

POTATO RADIO

Written by

Paul Knauer

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Houses tightly packed.

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

DAVID, 30s, shipwreck-survivor-chic, lazily gathers empty beer cans along a line of wooden fencing. Trash bag full, he heads back inside.

SECONDS LATER

An empty beer can arcs over the fence, lands in his yard.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

David sits on a sofa, flips through TV channels...

DAVID

Nope. Seen it. Stupid. Figured it out in the first five minutes. Good -- the first eight times. Nope.

He continues flipping, until...

TV PROFESSOR (V.O.)

Once you've inserted the pennies into the potato, simply connect the wires...

David leans forward.

TV PROFESSOR (V.O.)

Attach the bulb -- and, there you have it. A potato-powered light.

DAVID

No. Way.

LATER

David kneels beside a cluttered coffee table: wires, coins, metal washers and a pile of potatoes cover the surface.

In the center, two halves of a potato sit connected with wires to a small glowing light bulb.

DAVID

I'll be damned.

He grabs the TV remote.

DAVID
What else you got, Professor?

He clicks the TV on.

INT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

RUSSELL, 60s, naps in a beat-up recliner, TV remote balanced on his belly.

His eyes snap open. He looks around.

He fights to get out of the recliner, more rolling than standing. Eventually, he's successful.

He checks around the room.

RUSSELL
Hello? Yes. I can hear you. Where
the hell are you?

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

David sits in front of a small microphone connected to a rudimentary piece of electronics.

DAVID
Testing. Testing. Can anybody hear
me? One. Two. Three. Hello?

He sits back, looks at the TV, which sits paused on a shot of the TV PROFESSOR. Across the bottom of the screen: "How to build a mini radio transmitter."

He pulls the battery from his homemade device.

DAVID
That's cool, Professor. But,
there's no way to know if it works.

INT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Russell stands in the center of the room, arms wide.

RUSSELL
Where'd you go?

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

David sits on the sofa, thumb-wrestling with himself. One of his thumbs pins the other.

DAVID
Victory is mine!

LATER

He attempts to balance the remote on his nose.

LATER

David sits upside down on the sofa. A tissue dances in the air above his mouth, suspended by his breath. He lets it fall over his face.

DAVID
Kill me now, please.

He pulls the tissue from his face. Notices a potato on the floor, and -- the transmitter on the coffee table.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Potatoes cover the entire floor, each wired to the one next to it. Hundreds of them.

David sits in the center, his little transmitter and microphone in hand.

DAVID
Okay then, let's see what we have.

David connects the final wire, lays on his best "DJ" voice...

DAVID
Welcome to Potato Radio, my
kitchen's number one music station.

He's getting into it now...

DAVID
It's a beautiful morning at
K-P-T-O, home to all your potato-
related hits. Are you ready to do
the mashed potato?

INT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Russell, once again napping in his chair, wakes with a bolt.

MINUTES LATER

Russell paces the room, thermometer in mouth, phone at his ear...

RUSSELL

My breathing is fine. What I need
to know --

He checks the thermometer.

RUSSELL

It's normal. But, what about --
does the COVID make you hear
voices?

(beat)

What difference does it -- ?
Potatoes, okay? They're talking
about potatoes.

(beat)

I don't need to see a -- you know --
never mind. I'm sorry I called.

He tosses the phone aside.

KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Russell fumbles with a large sheet of aluminum foil. He wraps
it around his head, pokes a couple of eye holes.

Seeing his reflection in the glass of his microwave...

RUSSELL

You look like damn idiot, Russell.

Frustrated, he crumbles the foil into a ball, throws it out.

He grabs a couple of beers from the fridge and stomps out.

EXT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Russell pops open a lawn chair and slumps into it.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

David finishes a sandwich, sits back down with the mic.

DAVID

And we're back.

RUSSELL (O.S.)
Aw, come on! One more word about
potatoes, and I swear to God --

David looks around.

Outside his open kitchen window: Russell stomps around the
backyard next door.

Into the mic...

DAVID
You can hear me?

David watches as Russell looks to the sky.

RUSSELL
Hell, yes, I can hear you. Now, get
outta my head.

David quickly snaps the transmitter off, watches as Russell
slowly calms, sits back in the chair.

Russell downs a beer, tosses the empty can over the fence --
into David's yard.

David tenses.

DAVID
I believe we'll be putting a stop
to that.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

David, multiple bags of potatoes in hand, struggles to enter
his house.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

David sits in front of the TV, taking notes.

TV PROFESSOR (V.O.)
For this project, you'll need some
balsa wood and a bit of string.

DAVID
Oh, we'll be going a bit bigger
than that.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

David, stands next to a small catapult loaded with potatoes. His transmitter sits on a picnic table next to him.

He turns the transmitter on.

INT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Russell sleeps in his recliner.

His eyes snap open.

RUSSELL

Son of a --

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

DAVID

A quick look at the K-P-T-O forecast for tonight. A strong front moves through the area overnight, bringing severe weather and the possibility of potato-sized hail. Keep your head down and your umbrella open.

He yanks a rope connected to the catapult.

INT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Russell fights to free himself from the recliner.

The roof above him thunders with the THUMPING of potatoes.

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

David watches as Russell stomps from his house.

Into the mic...

DAVID

Surrender?

EXT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Russell spins, searching for his tormentor.

RUSSELL

Hell no, I don't surrender.

He's hit with a torrent of french fries.

He turns to see: David. Next door, loading the catapult, this time with empty beer cans.

David readies to pull the rope.

Eyeing the beer cans, Russell calms as a thought sweeps over him...

RUSSELL

This is my fault, isn't it?

David nods.

Russell tosses a can over the fence.

DAVID

Seriously?

RUSSELL

That one's got beer in it.

David turns off the transmitter, unhooks the wires, makes a show of throwing it away.

EXT. DAVID/RUSSELL'S HOUSES - BACKYARD - DAY

The two men sit on opposite sides of the fence, drinking beer together.

RUSSELL

I thought you were still Charlie.

DAVID

Charlie?

RUSSELL

What I mean to say is, I had a bit of a feud going with my old neighbor. Didn't know he moved out, you moved in. That man complained about everything. One day, I decided to give him something real to complain about.

David nods, thinks for a moment.

DAVID

I was in your head?

RUSSELL
Clear as a bell. How'd you -- ?

DAVID
I'm guessing you have fillings?

RUSSELL
My teeth? A couple.

DAVID
Probably that, then.

RUSSELL
That's weird.

Russell takes a long swig.

RUSSELL
What's with you and potatoes?

DAVID
I think I'd rather hear more about
Charlie.

The conversations continues...

FADE OUT.