

THE WEATHER SMUGGLER

By

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FADE IN:

EXT: AIRPORT WITH PLANE LANDING, DAY

If we're really going for it this will be a futuristic plane landing at a future airport. It is a horrible day, raining and overcast.

EXT: A RUN DOWN WAREHOUSE LINED STREET, DAY

We are looking at a dirty street lined on either side by dark warehouses. It is overcast and drizzling and looks like it has been so for a very long time. There is a distant rumble of thunder. A BOY 1 is running down a footpath. He is pulling his coat tight around himself and anxious to get out of the rain. Despite the poor weather he is wearing an old-fashioned school uniform including shorts. He enters one of the warehouse buildings and has to pull hard to open the door clearly warped by the damp.

INT: AIRPORT ARRIVALS, DAY

A number of people are leaving the plane but we focus on one man. He is bespectacled and reasonably well dressed but his suit, though clean and well presented, gives the impression of having seen better days. He is the SMUGGLER. He carries an attaché case and a raincoat.

INT: FLIGHT OF STAIRS, DAY

Boy 1 is running up a long flight of stairs in darkness. He is heading towards a bright light at the top of the stairs. Although the boy is running he seems to be moving slowly.

INT: BAGGAGE RETREIVAL, DAY

The Smuggler is at the luggage carousel waiting for a luggage to arrive. He keeps making furtive glances around him. He eventually retrieves a battered looking small suitcase.

INT: VIRTUAL CLASSROOM, DAY

Boy 1 enters a clean white room in which there are two desks at odd spaces in the room. Each has a chair behind it. There is a window opposite the door covered by a blind and an old-fashioned hat stand at the back of the room.

BOY 2 is already at one of the desks, standing at the side of it and leaning on it. As the Boy comes in, he moves round and sits upright in the chair.

BOY 2  
Hurry up. You'll be late,  
and we're already in trouble.

Boy 1 hangs up his coat and sits down. As he sits down, the outline of the room flickers and becomes an old fashioned schoolroom. The other desks are either have students in uniform sat at them or dummies to give the room the feel of being full. The two desks fit in gaps left.

The new objects come in the room come in one by one and are either slightly see-through or the colours are slightly washed out. The two boys and all the elements of the room that were there before the change are both solid and fully coloured. There is slightly right wing feel of strict regimentation.

Standing at the front of the class is the PROFESSOR. He is old fashioned, wears mortarboard, half glasses and a gown. He carries a cane. The boys acknowledge the arrival of the holographic representations of the other boys. He is played by the same actor as The Smuggler, but heavily made up so that he appears older and is not easy to recognise.

INT: CUSTOMS OFFICE, DAY

The smuggler has been pulled over by a customs official. The CUSTOMS OFFICER has an overly ornate uniform, suggesting a slightly more right wing state. He makes conversation distractedly while looking through the bags. The Smuggler looks around uneasily.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Have you anything to declare?

SMUGGLER

Not really. I've got my  
limit of alcohol, cigarettes  
and cannabis.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Where have you been sir?

SMUGGLER

Los Angeles.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Bet the weather's better  
there.

SMUGGLER

(shrugging)

That's where the money is.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Business or pleasure?

SMUGGLER

A little of both. I had a  
couple of meetings to attend  
and I took the opportunity to  
visit a couple of friends  
while someone else was  
footing the bill.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Oh? What is it you do?

SMUGGLER

I used to be a climate  
engineer, but I couldn't cope  
with inequality of it all so  
I retired. I still do the  
occasional consultancy  
though.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

I don't agree with all this  
messing about with the  
weather.

SMUGGLER

Neither do I. That's why I  
retired.

INT: VIRTUAL CLASSROOM, DAY

The professor smacks his cane on a table. The boys  
sit up straight.

PROFESSOR

(gruffly)

Silence! Pay attention! Sit  
up straight!

Suddenly the image of the professor flicker, the  
professor jerks as if trying to find some sort of  
stability. When the image reforms, although it is  
still the professor, it is slightly more  
dishevelled and its attitude more relaxed. The  
voice is far more relaxed and the cane is gone.

PROFESSOR

All right kiddies, let me  
tell you about the weather.

The boys look around at each other, nervously at  
first and then when there is no admonishment, more  
openly questioning. Has the virtual teacher been  
hacked?

PROFESSOR

Since the middle of the  
twentieth century, the  
principles of weather control  
have been well known. Pump  
some heat in here, add some  
chemicals there and Bobs your  
metaphorical uncle. By the  
middle of the twenty first  
century, the development of  
organo-metal oxides and  
trans-phasic metabeams we had  
the technology to match the  
theory.

The future looked rosy. You  
need three days clear to lay  
a highway? Zap! with the  
giant space mirror and you've  
got 72 hours of perfect road  
laying weather.

(MORE)

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Want to feed the starving millions? *Whoomph!* with the magic chemicals and the dessert is changed into thousands of square miles of fertile prairie. But who was to foresee the consequences of the new technology?

INT: CUSTOMS OFFICE, DAY

The Customs Officer's attitude has clearly changed towards the Smuggler. There is now an air of animosity about the Customs Officer. He jams the clothes back into the suitcase and picks up the attaché case. He shakes it at the Smuggler.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

What's the combination of this thing?

SMUGGLER

646 on the right catch, 487 on the left.

The Customs Officer opens the case, rifles the papers and jams them untidily into the bag.

The Customs Officer looks the Smuggler directly in the eye.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

(Threateningly)

I'm old enough to remember the good weather. Your lot have taken away the sun.

SMUGGLER

Believe me, I know.

The Smuggler gathers up his luggage and starts to set off. Suddenly he decides to make a stand and turns back to the customs officer.

SMUGGLER

I be a climate engineer, but you can't blame all this on me.

(MORE)

SMUGGLER (CONT'D)

If a cutler makes a knife for carving meat and some else gets stabbed with it, you can hardly blame the cutler. I might be a smoking gun, but I didn't pull the trigger, and let's face it. You didn't make any effort to get out of the way of the bullet. So, what are you going to do about it?

The Custom's Officer isn't listening, he's already moved on. The Smuggler looks sheepish and hurriedly leaves.

EXT: AIRPORT BUILDINGS, DAY

Outside it is raining. An unshaven man in dark clothing comes forward and acknowledges The Smuggler. The second man takes the case and bundles the smuggler into a car that looks as if it has never been washed.

INT: VIRTUAL CLASSROOM, DAY

The Professor has warmed to his topic and is sitting on a desk. The boys appear genuinely interested.

PROFESSOR

So, where do we go next? We've built a million miles of highway and changed every desert into a market garden. The process costs and who but the super rich can afford to pay? And what do they want? They want the weather they want when they want it. So, dreaming of a white Christmas? It's *Zap!* with the giant space mirror and you've got 72 hours of Bing Crosby and all your Christmases be white.

(MORE)

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Dinner party with a difference? It's *Whoomph!* with the magic chemicals and it's a Caribbean beach party in Slough. Cash equals climate and Wonga equals weather.

But the planet is a closed system, so if some people get the weather they want, who gets the cast off clouds?

EXT: A RUN DOWN WAREHOUSE LINED STREET, DAY

The car pulls up outside the virtual school and The Smuggler gets out. He takes the attaché case from the other man and the car speeds off. He places the attaché case on the floor, this time upside down. He turns the latches instead of flicking them open. The bottom of the case flies open and pillar of dazzling bright lights shoots out forcing the Smuggler to step backwards. A sudden cloud of mist flies out of the case and engulfs the Smuggler. The Smuggler has brought a case of good weather with him from Los Angeles and by triggering the case he is releasing it here.

INT: VIRTUAL CLASSROOM, DAY

There is something happening outside the window, but the boys are still listening to The Professor.

PROFESSOR

The problem with such a closed system means that the energy has to go somewhere. For every place that is hot, somewhere else has to be cold. For every place that is dry, somewhere else has to be wet.

At first, the odd road here, the odd desert there was no problem, there was plenty of slack in the system.

(MORE)

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

But when weather control became the plaything of the rich and famous, the bad weather that resulted became the birthright of the poor. While London basked in subtropical sunshine, the phrase "It's grim up North," became the daily weather forecast and Scotland became somewhere in the Arctic Circle. For every member of Climate Glitterati basking in the glare of perpetual Indian summer, there are one hundred in the Meteorological Underclass who had never seen the sun.

Boy 1 realises there is something different outside the window. He rushes to the blind and presses a button that makes the blind fade away. Boy 2 looks uncertainly at the professor, but when there is no reaction, he joins Boy 1 at the window. Both look out on the brightly lit, still damp streets, wondering exactly what has happened.

EXT: A RUN DOWN WAREHOUSE LINED STREET, DAY

The mist has cleared and The Smuggler is picking himself up and brushing himself down. It is a beautiful day, the sun is shining in a bright blue sky, marred only by a small single cumulus.

INT: VIRTUAL CLASSROOM, DAY

The boys are gathered by the window. In places the image of a boy is superimposed on another as the holo-generators try and cope with two images in the same place.

The professors program continues under the dead glare of the mannequins, unwatched by the boys.

PROFESSOR

And so you need to ask yourself, are you paying for your weather, or are paying for someone elses?

(MORE)

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

And while you're thinking  
about this question take a  
look out of the window.  
Today's weather is brought to  
you courtesy of The Weather  
Smuggler.

INT: FLIGHT OF STAIRS, DAY

The corridor is empty, despite the best efforts of  
The Smuggler, there is a feeling that the time of  
sunshine is behind them.

EXT: A RUN DOWN WAREHOUSE LINED STREET, DAY

The streets are already dry and the buildings look  
fresh and clean. The Smuggler looks up into a  
perfect sky. He is smiling.

FADE OUT