

Twitter Thread by Pulp Librarian



Pulp Librarian

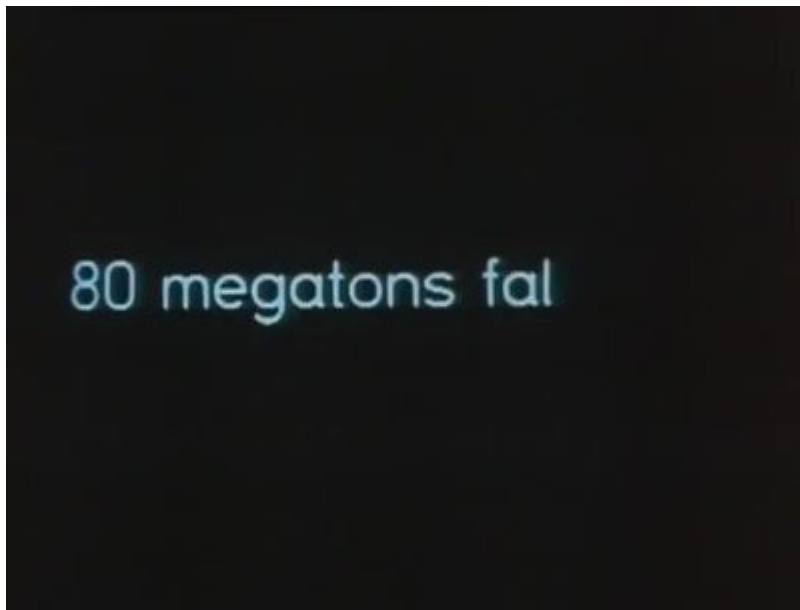
@PulpLibrarian



On 23 September 1984 the BBC broadcast the apocalypse: the story of nuclear war and its effects on the people of Sheffield. Filmed on a shoestring budget it still causes nightmares to this day.

This thread is not for the squeamish.

This the story of Threads...



In 1965 the BBC had filmed *The War Game*, a fictional docu-drama about a nuclear attack on Britain. However under pressure from the government the BBC withdrew it from screening. It was finally released in 1966 as a film in selected theatres.



For many years the withdrawal of *The War Game* had rankled many at the BBC. Surely it was a public broadcaster's duty to show the public what the reality of nuclear war would mean. Finally in 1982 they did so.

09 58

Enemy attack warning received by 250 carrier control points in major police stations. Police sound sirens – warning public to take cover. Every second is vital.



A Guide To Armageddon was a documentary for the BBC's peak-time science series Q.E.D. Produced by Mick Jackson it graphically depicted the effect of a one megaton explosion on London. It also explored how well people could survive such a blast if they were in a fallout shelter.



Jackson had carefully researched his subject and knew how under-prepared the UK was for nuclear war. The physical and psychological effects of atomic attack would catapult what was left of Britain back to a 14th century mode of living, a time when bubonic plague killed millions.

THE Hydrogen Bomb

WHAT THE HYDROGEN BOMB DOES

The hydrogen bomb's power is reckoned in millions of tons of high explosive; its searing fireball, white and blinding, is as hot as the sun's interior. It can gouge a crater in the earth a mile wide and up to 200 feet deep; and its dust can cause death or sickness hundreds of miles away if proper precautions are not taken. The menace is threefold, for the hydrogen bomb strikes with heat, blast and deadly radiation.

HEAT from the fireball, a mile-and-a-half across, instantly vaporizes anything it touches before it wears into the upper skies. Furthest during the first ten seconds, its rays can burn exposed skin or set fire to houses as far away as 10 to 15 miles. They can still be felt at 50 miles.

BLAST surges outwards at the speed of sound, accompanied by a hurricane wind. It enters doors and windows, causing buildings to "explode". It lifts or overthrows walls in its path. An overhead burst crushes roofs through their supporting walls. The worst danger is that people might be struck by flying wreckage, or hurled to the ground or against walls or other objects. Light

damage from an air burst could be found as far as 20 to 25 miles from the centre of the explosion, and windows would be broken even further away.

RADIATION The rising fireball sucks up and concentrates debris and dust and this is carried downwind to drift slowly back to earth as "fall-out". There it continues to give out dangerous radiation. Radiation is particularly dangerous because it cannot be felt or smelled, tasted, heard or seen. It can be detected and measured only with sensitive instruments. Even if you kept all the fall-out dust off you, you might still be injured, if you stayed in the open, by radiation from fall-out many yards away.

What YOU could do

Simple precautions which you and your family could take against heat, blast and radiation could save your lives. Heat and blast are familiar from the last war. Radiation is new, and only a thick shield of metal, masonry, earth, or other heavy matter will protect you against it. Used in the last emergency, an ordinary house with its thick brick walls should reduce the danger from radiation to some extent. Hide in some place you could do it, if war looked likely.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW Join the Civil Defence Corps or the Auxiliary Fire Service. They will teach you how to help yourself and others if war should come.

APPLY TO YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL OFFICES

The photograph shows Britain's newest test explosion at Christmas Island on 15 May, 1952. The towering mushroom, seen from 200 miles, has placed the local island in shadow.

What CIVIL DEFENCE can do!

There is no absolute safeguard against an H-bomb attack. Nothing could stop water-spread missiles and devastation, but life would go on. It would be disrupted and damaged, with many families having to leave their homes. But the nation would survive, and the world would go on. The nation would survive, and the world would go on. The nation would survive, and the world would go on.

THE HEADQUARTERS SECTION

Controls operations, provides scientific intelligence, establishes "fall-out" danger zones, arranges communications.

THE WARDEN SECTION

Provides the men, cool-headed and resourceful, who are the link between civil defence and the public and direct the other services where they are most needed.

THE RESCUE SECTION

Using specialist equipment, frees people trapped under wreckage or in shattered buildings. Duties may range from demolition work to providing first aid.

THE WELFARE SECTION

Houses, feeds and cares for the homeless and hungry.

THE AMBULANCE & CASUALTY COLLECTING SECTION

Groups first aid, give the wounded to the ambulance, and take them to hospital.

The Fire, Police, Nursing and other allied services, with their normal duties divided by the emergency, link with the Civil Defence Corps in carrying out the plan for survival.

The BBC then agreed to Jackson's idea of a drama based around his research. Like The War Game it would show a nuclear strike from the point of view of civilians caught up in its terrifying aftermath.

However it wouldn't focus on London...

