

MAX HEADROOM
"Academy"
2x01

Fan Transcribed by
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20 MINUTES INTO THE FUTURE...

EXT. THE FRINGES - DAY

Establishing shot of people living in The Fringes. Poor people warming themselves by the fire.

We pan over to reveal the unmistakable pink bus of Big Time Television.

CUT TO:

INT. BIG TIME TELEVISION BUS

Opens on a close up of a TV showing a radical music video for a cover of "Summertime Blues", including clips from "Jac Mac & Rad Boy Go!".

*Sometimes I wonder what I'm a-gonna do / There ain't
no cure for the summertime blues...*

We pull back to see Reg rocking out to the music, with his dog Fang by his side.

BLANK REG
THIS! IS! BLANK! REG!
YEEEEAAAAH!

The music is rudely interrupting Blank Dominique's own session in front of a TV screen.

BLANK DOMINIQUE
Reg.

Reg doesn't hear her over the insane volume of the music.

BLANK DOMINIQUE
Reg!

Fed up, Dominique stands up, goes over to him, and turns the music down.

BLANK REG
Dom, if it's not loud, it doesn't
work!

Dom grabs a pair of headphones and plants them (carefully, but forcefully) around Reg's mohawk-clad skull.

The music volume lowers considerably as Dom returns to her show.

The too-tanned, big-haired blonde host of Shoppin' Spree, a network TV shopping channel, grins predatorily at her audience. Numerous warnings and various calls-to-action flash across the borders of the screen. "CALL NOW!", "LIMITED TIME OFFER", etc.

TV HOST
 Are you tired of complaints about
 sagging buns? Or flat and naughty
 little muffins? Then this next
 product is just for you!

Dom perks up at this.

TV HOST
 (cont'd)
 And our first 23 callers will
 receive, absolutely free, this
 beautiful diamond necklace!

Dom, visibly delighted at this "free" bonus, gingerly
 inserts her credit-tube into a payment device in front of
 the TV, and enters what is presumably a pin-code.

BLANK REG
 I don't know how you can watch that
 drivel.

BLANK DOMINIQUE
 (unfazed by Reg's
 criticism)
 One of my little pleasures. Makes me
 happy.

TV HOST
 If you want the real thing for the
 right stuff, *Zik-Zak Muffin* is it.
 And the packaging is perfect as a
 soiree purse!

With a flash of TV static, the giggling visage of AI
 talking head, Max Headroom, pops onto her screen.

MAX
 You know, this home
 shop-shop-shopping show is great.

Dom half-smirks at Max, mockingly, knowing what's coming.

MAX
 (cont'd)
 From start to finish, it's just
 sell, sell, sell, sell, sell, sell.
 At last - HA! - a show with no-no-no
 commercials!

BLANK DOMINIQUE
 (angry)
 GO AWAY!

Max vanishes from her screen in a puff of snow.

BLANK DOMINIQUE
Reg, Max is ruining my program.

BLANK REG
(still watching videos,
cupping hand to headphone)
Good!

Dom looks back at the TV screen, which has since reverted to the home shopping show.

BLANK DOMINIQUE
Honestly, someone at Network 23
ought to do something about him.

Suddenly her TV show is interrupted yet again. This time it's not Max. It's something... else.

BLANK DOMINIQUE
Reg... Reg, come here.

Weird faces and cartoon sound effects flash across the screen like a blipvert. I'M THE KRACKER, Z I P P I N G, and 1 1 0 0 1 0 0 0 are briefly visible in-between the audiovisual insanity.

BLANK REG
Reg!

Irritated, yet again, Dom stands up and RIPS the headphones off his head. Reg yelps.

BLANK REG
Ow! Bleeding hell, Dom, nearly
ripped me bleeding ears off.

BLANK DOMINIQUE
(irritated)
Come here!

BLANK REG
(also now irritated)
Blimey, what is it?

BLANK DOMINIQUE
Look.

Dom points towards the chaos on the screen.

BLANK REG
Well, that's not Max, Dom.

(beat as Reg takes it in)

BLANK REG
It's those 'zippers' again! They
(MORE)

BLANK REG (CONT'D)
 must have a *hell* of a setup.
 Zipping into network transmissions
 takes a lot of power.

BLANK DOMINIQUE
 Well, they're *ruining* my shopping.

BLANK REG
 (clearly admiring)
 Takes a lot of *nerve* as well.

CUT TO:

INT. NETWORK 23 BOARD ROOM

Inside the dark black void that is the Network 23 board room, it's members review footage of the 'zipping' incident. We see the same footage Reg and Dom saw previously, but projected on the massive television on the board room wall.

LAUREN
 How are they doing this?

ASHWELL
 (quick to jump in)
 Well, you see, they hack into our
 satellite transponders and they
 hijack our frequency.

CHEVIOT
 (annoyed)
 Ashwell. Lauren means, "how are they
 cracking our security?"

ASHWELL
 Oh.

EDWARDS
 (hard, on a mission)
 They flatten our ratings every time
 they zip us like that. Look at those
 figures.

Edwards pushes a button and a graph appears on the big screen, and everyone looks.

A line graph appears on the screen showing real-time ratings of various competing networks. They all flicker up and down erratically, but Network 23 is clearly taking a hit.

EDWARDS
 (cont'd, off screen)
Shoppin' Spree TV is diving.

EDWARDS
(cont'd, pointing finger
agressively)
Viewers won't stand for this!

ASHWELL
This has got to be stopped!

LAUREN
This is dangerous... If they can
break into our carrier that easily,
nothing's safe.

ASHWELL
Our bank accounts, our medical
records...

EDWARDS
(getting to the point,
glancing from Ashwell to
Cheviot)
Never mind that. What about
ratings?

Edwards has clearly called out the elephant in the room.

CHEVIOT
I've already alerted Bryce Lynch.
He's been trying to track them for
some time. He was a hacker himself,
you know. Send a thief to catch a
thief.

While Cheviot is talking, a secretary off screen announces
his call is ready.

SECRETARY
(o.c.)
Bryce is on view-phone, Mr. Cheviot.

CHEVIOT
Ah, Bryce.

Wide shot as we see the face of Bryce Lynch, boy genius,
fill the big screen. The board members all turn their gaze
to him.

CHEVIOT
(cont'd)
You get that last zipping?

BRYCE
(irritated)
Of course.

BRYCE
(cont'd)
I've isolated the satellite they're
hacking into. Now, it wasn't easy,
because they hacked our security...

CHEVIOT
(pushing through Bryce's
boasting)
Bryce, just the conclusion will be
fine.

BRYCE
(still irked, now at his
intelligence being brushed
off)
The conclusion, Mr. Cheviot, is that
they are extremely good. But not as
good as I am, naturally.

The board members shuffle uncomfortably in their seats.

BRYCE
(o.c.)
Would you like to watch my endgame?

LAUREN
(sotto)
He thinks this is a game.

CHEVIOT
(sotto)
He thinks everything's a game.

CHEVIOT
(cont'd, his gaze turning
to the screen)
Don't you, Bryce?

BRYCE
Yes. I often play chess with the 23
computer. And I often beat it.

A beep emanates from Bryce's terminal.

BRYCE
Ah, here we go. Would you like to
watch?

Edwards looks especially uncomfortable.

Bryce transfers his display to their big screen so they
can see it all happening.

A Security Systems global security display appears,
showing Bryce tracking down the source of the zipping,

directing Metrocops where to go. Bryce's keyboard CLACKING in the background provides an aural backdrop.

Cheviot watches as the Bryce works his magic.

Suddenly the map begins to close in to street level. Blips on the map flash. Cheviot gets visibly excited.

CHEVIOT

You've got it! Well done, Bryce.

CUT TO:

INT. BRYCE'S LAB

Bryce is reviewing a printout. His confidence drops. He's concerned.

BRYCE

(to o.c. Cheviot)

Uh, I think there's a little error.
Can you hang on just one minute?

Cheviot and the board look back and forth at each other, concerned... and a bit confused.

Meanwhile, Bryce is thinking hard, furiously hacking away at his keyboard. A graphic appears showing *something*, but we're not entirely sure what it is.

Finally...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. NETWORK 23 BOARD ROOM

BRYCE

There's your target. That's it, Mr.
Cheviot. You've got your zipper.

Cheviot, quite pleased, picks up his telephone receiver.

CHEVIOT

Let me have security.

CUT TO:

INT. BRYCE'S LAB

Bryce smiles, feeling good about his quick thinking.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FRINGES, BIG-TIME BUS - DAY

BLANK REG

(o.c., on air)

You're tuned to *Big-Time*
Television. Where music is the
brandy of the damned... so, let's
pop the cork on this!

Metrocop vans swarm the area, and officers pile out of them.

They've come for Reg.

METROCOP
(background)
Go, go, go!

CUT TO:

EST. CITY/FRINGES NETWORK 23 SKYLINE - DUSK

CUT TO:

INT. NETWORK 23 CONTROL ROOM

Edison Carter swaggers into Control, huge video camera at his hip.

THEORA
(to a view-phone, at her desk)
Hold on, Dominique, he just walked in.

EDISON
(to Theora, conversationally)
You see what that explosion did to the people in that city, you'll know why they call it a "breeder reactor".

THEORA
(ignoring what he said)
Edison, it's Dominique. Blank Reg has been arrested.

EDISON
(beat, looks at the view-phone)
What happened?

DOM
Metrocops. They said he was "signal zipping".

EDISON
(shocked)
Reg? That's crazy. That's way out of his league.

DOM
Reg asked me to call you. Edison, you've got to help him.

EDISON
Where are they holding him?

DOM
Metro jail 42.

Edison jots it down in his notepad.

EDISON
I'm on my way.

CUT TO:

EXT. METROJAIL 42 - DAY

We truck past a Metrocop van as the back door opens in front of "Metro Jail 42". Blank Reg, "Metrocop" branded sack over his head and torso, is pulled out of the back by a pair of cops.

The cops lead him inside.

METROCOP
Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. METROJAIL 42

A half-dozen citizens are in a smoky, poorly lit waiting room. A pair of cops watching everything.

We follow a man and woman as they enter, and approach a view-phone terminal with a credit tube hole.

COMPUTER
(o.c.)
Insert credit tube.

The woman inserts her credit tube, and the machine beeps approvingly. The view-screen comes to life as the prisoner they're visiting appears on the screen. An impersonal, and more importantly, profitable way for people to visit prisoners in jail.

We don't hear their conversation; instead we truck right to the next booth where a female attorney is talking to her client on the view-screen.

ATTY. KEELER
Now, just tell me the truth. Were you zipping into Network 23 transmissions from Big-Time?

BLANK REG
Do me a favor, girl. There's not enough power in that bus to zip up me trousers, never mind a network satellite.

ATTY. KEELER
I don't think you understand the
(MORE)

ATTY. KEELER (CONT'D)
severity of this charge. Network
zipping is a prime offense. Sir --

BLANK REG
(boiling)
I understand one thing, darling:
someone's trying to frame me. And
when I find who, I'm gonna
unilaterally *murder* the swine.

At this, a box in the background of Reg's room begins
sounding a brief, but frantic alarm.

ATTY. KEELER
Watch your threats! We are being
monitored.

Reg blows this off, not caring.

ATTY. KEELER
(cont'd)
Now, we might have a chance, as long
as you aren't a recidivist.

BLANK REG
Me? No way. I can't even spell it.

ATTY. KEELER
(surprised)
You don't have a criminal profile?

BLANK REG
That's right. Of course I don't.

Edison arrives, visible to the view-screen.

BLANK REG
(desperately)
Edison! You've got to get me out of
this! Someone is setting me up.
Right up.

A BONG noise sounds, and a computer-like voice begins an
announcement.

COMPUTER
All rise for the most highly rated
judge.

A door labeled "CHAMBERS" creaks open, and a TV
view-screen cart is rolled out by two Metrocops.

JUDGE
Please approach the bench.

The prosecution and the defense (Reg's attorney) insert their floppy disks into the front of the view-screen, each causing a BUZZING acceptance in resposne.

PROSECUTION

Your honor, the network has reason to believe that an indictment of first-degree zipping should be brought against this defendant.

JUDGE

(pointing to Reg's attorney)
Counsel for the defense.

ATTY. KEELER

I move for dismissal on the grounds that the network has no first-hand corroboration that my client committed this crime.

PROSECUTION

He's a Blank, your honor.

Keeler looks in horror that her associate would bring that up.

JUDGE

(concerned)
A Blank? In that case, he's beyond my jurisprudence...

JUDGE

(beat)
Video Court!

ATTY. KEELER

But you haven't evaluated my floppy disc!

The Judge slams his gavel down hard.

JUDGE

The charges stand.

The Metrocops roll the view-screen cart away. Meanwhile, another Metrocop rolls over a comically large, board game-like spinner with days of the week printed on it.

ATTY. KEELER

We've got to pick a court date.

ATTY. KEELER

(to Edison)
Would you care to do the honors?

EDISON
 (weary at the absurdity of
 it all)
 No thanks. All yours.

The attorney turns to the wheel and gives the spinner a big turn. Around and around it goes, finally landing on "Wednesday".

BLANK REG
 (wistfully)
 I play *Grateful Dead* on
 Wednesdays...

ATTY. KEELER
 (exasperated)
 It only gives me one day to prepare
 your defense.

The attorney walks away, getting to work.

BLANK REG
 (to Edison)
 You believe me, don't you, old son?

Edison looks at Reg, going into full on "supportive" mode.

EDISON
 Yeah. You didn't. You couldn't. And
 you wouldn't!

EDISON
 (cont'd, contemplative)
 Question is, who did?

Reg quietly shakes his head; he has no idea, either.

CUT TO:

EST. NETWORK 23 TOWER - NIGHT

CUT TO:

INT. NETWORK 23 CONTROL ROOM - THEORA'S DESK - NIGHT
 Edison walks in, headed for Theora's desk.

THEORA
 How's Reg?

EDISON
 He's pretty angry, all right.

EDISON
 (cont'd, leaning in on her
 screen)
 What do ya' got?

We see the same video graphics from the Board Room raid scene on Theora's display.

THEORA

Well, Bryce coordinated the targeting for that raid. It seems he had a problem and it switched from mid-set, which is very strange.

EDISON

Can it be switched?

THEORA

Yeah, it could, but, uh, why?

THEORA

(cont'd)

Okay, the sat cam program produces a lot of temporary files. Then discards them.

Her display shifts to a visual representation of files being moved into the PURGE DIRECTORY.

THEORA

All those bits and pieces go into the purge directory, which is a sort of an electronic trash bin.

EDISON

(following)

Mm-hmm.

THEORA

(cont'd)

Which the systems operator empties at the end of the day. Everything ends up in there. Discarded files, bits and pieces of video outtakes, messages. I'll see what I can find.

CUT TO:

INT. BRYCE'S LAB - NIGHT

Bryce sits with his hands arched in front of his face, deep in thought. Max, in the background, observes him.

MAX

Praying, Bryce?

BRYCE

No.

MAX

(wistfully)

No need, huh?

BRYCE

No.

MAX
Oh, good. Oh, good.

MAX
(cont'd)
Game of chess?

BRYCE
No thanks, Max.

MAX
(persistent)
You can be white.

BRYCE
(vexxed)
No thanks, Max. Really. I'm
thinking. I'm evaluating a recent
strategy.

MAX
I know.

MAX
Did it work?

BRYCE
(surprised)
What?!

MAX
(in on it)
Switching the coordinates.

BRYCE
How on earth did you know?

MAX
I happened to be flit-flit-flitting
about the mainframe and I just
watched the show.

BRYCE
You won't tell... will you?

Max huffs in a way where he seems indecisive; we're not
sure what he'll do. Probably not.

CUT TO:

INT. NETWORK 23 CONTROL ROOM - THEORA'S DESK - NIGHT
Theora and Edison are still poured over her monitor.

THEORA
These files write over themselves a
lot before they're thrown away. I'll
(MORE)

THEORA (CONT'D)
get the computer to extrapolate it
for us.

Theora punches some keys. The graphic on her display changes to a globe that slowly contracts it's view, closer and closer.

THEORA
Now, those are the coordinates of
the target. But look, they switch
and give us another set.

EDISON
What are the new coordinates?

Theora reaches over, pulling a fresh readout from the line printer behind them.

THEORA
(reading)
Big-Time Television...

EDISON
What are the original coordinates?
I'm beginning to get a very nasty
tingle in my spine.

MURRAY
(listening in, o.c.)
Well, that's good. Probably means a
story.

Murray walks in, all business.

THEORA
(irritated)
It's not nice to eavesdrop, Murray.

MURRAY
It's not nice to falsify evidence,
either. Let's have the coordinates.

THEORA
My god, it's ACS. (beat) The
Academy of Computer Sciences.

MURRAY
Now, that is a story.

EDISON
(sarcastically)
Network 23's computer wiz kids
zipping their own channel? That's a
story, all right.

MURRAY
(conceding)
Yeah, I get your point. A bit,
uhm... sensitive.

EDISON
Sensitive? You can say that again.

MURRAY
All right. Uh, go to ACS. Lay some
story on them, see just what's going
on.

MAN
(o.c.)
Murray, Bryce Lynch on line two.

MURRAY
Yeah.

EDISON
Theora.

THEORA
It'll be fun, Edison! Like going
back to school.

EDISON
(knowing)
Theora...

THEORA
What?

EDISON
We both know something else about
ACS, don't we?

THEORA
(resigned)
Yes, we do. It's where Bryce came
from.

EDISON
We got a problem...

Murray rushes back.

MURRAY
Listen, I have a great idea. I just
told Bryce to go with you. You see,
he'll be able to talk to the kids,
help you subvert the little
geniuses.

Murray notices *something* is up.

MURRAY
What's the matter?

(beat)

MURRAY
(insistently)
What is the matter?

Edison and Theora look around uncomfortably.

CUT TO:

INT. BRYCE'S LAB

MAX
Welllllll?

BRYCE
Well what?

MAX
Well, as they said to K-K-King
Charles I on the scaffold, are you
going to go quietly? Or do you need
a push?

Bryce sits down.

BRYCE
To ACS? (*scoffs*) Murray asked me
to. I have to help Edison. What
could I say? I have no choice.

MAX
Of course you have a choice. The
same one Charles I had.

BRYCE
Exactly.

Bryce guzzles down a drink.

BRYCE
Will you come with me? I think I
have a problem...

The boy genius begins typing a message on his terminal as
Max overlooks, and we dolly in to see: ACS STUDENT
GUARD: THE SPORE IS IN THE WIND.

End of Act I

Act II**EXT. ACADEMY OF COMPUTER SCIENCES - DAY**

We see students with backpacks and schoolbooks walking up the steps of the *Academy of Computer Sciences*. A P.A. announcement plays in the background.

ANNOUNCER

(o.c.)

Academy of Computer Sciences fourth
period pod begins in exactly 1
minute and 3.0 seconds.

CUT TO:

INT. ACADEMY OF COMPUTER SCIENCES CLASSROOM - DAY

Another disembodied voice hands out instructions to the room full of ACS's brightest students.

ANOTHER ANNOUNCER

(o.c. to class)

Your assignment for this period is
to compute ten designs for
piezo-polymer fingers of a surgical
robot hand. Also, please note that
we have distinguished visitors from
Network 23 today. So please show
them how courteous we are.

One boy in particular looks over his shoulder as he sees Edison and Bryce wheeling in equipment.

BOY

(to girl next to him,
cryptically)

"The spore is loaded." You take the
first watch.

The girl nods.

CUT TO:

INT. ACADEMY OF COMPUTER SCIENCES HALLWAY - DAY

BRYCE

Look here, that's me.

Edison and Bryce are hunched over some old photos on the wall.

EDISON

(stupefied)

Oh, yeah. You trying to tell me you
had sideburns?

BRYCE

(almost offended)

Yeah.

EDISON

This bring back memories?

BRYCE

Some. Most memories are the random retrieval of normally superfluous data. A waste of "real-time". I try to bulk erase mine daily.

The two continue down the hallway, Bryce lugging his equipment on a dolly.

EDISON

Yeah, well, be careful you don't erase all the bits that add up to experience.

BRYCE

Oh, I keep the critical material! I remember my first undergraduate day here. It was Tuesday. It was raining, and I was cold.

EDISON

Huh. Your random recall is almost as good as Max's.

BRYCE

Oh, that's not random. That was my tenth birthday.

Ba-dump dump.

CUT TO:

INT. NETWORK 23 CONTROL ROOM - THEORA'S DESK - DAY

Theora and Murray are hunched over her terminal as she navigates the securicam network of ACS.

THEORA

They've separated. These kids are bright. They're into securicams everywhere. I mean, I'm tapping off *their* illicit feeds.

MURRAY

Which makes you even brighter.

THEORA

Older.

MURRAY

(insistent)
Wiser!

THEORA

(mock swooning)
Marry me, Murray.

For a beat Murray almost considers it, but then just grins.

CUT TO:

INT. ACS HALLWAY - DAY

Students roam the halls, going to their next classes, as Edison makes his way towards a doorway.

ANNOUNCER

(o.c.)

Announcement. Nanotechnology pod
test results are posted in the
sub-micron lab for your viewing.

Edison stops just short of a large door that says SIDNEY
HARDING, HEADSYSOP.

He picks up a huge 8" floppy disk off a nearby table. He considers it for a moment, and stashes it in his inventory.

EDISON

(reading, mockingly to
himself)

"Headsysop." Does it teach, or
devour maidens?

Carter takes a breath, steels himself, and then knocks on the door.

CUT TO:

INT. DIFFERENT ACS HALLWAY - DAY

Bryce travels the halls with his equipment dolly. He looks around at the students, lost in thought. He even bumps into one accidentally.

ANNOUNCER

Announcement. Students are reminded
not to leave their mutated molecules
in their lockers overnight.

LINE
Well, we haven't got
any absolute proof.

LINE
But the signals were
tracked to this campus.

LINE
Naturally, I'm more
inquisitive than anything else.

LINE
Naturally.

LINE
Are you positive about this?

LINE
One of your former
students did the tracking.

LINE
Bryce Lynch. And he
claims to be a genius, so...

LINE
Ah, Lynch. Excellent student.

LINE
Single-minded. Well,

LINE
ACS students don't
make mistakes,

LINE
and Lynch was
one of the very best.

LINE
In his time, of course.

LINE
Odd boy.

LINE
He never made contact with
his parents after he came to us.

LINE
They were middle
management, you know.

LINE
I well remember...

LINE
Time for my 3:00 pod.

LINE
I'll bring this up
after session.

LINE
I'm as anxious as you
to get to the bottom of it.

LINE
Headsysops, pods.

LINE
Tell you, in my day, it was
headmasters and classes.

LINE
Yes, yes. How times change.

LINE
We're all input
systems, operators,

LINE
and pod managers now, my boy.

LINE
But you can't fool and
old head, you know.

LINE
Settle down, settle
down. Order from chaos.

LINE
And now, for your next project,

LINE
you will each receive a package

LINE
containing one floppy diskette,

LINE
an old-fashioned 888 processor,

LINE
and a coat hanger.

LINE
With these materials, you will
be expected to design a device

LINE
to snare Clifford here.

LINE
We'll see which one of you
can build the better mousetrap.

LINE
- Piece of cake.
- Piece of cheese.

LINE
Your humor parameters
need expanding, Nicholas.

LINE
Yes, Stratton?

LINE
Can we kill it?

LINE
Yes, that is within the
bounds of the experiment.

LINE
But I'm afraid you'll find that
more difficult than you imagine.

LINE
Uh, Miss Partridge?

LINE
What are the time
parameters here?

LINE
You may have until
the end of the day.

LINE
If there are no
further questions...

LINE
Yes, Stratton?

LINE
What's Edison Carter doing here?

LINE
Oh, once again my
little code crunchers

LINE
are getting ahead
of their old sysop.

LINE
Say hello to Mr. Edison Carter.

LINE
Hello, Mr. Carter.

LINE
He does look like Max Headroom.

LINE
Uh, no, actually.
He looks like me.

LINE
Mr. Carter brings a
disturbing piece of information.

LINE
He suspects some
highly illegal signal zipping

LINE
has been emanating
from this campus.

LINE
Now, if this is true,

LINE
I expect the responsible
party to report to my office.

LINE
Because you are all minors,

LINE
you will be spared the
particular punishment

LINE
usually afforded adults.

LINE
As I am fond of saying,

LINE
we have our own methods.

LINE
Pod dismissed.

LINE
They seem like a
normal bunch of kids.

LINE
- Oh, yes.
- Homicidal rodent squishers.

LINE
You really expect
the guilty party

LINE
just to march right
into your office?

LINE
Of course. We
instill the morality

LINE
of binary absolutes
here, Mr. Carter.

LINE
The useful
consequence of pure logic

LINE
is the divine simplicity of a
yes/no decision about everything.

LINE
Well, what about
right and wrong?

LINE
I notice you said
"responsible party," not "guilty."

LINE
A gray area is quite useless
to a computer specialist.

LINE
We don't deal in guilt.
We deal in information.

LINE
That is why the appropriate
party will be with us shortly.

LINE
You will see.

LINE
Let's adjourn to my office.

LINE
Doesn't this place bring
back f-f-fond memories, Bryce?

LINE
Ah-Ah-Ah, the sounds,

LINE
the s-s-squeak of
trainers on the gym floor,

LINE
the screech of
ch-chalk on gallium chip.

LINE
The secret kiss behind
the computer terminal.

LINE
It wasn't like that.

LINE
Why do people get so
sentimental about college days?

LINE
Because for
p-p-people like Edison,

LINE
it was a time of
giggles, g-g-girls, guys,

LINE
and g-g-getting into trouble.

LINE
- Not me.
- Not yet.

LINE
Bryce Lynch is in there.

LINE
Well, it's Bryce Lynch.

LINE
We got the warning.

LINE
Good. How's your security?

LINE
Optimized. Only the
inner circle knows.

LINE
What's that?

LINE
My computer regeneration
project. Max Headroom.

LINE

Ah, yes. We've heard about that.

LINE

Rather primitive.

LINE

We're into cross-species
regeneration these days.

LINE

A little more advanced.

LINE

Se-Se-Se...

LINE

Seems like a nice boy.

LINE

Nicholas rather enjoys
his performances.

LINE

Talk-Talk-Talking
of performances,

LINE

if you're gonna get us
out of this m-m-mess

LINE

you got us into, you'll
need some fancy dancing.

LINE

What puzzles me is

LINE

how a former student
could have been incorrect

LINE

about ACS being the
source of the zipping.

LINE

Bryce wasn't wrong.

LINE

The party who did it
just isn't 'fessing up.

LINE

Logically impure.

LINE

It would assume that
there is a guilty party.

LINE

It just doesn't compute.

LINE

It would imply a gray area.

LINE

Not at ACS, Mr. Carter.

LINE

We work with
perfect information.

LINE

Paradise, huh?

LINE

Well, maybe you got a
dragon in the Garden of Eden.

LINE

You mind if I have a
look around on my own?

LINE

No, no, not at all.

LINE

But, Mr. Carter,

LINE

beware the dragon.

LINE

- How's Fang?
- Off his food.

LINE

Blimey, that bad?

LINE

Now, be sure he gets
his ice cream every night.

LINE

Yes, I will, but he won't eat
it out of your spoon for me.

LINE

And Big-Time is off air.

LINE

We could go out of business.

LINE
He likes chocolate chip best.

LINE
If they are zipping, Theora,

LINE
they're very
clever at hiding it.

LINE
Apart from the
inside of locker doors,

LINE
- whole place is clean.
- Oh, no, it isn't, Edison.

LINE
That hardware they've got in there
is fully capable of signal zipping.

LINE
Look.

LINE
Crafty little devils.

LINE
That's nothing to
the rest of the setup.

LINE
Some have
perverted little minds.

LINE
Oh, good, there's Bryce.

LINE
Nice to see you accessing
the old memory bank, sir.

LINE
Turn down the potentiometer
before you close the mic.

LINE
I've come to say goodbye.
We're about finished here.

LINE
Are your mics security looped?

LINE
- Of course.
- Good.

LINE
Congratulations.
We got away with it.

LINE
The only thing that can
happen to Blank Reg now

LINE
is some temporary discomfort.

LINE
They'll soon find out he
hasn't the power to zip

LINE
and justice will compute.

LINE
- Eventually.
- You little beast.

LINE
Bryce. I don't believe it.

LINE
Lots of little girls' and
boys' tricks in the system.

LINE
What kind of games
did you play, Theora?

LINE
Growing up games.
Doctors and nurses.

LINE
Yeah, well, there's
nothing like a good physical.

LINE
Okay, turn left and
go straight ahead

LINE
until you reach the stairwell.

LINE
Learn anything that
might brighten my day?

LINE
Yes, I was quite fast.

LINE
At the top of the
stairs, turn left

LINE
and then down the hall.

LINE
Ah. I must remember to
try and catch up with you.

LINE
- As a specialist?
- But of course.

LINE
Now I want you to lift
the nose of the statue.

LINE
Pardon?

LINE
You lift the nose,

LINE
you flip the switch,

LINE
and the door behind
the statue opens.

LINE
I'm afraid Bryce has
been a very naughty boy.

LINE
I wonder what you
tweak to close it.

LINE
Well, Bryce, I wondered
what had happened to you.

LINE
What you up to?

LINE
Sneaking a smoke? Or...

LINE
zipping a network?

LINE
Edison, how did you get in here?

LINE
I think we better
go have a little talk.

LINE
Oh, and try and remember,

LINE
I was a kid once too.

LINE
I wish you hadn't
kept anything from me.

LINE
- Like what?
- Your record.

LINE
But he hasn't got a
record. He's a Blank.

LINE
Previous criminal activities.

LINE
They can't have any files on me.

LINE
I've been off the
records for years.

LINE
The network police ran
a computer investigation.

LINE
They say the probability is
you committed these crimes.

LINE
Oh, probability.

LINE
Yes, Dominique.

LINE
If the probability computes,

LINE
and in cases where
there's no evidence,

LINE
they work on the probability.

LINE
Well, I expect it saves
everybody a lot of work.

LINE
It's not gonna save you, Reg.

LINE
You compute.

LINE
And the punishment for
network program zipping

LINE
is terminal.

LINE
You put together pieces
of my sat cam sequence

LINE
from the purge directory?

LINE
Most of it. The
computer did the rest.

LINE
Man. I gotta recode
that sat cam program

LINE
to wipe out all the files
before dumping them.

LINE
We saw how you altered the
target from ACS to Big-Time.

LINE
Computer-enhanced files.

LINE
Illegally obtained.

LINE
You can't use that
against me, Edison.

LINE
That's inadmissible evidence.

LINE
We don't want to use
anything against you, Bryce.

LINE

- We want to help Reg. So should you.

- Why?

LINE

Because you've put him in very serious danger.

LINE

Bryce, I'm getting angry.

LINE

Then stop. It's quite unnecessary.

LINE

Blank Reg didn't zip our transmissions, right?

LINE

You know he didn't.

LINE

Why did you do it?

LINE

I mean, why Reg, of all people?

LINE

I had to make a quick decision.

LINE

I had to protect ACS, didn't I?

LINE

I don't believe it. An emotion.

LINE

A decision, Edison.

LINE

I simply selected the closest option that would achieve that goal.

LINE

Now, Blank Reg couldn't be proven guilty. It's an optimum solution.

LINE

What about right and wrong?

LINE

Non-empirical concepts.

LINE
Don't you understand? The network
court
wants to make an example of someone.

LINE
And Reg is it.

LINE
Network courts.

LINE
Our courts.

LINE
All we have to do is
rearrange the information.

LINE
As long as no one
finds out about ACS.

LINE
Bryce, stop treating
people like machines.

LINE
You can't rearrange
information which is evidence.

LINE
Grow up.

LINE
Okay, okay, so you were right.

LINE
He is an obstinate little child.

LINE
Where are you going, Edison?

LINE
Cheviot's office.

LINE
Maybe I can get him to fix
things with the network court.

LINE
You're just like Bryce.

LINE
- What?
- Fix things with the court.

LINE

- I mean, what about Reg?
- I care about Reg.

LINE

What about justice? You don't
need to fix it. He didn't do it.

LINE

But how do we
prove he didn't do it?

LINE

Bryce is right.

LINE

We can't use the
information he accessed

LINE

and we can't testify for Reg.

LINE

As 23's employees, our evidence
is inadmissible in 23's court.

LINE

Unless Bryce helps,

LINE

Reg is in very real trouble.

LINE

Well, I'm gonna go and see Reg.

LINE

I mean, there must be a way

LINE

of proving he's incapable
of zipping from Big-Time.

LINE

If Bryce won't help, I will.

LINE

Why are you smirking
at me like that?

LINE

Me? Smirk?

LINE

That's not in my
pro-pro-program.

LINE
I thought you were on my side.

LINE
It's not a ques-question
of sides anymore, Bryce.

LINE
Ha ha. Except
for the right side.

LINE
I'm uncharacteristically
confused.

LINE
I'm used to logic, not opinion.

LINE
The thing... The thing
is you're a bit like me.

LINE
Ex-Except we've
got different bits.

LINE
Sometimes I think I
could use some leg-legs,

LINE
and right now I think you-you-you
could use some conscience.

LINE
Which file is it in?

LINE
Think of yourself
as a human program

LINE
and that bit of you has
developed a glitch-ch-ch.

LINE
Developed a glitch.

LINE
Everyone keeps
lecturing me these days.

LINE
That's why I'm just
talk-talk-t-talking to you

LINE
about getting
Blank Reg released.

LINE
I know.

LINE
Yes, sir. That's right, sir.
We dropped off three more.

LINE
Leave the truck
around the loading dock.

LINE
If you told your lawyer
about your criminal profile,

LINE
she might have been better
prepared to defend you.

LINE
I told you, Dom, I didn't know.

LINE
How could you not know
you had a criminal profile?

LINE
It's something called

LINE
the Career Capability
Malfeasance Program.

LINE
CPMP.

LINE
It's the program that matches
Blanks with unassigned profiles.

LINE
It compares the crime template
to the personality template.

LINE
And if it matches,
you're assumed guilty.

LINE
Criminals can blank
out their identities,

LINE
but they can't get rid
of their criminal profile.

LINE
Are you saying there
are more criminal profiles

LINE
than there are criminals?

LINE
Precisely.

LINE
If a Blank is arrested now,

LINE
they run a CPMP on him.

LINE
If the computer says the
probability is high enough,

LINE
it's considered a match.

LINE
So that isn't
really your profile.

LINE
That's what I've been trying
to tell you. Blimey, Dom.

LINE
Isn't science wonderful?

LINE
- Oh, Reg.
- Yeah, wonderfully inhuman.

LINE
I'm gonna go to 23.

LINE
Our only chance is to
get Murray to authorize

LINE
this as a story.

LINE
Template matching isn't justice.

LINE
It's just administrative
convenience.

LINE
Administrators. Button pushers.

LINE
Hold on, Reg.

LINE
As they say, the last resort of
the innocent is always publicity.

LINE
Watch me.

LINE
Nicholas.

LINE
We need a real-time conference.

LINE
What's tickling your synapses?

LINE
Now look. In my day, zipping
used to be a good hack.

LINE
But things have changed.

LINE
It's a criminal offense now.

LINE
And by trying to protect you

LINE
and ACS, I'm in conflict
with my own network.

LINE
So?

LINE
So flatline the project

LINE
and submit a
report to your sysop.

LINE
That's not a winning option.

LINE
You're a minor. They
won't do anything to you.

LINE
They'll dump me from
the Academy, Bryce.

LINE
Look, as long as
nobody says anything,

LINE
nobody gets in trouble.

LINE
Blank Reg does.

LINE
Who? That guy?

LINE
He's just an old Blank.

LINE
But he didn't do it.
We both know that.

LINE
That's irrelevant.
Is this what happens

LINE
when you have to work
around computer illiterates?

LINE
You're really not compiling
this, are you, Nicholas?

LINE
You did it. Blank
Reg didn't. Facts.

LINE
Give me credit, Bryce.
I've got it all worked out.

LINE
I'm sure your procedures
are impeccable.

LINE
But you're using
the wrong formula.

LINE
You remind me of myself.

LINE
Should I take that
as a compliment?

LINE
No.

LINE
Calm down, Reg. I'm sure
Miss Keeler is on her way.

LINE
If she's late for
my trial, I'll kill her.

LINE
All homicide threats are
recorded for later playback.

LINE
Stick that in your pipe
and smoke it, sunshine.

LINE
Bryce.

LINE
I'm at the Academy.

LINE
I just had a real-time conference
with the zipping hacker.

LINE
- Nicholas.
- That's wonderful.

LINE
No, it's not.

LINE
It didn't work.

LINE
I don't know what to
do, Theora. Help me.

LINE
What is it?

LINE
We just found out who
the guest prosecutor is.

LINE

Paul Wade?

LINE

But he's the frontman for
23's*<i> You the Jury</i>* show.

LINE

And the best television
prosecutor money can buy.

LINE

It's a game show for my life.

LINE

Welcome to Network 23's
award-winning game show

LINE

<i>You the Jury.</i>

LINE

This is the defendant,

LINE

Blank Reg, a pirate TV operator

LINE

employed by Big-Time Television,

LINE

who Network 23 has charged
with first-degree signal zipping.

LINE

These are the Metrocops who
claim they caught Blank Reg in the
act.

LINE

And this is the TV pirate's
attorney, Shelley Keeler.

LINE

Shelley's got her
work cut out for her,

LINE

because today's guest prosecutor

LINE

is the Channel of Fortune's
leading quiz master,

LINE

Paul Wade.

LINE

On the show where the
audience decides the verdict,

LINE

<i>You the Jury.</i>

LINE

We'll be back with our first
pleading in just a moment,

LINE

but first, this word.

LINE

If you want to do
justice to your cooking,

LINE

try Zik-Zak Soy Muffin Mix.

LINE

Tasteless, colorless,
and odorless.

LINE

The perfect base
for every taste.

LINE

Don't be guilty that
they have no taste.

LINE

I know, Mr. Cheviot,
but Edison insisted.

LINE

All right, Murray, put him on.

LINE

Yes, Carter.

LINE

Your network court is on the
verge of convicting an innocent man.

LINE

That's an awfully serious
charge. Can you back it up?

LINE

I can.

LINE

But I need you to buy
me a little more time.

LINE
Are you asking me to subvert
the network's judicial process?

LINE
Quite the contrary.

LINE
I believe the true source of
the zipping is not Blank Reg,

LINE
but the Academy of
Computer Sciences.

LINE
For God's sake, Edison,

LINE
those youngsters represent
the distillation of human intellect.

LINE
They're the root
stock of the future.

LINE
Bryce Lynch is
the product of ACS.

LINE
And Bryce is covering this
up by changing the coordinates

LINE
away from the true
source of the zipping.

LINE
If that's true, if our own head
of research and development

LINE
is responsible for
covering up a crime

LINE
which cost this network
hundreds of thousands of credits,

LINE
we'll be the laughingstock
of the industry.

LINE
We could lose the
entire Zik-Zak account.

LINE
Mr. Cheviot, couldn't we
reschedule the network court?

LINE
Give Edison some time
to clean up this mess.

LINE
Please. Sir, the
accused is Blank Reg.

LINE
I'm sorry about Blank
Reg, believe me.

LINE
If he's innocent, I'm
sure he'll be acquitted.

LINE
He's only one man.

LINE
I have to concern myself
with the greatest good

LINE
for the greatest
number of people.

LINE
Which means this entire network.

LINE
No, Murray. I won't reschedule.

LINE
Better find Bryce.

LINE
It's time for kill or cure.

LINE
Welcome back to*>* You the Jury.</i>

LINE
And now, here's the judge.

LINE
Thank you. Hello, hello, hello.

LINE
Oh, thank you, thank you.

LINE
And welcome to the
show that puts you

LINE
in the jury box.

LINE
Our first case today
involves a charge of zipping

LINE
against a Blank Reg.

LINE
For 1,000 credits, how does
your client plead, Ms. Keeler?

LINE
Innocent. I...

LINE
I mean, not guilty, sir.

LINE
Just relax, Ms. Keeler.

LINE
Proceed with your opening
argument, Mr. Wade.

LINE
Thanks, Bob.

LINE
Ladies and gentlemen, the
prosecution intends to prove

LINE
beyond a shadow of a doubt

LINE
that the Blank known as Reg

LINE
is guilty of network zipping.

LINE
What we're really talking
about here is principle.

LINE
What we're talking about
is a threat to television.

LINE
To our lives.

LINE
We are talking
about interruptioning.

LINE
When decent, honest,
peaceful television-loving people

LINE
cannot watch*<i> Shoppin' Spree</i>*
without these savage attacks

LINE
on their viewing freedom,

LINE
we have to ask this question.

LINE
Are we being too lenient?

LINE
When our wives and daughters

LINE
cannot shop from their
own homes in peace,

LINE
we must ask is consumerism
itself under attack?

LINE
Credit for your thoughts.

LINE
Save your money, Edison.

LINE
You already know.

LINE
I don't want to sound paranoid,

LINE
but...

LINE
I know this place is bugged.

LINE
Now we're in a cone of silence.

LINE
No one can eavesdrop.

LINE
I tried to redirect Nicholas,

LINE
but he's a poorly
designed system.

LINE
What system?

LINE
The system that allows him to
be better off by keeping quiet.

LINE
I mean, what good is a system
if it doesn't work properly?

LINE
I hate to be the one to
break this to you, Bryce,

LINE
but life is more than just
interactive systems analysis.

LINE
Not really.

LINE
It's a matter of information.

LINE
Once we understand and
collate our ideas, life will be

LINE
much simpler, really.

LINE
It's a matter of
number crunching.

LINE
It's not just more complicated.

LINE
Look, life is based on
something more than just logic.

LINE
It's based on...

LINE
feelings.

LINE
So everyone keeps telling me.

LINE
Is it difficult to keep
your feelings at bay?

LINE
Well, you can

LINE
switch them off when
they become inconvenient.

LINE
It's just that every time you do,
you become a byte less human.

LINE
But what if a microchip
failed to work properly

LINE
because it had to make a moral
decision every time it switched?

LINE
Okay.

LINE
And what if you created
an artificial intelligence

LINE
and it wouldn't work because it
disagreed with your principles?

LINE
Then you have a choice which is
not just a yes/no binary absolute.

LINE
It's a question of conscience.

LINE
Yeah.

LINE
Conscience.

LINE
Better work that one out.

LINE
Look,

LINE

I really enjoyed this little
chat, but I gotta get going.

LINE

I gotta go watch a friend of mine
go down for something he didn't do.

LINE

Well, at least you'll
understand that.

LINE

So, my little ch-ch-chip
off the old mainframe,

LINE

what are you going to do?

LINE

Well,

LINE

I think I need to rewrite
my own program.

LINE

Okay. Now, moving on to our
second round of questioning.

LINE

Oh, that's the
plea-bargaining buzzer.

LINE

Approach the bench, guys.

LINE

According to our
rolling audience poll,

LINE

the Blank Reg should be
reduced to random electrons

LINE

by a margin of 9 to 1.

LINE

This is my first and
last offer, sweetheart.

LINE

If the Blank cops to zipping,
I'll settle for life and a day.

LINE
I have to confer with my client.

LINE
Will she go for
the life and a day,

LINE
or try to get the Blank free?

LINE
Let's ask some of the folks
in the gallery what they think.

LINE
- This is the deal.
- I understand the offer.

LINE
If I confess to
something I didn't do,

LINE
I go to prison for
the rest of me life.

LINE
Stuff it. I'd make a
very bad prisoner.

LINE
They used the phrase
random electrons.

LINE
I can't spell that, either.

LINE
It means no?

LINE
Conference time's up.
Approach the bench.

LINE
So, what'll it be, Shelley?

LINE
We're gonna go for it.

LINE
Oh, they're gonna go for it.

LINE
Nicholas. You've been cheating.

LINE
Nice try.

LINE
Cheating?

LINE
Loading inaccurate information

LINE
designed to crash
a logic program.

LINE
And output bias to produce
selective information.

LINE
And putting it
simply, Nick, lying.

LINE
We couldn't.

LINE
The coordinates are clear.

LINE
It really was the Big-Time
bus the zipping came from.

LINE
Blank Reg must be brilliant.

LINE
And guilty.

LINE
Hey, let's watch his sentencing.

LINE
Blank Reg, eh?

LINE
Fancy being able
to zip a live program.

LINE
Bryce, you're making a
mistake in your old age.

LINE
You can't tell one set of
coordinates from another.

LINE
I assumed you guys had learned
something since I was here,

LINE
but it's evident
that your generation

LINE
hasn't the skills nor
the system for zipping.

LINE
What would you call this setup?

LINE
Toys for Tots.

LINE
You're taking credit
for Reg's achievement.

LINE
You're obviously trying
to impress the girls.

LINE
Say when, Mr. Lynch.

LINE
Nicholas, you're
behaving emotionally.

LINE
Shut up.

LINE
You wouldn't dare.

LINE
Jury find Blank...

LINE
I move for dismissal.

LINE
Hold it. Looks like we've
got a move for dismissal.

LINE
- On what grounds, Ms. Keeler?
- Pure logic.

LINE
My client, Blank Reg, couldn't
possibly

(MORE)

LINE (CONT'D)
have caused the zipping you just
saw.

LINE
He's here in the court.

LINE
Oh.

LINE
Dismissed.

LINE
Oh, Dom, that's the first time

LINE
you've ever had
your arms around me.

LINE
Oh, Reggie, darling.

LINE
Ugh, about your
personal hygiene.

LINE
Oh.

LINE
What made Bryce change his mind?

LINE
He didn't. He adjusted
his parameters.

LINE
Think it'll make him
any easier to work with?

LINE
Never. Con-Con-Converts
are the worst kind of bigots.

LINE
One of yours?

LINE
One of my best.

LINE
Closed-Captioned By J.R.
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