A RIVER IN EGYPT

Story by Marty Kaplan  Visuals by Darren Ragle
I've filled my closets with five gallon water bottles...

...and my pantry with canned food that I don't let expire...

...I keep sneakers next to my bed in case of broken glass...

...I keep a flashlight in my night table...

...and a portable radio...

...and fresh batteries...

I have a secret stash of cash in case the ATM's run out...

...I've attached my bookcases to the walls...

...I've had my foundation bolted...

...and my water heater strapped...

...I've put earthquake kits in my house...

...and in my office...

...and in my car...

...which I top off whenever the tank is half full...

I've got copies of my important documents...

My kids have emergency contact numbers in other states in case local lines go down...

And I'm always sure that Hershey has a week's worth of extra chow...

And treats.

Oh, you are so in denial.
YOU ACTUALLY THINK
ALL THIS BOY SCOUT STUFF
IS GONNA SAVE YOUR ASS FROM
THE BIG ONE?

WHO SAYS
YOU'LL BE AT YOUR
PLACE WHEN IT
HAPPENS?

COULD
BE YOUR
LADY'S.

..OR
THE
101.

$200 BILLION IN
INFRASTRUCTURE AND
HOME EQUITY—GONE
IN TWO MINUTES.
BUT THE BIG ONE'S
NOT ABOUT TWO
MINUTES, IT'S ABOUT
THE WEEKS AND
MONTHS AND EVEN
YEARS AFTERWARD.
THINK OF IT...

NO ELECTRICITY.
NO TRANSPORTATION.
NO COMMUNICATION.
DAMS AND PIPELINES
YOU NEVER KNEW
YOU DEPENDED ON...
DESTROYED. A SPARK
IGNITES A GAS LINE.
The neighborhood,
THE WHOLE CITY...
THREE DAYS AFTER THE QUAKE, PANIC SETS IN. MARAUDERS WHO DIDN'T PREPARE WILL GO FORAGING FOR FOOD. THERE'LL BE GANGS... THERE'LL BE LOOTING...

GOT A GUN, MARTY?

BODIES WILL PILE UP,

INFECTIONS WILL SPREAD.

PANDEMIC.

STENCH EVERYWHERE. THE LIVING WILL ENVY THE DEAD.
That can't be!! The city, the county, the White House, we've got plans for all of this!!

Ever heard of Katrina?

Good luck.
WAIT A MINUTE, WHAT'D YOU JUST SAY?

I SAID "GOOD LUCK."

LUCK!! THAT'S IT!!

WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO? PUT A RABBIT'S FOOT IN YOUR EARTHQUAKE KIT?

NO.

I MEAN...

LUCK IS PART OF LIFE.

...THANKS...

NOT JUST IN AN EARTHQUAKE. NOW.
Any day of the week, I could get killed in a car accident. 100,000 people a year die in cars, but that doesn't stop me from driving. I wear a seat belt, I drive defensively...

Yeah, and at any minute a drunk driver going 100 could cross the median and crash into you head on...

Or it's like cancer. You do everything you can to prevent it, you don't smoke, you eat right, you exercise.

That's where the denial really comes in handy.

Actually, you treasure every moment because you never know what could happen.

Yeah, and one day through no fault of your own, the DNA in just one of your cells makes a teensy mistake and splits into two haywire cells and before you know it you're telling your friends what kind of music you'd like at your memorial service!!
Don't you get it?! That's what life is! No one gets out alive. We all take risks every day, whether we want to or not.

We know we can be hit by lightning, or some blood vessel in our brain can burst, so we can't let the fear rule us!!

We get on with our lives. We live as if we're immortal, as if our gods will protect us, as if our prayers matter.

I told you you were in denial, dude.

It's not denial if you also accept and prepare for what can happen! It's not denial if you've done everything you can! It's...

Sisyphus?

Yes! Sisyphus. Forever pushing his boulder up the mountain, knowing it will always go rolling down again.

“One must imagine Sisyphus happy.”

That's right! That... randomness, that chance, that luck, that's our lot in life, good or bad.

If I knew I was gonna die in an earthquake tomorrow, I wouldn't worry about that scotch and steak I'm having tonight.

Now that's denial.
No, denial is living in an earthquake zone.

Denial is moving to a place where the weather is like Eden, even though you know the next big one is already a hundred years past due.

Denial is living in the shadow of Vesuvius, only here it's called the San Andreas Fault. Denial is putting your roots down in paradise even though you know that being here is asking for it, bucking the odds, licking the razor.

Denial is thinking that the stinking hell-hole LA will be for years after the big one won't make you rue the day you decided to come here for the palm trees and sunshine.

Denial is a Faustian bargain, only you don't get immortality - you just get a tan.

But you can't live like that!! You take every precaution you can and then you just have to go on with your life!!
The thing is, we're all already broken vessels. The world is already broken, even before the Earthquake. Our job is to repair the world right now, and not just wait for the big one.

Repair? And prepare. Until the end of time.

That's not denial?
No, your cigarette is denial.

Denial is living as if "as if" doesn't apply to you.

That's all there is.

Did you feel that?