MAX EVERDRIVE

"Prolapsed Soul"

Episode #3

Written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. PLAZA

The Plaza of the Channel 6 TV satellite is bustling with activity. Departments are all open, and the walkways are packed with people. There's no trace of extra-terrestrials, or retrofitted alien technology.

A tall, statuesque man, possibly the recipient of some skilful plastic surgery, is standing next to a reporter. She seems to be interviewing him for a news programme.

INTERVIEWER

I am joined here today by Richard Dickinson, multi-billionaire and CEO of Dickinson Space Industries. Richard, today, you're on the verge of launching Space Channel Six, the world's first television channel created, filmed and operated entirely from space.

DICK DICKINSON

Hello, Earth! Watch out for Max Everdrive, coming to your TVs this season, created and broadcast here, from space!

INTERVIEWER

Dick, you are, of course, well-known for these kinds of stunts, but this one stands as perhaps your most elaborate yet. What could have possibly possessed you to do this?

DICK DICKINSON

Have you ever considered how damned wasteful satellite television is? We beam it all the way up to the satellite, only to beam it all the way back down to earth again! With my new Channel Six station, we'll be able to halve the trip, which lets us deliver great television to you at lightning speed!

INTERVIEWER

Is all this really necessary? If you-

DICK DICKINSON

(interrupting)

Is it necessary? Of course it's necessary - it's my moral duty! Here at Dickinson Space Industries, our mission is to harness technology in order to make the world a better place. And that is exactly what I'm doing.

INTERVIEWER

Does your technology always make the world a better place?

DICK DICKINSON

Of course! All technology does! From the first cavemen onwards! Why, when they were having trouble outrunning all the new dinosaurs, they invented the wheel, and that let them get around really fast and give all those dinosaurs a run for their money.

INTERVIEWER

What do you think of the idea that science and technology simply reflect the values of the society that produced them?

DICK DICKINSON

Ha ha, no, my dear. No. Technology is a straight line from beginning to end, and I can feel it now, with every fibre of my being - we're so close to the end! So very, very close!

INTERVIEWER

Do you have any comment regarding the two engineers who tragically lost their lives in a debrisrelated incident last week?

DICK DICKINSON

My legal team advises me not to make a statement other than to acknowledge the tragedy of the debris, uh, occurrence. It's tragic, tragic. But believe me, we all have to make sacrifices for the dream. You, me, everyone.

INTERVIEWER

One final question, Dick. As you surely know, the cost of beaming TV up to the satellite is negligible compared to all this. Isn't it cheaper and easier to just... make TV on the ground?

DICK DICKINSON

(nervously)
Ha-ha... what?

INTERVIEWER

Making the TV is expensive. Beaming it down is expensive. Beaming it up is arguably the easy part.

DICK DICKINSON
Is this one of those ambush interviews?

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. DOG'S KITCHEN

Dog is reclining in his seat, enjoying an ice-cold can of Delicate Ooze. The television is blaring in the background, displaying some Delicate Ooze marketing.

T.V. ANNOUNCER

Drinks shouldn't taste good. That's what I say, that's what everyone says. Drinks should be bitter and acrid, jammed with flavours that are confusing and disgusting, far beyond the flavour comprehension of any known life form.

The picture changes to show a sinister, grey planet.

T.V. ANNOUNCER (CONT'D) Every can of Delicate Ooze is collected from moisture secreted by the mysterious Ooze planet in the Omega Quadrant. Then, we ship it to vending machines and sustenance stations the galaxy over, while it's still gelatinous, so that you can enjoy the taste of Delicate Ooze, wherever you dwell, and however you ingest nutrients!

The TV shows a grotesque alien holding a can of delicate ooze.

GROTESQUE ALIEN

Since I started consuming Delicate Ooze, I've been growing crystals out of my arm. So that's cool, I guess!

Merrick knocks.

DOG

Come in!

Merrick enters the room. They're holding a jar of grease.

MERRICK

Do you have a moment? I got an idea I want to pass by you.

DOG

Shoot.

Merrick dumps the jar of grease on Dog.

DOG (CONT'D)

I don't like it.

MERRICK

Oh, sorry, I forgot that you can't directly absorb ideas contained in grease.

DOG

(annoyed)

Use words!

MERRICK

I want to start a museum. Of Earth stuff! It'll have all the cool artefacts I've collected - plus anything we can find lying around. There's a vacant lot in the plaza, and it's the perfect size!

DOG

You think people are gonna come from far and wide to see Garfield comics and Buffy the Vampire Slayer VHS boxsets?

MERRICK

Hey! Say what you want about me, but leave Buffy out of this!

DOG

Sorry, that was uncalled for. I don't know, Merrick, maybe it's a good idea? I kind of just want to leave all that stuff behind right now. Speaking of - I'm going to go take a shower. I have to be perfect today. I got my interview with the Tau Ceti people.

MERRICK

How do you feel?

DOG

To be honest, strangely serene. I think I'm past the event horizon of anxiety.

He sniffs.

DOG (CONT'D)

Also, greasy.

Dog leaves.

MERRICK

Good luck!

ZOLTRAN

He's cranky before and after and during his morning ooze.

MERRICK

I wasn't gonna ask.

ZOLTRAN

He won't stop drinking it. Smells like battery acid and crushed beetles.

MERRICK

You can smell?

ZOLTRAN

No. But I'm assuming it smells that way.

He shows the can to Merrick. It has a jazzy little text bubble on it that says 'Contains battery acid and crushed beetles!'.

INT. DOCKING BAY

Merrick and Zoltran are in the docking bay, a small and relatively unsophisticated-looking space with room for one or two small shuttles. They're currently being talked at by an extremely happy-go-lucky looking robot.

SMILEY

I thought you two would want to see this.

The robot points to a monitor. It's displaying what looks to be a metal crate.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

Space junk. It's been drifting closer to the station for a couple of weeks. It'd be too much trouble to deflect, so we're probably going to try and take it in.

MERRICK

Sweet! A box! A box!

ZOLTRAN

What is it?

SMILEY

Looks like some kind of storage pod.

MERRICK

Sweet! Earth garbage! Today is a good day!

ZOLTRAN

When will we know?

SMILEY

You two will be the first to hear if there are any developments.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. DOG'S KITCHEN

Dog is pacing back and forth across the kitchen, still sipping his ooze. His scheduled interview is in thirty seconds. He checks his computer again. Everything looks good. The call comes in. He takes a deep breath and pushes the button. An aquatic-looking alien appears on the screen.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER Hello. Can I confirm that I am speaking to Dog?

DOG

Yes, this is Dog.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER Greetings. I am from the Tau Ceti board of migration. We will now proceed with the interview, with your permission.

DOG

Okay.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER Dog, what is your species?

DOG

Dog.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER You're named Dog, and you're a dog?

DOG

Yes. I didn't name myself, I was named by a human, and that human decided to call me Dog. Actually, she decided to call me 'Disaster D Diggety Dog' but most people shorten that to just Dog.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER I see. Why do you want to come to Tau Ceti?

DOG

I mean, have you seen where I live? It's like a big metal coffin with a single fern.

He motions to the room behind him.

DOG (CONT'D)

The walls are metal, the ceiling is metal, the floor is metal with a thin layer of linoleum.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER

Linoleum?

DOG

It's a space-age material they designed on earth in order to make kitchen floors easier to clean.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER

I see.

DOG

Anyway, it sucks here, man. It's depressing. Every day I wake up there's that brief moment of happiness because I don't quite remember where I am, followed by disorientation as I look at where I am, followed by unhappiness at realising where I am.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER (pronouncing 'Tau Cetian' in Tau Cetian, which is a series of clicks and high-pitched whines)

I see. Do you speak any Tau Cetian?

DOG

What?

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER
It is our native language. If you wish to proceed with the next stage of your application, it would be instructive to learn a little.

DOG

Okay.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER
Do you know anything else about Tau
Ceti?

DOG

I know about sun, sand and surf. They sound pretty sick.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER
Please don't take this the wrong
way, but you can't *live* on those
beaches. We are a water-dwelling
people. Everything we have is under
the water. Can you breathe
underwater?

DOG

No.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER Can you swim?

DOG

I'm a quick learner.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER
I must warn you, adjustment to
underwater living can be very
taxing. You should at least read up
on the side effects.

Dog sighs.

DOG

I'm sorry. Sorry I don't know anything. Back on earth I was actually pretty dumb. Shit, I shouldn't have said that. Shit, I'm not supposed to swear. Uh, can I take five? I'm kinda freaking out here, I feel like I'm saying all the wrong things.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER

Of course.

Dog switches off the camera, goes to the fridge, takes out another can of delicate ooze, necks the entire thing, and turns around. The wall is pulsating flesh.

DOG

Oh, that's not good.

He closes and opens his eyes. Still flesh. He stops for a minute, and hits the side of his head with his paw. The wall changes, it's now an open wall that leads into space. He hits his head again, it turns into teeth. He hits his head again, the wall is eggs. He hits it again. It turns into extremely ugly wallpaper. He hits his head again. It turns into his regular wall, but instead of the Tau Ceti picture, it's a framed picture of Ronald Reagan, signed 'To Dog, From Ronnie'.

DOG (CONT'D)

I shoulda stuck with the teeth.

Dog goes back to the computer, and turns the camera back on.

DOG (CONT'D)

Sorry about that.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER

It's really no trouble. Now, Dog, I've been hearing about the destruction of your planet for some weeks now. But what was Earth like? I mean, back when before all this... fungus business.

DOG

Uh... jeez, I actually don't know how to answer that one. In an objective sense I think it was pretty bad, compared to most of the planets I've heard about. People suffered a lot. Many earthlings lived their whole lives poor and afraid. But there were a lot of people and places there that I think about every day and will never, ever stop thinking about, because, for some of them, I know I'm the only living earthling that remembers them, and if I forget them then they're lost, forever.

TAU CETIAN INTERVIEWER I see. Dog, thank you for your answers. We will endeavour to respond as soon as possible. Goodbye for now.

DOG

Bye.

The video feed goes blank. Dog sits in silence for a moment.

DOG (CONT'D)

Oh god, I beefèd it, didn't I? I totally beefed it. Fuck.

He goes over to the fridge, cracks open ANOTHER can of Delicate Ooze, and involuntarily starts drinking it. It seems to calm his nerves a little. Ronald Reagan smiles down upon him.

INT. DOG'S KITCHEN

MONTAGE

- Dog drinks Ooze while sitting in the kitchen.
- Dog cracks a fresh can of Ooze
- Dog is lying in bed, drinking Ooze.
- Dog is opening more cans.
- Dog opens his fridge. It's all Ooze.
- Dog throws a can of Ooze in the trash. The trash is full of ooze.
- Dog is lying on the floor of the kitchen. His eyes are wide open and his mouth is in a fixed smile.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. DOCKING BAY

Merrick and Zoltran are back in the docking bay with the happy-go-lucky robot. The crate on the screen is slowly rotating. There's something written on the other side.

MERRICK

Oh boy, here it comes.

It rotates ever so slightly more. They keep watching. Eventually, the label comes into view. It says 'Dirty Magazines'.

MERRICK (CONT'D)

Dirty magazines! Score!

ZOLTRAN

What do you want with dirty magazines?

MERRICK

They represent a prolific genre of Earth media, but very few of the humans I helped evacuate ever took them. No idea why.

ZOLTRAN

I mean, I can think of a few reasons.

MERRICK

Eventually I started asking them about it. People started grabbing family photos and jewelry and stuff and I was like 'But what about the dirty magazines?' and they acted like I was being really rude. So I've always wanted to know what was in them.

Zoltran turns and stares at Merrick with a look of pure confusion.

INT. DOG'S KITCHEN

Dog is watching TV. Some kind of documentary.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Scientists have invented a gun that only shoots criminals.

A cop is shown on screen. They're wandering around a populated urban area, just pointing the gun and people and trying to shoot. Eventually, there's a BANG, and some dude falls over, dead, about 20 feet away. The newsreel caption at the bottom of the screen reads 'cop shoots criminal'. A news reporter is now interviewing the cop in question, who's standing there nonchalantly.

INTERVIEWER

What'd he do?

COP

(shrugging)

Iunno.

The screen changes to show the Channel 6 ident.

NARRATOR

We'll be back with more true stories of crime and criminal activities after these messages.

The screen changes to show an advert.

ADVERTISEMENT (V.O.)

Do you feel strange aches and pains with no known cause?

Dog turns off the TV. But, after a moment, the voice keeps coming, gradually becoming less tinny, louder and closer.

ADVERTISEMENT (V.O.)

Have you encountered vomiting, confusion, dizziness, sleepiness, insomnia, fits, change to your eyesight, lack of co-ordination, weakness in your arms and legs, clear fluid or blood coming out of your eyes, ears or nose, deafness in one or both of your ears, amnesia, loss of moral or professional faculties, the feeling of someone's presence in the room with you even when nobody's there, amnesia, or prolonged deja vu?

Dog tries to turn the TV off, but it's already off. He unplugs it, but the voice keeps going, getting louder and louder.

ADVERTISEMENT (V.O.)

Do you have a pounding headache that just won't stop? Is your brain about to bust its way out of your skull? Do you feel as though your head's going to explode? Do you feel as though your head is about to explode? DO YOU FEEL AS IF YOUR HEAD IS ABOUT TO EXPLODE?

Dog is covering his ears and screaming. Then, as the voiceover reaches a crescendo, it suddenly stops. Dog opens his eyes. He sees a vision of himself, sitting at his kitchen table.

HALLUCINATORY DOG

You're like a shit factory. You're like some kind of sentient shit machine that absorbs nutrients from your surroundings and turns them into shit. You're not worth anything.

DOG

I don't have to do this! I don't have to justify myself! I just wanna live somewhere nice! Isn't that enough?

HALLUCINATORY DOG
One day you'll die and all you'll
have left behind is shit.

Dog picks up the phone and begins frantically dialling. It rings for a second.

DOG

Hello? Hello? I think I'm really
messed up, please help!

PHONE

Look down at the floor below you.

DOG

Okay...

PHONE

Is there a spoon down there?

Dog bends down. There is, in fact, a spoon down there.

DOG

Hey, there is. How did you know?

PHONE

I'm a phone.

DOG

You're a phone?

PHONE

I'm a phone.

Dog realizes he doesn't have a phone, and never did, especially not a rotary phone. He looks over at the end table. It's not there and nor is the phone.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. CORRIDOR

The computer technician and a bug-like alien are standing in front of the vending machine near C6 Information Services. The latter is holding a can of Delicate Ooze, reading the label.

BUG-LIKE ALIEN

Crushed beetles, battery acid... wait, this stuff has Polysiluride in it? Dude. Polysiluride is banned in like 12 galaxies.

TECHNICIAN

Is it really that dangerous?

BUG-LIKE ALIEN

One of my brood sisters got hooked on it back before they started selling it in cans.

TECHNICIAN

How bad are we talking here? Scronk? Electrone Brone? Brown September?

BUG-LIKE ALIEN

Much worse. She didn't know where she was, who she was, what see was. Eventually started to think she was a traffic light.

TECHNICIAN

That's messed up.

ALIEN 1

Eventually I had to intervene. I confronted her, and I said 'we need to talk about this traffic light thing. This is bad for you'.

BUG-LIKE ALIEN

What'd she say?

TECHNICIAN

She just told me to stop. She was too busy signalling.

(MORE)

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

I went on this whole spiel about how she was tearing our brood apart and confusing passing motorists and stuff. But I could tell she wasn't listening. All she said was 'I think you should go'.

INT. DOG'S KITCHEN

Dog is in his apartment. He can see the texture of the walls begin to shimmer and move. The walls are bubbling like hot grease.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Do you have aches, pains, feelings of regret, feelings of guilt, stomach pains, vomiting nausea, the walls are melting, the walls are melting what are you doing just standing there the walls are melting my god man get out of here, do you hear voices, do you hear voices, do you often get a sense of deja vu, are you unable to stop cursing at family gatherings, will you ever see her again, do you get thick fleshy pustules, does your mouth taste like cinnamon, can you breathe, do you feel like it's all going to be okay, do you often get a sense of deja vu, does your head feel like it's going to explode, does your head feel like it's going to explode, DOES YOUR HEAD FEEL LIKE IT'S GOING TO EXPLODE?

The walls are melting. Everything is hot. Everything is so hot but Dog is so cold, so, so cold. It feels like there's fire everywhere. The narrator is Texan now. A man in a flaming ten-gallon hat.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Well howdy cold boy! Welcome to oldie coldie holdie's house of fires! We got sma ll fires, big fires, house fires, trailer fires, dumpster fires, gaslights. Come on down, pardner, it'd be mighty light to nice ya!

Dog starts to breathe faster and faster. His mouthwash is there. It's mocking him. It thinks he's disgusting.

MOUTHWASH

Your breath is disgusting. Did you know that? It's disgusting. You smell like you've got a mouth full of maggots, man. Think what kind of terrible things are festering down there.

DOG

What do I do?

MOUTHWASH

You've got me, old boy. You've got me.

Dog retches. Bugs start spilling out of his mouth.

Faintly, Dog hears a knock at the door. It's Merrick.

MERRICK

(muffled)

Hey Dog, you wanna come look at some dirty magazines?

Dog doesn't respond. Merrick knocks a few more times.

ZOLTRAN

Dog? You in there?

They wait a little, then open the door. Merrick and Zoltran both spot Dog, who falls to the floor, gurgling and drooling. He doesn't acknowledge either of them.

MERRICK

Is he asleep?

Zoltran goes over to look at him.

ZOLTRAN

I think he's broken.

MERRICK

Oh no! He'll miss the grand opening of the supply crate.

ZOLTRAN

In these dark times, I suggest rockpaper scissors. Loser has to take him to the medbay.

MERRICK

Okay.

MERRICK (CONT'D)

Rock, papers, scissors...

Merrick makes a vague gesture. Zoltran displays a picture of a rock.

ZOLTRAN

What is that gesture?

MERRICK

That's paper. How can you not see that's paper?

Dog gurgles in the background.

ZOLTRAN

Well, I win.

MERRICK

Oh. Doesn't paper beat rock?

ZOLTRAN

Uh, no. Rock rips through paper. Paper is fragile, rock is hard. Rock beats everything.

MERRICK

Well, that does make sense. Rock IS hard.

INT. MEDBAY

Merrick and Dog are sitting in the medbay waiting room. Dog is vibing out. A nearby alien is looking concernedly at him.

NEARBY ALIEN

Is that your dog?

The alien gestures to Merrick. Merrick looks at dog, then back at the alien.

MERRICK

No. He's his own dog.

Dog makes a weird and unparseable vocalisation.

MERRICK (CONT'D)

You still in there, buddy?

From Dog's perspective, we see him focus on a nearby door button. He is focusing harder and harder on the door button, to the exclusion of all else.

Eventually, the door button is all. He becomes the door button, seeing what it says, doing what it does, thinking as it thinks.

DOG (V.O.)

Oh shit. I'm a door button. Oh god oh man, what do I do? Gotta think like a door button, act like a door button. Fuck!

He spots an alien walking across the waiting room.

DOG (V.O.)

Oh, hey, is that alien coming this way? Hey! Over here! You, I'm a door button! Push me! Push me! Open this door! Please, I'm begging you!

The alien keeps walking.

DOG (V.O.)

No, don't leave, I need this, I need this! Please! Come back! Please!

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINATION ROOM

Dog is just sitting there, staring into the middle distance. Merrick is talking to Dog's ex-therapist via video link. He looks to be on some kind of really interesting and aspirational planet. He's reclining on a couch, cocktail on a coffee table, looking at some papers.

ACTUAL THERAPIST

Okay, he's going to have to take this twice a day.

The video screen dispenses a small cardboard box.

ACTUAL THERAPIST (CONT'D) It's called Vicoderix. It will stave off the withdrawal.

Merrick reads the label carefully.

MERRICK

This has the same ingredients as Delicate Ooze.

ACTUAL THERAPIST

Well how else was it gonna work? Magic?

(MORE)

ACTUAL THERAPIST (CONT'D)

You take the pills and gradually reduce the dose until you're down to zero.

MERRICK

But what happens if he gets hooked on these?

ACTUAL THERAPIST We transfer him to Amphaniox.

MERRICK

I know that! That's just more Ooze! What about after that?

ACTUAL THERAPIST To be honest, the patient is usually dead by then.

INT. DOCKING BAY

The crate is here. Zoltran and some others are milling around excitedly. One of the taller robots pushes the release button. The door retracts, and thousands upon thousands of magazines spill out. Zoltran takes a closer look. They're all... Reader's Digest magazines. And they're filthy. Most of them are dog-eared, covered in grease and stained a dirty brown colour. They also look sticky. They're borderline unreadable. Zoltran can feel the odour coming off of one. It's nasty as hell.

ZOLTRAN

Sweet.

INT. DOG'S KITCHEN

The TV is still tuned to Channel 6. There's a commercial on, depicting some kind of baby doll.

NARRATOR

Introducing the new baby shakeshake!

The doll begins to cry, and realistic tears start streaming down its face.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Oh no! Baby shake-shake is crying! Just give her a shake and she'll be right as rain! A child is shown shaking the baby, and eventually it stops crying. Even though it's stopped crying, the child keeps shaking, and shaking, and shaking. For an uncomfortably long time. Then, they stop, and give the camera a thumbs-up and a smile.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Wow! Nice job calming baby shakeshake! You've earned a welldeserved smoke break!

The child is on a small balcony outside, smoking a light-up toy cigarette. The caption onscreen says 'cigarette accessory sold separately'.

The commercial continues to cycle through images of children jauntily shaking babies, but Dog stops paying attention. There's a bug crawling on the screen. In fact, there's multiple bugs on the screen. Looking around, Dog sees that there are bugs everywhere. There are bugs crawling all over him. There are bugs on the floor and ceiling. He looks around the room. There's a little hole in the wall near the fridge, and bugs are crawling out of it. Thousands of bugs. There are bugs crawling all over him. He tries to shake them off of his head, but there's always more. There's always more. They coat every surface, clicking and buzzing and making horrible bug noises, crawling all over him, inside his nose, ears, mouth and eyes. He screams.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. CORRIDOR

Zoltran is strolling down the corridor at a leisurely pace, holding a filthy looking reader's digest magazine.

ZOLTRAN

(reading aloud)

Is your child sexting? Page 118.

They flip through approximately 117 pages.

ZOLTRAN (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)

My seven year old, Henry, can't spell. Yet there's one word he can spell perfectly. That word is boob.

INT. DOG'S KITCHEN

Dog is sitting in his kitchen, drinking tea. He is shivering intensely, even though he is wrapped in blankets and scarves. Merrick is sitting with him, munching on some kind of exotic space candy bar. Zoltran enters, still clutching the magazine.

MERRICK

Anything good?

ZOLTRAN

(outraged)

No. Children are sexting. And I think we're spending too much money on the war in Iraq!

MERRICK

Oh.

Zoltran gestures at Dog.

ZOLTRAN

How's he doing?

DOG

So... cold...

ZOLTRAN

Are you okay?

DOG

No, I'm not okay!

Dog pauses.

DOG (CONT'D)

Do you think they'll relocate me to Tau Ceti?

MERRICK

I don't know.

DOG

I think I beefed my interview with them. What if I get stuck here? I'm so fucked. I'm so fucked.

Dog sips his tea and adjusts his scarf.

 $$\operatorname{\textsc{DOG}}$ (CONT'D) What are you eating?

MERRICK

I dunno. Earth candy bar.

Dog grabs it. It's a stick of deodorant.

DOG

This is deodorant.

MERRICK

Yeah, you want some?

END OF SHOW