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Several neighbors hope to find safety in the only bomb shelter on their street when an announcement comes over the radio that enemy missiles are approaching. Can it shelter all of them? Does its owner let them in? Here is the story.....

The Shelter
Rod Serling

SYNOPSIS OF ACT ONE: On a summer evening, a birthday celebration is going on at Dr. Stockton's. Among those present are his neighbors: the Hendersons, the Weisses and the Harlowes. In the midst of it comes unexpectedly over the radio the announcement of the President of the United States declaring a state of emergency of for suspected enemy missiles approaching. The party breaks up and the neighbors hurry home. However, shortly afterwards they return one after another to the Stockton house for the simple reason that they want to survive want to share with the Stocktons the bomb shelter which is the only one on their street.

ACT TWO (abridged)

OUTSIDE STOCKTON HOME
HENDERSON: It'll land any minute. I just know it. It's going to land any minute
MRS. HENDERSON: (grabs hold of him) What are we going to do?

Throughout above and following dialogue, a portable radio carried by one of the children carries the following announcement:

ANNOUNCERS VOICE: This is Conelrad. This is Conelrad. We are still in a state of Yellow Alert. If you are a public official or government employee with an emergency assignment, or a civil defense worker, you should report to your post

immediately. If you are a public official or government employee...
...MRS. HARLOWE: Jerry, ask again.HARLOWE: Dont waste you
time. He wont let anyone in. He said he didnt have any room or
supplies there and its designed for three
people.MRS.HENDERSON: Whatll we do?HARLOWE: Maybe we
ought to pick out just one basement and go to work on it. Pull all our
stuff. Food, water, everything.MRS.HARLOWE: It isnt fair. (she
points toward Stockton house) Hes down there in a bomb shelter
completely safe. And our kids have to just wait around for a bomb to
drop and HENDERSON: Lets just go down into his basement and
break down the door?A chorus of voices greet this with assent.As
HENDERSON rushes through toward the basement entrance,
HARLOWE overtakes him saying:HARLOWE: Wait a minute, wait
a minute. All of us couldnt fit in there. That would be crazy to even
try.WEISS: Why dont we draw lots? Pick out one
family?HARLOWE: What difference would it make? He wont let us
in.HENDERSON: We can all march down there and tell him hes got
the whole street against him. We could do that.HARLOWE: What
good would that do? I keep telling you. Even if we were to break
down the door, it couldnt accommodate all of us. Wed just be killing
everybody and for no reason.MRS. HENDERSON: If it saves even
one of these kids out hereI call that a reason.The voice comes up
again.WEISS: Jerry, you know him better than nay of us. Youre his
best friend. Why dont you go down again? Try to talk to him.
Pleased with him. Tell him to pick out one family Draw lots or
something HENDERSON: One family, meaning yours, Weiss,

huh?WEISS: (whirls around to him) Why not? Ive got a three-month-old infantMRS. HENDERSON: What difference does that make? Is your babys life any more precious than our kids?WEISS: (shouting at her) I never said that. If youre going to start trying to argue about who deserves to live more than the next one HENDERSON: Why dont you shut your mouth, Weiss? (with a wild, illogical anger) Thats the way it is when the foreigners come over here. Aggressive, greedy, semi-AmericansWEISS: (his face goes white) Why you garbage-brained idiot youMRS. HENDERSON: It still goes, Weiss! I bet youre at the bottom of the listWEISS suddenly flings himself through the crowd toward the man and theres a brief, hand-to-hand fight between them broken up by HARLOWE who stands between them breathless.HARLOWE: Keep it up, both of you. Just keep it up. We wont need a bomb. We can slaughter each other. MRS.WEISS: (pleading) Marty, go down to Bills shelter again. Ask him WEISS: Ive already asked him. It wouldnt do any good.One again the siren sounds and the people seem to move closer together, staring up toward the night sky. Off in the distance we see searchlights.HARLOWE: Searchlights. It must be coming closer.HENDERSON: (as he suddenly pushes HARLOWE aside and heads for the steps) Im going down there and get him to open up that door. I dont care what the rest of you think. Thats the only thing left to do.MAN # 1: Hes right. Come on, lets do it.INSIDE THE SHELTERGRACE is holding tight to PAUL. STOCKTON stands close to the door listening to the noises from outside as they approach. Theres a pounding on the shelter door that

reverberates. OUTSIDE THE SHELTER HENDERSON: Bill? Bill Stockton? Youve got a bunch of your neighbors out here who want to stay alive. Now you can open the door and talk to us and figure out with us how many can come in there. Or else you can just keep doing what youre doing and well fight our way in there. HARLOWE appears and pushes his way through the group and goes over to the shelter door. HARLOWE: Bill. This is Jerry. They mean business out here. STOCKTONS VOICE: And I mean business in here. Ive already told you, Jerry. Youre wasting you time. Youre wasting precious time that could be use for something else. like figuring out how you can survive. NAM # 1: Why dont we get a big, heavy log to break the door down? HENDERSON: We could go over to Bennett Avenue. Phil Kline has some giant logs in his basement. Ive seen them. Lets get one. And well just tell Kline to keep his mouth shut as to why we want it. WEISS: Lets get hold of ourselves. Lets stop and think for a minute HENDERSON: (turning to face WEISS) Nobody cares what you think. You or your kind. I thought I made that clear upstairs. I think the first order of business is to get you out of here. With this he strikes out, smashing his fist into WEISSs face in a blow so unexpected and so wild that WEISS, totally unprepared, is knocked against the wall. His wife screams and, still holding the baby, rushes to him. Theres a commotion as several men try to grab the neighbor and HARLOWE is immediately at WEISSs side trying to help him to his feet. Once again the sirens blast. HENDERSON: (should over the noise and commotion) Come on, lets get something to smash this door down. They start out of cellar toward

the steps. **INSIDE THE SHELTER** **STOCKTON** slowly turns to face his wife. The angry screaming cries of the people ring in their ears even as they depart. **GRACE** (looks up) Bill? Who were those people? **STOCKTON** (turning to stare toward the door) "Those people?" Those are our neighbors, Grace. Our friends. The people we've lived with and alongside for twenty years. (then in a different fixed expression and in a different tone) Come on. Paul. Let's put stuff up against this door. Everything we can. The man and boy then start to pile up a barricade, using furniture, the generator, books, any movable object they can get their hands on. **OUTSIDE OF THE SHELTER** The mob marches down the street carrying a large heavy log that is perhaps fifteen feet long. Their own shouts mix with the sound of the intermittent siren and with the voice of the announcer on the Conelrad station. **ANNOUNCERS VOICE:** We've been asked to once again remind the population that they are to remain calm, stay off the streets. This is urgent. Please remain off the streets. Everything possible is being done in the way of protection. But the military and important civil defense vehicles must have the streets clear. So you're once again reminded to remain off the streets. Remain off the streets! The minute the mob gathers before the **STOCKTON** house, they smash into it, carrying the giant log. They move down the cellar steps. As the log smashes into the shelter door, the siren goes up louder and more piercing and it is at this moment that we see both **WEISS** and **HARLOW** join the men on the heavy log to lend their support to it. **INSIDE THE SHELTER** **STOCKTON** and Paul lean against it as it starts to give under the weight, under the

pressure. The air is filled with angry shouts, the intermittent siren, the cries of women and children. **INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE SHELTER** And it all reaches one vast pitch just as the door is forced open. **PAUL** and **STOCKTON** are pushed back into the shelter and just at this moment the light goes on in the basement. The siren also reaches its top and then suddenly goes off and there is absolute dead silence for a long moment. Then from the portable radio in the corner comes **ANNOUNCERS VOICE**: This is Conelrad. This is Conelrad. Remain tuned for an important message. Remain tuned for an important message. (a pause) The President of the United States has just announced that the previously unidentified objects have now been definitely identified as being satellites. Repeat. There are no enemy missiles approaching. Repeat, there are no enemy missiles approaching. The objects have been identified as satellites. They are harmless and we are in no danger. Repeat. We are in no danger. The state of emergency has officially been called off. We are in no danger. Repeat. There is no enemy attack. There is no enemy attack. **MRS. WEISS**: (her eyes closed and crying softly) Thank God. Oh, thank God. **WEISS**: (in a whisper, his face bruised and blood clotted) Amen to that. **HENDERSON**: Hey, Marty MartyI went crazy. You understand that, don't you? I just went crazy. I didn't mean all the things I said. (he wets his lips, his voice shaking) We were all of us we were so scaredso confused. (he holds out his hands in a gesture) Well, it's no wonder really, is it? I mean... .. well, you can understand why we blew our tops a little. There's a murmur of voices, a few half-hearted nods, but they're all still in a

state of shock. HARLOWE: I dont think Martys going to hold it against you. (then turning to STOCKTON) I just hope Bill wont hold this (he points to the wreckage around him) against us. Well pay for the damage, Bill. Well take up a collection right away. As STOCKTON walks past them across the cellar and up toward the stairs, all eyes are on him and theres an absolute dead silence. WEISS: (his voice shaky and nervous) We could we could have a block party or something tomorrow night. A big celebration. I think we deserve one now. He looks around smiling at the others, a nervous smiles born of a carry-over of fear and the realization that something has taken hold of all of them now. Something deadening in its effect and disquieting beyond words. STOCKTON takes a step up on the stairs then stops and turns back toward them. His face is expressionless. HARLOWE: (with phony laughter desperately trying to relieve situation) Block partys not a bad idea. (looking around at the others) Anything to get back to normal. STOCKTON: (looks from face to face and slowly shakes his head) Normal? (a pause) I dont know. I dont know what "normal" is. I thought I did, but I dont any more. HARLOWE: I told you wed pay for the damages. STOCKTON: (stares at him) The damages? (he nods) I wonder if we realize just what those damages are? (he looks from face to face again) Maybe the worst of them was finding out just what were like when were normal. The kind of people we are. Just underneath the surface. I mean all of us. A lot of naked animals who attach such great importance to staying alive that they claw their neighbors to death just for the privilege. (he leans against the stairway

wall, suddenly desperately tired, very softly as he turns away from them) We were spared a bomb tonight.....but I wonder if we werent destroyed even without it.He continues up the steps. 100Test
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