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Critters

By Domonic Muir

Radar Control,
this is Prison Transport 9961
requesting permission to land.
Over.
We've been expecting you,
PT 9961.
Please confirm payload.
Over.
Crite prisoners...
eight of them. Over.
There seems to be
a problem, PT 9961.
My advance notice cube
states there should be
Please explain. Over.
We did have 10
at one time,
but the Crites were
eating everything in sight.
We had to kill two of them
to make the food last longer. Over.
Roger, PT 9961.
You're cleared for landing
in docking bay B.
Send Crite prisoners
through detox and immunization.
Put them in the termination lock
as soon as you land.
Shock control will be
standing by. Over.
Roger, Radar Control.
This is Warden Zanti.
Get Shock Control over
to the termination lock.
The Crites are
up to something.
Explosion in termination lock.
Damage report.
Two dead
and three wounded, sir.
- Escapes?
- The Crites. All eight of them.
The Crites have stolen a ship!
Damn.

Get the bounty hunters.
I have a job for you.
They've stolen
one of our fastest ships,
with enough fuel to cross
the galaxy 10 times over.
So fuel is
not their concern.
However, you must stop them
before they can feed.
You will receive
full payment, as usual,
only upon evidence
of their destruction.
Brad, April, breakfast!
Brad, I need
to get in there!
Come on, you little snout,
I'm in a hurry!
Mom, Brad won't let me
in the bathroom!
Hello?
Yeah, hold on.
April, telephone!
Brad, you're
a real jerk!
Mom, Brad's hogging
the bathroom.
Two minutes.
Hello?
Oh, hi.
Jay, breakfast!
Helen, was that
Charlie calling?
No, it was Steve.
Steve?
Yeah?
Happy birthday!
Yeah?
What'd you get?
- No!
- Hey.
Steve who?
The new boy at school.

Whatever happened
to what's-his-name?
- Richard?
- I'm a terrible guesser.
Yeah, Richard.
I thought he was
the love of her life.
Try and keep up,
will ya?
You got to keep me informed.
Did you wash my bowling shirt?
Yes, it'll be ready
for the tournament. Go eat.
Brad, get Chewie
off the table.
I can't wait!
Have you seen
Charlie this morning, Brad?
Bye.
Thanks.
So who is this Steve?
The dork from New York.
Shut up.
You're such a baby.
What happened
to Richard?
All Richard cared about
was hog farms.
So?
My Dad farmed hogs.
Dad!
Brad, what are you
sitting at the table
with a thermometer
in your mouth for?
I'm not feeling
very good.
I'll bet.
- You look okay.
- 106?
Did you tell Mom about your
big geometry test you have today?
Shut up.
Just shut up!

You have
a test today, Brad?
- You're a real shithead.
- Bradley!
Boy, I'm going
to wash your mouth out.
Maybe you'll do as well on this
as you did on your last one.
What last test?
Bye.
Mmmmm.
Brad!
Come on, April,
we're running late!
Get yourself ready
for school, boy.
Dad.
You miss that bus
I'm going to skin you
and hang your bones
out to dry.
"Thank you for the lovely breakfast
you prepared, Mother."
Wonder what happened
to Charlie?
Morning, Harv.
Morning, Sal.
What's happening?
This here says
that John Travolta
used to be a waitress
in Fort Myers, Florida.
What's happening
here, Sal?
Big bowling tournament
tonight.
And Charlie, he's sleeping
it off in the back.
Be nice, Harv.
He don't mean no harm.
They're coming!
They're coming, Harv.
Yeah. I'm getting them through
my fillings, just like last time.

Cut the crap, Charlie.

Listen.

Jeez.

They're the same ones
that ruined my pitching career.

You ever consider slowing down
on the whiskey, Charlie?

It ain't the whiskey.

Sal.

Sal, you remember, right?

I was a prospect, huh?

I wasn't drinking then, was I?

Sure, Charlie, sure.

You were Major League material.

Right.

I had heat.

Then I started
getting these messages...

This is Patrol GXP 1198
calling Alpha Tango Delta.

Come in.

- Over.

- Do you hear that?

Charlie, it's Jeff.

I'm on Route 22.

Come on, lover, pick it up.

- Cut the horseshit, Jeff.

- Ooh, sorry, Harv.

- I didn't know you were in.

- What do you need?

Just signing off

for the night.

So sign off, already.

Uh, Charlie...

why don't you just

go on out to Jay and Helen's?

You don't want

to get fired now.

Oh no.

No, I like my job.

You just forget about

that Martian stuff, okay?

Forget about that.

Yeah, right.

This town's a zoo.
Prepare for holographic
transmission.
In my haste
to get you on your way,
there were a couple of things
I neglected to inform you of.
We are tracing the Crites
to a solar system
where only one planet
supports life... Earth.
Your ship database will contain
adequate information
on the culture
of the planet.
Your transformation
capabilities
should come in
quite handy there.
I trust, however, you will be
less destructive this time,
considering you nearly
destroyed half...
Earth is a culture
of many contrasts.
Their technological
advances have been...
Bring him down,
bring him down!
Okay.
Okay, I'm ready
for that carburetor, Charlie.
Charlie!
Give me the carburetor!

It's 5:

K-Eat in Kansas City.
Okay, 1948.
A Missouri housewife is kidnapped
by six little men with orange heads
on her way to the laundromat.
All right!
Whoo!
What the hell

was that?
Did you see that?
That was the best one we ever did!
Yeah, that was...
that was real good.
Homemade.
Best in the state.
Charlie,
you broke my slingshot.
It's... I can fix this.
I can fix this.
You just go get
a tin can.
Anyway, like I was saying,
this housewife...
What housewife?
I thought I told you to get rid
of them fireworks?
- You like working here, Charlie?
- Yes, sir.
I've been waiting
on that carburetor.
You've got to try and concentrate
on what you're doing, okay?
- I'm gonna.
- I got a lot to do today,
so try to keep up.
- Dad, I asked if he could...
- Give me those.
These are not toys.
I want to try to get this thing
fired up before dark.
Now what?
Sorry, Charlie.
That don't feel right.
- Hi, Daddy.
- Hey, girl.
Daddy, this is Steve Elliot.
I asked him to stay for dinner.
I hope it's okay.
Mom said it was okay.
- Nice to meet you, Mr. Brown.
- Expensive little toy.
Steve's dad just gave it

to him for his birthday.

It's the greatest,

isn't it?

Don't look like you're going

to haul much hay in it.

No...

Let me... let me

just test it out.

Careful, Charlie.

Charlie.

Bradley Brown,

I'm going to kill you.

You get back here!

Brad, I'm going

to kill you!

Come here,

you little snot.

- April!

- He shot me with a slingshot!

- I did not!

- Liar!

- April!

- Liar!

Hold it, hold it!

Boy, did you shoot your sister

with that slingshot?

I think I'll stand

on the fifth amendment.

This is not a democracy.

Did you or didn't you?

Yeah, I guess I did.

You know better

than that, boy.

Go to your room.

- And no supper.

- Oh, Jay.

Helen.

At least you like me.

She's all set to go,

Mr. Brown.

Okay, Charlie.

See you in the morning.

This is a great meal,

Mrs. Brown.

Really, one of the best

I've ever had.

Thanks.

Thank you, Steve.

- Well, we should get going.

- What?

You promised you'd take me
for a ride, remember?

I did?

right.

Hon, I kinda figured
you'd watch me bowl tonight.

We're defending
the championship, you know.

- Oh, we're...

- Maybe we'll come by later.

Don't suppose anybody would like
some dessert before they leave?

- No thanks, Mom.

- It was very good.

- Thank you.

- Thanks.

- Helen?

Have you... you know,
talked to her
about the way
things are?

Years ago.

Years?

I thought you were
going to let me drive?

Okay. Be careful.

What do I want
to see an old barn for?

Come on.

It's romantic.

April...

You want your car keys back,
don't you?

Come on, Steve.

Want your keys?

Come on!

I'm allergic.

Just a minute!

Come in.

You can thank your mama
for fixing you a plate.
Where's that slingshot?
Brad, why are you always
fighting with your sister?
How come you and Mom
always take her side?
I mean, I didn't even
do nothing!

Boy, you shot her
with a slingshot.

Right.

Anyway, I'm confiscating
this until further notice.

- But Dad...

- And no movies...
for two weeks.

No, uh... April...
if your Dad catches me
up here I'm history.
He didn't even like me
eating his food.

My parents never
come out here at night.

You sure?

Sorry.

Chewie!

And now for the number one
song of the week...

Johnny Steele's,
"Power of the Night."

Jay?

There's something wrong
with the TV!

Jay?

The earth moved.

- Already?

- Yeah.

Jay, will you forget about
the shaking? Let's go.

I'm just going
to have a look.

We're going to be late

for the tournament.

Brad, what the hell
are you doing up there?

Dad... you see... uh...
the earthquake threw me
clear out of my room.

I could not believe it.

Cut the bull and get
your butt down here.

You look like you've
done that a couple of times.

- A couple times.

- Come on.

I want to keep
an eye on you.

- Where are we going?

- Out to the field.

- Did you see that meteor?

- I saw something.

Maybe it's a Russian spy probe
on some sort of secret mission.

I think you watch
too much TV.

Smells like oil burning.

Smells like cow crap
to me, Dad.

Holy shit!

- Are you all right?

- Yeah.

What is it?

Looks like
one of the herd.

- What happened to him?

- I don't know.

Without my gun,
I don't want to find out.

Let's go.

Mom's going to be
really grossed out
when she hears about this.

Maybe we shouldn't even
tell her about it
till we find out more
about what happened out here.

This is GXP 11 niner eight,
come in
Alpha Tango Delta. Over.
What is it, Jeff?
Over.
Hey, Sal.
How about we get some donuts
and coffee after work? Over.
Not tonight, Jeff.
Not ever. Over.
I copy, Alpha Tango Delta.
Over and out.
Shit!
Damn dog.
Come here, poochy.
Here, pooch.
Come on.
Come on, doggie.
Come on.
Bark, bark, bark.
Come on.
What the...?!
Damn cat.
Oh, you scared
the hell out of me!
- Oh!
- I'm sorry. Forgive me.
- Something was staring at me.
- What do you mean something?
- Where?
- Over there by the window.
- I don't see anything.
- Maybe it was Chewie.
Yeah, maybe.
Did you find anything?
Yeah, we found something
a little strange.
Jay?
Transform.
Nothing likes me.
Find something.
Eating start.
Who are you calling?
Harv. I want to tell him

what's going on out here.
Maybe he's gotten
other calls.
This phone is dead.
What?
Mom?
Okay.
There's no reason for you to
come down here. Just wait a minute.
Probably just a circuit
breaker's been tripped.
What the...?
Jay, any luck?
Just a minute.
What's wrong?
Dad!
- Stay upstairs!
- Mom, we got to help him!
- Bradley!
- No, no, don't come down here!
Jay, come on!
What's down there?
I don't know.
Something meaner than hell.
Jeff, come in, Jeff.
Over.
This is Alpha Tango Delta
calling GXP
Come in.
Over.
Come on, will you quit fooling
around and answer me? Over.
All right, I'm sorry
about the donuts and coffee.
Maybe another time, but tonight
I have to wash my hair.
Over.
Come on, Jeff.
I've been getting all sorts of calls
about UFOs in the area.
Carla Emmons swears
one nearly ran into her house
and then went flying off.
I think she's been dipping

in the cooking sherry again.
Anyway, she wants you to get
over there right away. Over.
I am starting to lose
my patience, Jeff.
If you are sleeping on
the job again, I am not going...
I can't feel that.
Hey, careful, boy.
That's some kind
of poison.
That's better, babe.
I'm beginning to get
the feeling back.
I'll get it.
Steve!
Steve!
Who's that?
April!
April?
Brad!
April?
Brad! Brad, help!
Hurry up!
Do something, Brad!
Brad!
Brad!
- Brad!
- Mom!
- What? What are you...
- Steve's dead!
Charlie?
- Call Harv.
- What for?
Call Harv.
Call.
Call the army.
They're here.
- Who?
- Who?!
Them!
My teeth.
Sally, call Harv, please?
Charlie...

I want to go home.
Okay.
Just... where is he?
Might be
at the bowling alley.
Okay, good, good.
I'll get Harv.
- You call the army.
- Okay.
Thank you, Ms. Grubner.
Tonight...
I would like to read to you
from the book of Genesis.
Chapter 19...
which, as most of you know,
is the story
of Sodom and Gomorrah.
Obviously, some
of our citizens are...
We're here for the Crites.
The county is going
to pay for this, Jeff.
Jeff?
Jeff?
Jeff Barnes?
Jay.
Jay, what are you doing?
Maybe we ought to just
stay put.
They haven't gotten
into the house yet.
They will.
We could board up the place.
We could make it stronger.
Helen, these things
are vicious.
They've cut out our phone,
they've cut out our power.
You understand
what that means?
It's just a matter of time
until they get in here.
Yeah, but we should
just stay here.

No, we can't wait.
Wait up, Brad.
All right, Jay,
I've got her.
Okay, let's go.
Stay together.
I'm going to drive, Jay.
Okay, baby.
Come on.
Oh my God, Jay.
- Oh, Mom.
- What the hell are those things?
They're from outer space,
like Charlie says.
Bradley.
Maybe they're some government
experiment gone haywire.
They used to be gophers,
but got zapped by some radioactive...
- Bradley!
- What are we going to do now?
Steve's keys.
Oh God.
Wait!
Stay together.
Come on, come on.
Go on!
They're getting bigger!
Come on, faster!
Faster!
It's locked!
Come on!
Go! Get in!
Jay!
Brad!
Get him up to the door.
Get your feet up, Jay!
Mom, shoot!
I can't!
It must be empty!
My pocket.
My shirt pocket!
Get them. Hurry.
- Well?

- The line's busy.
I don't get it.
Jay's never this late.
- Except when he pays for the beer.
- Yeah.
Jake, they are coming.
They are not only coming,
they are here.
See, I was out
on Route 22...
- and I looked up...
- Have another drink, Charlie.
I don't want
another drink, Jake.
I want Harv.
We're under attack.
I'm going to leave it
right here.
Just don't bother me
any more.
I saw the sign was shaking
and everything.
- Isn't that Johnny Steele?
- I don't know.
Whoa!
Joe, let's go.
Holy shit!
Wonder what team
he's on?
Hey, Jake, are we gonna get
a couple beers over here or what?
Keep your shirt on,
asshole.
I got a problem here.
You believe these guys?
It ain't Halloween, is it?
If anything does happen to me,
you crooks won't live long.
What does he mean
we won't live long?
What can I get
for you fellas?
Reverend, what are
you doing here?

That's some outfit
you got on.

- We want the Crites.

- Oh really?

Who are they,
some new team?

The Crites.

Mister, I don't know
what you're talking about.

I think you all
better be leaving
before somebody
gets hurt.

You all have
a serious attitude problem.

Keep your shirt on,
asshole.

This had better
be important.

Harv, you better get
down to the church,
- all hell is breaking loose.

- What?

The reverend says
a couple of guys started shooting...

Whoa, slow down.

...destroyed the organ,
you know how beautiful...

- Where's Jeff?

- I don't know.

I've been trying
to get him for hours.

Give me 10 minutes.

He looks pretty sick, Mom.

I'm okay, sport.

He's fine.

He doesn't look
fine to me.

Why don't you go
check the windows?

- I already did.

- Check them again!

It's okay, Mom.

I'm so sorry.

April?

Yeah?

You okay?

The flue's open!

Mom!

The shotgun!

Brad!

Brad, look out!

Hey, hey!

Hey, hey!

I've been looking

for you guys!

I just want to talk

to you.

- At first he was Jeff.

- Was it Jeff or wasn't it?

- He changed.

- Changed?

They were wearing

really funny clothes.

Like they was

from Los Angeles.

- Everybody calm down.

- Harv, all hell is breaking loose.

- Yeah, Sal. Over.

- There's been a disturbance
at the Bowlarama Lanes. Over.

What kind

of a disturbance? Over.

Well...

evidently some guys

shot up the bar.

You get a description?

Over.

Well...

it's kind of strange, Harv,

but Jake says

it was Reverend Miller

and Charlie

and some stranger.

Hold it, hold it,

hold it.

I'm not reading you

clear, Sal.

Repeat that. Over.
Reverend Miller,
Charlie McFadden
and some stranger
just shot up the bar
at the Bowlarama Lanes. Over.
Have you heard
from Jeff? Over.
I can't raise him, Harv.
I also got a report here
about shots fired
out Route 22...
near the Brown place. Over.
Harv, do you read? Over.
Sal, I want you to keep
trying to raise Jeff.
I'm headed over
to the bowling alley.
Then I'm going to head out
towards the Brown's place.
Over and out.
Over and out.
Get 'em, Harv!
Babe, I got to get to a phone,
get some help out here.
I can do it.
- Absolutely not.
- Dad, you can't even walk.
I'm so tired.
Damn.
Son...
assuming I said okay,
how would you do it?
Hit the yard, grab my bike
and head for the highway.
Dad, somebody's got
to go for help.
All right.
But boy, you ride like
you never rode before.
You get over to the Emmons' house
and get on the phone.
- Get Harv over here.
- Dad, I'll be fine.

Don't worry.
You want to take this?
Nah, you keep it.
It'd just slow me down.
Anyway, you might need it.
Brad?
See ya.
Oh my gosh.
They're growing!
How ya feeling, hon?
Like a brick hit me.
Oh, baby.
How long have I been...?
Where's Brad?
Brad has gone
to get help.
Oh, Jay, you shouldn't
have let him go.
Stop, stop!
Wait!
Go, just go.
These things... these critters.
Come on, go!
Dad's all torn up and Mom's got
a harpoon thing in her neck.
They're getting
bigger.
Let's go!
Charlie?
Where's Jeff?
Hey, you're Johnny Steele.
- Where?
- Huh?
Where are they?
At my house.
Come on, hit it.
Where?
Charlie, you know
where my house is.
Who are you guys?
We want the Crites.
The Crites?
Critters,
Crites.

You're not from
around here, are you?
Okay, okay.
You help me, I help you.
Stop it!
Goddamn it, stop it!
I got one.
Get out of my house!
Damn it!
Give me some more rounds.
That's it.
Oh, Jay.
Holy...
Mom? Dad?
Are you all right?
- Are you all right?
- Yeah.
Brad, who did you bring?
Charlie
and Johnny Steele.
- Who?
- Go on!
Help us!
Oh God, Chewie!
Help us!
Help us!
Oh, it's Harv.
Holy shit!
What is that, a cannon?
What's going on here?
Brad.
Where's Brad?
He's still in the house.
Helen, Helen!
Helen, Helen, Helen!
Get in the car.
Get in the car!
Get in there.
Get in.
Jay, get in the car.
Watch it!
Jeez, these folks could use
a good exterminator.
Charlie, what do you think

you're doing?
You drunk?
I hope not you'll
take over our operation.
Charlie, put me down.
Harv...
are you okay?
I swallowed
my chewing tobacco.
Chewie.
Here, Chewie.
Chewie.
Come here.
Chewie.
Where've you been?
I've been looking all over for you.
Come on.
We're going for a ride.
Brad, get down here!
Brad!
Help!
Thanks.
Oh, no.
April!
No, Helen, no!
No!
Where's April?
It just grabbed her.
I couldn't...
It was huge.
- Come on, Harv.
- They took her that way.
What was that thing?
Charlie?
Brad!
Brad!
No! You get him!
Get him!
- Charlie?
- Brad.
I was right.
I was right!
What are you doing here?
I'm just following

my teeth.

- I'm getting signals like crazy.

- Come on.

Where are we going?

- What the heck...

- Shhh!

Brad, is that April?

- Stay down, Brad.

- Stay here.

If I need you,

I'll holler.

Brad...

What's that thing

going to do with April?

- It's going to kill her.

- Oh, it's going to kill her.

Kill her?!

Bradley!

Let's go.

Brad!

April?

Give me your hand!

- I dropped my firecracker!

- Forget it!

But they'll get away!

- Charlie, let's go!

- Come on!

Brad, I got an idea.

Come here!

- Give me your fire.

- Brad!

Brad, come on!

Come on!

Throw it!

Dad!

- Mom, Dad!

- Are you okay?

Yeah, we're okay.

Hey!

I, uh...

just wanted, you know...

to say thanks.

Call me.

listen, you wouldn't

happen to have
another one of them
electronic gizmos
like you gave
to Brad there?
Listen, maybe you need
a good mechanic
to work
on them guns there.
I'm real good
with my hands...
Chewie!
Chewie?
Chew.