

PARASITECOLOGY

S01E09 - "Half Breed"

written by

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ACT 1: THE PLAN

EXT. CITY STREETS

Night crowd and cars. Walking.

JAVIER

I can't believe you hung me out to dry like that! We're supposed to be partners!

CHER

Now who's being irrational? You really think that would have been a smart time to quit? Right when we just found tangible evidence, well - smellable evidence - that your company is under the control of human hosts illegally inhabited by spirits from my planet?

JAVIER

... human hosts illegally inhabited by spirits from your planet, like me...

CHER

Like you, and... NOW THAT'S a very DIFFERENT situation and you know it!

JAVIER

Do I know it? What's to say those spirits aren't political refugees like yourself? Or, I don't know, just some symbiotic kids out on a cosmic rumspringa?

CHER

Impossible; first -- I'm rather unique as far as my people go. And as I told you before, pre-enlightened worlds are off-limits. Not to mention the penalties for my species being found on this world in particular are extremely grave.

JAVIER

Why this world in particular?

CHER

It's a long story, one for a private location, and anyway -- I'm starving; we're all out of the Wintergreen pocket mints.

JAVIER

Those were Tums. Anxiety gives me heartburn.

CHER

And hunger gives me an urge to eat delicious Wintergreen Tums mints, which decidedly live up to their reputation as non-pareils.

JAVIER

Look, they're not non-pareil mints. And their jingle is literally "TUMS TA TUM TUM TUMMMMS" which is meant to represent the looming explosion of your half-digested dinner either one way or the other.

CHER

Oh, dinner -- STOP, you're making me hungrier. Let's find a place quick, before we attract attention. There's no doubt that your company executives must be controlling the murderbots. With bearers that stink that much, they'd be dead in minutes if they weren't the ones BEHIND the attacks.

Pace of walking increases. Pause before dialogue continues.

JAVIER

This is creepy... Personeum has its hand in so many technologies, we could probably be tracked anywhere -- especially out on the streets. Cell phone towers, internet-connected security cameras with face recognition.

CHER

You think they know what we look like? Mmm -- we should put on your sunglasses.

JAVIER

What? No. It's dark out.

CHER

Oh, yes, it's dark and I suppose just because you can't perceive it, that the sky isn't totally flooded with UV rays bouncing about and destroying your corneas at all times, plus why don't we make it as easy possible for an evil corporation to hunt us down?

JAVIER

(hrumphing)

Man, I don't like this. It's like the entire world is filled genetic duplicants of The Edge looking at me disdainfully like I'm Bono at the UN.

CHER

Wait -- HERE. Yes, I know of this place. Excellent choice. Let's go in.

JAVIER

"The Crystal Palace"? I've never heard of this place, how do you know about it?

CHER

I don't know, Bearer. Probably Yelp or Angie's List or... some kind of rating service... Bumble? No, Happn, maybe? One where I had to fill out a LOT of biographical information. Anyway, it's supposed to be very good. Like a dinner club. Beverages, rhythmic music, all you can eat hot-dog buffet, ETCETERA.

(aside)

Yes, door keeper - here you are! The identification which identifies my identity, and the requisite fee for the admitted.

Door swings open and bad rock starts playing. Some audience wooing, etc.

JAVIER

Cher, this is a STRIP CLUB!

CHER

Yes, that's what I said.

JAVIER
You said dinner club!

CHER
Yes, it includes dinner.

JAVIER
And nude dancers!

CHER
Is that unusual for humans?
Frankly I didn't realize it was a
point of note, like saying: yes,
this establishment has chairs and a
breathable atmosphere. Well, at
any rate, where else could we go
where it's not unusual for a single
male human in dark glasses to sit
alone and argue with himself while
eating from an all-night all-you-
can-eat buffet?

JAVIER
Uh: an all-night all-you-can-eat-
buffet!

CHER
Listen Javier, I've looked through
a lot of your cultural
entertainment memories, various
forms of human cinema and Showtime-
like pay channels, and this sort of
establishment is considered IDEAL
for passing sensitive information
between parties, or plotting
illegal activities such as
penetrating the security of a
multinational conglomerate.

JAVIER
Yeah, so is a dimly lit underground
parking garage, but we're not
hanging out there!

CHER
Do these "garages" have hot-dog
buffets?

JAVIER
No, but they're probably more
sanitary.

(MORE)

JAVIER (CONT'D)

And it's a GARAGE, not a Taylor Swift concert -- you can just buy a hot dog and bring it with you to the garage, nobody is going to frisk you, it's a GARAGE.

CHER

"A" hot dog? Do you really think the point of a hot dog buffet is to have "A" hot dog?

JAVIER

Cher, I honestly cannot believe we are arguing about this right now.

CHER

Fine, if it bothers you so much, we'll have "A" hot dog and then straight to the garage.

JAVIER

Or my apartment, where we have complete PRIVACY.

CHER

Well that's a pretty good idea, I think you should have mentioned that outside. Anyway, can we sit? Your back is killing me.

JAVIER

Hrhmph. Okay, back in that booth, as far from the wobbling as we can get.

CHER

Okay, but that seems far from what is termed the "VIP" room, and I'm anxious to know what sort of buffet they have in there.

JAVIER

SIT, now. Get talking.

Sound of booth sitting.

CHER

Right, to business. I... I feel like I should pass you a large envelope made of manila hemp. You don't think they sell "manila" envelopes, do you?

JAVIER
NO ENVELOPES.

CHER
Ok, alright, uh... where to start,
where to start... okay, first, I
think I owe you an [apology]

JAVIER
[Apology]?

CHER
Yes. When we first agreed to this
"trial", which I think we can both
agree is a huge success: well
beyond initial projections, just
really, unnngh, hitting it out of
the stratosphere... uhh... I
promised you that it would be "I
help you, you help me, we help each
other." And earlier I... mmm,
forgot that promise and I want to
say I'm very sorry, and from now on
I will only make choices in YOUR
best interest. And no... no, I can
see you starting up and DON'T say
it, because you also very much
enjoy hot-dogs, so this is a
mutually beneficial choice of
venue.

JAVIER
Well, that was astonishingly close
to a real apology, so -- in the
interest of intergalactic
relations, I'm going to accept.
But don't -- DON'T pull that
disappearing act on me again,
understood?

CHER
Understood, my friend.

JAVIER
Okay, if we're done with the mushy
stuff, can we get back to doing
something about the secret group of
evil aliens infecting one of the
biggest companies in the world?
And that's just what we currently
know -- it could go all the way to
Apple, or... Yum! Brands, or...

(MORE)

JAVIER (CONT'D)
you know, that would definitely
help explain Comcast... how far
does it go, and what are they up
to?

Music changing to generic rap.

CHER
Impossible to say, though if they
are indeed part of the Cabal of
Violence on my planet, as seems
almost certain, they have one goal
only: power. Complete and
unyielding power. Power upon
power, on a scale...

JAVIER
Yeah, powerful power, got it.
Cher, I don't see why you're so
sure this has something to do with
your "Cabal of Violence".

CHER
Remember how I said before that
this world SPECIFICALLY was off-
limits to my people?

JAVIER
Yeah, and then you avoided the
subject.

CHER
And I'm just about to discuss it in
detail while providing firm
justification for my reasoning. I
just need to make sure we're on the
same page; that we're a
synchronized team with a combined
goal of rooting out this conspiracy
and exposing its evil for the world
to see!

JAVIER
(short pause)
That's a soft YES.

CHER
A soft yes... I'll take it, yes,
I'll take it: I'll put in my back
pocket and I'll pat it every once
in a while to make sure it hasn't
gone anywhere. Well, back to the
off-limits thing...

(MORE)

CHER (CONT'D)
it's a funny story, Javier, and I
think when I get done with it we're
all going to see the humor in the
situation. Let me just set the
scene... it was ten thousand years
ago when man was little more than
an erect primate hitting rocks
together in the jungle...

Jungle/insects atmosphere plays with strip club music
continuing.

CHER (CONT'D)
With a bit less Ginuwine-esque
grind hop playing...

Rap fades.

JAVIER
We're doing this again?

CHER
You're really a bit of a theatrical
Philistine.

JAVIER
I don't think they show up for
another 8000 years or so, actually.

CHER
Hush, I'm narrating. A cloudless
night with the stars seeming but a
hairy and uncoordinated arms reach
away. Suddenly the sky cracks in
two, and a glorious sight is
beheld!

Whooshing whirl of a spaceship descending then landing.

JAVIER
Yep. Looks like a spaceship.

CHER
(coughing)
Ahem. That's not quite your line,
early man.

JAVIER
Let's see... OH, HELL NO. I'm not
doing a bunch of stereotyped
caveman grunts!

CHER

It's actually quite a refined language, there's a lot of meaning that can be packed into various inflections of "ookgh", "orgh", ETCETERA.

JAVIER

Forget it, germ. You want to recast with Tim Allen, be my guest.

CHER

Well, that's uncalled for. I suppose I'll just have to do this as a one-being show, plays to my performative strengths anyway...

(narrating)

A voice from the heavens speaks as humans gather from afar to view the wondrous sight. "People of Earth-261, we have observed you from afar and come to you as friends. Today, the spirits of Earth, aka Planet One, share with you a great gift! Gather close and be enlightened!"

Shimmering noise increasing in loudness.

JAVIER

Whew, that's bright, can you turn down the HDR on this visionquest a bit? I guess these sunglasses don't do anything for mental hallucinations.

CHER

Really, Javier, I'm trying to put on a performance here, I'm not looking for stage direction.

(narrating again)

And thus were the primal humans given a great gift that night, as the spirits sailed away to the stars, leaving behind...

Also sprach zarathustra opening.

JAVIER

A big black monolith, are you fucking kidding me?

(MORE)

JAVIER (CONT'D)

You're trying to tell me your species came here 10,000 years ago and left behind a 2001 Space Odyssey monolith that propelled man forward intellectually to where we are today? That's your great GIFT?

CHER

What? No. That thing? That's a spent fuel pod. No, the GIFT was that a whole bunch of you guys got to come back to our planet and... umm... become a new host species because... our original ones all died off in a plague. And then the Galactic Confederation heard about it and kind of... banned us from this planet, which uhh... might also...

(very quickly)

have been related to our program of selectively breeding the ones we brought back for ah, I'm not sure if meekness is the EXACT genetic marker but, ahh... Well suffice it to say that a cabal looking to consolidate its power might be very interested in a planet of 7.5 billion hosts with a more, umm, let's say excitable temperament. But --

(snapping)

yes, getting back to your original point, which is WELL TAKEN, YES, I think you could give us quite a lot of credit for inspiring the human race of Earth-261 to the heights of civilization and intellectual curiosity that you have climbed to the summit of...

Jungle/insect background fades and NSFW rap song (STFU by Jam Studio 30 sec version or full track start at 50 sec and cut off after swagger part) and men cheering rise.

INTERSTITIAL - THANKS

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

We want to thank you for listening and hopefully you're enjoying the show. If not, keep listening, there's a button scene at the end for the next Marvel movie, and let's just say... I was NOT expecting Mark Paul Gosselaar as Korvac the Machine Man, but it works.

This week, let's not talk, let's just be comfortable in who we are. Nah, it's not working for me. Let me throw out a few favorite podcasts we think you should be listening to. Besotted Geek, where a funny couple offers nerdy news and reviews bolstered by custom cocktails; 33% pulp where Linzi, Daniel and a guest each review 1/3 of a pulp novel and then recap the whole thing with witty commentary; and the Epic Film Guys who do in-depth film discussions with a heap of comedy... and they are also responsible for the Livestream for the Cure where a bunch of podcasters show up to raise money for cancer research. So, fuck cancer; fuck suicide; and LOVE all those podcasters we just mentioned by subscribing to them.

Pumpkins, I do want to get you back into the show, but first I want you to do one thing for us: send us some feedback on Twitter @parasiteecology. Tell us what you like, then tell us what you don't like, but then tell us another thing that you do like so we feel good at the end. Seriously though, hearing from you is awesome, especially if you send us messages about what you think we look like and then get freaked out if you see a picture of us and think "that's not how I pictured them at all." That one thing: send us some feedback on Twitter @parasiteecology.

Thanks and back to the show.

ACT 2: THE DIRT

INT. PERSONEUM OFFICE

Sounds of typing and computer hums. Peanuts voice.

JAVIER

Yeah, nice to be back, thanks.
Except for the case of the Mondays,
right? Gotta get back to the grind.
Yeah, talk to you later.

Typing continues.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

(mumbling to himself)

Okay, now the data layer is locked
and obfuscated but I'm pretty sure
the business layer has a back door
for us to test against real data...
No, looks like that got patched
out, I'm going to have go back and
compile an older revision and hope
the data calls haven't changed too
much. Hold on.

CHER

Of course, yes! No problem at all.

JAVIER

Git reset soft... um, 0c3a...

CHER

(quietly whistling)

JAVIER

CHER, please. I'm working, and I'm
already anxious enough just being
here, much less digging into things
I'm not supposed to.

CHER

No, yes, of course. You're doing
that THING with the, uh...

JAVIER

(mind elsewhere while
typing)

Going through the source code of
the Jibbrrr app, looking for a way
to review encrypted messages sent
between the management team.

CHER

No, it's a very good plan, and one that basically needs no input from me, so I'll just...

JAVIER

Thank you. This is taking forever to recompile.

Phone buzzing.

CHER

Who is it? Is it Vance?

JAVIER

Why would it be Vance? He sits like three desks down. No, it's my sister, Mia. I'll check it later.

(pause)

Recompile is still going, I guess.

Pause.

CHER

(singing to self quietly)

Coming through your speaker, we got that paper, we got that swagger...

JAVIER

CHER!

CHER

Sorry, sorry.

JAVIER

Okay, attach the debugger and breakpoint on the authentication step and change a few flags...

CHER

(singing to self quietly)

We got that, we got that, we got that swagger...

JAVIER

CHER! I am TRYING to work and I'm doing very complicated real-life hacking, not some Swordfish CSI hand-wavey bullshit.

CHER

No, no, I understand, although it seems like if you have source code access it really doesn't fall under the realm of hacking... but computers are new to me so I'll leave it to an expert.

JAVIER

(sarcastically)

Oh no! PLEASE, offer me the great gift of your wisdom, lord of the stars, for we humans would still be but apes if you had not had the generosity to come here looking for new flesh bicycles to steal.

CHER

See, now I knew that you'd have trouble getting past that, that's why I didn't bring it up. How about I throw in a little oxytocin kick and we chat about it some more.

JAVIER

Hold on, I just need to type in this important command multiple times.

Sound of two keys and space being hit repeatedly.

CHER

(getting slower at end and throaty oh)

Fuh fuh fuh fuh fuh fuh... fuh.
OH.

JAVIER

And... okay, I've got access to their group messages. Hmm... not really sure it looks like anything nefarious going on. I see a lot of communication about ensuring the success of the alpha-track program, and... some kind of hard shift into start-ups, pulling money from Internet services and putting it into... FlashBite, SlosAndNosh, DentistDodgers... they all seem connected somehow. And here... they seem to be hung up on going viral like in the BettyBomb challenge. I don't understand.

CHER

That's it?

JAVIER

Well, I've got more messages to go through, but this is all there is on the company-wide servers. They do have a private database shard just for the board, but it'll take some time to access it.

CHER

Okay, well I guess I'll just wait patiently until... oh what do you know, it's lunch time!

JAVIER

It's 10:48 am.

CHER

And I'm starving, this "script hackery" and talk of bits and bytes has got me rather peckish.

JAVIER

Why are you so hungry?

CHER

I may be... partaking in some of your endocannabinoids to reduce the overall sensation of fear that comes from being hunted continuously. It has the side effect of giving us...

JAVIER

The endo-munchies?

CHER

Don't be crass. This is clinical organic chemistry, not a review channel about the quirky "vibe" differences between...

JAVIER

Strawberry kush explosion.

CHER

And...

JAVIER

Sour diesel shotgun.

CHER

From a gentleman with the username
of...

JAVIER

Uhh... VapeThisBro-420-360-24-7-69.
Listen, we'll go in a little bit,
Cher.

CHER

Sure, yes, of course.

(mumble singing)

Hard like you never seen, bow down
to the queen, like my money dirty
and you know i always got that
green.

JAVIER

Screw it, let's go to the
[cafeteria].

CHER

[Cafeteria]! And hey -- don't
worry if we don't find anything
right away, for all we know it
could take up, say, two weeks until
we find out something
interesting... we'll just keep our
minds STEADY on the very crucial
task before us...

Significant pause.

JAVIER

Just do it.

CHER

WE GOT THAT SWAGGER, WE GOT THAT.
WE GOT THAT. WE GOT THAT SWAGGER!

OUTRO PART 1