VO

FAR OFF IN THE DISTANT SKIES OF WORLDS UNKNOWN THERE FLIES A SHIP CALLED THE KURGAN. ABOARD, SOME OF THE TOUGHEST SONS OF GUNS FOR HIRE THIS WILD UNIVERSE WILL EVER KNOW. THEY ARE THE MISERY LOVES COMPANY.

(theme?)

VO

Clyde was standing on the roof of a building in a schmaltzy city. A place he would never visit if he hadn't been paid to do it. The life raft of the Kurgan sat on the roof with him nearby. A base. A place of comfort in this nightmare of buildings and people. He never felt comfortable around this many. He felt like they could read his thoughts. Now he knew they could literally look straight through him. He'd looked at the target building from every angle. Watched the entrances, the exits. He felt ready to enter. Clyde's body now was like a void, like he'd been turned inside out. He could hold guns and ammo on the inside of himself, like he had a million hands where his lungs used to be. He checked his customized sniper rifle, polished out any dust he could find. He saw his reflection, twisted in the neon light of the city night. It always caught him by surprise. He missed his mohawk. Missed how his body used to feel when he nailed a tricky shot.

AHAB

DOM, watch how he does this.

CLYDE

Shhh.

AHAB

Sorry, sorry.

VO

Clyde held his breath. Felt his muscles turn to stone. Fired. Bullseye.

AHAB

I mean look at that, dead center, and he makes that shot hanging *upside down*.

DOM

You are not enhanced in any way?

CLYDE

Nah man. I just practice a lot.

AHAB

I told you he was one in a million.

DOM

You are extraordinary, Clyde. Your instincts are flawless.

CLYDE

You're going to make me blush you jerks.

VO

Ahab's voice brought him back to the present.

AHAB

Everything good?

BERNIE

Yeah, I'm eatin'.

AHAB

During the mission?

BERNIE

As far as I'm concerned this *is* the mission.

AHAB

Whatever. Clyde?

CLYDE

Busy.

AHAB

Keep in touch.

VO

Clyde looked across the busy street. He saw the quite literal window of opportunity. He pocketed his favorite rifle, some knives, some ammo, felt his body turn into smoke and like a pillar of ash flew across the space and entered an open window in the target building. He reformed once he was inside.

CLYDE

Kurgan, how busy is this floor?

KURGAN

I'm unable to see the building. I cannot find the location of either the target server or the person you are requested to kill.

CLYDE

What do you mean?

KURGAN

My data tells me you're on top of an empty building. I know this is incorrect, but I can't seem to perceive it. I'm also finding it increasingly difficult to communicate with you.

BERNIE

Ahab, Clyde, I'm about to make a lot of noise. Be ready on your planets. They're gonna know.

AHAB

Thanks for the unchar(Static, fadeout)

CLYDE

Can you give me ten minutes?

(Static)

CLYDE

Hello? Kurgan?

(Static)

CLYDE

Kurgan? Can you hear me at all? Damn it. Aughhh.

SCHMUCK (Distant, approaching)

We're basically inside a completely shielded fortress. You couldn't even break *out* of here without everyone knowing. But getting a smoke break once every two hours, holy shit better call those shartslappers in resources, better have a ton of meetings about it, better get *real mad for no reason!*

VO

Clyde, hearing the guards approaching, floated his way to the roof of the room and slowly withdrew two knives from his chest. Two lizard-like man-beasts entered the small room he was in.

SFX: Entering room, footsteps, lighters

SCHMUCK

It's like pulling teeth with these people.

SCHMUCK 2

Yeah but you're kind of an asshole about it. You can, like, just walk off. Just go off for a minute, don't make a big deal about it.

SCHMUCK

It's the ethics of the thing. The principle. I'm not a prisoner here, you write me a paycheck. You're paying my insurance for gods sake.

SCHMUCK 2

You gotta play by their rules.

RADIO VOICE

We got two breaches. Everyone, high alert. We're going into lockdown.

SCHMUCK

GREAT.

SCHMUCK 2

On our way.

VO

Clyde stretched his body down to their level. One of the guards was dead before their body hit the ground.

(SFX: knives, death)

CLYDE

Don't say a word. Nothing. Your servers. I need to know everything about this place.

SCHMUCK 2

I'm going to report this.

CLYDE

Do you see your friends blood on the floor.

SCHMUCK 2

Yes.

CLYDE

Let me ask one more time. The server. The layout of the building. Tell me.

SCHMUCK 2

It's kind of a lot to explain.

CLYDE

Then you're going to take me to it.

SCHMUCK 2

I can't, did you not hear? We've had two-- three facilities under attack. I have places I have to go.

CLYDE

Then you're going to have to forget for a minute.

SCHMUCK 2

My record is SPOTLESS you asshole.

VO

Clyde, sensing the sort of person he was dealing with, stuck the man on his arm with his knife the depth of a fairly bad paper cut.

SCHMUCK 2

Holy shit, please, please, I'm sorry, please don't kill me.

CLYDE

Walk.

VO

The man, who it should be noted was not even bleeding, now feared for his safety. He clutched the wound on his arm as if the whole limb would fall off and opened the office rooms door.

CLYDE

Do anything stupid and I'll take your eyes.

SCHMUCK 2

Y-yes sir.

VO

Clyde dissolved into dust and stuck to the man's back, a perfectly matched shadow. Armed guards of all types rushed by them as if they weren't even there.

(SFX: Footsteps, alarms)

BOWTIE

Where's your designation, son.

SCHMUCK 2

I'm not sure. I'm trying to find the server room.

BOWTIE

The *server* room?

SCHMUCK 2

It's imperative. That I find. The server room.

BOWTIE

What's your name?

SCHMUCK 2

I'm not---

BOWTIE

What's wrong with your face son? Listen, you got no business being in the server room. If that wasn't your designation we're going to have to take you down to the main office and write this up.

VO

Clyde, sure the ruse was up, had slowly drifted into the well-dressed lizard-mans nostrils, expanding and killing the man slowly.

SCHMUCK 2

My... Face... ... My record...

BOWTIE

What is all this clap-trap nonsense, we got a war going on and you're smoking like a teenager in a high school parking lot.

SCHMUCK 2

Face part is... Record......

(SFX: explosion, gore)

BOWTIE

Holy spinach and artichoke salad dressing son you're head just exploded!

(SFX: Body falling, CLYDE SFX)

BOWTIE

(On radio) Folks we got a situation on the 19th floor, some schmucks head just downright smashed itself into the utmost gore-ific scene under the threat of being given disciplinary action. It's not pretty.

BOWTIE

I gotta find out what's going on in the server room. (TO Radio) Someone clean up this guys face please.

VO

Clyde fitted himself to the new man's back. A sharply dressed if particularly unpleasant smelling alien with a prominent bowtie that may or may not have been his own flesh. Even in this tense situation he still did not feel the once present joy from the hunt. The bowtied alien led him directly to a nearby lab. Several aliens inside were chained to desks, writing code in a dark room. The bowtied alien entered a code and walked inside.

BOWTIE

Hey guys, some problems, it looks like a bunch of our stuff is being blown up around the galaxy right now, so uh, watch your buttholes. If you see anything weird, let someone know.

TECH 1

Please give us food.

BOWTIE

Oh, Mr. I Need To Eat To Survive over here. What a baby! I'll have someone bring you a taco or something.

TECH 1

We can't keep going under these conditions. Please, just let us go.

BOWTIE

That's all the upper guys, sorry, can't do nothin' for you.

VO

As the bowtied man sealed the door once more, Clyde reformed inside.

CLYDE

You the triple 7 techs?

TECH 1

Yes, please, we--

CLYDE

Don't talk, don't move. Go down the hall, there's an office with a dead guy inside of it. Stay there.

VO

Clyde pulled a small device from the air, it seemed to the others, and held it to the chains that held the techs. It resonated with a very specific frequency, shattering the metal that bound them.

CLYDE

Before you go. Where's the server here.

TECH 1

It's up one floor. Listen, there's a... thing up there.

CLYDE

What thing.

TECH 1

We're not sure. I don't know if it's a living thing or a robot of some kind, but it... it... It's pure evil.

CLYDE

I'll keep my eyes on it.

TECH 1

If you try to fight it you'll die.

CLYDE

Don't worry. I already died once. Maybe twice. I'll be fine. Here's a knife, *you* try not to die.

VO

Clyde handed the knife off to the leader, and set off for the next floor. He stuck close to the ceiling of the office building, moving quickly. More armed guards passed, but none thought to look up. He searched the next floor, finally finding a secured room. He peered into it, saw a number of armed guards in front of a sterile room door with an ocular lock. He didn't think he'd be able to slide under that one.

CLYDE

There it is. Sitting pretty.

VO

Clyde reformed, adjusted his personal weapon for close range fire, and walked right in.

CLYDE

Who wants to give up an eye for that door?

SCHMUCK 3

Who the shit are you?

CLYDE

My names Clyde. And I'm gonna take your eyes. Maybe yours, you have almost, what, twelve?

SCHMUCK 3

Kill him.

VO

They fired their weapons. They tore through Clyde's very cool desert warrior clothing and armor, spraying the wall and door behind him with bullets.

SCHMUCK 4

Uh... did we all miss?

CLYDE

No. It's just my turn.

(SFX: a multitude of shots, death)

CLYDE

Oh, thank you. A volunteer. Good.

SCHMUCK 3

Wait, wait, wait

(SFX: Knife, eyeball stab, Schmuck 3 screams)

CLYDE

Thanks for your assistance. If we can help you in any other way, please talk to resources downstairs.

VO

Clyde pointed his gun at the Schmuck without looking and pulled the trigger. The screams stopped. Clyde held the now detached eyeball up to the ocular scanner, which opened the door to the clean room. Clyde decided to keep the eye for Bernie as a souvenir. He walked into the massive, cool, clean server room. He set up a data transfer, then suddenly--

(SFX: electric blast, Unpleasant, upsetting sounds)

HEXIL

Clyde. Former member of the triple 7 mercenary army. Currently... employed with an outfit known as the Misery Loves Company...

CLYDE (In obvious pain)

What... what are you.

VO

The shadowy figure had blasted Clyde with some kind of energy. He hadn't felt pain at all in years, much less something this horrible. His whole body screamed in agony. Clyde couldn't make out the thing that had attacked him. He could feel something-- First, he felt naive. He'd gone so long without discovering a vulnerability to his bodies' state that he simply thought there wasn't one. This false idea had rooted deep in his mind. He felt the malaise of his invulnerability reduce itself to terror, thick, heavy, and lucid.

HEXIL

My name is Hexil. I am... in some ways, like you, Clyde. I'm not going to kill you. Clyde, I won't even stop you. You can take your data. Go back to your friends. I'm not a bad thing. I'm... *One Who Watches.* And You. Have. A. Gift. Something remarkable... beautiful... I was hoping you would come.

(SFX: Tendrils of hate)

HEXIL

Clyde. I want you to remember what happened to you. I'm going to take the memory. I'm going to breathe it in. I'm going to have it.

(SFX: More electric energy, Clyde screams, whimpers.)

HEXIL

Think. Think. Think.

(SFX: Woosh)

HEXIL

I see you. I see the place. And there he is...

VO

Clyde felt his head exploding with agony. His pain was voiceless. His body frozen. Hexil looked deep into Clyde, stretching and expanding inside of his memory.

HEXIL

It was a mission, right before DOM left... Left. He and Ahab were clashing often now. Bitterness was sinking in, wasn't it. Bernie had just joined. He was fighting outside of this place, this strange facility. The mission was to capture a bounty who seemingly didn't exist. Ahab had been beaten nearly to death. He was trapped in something, a weapon they'd never seen before. A chamber. REMEMBER CLYDE. THINK. Ahab had damaged it. Done something... you hadn't seen.

DOM

Leave him. Clyde, he's dead already. He's too weak. There's too many to kill. I'm not good enough. My hands, they're gone.

HEXIL

Something took DOM's hands. You couldn't leave Ahab. He couldn't leave. You went into the chamber. There was violence erupting all around you. Fire, smoke, blood thick in the air.

CLYDE

I'm not going without him Dom, I'm not going anywhere if he's not alive!

HEXIL

So much willpower. A key.

CLYDE

C'mon Ahab

DOM

I'm leaving you both. Goodbye.

CLYDE

AHab. Brother.

AHAB

I'm... damn it Clyde. What happened. Oh god.

CLYDE

He left us.

AHAB

DOM? Is he alive? DOM?!

CLYDE

No, he--

HEXIC

Something happened. The weapon began to spin up. The cell was closing.

AHAB

Get out, CLYDE.

HEXIC

You picked up Ahab, he began to walk, too slow. You pushed him, the door. It sealed behind you.

(SFX: Sealing door, energy powering up)

HEXIL

You looked up, for the last time you felt heat. And until now, fear.

(CLYDE Screams in horror as the weapon fires)

HEXIL

I understand now Clyde. I remember, as if it was me. I remember. Clyde, goodbye.

(SFX: The music, the discomforting SFX end abruptly in an echo)

VO

Clyde found himself standing exactly where he had been. He jerked his head around. The pain had disappeared. He wasn't even sure it had ever been there.

CLYDE

Kurgan?

KURGAN

Company member Clyde, I've been attempting to reach you. The barrier around the building is gone. I can see you now.

CLYDE

Something... happened to me.

KURGAN

What's going on?

CLYDE

There's... the hostages. Bring the life raft around, pick them up. I'll be there in a minute.

KURGAN

Understand, Company member Clyde. We'll talk later.

CLYDE

Yeah... We will...

VO

Clyde offloaded all the data he could retrieve from the central server. He looked around. He felt like he could still feel Hexil in his mind, but it was gone. So was Clyde. He fled the building, boarded the Kurgan with the Triple 7 hostages, and he was out. Then, in the room outside, people started moving.

SCHMUCK 3

Oh wow, oh my god my eye is completely gone.

TECH GOON 1

You're alive too? I thought he shot you in the head! I was playing dead over here, I knew that guy was going to kill all of us so I just laid down.

SCHMUCK 3

Yeah! He just pointed his gun without looking and fired, he missed probably by, jeez, what is that, like 4 feet.

TECH GOON 1

Impressively bad shot. Man! You are bleeding like *crazy.*

SCMUCK 3

Yeah he pulled out my eye.

TECH GOON 1

That's gonna to be badass when it stops hurting.

SCHMUCK 3

Wanna know the craziest thing?

TECH GOON 1

What's that?

SCHMUCK 3

My dad, seriously, not a joke, my dad lost the *exact same eye* defending this building back when he was *my exact age*

TECH GOON 1

Get the hell out of here.

SCHMUCK 3

I'm not messing with you dude. At all. Oh god wow I am in *agonizing pain*.

TECH GOON 1

You're probably in shock.

SCHMUCK 3

Yeah I think I'm definitely getting there. I gotta tell my dad though, I... I, you know. I think he's finally going to be proud of me.

TECH GOON 1

That's heavy.

SCHMUCK 3

I'm just... I'm in a lot of pain, my adrenaline is going crazy, I just, I really believe he's going to see that I'm worth being called his son now.

TECH GOON 1

Yeah, you guys are finally going to see... eye to eye.

SCHMUCK 3

(Genuine, heartfelt laughter). Oh, god. We need to find someone important and tell them what's happened in here.

TECH GOON 1

After that, I'll take you to the hospital. Maybe we can get some coffee later.

SCHMUCK 3

Wow, you know, I'd really like that. I've always kind of wanted to take you out..

TECH GOON 1

Really?

SCHMUCK 3

I think you're... well, to be honest, I'm.. I don't know how to say it. I've always liked you.

TECH GOON 1

That's so sweet. I didn't know, I had no idea.

SCHMUCK 3

It's true.

TECH GOON 1

Listen, you stay here, and uh, I'm going to find someone. To help with all these... well, all our dead friends.

SCHMUCK 3

Okay.

TECH GOON 1

Stay put here. I'll be back in a minute.

SCHMUCK 3

Okay.

(SFX: Footsteps)

SCHMUCK 3

Wow. Wow... I can't believe she... wow... my dad... I gotta say... I think things are finally looking up for me.

VO

Word of the Misery Loves Companies' exploits are sure to reach the top now. And who is this mysterious new enemy, Hexil? What does he want with Clydes' memories? Will this new couple, forged by Clyde's incompetent lazy gunfire make it in today's high-paced, high stress world? All this and more in the next episode of The Misery Loves Company episode 9, The Delivery, OR, The parting glass!