

# IMMUNE

Written by

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Based on

*Vaccinated: One Man's Quest to Defeat  
the World's Deadliest Diseases*

by Paul Offit, MD

A CELL.

Floating peacefully in an aqueous environment. Its enveloping cell membrane protecting it from the surroundings.

Suddenly, a SPIKED SPHERE erupts from within the cell. Violently ripping the cell membrane as it forces its way from one side to the other.

It's followed by another spiked sphere. And another. More and more spheres spill out, the helpless, dying cell turned into a replicating factory by a dangerous invader.

The multiplying horde of spheres quickly spreads in all directions, parasitic spikes attaching to neighboring cells and forcing their way inside.

One host cell after the next is turned into a replicating factory, helpless to stop this brutal warfare. A vicious attack by a highly evolved VIRUS.

Within moments, the entire cluster of host cells is swarmed in a sea of enemy viruses, overwhelmed in a violent invasion.

ZOOM WAY OUT, flying past cells, tissue, organs, lungs...

EXT. HONG KONG - 1957 - DAY

A Hong Kong CITIZEN struggles along a sidewalk, COUGHING violently, ill with the H2N2 influenza A virus. He takes a few delirious steps and COLLAPSES, deathly sick.

Other CITIZENS avoid him, steering clear, covering their mouths, some wearing makeshift masks. Adults, kids, everyone.

SUPERTITLE: HONG KONG - 1957

COUGHS from around the packed city block, many people sick.

SNAP!

AN AMERICAN PHOTOJOURNALIST captures shots around the city:

- A long line of PATIENTS snaking down the street, leading into a clinic.
- Several SICK PEOPLE that are too tired to stand in line, resting on the ground. Some aren't moving.
- Overworked DOCTORS and NURSES, wearing fabric masks, scrambling to help.
- PARENTS carrying their suffering CHILDREN.

SNAP!

CUT TO:

A MASS PRINTING PRESS. Churning out hundreds, thousands of copies of the New York Times...

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP: MICROSCOPE SLIDES

A smattering of different viruses: some spherical, some rod-shaped. All adapted for vicious cellular warfare.

INT. WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE - CONFERENCE ROOM - 1957

A 1950s slide projector beams images of the viruses onto a screen, a meeting for a trio of EXECUTIVES.

The presenter wears a suit under his lab coat, standing a commanding 6'1". Brimming with fire and intelligence, he's a man with no filter and isn't someone to mess with. A faint scar is visible on his forehead.

This is MAURICE HILLEMAN, late 30s.

HILLEMAN

Measles, mumps, dozens more...  
We've been studying their  
replication mechanisms and  
improving our vaccine techniques.  
With a thirty percent budget  
increase, we can wipe many of them  
off the face of the planet.

The lead executive is TOMMY FRANCIS, the Director of the army's Influenza Commission. He's Hilleman's boss.

TOMMY FRANCIS

These are all diseases that affect  
children?

HILLEMAN

Children and adults too. Millions  
suffer and die every year.

TOMMY FRANCIS

I appreciate the passion, Maurice.  
But the task of this department is  
fighting disease that affects war.

HILLEMAN

You don't think war is affected by  
dying citizens? God damn it, Tommy.  
Be smart.

TOMMY FRANCIS

Watch your mouth.

HILLEMAN

It's the fucking army. Where do you  
think I learned?

TOMMY FRANCIS

This meeting's over. Dismissed.

EXT. WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE - DAY

An old government building that could use a facelift.

SCIENTISTS, DOCTORS and ARMY PERSONNEL bustle in and out of  
the entrance.

A frustrated Hilleman charges outside, carrying several  
newspapers and a glass bottle of Coke. He marches across the  
road to a picnic table surrounded by concrete.

He sits, getting some air, feeling at home outside. He pops  
open the Coke with his bare hand and chugs.

He flips through the papers, catching up on the news. His  
frustration subsiding as he reads.

A New York Times headline catches his attention:

HONG KONG BATTLING INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC

He fixates on a photo of SICK CHILDREN, their visible  
suffering breaking his heart. He reads the details:

"250,000 residents have received treatment..."

"Thousands of sick patients standing in long clinic lines..."

"Many women carried glassy-eyed children tied to their  
backs..."

He downs the Coke and hurries back to work.

INT. TOMMY FRANCIS' OFFICE - DAY

Hilleman barges into Tommy's executive office and drops the  
newspaper on his desk. Tommy is in the middle of a call.

TOMMY FRANCIS  
(to phone)  
I'll call you right back...

He hangs up. Grabs the newspaper.

TOMMY FRANCIS (CONT'D)  
What's this?

HILLEMAN  
The next pandemic. It's here.

TOMMY FRANCIS  
You get that from an article? Ok  
Pasteur...

HILLEMAN  
No one listened to Pasteur in his  
day either. Turns out bacteria and  
viruses do cause disease.

TOMMY FRANCIS  
You've made your point.

HILLEMAN  
You want to sell this up the chain?  
In World War I, more soldiers died  
from the Great Flu than all the  
damn bullets.

TOMMY FRANCIS  
You mean the Spanish Flu.

HILLEMAN  
Common misnomer, it originated in  
Kansas. But that would've screwed  
American PR. Trust me, I was born  
during that hell...

CUT TO:

A CELL.

Bulging, quaking, then hemorrhaging, its dying innards  
spilling into the surroundings. A victim of an invading virus  
- a perfectly evolved killing machine...

INT. HOSPITAL - MILES CITY, MONTANA - 1919 - DAY

A COUGHING, GROANING PATIENT. Deathly ill with the H1N1  
influenza A virus. In chaotic hell:

He's surrounded by similarly SICK PATIENTS, packed into a long row of hospital beds.

SUPERTITLE: MILES CITY, MONTANA - 1919

Exhausted DOCTORS and NURSES, wearing rudimentary masks, try to help every patient. But they're vastly outnumbered.

Some patients wear masks, some don't, others wear mechanical breathing devices... Many faces are blue from oxygen deprivation, sick with the aptly called purple death.

Several patients are no longer moving, dead in their beds.

This is the GREAT FLU OF 1918: the deadliest pandemic in modern history.

Cutting through the chaos, a WOMAN'S SCREAM spills out from a closed door...

INT. MATERNITY WARD - DAY

Less packed than the flu ward but no less intense.

A HOMEOPATHIC DOCTOR clutches the trembling hand of a mother - ANNA, who is in the middle of an intense contraction...

RETURN TO:

INT. TOMMY FRANCIS' OFFICE - 1957 - DAY

Hilleman continues his rant.

HILLEMAN

I somehow survived but that pandemic killed 50 million worldwide. Didn't discriminate between young and old.

TOMMY FRANCIS

Let's see how things play out in Asia.

HILLEMAN

We wait too long and it'll be on our shores. By then it'll be too late.

TOMMY FRANCIS

Your concerns are noted. Now get the hell outta my office.

INT. QUAKER SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

A TEACHER addresses an energetic class of FIRST GRADERS.

TEACHER

Because of the apple, Adam and Eve  
were cast out of the Garden of  
Eden. Thus began human history.

A hand shoots up in the back. It belongs to a precocious 6-year-old with blue eyes and an adorable pixie haircut: JERI.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Yes Jeryl?

JERI

What do you mean human history?

TEACHER

Well, Adam and Eve were the first  
people. Our first ancestors.

JERI

My dad says that's a load of crap.

SMIRKS from her classmates.

The Teacher grabs a bar of soap from her desk...

INT. QUAKER SCHOOL - CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Hilleman hurries into a meeting with the Teacher and Jeri.

JERI

Dad! I'm sorry.

HILLEMAN

Nothing to be sorry about.

Jeri sits next to her father. He holds her hand.

TEACHER

Appreciate you coming, Mr.  
Hilleman. The school is concerned  
about all the recent incidents.

HILLEMAN

It's been a difficult few months.

TEACHER

Yes, I'm so sorry about Mrs.  
Hilleman. My condolences again.

HILLEMAN

Thank you, we miss her very much.

TEACHER

As you might know, trauma can affect behavior.

HILLEMAN

It can. Is that what happened here?

TEACHER

We take our teaching of history very seriously.

HILLEMAN

It's certainly an inspired story.

TEACHER

History.

HILLEMAN

That's one opinion.

TEACHER

Ah, I see the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

That pushes Hilleman over the edge.

HILLEMAN

Listen, Myra. Can I call you Myra? What kind of soap was it?

TEACHER

Sorry?

HILLEMAN

The soap that you shoved into my daughter's mouth. Was it Imperial? Palmolive? Wright's?

TEACHER

I... I'm not sure.

HILLEMAN

Then how do you know it was fit for consumption?

TEACHER

Uh, well....

HILLEMAN

No matter, I'll run a toxicology report.

(MORE)

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

Standard test at the office. Let's all just hope you still have a job tomorrow.

The Teacher's face drains of color.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

Come on, Jeri. There are other schools.

INT. HILLEMAN APARTMENT - WASHINGTON DC - EVENING

Hilleman and Jeri return home to their DC apartment. Hilleman sets down two briefcases.

JERI

So I'm not in trouble?

HILLEMAN

For telling it like it is? Never.  
How about we work on a model?

Jeri's eyes light up.

INT. HILLEMAN APARTMENT - JERI'S BEDROOM - EVENING

It's more a budding scientist's workshop than a little girl's bedroom.

A shelf is packed with completed scientific models: a human skeleton, eyeball, transistor radio, even a Ford Model T.

Jeri eagerly picks up a work-in-progress human heart model and gets to work. Hilleman plays the role of the assistant, handing her pieces.

HILLEMAN

Don't forget the aorta.

JERI

What's that do?

HILLEMAN

It's the body's main artery.

JERI

Dad, do you miss mom?

HILLEMAN

Yes, honey. Every day.

(handing her a piece)

Here - looks like a ventricle.

JERI  
I miss her too.

HILLEMAN  
I know. It's not fair, for either  
of us. But you're safe with me.  
I'll always protect you.

Jeri nods and works on the heart.

INT. APARTMENT - HILLEMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hilleman reads in bed. The house is silent.

As he flips the page, he hears a distant RUMBLE. He flips another page. The rumble intensifies.

He lowers the book. Notices the room starting to SHAKE. The floor vibrating with a strange crescendo.

Stepping out of bed, he peers through the window. An ominous sight awaits him:

Hundreds of SPIKED VIRUS SPHERES flood into the neighborhood, quickly surrounding the apartment building.

Reaching critical mass, the virus spheres spill out onto the grass, covering every inch of ground before attacking the building and CRASHING inside through windows!

Hilleman frantically runs out of his bedroom to:

INT. APARTMENT - JERI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hilleman flings open Jeri's door and GASPS at what he sees:

Shattered glass on the ground, a horde of VIRUSES flooding inside through the broken window and swarming Jeri in a deadly, suffocating cluster.

She tries to scream but the viruses quickly envelop her mouth. Her terrified eyes flick his way, begging for help.

Hilleman reaches for her but there are too many invaders...

INT. APARTMENT - HILLEMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hilleman shoots up in bed, waking from a nightmare.

INT. APARTMENT - JERI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hilleman checks on Jeri. She sleeps soundly. Safe.

INT. APARTMENT - HILLEMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hilleman returns to his bedroom, quietly closing the door.

One of his briefcases is on the bed, open to the New York Times pandemic article.

His eyes land on the photo of sick children.

INT. WALTER REED RESEARCH INSTITUTE - HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Hilleman rushes into work with his two briefcases, passing his lifelong secretary MARIE BUTLER as he enters his cramped office.

HILLEMAN

Marie, I need one of our medical labs in the Far East. Any officer you can reach. Gotta find out what's going on in Hong Kong.

MARIE

Guessing we shouldn't include Mr. Francis on the call?

HILLEMAN

You're always right, Marie.

MARIE

I know.

As Marie picks up the phone and gets to work, Hilleman studies a WORLD MAP hanging in his office. He sticks a red pin into Hong Kong.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Army's 406th on the line! From Zama, Japan.

Hilleman grabs the phone.

INTERCUT with a MEDICAL OFFICER stationed in Zama.

HILLEMAN

What do you have for me?

## MEDICAL OFFICER

One of our navy servicemen was exposed. Got back on his ship, returned to base, now he's ill. We have him in quarantine.

## HILLEMAN

I wish him a speedy recovery. Now listen carefully. Get him to gargle with salt water, spit into a cup, then send me the specimen. Next plane out, as soon as possible.

## MEDICAL OFFICER

Copy that.

Hilleman hangs up.

INT. WALTER REED - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Hilleman's small RESEARCH TEAM gathers for a meeting with their boss. Each one straightens as the door flings open:

Hilleman rushes into the conference room, carrying a package mailed from Japan. He RIPS it open, withdraws a VIAL containing the sick serviceman's sample.

He holds up the vial before the team. They regard their boss with a mix of respect and fear.

## HILLEMAN

Let's get as many blood antibody samples as possible, from the military and otherwise. See if anyone's immune to this damn thing. We're already behind so divide and conquer. Clock's ticking.

INT. HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

PASSENGERS stand in line, boarding a flight to TAIWAN.

Most people wear masks, especially the FLIGHT CREW.

A MASKED PASSENGER wipes sweat off his brow. He stifles a COUGH, pretending not to be sick as he hands the GATE ATTENDANT his boarding pass...

INT. TOMMY FRANCIS' OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Hilleman barges in, looks for Tommy. The only one there is TOMMY'S SECRETARY.

TOMMY'S SECRETARY

Mr. Hilleman, something I can help you with?

HILLEMAN

Where is he?

TOMMY'S SECRETARY

At an early dinner.

HILLEMAN

Did he look at my results yet?

TOMMY'S SECRETARY

He's getting to it. I'm happy to remind him in the morning?

EXT. COSMOS CLUB - EVENING

An exclusive, members only social club. Founded in the 19th century and it shows - from the neoclassical historic building to the privileged CLIENTELE heading inside.

INT. COSMOS CLUB - EVENING

With rich wooden paneling and perfect white tablecloths, the dining room BUZZES with conversation. It's a who's who of DC elite, formally dressed, with expense accounts to match.

Before the MAITRE D' can stop him, Hilleman barges in and makes a beeline for a back table.

He quickly finds Tommy, who is the middle of dinner with a government BIGWIG.

TOMMY FRANCIS

Maurice? Since when are you a member?

HILLEMAN

Five minutes. I'm sure your friend here will understand?

He hovers over the Bigwig.

BIGWIG

I'm hitting the head.

He leaves. Hilleman slides into the booth.

HILLEMAN

This H2N2 out of China is a big problem.

TOMMY FRANCIS

Problem? The Russians just launched Sputnik. Everyone here's talking about the space race.

HILLEMAN

Forget space. That damn race'll be over for all of us if we don't put a lid on this thing now.

Hilleman pops open his briefcase and shoves a stack of papers into Tommy's hands. Tommy pages through the paperwork. His demeanor growing more serious.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

It's the middle of summer and it's already spread to Taiwan, Malaysia, India and Japan. So it'll be on our shores by September. Right in time for the school year.

TOMMY FRANCIS

Anyone immune?

HILLEMAN

Just a few old timers that survived a similar strain back in 1889.

TOMMY FRANCIS

The Russian flu?

HILLEMAN

Correct. First pandemic of the industrial era. A million dead. Would be many more now given the modern world.

Tommy nods, finally agreeing with him.

TOMMY FRANCIS

Ok. I'll reach out to the DBS.

HILLEMAN

Forget it, they move like molasses. Give me more resources. My team's too small, too inexperienced.

TOMMY FRANCIS

There's a process, Hilleman. Be a team player, stand by while I do my job. You can't fight a pandemic alone.

HILLEMAN

We don't have time for fucking process.

He grabs his paperwork and leaves.

INT. WALTER REED - HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Hilleman returns to his office. Marie hands him a sandwich.

HILLEMAN

Get me our vaccine manufacturers. All six of them.

MARIE

It's 9pm...

HILLEMAN

Good. The CEOs should be at home, easy to track down.

He sits down at his desk and inhales the sandwich. He pops open a Coke and rejuvenates.

MARIE

John Gadsden from Merck on the line!

Hilleman quickly grabs the phone.

HILLEMAN

(into phone)

Sorry it's so late, John. You'll thank me later. In the morning, I'm sending over a sample of this H2 virus from China. We need vaccines in peoples' arms in four months.

YELLING on the other end.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

I know, no one's ever moved this fast. But I need your help. America needs your help.

More YELLING. Hilleman barely even listens, waiting for the CEO to finish his rant.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

Fine. If you won't do it, one of your competitors will. Somebody's getting the credit for saving lives and somebody's gonna be a sorry son of a bitch. You want to be a sorry son of a bitch, John?

Silence on the other end. Hilleman waits, relishing the quiet. Then listens as the CEO asks a question.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

Don't you worry about the DBS, I'll handle. Oh and John: we're late into the hatching season so tell your producers not to kill their roosters. You'll need millions of fertile eggs. Talk soon.

He hangs up.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

Alright Marie, who's next?

INT. LAX - PASSPORT CONTROL - DAY

A snaking line of TRAVELERS, arriving in LA from international destinations. Waiting with their passports.

COUGHS in the crowd. A PILOT we recognize from the Hong Kong airport is there, his face pale.

The virus is here...

INT. WALTER REED - HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

The world map has evolved dramatically: red pins now spread across the entire planet, reaching all the continents.

Several red pins are in the US on both coasts: Los Angeles and Boston.

As Hilleman works at his desk, a corner TELEVISION shows a 1950s-style NEWS REPORT about the spreading pandemic.

NEWS REPORTER (ON SCREEN)

*The first cases of a dangerous new flu from Asia have been detected in the United States.*

MARIE (O.S.)

He's in the middle of something...

A slender bureaucrat barges into the room. This is HARRY MEYER, the DBS DIRECTOR (Division of Biologics Standards).

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
You can't develop and distribute a  
vaccine without my authorization!

HILLEMAN  
Pretty sure I just did. Please take  
a seat.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
Just wait til Tommy hears about  
this...

HILLEMAN  
Take a damn seat.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
I'll stand, thank you very much.  
Hope you've enjoyed this office  
cause when I'm through with you...

Hilleman doesn't take threats lightly. He meets eyes with Marie, who quietly shuts the door.

HILLEMAN  
Now listen to me, you slice of  
bureaucratic horseshit. This  
vaccine's the only damn thing  
that's going to save millions of  
Americans. You included. So say  
thank you and try again.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
The Division of Biologics Standards  
has strict protocols and...

HILLEMAN  
DBS, NIH, FDA... Who the hell can  
keep track of all these flaccid  
departments?

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
You forgot the CDC.

HILLEMAN  
Crap Disease Commies? Tell 'em to  
get a better name.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
I will. That'll do wonders for your  
career.

Hilleman turns away from him, focusing on the TV news report.

NEWS REPORTER (ON SCREEN)  
*No one is safe, including healthy, young people. The school year has just started so officials are warning about the possibility of students being sent home.*

Hilleman grabs his jacket and heads for the door.

HILLEMAN  
Stand as long as you'd like.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Hilleman arrives at a school playground and scans the crowd of ELEMENTARY STUDENTS having fun - it's recess.

He sees SNIFFLING STUDENTS. Hopefully it's just the cold...

Seeing Jeri on the swings, he hurries her direction.

HILLEMAN  
Time to go, honey.

JERI  
What'd I do?

HILLEMAN  
Nothing. We're getting you a home tutor. Just for a little while.

INT. WALTER REED - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

Stacks of lab results are piled around the conference table. Hilleman slugs his way through the results, the work never ending. Marie interrupts.

MARIE  
The new babysitter's about to quit.

HILLEMAN  
Good riddance.

MARIE  
Jeri can't babysit herself.

HILLEMAN  
Plans tonight?

Marie raises her coat, ready to go - she was expecting this.

MARIE  
Dinner's on you.

HILLEMAN  
I know.

EXT. WALTER REED - NIGHT

The entrance is quiet - everyone has already gone home for the night.

Hilleman exits the building, finished with another long day.

Carrying his two briefcases, he walks home.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Hilleman passes an area hospital and sees an ominous sight:

Body bags piled up outside the hospital, MASKED WORKERS struggling to pack them into vans. There are simply too many bodies and too few resources to deal with them.

Hilleman picks up the pace.

EXT. COSMOS CLUB - NIGHT

Hilleman stops across the street from the Cosmos Club. RICH BUREAUCRATS filter out, picking up their cars at valet, smiling, LAUGHING, carrying on without a care in the world. Certainly not concerned with the incoming pandemic.

Hilleman shakes his head and hurries home.

FADE TO:

INT. WALTER REED - HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

The world map is now covered in red dots, the United States included.

Hilleman sits at his desk, staring at the map. A lost look on his face - he didn't win this battle.

A KNOCK on his door:

TOMMY FRANCIS  
Congratulations. We just hit ten million doses.

HILLEMAN

Too little, too late. Over a million dead worldwide. Six figures here. Everyone knows someone, even Jeri lost a teacher.

TOMMY FRANCIS

We did the best we could.

HILLEMAN

Whatever you need to tell yourself.

TOMMY FRANCIS

I'll set a meeting. Get the heads together again. I'll push to increase your budget, at least ten percent.

Hilleman is insulted by the pitiful offer.

HILLEMAN

We need to be ready next time.

TOMMY FRANCIS

I'm sure it'll be a long while before another pandemic.

HILLEMAN

History says otherwise. Another one's coming in nine years.

TOMMY FRANCIS

How can you possibly know that?

Hilleman wheels over a white board covered in years and numbers: H1 = 1918. H2 = 1889 & 1957. H3 = 1900 & 1968.

HILLEMAN

Influenza has sixteen types of hemagglutinin spike proteins and those change a little every year. Pandemics happen when a big mutation comes along and the virus gets scary good at its job. Unleashing hell on the windpipe, lungs and all. Only three types cause 'em: H1, H2 and H3.

TOMMY FRANCIS

I'm not following.

HILLEMAN

The time between pandemics of the same type is always 68 years.

(MORE)

**HILLEMAN (CONT'D)**

We just experienced H2 in 1957. The last time was 1889.

**TOMMY FRANCIS**

They can't all be 68 years.

**HILLEMAN**

It's exactly 68 years - the average human lifespan. Enough time for an immune population to die off. The last H3 pandemic was 1900, so the next one's coming in '68.

Tommy studies the white board, skeptical.

**TOMMY FRANCIS**

I appreciate the effort, Maurice. I'll have my group take a look but I doubt anyone can predict a pandemic.

Hilleman scans the picture frames on his desk: him with Jeri, graduating Montana State University next to what looks to be his DAD, a childhood photo with SEVEN SIBLINGS. He fixates on one brother - NORMAN. Looking healthy...

FLASH - an image burned into Hilleman's memory forever:

Norman writhing in bed, sweating, his neck swollen. Breathing rapidly, loudly WHEEZING with some terrible illness...

RETURN TO - Hilleman in his office.

**HILLEMAN**

This can't happen again. Not on my watch. Find some other damn pencil pusher.

He quickly throws the picture frames and a few other personal belongings into his two briefcases. Grabs his coat.

As he hurries out, leaving a speechless Tommy:

**HILLEMAN (CONT'D)**

Pack it up, Marie!

CUT TO:

A HAND. Scribbling a growing list.

Entries include:

- Measles

- Mumps
- Rubella
- Chickenpox
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B

And many more deadly diseases...

EXT. MERCK HEADQUARTERS - WEEKS LATER - DAY

Rahway, New Jersey is home to an expansive office park: the headquarters of multinational pharmaceutical company MERCK.

A spotless new brick building is surrounded by lush, well manicured grounds - a far cry from Walter Reed.

A Volkswagen pulls into the parking lot.

Hilleman steps out, wearing a suit.

INT. MERCK HEADQUARTERS - EXECUTIVE FLOOR - DAY

Hilleman checks in with a RECEPTIONIST and takes a seat on a luxurious leather couch.

He taps his fingers on the leather, uncharacteristically anxious.

He scans the walls:

- A gold plaque reveals the company history. The Merck Group, founded in Germany 1668. The American branch founded in 1891.
- A framed Time Magazine article shows former company president George Merck and a quote: "Medicine is for people, not for profits."

SECRETARY  
Mr. Gadsden will see you now.

INT. MERCK - OFFICE OF THE CEO - DAY

Hilleman is led into a lavish suite and greeted by Merck CEO JOHN GADSDEN. He's an elite corporate mastermind, disarmingly charming and always calculating three moves ahead.

CEO GADSDEN  
Maurice! So good to see you.

HILLEMAN  
Thanks for meeting, John.

CEO GADSDEN  
I should be thanking you. Hell of a job handling that pandemic. I never imagined we could mobilize so quickly.

HILLEMAN  
You saved us. But at the end of the day, too many were lost. That one's on me.

CEO GADSDEN  
It was a Herculean undertaking. Too many moving parts, too much bureaucracy. I suppose that's why you're here.

HILLEMAN  
You guys are the best in the business.

CEO GADSDEN  
Yes, I manage a world class group. But help me understand. You worked for the government, you could be in academia. We all know what that world thinks of us and our profits.

HILLEMAN  
Sure, dirty industry. But profit means resources.

CEO GADSDEN  
But let's say, for instance, you're here. You do great things. What are the odds you win the Nobel? Or any major prize? The science community won't take your seriously.

HILLEMAN  
Don't much care for prizes, John. Dying kids don't care about them either. Let others toot their own damn horns while I work.

CEO GADSDEN

Well said. You're right about our resources. Rising profits means sizable funding.

HILLEMAN

Plus there's manufacturing. The ability to develop and deliver under one roof. We do this right, we'll solve big problems. Prevent serious diseases. Even stop pandemics.

CEO GADSDEN

You think another one's coming?

HILLEMAN

Only a matter of time. The price we pay for overpopulating the planet.

The CEO nods, liking Hilleman's confidence.

CEO GADSDEN

Very good, very good. How's your daughter?

HILLEMAN

Seven going on seventeen. Best and toughest job I've had.

CEO GADSDEN

How does she feel about moving?

HILLEMAN

She adjusts quickly to new schools.

CEO GADSDEN

Then how about this. I make you our new director of virus and cell biology. You'll have your own lab.

Hilleman is taken by surprise - that was too easy. Realizing what's happening here, he loosens up.

HILLEMAN

You already had this in mind...

CEO GADSDEN

Just had to make sure. When a CEO meets the best of the best, you better hope he does everything possible to land the prize.

He extends his hand for a shake.

CEO GADSDEN (CONT'D)  
Welcome to Merck.

INT. MERCK - HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Hilleman sets up his new, much more spacious office. Places the picture frames on a lavish wood desk as Marie walks in.

HILLEMAN  
How was Bermuda?

MARIE  
Could've used another week.

HILLEMAN  
What does one even do there?

MARIE  
What normal people do. Eat, drink, swim. You know, relax?

HILLEMAN  
Sounds like hell. I'll relax when I'm dead.

Marie quickly organizes her desk, sifting through envelopes and paperwork. She scans a memo, checks her watch.

MARIE  
Staff meeting in five minutes.

HILLEMAN  
I didn't set any meeting.

MARIE  
It's not yours.

INT. MERCK CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

An expansive conference room filled with cigarette smoke.

Well groomed EXECUTIVES in expensive suits smoke and CHATTER as Hilleman and Marie enter. Hilleman's old suit stands out.

Marie glances at dressy, made up SECRETARIES, all wearing high heels. She quickly sits down.

The CEO steps in and everyone takes their seats.

CEO GADSDEN  
Max, let's go.

Second-in-command MAX TISHLER rises to address the group. While short with red curly hair and horn-rimmed glasses, he projects intensity and corporate power.

MAX TISHLER  
Morning. I'd like to welcome Maurice Hilleman, our new director of virus and cell biology, reporting to me. He'll be doing great things for us, right Maurice?

APPLAUSE from the group. Hilleman smiles uncomfortably, unused to being the center of attention.

Max notices the CEO fidgeting, growing impatient.

MAX TISHLER (CONT'D)  
Diving right in. Stock's down two percent last month, we need a big win. What do we have? Lewis?

LEWIS SARETT quickly stands.

LEWIS SARETT  
Lots of opportunity in exports. We can increase Cortisone sales overseas.

MAX TISHLER  
Cortisone was big - last decade. Innovation, people! James? Karl?

JAMES SPRAGUE and KARL BEYER stand simultaneously.

JAMES SPRAGUE  
How about a drug for hypotension?

MAX TISHLER  
Too niche. This is a country of gluttony and heart attacks.

KARL BEYER  
Then hypertension. We're already working on chlorothiazide.

MAX TISHLER  
Bingo. Hit the gas on development, then give it a sexier name. Who's our best detail man?

Several MARKETING EXECS stand.

MAX TISHLER (CONT'D)  
I said man! Not men.

As the Marketing Execs sit back down, Hilleman and Marie exchange a glance - they're out of their element.

INT. MERCK - HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Hilleman and Marie return to their office, at a loss for words.

Marie glances at Hilleman's old suit.

MARIE  
We'll need to get you a new suit.

HILLEMAN  
What's wrong with this one?

MARIE  
Here? Everything.

Hilleman heads for his desk.

HILLEMAN  
Let's start setting up those  
interviews. We're going to bring in  
the very best.

MARIE  
Good luck with your budget.

HILLEMAN  
Budget?

Marie shows him a budget memo from the CEO's office. Hilleman rises to leave.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Damn it, I'm no accountant. I'm a  
scientist. Tell Gadsden's office  
I'm on my way.

MARIE  
Maurice... This isn't the army. You  
need to play ball, at least on day  
one.

Hilleman realizes she's right. Returns to his desk.

HILLEMAN  
Fine. Let's see who's good.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF INTERVIEWS IN HILLEMAN'S OFFICE

Hilleman sits across from ARLENE MCLEAN, a quiet but sharp statistician. He reviews a stack of grids and tables.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
You put all these together?

ARLENE MCLEAN  
Wouldn't trust anyone else.

HILLEMAN  
The work's good, Arlene. We'll need stats for all our vaccine studies.

ARLENE MCLEAN  
I can do that in my sleep.

HILLEMAN  
We don't sleep around here.

ARLENE MCLEAN  
Fine. Sleeping bag stays home.

That almost gets a smile out of Hilleman.

ARLENE MCLEAN (CONT'D)  
One thing I don't understand, Mr. Hilleman. Why'd you meet with me?

HILLEMAN  
I don't understand the question.

ARLENE MCLEAN  
Haven't had too many interviews these days.

HILLEMAN  
That's someone else's problem. I don't give a damn what you look like or what's between your legs. Only what's between your ears. See you in the office tomorrow.

CUT TO:

Hilleman sits across from Bolivian scientist VICTOR VILLAREJOS, who has international experience with vaccines.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Where'd you say you're from?

VICTOR VILLAREJOS  
Bolivia, sir.

HILLEMAN

Never been to Central America.

VICTOR VILLAREJOS

It is... South America.

HILLEMAN

Never been there either. Too many  
jungle diseases. So you have  
vaccine experience down there?

VICTOR VILLAREJOS

Our country was one of the first to  
use your H2 vaccine.

HILLEMAN

Good. We need an international man.  
We'll get you a jeep, boat,  
machete, whatever you need.

A KNOCK - Marie pokes her head through the door.

MARIE

You need to leave for your lunch.

HILLEMAN

Jesus Christ, another one?  
(shaking Victor's hand)  
Victor, I hope you like getting  
fat.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA ROW HOUSE - EVENING - ESTABLISHING

A historic row house in the heart of Philly.

INT. HILLEMAN HOME - EVENING

Hilleman and Jeri unpack moving boxes.

HILLEMAN

Take the extra room. Make it your  
lab.

JERI

Yay!

Jeri organizes her models: skeletons, radios and all.

Hilleman unpacks his clothes, taking out old shirts and  
suits. He hangs them next to two immaculate, brand new suits.  
Then thinks twice and sticks the old suits back in the box.

The phone RINGS. Before Hilleman has a chance to grab it, Jeri picks up.

JERI (CONT'D)  
Hello? Hi Grandpa!

HILLEMAN  
Ask him if I can call him back.

JERI  
He'll call you back, thanks!

She hangs up.

JERI (CONT'D)  
When can we go visit?

HILLEMAN  
We'll wait for him to visit us,  
honey.

Jeri's notices her dad's mood growing more sullen.

JERI  
Are you ok, daddy?

HILLEMAN  
Let's organize that lab of yours.

He sets a box in front of her, ending the conversation.

As Jeri unpacks, Hilleman's mind wanders elsewhere...

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - MILES CITY, MONTANA - 1919 - DAY

We're back in the maternity ward during the Great Flu.

The Homeopathic Doctor clutches Anna's trembling hand as she experiences an intense contraction...

An anxious father, GUSTAVE, paces back and forth. He has the weathered, tan skin of a farmer, with an attitude to match.

GUSTAVE  
Help her!

DOCTOR  
Mr. Hilleman, I'm doing all I can.  
Please put on your mask.

GUSTAVE  
Forget your god-forsaken masks!

DOCTOR  
I beg you, for everyone's safety.  
Hers included!

GUSTAVE  
Where are the nurses?

DOCTOR  
Next door helping other patients.  
20 dead in the last 24 hours.  
Millions across the country...

GUSTAVE  
The Spanish flu is the least of our  
problems. Help her!

DOCTOR  
(to Anna)  
Breathe in, breathe out...

ANNA  
It hurts...

There's blood on the table. Lots of it.

As another intense contraction overwhelms Anna, she pushes with all her might. The Doctor reaches in and gently pulls out a BABY GIRL.

Anna and Gustave stare at their daughter, listening expectantly. The baby is silent. Unmoving.

The Doctor quickly gets to work: cupping his hands around the baby's back, using his thumbs to push down on her tiny chest. He tries to breathe air into her lungs. Nothing.

The Doctor turns to the stunned parents, his sullen expression saying it all. But before anyone can grieve...

Another wave of contractions floods Anna's body. Gustave's confused expression - there's more?

The Doctor gently sets the stillborn girl on a tray table and hurries to help Anna.

Gustave takes his wife's hand as she pushes with her remaining strength. Her face drains of color. Gustave is horrified by all the blood on the table.

The Doctor carefully pulls out a BABY BOY. Gustave holds his breath. The boy kicks his little legs. Then CRIES OUT.

The Doctor hands Gustave his son.

GUSTAVE  
Anna... He's beautiful...

No response. As Gustave looks at his wife, her eyes roll up in her head. Her limbs twitch violently.

The Doctor rushes to Anna's side but can't stop the seizure.

GUSTAVE (CONT'D)  
Good God, what's happening to her?

Sweat covers Anna's pale face as the seizure stops. She musters enough strength to open her eyes.

ANNA  
Bob. Edith...

GUSTAVE  
Anna, my love...

Tears flood Gustave's face. He looks at his baby boy. Then to his wife. Who stops moving, her face ashen.

Helpless, the Doctor takes off his gloves.

As Gustave's heart shatters, all he can do is cross himself and clutch his newborn son.

EXT. MILES CITY, MONTANA - DAY

A small town that's straight out of a Western. Fed by rushing water at the juncture of the Tongue and Yellowstone Rivers.

Near the green, tree-filled banks lies a solitary dirt road that weaves up to:

EXT. HILLEMAN FARM - DAY

An old farm with gardens, livestock and a chicken coop.

Two FARMHOUSES bookend the property. One in far better shape than the other.

An exhausted Gustave walks home, clutching the newborn. He heads for the older, more rundown farmhouse.

He's met by his brother BOB and his wife EDITH, who approach from the other, more immaculate farmhouse.

UNCLE BOB  
I'm so sorry, brother.

Gustave hands the bundle with the baby to Bob and Edith.

GUSTAVE  
The lord has bestowed more than  
enough fruit on my house. Maurice  
is all yours.

Bob and Edith are stunned as they take little MAURICE.  
Gustave's other SEVEN CHILDREN spill out of the farmhouse:  
Elsie, Harold, Howard, Walter, Richard, Victor and Norman.

HOWARD  
Dad...

ELSIE  
Where's mama?

Gustave shakes his head. The devastated children run to him.

As Gustave embraces his kids, he meets eyes with Bob,  
gesturing to Maurice.

GUSTAVE  
It's as she wished.

While Gustave consoles his children, Bob and Edith hold baby Maurice tightly. Their faces lighting up with stunned joy in this moment of mixed emotions.

RETURN TO:

INT. HILLEMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A mattress on the floor. Hilleman sleeps soundly.

The door CREAKS open. TIPTOES as someone nears the bed.

A shadow over Hilleman, someone reaches for the covers...

Instinctively, Hilleman's eyes shoot open.

JERI  
Daddy, my throat hurts.

Hilleman gets his bearings. Sits up, flips on a light.

He touches his forehead, then Jeri's. He feels the sides of her face, her jawline.

Jeri winces. Hilleman looks closer - Jeri's cheeks puff out like a chipmunk's.

HILLEMAN  
One second, honey.

He reaches for his briefcase, finds the MERCK MANUAL. Pages through, finds an entry. It confirms his suspicions.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Get dressed.

EXT. MERCK HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

An empty parking lot. The Merck building is quiet.

Two light beams cut through the darkness as Hilleman's Volkswagen pulls into the closest parking spot.

INT. MERCK - SECURITY DESK - NIGHT

Hilleman enters the building with Jeri. He waves at the night guard, SECURITY JIM.

HILLEMAN  
Howdy, Jim. We'll be quick.

SECURITY JIM  
Anything you need, Mr. Hilleman.

INT. MERCK - HILLEMAN'S LAB - NIGHT

Hilleman flips on the lights, illuminating a lab in the midst of setup: boxed equipment, disorganized supplies.

He leads a sleepy Jeri to a work bench, plops her on a stool.

He rummages through boxes, finds a container of cotton swabs.

He opens a refrigerator, inspects a collection of vials. Picks out one with a straw-colored nutrient broth.

HILLEMAN  
Honey, can you say AHHH?

JERI  
AHHHH.

With a cotton swab, Hilleman swipes the back of Jeri's throat. He sticks the sample into the vial of broth, then places the vial back into the fridge.

INT. PEDIATRIC OFFICE - MORNING

Lively pediatrician DR. ROBERT WEIBEL examines Jeri, feeling the sides of her throat. Hilleman waits impatiently.

HILLEMAN  
We almost done here?

DR. WEIBEL  
I'm examining you next. Sounds like someone has a serious case of the cranky pants.

Jeri GIGGLES. Dr. Weibel touches her cheeks, she winces.

DR. WEIBEL (CONT'D)  
Yep, you were right. Looks like mumps.

HILLEMAN  
What can we do for her?

DR. WEIBEL  
Nothing now. Just monitor her, hope there's no encephalitis.  
(to Jeri)  
Lollipop?

JERI  
Yes!

Hilleman sees how good this doc is with his daughter. He scans the walls, spots a diploma from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

HILLEMAN  
A Quaker I see?

DR. WEIBEL  
Don't much care for sports. Or religion.

HILLEMAN  
Amen. Heck of a practice you have here.

DR. WEIBEL  
Nine years and counting. Try to help as many kids as I can.

That last comment registers with Hilleman.

HILLEMAN  
You know, my lab could use a MD...

DR. WEIBEL  
I'm afraid I'm spread too thin  
these days. Between the practice  
and the Children's Hospital...

HILLEMAN  
Children's Hospital?

INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA - DAY

Dr. Weibel gives Hilleman a tour of the Children's Hospital.

They peer through windows and see suffering, bedridden  
CHILDREN.

DR. WEIBEL  
Wish I had a magic cure for them  
all.

HILLEMAN  
You're doing miracle work.

DR. WEIBEL  
Trying.

HILLEMAN  
You guys ever do clinical trials  
here?

INT. POLIO WARD - DAY

Dr. Weibel leads Hilleman into a small room with a few  
PATIENTS.

Hilleman sees LORRAINE WITMER (29), perky, elegantly dressed.  
She visits with the children, who lie in uncomfortable,  
contorted positions.

Hilleman is struck by Lorraine's graceful and calm demeanor.

DR. WEIBEL  
Lorraine, this is Maurice Hilleman.

LORRAINE  
Pleasure to meet you.

HILLEMAN  
I thought polio was all but  
eradicated.

LORRAINE  
How about we step outside?

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE POLIO WARD - DAY

Lorraine leads Hilleman and Dr. Weibel out of the ward and shuts the door behind her.

LORRAINE

Just because they're sick doesn't mean they can't hear you.

HILLEMAN

Sorry.

LORRAINE

They didn't get the vaccine in time.

HILLEMAN

Poor kids.

They both care deeply about these sick children.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

So you're the one that coordinates clinical trials?

LORRAINE

Yes, we've conducted dozens over the past few years.

HILLEMAN

Good. Cause we'll be doing dozens more.

LORRAINE

We?

HILLEMAN

My lab needs someone like you.

LORRAINE

I don't recall this being a job interview.

HILLEMAN

Sometimes I follow my gut.

LORRAINE

Doesn't sound very scientific, Mr. Hilleman.

Touché. Hilleman is impressed. And smitten.

HILLEMAN

Call me Maurice.

INT. HILLEMAN'S MERCK OFFICE - DAY

Hilleman, now dressed in a new, immaculate suit, sits across from two scientists that are a mismatched pair:

AL WOODHOUR, burly, bearded, brimming with attitude and grit. His expertise is inactivated vaccines like the flu.

GENE BUYNACK, shorter, more reserved. He's an expert in live virus vaccines.

HILLEMAN

Why are there two of you?

AL WOODHOUR

I handle inactivated viruses. Gene handles live ones. We're a package deal.

Hilleman shifts in his seat, still breaking in the new suit.

HILLEMAN

Need someone that knows both. It's a budget issue.

AL WOODHOUR

Good luck finding that person.

He rises to leave. Hilleman gestures to Gene.

HILLEMAN

Does he ever talk?

AL WOODHOUR

Gene prefers specific questions.

HILLEMAN

Ok... Talk to me about live viruses, what resources we'll need.

GENE BUYNACK

(quiet but precise)

Well there's Smallpox. Yellow fever. Great successes with those, techniques are well established. We'll need cold storage, 2-8 degrees Celsius. Lots of chickens.

HILLEMAN

You both start Monday. But you're sharing a damn desk.

INT. MERCK - OFFICE OF THE CEO - DAY

Hilleman KNOCKS on the CEO'S door and enters without waiting for a response.

The CEO is in the middle of lunch with Max. They're both eating steak.

HILLEMAN

You asked for me?

MAX TISHLER

Actually, I asked for you. I'm not approving any more of your hires. Don't bother our CEO next time.

CEO GADSDEN

How about a steak, Maurice?

HILLEMAN

What the hell am I supposed to do with a skeleton staff?

MAX TISHLER

Be creative, it's only the beginning.

CEO GADSDEN

Max is right. Work with what you have, we'll grow your department as we develop product.

HILLEMAN

What product? I barely have any resources for vaccine development.

CEO GADSDEN

Vaccines aren't profitable.

HILLEMAN

What about all the damn H2N2 vaccines I just helped you sell?

CEO GADSDEN

That you helped my competitors sell too.

The CEO bites into his steak, blood dripping onto the plate.

MAX TISHLER

Maurice, we still good for that press visit later?

HILLEMAN

The lab loves a parade.  
(not finished yet)  
Listen, you guys know about  
antigenic drift and shift?

MAX TISHLER

It's your theory, isn't it?

HILLEMAN

Not a theory.

CEO GADSDEN

Walk us through it.

HILLEMAN

It's the two main types of  
mutation. Antigenic drift is all  
about small changes that are always  
happening. Think flu season.

CEO GADSDEN

Go on.

HILLEMAN

Shift is when there's a big change.  
A serious mutation, often happens  
when viruses jump across species.  
Birds and pigs to humans, that type  
of thing.

MAX TISHLER

What's your point.

HILLEMAN

With drift, we deal with it and  
move on. But shift... That causes  
pandemics and it's always on the  
horizon. Means we're on the clock,  
ticking towards disaster.

The CEO finishes his lunch, his impatience growing.

CEO GADSDEN

Just focus on your work.

HILLEMAN

Why'd you hire me, John.

CEO GADSDEN

For your brain.

HILLEMAN

My brain knows vaccines.

MAX TISHLER  
We'll get you refocused.

HILLEMAN  
What the hell happened to medicine  
for people, not for profits?

CEO GADSDEN  
George Merck said many things - as  
we all do. I have no intention of  
running this company into the  
ground.

CLOSE ON:

AN INFLUENZA VIRUS MUTATING. Its surface spikes evolving  
gradually, changing slightly.

But then there's a massive shift. The spikes transforming  
into a completely different shape. Unrecognizable,  
undetectable for an unsuspecting immune system...

INT. HILLEMAN'S MERCK OFFICE - LATER

Hilleman returns to his office. Stepping uncomfortably in new  
high heels, Marie follows him, holding the phone.

MARIE  
Your uncle's on the line.

HILLEMAN  
I'll take it in my office.

He shuts his door. Picks up the phone.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Bob, how are you. Sorry about the  
phone tag.

INTERCUT with Uncle Bob on the farm - he's aged gracefully  
since we last saw him in 1919.

UNCLE BOB  
How's the new office, son?

HILLEMAN  
Still getting my feet wet. Come see  
the new joint. It's no farm but  
Jeri and I would love to have you.

He glances at the frame on his desk. His graduation photo is  
with Uncle Bob.

UNCLE BOB  
Long way to Philly. You oughta come home.

HILLEMAN  
This is home.

UNCLE BOB  
Please come. We... We lost your old man. It was very unexpected.

Hilleman pauses, his face a mask of locked away emotion.

HILLEMAN  
Sorry to hear. Guess church couldn't save him after all.

UNCLE BOB  
Your brothers and sister are all here.

That pushes Hilleman away even further.

HILLEMAN  
Thanks, dad. I'll send flowers.

He hangs up and lingers by the phone. Touches his faint forehead scar, remembering...

CUT TO:

INT. HILLEMAN FARM - CHICKEN COOP - 1931 - DAY

Feathers and dust kick into the air as a CHICKEN runs amuck through a coop.

A 12-YEAR-OLD MAURICE avoids clucking chickens, nests and eggs as he chases after the feathered troublemaker.

MAURICE  
Gotcha!

He grabs the chicken. Before she can peck him, he gently pets her, tucks her head under a wing and rocks her from side to side, putting her into a calm trance.

Maurice grabs a basket and collects eggs. He's so focused on the job that he doesn't see a loose nail...

MAURICE (CONT'D)  
Agh!

EXT. BOB'S FARMHOUSE - DAY

Maurice sits on the front porch as Uncle Bob patches up his forehead.

UNCLE BOB  
Hold still son, it'll sting a bit.

He pours alcohol on the wound. Maurice clenches his teeth, trying to hold it together.

MAURICE  
Why do we do that?

UNCLE BOB  
Kills infection. Tiny bacteria, so small you can't see 'em.  
(finishing up)  
Might scar. But you're good to go.

Maurice hops up. Uncle Bob hands him the basket full of eggs.

UNCLE BOB (CONT'D)  
Now back to work. This Depression means we're all hands on deck.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON

Wiping his brow from the blazing summer sun, Maurice carries the eggs to a small stand.

Down the road, in front of Gustave's worn farmhouse, Maurice's seven siblings work a bigger stand, selling fruit. He's far outnumbered.

RICHARD  
Hey Maurice, give up! Can't beat fruit pickin' with twelve hands!

The other siblings LAUGH.

MAURICE  
Try counting again, Richie! There are seven of ya!

As Richard remembers to include his own two hands in the count, Maurice hears FOOTSTEPS.

Gustave steps out of his farmhouse. Now wearing a cross and sporting a long greying beard, the years haven't been kind.

He checks out the fruit stand run by his children.

Seeing Gustave with his other kids, Maurice's face flashes with jealousy. Gustave strides over, checking out his stand.

GUSTAVE

"Woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up." What verse is that, boy?

MAURICE

How should I know?

GUSTAVE

Bob better help you with your scripture. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10. Now run along before the sun cooks you an omelette.

EXT. BOB'S FARMHOUSE - EVENING

A disappointed Maurice returns home with the basket of eggs - he didn't sell a single one.

He's greeted by Uncle Bob and Aunt Edith.

UNCLE BOB

Chin up, son. Means more for us.

AUNT EDITH

I'll get supper started.

She grabs the egg basket and heads inside.

UNCLE BOB

How's your head?

MAURICE

Stings a little.

UNCLE BOB

We'll clean it again in the morning. Make sure all those bacteria are gone.

FOOTSTEPS. Gustave approaches.

GUSTAVE

Stop packing the boy's head with mumbo jumbo, Bob. If you can't see or smell it, there's nothing there.

UNCLE BOB

Could say the same about faith.

GUSTAVE  
Don't listen to your uncle, boy.

He hands Maurice a new Bible.

GUSTAVE (CONT'D)  
Only thing that's protected our  
family since your mother left us.

UNCLE BOB  
Hard work might've helped too.

GUSTAVE  
Take it.

Maurice hesitantly takes the book.

GUSTAVE (CONT'D)  
Bob, you got any of those bath  
sponges? Norman's sick.

UNCLE BOB  
Yeah I'll grab you one. Symptoms?

GUSTAVE  
Sore throat, fever. Bath oughta do  
him good.

UNCLE BOB  
You call the doc? I'll pay for a  
visit.

GUSTAVE  
Don't need your charity. We're all  
prayin' for him.

Edith steps outside, holding a sizzling pan with cooked eggs.

EDITH  
Join us, Gustave?

GUSTAVE  
Got seven other mouths to feed. See  
you in church Sunday - all of you.

As Edith carries the pan back inside...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. HILLEMAN HOME - NIGHT

Hilleman carries a plate through the kitchen. He and Jeri  
tidy up.

JERI

Who'd you say she was again?

HILLEMAN

A potential recruit.

JERI

Sure is a lot of work for a recruit.

HILLEMAN

Just... help me get ready.

He double checks the dining table, which has been set. He adjusts the plates, obsessing over their exact placement.

The doorbell RINGS. Hilleman drops a plate - CRASH.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

ONE MINUTE!

LATER

Hilleman and Jeri have dinner with Lorraine.

They're eating a meal of burgers and fries. Hilleman and Jeri use their hands. Lorraine uses a knife and fork.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

How's the burger?

LORRAINE

Delicious.

JERI

I picked out the menu!

LORRAINE

It's wonderful, thank you.

Lorraine smiles politely. An awkward moment of silence.

HILLEMAN

You know, back on the farm, we had a few cows. Mostly dairy but once in a while we'd treat ourselves to burgers too.

Mid-bite, Jeri looks at her burger, seeing it in a different light. She plops it back on her plate.

LORRAINE

I bet the farm's lovely. How often do you go back?

HILLEMAN

Never.

LORRAINE

Why not show Jeri her roots?

JERI

Yeah Dad, let's go!

HILLEMAN

Nothing for us there. Sometimes the  
apple falls too far from the tree.

He takes a big bite.

LORRAINE

You two ever been dancing?

JERI

No...

LORRAINE

How about we all go after dinner?

HILLEMAN

Never tried. Don't care to.

LORRAINE

Can't dismiss it until you've tried  
it.

Off Hilleman's horrified expression...

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

A band BLARES as SWING DANCERS spin, twirl and flip around  
the dance floor.

Lorraine dances with Jeri as Hilleman sits to the side,  
uncomfortably sipping a Coke.

Lorraine offers him a hand.

LORRAINE

Join us?

JERI

Yeah come on dad!

HILLEMAN

You know how much disease is flying  
around here? All those hands,  
changing partners...

LORRAINE

Does your dad often suck the fun  
out of things?

JERI

Always!

LORRAINE

We'll need to change that.

She and Jeri dance together, having the time of their lives.

Hilleman can't take his eyes off Lorraine - she's glowing.

Finally, he stands: it's now or never. He tries moving with the music but his upper and lower hemispheres are on different planets. His dance moves are an awkward mess.

INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - DAY

Hilleman's lab comes together as more equipment is brought in and organized.

He's gathered his new team, a small, scrappy, diverse group: Arlene, Victor, Dr. Weibel, Lorraine, Al, Gene and Marie.

HILLEMAN

We stand on the shoulders of giants. In 1796, Jenner created the Smallpox vaccine - the first in history. A moment that would forever increase human lifespans.

He smiles at Lorraine. Others notice.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

From Beijerinck and tobacco mosaic, we learned how viruses cause disease. From Pasteur, we found out vaccines could be made from dangerous viruses like rabies.

He paces the lab, all eyes on him.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

Enders, Weller and Robbins taught us how to grow animal and human cells. Goodpasture showed us how to replicate viruses in eggs. From Theiler we learned that animal cells could weaken human viruses.

Gene lights up at the reference to attenuated vaccines.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

Then a decade ago, Jonas Salk developed the polio vaccine. He made it public in 1955, winning the hearts of people worldwide. Today, polio has nearly been eradicated.

Gene raises his hand awkwardly.

GENE BUYNAK

Sabin's live attenuated version is considerably better.

AL WOODHOUR

Shut up, Gene. Salk's inactivated vaccine came first.

HILLEMAN

Both of you smart asses, put a sock in it... The popularity of the polio vaccine opened the door but it was only the beginning.

He produces a long handwritten LIST with disease entries: mumps, rubella, measles, varicella and dozens more.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

This is what we're going after. No child or family will suffer needlessly again. So let's get to work: we already have our first target.

He opens the refrigerator, takes out the vial with Jeri's mumps sample and raises it for all to see.

We ROCKET INTO the vial, revealing a MUMPS VIRUS. A dangerous sphere with clusters of spiked surface proteins.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - DAY

Hilleman peers through an electron microscope, studying the virus.

The team is busy around him, working at lab benches.

ARLENE MCLEAN

Here's the latest data.

She hands Hilleman a long document of statistics. He quickly reviews it. Al and Gene chime in.

AL WOODHOUR  
We'd have better luck with an  
inactivated version.

GENE BUYNACK  
Incorrect. Just needs more  
attenuation.

HILLEMAN  
I agree. Let's pass it over several  
more chicken embryos.

GENE BUYNACK  
Yes sir!

AL WOODHOUR  
Suck-up.

HILLEMAN  
Fucking Laurel and Hardy over here.

LORRAINE  
Watch your language.

HILLEMAN  
Sorry.

Al, Gene, Arlene, Dr. Weibel and Victor are stunned by this  
exchange. Their boss - actually apologizing??

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
What are you all looking at? Back  
to work.

INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA - DAY

Lorraine takes Hilleman and the team on a tour of the  
Children's Hospital.

They peer through windows and see suffering, bedridden  
CHILDREN, sick with different diseases:

- A GIRL covered in a blistering rash, sick with the MEASLES.
- A BOY with painful swollen cheeks, sick with MUMPS.
- A CHILD with a small head deformity due to RUBELLA.

Visibly distressed, Hilleman can't tear his eyes off the  
patients. He waves his team to come closer.

HILLEMAN  
This is why we work.

Arlene, Al, Gene, Victor, Dr. Weibel... They're all heartbroken soaking in the sight of these patients.

Hilleman takes Lorraine's arm.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
This was a hell of an idea.

LORRAINE  
I know.

As Hilleman studies the sick children, he recalls a painful memory...

CUT TO:

INT. MAURICE'S BEDROOM - 1931 - DAY

A simple room with a small bed and a bookshelf packed with scientific books: Darwin, Edison, Newton.

Maurice organizes a basket with perfect-looking fruit: apples, pears and plums. He's ready to beat the competition.

Hearing the HUM of an engine, he hurries outside.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Maurice runs to the road as a rickety MODEL T kicks up dust. A red cross adorns the side but it's hardly an ambulance.

The Model T parks in front of the rival fruit stand. Maurice counts only six siblings.

A NURSE hops out and hurries to the farmhouse. Maurice and the other siblings run after her.

As Gustave greets the Nurse at the front door, Maurice can hear the HOARSE CRIES of his brother Norman inside. The Nurse raises her hands to stop the kids.

NURSE  
Everyone stay clear. Diphtheria's real contagious.

MAURICE  
What about you?

NURSE  
I have the shot.

Maurice processes - he has no idea what this means. The Nurse slips on a mask and heads inside.

Through the open door, Maurice catches a quick glimpse of Norman, the sight he'll never forget:

Norman writhes in bed, sweating, his neck swollen. He breathes rapidly, loudly WHEEZING.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A quiet hilltop cemetery overlooks Miles City and the rivers.

Clad in black, the Hillemans stand around a freshly buried plot. A CROSS sticks out of the dirt.

As a LUTHERAN PASTOR finishes a funeral service, a distraught Maurice stares at the name on the cross: "Norman Hilleman."

It's next to the grave of Maurice's mother Anna and a smaller grave for his stillborn twin sister MAUREEN.

Uncle Bob pats Maurice's shoulders, trying to comfort him.

As the service concludes, Maurice finds Gustave.

MAURICE

The nurse said there was a shot...

GUSTAVE

What?

MAURICE

Why didn't Norman have it?

GUSTAVE

Don't believe in that hocus pocus.

MAURICE

I want the shot.

GUSTAVE

I forbid it. Quit talkin' nonsense.

Uncle Bob steps in to intervene.

UNCLE BOB

Actually Maurice, you already have it. One of the shots the doc gave you last time.

GUSTAVE

You gave him that poison?

UNCLE BOB  
Might've saved his life.

GUSTAVE  
I'm his father. It's my decision.

UNCLE BOB  
You put him into my care. When I  
have the ability to protect him,  
it's my duty to do so.

Maurice nearly has tears in his eyes as he glares at Gustave.

MAURICE  
He... died because of you.

GUSTAVE  
Watch your mouth, boy.

MAURICE  
You could've saved him!

GUSTAVE  
"The lord giveth and the lord  
taketh away." Just like with your  
mother. Although come to think of  
it, that was your fault.

Maurice's heart shatters. He seethes with hurt.

MAURICE  
Forget your damn lord!

GUSTAVE  
Don't you ever talk that way!

Gustave raises his hand to slap Maurice but Uncle Bob steps in the way.

UNCLE BOB  
That's enough! Both of you.

GUSTAVE  
The devil is in you, boy. Get  
yourself to church to be cleansed.

MAURICE  
I'm never going again!

GUSTAVE  
I'm your father. You'll do as I  
say.

MAURICE  
You're not my father.

He steps behind Uncle Bob. Gustave glares at them both.

GUSTAVE  
Bob, you make sure he's there.

He strides off, leaving a heartbroken Maurice.

INT. LUTHERAN CHURCH - DAY

An old wooden church, badly in need of repair.

The Pastor leads the CONGREGATION in song. The loudest voice belongs to Gustave, singing his lungs out in the front pew. His six children singing besides him.

Bob, Edith and Maurice walk in late. Maurice stubbornly plops down in the last pew. Bob and Edith join him.

While everyone holds a Bible, Maurice takes out a different book: Darwin's "On the Origin of Species."

He loudly flips the pages, ignoring the service, determined to rebel against his birth father now and forever.

RETURN TO:

EXT. MERCK HEADQUARTERS - DAY

On a hill overlooking the Merck campus, Hilleman sits on grass under a tree.

He eats his lunch alone, trying to clear his mind.

INT. HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Hilleman returns to his office only to find Max sitting there, waiting for him.

MAX TISHLER  
What's this about a mumps vaccine?

HILLEMAN  
We have the power to eradicate a deadly disease.

MAX TISHLER

Just cause your daughter got sick  
doesn't mean we should sink  
resources into it. She recovered,  
didn't she?

HILLEMAN

Many others aren't so lucky. This  
thing can cause seizures,  
paralysis, even death.

MAX TISHLER

Doesn't make it profitable. Gadsden  
and the board won't go for it.

HILLEMAN

Think of the scale. Mumps infects 1  
million people each year - in the  
US alone. How many got the polio  
vaccine?

MAX TISHLER

No one made money off polio.

HILLEMAN

Cause Salk gave it away.

Max stands, looks out the window at the company grounds.

MAX TISHLER

What else are you working on?

HILLEMAN

Rubella. 12 million cases last  
year.

MAX TISHLER

Vaccines for pregnant women? Too  
niche of a market.

HILLEMAN

The effects can be catastrophic.  
Miscarriages, stillborns, birth  
defects. The damn thing is a  
monster maker.

Max paces around Hilleman's office.

MAX TISHLER

Our industry isn't built on  
vaccines, Hilleman. They aren't  
sexy. There's no fanfare.

HILLEMAN

Because when they work, people  
don't die. So there's no story.

MAX TISHLER

Focus your team on a new drug.  
Something we can sell on a large  
scale.

HILLEMAN

This century could see the biggest  
lifespan increase in history.  
Because of vaccines.

MAX TISHLER

Might be true but the public will  
never believe it.

HILLEMAN

Give me this one, Max. Roll it out  
to as many people as possible. If  
it fails, fire me. Fire my whole  
damn department.

MAX TISHLER

You know I will.

EXT. DIVISION OF BIOLOGICS STANDARDS - DAY

A long brick government building, devoid of personality and  
style.

INT. DIVISION OF BIOLOGICS STANDARDS - CORNER OFFICE - DAY

Hilleman enters the corner office of DBS Director Meyer, who  
waits for him behind a large desk, looking pleased.

HILLEMAN

Nice office.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER

You've always been a terrible liar.

HILLEMAN

Good to get that off your chest?  
Let's move on.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER

I'm not approving your mumps  
vaccine.

HILLEMAN  
Why the hell not?

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
Jeryl Lynn strain? What kind of a  
name is that?

HILLEMAN  
An accurate one. The sample came  
from my daughter.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
Sounds like phony science.

HILLEMAN  
Do you read the papers?

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
Excuse me?

HILLEMAN  
New York Times, Washington Post...  
Or are you illiterate?

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
Go to hell.

HILLEMAN  
I'll save you a seat. Next time  
there's a mumps outbreak? Guess  
who's gonna be named on each front  
page. The fuck face who could've  
stopped it with a simple approval.

Director Meyer boils with frustration. Hilleman heads out.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
It'd be a shame to lose this corner  
view.

On his way out he TAPS the window, with a garbage view of the  
parking lot.

INT. FRENCH RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Hilleman and Lorraine enjoy a candlelit dinner.

They clink champagne glasses.

LORRAINE  
Congratulations on the approval.

HILLEMAN

Still need to roll it out. Then  
hope the public adopts it.  
Otherwise we're all in trouble.

LORRAINE

I have a feeling mumps will never  
recover from infecting Jeri.

HILLEMAN

There are many more diseases.

LORRAINE

And you'll fight every one of them.

HILLEMAN

'57 happened on my watch. I can't  
fail like that again.

LORRAINE

The failure wasn't your fault.

HILLEMAN

That's no excuse. Bob always said,  
if you have the ability to protect  
people, you better damn use it.

LORRAINE

I'm sure those were his exact  
words...

Hilleman shrugs innocently.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

He wasn't wrong, though. You'll  
protect and save so many.  
Especially those you love.

Hilleman quiets for a moment. Lorraine hit a nerve.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry you couldn't save your  
brother. Or your wife.

HILLEMAN

I'm no expert in cancer.

LORRAINE

No one is. Can't imagine what you  
and Jeri went through.

HILLEMAN

She's a little fighter.

LORRAINE  
Sounds like someone else I know.

Hilleman taps the table, something on his mind.

HILLEMAN  
You know, I think you should marry  
me.

LORRAINE  
Is that a question or a demand?

HILLEMAN  
Well, I am your boss.

LORRAINE  
I'm not sure you're a good enough  
dancer yet.

Hilleman grins, playing along.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)  
But it's not entirely up to me.

INT. HILLEMAN HOME - NIGHT

Hilleman and Lorraine quietly return to the house, the door CREAKING shut.

Jeri sits on the kitchen counter, waiting for them. She's there with Marie, who just shrugs her shoulders.

MARIE  
We have ourselves an insomniac.

HILLEMAN  
Like father like daughter. Thanks,  
Marie.

MARIE  
I'm sleeping in tomorrow. Oh who am  
I kidding?

As soon as Marie leaves:

LORRAINE  
Jeri, I'd like to talk to you about  
something.

JERI  
Is it about bedtime?

LORRAINE

Not exactly. You see, your dad  
asked me a question. But I'll only  
say yes if you're ok with it.

JERI

Ooooh he wants to marry you??

Hilleman and Lorraine blush.

JERI (CONT'D)

Do it!

HILLEMAN

Smart girl.

JERI

Smart dad.

LORRAINE

Wonderful. And if we're going to be  
a family... I'll never be your  
actual mom but I thought it might  
be nice for me to... adopt you.  
Perhaps you'd like that?

Jeri thinks long and hard, soaking this in. Then leaps onto  
Lorraine, embracing her in a big hug.

Hilleman is equally touched by Lorraine's idea.

EXT. MERCK HEADQUARTERS - SEVERAL MONTHS LATER - DAY

Hilleman parks his Volkswagen, ready for another day. He  
hurries to the passenger side, opens the door for Lorraine.

A PORSCHE pulls into the CEO's spot. Hilleman takes  
Lorraine's hand and hurries to the building, trying to get  
inside without a conversation...

CEO GADSDEN

Morning, Hillemans...

Caught. The CEO notices Lorraine's baby bump.

CEO GADSDEN (CONT'D)

Congratulations, Lorraine.

LORRAINE

Thanks, John.

HILLEMAN  
(to Lorraine)  
I'll catch up with you later.

Lorraine heads inside the building.

CEO GADSDEN  
The vaccine rollout is too slow.

HILLEMAN  
Aren't the numbers still trickling in?

CEO GADSDEN  
We need gushing, not trickling.  
I'll have to raise prices.

HILLEMAN  
No no, this needs to be affordable for everyone. It's a volume play.  
More people will get the next one.

CEO GADSDEN  
They better. What is the next one?

HILLEMAN  
We're working on it.

CEO GADSDEN  
Work faster. And stop getting into the weeds with the team. I need you to manage, see the big picture.

HILLEMAN  
How about you come by the lab? See for yourself what we're doing.

CEO GADSDEN  
Not my style. Deal with Max, he can update me.

HILLEMAN  
Listen, John. I'm not good at this whole song and dance. I just want to do my damn job.

CEO GADSDEN  
This is the job, Maurice.

INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - DAY

Hilleman has gathered his team.

They wait as he studies his handwritten disease list.

HILLEMAN

We need a big one. Or we're getting shut down.

VICTOR VILLAREJOS

Varicella?

HILLEMAN

Chickenpox isn't deadly enough. We'll tackle it down the road.

GENE BUYNAK

Hepatitis B?

HILLEMAN

Too complicated. Department needs to be bigger, more established.

DR. WEIBEL

Common cold?

HILLEMAN

Too many strains. Can't keep up with the mutations.

LORRAINE

How about measles? Eight million children die each year worldwide.

HILLEMAN

Bingo.

AL WOODHOUR

Didn't Enders already try to make a vaccine?

HILLEMAN

It doesn't do squat. Just gets more people sick. Back me up, Arlene.

Arlene pages through a thick binder of data.

ARLENE MCLEAN

Correct. Side effects too: rash, high fevers, even seizures.

HILLEMAN

It's nothing but an isolate. We're going to make an actual vaccine.

LORRAINE

Dr. Stokes from clinical trials  
thinks adding gamma globulin would  
help.

HILLEMAN

Probably right. But that process is  
a pain in the ass. Let's pass it  
over chicken embryos until it's  
bullet-proof. Should solve it.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Microscopes, magnified MEASLES VIRUS, tubes of fluid,  
injecting chicken embryo cells, vials spinning in  
centrifuges...

Hilleman and his team work on the Measles vaccine.

Meanwhile, the months tick by and Lorraine grows more  
pregnant.

CUT BETWEEN the lab and the maternity ward, where Lorraine  
gives birth to their daughter KIRSTEN.

QUICK CUTS of needles extracting vaccine. As a needle plunges  
into fluid...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CEO'S MANSION - SEVERAL YEARS LATER - AFTERNOON

SPLASH! A 10-year-old girl plunges into a pool. She rises to  
the surface, revealing a slightly older Jeri. She joins  
Lorraine and 3-year-old Kirsten.

They're in the pool of the CEO's sprawling Pennsylvania  
estate, surrounded by lush gardens.

A party is underway - all the Merck Executives and  
Secretaries are there, drinking, eating, swimming. Max and  
CEO Gadsden are in the pool too.

Hilleman sits by the pool, still dressed in a full suit.

LORRAINE

Maurice, it's lovely in here.

JERI

Yeah dad, come on!

MAX TISHLER

Afraid of sharks, Hilleman?

HILLEMAN

Nah. Just the millions of viruses  
floating in there.

CEO GADSDEN

One track mind, that's why you're  
so good. 20 million doses and  
counting, stock has nearly doubled!

MAX TISHLER

Measles is a goner. Mumps and  
rubella too.

HILLEMAN

Still took too long for my liking.

CEO GADSDEN

Then let's get you to manage more.  
Let the team run with the ball.

LORRAINE

Good luck. Even I can't get Maurice  
out of the lab.

CEO GADSDEN

This is a time to celebrate.  
Profits are at an all time high.

MAX TISHLER

We oughta push for awards too.

HILLEMAN

No time for that BS, too many  
diseases to tackle. Even with the  
three we have, we're looking into a  
combined shot. MMR.

CEO GADSDEN

Brilliant. You proved yourself,  
Hilleman. Max, what do you say we  
triple his budget?

MAX TISHLER

Hell, give him a new title too:  
Head of Vaccinology. What do you  
say, Maurice?

HILLEMAN

I'd say it's about damn time.

He raises his Coke to cheers.

CEO GADSDEN

Now who's ready for oysters?

HILLEMAN

Are they raw?

CEO GADSDEN

What if I promise they're virus-free.

HILLEMAN

The issue is more bacteria.

MAX TISHLER

Is he always this way, Lorraine?

LORRAINE

The first time we met, he turned it into a job interview.

LAUGHS from the group.

INT. HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Hilleman sits at his desk, reading reports. His entire team shows up at his door.

HILLEMAN

What'd I do now?

ARLENE MCLEAN

Big problem in Hong Kong. H3N2. Has all the signs of a pandemic.

She drops a folder on Hilleman's desk. It takes him a moment to snap back into work mode. He opens the folder, scans the data inside...

FLASHES:

- Coughing HONG KONG CITIZENS, some collapsing in the streets.
- Overloaded hospitals with too many PATIENTS.
- Struggling NURSES and DOCTORS.

It's all eerily familiar...

RETURN TO:

Hilleman immediately springs to action.

HILLEMAN

This is it. This is what we've been building towards.

He stands and addresses each team member.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Victor, get us virus samples.

VICTOR VILLAREJOS  
I already called this morning.

HILLEMAN  
Good. Al and Gene, get the benches  
prepped.

AL WOODHOUR  
They're always prepped.

HILLEMAN  
Then prep 'em again. Arlene - any  
more data comes in, you find me.  
Lorraine, let's see how fast we can  
set up a trial. This is it, people!  
Every second counts.

CLOSE ON: the H3N2 INFLUENZA VIRUS. Multiplying rapidly, a  
growing army wreaking havoc on a cluster of helpless host  
cells.

The immune system unable to recognize this mutated monster.

INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - DAY

Hilleman looks up from a microscope, Al standing next to him,  
itching to help.

HILLEMAN  
Negative. Not immune.

AL WOODHOUR  
I can handle the next one.

HILLEMAN  
Not yet.

AL WOODHOUR  
Might take you a while...

He points to a rack packed with hundreds of blood samples.  
It's a big task. Hilleman nods, then addresses Al and the  
rest of the team.

HILLEMAN  
Fine. Let's divvy these up. Test  
'em all.

The members of the team nod, ready to go.

ARLENE MCLEAN  
I assume we've called the WHO?

HILLEMAN  
Never assume anything. When I was in grad school, everyone assumed the clam was caused by a virus.

VICTOR VILLAREJOS  
The what?

HILLEMAN  
The clam. Chlamydia. I figured out it was bacterial. Helped a lot of fucking people.

An awkward silence.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Yes we need to call the WHO. Plus the Public Health Service and the Influenza Commission.

LORRAINE  
I'll do it.

HILLEMAN  
Good. Send them the virus, have them test against as many samples as they have, a global variety. Thanks, honey.

LORRAINE  
Not in the office, Maurice.

HILLEMAN  
Thanks, Lorraine...

WE FLY DOWN LAB BENCHES

Every member of Hilleman's team methodically tests the virus against each blood sample. Hilleman included, too much of a control freak to let his team run with the process.

Syringes enter test tubes, drop fluid into vials. Rhythmic and precise.

Marie enters the lab, a grave expression on her face.

MARIE  
Maurice...

INT. RENTAL CAR - MILES CITY, MONTANA - DAY

The Hillemans ride together in a rental car, driving on a road alongside the Yellowstone River.

Hilleman is at the wheel, his gaze lost in the distance, a range of mixed emotions as he soaks in this familiar yet alien place. The land of his childhood.

Miles City hasn't changed one bit: tree-filled river banks, dirt roads, old farmhouses, Western-style town.

Jeri and Kirsten ride in back, mesmerized by the vast landscape.

JERI

Wow those mountains are huge. Why'd we never come here before?

Hilleman shrugs, focusing on the road.

JERI (CONT'D)

Mom?

LORRAINE

Don't look at me. It's my first time too. Maurice?

All eyes on Hilleman.

HILLEMAN

Wasn't sure anyone would want to leave.

He turns off the road.

INT. HOSPITAL - MILES CITY, MONTANA - DAY

The same hospital where Maurice was born. Far less chaotic now than during the Great Flu.

Hilleman KNOCKS on a door and leads his family into a PATIENT ROOM.

They find Uncle Bob, hooked up to an assortment of machines and tubes. He's aged considerably.

UNCLE BOB

Who let in these city slickers?

HILLEMAN

Dad...

Hilleman gently hugs Uncle Bob.

UNCLE BOB  
Glad I wore my weekend finest.  
(smiles at Lorraine)  
Lovely as always, Lorraine.

LORRAINE  
Thanks, Bob. Same goes for you.

UNCLE BOB  
And look at these little ladies...  
Not so little anymore, huh.

JERI  
Hi Grandpa!

They hug. Lorraine brings Kirsten in for a hug too.

UNCLE BOB  
Jeri, I hear you're quite the  
engineer.

JERI  
I just made a radio.

UNCLE BOB  
Just like your dad. He built all  
kinds of contraptions on the farm.

JERI  
I wanna see the farm!

UNCLE BOB  
Anytime.

JERI  
Dad, can we go? Please?

HILLEMAN  
We're not here long enough.

UNCLE BOB  
Come on, son. At least show her the  
chickens.

JERI  
You have chickens??

UNCLE BOB  
A whole coop. Your dad always had a  
special way with 'em.

HILLEMAN  
Still do. Need their eggs for  
vaccines.

UNCLE BOB  
Too bad your vaccines can't fix my  
situation.

HILLEMAN  
Not yet anyway.

Uncle Bob COUGHS violently.

UNCLE BOB  
Ladies, could I please have a  
moment with my son.

LORRAINE  
Come on, girls.

JERI  
Bye grandpa!

Uncle Bob watches them walk away with near tears in his eyes.

UNCLE BOB  
If he could just see you now.

HILLEMAN  
He'd say I was a shit father.

UNCLE BOB  
He wouldn't swear. Or lie. Both are  
sins.

That gets a rise out of Hilleman.

UNCLE BOB (CONT'D)  
His biggest sin was never telling  
you how proud he was.

HILLEMAN  
I doubt that.

UNCLE BOB  
Tough to believe but he was. As am  
I. You just keep doin what you're  
doin.

His words mean everything to Hilleman. As he sits down next to Uncle Bob, the two men grow serious in an intimate, difficult conversation.

INT. HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A heartbroken Hilleman is back at work, sitting at his desk, staring at the college graduation photo of him with Bob.

He then turns to a stack of lab results, focusing his energy on his work.

He pages through, growing increasingly concerned.

HILLEMAN  
Marie, bring in the team!

He steps up to a NEW WORLD MAP hanging on the wall and sticks a red pin in Hong Kong.

MOMENTS LATER

Hilleman's team files in.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Not a single sample is immune. This is the real deal. This pandemic is coming and it's coming fast. Looks to be even deadlier than '57.

DR. WEIBEL  
That one was Hong Kong too. What are the odds?

HILLEMAN  
Only place over there with Western reporting. Was actually Guizhou back then. Likely spread from the mainland again this time.

GENE BUYNAK  
So it's already spreading...

Hilleman nods, his concern evident.

HILLEMAN  
It's the middle of July. So this damn thing'll be here by September. We need a production strain ready by then, or sooner. Clock's ticking. Anything we can get ahead of, we get ahead of it now.

ARLENE MCLEAN  
Eggs.

HILLEMAN  
Eggs?

ARLENE MCLEAN  
To make millions of vaccine doses,  
we'll need millions of eggs.

HILLEMAN  
Good point. Let's work up a plan.  
Show the world what we can do. And  
Marie? Call Tommy Francis' office  
and leave this message from me:  
"1968 like I fucking said."

INT. HILLEMAN VOLKSWAGEN - EVENING

Hilleman is at the wheel, his family in the car.

They drive home, Hilleman quiet and tense. His focus entirely focused on the pandemic.

He notices they're the only car on the road. In the middle of Philadelphia. How is that possible?

He pulls over. Inspects the surroundings. The sidewalks are bare too, not a single soul in sight.

Suddenly, Jeri and Kirsten SCREAM.

Hilleman spins around, sees what they see:

A flood of SPIKED VIRUS SPHERES swarming towards the Volkswagen, hundreds and hundreds of them.

The car is quickly surrounded, trapping the Hillemans inside. The viruses close in, the car frame groaning under the pressure of all those spiked spheres.

CRASH! Windows explode and the viruses invade the car, spilling inside. Hilleman reaches out helplessly as the viruses cluster around his family.

The car shakes violently as the family is overwhelmed...

INT. HILLEMAN HOME - NIGHT

Hilleman wakes with a start.

Lorraine is in bed next to him - sleeping soundly.

Hilleman takes deep breaths, trying to quiet his beating heart.

INT. MERCK - SECURITY DESK - EARLY MORNING

Hilleman is one of the first people in the office. He's greeted by Security Jim.

SECURITY JIM  
Mornin, Mr. Hilleman.

HILLEMAN  
How are the boys, Jim?

SECURITY JIM  
Doin just fine. Can't thank you enough - both of 'em got that MMR.

HILLEMAN  
Good man.

INT. HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

As Hilleman enters his office, Marie is already waiting for him.

HILLEMAN  
What time do you get here?

MARIE  
You'll never know.

HILLEMAN  
Today's business: Chickens.

MARIE  
Chickens?

HILLEMAN  
We're gonna need lots of 'em.

EXT. KIMBER FARMS - FREMONT, CALIFORNIA - DAY

Rolling hills dotted with trees.

A rental pickup truck pulls up to a sprawling CHICKEN FARM.

Hilleman steps out and inspects the operation. It's remarkably clean: immaculate chicken coops, screened from the surroundings. WORKERS wear protective clothing and shoes.

He's greeted by a SUPERVISOR, who offers a sterilized coat and shoes.

SUPERVISOR

Welcome Mr. Hilleman. Please put these on. Helps keep the place sterile.

HILLEMAN

Is it true? You've bred leukemia-free chickens?

SUPERVISOR

Only such flock in the world. But I'll let you see for yourself.

INT. KIMBER FARMS CHICKEN COOP - DAY

The Supervisor leads Hilleman into a chicken coop. As they enter the building, they step through a foot-pan containing disinfectant.

SUPERVISOR

Twenty percent of U.S. chickens suffer from the leukemia virus.

HILLEMAN

I'm familiar. Big headache on our farm growing up.

SUPERVISOR

Two hundred million in lost revenue each year.

HILLEMAN

You fix that problem and everyone'll start eating more chickens and eggs.

SUPERVISOR

That's the idea.

As they pass sterile incubators, Hilleman marvels at the size and quality of the product.

HILLEMAN

These are some eggs.

SUPERVISOR

Flock's been bred to produce the best. Our hens lay around two hundred and fifty each year.

HILLEMAN

You're doin' something right.  
What'll it take to buy these  
chickens?

SUPERVISOR

Sorry, no can do. This flock's for  
research.

HILLEMAN

Who's your boss?

INT. KIMBER FARMS OFFICES - DAY

The Supervisor brings Hilleman to a big desk.

Its occupant reads a newspaper. All Hilleman can see is rugged cowboy boots draped over the desk and a wide-brimmed hat.

The newspaper lowers, revealing the Director of Poultry Research, WF LAMOREUX.

HILLEMAN

Hell of an operation you have here.

LAMOREUX

Been breedin 'em right since '25.

HILLEMAN

I'd like to buy some of your flock.

LAMOREUX

I bet you would. Not for sale.

HILLEMAN

Who's the boss around here?

LAMOREUX

You're lookin' at him.

HILLEMAN

Millions of lives are in danger.  
Ours included. What if I told you  
your chickens have the power to  
stop it?

LAMOREUX

Sorry, not sellin'.

Listening to Lamoreux speak, Hilleman perks up.

HILLEMAN

Where you from?

LAMOREUX

Helena.

HILLEMAN

Thought I recognized the accent.  
Miles City.

He extends his hand. Lamoreux's entire expression shifts. He smiles broadly.

LAMOREUX

Take 'em all. One buck apiece.

EXT. MERCK HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Hilleman supervises as CONSTRUCTION CREWS build chicken coops all around Merck headquarters, ruining the manicured grounds.

CEO Gadsden arrives in his Porsche and loses his shit at the sight of this operation. He makes a beeline for Hilleman, stumbling over several chickens on the way.

CEO GADSDEN

Hilleman, what is this insanity? I never approved this!

HILLEMAN

Came out of my budget. The one you and Max told me to use as I saw fit.

CEO GADSDEN

Not on this scale! The board's going to crucify me.

HILLEMAN

Not when they see how many vaccines we produce.

CEO GADSDEN

Consider your budget frozen.

He nearly trips over a CLUCKING chicken.

CEO GADSDEN (CONT'D)

In the building. Now.

INT. HALLS OF MERCK - DAY

Hilleman tries to keep up with the CEO, who strides past cubicles, office and labs: his kingdom.

CEO GADSDEN

What kind of business do you think this is?

HILLEMAN

One that's about to save many lives.

CEO GADSDEN

With what, feathers?

HILLEMAN

Eggs. Millions of eggs means millions of vaccine doses.

CEO GADSDEN

Walk me through that.

HILLEMAN

We make this vaccine by inactivating, or killing the virus. So the immune system can learn to fight it. But to pull that off we need lots of virus. Chicken eggs are the best way to grow it fast.

CEO GADSDEN

We've always used outside farms and producers. Why not this time?

HILLEMAN

Much bigger scale. I thought I'd save you money building it here.

CEO GADSDEN

This isn't a hen house, Hilleman. Get better at managing upwards. Pull something like this again and you're gone.

INT. HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Marie brings Hilleman a bulky package addressed from Hong Kong. He tears it open, revealing a stack of newspapers from around China.

While he can't read Chinese, all the front pages feature pandemic photos. One headline mentions an ominous figure: 500,000.

Hilleman fixates on images of suffering families and children...

FLASH TO:

EXT. GUSTAVE'S FARMHOUSE - 1931 - DAY

The image burned into Hilleman's memory forever:

Norman writhing in bed, sweating, his neck swollen. Breathing rapidly, loudly WHEEZING.

RETURN TO:

INT. HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Hilleman is visibly distressed, recalling the horror.

He sticks more red pins into his wall map - the pandemic is rapidly spreading across China.

INT. MERCK - HILLEMAN'S LAB - DAY

Hilleman's team watches as their boss takes on the majority of the work load. RAPID FIRE SEQUENCE OF LAB TECHNIQUES:

- Hilleman grabs an incubating CHICKEN EGG.
- He cuts a small window in the shell.
- He extracts virus from a vial and injects it into the egg.
- ELECTRON MICROSCOPE IMAGE: the virus ATTACKS the chicken cells, attaching to them, relentlessly multiplying and overwhelming the system. The immune system helpless to stop the violent onslaught.
- Hilleman HARVESTS the virus-containing fluid, then purifies it.

Hilleman brings the fluid to Al's bench.

HILLEMAN

Should be enough purified virus in  
here.

AL WOODHOUR  
I live to kill viruses.

Al immediately gets to work.

Hilleman paces the lab, observing the team.

HILLEMAN  
Until we've solved this, we're here  
7 days a week. If you aren't in on  
Saturday, don't bother showing up  
on Sunday.

The members of the team nod, buckling up for this crazy ride.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
We need to prep manufacturing. Get  
'em ready for the moment we have  
our vaccine.

VICTOR VILLAREJOS  
Small problem...

HILLEMAN  
Problem?

VICTOR VILLAREJOS  
They are changing procedure.

HILLEMAN  
God damn tinkerers. Don't mess with  
my fucking process. Marie!

MARIE  
I'm here.

She's right behind him, anticipating and ready.

HILLEMAN  
Get Phil up here now!

MARIE  
I don't think that's a good idea.

HILLEMAN  
You know what? You're right.

INT. MERCK MANUFACTURING - DAY

Merck's manufacturing warehouse is a bustling operation of  
machinery, conveyor belts and assembly lines.

ASSEMBLY WORKERS (many of them women) manufacture product, filling bottles, sealing, labeling, boxing and loading onto trucks.

Hilleman storms in and locates the person in charge. Hilleman might be big but this other man is taller and thicker, built like a tree trunk.

This is PHIL, the head of manufacturing. And a union boss.

HILLEMAN

Phil...

PHIL

Maurice... To what do I owe the pleasure?

HILLEMAN

What's this about you changing the process?

PHIL

Small change. We're always looking for efficiencies.

HILLEMAN

Efficiencies?

PHIL

To increase production.

HILLEMAN

So you want to make crap product.

PHIL

Pardon?

HILLEMAN

Cheap, fast, horseshit in a tube.

PHIL

All due respect, I'm not taking orders from a scientist.

HILLEMAN

Shove your respect up your ass, Phil. You're a fucking tinkerer.

PHIL

What'd you call me?

HILLEMAN

This isn't the damn time to Frankenstein my process!

PHIL  
I'm not listening to this.

HILLEMAN  
A fucking procedure was developed to safely make our vaccines. Then you meatheads want to get fucking brownie points by changing the process to get more yield.

PHIL  
Get off my floor.

HILLEMAN  
Stop meddling and stick to the goddamn process.

As Hilleman leaves, the Assembly Workers pick up their jaws from the floor and go back to work.

INT. MAX TISHLER'S OFFICE - LATER

Hilleman sits in a chair across from a frustrated Max.

MAX TISHLER  
Can't talk to employees that way.  
Especially not Phil.

HILLEMAN  
So have Gadsden fire him. He's a damn incompetent blowhard.

MAX TISHLER  
Can't. Manufacturing's all union.  
You need to work better with others. The cussing needs to stop too.

HILLEMAN  
What is this, fucking parochial school?

MAX TISHLER  
We're bringing in a few psychologists. To help executives with their management techniques. Less swearing, more diplomacy. Consider it charm school.

HILLEMAN  
I don't have time for that shit.

MAX TISHLER  
Make time. It's not a request.

INT. DIVISION OF BIOLOGICS STANDARDS - DAY

Hilleman strolls into DBS Director Meyer's new office. Similar space to last time but with an improved view, looking out at trees.

HILLEMAN  
Better view. Bravo.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
It'd look much better without you in it. Do you have an appointment?

HILLEMAN  
Moving up in the world, must be nice. And all thanks to my vaccines.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
They wouldn't be out there without my approval.

HILLEMAN  
We got an important one coming.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
You say that every time.

HILLEMAN  
Want me to help you do your job or not?

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
Like you ever give me the option. As always, there's a protocol.

HILLEMAN  
Shove your protocol you know where. This approval needs a rush job. Unless you want blood on your hands.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER  
Only if it's yours.

As Hilleman walks out, he gestures to the window.

HILLEMAN  
Maybe ask someone to wipe off the bird crap.

EXT. PORT CAM RANH BAY - VIETNAM - DAY

A busy port on Vietnam's eastern seaboard.

A SHIP arrives from Hong Kong.

PASSENGERS disembark. Many of them masked.

Scattered COUGHS in the crowd. The virus is here...

The ship is docked right next to a US WARSHIP. Bustling with AMERICAN SOLDIERS. In Vietnam for the war.

INT. HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - EVENING

Hilleman's map with the red pins. The virus has moved to other East Asian countries, spreading to Hong Kong's neighbors.

Hilleman pours over more data reports. He's exhausted but unrelenting. His tired eyes scan each page.

Lorraine steps in.

LORRAINE

I'm heading home. Can you call a cab?

HILLEMAN

Fine. I'll try to be back by dinner.

LORRAINE

No trying now. Come for dinner, then you're free to go back.

HILLEMAN

Ok, ok. I'll be there.

The stack on his desk suggests otherwise.

LORRAINE

Maurice, don't kill yourself.

HILLEMAN

Can't repeat what happened last time.

LORRAINE

Look what you've built in a decade. Trust the team.

Lorraine leaves.

Hilleman takes several pins and flicks them at the map, playing darts with the world.

INT. HILLEMAN HOME - NIGHT

Hilleman returns home late. It's quiet - the girls are asleep.

The kitchen light is on.

He sets down his two briefcases and wanders into the kitchen, finding a cold dinner plate waiting for him. He picks at the food.

INT. HILLEMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hilleman brings his two briefcases into the bedroom.

Lorraine is already in bed, reading.

LORRAINE

The girls kept waiting for you.

HILLEMAN

We're in a race here.

LORRAINE

I know. Just don't run yourself into the ground.

She resumes reading her book.

Hilleman undresses and gets into bed. He pops open his briefcases and takes out stacks of data-filled documents.

He pours over the documents, he and his wife reading in the same bed but worlds apart.

INT. MERCK CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Executives file in for the weekly meeting. Karl Beyer sets up at the podium, ready to present to the group.

A seat next to the CEO and Max is noticeably empty.

CEO GADSDEN

Where the hell is Hilleman?

INT. HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Hilleman pours over data reports with Arlene, Al and Gene.

ARLENE MCLEAN  
Results are trending the right direction.

AL WOODHOUR  
We're so close.

HILLEMAN  
Close isn't good enough. No one leaves the lab til we have the final result.

Max enters the office.

MAX TISHLER  
I need him.

Arlene, Al and Gene file out.

MAX TISHLER (CONT'D)  
Can't miss meetings like that.

HILLEMAN  
There aren't enough hours in the day.

MAX TISHLER  
Make the time. Big board meeting next week, they're breathing down our necks.

HILLEMAN  
They don't want to stop a pandemic?

MAX TISHLER  
Not if it bankrupts the company. You know Karl's gunning for your department, right? Don't make me give it to him.

As Max leaves, Marie walks in. Waits until Max is gone.

MARIE  
Charm school's this afternoon.

HILLEMAN  
Not today.

MARIE  
It's mandatory.

HILLEMAN  
So is saving damn lives.  
Reschedule.

## INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - NIGHT

Hilleman runs more experiments with his team, the exhaustion evident on all their faces.

Lorraine shows up with Jeri and Kirsten. They unload bags of burgers and fries.

JERI  
Who's hungry?

The entire team swarms the food, starving.

## INT. HILLEMAN HOME - NIGHT

Hilleman returns home late. All the lights are off - everyone is asleep.

He heads for the stairs. Then stops, thinking twice about disturbing Lorraine.

He rummages through a closet. Finds a sleeping bag.

## INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - NIGHT

Hilleman returns to the lab.

The lights are on but no one is at the benches - the team is curled up on the floor, dozing off in sleeping bags.

Hearing the door shut, Arlene opens her eyes and quickly stands. Hilleman waves at her to go back to sleep.

Hilleman finds an empty corner, sets his sleeping bag on the ground and climbs inside.

## INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - MORNING

Hilleman is the first to wake. The sun just starting to rise outside.

He throws on his lab coat, then activates a LOUD centrifuge, waking everyone.

HILLEMAN

I built this department to fight  
this exact situation. Let's not  
prove the damn doubters right.

Al and Gene get up slower than the rest. They stretch, their  
backs sore from sleeping on the ground.

AL WOODHOUR  
Can't do this anymore.

HILLEMAN  
You can't leave. Not now.

AL WOODHOUR  
You do most of our work anyway.

GENE BUYNAK  
If Al goes, I go.

HILLEMAN  
What are you two, bound at the hip?

Al and Gene shrug.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
You know what, forget it. If you  
aren't committed like the rest of  
us, get outta here.

AL WOODHOUR  
Fine.

Al and Gene walk out.

Hilleman is left with Arlene, Dr. Weibel and Victor. Hilleman  
sits down at the bench.

HILLEMAN  
To hell with those two. We have  
everyone we need right here.

The other three look far less sure.

Marie enters the lab.

MARIE  
Charm school?

HILLEMAN  
Fuck that.

MARIE  
I give up.

INT. HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Hilleman is busy carving two apples. Shaping them like heads. Adding makeshift teeth, eyes and hair from thumb tacks, brass fasteners, paperclips and other office supplies.

He creates two SHRUNKEN HEADS and sets them behind his desk. Somehow, they resemble twisted versions of Al and Gene.

Marie enters his office, is about to say something when she notices the shrunken heads.

MARIE  
Oh lord that is messed up.

TIME LAPSE as the shrunken heads age - the apples browning, dehydrating and decaying...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

The shrunken heads have transformed into something truly grotesque.

Hilleman pages through another stack of newspapers from different countries: India, Philippines, Malaysia...

FLASHES of sick, dying PATIENTS in those countries. Hospitals overloaded with bodies. The death count climbing at an alarming rate.

Hilleman picks up a newspaper from Vietnam.

FLASHES: sick, hospitalized AMERICAN SOLDIERS in Saigon.

That last paper worries Hilleman the most.

He sticks more pins in his map, including one in Vietnam.

Max marches into his office.

MAX TISHLER  
I'm cutting your staff in half.

HILLEMAN  
You can't, not now. This thing just spread to 'Nam.

MAX TISHLER  
So?

HILLEMAN

War is the biggest spreader of disease. It'll be here next.

MAX TISHLER

Work on another project. This vaccine is someone else's problem now.

HILLEMAN

Was it the fucking charm school?

MAX TISHLER

Your word choice is telling.

HILLEMAN

We have the power to stop a pandemic. Shouldn't we move hell, heaven and earth?

MAX TISHLER

At what cost? You're a brilliant man, Hilleman. But you're doing too much. Stop being a liability.

He leaves. Once he's out of the office, Hilleman hurries to Marie.

HILLEMAN

Let's get Arlene, Victor and the doc in here.

MARIE

Sorry. They don't work here anymore.

She holds up a company memo listing all the cut employees. Arlene, Victor, Dr. Weibel amongst many others.

HILLEMAN

Damn it. Who's left?

MARIE

I don't know.

HILLEMAN

Get them back.

MARIE

With what funding?

Hilleman has no answer for that.

INT. HILLEMAN HOME - EVENING

Hilleman returns home to find Lorraine packing suitcases.

LORRAINE

We're going to my mom's. Just for a little while.

HILLEMAN

Now's not the time.

LORRAINE

What you're doing is so important. But I need the extra help.

Jeri and Kirsten come down the stairs.

JERI

Daddy, are you coming?

HILLEMAN

Not this time, honey. Daddy has to work.

He hugs Lorraine and the girls. They walk out the door.

Leaving Hilleman alone.

EXT. HICKAM AIR FORCE BASE - OAHU, HAWAII - DAY

The US military's hub in Hawaii for efforts across the Pacific. BUZZING with planes flying to and from Vietnam.

SOLDIERS arrive from the war, some intact, some injured.

Many of them visibly SICK...

INT. HILLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Red pins are now on different continents, including Europe and Australia. Several pins are in the US too - on Hawaii and the West Coast.

Hilleman stares at the map, struggling to figure out his next move.

Security Jim shows up at Hilleman's office.

SECURITY JIM

Mr. Hilleman, I'm so thankful of all you've done. But I'll need your lab keys...

HILLEMAN

What?

INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - DAY

Hilleman hurries into the lab and finds Karl directing employees to box up the lab.

HILLEMAN

Fuck you, Karl. You aren't doing this.

KARL BEYER

Wasn't my decision.

Max enters the lab.

MAX TISHLER

Sorry, Hilleman. It was the board's call. Your funding's run dry.

As someone grabs Hilleman's sleeping bag and toiletries...

HILLEMAN

Don't fucking touch that.

He grabs his stuff.

EXT. MERCK HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Hilleman carries out his belongings in a moving box.

Seeing a familiar Porsche pulling into the lot, he steps in the CEO's parking spot.

The CEO rolls down his window.

HILLEMAN

Damn it, John. The board is dooming the nation here.

CEO GADSDEN

Someone else will fix it.

HILLEMAN

It'll take too long. All the blood will be on this company's hands.

CEO GADSDEN

Our hands are clean. Go take a vacation.

HILLEMAN

And do what?

CEO GADSDEN

Take some time for yourself for a change.

HILLEMAN

Not my damn thing.

He walks off, freeing up the CEO's parking space.

INT. HILLEMAN HOME - DAY

Hilleman returns to a silent house. His family is still gone.

He has nowhere to go.

He contemplates his next move.

EXT. MILES CITY, MONTANA - TWILIGHT

A pickup truck RUMBLES past rushing rivers, tree-filled banks and Miles City, which still looks the same. A time capsule of the American Frontier.

The truck swerves onto a solitary dirt road, kicking up dust.

Hilleman pulls up in front of the old farm. Long abandoned, the chicken coop has fallen apart and the two farmhouses stand empty. Damaged roofs, rotting walls, broken windows.

Just a bunch of ghosts.

Hilleman sits in the rental pickup, staring at this depressing place.

INT. BOB'S FARMHOUSE - EVENING

With a rusty CREAK, Hilleman forces the entry door open.

The old farmhouse is in shambles, debris littering the dusty floor.

It's been empty since Bob passed away, picked over by squatters.

He steps over the rubble, struggling to recognize the home of his youth.

He makes his way to his childhood bedroom. There's an old bed frame but no mattress.

The bookshelf still has a few books. He peruses the titles, finds his favorite, ripped cover and coated in dust: Darwin's "On the Origin of Species."

He smiles to himself, places his coat on the ground and lies down. Gazes up at the ceiling as he listens to the WHISTLING wind.

INT. BOB'S FARMHOUSE - MORNING

A beam of sunlight strikes a sleeping Hilleman's face.

He stirs, waking up in an uncomfortable position on the hard wooden floor.

He stretches, his body aching.

He listens to the sound of CHIRPING BIRDS.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Hilleman makes his way up a hill, passing gravestones while holding a Dixie cup of steaming coffee.

The air is still, trees barely whispering.

He finds a sextet of graves, simple crosses and names:

- Bob and Edith
- Gustave, Anna, Maureen and Norman

He takes a seat on the grass, parking himself between the graves of Bob and Gustave.

A gentle breeze ripples across the graveyard. He runs his hand through the soft dewy grass.

He reaches into his coat and withdraws the Darwin book. Rests it against Gustave's grave.

HILLEMAN  
For all your spare time, old man.

SOFT FOOTSTEPS in the grass behind him.

He turns, blinded by the sun...

LORRAINE

So beautiful here. For once it'd be  
nice to visit for a happy reason.

She's holding flowers.

HILLEMAN

No other countryside quite like it.  
How'd you find me?

LORRAINE

Marie called.

HILLEMAN

Of course she did.

Lorraine joins him on the grass.

LORRAINE

Things got that bad, huh?

HILLEMAN

Nightmare.

Lorraine sets pairs of flowers by each grave.

As she places flowers on Gustave's grave, Hilleman moves them to Bob's.

LORRAINE

For someone who doesn't care what  
others think, you sure are haunted  
by him.

HILLEMAN

He's still judging me from hell.

LORRAINE

Let him scream and shout as much as  
he wants.

It's so quiet around them.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

I look at you and I don't see him.  
I see Bob.

HILLEMAN

Less patient. More scars.

LORRAINE

Scars heal.

HILLEMAN

Only if you let 'em. Where are the girls?

LORRAINE

With my mom, at the farm. Finally got to see the place.

HILLEMAN

Doesn't look like it used to.

LORRAINE

Most things don't. They miss you. You're a good father - much better than yours ever was.

Her words mean the world.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

You have nothing to prove to him.

HILLEMAN

A bit late for that anyway.

LORRAINE

So forget the doubters and start proving us believers right.

HILLEMAN

Tough to do without a department.

LORRAINE

Minor detail. No more of your loner cowboy nonsense. Remember what you've built.

She takes his hand.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Someone once told me... If you have the ability to protect people, you better use it.

HILLEMAN

Pretty sure there was a "damn" in there somewhere.

LORRAINE

Are you challenging me, Mr. Hilleman?

HILLEMAN

Never, Mrs. Hilleman.

He puts his arm around her and they soak in the serenity of this peaceful place.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

A cute little house with an immaculate garden.

Hilleman RINGS the buzzer.

Arlene answers.

HILLEMAN

I need you.

ARLENE MCLEAN

Are we back?

HILLEMAN

A few minor details. My problem,  
not yours.

ARLENE MCLEAN

Don't have to tell me twice.

INT. PEDIATRIC OFFICE - DAY

A BOY sits patiently as Dr. Weibel uses a stethoscope to listen to his heartbeat.

Hilleman bursts into the exam room.

DR. WEIBEL

Excuse me, I'm with a patient.

HILLEMAN

He looks fine to me.

DR. WEIBEL

You aren't the doctor here. But yes, he's fine.

HILLEMAN

Good. Let's go.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Hilleman KNOCKS on an apartment door.

Victor answers. Before Hilleman even opens his mouth...

VICTOR VILLAREJOS  
About time, sir. I do not want to  
go back to Bolivia.

HILLEMAN  
South America. Between Peru and  
Brazil.

VICTOR VILLAREJOS  
You've been studying the map.

HILLEMAN  
It's all I've been doing.

EXT. TOWNHOME COMPLEX - DAY

Hilleman stands in front of a door, hesitant to knock.

Arlene, Victor and Dr. Weibel are there for moral support.

HILLEMAN  
What am I supposed to say?

ARLENE MCLEAN  
Just be polite.

Arlene KNOCKS for him, not giving him a choice.

Al answers the door. Sees Hilleman and the others.

AL WOODHOUR  
Oh no...

He tries to shut the door but Hilleman blocks it with his foot.

HILLEMAN  
Damn it, Al. Give me a minute.

AL WOODHOUR  
Ugh leave me alone.

Al POUNDS the inside wall.

Seconds later, the next door down opens. It's Gene. He and Al are neighbors.

HILLEMAN  
Christ. Go figure.

AL WOODHOUR  
You have a problem?

HILLEMAN  
No problem.

As Gene walks over to see what the hell is happening, Hilleman pulls out the two shrunken heads. Which are rotten and absolutely disgusting at this point.

AL WOODHOUR  
What the heck are those?

HILLEMAN  
Mistakes. My mistakes.

AL WOODHOUR  
Are you... apologizing?

HILLEMAN  
More a peace offering.

He offers the shrunken heads.

AL WOODHOUR  
Uh, I'm fine.

GENE BUYNAK  
Me too.

HILLEMAN  
We need you guys. I need you, to do what you do best.

AL WOODHOUR  
You can't ever fire us again.

HILLEMAN  
I promise.

AL WOODHOUR  
And maybe we'll make one of those heads for you.

HILLEMAN  
Don't push it.

GENE BUYNAK  
Did you get fired too?

HILLEMAN  
More like pushed out. Minor details.

INT. MERCK - SECURITY DESK - EVENING

Hilleman and his team enter Merck after the work day.

Security Jim is surprised to see them.

HILLEMAN

Jim, I need a favor.

SECURITY JIM

I'm getting in trouble for this,  
aren't I...

HILLEMAN

Do it for your family. For your  
boys.

INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - EVENING

Security Jim unlocks the door and flips on the lights.

The lab has been reconfigured but still has everything they need.

HILLEMAN

Thanks Jim. I owe you.

SECURITY JIM

Just get me that shot when it's  
done and we're good.

He leaves. Hilleman addresses his team.

HILLEMAN

All my life I've been fighting.  
Zealots, bureaucrats,  
accountants... But the real enemy  
is right here, in the test tube.

He paces the lab, everyone's eyes locked on him.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)

And I've been thinking a lot about  
that enemy. How it multiplies, how  
its strength is in its numbers.  
Turns out that's our strength too.  
We work together and this enemy  
doesn't stand a chance in hell. You  
all know what to do.

The team quickly gets down to business organizing and firing up equipment.

Moments later, Marie enters holding Hilleman's world map.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Took you long enough.

MARIE  
I was enjoying my time off.

Hilleman quickly tapes the map to the wall. Together, everyone adds red pins, updating the map to the current spread of the pandemic.

Now there are more pins around the US - the virus is spreading.

#### SERIES OF SHOTS OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS

Hilleman's team works like a well-oiled machine.

- Gene gathers supplies from the refrigerator: formaldehyde and a tube of live virus. He brings everything to Al.

- Al pours the formaldehyde into the live virus tube, then looks at the result through a microscope:

CLOSE UP: the formaldehyde washes over the virus spheres, breaking them apart and effectively killing them but keeping their surface protein spikes intact.

- Arlene tabulates data, calculating their progress.

- Hilleman paces, observing and staying hands off, trusting his team to run with their expertise.

- Victor takes a culture of human cells, ready to test them against the inactivated virus.

- Hilleman pulls into the parking lot in the evening. As he parks his Volkswagen, he quickly ducks down. Narrowly avoids being seen by the CEO, who drives home in his Porsche.

- Hilleman wheels a rolling stand TV into the lab and keeps tabs on the news, following the spread of the pandemic.

- A packed train takes PASSENGERS across the country from the West Coast to the East Coast. Several people COUGH in their seats.

- On his map, Hilleman adds more red pins around the United States. Several just outside Philadelphia.

The virus is about to hit home...

INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA - DAY

Lorraine makes her way through the Children's Hospital.

She hears a CHILD COUGHING. Peers into a window. Sees a masked DOCTOR with the sick child.

She checks the Child's file. Not good.

Lorraine rushes to a phone...

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Hilleman hurries through a school hallway, maneuvering past MIDDLE SCHOOLERS.

He enters a MATH CLASSROOM and finds Jeri.

HILLEMAN

Jeri, let's go.

Jeri knows the drill. She packs her backpack.

The MATH TEACHER steps between them.

MATH TEACHER

Excuse me, we're in the middle of a lesson.

HILLEMAN

Yes, carry on. We'll teach her at home.

MATH TEACHER

Not how this works. Jeri, please take a seat.

Hilleman glances at the teacher's desk: MR. ANDREWS.

HILLEMAN

Listen, Andrews. Do you know what a virus is?

MATH TEACHER

It's MR. Andrews. And of course I know. It's a tiny, dangerous organism.

HILLEMAN

Hardly, take a bio class. A virus is barely alive. It doesn't eat, it doesn't sleep, it doesn't shit - pardon my French.

The students perk up.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
It evolved to do one thing with  
deadly precision: replication.

JERI  
Like a killer Xerox machine!

HILLEMAN  
Thanks Jeri. It invades and hijacks  
cells. Turns them into factories  
making millions of deadly copies.  
Killing the host cells in the  
process.

QUICK SHOTS of the pandemic virus attacking cells in intense,  
overwhelming warfare. Their numbers multiplying rapidly and  
destroying the host cells.

MATH TEACHER  
Ok... Why are you telling us this?

HILLEMAN  
Cause a very bad one is already  
here.

JERI  
Dad, tell them about the surface  
proteins!

Hilleman takes over the class, erasing equations on the  
blackboard and drawing diagrams.

HILLEMAN  
Every virus has 'em. Think keys  
that lock with cells, enabling  
invasion. Vaccines teach the immune  
system to recognize those keys.

JERI  
So it can hunt them down and  
destroy them!

MATH TEACHER  
Ok that's enough. Who do you think  
you are?

HILLEMAN  
I'm the locksmith and the doors are  
about to get broken in. So unless  
you don't give a damn about the  
lives in this room, I'm taking my  
daughter and getting back to work.

Hilleman and Jeri walk out of there, not waiting for a response. The students CHEER.

CLASS CLOWN  
I wanna take bio!

INT. HILLEMAN HOME - EVENING

Hilleman brings Jeri home.

They're met by Kirsten and Lorraine.

Seeing the kids at home, a huge relief washes over both parents.

LORRAINE  
Thank you.

HILLEMAN  
No, thank you.

He kisses Lorraine and his daughters. He's about to head back out but then stops.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
How do you want to do this.

LORRAINE  
You go, I'll stay with the girls. I  
love you.

INT. MERCK LABS - HALLWAY - EVENING

Max is on his way out for the day when he passes Hilleman's lab. He's surprised to see the lights are on...

INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - EVENING

Max enters the lab and finds Hilleman working with his team.

He CLEARS his throat. Everyone stops, freezes.

HILLEMAN  
Give me five minutes.

MAX TISHLER  
Three.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE LAB - NIGHT

Hilleman follows Max out of the lab.

MAX TISHLER

Give me one reason not to call  
security right now.

HILLEMAN

Because we're on the verge of  
stopping this damn pandemic. I know  
you know how important that is.

MAX TISHLER

With what money? When Gadsden finds  
out...

HILLEMAN

I'm paying for it.

MAX TISHLER

What?

HILLEMAN

My salary. Sold all my stock too.  
Was a nice return thanks to all  
those vaccines.

Max processes. His mood shifting.

MAX TISHLER

Just get it done fast.

EXT. MERCK HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

The CEO drives out of the parking lot when he notices  
Hilleman's Volkswagen. He hits the brakes and parks in the  
adjacent spot.

INT. MERCK - SECURITY DESK - NIGHT

The CEO marches back into the building, straight up to  
Security Jim's desk.

CEO GADSDEN

Where is he?

SECURITY JIM

Sorry, sir. Who?

CEO GADSDEN

I'm not an idiot.

Security Jim does his best to shrug and play dumb.

The CEO takes off in the direction of Hilleman's lab.  
Security Jim reaches for the phone...

INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - NIGHT

The team works around the clock to create the vaccine:

- Al and Gene work side-by-side, finalizing the inactivated vaccine.
- Arlene writes out test results, charting out data.
- Dr. Weibel unpacks boxes of masks, ready to distribute them as necessary.
- Victor tests international virus samples, making sure there aren't any mutated versions.
- Hilleman supervises, helping out wherever he's needed.

Hilleman hears VOICES in the hallway. He looks out:

Sees CEO Gadsden talking to Max, who intercepted him right in time. Max waves at the lab in an animated fashion.

Gadsden listens to him carefully. Then nods and walks away.

Hilleman meets eyes with Max and nods, appreciative. Max taps his watch. Hilleman gets back to work.

The night outside FADES to early morning...

INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - EARLY MORNING

An exhausted Hilleman holds up a vial of VACCINE.

HILLEMAN  
It's finished.

AL WOODHOUR  
Fastest vaccine developed in  
history.

HILLEMAN  
Couldn't have done it without all  
of you. Just need to make sure it  
works.

ARLENE MCLEAN  
Clinical trials or government  
approvals first?

HILLEMAN  
No time for either.

ARLENE MCLEAN  
What's the alternative?

HILLEMAN  
We test it. Right here, right now.

He rolls up his sleeves and turns to Dr. Weibel.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Doc?

DR. WEIBEL  
I... could lose my medical license.

HILLEMAN  
Coward.  
(turning to others)  
Who wants to do it?

AL WOODHOUR  
We could go to jail. All of us.

GENE BUYNAK  
You included.

Hilleman meets eyes with each of them. A tense standoff.

HILLEMAN  
Marie, get Lorraine and the girls  
down here! Wake them up, say it's  
an emergency.

Marie nods and steps out. Hilleman stares down Arlene, Al,  
Gene, Victor and Dr. Weibel.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Should I remind you what we're  
racing against?

He flips on the TV. News broadcasts present the escalating  
situation:

NBC NEWS ANCHOR  
10,000 pupils have been stricken  
with this new epidemic...

CLICK - he turns the dial to another station.

CBS NEWS ANCHOR  
Cases are soaring as the outbreak  
shifts to adults...

Hilleman's team stares at the TV, torn on what to do.

Hilleman rummages through the supply closet.

PRELAP: HURRIED FOOTSTEPS...

INT. MERCK - SECURITY DESK - ONE HOUR LATER

Lorraine hurries into the building with Jeri and Kirsten.

Marie is right there waiting for them.

INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - MORNING

Marie brings in Lorraine, Jeri and Kirsten.

Lorraine senses the tension between her husband and the team.

HILLEMAN  
Vaccine's done, Lorraine. We need  
to test it. You and me.

He holds up a basket of syringes, each one containing the  
vaccine.

LORRAINE  
Why us?

HILLEMAN  
Cause everyone else is too chicken.  
And that's an insult to chickens.

LORRAINE  
I don't know, Maurice.

HILLEMAN  
It's going to work.

LORRAINE  
You're sure?

HILLEMAN  
As sure as when I hired you.

Lorraine studies the syringes, still looking unsure.

HILLEMAN (CONT'D)  
 Goddamn it, I thought I wasn't  
 supposed to do this on my own.

He rolls up his sleeve, grabs a syringe and JABS it into his own arm, plunging the vaccine fluid into his body.

The group watches in shock.

Hilleman doesn't break a sweat. He finishes injecting himself and tosses aside the used syringe.

Lorraine sees the certainty in her husband's eyes. And it's infectious.

LORRAINE  
 You're not doing anything on your own.  
 (rolling up sleeve)  
 But you owe me a dance.

HILLEMAN  
 Fair trade.

As he reaches for another syringe, Dr. Weibel stops him.

DR. WEIBEL  
 Step aside. Last thing we need is your wife getting nerve damage.

HILLEMAN  
 If you lose your license, I'll still send the kids for checkups.

DR. WEIBEL  
 I feel so much better now.

Dr. Weibel grabs a syringe, wipes Lorraine's arm with alcohol and injects her.

JERI  
 Me too! Me too!

Jeri courageously rolls up her sleeve. Hilleman looks on proudly. Kirsten steps forward too.

KIRSTEN  
 Will it hurt?

HILLEMAN  
 Nothing you can't handle, honey.

Kirsten slowly rolls up her sleeve too.

Dr. Weibel injects both daughters, the two of them handling the shot like champs.

That pushes the rest of the team over the edge. They line up: Marie, Arlene, Al, Gene, Victor. All ready to get vaccinated.

Dr. Weibel injects every single one of them. Then prepares one last syringe: for himself.

He lines it up on his arm, then looks at Hilleman.

DR. WEIBEL  
Care to do the honors?

HILLEMAN  
Why not. We're all in deep shit  
together anyway.

He pushes the plunger.

We FOLLOW the fluid into Weibel's arm. The vaccine filled with unmoving, inactivated virus, entering the body near a group of cells.

The IMMUNE SYSTEM activates, quickly surrounding the inactivated virus. It clusters around the foreign body's spiked surface proteins, learning how to detect and fight this enemy now and forever.

RETURN TO:

INT. HILLEMAN'S LAB - MORNING

Hilleman, his family and the team stand in a circle, a palpable excitement amongst them.

Hilleman takes Lorraine's hand and gives her a gentle little dance spin.

LORRAINE  
Sweet. But it doesn't count.

Hilleman GRUMBLES. No way out of this one.

JERI  
So now what?

DR. WEIBEL  
We wait. To make sure it worked.

HILLEMAN  
Bob, how long have you been in this  
damn lab?  
(MORE)

**HILLEMAN (CONT'D)**

We all know it's going to work.  
Just need to handle a few more  
things...

CUT TO:

INT. MERCK MANUFACTURING - DAY

Hilleman brings a big and a small wrapped gift for Phil.

**PHIL**

Since when are you back?

**HILLEMAN**

Just open them.

Phil unwraps the big gift. It's a bottle of champagne.

Phil unwraps the small one. It's a vial of vaccine.

**HILLEMAN (CONT'D)**

Courtesy of my team. The rest is up  
to you. It's your department, you  
know what's best.

He walks away before Phil can respond.

Phil holds up the vial, light sparkling off the glass...

INT. DIVISION OF BIOLOGICS STANDARDS - DAY

Hilleman enters the corner office carrying a framed photo. He presents it to the DBS Director.

**DBS DIRECTOR MEYER**

What the heck is this?

**HILLEMAN**

The view from my office. Hell of a  
lot worse than yours.

PHOTO REVEAL: Hilleman's ugly view of Merck's manufacturing wing, delivery trucks spewing smoke into the air.

**HILLEMAN (CONT'D)**

Should make you feel better about  
yourself.

**DBS DIRECTOR MEYER**

That almost sounds like a  
compliment.

HILLEMAN

As good as you're going to get.

DBS DIRECTOR MEYER

You really need this approval,  
don't you.

HILLEMAN

We all do.

INT. OFFICE OF THE CEO - DAY

CEO Gadsden is in the middle of signing memos as a large group parades into his office:

Phil, DBS Director Meyer, Security Jim...

Then Hilleman and his team: Arlene, Al, Gene, Victor, Dr. Weibel, Lorraine and Marie. Even Max, who stands with them.

They crowd the office, trapping the CEO behind his desk.

CEO GADSDEN

This should be good.

Without saying a word, Hilleman hands him a vaccine vial.

The importance of that moment hits the CEO. He scans the room, reading the faces of everyone there.

The group waits expectantly, awaiting the verdict.

INT. MERCK MANUFACTURING - DAY

The manufacturing operation fires to life:

- Hundreds, then thousands of eggs are injected with virus, then harvested for purified virus-containing fluid.

- Batches of virus are inactivated with formaldehyde, the chemical breaking them down.

- Assembly lines packed with workers churn out millions and millions of vaccine doses.

- Doses are boxed and loaded onto trucks. Merck manufacturing the vaccine in blazing record time.

*SUPERTITLE: Tens of millions of doses were made available within months of the first reported illness, an unprecedented timeline in vaccine production and distribution.*

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

CITIZENS line up at pharmacies to get vaccinated. Adults, kids and all.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

PRESIDENT JOHNSON rolls up his sleeve as his DOCTOR administers a dose.

EXT. VIETNAM ARMY BASE - DAY

A bustling base surrounded by the lush jungles of Vietnam.

SOLDIERS line up to get the vaccine.

INT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - DAY

The ASTRONAUTS of Apollo 8 train for their upcoming mission to reach the moon.

Their PHYSICIAN injects each of them with the vaccine.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Hilleman drops Jeri off at math class. She eagerly rejoins her classmates.

Before Hilleman can leave, the Math Teacher shakes his hand.

*SUPERTITLE: Thanks to the efforts of Hilleman and his team, the pandemic of 1968 stopped as quickly as it had started.*

CLOSE ON HILLEMAN'S MAP: one by one, the red pins quickly disappear from the United States, then from around the world. The virus eradicated.

EXT. MERCK HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Chicken coops are everywhere on the Merck campus.

*SUPERTITLE: By the late 60s, Merck had more than enough eggs to mass produce any vaccine. For a time, the company became the biggest producer of chickens and eggs in the world.*

A lone chicken waddles through the parking lot, stops at the CEO's Porsche and pecks at the tires.

FADE TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - 30 YEARS LATER - DAY

Near the National Mall, a CROWD OF THOUSANDS has gathered in front of a large stage. The area is flooded with cameras and REPORTERS. All gathered for an important ceremony.

*SUPERTITLE: December 31, 1999 - MILLENNIUM CELEBRATION  
OPENING CEREMONIES.*

Intercut between the live event and CSPAN footage.

On a stage packed with SPECIAL GUESTS, a SPEAKER takes the podium and addresses the crowd/cameras:

SPEAKER

On the eve of the new millennium, we are here to celebrate the most important contributions of the twentieth century. Our special guests will place their items in the millennium time capsule, to be opened one hundred years from now.

The guests on stage are an impressive collection of POLITICIANS, MILITARY PERSONNEL, CELEBRITIES and leaders in their field:

- President BILL CLINTON and first lady HILLARY
- RAY CHARLES
- Cherokee Nation Chief WILMA MANKILLER
- Poet ROBERT PINSKY
- Opera singer DENYCE GRAVES
- Former President RONALD REAGAN

And then a familiar-looking man...

80-YEAR-OLD HILLEMAN sits with Lorraine. And of course Jeri and Kirsten, who are both adults now.

FOOTAGE FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE CEREMONY - the Speaker addresses the crowd:

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

Please give a warm welcome to Dr. Maurice Hilleman. Pioneer in the field of immunology. And director of the Merck Institute for Therapeutic Research.

APPLAUSE from the crowd.

Lorraine squeezes Hilleman's hand as he heads to the podium.

On his way, he's met with a handshake:

It's DR. ANTHONY FAUCI. At the time, head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

HILLEMAN

Come on, Fauci. Get the hell outta my way.

Fauci chuckles, Hilleman smiles warmly – these two know each other well.

As Hilleman takes the podium, he places his time capsule contribution for all to see:

A box of clear plastic. With six colorful vaccine vials embedded inside.

*SUPERTITLE: Hilleman's contribution to the millennium time capsule included his six most important vaccines.*

The vials are labeled accordingly:

- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
- Varicella (Chickenpox)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Pneumococcal
- Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b)

*SUPERTITLE: While he never won the Nobel prize, Hilleman and his team stopped multiple pandemics and eradicated numerous deadly diseases. He created over 40 vaccines, including 8 of the 14 standard ones recommended for children.*

As Hilleman delivers his speech, the crowd and special guests listen attentively.

But no one hangs on every word quite like Lorraine, Jeri and Kirsten, who clutch each others' hands with pride.

*SUPERTITLE: His work has saved more lives than anyone in human history.*

FADE TO BLACK.