

# THE DAY AFTER



*The Day After.* ABC.

**In America, the apocalypse has never felt closer.**

Glimpses of America befalling disaster have been littered throughout TV and cinema from *The Twilight Zone*'s [Time Enough at Last](#) (1959) to the small budget gritty, mini-masterpieces of the '80s:

- *The Day After* (1983, [trailer](#))
- *The Terminator* (1984, [trailer](#))
- *Miracle Mile* (1988, [trailer](#))

These films were largely meditations on the fragility of society with nuclear weapons. They showed in painful detail the effects that would befall America if disarmament or AI were to go sideways.

The next generation of these films were extrapolations into climate change:

- [The Day After Tomorrow](#) (2004)
- [2012](#) (2009)
- [San Andreas](#) (2015)

HBO's *The Last of Us* (2023, [trailer](#)) ignited a new generation of American end-times films. In this series, a fungal infection overtakes modern America and destabilizes it to the degree of producing tiny factions fighting for survival.

When Patient Zero is brought to a leading epidemiologist, she only has one idea to contain the spread:

"Bomb"

Alex Garland (*Ex-Machina*, *Annihilation*, *Devs*) takes a new perspective on the apocalypse film. No doubt spurred by recent political events we see an implosion of America to divisiveness. But his movie flows beyond the twittershpere and the protests, disintegrating the country into full-blown *Civil War*.

In this landscape of cinematic cataclysms, America's portrayal as teetering on the brink of destruction reveals a deep-seated cultural psyche grappling with its vulnerabilities. From the chilling Cold War era contemplations to the unnerving depictions of technological and ecological disasters, these narratives transcend mere entertainment.

These films, each a piece of America's cinematic anthology, serve not only as cautionary tales but also as catalysts for introspection, urging us to envision and strive for a world where such apocalyptic landscapes remain firmly within the realm of fiction.

**For More:**

*Civil War* [trailer](#). In theaters now.

Kirsten Dunst is no stranger to the world from ending. She's a war photographer in *Civil War* hell-bent on making it to the White House. In *Melancholia* ([trailer](#)), she just wants to watch the world burn.

The remarkable irony of a bookworm in the apocalypse. Watch the [iconic scene](#) from *The Twilight Zone's Time Enough At Last*.