

PARASITECOLOGY

S01E01 - "Alive Again"

written by

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ACT 3 - THE BAD NEWS

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INT. NOTHINGNESS

1

Javier doubts an increasingly frustrated Cher, who lays out harsh truths and displays some of the "help" it can provide.

CHER

Sorry, what's that?

JAVIER

I said no. No, as in, that is a completely ridiculous story, idiotically described and is... not what happened to me. I just...

(long pause then satisfied sigh)

I get it now!

(pause)

I screwed it up. I'm in a coma. I screwed up killing myself... even that. Especially that! I took too many pills but not enough pills, I shot the part of my brain that I don't NEED but definitely do NEED ... did I buy a gun? Why can I not remember this?

CHER

Short-term memory loss is a common side effect on initial symbiotic integration.

JAVIER

(ignoring)

Or maybe I'm not in a coma, I'm just in some deep psychosis, a really... messed up but consistent one. One where some other part of my brain, probably the shot-up part with my luck, thinks that it's an alien parasite, apparently the only one of its kind on Earth, who wants free room and board in my little old noggin in exchange for some nebulous offer of "help"; an alien parasite who also happens to be a fugitive from its own planet and is possibly being hunted by sophisticated android murderbots. Did - did I get that right?

CHER

Uh, actually -- symbiote, not parasite, I really can't stress enough how insulting and, ok I'll just say it -- racist -- the P word is...

(CONTINUED)

JAVIER

This is totally unbelievable. It
CANNOT be believed.

CHER

Well [I think]...

JAVIER

(convincingly)

I... won't believe it.

CHER

(calmly)

Okay. OKAY. Yes. Javier, you've
seen through the masquerade. I'm
backed into a corner and have no
choice but to be totally honest
with you. I am, as you suspected
all along, an advanced AI which has
simulated your entire existence
perfectly... until yesterday. The
day you discovered the truth.

JAVIER

I discovered... the truth?

In a moment, rumbling background noise of a theater is heard.

CHER

(wildly)

NO! YOU DIDN'T. That's the MATRIX,
Javier, an extremely popular film
which I have obviously never seen
except do you know how I know about
it, it's because I am a SYMBIOTE
with direct access to your brain's
memory functions and YOU had seen
the MATRIX eleven and one half
times IN THE THEATER, and the one
half is because one of those times
you had to defecate urgently and,
again as a SYMBIOTE with direct
access to your brain's memory
functions, I know you are scared --
well not shit-less, that seems like
a poor idiomatic expression to
apply here -- one second -- SCARED
WITLESS of public toilets, but
especially of ones that DO have
those paper seat covers because
that means the people in charge of
the theater know just how dirty the
butts that sit on the seats ARE.

(breathing heavily)

JAVIER

(roughly)

You done? You feel better now?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JAVIER (CONT'D)

And by the way, in my defense, I also saw the Matrix sequels so... now you know why I sort of forgot all about it.

CHER

(sighing, sincerely)

Oh, oh... I'm -- I apologize Bearer, I seem to be more affected by the host, umm... you... than usual. Let's all take a deep breath here... Mostly you, I don't have lungs.

CHER (CONT'D)

I mean, I know this arrangement is neither of our first choices. But consider where you were but a day ago... ready to end it all, friendless and alone. And today you've got someone here willing and able to help. And hey, I'll admit this whole condition your condition is in is little more COMPLICATED than I originally planned on. Its like... the car rental place ran out of automatics so you gotta learn to drive stick on the fly yeah? You know -- just as good, very..

(Closes fist, "mmm" sound)

Raw and powerful, and maybe I grind the clutch a little at first, and maybe the car has a lot of unnecessary complexity, but that... That's part of the charm.

JAVIER

Even if I believed you, what possibly could make you think I would say yes to living a "life" in this soulless BLANK of a prison?

CHER

Listen, I said I would help you out of the void, and I meant that practically as well as metaphorically. I just needed some time to get back in the saddle. So how about this...

Sound effect.

JAVIER

I can... actually see... a little. It's kind of blurry... it just looks like a big white rectangle.

(CONTINUED)

CHER

Well, it's the ceiling, so... we're on the green at least. Well for me, it's black and white for YOU until I get things sorted - for now I need to hang onto your rods, but I'll let you grab the cones.

JAVIER

(snort)

CHER

Oh, please tell me that's not the level of discourse I should be expecting. Alright... let me now how this goes. Better one... or better two.

The ambient echoing drip slowly focuses into a clear drip-drop of a faucet.

JAVIER

Water dripping. Where's it coming from? I... can't move my head.

CHER

We're not there yet. We will be, I promise. And it's the faucet in your bathroom, you must have left it running a bit. Which, nnnh, not to preach, but it is really quite wasteful, I know your planet doesn't believe in global warming, or, I guess, just plain "hey it's hot as hell out everywhere all the time now" as a general concept apparently, but you should...

JAVIER

(irritated loud breaths)

CHER

Ok, it seems like we've got a bit more convincing to do, and that's fine... Here's just a quick little communication exercise we can do, together. I'll throw out a statement and we just, both at the same time, say on a scale of 1 to 10, how much we agree with it. Okay? The statement is "I feel like this arrangement could really work." and we both individually rate it a... [9.8]

JAVIER

[How about] a big fucknggg TWO.

(CONTINUED)

CHER

(happily)

Well Bearer, that is double a 'one' -- I think we're making great progress here, and I haven't given you the full sales pitch yet. So... I mean I don't want to hand you the old resume, dust off my CV... but I'm... 620 of your Earth years old, and -- I've got some stories, let me tell you and that -- that is not a brag. I have extensively studied chrono-spatial hyper-physics for which I received no less than three certificates of completion from the University of Galaxy Study for Chrono-spatial Hyper-Physics Studying... which I understand doesn't seem very prestigious in your language but let's be fair, your language doesn't even have the right words for chrono-spatial hyper-physics so... and again, not a brag.

JAVIER

Does your language not have the word "brag", because I think you might be misunderstanding the concept, missing the point, etcetera?

CHER

(lost in thought)

What else, what else. I like early period Inverse-jazz, obviously not the late millenium b.s., and I enjoy knitting nanofiber shawls, well - I enjoy monitoring the sensation of someone else knitting nanofiber shawls, I guess that's sort of splitting existentialist hairs, though. Oh, and I have never gotten one of my hosts killed, inadvertently.

JAVIER

(strongly)

Just... vertently?

CHER

(laughing)

Oh, that's just the sort of wordplay based banter I was hoping to build towards. Okay, now I'm getting that you're not a bullet-point type of guy. You need the flagella-on approach. So - enough about me, what can I do for you today...

(CONTINUED)

JAVIER

Sell me a timeshare?

CHER

Well when you think about it... heh wow, I've missed wordplay. But let's see... ah... Okay -- tell me what happened Tuesday, seven weeks ago.

JAVIER

(firmly)

No.

CHER

Fine, you don't have to talk about it. I'll just recap, and maybe you'll happen to think about it a little while I do. You were at your software development job at a big company, doing great, everybody thought so, but... you weren't doing great, were you Javier?

JAVIER

I don't want to hear this.

CHER

(chuckling)

Well it's, kind of a mandatory presentation as part of your orientation... captive audience... come on, this back and forth, we've got to have hit at least a 3 by now... Anyway, you're at your job, work piling up faster than you can finish it, and even though every day is a struggle just to leave your bed, one that you lose every couple weeks and use up all your vacation days on, well, you're doing the work of three people but it's getting worse every day, until Tuesday, seven weeks ago. When you...

JAVIER

I quit. So what?

(CONTINUED)

CHER

Quit? No, Javier, quitting is slamming down a resignation letter on your boss' desk and saying they don't pay you enough for this crap, or flipping the double bird at Perry, the incompetent regional manager, and storming out in a blaze where you say uncompromisingly honest things about the correlation between his accelerating baldness and his tendency to wear hats indoors. Or even just saying "Sorry, this just isn't the right job for me anymore, I'm quitting". No, you [told them]

JAVIER

Stop.

CHER

You told them you had cashed in some Bitcoins [you had bought]

They speak in unison.

JAVIER

(woodenly)

I had bought six years ago because I thought they were cool, and had forgotten about and then found them on an old hard drive [and it]

CHER

...and it wasn't that much but it would allow you to "go back to school". And then you gave them four weeks of notice so they'd have plenty of time to replace you, even though every day you stepped into that office you would have a panic attack and every night a break down. But you hadn't cashed in any Bitcoins, because that surprisingly detailed account of you acquiring them had never happened. Instead, you had bought DogeCoins when they were at their peak and it was a very bad investment, and now, you barely had a month or two of savings to live on. And you weren't going back to school because even if you could afford it -- you hated school. And you weren't quitting, Javier, you were RUNNING AWAY. And you couldn't even do that right because they convinced you to call it a "sabbatical" so you could come back later. And you felt...

(CONTINUED)

JAVIER
(Pleading)
Please.

CHER
Well, we both know how you felt.
That's not why I brought it up.
Please understand that, I really --
REALLY -- don't want to make you
feel that. I brought it up to ask
you... how you feel about it now.
Right now.

JAVIER
(confused)
I... don't...

CHER
Feel it? No you don't, do you? Or
maybe just a little bit, but sort
of fuzzy and dull like it took
place years ago, or in a story that
happened to someone else. Just --
insulated. Like all the
overwhelming emotions were gushing
out of a garden hose, and somebody
just kind of
(click click mouth sound)
turned down the spigot. All the
embarrassment, the guilt, the
fear...

JAVIER
Gone.

CHER
Ah - not gone, I just
(click click mouth sound)
turned down the spigot. And this
other hose over here... the one
that leads an eleven year old boy
laying on the floor in front of an
electric fan, well...
(click click mouth sound)
How about just a little more of
that...

Dreamy, soaring synths play for an extended period.

AD - FLASHBITE

2

HI FOLKS, THIS IS ALAN FROM PARASITECOLOGY AND OTHER FINE
INTERRUPTED TALES PODCASTS SUCH AS INTERRUPTED TALES.

2

Hey, some exciting news for us here - we just got our first sponsor. And actually, when we first started making the show, we were on the fence about doing ads. But then we were approached by a big name company that makes a ton of the products we use everyday about a new service of theirs, and once we tried it, we were hooked. So today I'd like to tell you about Flashbite. Flashbite is a new subscription snack delivery service that sends you delicious and healthy snacks every month in the exact amounts you choose. They are not one of those pre-packaged snack companies that just overwhelms you with unhealthy junk food swimming in unpronounceable chemicals. In fact, Flashbite has partnered with leading weight loss programs to deliver organically scrumptious treats specifically tailored to your nutritional needs and dietary restrictions. You can specify any allergies you have or specific needs like "no added sugars." How about no gluten? No problem. Do you only have 125 calories per day for snacks? Flashbite freshly packages each snack to specific calorie targets you request. If you use our code "ohthehumanity.com/bite" today - that "o h" thehumanity.com/bite "b i t e"- you'll get a free starter pack filled with tasty snacks, including their most popular treat: raspberry flax choconummies. Let me tell you, they sent me some and they're like nothing I've ever had before, I'm completely addicted, can't stop popping them in my mouth. There's no obligation, you just put in the code and get the first delivery free, you don't even need a credit card. So remember to go to "ohthehumanity.com/bite" for free snacks today. Flashbite - snacking right, done right.

Puppies, I want to get you back into the show, but first I want you to hit subscribe on iTunes, or pocketCasts, or your iRiver digital mp3 player which is really a better value than an ipod with a non-PC compatible firewire port, I think we can all agree. Listen, I know it's happened before, you listened to the first couple episodes of a show and you thought "eh, I guess I could listen to that" but you got distracted by R slash unexpected wholesome, and forgot. You know what Al Davis said, just subscribe, baby. And he was talking to a literal baby, and that baby grew up to be ... Post Malone.

Thanks and back to the show.

ACT 4 - THE REALITY

3

INT. NOTHINGNESS

3

Javier, facing a worse alternative, backs into a "temporary" deal with Cher.

JAVIER

(breathing in blissfully)
This is sooo... well, it's so insane.

CHER

Insane? No... it's just my pitch -
- my pitch to you, Javier. But...
we also have to be careful with
this sort of thing. So I'll just
have to turn that done a bit...
(Click click)

JAVIER

(slight pout)
Ohhhhh.

CHER

Trust me, I have a lot of
experience in managing that. And I
hope you weren't offended with the
garden hose analogy, obviously your
human neuromuscular system is a
wondrous miracle of nature and all
that, but I have to be completely
honest... you humans are packing,
we are talking BIGGGG hoses. It is
pretty incredible. And listen this
is two-way deal here, if you're
happy, I'm happy -- almost
literally. And if you don't like
it, well, I don't like it. And we
can just walk away from the deal.

JAVIER

Really? You'd go? You're here for a
month and I say, "hey actually, I
do sort of prefer having dedicated
control of my body as I have for
the past 38 years, in case I feel
like, interacting with a physical
object some time" and you say, "ok,
sorry it didn't work out, but
seriously let's keep in touch."

CHER

(affirmatively)
Mmmhm! Consider it a trial period.

JAVIER

You'd just leave my body, I don't
know how... or now that I think
about

(CONTINUED)

(MORE)

JAVIER (CONT'D)
(disgustedly)
how you got in...

CHER
Come on, trade secrets.

JAVIER
And you'd -- I dunno, undulate off
to someone else and offer them the
same deal?

CHER
Of course, yes. YES. After the
mandated arbitration period, and
then 30 to 45 days later, I'm clear
out.

JAVIER
Excuse me?

CHER
Well it's not something we need to
get into, I mean it's all a bit
shabby isn't it? I mean even your
words for it "squatters rights" --
urnngh, right?

JAVIER
You think you have...

CHER
Hey, it's the law. GALACTIC law.

JAVIER
Says the microscopic fugitive from
justice who has taken over my body
against my will.

CHER
(firmly at first)
What they are doing is NOT just,
alright? They are not the good guys
here. And this -- this is for OUR
mutual benefit. I'm a LIBERAL on my
planet, ok? And furthermore, this
whole fugitive thing -- that's only
my homeworld. There's a whole
galaxy of races and cultures out
there, and the galactic code of
universal suffrage says no
intelligent species shall suffrage
another to lose their life if
another intelligent species can
help... them...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHER (CONT'D)

it's -- I can't remember the exact wording, ok, it's been 611 years since my Organized Government and Policy neurotraining, and -- it's not important, what is important, for you and for me...

(fades off)

JAVIER

Tell me.

CHER

What's important for you is that you have been asking all your life for a way to handle all those impulses and feelings that drown you, something the laundry list of meds and therapy never ended up doing. And what's important for me... is that I would die... within hours outside of a willing host. And if you want it, I will leave... I HAVE to leave, because...

(snapping)

symbiote, remember? Not a parasite. Symbiote. Who wants to help you. I help you, you help me, we help each other. What do you say?

Pause, as music swell dies down.

JAVIER

Just a trial period?

CHER

Just a trial period. Come on, let Cher take the wheel!

JAVIER

I can't believe I'm saying this, or even considering this but ... Yes. I think this could actually work, and -- wait, what was with the murderbots [thing again] ?...

CHER

(interrupting)

Oh, that's so wonderful to hear, Javier. And you know, frankly, between you and me, its sort of just in time too, ...you've been lying unconscious on your bathroom floor, on top of a pizza box; just absolutely soaked in urine for two days and it may take me...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHER (CONT'D)

mmm rough guesstimate, a couple more? To figure out how to work these stump like appendages attached to your lower torso.

JAVIER

My LEGS?

CHER

Yes, LEGS! Look at us, working like a team already!

OUTRO PART 2