

Matt the Magnificent

A man and woman are trapped in a Costco by terrifying  
force just outside.

FADE IN:

INT. COSTCO - DAY

The camera focuses on SANDRA, female, mid-20s, in gray sweats shops for steaks.

MATT, male, late 20s, wearing athletic gear and a tight shirt that shows his build. His cart is full of food and workout gear. Sandra catches Matt's eye, tries to avoid him but she fails.

MATT

Hey, Sandra, nice to see you again.

SANDRA

Hey there, Matt.

She looks uncomfortable and stares at his overstuffed cart.

SANDRA (CONT.)

Preparing for the apocalypse?

MATT

Always. I don't know what the rest of the fools around here are thinking. You know something is going on down at that government lab, right?

SANDRA

Matt, the government bought that place like three years ago and I've never heard a peep.

MATT

You don't have to be a guy with a genius IQ like myself to figure it out. That's why I'm exercising all the time now. I'm down to 5 percent body fat. Ready for anything!

Matt turns sideways and flexes his bicep.

SANDRA

Maybe you're just a lunatic prepper and no one cares?

MATT

Easy to say now, but when it goes down, you'll want to know me.

Matt leans closer to Sandra.

MATT (CONT.)

I shouldn't be telling anyone this,  
but over the summer I built a bunker.  
I'd love to show it to you.

Sandra pushes her cart away from Matt.

SANDRA

Oh, that's original - you're going to  
show me your bunker.

(laughter)

Matt, I'm a single mom now. You  
remember my two-year-old daughter,  
Lisa.

MATT

Bring her along. I'm just saying,  
Sandra, I'm the guy to know in this  
town. Look, I live a lot closer to  
this facility than you do. I hear  
things, and I've done serious  
research. They're up to something.

SANDRA

What could they be doing that makes  
you want a bunker?

MATT

Do you notice that there are a lot  
fewer coyotes stalking around  
recently? When I was a kid they were  
everywhere. Now, I never see them.

SANDRA

What are you talking about?

MATT

Do I have to spell it out?  
Experiments! They're doing them on the  
animals, and soon enough, they'll be  
doing them on us.

Sandra rolls her eyes and speeds up, walking her cart to the  
long cashier lines. Matt follows.

SANDRA

You're done shopping?

MATT

I was done when I saw you. I've liked you since high school, but you've always snubbed me, even though I was a senior and you were a freshmen. Why?

SANDRA

You're not my type, Matt. We don't have anything in common.

MATT

I'm very entertaining, and my body is like a Greek god.

(beat)

Look, I'm just pulling your leg. I know you've got a lot of stuff going on.

SANDRA

I don't want to be rude, Matt, but I worked all night at the restaurant and I'm tired. Lisa's with my mom and has a stomach virus. It's tough to feel flirty right now.

MATT

Restaurant? Do you ever see any of those government-types at the diner?

SANDRA

On occasion.

MATT

One day you should just ask them what they're doing over there. I'm working at my Dad's store for fun since money isn't a problem, and I noticed that when he talks to them, they clam up super quick. They're hiding something Sandra, and with the noises, I heard last night, it's just not safe.

SANDRA

Look, Matt, I'm not going to your bunker!

Suddenly, there's an EXPLOSION outside Costco. The lights flicker off, so the only light is from the front door and the skylights high above.

MATT  
What the hell?

SANDRA  
Was that a bomb?

Then a woman runs into the Costco SCREAMING. MAGGIE is a tall woman in a red dress. She runs to the lone SECURITY GUARD.

MAGGIE  
Close the door! Close it!

People are darting every direction, some running outside.

MAGGIE (CONT.)  
Don't go out there!

A guttural SCREAM is heard outside, and then something LARGE FLIES into back into the Costco. It is a human torso. Pandemonium breaks out as those that ran out of the store run back inside. The Security Guard hurries them inside and then slams down the metal doors.

SECURITY GUARD  
People! If you're by an exit, lock those doors, now!

Matt grabs Sandra's arm.

MATT  
Sandra, let's go!

Matt and Sandra run toward the back of the store, open the door to the meat section, and dive to the ground. Sandra's breath is visible in the low-slung security lights that dot the room.

Sandra and Matt sit side by side, backs against a meat display, both picking up their phones.

SANDRA  
Mine's dead. Yours?

MATT  
Same.

SANDRA  
What the hell is going on?

Matt peeks his head out from behind the meat counter and looks at the front doors. Everyone is hiding other than the

Security Guard, who's ducking behind a cash register.

MATT

(beat)

You're not going to like what I think.

SANDY

This isn't the time to be stupid.

MATT

They're working on a nature-based weapon, doing some Jurassic Park shit at that lab!

SANDRA

Seriously?

MATT

What else could do that in the middle of Mesquite, Nevada? You saw what it did to that person!

Suddenly, a BANG rattles the giant metal doors. The SECURITY GUARD draws his gun. SCRATCHING and POUNDING at the doors. There's a series of taps now, like heavy rain. The sound moves up the side of the building.

SANDRA

Something's climbing!

(Her eyes follow the sound, to the ceiling)

A massive shadow SKITTERS across the skylights. A creature with the outline of a giant centipede appears, countless legs move the creature with terrifying speed.

SANDRA

A giant centipede?

MATT

Actually, it's likely Arthropleura, a centipede relative from the Carboniferous period, roughly 350 million years--

SANDRA

Oh my God! Don't you know we're about to get eaten by that thing?

MATT

Well, they're supposed to be herbivores, but they must have crossed it with a modern centipede. I wonder how it's able to breathe in our atmosphere?

SANDRA

(furiously points in his face)  
Shut up, Matt! If you keep talking like this is 8th-grade science class and I'm going to run out and sacrifice myself to that thing!

More scampering, now the other direction. People scream they avoid the moving shadow. The creature stops directly above the center of the store.

SANDRA (CONT.)

What are we going to do?

MATT

Well, if you're just going to dismiss everything I say, I'm not going to say anything.

SANDRA

(beat then sigh)  
I'm sorry. Please.

MATT

How about a date if we make it out of this thing?

SANDRA

You're serious right now?

MATT

(beat)  
Just teasing. So, just know that we can't outrun this thing. A quick mental calculation tells me that this thing probably runs faster than 40 miles per hour.

SANDRA

Holy shit. What can we do now?

MATT

Well, Arthropleura was alive when the earth had way more oxygen in the air.

If we could limit its oxygen we might have a chance.

SANDRA  
Why would they do this?

MATT  
Are you kidding? Drop a few of these suckers on North Korea and see what happens? Especially if...

SANDRA  
If what?

MATT  
They figured out a way to control it.

There's more commotion at the skylight as the creature bangs hard on the plexiglass. The POUNDING grows louder as the massive insect SMASHES the skylight. Then, it wraps its body around the destroyed cords and cables and climbs down into the store. The creature's legs CLICK rapidly against the concrete floor as it disappears into the store.

MATT  
(whimpers)  
It's inside.

SANDRA  
No! I have a two-year-old. I'm not going out like this!

MATT  
(grabs her arm)  
Sandra. We are their experiment. That's why our phones don't work. They hit us with an electromagnetic pulse; fried all the cellphones, and security cameras. No evidence.

Matt blanches as sweat pours from his head, and he loses consciousness.)

SANDRA  
Matt, stay with me!

Sandra runs back toward the kitchen area, fills a cup of water. As she does, her eyes fall upon some cleaning bottles on a shelf by the sink. She grabs them and runs back toward Matt. She dumps the cup on his head.

SANDRA

Wake up, Matt! I have an idea, but I need your help.

Matt coughs but doesn't regain consciousness.

SANDRA

Dammit!

CRASHING sound nearby followed by screams. Sandra takes a peek through the windows and spots a woman running and screaming down an aisle. Behind her, the massive insect chases her down. Sandra's eyes then fall on a shelf full of empty mason jars. She looks at Matt, shakes her head, and tiptoes out of the meat room.

INT. COSTCO - MOVING THROUGH THE AISLES

The camera follows closely behind Sandra as she runs toward the jars. She dodges some badly mutilated bodies and grabs a pack of mason jars. In doing so, she destabilizes the stack, and several packages SMASH on the floor.

Sandra freezes. Rapid CLICKING, growing louder. She runs and dives into a tent display. Soon the massive centipede approaches. The shadowy form of the creature's antennae, thin and long as a fishing pole appears and STRIKES the tent. Sandra grabs her mouth, muffling her cries. The creature moves upon the tent and it starts to collapse under its weight.

SECURITY GUARD

Hey you son of a bitch, turn your ugly ass around!

A SHOT rings out, and the creature squeals. The tent goes flying, exposing Sandra. Her eyes meet the Security Guard's.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT)

Run woman, run!

The centipede rises up, now taller than the man, its multitude of legs flittering in the air. Another shot. The beast makes an unearthly cry and storms the security guard, who EMPTIES his weapon. The centipede moves with blinding speed and bites the man with enormous pincers, and then scampers to the top of a food aisle. The Security Guard seizes, white foam coming from this mouth. Sandra bolts.

INT. COSTCO - DAY - MEAT ROOM

Sandra dives into the room, finding MATT on all fours, crying. He looks up at her.

MATT

You came back. I thought you left me to die.

SANDRA

Come on dude, get it together. I have an idea, but I need your help.

She shows him the bleach and a bottle that has the letters CLR on it.

MATT

You're going to clean?

SANDRA

I thought you were the smart guy. Don't these two substances make a deadly gas?

MATT

(eyes grow wide)

Yes! Chlorine gas. It should interfere with their breathing, especially since they're used to more oxygen.

Brilliant! But how do we get it to them without knocking ourselves out?

Sandra shows him the mason jars.

MATT

That might work! Let's get to mixing. Be very careful not to breathe this stuff!

SANDRA

Thanks, Einstein.

INT. COSTCO - DAY - SECURITY ROOM

Maggie is seen seated at the security chair, where a field of monitors surround her. She's got her shoes off and feet up and is drinking a Gatorade. Next to her, a cellphone buzzes, and she answers.

MAGGIE

Yes sir. The operation is going well.

The being has shown extraordinary capability, acting autonomously mostly.

(inaudible voice)

MAGGIE (CONT.)

Yes, sir, I'm able to initiate control when needed. There's one more challenge I see ahead. Nothing serious, just a couple of bozos thinking they can science their way out of this. No, I think one is enough. I'll notify you when it's done.

Maggie flashes a wicked smile as she stares at one of the cameras that shows Matt and Sandra frantically mixing their concoctions. She takes out a small device and taps a few times on its screen. The camera pans to the video monitors that show the monstrous centipede stop, pivot, and bolt in a different direction. It rapidly moves from screen to screen until it stops directly in front of the meat room.

INT. COSTCO - DAY - MEAT ROOM

SANDRA

Open the door, Matt!

Matt runs to the door closest to the centipede and opens it. The centipede rushes in. Sandra pulls a string tied to the door handle and the door closes. Then they both start throwing the mason jars at the creature as they retreat to the other door. The jars shatter and soon a thin gas is visible. The creature HISSES and thrashes about, clearly in distress.

MATT

Run!

INT. COSTCO - DAY - SKYLIGHT

Matt and Sandra are seen on top of an aisle, reaching for the cords and cables that hang from the shattered skylight.

SANDRA

Matt, you go first. Then you can help me up.

MATT

No, you're lighter. You'll make it for

sure and then you can call for help.

SANDRA

Matt, don't...

MATT

I'll be right behind you.

SANDRA

Maybe we killed it?

MATT

Tough to say. We didn't have a lot of the gas, but clearly, we pissed it off. Now, up you go.

Matt boosts Sandra up and she grabs onto a bunch of cables and starts to shimmer up. A sound of SMASHING GLASS echoes through the store. Sandra stops climbing.

MATT

I guess that answers that question.  
Go!

Matt grabs onto the cables and quickly shimmers up the cable, catching up to Sandra. The camera pans to the centipede climbing up the wall near the meat room, up to the ceiling. The centipede barrels towards them at incredible speed.

MATT

Climb faster!

Sandra reaches the skylight first, cutting her arm on the broken plexiglass. She reaches down to pull up Matt.

SANDRA

Take my hand!

He goes to reach for her hand, but the centipede gets there first. It wraps its body around Matt's. Matt starts punching the creature frantically. He grabs an antenna and twists, breaking the antenna off. The creature CRIES OUT, buckles, and starts to fall. At the last moment, its pincers dig into his leg. Matt SCREAMS out in agony.

MATT

Go, Sandra! Get to the bunker!

SANDRA

Matt! No!

Matt looks sadly at Sandra, and lets go of the cable. He and the creature fall back into the darkened building, crashing to the floor and out of sight.

EXT. COSTCO - DAY - ROOF

Sandra kneels on the roof, sobbing. She picks up her cell- still nothing. She stands up and moves to the edge of the roof.

Sandra sees the destroyed parking lot swarming with giant centipedes. There are well-dressed people among them, standing casually, with small devices. Then, she hears the front door of the Costco open. A tall woman in a red dress walks out. The centipedes part out of her way as Maggie strolls into the center of the parking lot. She looks up toward Sandra.

MAGGIE

Thank you for your sacrifice!

Maggie pauses, and waves, and then walks away. Instantly the horde of centipedes attack the Costco and begin to destroy the structure. Several begin to climb the sides of the building.

The camera zooms out, showing Sandra surrounded by giant centipedes closing in.

FADE TO BLACK

END.