SMALL CREATURES emerge from a crevice in the hillside. They're two-feet tall, big noses, big ears, big feet, overalls. One is bearded, pudgy; the other is thin, younger, a mosquito-like face. Both peer into the crevice -- awaiting the emergence of more creatures.

MORTON

Hurry it up, ya stinkin droibs!

A HAND reaches up from within the crevice. But suddenly the GROUND VIBRATES and THEN JERKS VIOLENTLY. While LIGHTS in the City FLICKER IN UNISON and GO OUT and the CREVICE SLAMS SHUT WITH A THUNDERING ROAR, pinning the outstretched hand like a twig stuck in the dirt. Those below have all been crushed. The two creatures have been tossed to the ground. When the VIOLENCE IS OVER, they struggle to their feet and make their way over to the outstretched hand (we see it has only THREE DIGITS).

MORTON (CONT'D)

Ah, croib! Issa big noodge that's
killed em all dead! Every stinkin
one an all!

The mosquito-like one approaches to look.

KYLE

Bruther, mother is all kaput. Issa
sad day in Oiden Dibble.

MORTON

Sure yeah, they had alla the beer.

INT. WARREN'S KITCHEN - SAME TIME

In SHAMBLES, as CAR ALARMS and SIRENS WAIL across the broken city. Dishes have fallen and shattered, the radio has crashed to the floor. Warren eases his head out from beneath the table, as a CUP ROLLS, SMASHES on the floor, sending him back into hiding. He emerges a moment later, assesses the damage, notices that the CURTAIN ROD over the sink has fallen. He moves to put it back, looks out the window.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - WARREN'S POV - CONTINUOUS

His battered Chrysler, propped precariously on its jack, teeters, then PLOPS ONTO THE SLOPING STREET and ROLLS.

WARREN (O.C.)

Noooooo!

Warren bursts out the front door, while his CAR CALMLY ROLLS DOWNHILL, picking up momentum. He reaches it, jerks the door handle -- it's locked. He tries to stop it, pushing, pulling, grunting. Finally, it rolls into the side of AN OLD WAREHOUSE.

GRAMPA (V.O.)

And that's how my father met my mother.

The warehouse's HUGE STEEL DOOR SLIDES OPEN with a BANG. LILY, 30, attractive, ponytail, work shirt -- pissed.

LILY

What the hell are you doing?

WARREN

I didn't know anybody lived here.

LILY

So you just drive your car into it?

WARREN

Okay, no, I didn't "drive" my car into it. My car fell off its jack and rolled here.

LILY

And it didn't occur to you to make sure it wouldn't fall off the jack?

WARREN

Gee, maybe if I'd used my superpowers to predict the earthquake.

LILY

You live in San Francisco. Hello.

WARREN

(angry)
You know what?

LILY

(in his face)
What?

Warren thinks his words through -- she's really pretty.

WARREN

I'll... make it right.

LILY

You bet you will, buster!

WARREN
 (tempering himself)
 I'll need a pen and some paper.

LILY
 Stay here. You're not coming inside.

She exits into her warehouse.

WARREN
 Don't even want to come inside.

INT. WARREN'S CLASSROOM - DAY

FONT: "A Few Days Later"

Things have been straightened up since the earthquake, books restacked, etc. Warren is HANDING BACK TEST PAPERS to his STUDENTS. He hands one to a girl, smiles.

WARREN
 Alice. Hundred percent. Nice job.

He moves to a SCRUFFY KID with disheveled red hair, freckles.

WARREN (CONT'D)
 Leo. Fifteen percent. Mag-nificent.
 (hands him the paper)
 See me after class, will ya?

The look on Leo's face says this is not new or welcome.

INT. WARREN'S CLASSROOM - LATER

Leo sits slumped in the chair beside Warren's desk. Warren stands in front of him.

WARREN
 What the heck are you doing?

LEO
 You told me to stay after class.

WARREN
 Not what I meant. You answered three out of twenty questions. Why?

LEO
 'Cause those were the ones I knew.

WARREN
 Leo, you're screwing up your life. Your grades are terrible. And instead of applying yourself, you sit in class and doodle in your notebook.

(MORE)

WARREN (CONT'D)

(then)

Give me the notebook.

LEO

What, why?

WARREN

Give me the notebook.

The boy reluctantly reaches into his backpack, pulls out a TATTERED NOTEBOOK, hands it to Warren.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I'll just keep this until the end of the semester.

LEO

Aw man...

Warren proffers a SOCIAL STUDIES TEXT to him.

WARREN

I want you to look up the answers to the other seventeen questions.

Leo looks at Warren, snatches the textbook from him. Warren sits at his desk. When Leo starts to work, Warren leans back and OPENS THE NOTEBOOK. When he does, he's baffled by what he sees. He starts to flip from page to page, as CAMERA ZIPS AROUND to see his POV.

NOTEBOOK - An intricate blueprint-like drawing of a STATIONARY BIKE attached to HUNDREDS OF INTERLOCKING COGWHEELS, large and small, each of them leaning at an angle to create centrifugal force from momentum. It says, "ENERGY."

PAGE FLIPS - to a series of sketches showing a train with a DETACHABLE SIDECAR on a PARALLEL TRACK. The sidecar delivers and receives passengers. It says, "STOPLESS TRAIN."

PAGE FLIPS - to an elaborate sketch of a TELESCOPE, its internal parts exposed, showing a complex series of CONCAVE and CONVEX LENSES that bounce an image in a circle, filtering out the faster vibrations of newer objects. "TELESCOPE TO THE PAST."

WARREN (CONT'D)

Leo? These drawings are incredible.

LEO

Huh?

(shrugs)

My dad says they're stupid.

WARREN

Well, your dad's an idiot.

Warren closes the notebook, hands it back to him.

LEO

I thought you were keeping it?

WARREN

I want to talk to your parents.

LEO

Why? I'm doing the other questions.

WARREN

No, I want to talk to them about you. About what you can do. They need to know. They need to help you, encourage you.

LEO

Yeah, well, you can't. My mom left when I was like six.

WARREN

I didn't know that. What about your dad?

LEO

In jail.

WARREN

So who's looking after you?

LEO

(caught, then)

Uh... my aunt. Elizabeth. Aunt Liz. I'm living with her. But see, she's deaf, so you can't call her. You have to write her a note. I'll give it to her.

WARREN

(narrows his gaze)

Uh-huh.

(stands, then)

Stay here. Finish the questions.

Warren exits.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - LATER

Warren's sitting across from PRINCIPAL Carol Dowd, 50s.

PRINCIPAL

The father's in jail, huh? Well, that doesn't surprise me.

WARREN

But he's not a bad kid, Carol. And he's smart.

PRINCIPAL

Smart? Oh please. Leo Fickett is failing every one of his classes.

WARREN

Well, that's just because he's, I don't know, bored.

PRINCIPAL

Hell, we're all bored, Warren. Tell him to get used to it.

WARREN

I just think, with the right kind of encouragement, this kid --

PRINCIPAL

Warren, "this kid" is nothing but trouble. Last week, he got in a fight with two eighth graders, almost got suspended. Just call Social Services and be done with it. They can place him somewhere. And, with any luck, he'll end up in another district.

INT. CLASSROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Leo's finishing the questions. Warren enters, sits.

WARREN

Look, Leo, I know you're living alone. And you can't do that. Now, I've got some room at my place and, before you say no...

LEO

Sure.

WARREN

Oh. Well, okay then...

EXT. WARREN'S HOUSE - LATER

Warren parks the Chrysler (repaired) in front.

LEO (V.O.)

So... you got a swimming pool, right?

Leo gets out with a bag of clothes, Warren gets out.

WARREN

Leo, you're a constant source of amusement.