

## **Leave the World Behind (2023)**

**Writers: Rumaan Alam, Sam Esmail**

**Directed by: Sam Esmail**

**Stars: Julia Roberts, Mahershala Ali, Ethan Hawke, Kevin Bacon**

**IMDB Rating: 6.5/10 Stars**

**Rotten Tomatoes Audience Score: 35%**

**Runtime: 2 hours, 20 minutes**

### **Full Plot Spoilers Ahead, You Have Been Warned...**

Amanda Sandford, who's not big on people, decides to take her family on a surprise weekend trip to a vacation rental. It's supposed to be a nice family bonding time with her husband Clay and their kids, Archie and Rose. While they're out shopping for groceries, Amanda notices some guy stocking up on a ton of canned food and water. Later, while they're chillin' at the beach nearby, they see a skyscraper-sized oil tanker crash onto the beach right in front of them. When they get back to the rental house, they realize the TV and Internet are not working, and there are some deer staring at them. That night, the owner of the house, George H. ("G.H.") Scott, and his daughter, Ruth, show up, saying there's a blackout and they need a place to stay. The blackout was why they returned to the home. Amanda's not too sure about them, but Clay's like, "Sure, why not?" Later, emergency alerts start popping up on TV. The next morning, Rose is bummed because she can't watch the last episode of "Friends" without Internet or TV. Amanda gets a bunch of news alerts on her phone, saying there's a blackout on the whole East Coast and maybe it is because of hackers. Rose notices more deer hanging around outside. Clay goes to town to try and find out what is happening, while G.H. goes to his neighbor's house to check things out. Clay runs into a Spanish-speaking lady and sees some weird leaflets in Arabic falling from a drone. G.H. finds a satellite phone at the neighbor's place and figures out there's something wrong with the satellites. He also discovers a crashed plane on the beach while dodging another that is crashing right on top of this one. Meanwhile, Rose and Archie find an empty shed in the woods, and Archie gets rid of a tick that is biting his ankle. When they get back, G.H. tells Amanda about what he found, but they get interrupted by a loud noise that stuns them all. Amanda remembers the guy stocking up on supplies, who G.H. thinks is his contractor, Danny. Clay comes back freaked out by the leaflets, and they decide to try to go to Amanda's sister's place in New Jersey, but they get stuck in traffic as the interstate is clogged with empty and collided brand-new self-driving Teslas; which they narrowly avoid more incoming Tesla cars continuing to drive themselves without drivers into the pile-up, and are forced to return to G.H.'s house. During the night, Ruth and Clay have a deep talk and get distracted by seeing flamingos in the pool. Amanda and G.H. start getting along, but then there's another loud noise and the power goes out. Rose tells Amanda a story from "The West Wing." The next morning, Archie's teeth begin to fall out for no reason. G.H. thinks it's because of the tick bite and suggests they go see Danny for help. Rose disappears, so

G.H. and Clay take Archie to Danny's while Amanda and Ruth look for Rose. They find a bunch of deer at the shed that freak them out. At the same time, G.H. and Clay have an armed standoff as they talk to Danny, who tells them about microwave weapons, makes a deal for meds and sends them to a bunker nearby. Shaken, G.H. thinks as he discusses with Clay and Archie on the basis of his work with military contractors that the country is in a three-stage campaign leading to a progressive-breakdown of social order and resulting in coup d'état or possible civil war in the United States. Amanda and Ruth see New York City getting bombed. Rose finds the bunker, flips on the generator for power. She finds a collection of DVDs that includes the entire "Friends" run and decides to watch the last episode as a computer screen in the background displays a message that warns of attacks by rogue military elements and elevated radiation levels across multiple U.S. cities. Rose gets to watch her last show while the United States burns as the screen cuts to black ending the movie.

I am late to the party with this movie. I didn't watch it right away when it came out. Took me a few months to get to it as I was watching the entire series/movies/return series run of "TWIN PEAKS." When you watch "Twin Peaks" you gotta finish it first right? It's a mind-FK on what the hell is actually going on with that show. So "Leave the World Behind" (2023) I liked... It has issues, sure, but all-in-all it's a decent watch. My issues are minor, but some of them could be semi-major. While trying to be as realistic as possible it actually seems a little hokey how the characters mesh during the film, but there are some real good moments in and outside of that. **'The not knowing'** really saves this movie. Would love to see the same movie, but from Kevin Bacon's character of Danny's point of view. The end sequence of New York City has a semi-massive mushroom cloud. Too small to be a H-bomb but big enough to still be in the atom bomb family. Does this make sense to anyone else? Is anyone else seeing the same thing I saw at the end? There were no loud sonic booms or blast wave happening moments before. From where they are they would have absolutely felt and heard an atomic explosion, even in the kiloton range over megaton. If it were an A-bomb level explosion the cloud is probably an hour to three hours old. They would have suspected something. To just walk in the woods nearby and discover this huge mushroom cloud in New York City doesn't seem plausible to me. Since the movie is supposed to be ground in our current reality it takes some pretty big liberties, both for positive and negative storytelling probes.

## **Some Internet theories were saying Aliens...**

Aliens? Not the worst theory here. My issue with aliens here is that some people knew this was coming within the confines of the story being told here. I do not think aliens and that knowing would align in a more plausible way than say, a possible rogue AI... I feel like this is how a rogue AI would attack the U.S. though. Why does everyone believe it will happen as if this was "Terminator" or "the Matrix?" Destroying everyone and everything. Killing off humanity in a nuclear fireball would destroy this planet's ability to host technology to support AI to begin with. The idea of destroying a country with a largely intact infrastructure would be the way to go. Like the machines said in "The Matrix;" "There are levels of survival we are prepared to accept." ~The Architect. I feel like this movie could exist inside the continuity of "the Matrix" in a way. After the initial attack the machines would need humans to help rebuild and execute

the machine's instructions. This could even come from a human-puppet leader, like G.H. Scott's mysterious client. Like they said in the film; *'America has made a lot of enemies.'* In all seriousness I do not believe these enemies, even United, could take down America in this fashion. Even the Alex Garland film *"Civil War"* (2024) – where a modern-day United States descends into another Civil War. In order for a plan like this to actually work in *"Leave the World Behind"* (2023) there would have to be a considerable amount of inside help. Computer-wizards, CIA people and technology verse a largely sleeping Federal Government. There was one news blast in *"Leave the World Behind"* (2023) that said the White House was under attack by rogue US forces. That made me think. How long would it take under an attack of this nature for our own Generals to begin to seize power, be it for our own good, their own ego and motivations or perhaps part of the plan itself?

## **In *"Leave the World Behind"* (2023) it was roughly 24 hours...**

So much could have been taken into account and they do not go anywhere with any of it. The kid losing teeth, the animals behaving strangely, the flirting and dancing. I just feel like this was a super great idea with too much passive-progressive-woke takes over going in more direct and logical, real human direction on something like this. I doubt in real life G.H. Scott would keep any of this a secret. The second he knew the world would never be the same again, in a literal sense, things would have taken a more serious and deadly tone. I can give the movie a solid 7 out of 10 stars for effort and tension. A lot of things are left kind of vague. What caused the whole apocalypse, what the Spanish lady was saying, Archie's teeth, and the deal with the secret cabal? The movie doesn't come right out and say it, but it's all about uncertainty and misinformation during a blackout. The message seems to be about sticking together in tough times and not turning against each other. The lady speaking crazy in Spanish talking about some pretty intense stuff, like seeing a plane spraying red gas and feeling lost. We do not get subtitles to know exactly what she's saying, but it adds to the overall feeling of uncertainty and chaos. Then there's the whole deal with the flyers dropping from the sky. Maybe it's a warning, maybe it's a threat, maybe it's total bullshit, we're not totally sure. It just adds to the confusion and tension. G.H. mentions *'cabal'* as a joke, but it could be a hint at something more sinister. Maybe someone or something took control when the world was in chaos, leading to even more problems, and Archie's teeth falling out? That's a weird one. It could be from some bug, microwave energy weapon or radiation in the area. Whatever it is, it's not good news. The movie leaves a lot of things up in the air, but that's part of what makes it so interesting and horrifying. It's all about uncertainty and how we deal with it, both in the movie and in real life.

**It is an interesting premise though and who is to say how humans would behave when/if the world goes to shit for real. It is bound to at some point. Why not now or soon... If we believe the BS-news and shoty-political takes we are well on our way. I have been saying for years; *"just give me a nice spot on the beach so I can sit and watch the world burn."***

Review of: "Leave the World Behind" (2023)  
by David-Angelo Mineo  
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1,826 Words