

SPR

S01E08

Written by

John "Jack" Dorsey
and
Maximillian Clark

NEWS ONE

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INT. NEWS STUDIO

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In the studio.

UNDERWRITER

This is SPR.

WENLING CHEN

Congress has passed a new resolution to combat a dangerous new trend among America's unpowered teens.

(then)

"Dipping" has been gaining nationwide attention as hundreds of young people have been hospitalized with serious diseases after bathing in nuclear waste hoping to gain powers.

UNDERWRITER

That was Wenling Chen reporting from SPR Seattle.

DEIRDRE WILSON

Live from SPR News in Washington, I'm Deirdre Wilson.

(then)

The results of Cosmos v US Attorney General is expected later today, ending almost two months of uncertainty for one of the Earth's greatest heroes. While it is widely believed that Cosmos will be victorious in his bid for asylum, many are saying this will galvanize support the President's alien registration act.

(then)

In anticipation of today's ruling the White House Press Secretary Jill Wessell issued this statement:

SFX: Press pool. Cameras. Etc.

JILL WESSELL

The President wishes Cosmos luck in his hearing.

(MORE)

JILL WESSELL (CONT'D)

He feels that for all of the media attention and commentary that the system is working exactly as it should.

(then)

If Cosmos is able to convince the courts that he belongs here, then he will be welcomed, the same as any other alien invader.

(then)

However, in the meantime since President Ames's order has been in effect, America is setting record lows in crime rates and villainous activity.

(then)

We can say that this policy is working. Those that oppose it are inviting this planet to become a rest stop for any sort of parasite, monster or humanoid.

(then)

Luckily for us, this is a country built on the law. Each executive agency will see those laws enforced, no matter who breaks them.

DEIRDRE WILSON

While the country waits in anticipation, Cosmos' attorney Phil Axiom has continued to pass along Cosmos's message of hope, that this trial has opened a window into the plight of many aliens like him who have no world to return to.

UNDERWRITER

That was Deirdre Wilson reporting from Washington. It's 73 degrees here in Paradise City. Coming up next is These American Supers...

END NEWS ONE

ACT ONE

50 INT. TAS STUDIO

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In the studio.

ETHAN

From QSPZ Baltimore, it's These American Supers. With the nation holding its breath on the result of The United States v. Cosmos, it seems that everywhere you turn, people are discussing the issue of Alien Rights.

(then)

It has been an extraordinary and uncertain time for many of our fellow citizens.

(then)

And normally I'd have an anecdote or story to share with you at the top. But instead I thought it best to let aliens speak for themselves.

(then)

So, today on our program, "Aliens in America."

(then)

Act One, "The Alien Hunter". Hailey Frond has the story

Music.

HAILEY FROND

Sam Danielewski can find anyone. Anywhere. All you have to do is show them a picture, and they'll lead you straight to the person.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

It's not exact. I can get it down to like ten yards. And it's not like I see it on a map in my head. It's like I'm a compass and when I think about it I just...

Aside.

HAILEY FROND

Sam closes their eyes and points off into the distance. You can tell they're drawn to something.

Back to recording.

HAILEY FROND (CONT'D)

Who are you thinking about right now?

SAM DANIELEWSKI

Katrina Roberts. From third grade. She used to play hide and seek with me.

HAILEY FROND

I bet you were pretty good.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

Oh. I was a God.

They laugh. Music.

HAILEY FROND

As an adult Sam put their powers to good use, working search and rescue with the National Parks Service.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

Before I joined, about 1600 people a year would get lost in National Parks, and they'd recover about half of them. Once I joined we got that up to 100.

HAILEY FROND

You mean you'd save 100 more people?

SAM DANIELEWSKI

100 percent. We got them all.

HAILEY FROND

Wow.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

Yeah. We'd get faxes coming in from all over.

(then)

Twenty, thirty a day sometimes in the summer. But it was great. I had my own space, a little team under me. We did good work under the radar. Well until...

(then)

7/20.

SFX: Helicopter.

BEN BELTZER

Manhattan is gone. There's no sign of radiation or explosives. It's just gone...

HAILEY FROND

Sam packed a bag and flew to New York the second they heard about it. They were among the first responders.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

It was the biggest search and rescue operation in the world. They had us divided into seven camps, there were other diviners in the field. But really it wasn't hard to find *someone* who needed help.

HAILEY FROND

These camps of psychics came alive in the days that followed as the list of missing continued to grow. Relatives, friends would come into these camps trying to find out if their loved ones were still alive.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

Unfortunately my power doesn't work that way.

(then)

I mostly helped them find the bodies.

HAILEY FROND

By the end of the week, Sam had helped to locate over a hundred survivors.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

Which was something. I try to think about the good we were able to do and not about the bad news we had to deliver.

(then)

And we, got a commendation from the President. That was something. Afterwards I went back to the Parks Department and normal life.

(adding)

Or so I thought.

Music.

HAILEY FROND

Sam spent the next year or so back in their office in Boulder, but from time to time, something unusual would happen.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

I started getting these special case files from outside the department. "Green Files" we'd call them. Because that's how they came when they delivered them.

HAILEY FROND

And what were they?

SAM DANIELEWSKI

They said they were missing person files. And that's a little harder for me because the Green Files were usually people in cities.

(then)

It's one thing when I tell a helicopter which mountain someone is stuck on, it's another when I have to pinpoint what floor of a building someone is on.

(then)

But I found them. Pretty soon they brought in a full time liaison and we worked out a system. We had topographical maps, blueprints, and with the internet it got even faster. And it felt good. After 7/20 I was looking to help as many people as I could. And the Green Files kept on coming. Soon it was half my caseload, and it kept growing.

HAILEY FROND

How many of those green files would you say you got over the years.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

In five years, it was over...

(choked up)

It was over twenty thousand people I helped them find. But then there was Lei Bea. She was a green file that was brought to me in 2016. The files for kids stick out.

(then)

(MORE)

SAM DANIELEWSKI (CONT'D)

I found her right away in New Orleans. And got the confirmation that they found her safely. But with a name like that, it sticks in your head a little.

(then)

It was a couple months later when I brought her up at a party and I thought about her. I normally feel the person east or west, but this time, it was up.

HAILEY FROND

They had pinged her off world. A first for them.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

Yeah. And that made me curious. Usually after I find someone I just toss the file in the out box and the liaison would collect them at the end of the day.

(then)

But I started keeping some of them in my desk after they were found. And in the next few months it seemed that a lot of them were going off world or to the same building in El Paso Texas which was...

(then)

An ICE detention center.

HAILEY FROND

From there, Sam realized that they were part of an effort by Immigration and Custom Enforcement's Space Invaders program. This was a wide effort by ICE to locate and deport illegal aliens from other planets. Which is hard to hear considering...

SAM DANIELEWSKI

I'm an alien. My grandparents came here as refugees in the fifties from the Kuiper Belt. That's where my powers come from. And they knew that.

HAILEY FROND

When they made these discoveries they went to his liaison, Amber Wallace.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

Once I found out about the detention center, I went to Amber with it. And to her credit, she told me straight out that I was right. She thanked me for my assistance and left. Honestly that "thank you" nearly killed me.

HAILEY FROND

Shortly afterwards, Sam left the parks service.

SAM DANIELEWSKI

I couldn't do it anymore. That office had just become polluted after that. I took some time off. I wish I could say I found some way to make it right, but how do you balance the scales on that? Twenty thousand people. And I can hardly remember any of them. I check in on the handful of files I kept, just to feel them moving. Not all of them do.

HAILEY FROND

Sam runs a non-profit that focuses on reuniting families with lost loved ones. They named it Compass, after the call sign they received on 7/20. They are headquartered in Denver, Colorado.

Music.

ETHAN

That segment was produced with the help of regular contributor Hailey Frond. We'll be back with more of These American Supers. After the news break...

END ACT ONE

NEWS TWO

51 INT. AD BREAK

51

In the studio.

ADS

Support for SPR comes from...

(then)

Ambi-Optical. Keeping your identity secret can be a handful. Wearing a mask or cowl can be even worse. Glue, sweat and red marks at the end of your patrol? You already have to clean up for your normal job, why make it worse?

(then)

That what we created Ambi-Optical Glasses. Stylish, comfortable glasses that keep your identity secret by causing face blindness in everyone you meet. Just pop them on and presto, no one will give you a second thought. In fact we're so confident in our product, we guarantee your own parents won't be able recognize you. Available in prescription and blue light filtering frames. Ambi-Optical Glasses. Because masks are sweaty.

(adding)

Please do not look in any mirrored surface while wearing Ambi-Optical Glasses, as the face blindness properties may cause you to temporarily forget your own identity. In some cases this has been permanent. See website for details.

52 INT. NEWS STUDIO

52

In the studio.

DEIRDRE WILSON

Live from SPR News in Washington, I'm Deirdre Wilson.

(then)

The Heroic Legion has narrowed its search for Tower Two down to two cities; Los Angeles and Seattle.

(MORE)

DEIRDRE WILSON (CONT'D)

(then)

While Los Angeles welcomes future development from the Legion, residents of Seattle have taken to the streets in protests at Legion outposts across the city. Concerns range from the increased risk of supervillainy to the rising cost of local rent. Seattle is only one of many cities that have become resistant to the Legion's presence in recent weeks.

(then)

A nationwide poll of 800 Americans found that trust in the organization has fallen since the imprisonment of Cosmos and the Babylon incident. To learn more we spoke with Beth Campbell, partner at American Research Media Specialists.

SFX: Office Walla.

BETH CAMPBELL

The Legion hasn't seen approval numbers this low since the Vigilante Riots back in 1977.

(then)

Back then it was an issue of public trust, rectified by Heroes registering with the state, but now it seems to be an issue of celebrity. Cosmos changed things, he was the poster child for dependability. People trusted Cosmos and felt safe with him. With him in the Legion, they shined in his reflected glory until they were able to win the public's trust in their own right. But now it seems that without him, the Legion just doesn't carry the weight they once did. The Babylon incident is a tragic example of that.

(adding)

The Legion doesn't have a lot of choices here. They would have to find someone as popular as Cosmos to regain the good will that's been lost.

Back to studio.

DEIRDRE WILSON

The President cited the polls in a tweet, stating that organizations like the Legion bear responsibility for violence brought on by aliens like Cosmos.

(then)

The Heroic Legion declined to comment on the protests and the President's remarks.

UNDERWRITER

That was Deirdre Wilson reporting from Washington. It's 74 degrees here in Paradise City. And now back to These American Supers...

END NEWS TWO

ACT TWO

53

INT. TAS STUDIO

53

In the studio.

ETHAN

Welcome back to These American
Supers. I'm Ethan Schwartz.

(then)

Moving from to a new city can be
difficult. Moving to a new planet
is an entirely different matter.
T'omz T'omz rhymes on the subject.

T'OMZ T'OMZ

A wise man once said "It's not that
easy, being green." I'd like argue
it's actually quite easy to be
green. It's everyone else that has
a problem.

(pause)

Perhaps he was speaking on being a
singing frog. I myself am not a
frog. Nor can I sing. Nor am I a
man, at least not in the
traditional sense. But I am green.

(pause)

Specifically I am olive, which was
meant to help me blend into my
environment, which of course was
very helpful on a dead planet
colored red, and even more useful
in a city made of grey and trash. I
do however, look stunning. In
black.

(pause)

No being green is not hard, it's my
height that's often the problem.
Stairwells and door wells and
elevator cabins, are all zoned for
humans, five nine to six two, not
Martians spanning seven feet five
inches. Point two.

(pause)

Which now of course leads me to
shoes. Have you ever had nothing to
choose? No Big and Tall nor JCPenny
has had my size, so now I am stuck
wearing whatever arrives. On Mars,
if you could believe, I was quite
stylish. And on earth. Well.

(MORE)

T'OMZ T'OMZ (CONT'D)

Despite my size and green disposition, I fear I am ordinary. Pedestrian. Quotidian. A run of the mill olive alien amidst, the exquisite.

(pause)

So onwards to work which is not clad in spandex, but summed up in numbers, flowcharts and index. That's right, though I am strong, tall and can turn into goo, I am just a CPA. I am quite good at it too.

(pause)

The days can be quite long and dreary, and none of my clients are people I'd query. But it earns me a living so I can feed my cat, and pay my apartment rent, and the occasional hat.

(pause)

So at quitting time with the rest of the people, I pack myself into the L train and apologize to the rabble, who are wedged in there with my knees in their kidneys and my rear, at their face level.

(pause)

Back at home my husband asks how was the day, and I answer with: "fine" and he with "OK". If this doesn't strike you as passion, you'd be right. But after fifteen years am I supposed to alight every time I see my betrothed? So if you were to ask me, is it easy being green? I tell you yes. But I warn you, I can be quite the queen...

ETHAN

That was an except from "Gay Earthlings are from Earth, Gay Martians are from Mars", his new book of essays, available wherever books are sold.

Music.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

(then)

That's our show today.

(MORE)

ETHAN (CONT'D)

We'd like to thank Sam Danielewski,
we'll have a link to their non-
profit Compass on the SPR homepage.
They are always looking for
volunteers.

(then)

We'll be back soon with more of
These American Supers...

END ACT TWO

NEWS THREE

54 INT. NEWS STUDIO

54

In the studio.

DEIRDRE WILSON

Live from SPR news in Washington
I'm Deirdre Wilson.

(then)

We're moments away from Judge
Leonard Divolvo's verdict on the
case of The United States v.
Cosmos...

SFX: Cameras. Murmuring. Gavel.

JUDGE DIVOLVO

I'd like to begin this by thanking
the defendant for his service to
this country, for being a role
model and for his cooperation with
the proceedings today.

(then)

As Cosmos has been in the United
States illegally for over thirty
years with ample opportunity to
come forward and naturalize, it is
this court's decision that Cosmos
be denied amnesty and be removed
within thirty days unless this
decision is appealed to a higher
court.

SFX: Shouts. Cameras.

DEIRDRE WILSON

Uh. Wow. That was the live ruling
on Cosmos vs. The United States.

(then)

We will be back to discuss the
ramifications of this. Please stand
by...

Abrupt music.

UNDERWRITER

That was Deirdre Wilson reporting
from Washington.

(then)

(MORE)

UNDERWRITER (CONT'D)

Today's show was written and produced by John Dorsey and Maximilian Clark. Additional producing by Brendan Sokler and Carla Lerner, This episode's cast include (see website). With special thanks to Brenna Killeen.

(then)

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(then)

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(then)

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Outro.

UNDERWRITER (CONT'D)

...Coming up next. Is it a good idea to expel Earth's mightiest hero from the country? No. No it is not.

(ahem)

An investigative report.

SFX: Music and fade out.

UNDERWRITER (CONT'D)

This is SPR.

END NEWS THREE

END EPISODE
EIGHT