

"CRYPTOLANTES"

Let the Punishment Fit the Cybercrime

The A-Team meets The Big Bang Theory  
meets Mission Impossible

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FADE IN:

CRAWL

The Internet is now more lawless than the Wild West. Every day, crooks loot millions of dollars from innocent people. Law enforcement is powerless. The only hope for victims of these cyber thugs is a clandestine team of geeks and washed up special ops, the CRYPTOLANTES.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Frilly pink.

On an unmade bed, an ONLINE VIXEN, 20s, in a silk blouse, panties, bends seductively into CAMERA.

VIXEN

I promise you pleasure impossible to imagine.

MAN (O.S.)

Take off your blouse.

Vixen slides out of her blouse and tosses it aside.

VIXEN

You like this, my little sweet-pea?

MAN (O.S.)

Now undo your bra.

The Vixen starts to unhook her bra. Freezes. Leans forward into CAMERA.

VIXEN

What the hell? My client data!

She SMACKS the CAMERA.

INT. IMPALER'S OFFICE - DAY

Cluttered with cables and computer gear. A table filled with unopened boxes of luxury goods, electronic gear and expensive toys, including a train set.

Three GOONS (20s), one with ginger hair ("GINGER"), one stocky, wearing a red jacket ("STOCKY"), one with glasses ("GLASSES"), sit at a table filled with computers. A wall-mounted TV shows a skewed view of Vixen frantically adjusting her computer. The Stocky Goon's monitor displays the same image.

Behind him stands the IMPALER (30s), slicked back hair, Rolex watch, gold bracelet, reeking of intimidation.

SUPER: THE IMPALER'S LAIR  
MARAMURES, ROMANIA

The Impaler slaps Stocky, who goes sprawling.

IMPALER  
(in Romanian with subtitles)  
You f'ing idiot! Why didn't you  
let her finish?

STOCKY GOON  
Well, I...

IMPALER  
Shut up.

On Glasses computer, a STUDENT drums his fingers.

STUDENT  
Come on you dumb dinosaur.  
(beat)  
100 auroshekels?

Increasingly agitated, he punches keys.

STUDENT  
Calm down. Calm down.

His image disappears as he SLAMS the lid down.

The Impaler slips off his Rolex and swings it like a  
hypnotist's pendulum.

IMPALER  
Okay, comrades. Whoever makes  
their quota gets this.

Stocky draws himself up.

STOCKY GOON  
If we don't?

IMPALER  
Always the Botiza Leap.

STOCKY GOON  
(gulps)  
You're kidding, aren't you?

IMPALER  
(big smile)  
Of course.

NAN (70s), Asian, cardigan, glasses with a neck chain,  
peering into CAMERA, appears on the TV and Glasses'  
display.

GLASSES  
Hey! Got a granny with a pension!

All turn. The Impaler hovers over Glasses.

Stocky's cell phone rings. When he pulls it out of his pocket, the Impaler yanks it out of his hand. Stocky tries to retrieve it. The Impaler smashes Stocky's arm away. Presses SPEAKER.

MAYOR (OS)  
(filter)  
Hello ... Stocky?

IMPALER  
Nice to hear from you (a beat)  
Mayor.

Glances at Stocky, who has covered his face in his hands.

EXT. ANDHERI, MUMBAI, INDIA - OFFICE BLOCK - DAY

A raucous Indian street with jostling crowds and immobilized traffic.

SUPER: ANDHERI  
MUMBAI, INDIA

Four CRYPTOLANTES huddle as they prepare for a cyber-scammer takedown.

FRANK O'DALEY (early 40s - the "Muscle"). Ex-Delta Force, prosthetic right ear to replace one shot off in Afghanistan. A radio mike has been installed in it. Buffed, tough, ready for action.

MEATBALL, (late 20s - the "Cunning Linguist"). Big, round, shambling, unkempt. He can learn any language almost overnight

GORDON GREEN (20s - the "Alpha Geek"). High on the ASD spectrum. Can mind meld with any computer but has difficulty understanding social nuance.

Frank, Gordon and Meatball (in decreasing order of stylishness) wear business suits and carry briefcases.

CHANDRA ALACANTRA (late 20s - the "Mechanical Siren"). Olive-skinned, beautiful, exotic with a dim view of men ever since she majored in engineering and never received recognition she felt her due.

Frank indicates an image of the building lobby on his tablet. In the corner is a statue of the elephant-headed god, Ganesh.

FRANK  
Gordon, there's the power room.  
Give us-

GORDON  
I've memorized the blue prints.

FRANK  
-five minutes before you shut  
it down. Chandra, you-

CHANDRA  
What if the guard's gay? Why don't  
YOU distract him?

FRANK  
Come on, please-

CHANDRA  
Just visualize you're hitting on a  
Bollywood star.

FRANK  
Meatball, you're coming with me-

MEATBALL  
(thick Glaswegian accent)  
Treat me with the respect I  
deserve, boyo. Or I'll tell 'em  
you played cricket for Pakistan.

FRANK  
That's ridiculous.

MEATBALL  
Ya think so?

FRANK  
And, Gordon, no tantrums!

CHANDRA  
They're not tantrums. They're  
meltdowns.

FRANK  
Whatever.  
(to Cryptolantes)  
Synchronize.

They consult their watches.

FRANK  
17 minutes after ten.

GORDON  
And 22 seconds. 23 seconds.

CHANDRA  
We've got it, Gordon.

INT. OFFICE BLOCK - LOBBY - DAY

A GUARD stands behind a security console.

The Cryptolantes enters.

GORDON  
(loudly)  
There's no elephant.

Chandra covers Gordon's mouth with her hand.

CHANDRA  
The holiday was last month.

GUARD  
May I help you?

MEETBALL  
(in Hindi, with subtitles)  
We have meeting with Haji Lala.

The guard picks up the phone. Chandra lays her hand on his to stop him.

CHANDRA  
He's expecting us.

GUARD  
Excuse me?

Frank, Gordon and Meatball (the "TRIO") head towards the elevator bank. Gordon peels off towards the power room.

CHANDRA  
How's your mother, Niraj? Is the chemo working?

GUARD  
How do you know my mother?

B.G., Frank is about to punch the elevator button. He tilts his head towards his right ear as Meatball and Gordon stare at him.

FRANK  
Yeah, I'm here.

ESTABLISH CRYPTOLANTES BUILDING - NIGHT

A nondescript office building.

SUPER: CRYPTOLANTES OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INT. LEILANI'S OFFICE THE SAME TIME - NIGHT

Government issue, but shabby in comparison to more famous agencies. Through the window can be seen the floodlit Washington skyline.

A clock on the wall hanging between framed certificates reads 11:50.

LEILANI YANG (late 30s - the "Tiger Mom"), the no-nonsense head of the Cryptolantes, always doing her best to maintain the cohesion of her ever-squabbling team, speaks into a laptop.

Behind her stands two CLEAN CUT U.S. AGENTS (one late 30s, other early 50s)

LEILANI  
I'm ordering you to stand down.

FRANK (O.S. on computer)  
Whaddya mean, Leilani? We're about  
to nab Haji Lala.

LEILANI (O.S.)  
This is an official order.

FRANK  
Where'd it come from?

Leilani looks up at the U.S. Agents.

LEILANI  
On high.

FRANK  
How high?

LEILANI  
VERY high.

EXT. OFFICE BLOCK - LOBBY - DAY

Three FBI AGENTS (30s-40s) in windbreakers and bullet  
proof vests, five INDIAN Central Bureau of Intelligence  
["CBI"] AGENTS and eight INDIAN SWAT AGENTS sweep in.

FBI Agent #1 pushes Chandra aside. She shoves his arm  
down.

CHANDRA  
Watch it, jerkwad.

The guard lifts the phone. Swat Agent #1 aims his rifle  
at him. CBI agent #1 shakes his head. Trembling, the  
guard lowers the phone.

Gordon creeps back to the elevator bank. All but FBI, CBI  
and SWAT Agents #1 swarm the Trio. SWAT agents aim their  
rifles at them.

CBI AGENT #2  
On the ground! Now!

MEATBALL  
(in Hindi)  
Someone speaks of nothing.

FBI agent #2 pushes down the rifle of Swat agent #2.

FBI AGENT #2  
(to CBI Agent #2)  
They're clean.  
(to Trio)  
Okay, kiddies. Game over.

FRANK  
But- but- We spent nine months  
building this case!

GORDON  
People think DNS means "Domain  
Name Server." It really means  
"Domain Name System." So I-

MEATBALL  
It's okay, Gordon.

FBI AGENT #2  
Time to let the grownups  
take over.

The elevators doors open, and the agents pile in.

The trio trudges into the lobby.

EXT. ANDHERI - OFFICE BLOCK - LATER

The Cryptolantes stand behind a police cordon.

B.G. a CBI agent and an FBI agent escort handcuffed Haji  
Lala (40s), heavysset, thuggish. Four Indians (20s) in  
office attire, also handcuffed, and three PORTERS  
carrying desktop computers, follow.

FRANK  
(to other Cryptolantes)  
We're being screwed!

Gordon's tries to parse the last sentence.

CHANDRA  
Think of it as an all-expense-paid  
Indian holiday, courtesy of our  
government.

MEATBALL  
Ya call spending five days on my  
knees staring at the inside of a  
toilet bowl a holiday?

FRANK  
I've been on three all-expense-  
paid government tours. The last  
one cost me my right ear.

CHANDRA  
We're in India, you guys.  
Transcend!

FRANK  
You know winning stallions are  
worth millions. Can't risk  
injuring one. Before IVF, when  
they wanted to breed it, they'd  
throw a teaser mule on top of the  
mare to warm her up. The minute  
things start going great, they'd  
yank that poor mule off and lower  
the lucky stallion on the mare to  
enjoy the big reward. Right now I  
feel about like that poor mule.

GORDON  
 You mean you want to [COUGHS] a  
 horse?

SFX DESKTOP COMPUTER SCREEN

NAN (O.S.)  
 Noooo!

A golden splash screen RESOLVES.

SCREEN  
 Your documents, photos, databases  
 are now locked. It will cost one  
 additional auroshekel every day  
 for 14 days. Then all your files  
 shall be erased.

MATCH CUT ON:

INT. GRANNY FLAT - DAY

Tidy. Mantle filled with mementoes, including a cremation  
 urn and photo of a Younger Man with a Younger Nan and a  
 little girl.

NAN, WEEPS as RANDY ARMITAGE, (late 20s), Nan's next door  
 neighbor. Black, bearded, ruggedly handsome and a bit  
 professorial, studies a frozen screen.

NAN  
 What's an auroshekel?

RANDY  
 Uh, it's cryptocurrency.

NAN  
 A crypt? The Church did THIS  
 to me?

Randy tries not to smile.

RANDY  
 Crypto. It's a type of money that  
 only exists in cyberspace.

NAN  
 How much will it cost me to get my  
 memories back?

RANDY  
 One auroshekel per day.

NAN  
 How much is that in real money,  
 young man?

RANDY  
 (small voice)  
 Four thousand dollars.

Nan's jaw drops.

RANDY  
You have backups, right?

Nan WEEPS afresh.

RANDY  
Only the mofos who kidnapped your  
computer can unlock your files.

NAN  
What happens if I don't pay?

Randy draws his finger across his throat.

NAN  
Can't you help me?

RANDY  
I'm a forensic psychologist. If I  
could see the code, I could tell  
you if it were the Russians or the  
North Koreans. But without access-

INT. CRYPTOLANTES OFFICE - CANTEEN - DAY

Standard government-issue. Coffee and vending machines.  
Microwave. Sink. Counter. Cheap table and chairs.

Frank jams a length of Tygon tube into the coffee machine  
spout and presses the EXTRA STRONG button. He pulls up a  
chair. Sits. SIGHS with relief as the coffee flows down  
the tube into his mouth.

Meatball shambles in, followed by Gordon and then  
Leilani, holding up a copy of The Washington Post.

LEILANI  
Congratulations, guys.

Meatball grabs the paper.

MEATBALL  
(reads)  
"FBI Smashes Vast Cyber  
Fraud Ring."

Gordon and Frank glower at her.

GORDON  
It made Frank want to [COUGHS] a-

MEATBALL  
Gordon!

Gordon takes the paper and skims the article.

MEATBALL  
(to Leilani)  
So we get a raise?

FRANK

I'd settle for one of those tin-foil star certificates hanging in your office.

LEILANI

Aren't my thanks enough?

MEATBALL

Why do you always dribble out praise like some explorer stuck in the Sahara on his last canteen?

LEILANI

I don't want to inflate your already swollen egos.

FRANK

That was our WORK! What kind of thanks is that crapola article?

LEILANI

The kind that means we don't officially exist, our budget stays black, and maybe you all get a government pension.

Gordon looks up from the paper.

GORDON

It was a man-in-the-middle attack! Trojans aren't binary!

Frankie glances at Meatball.

MEATBALL

They do work both ways.

FRANK

I never turned one inside out. Have you, Meatball, me boy?

He nudges Meatball.

FRANK

I forgot. You never had the occasion to use one.

MEATBALL

We're talking about computer programs, you shell-shocked shitweasel.

FRANK

I know that!

INT. GORDON'S OFFICE - LATER

MUSIC plays from a hi-tech stereo system.

An android's lair. Chockablock with computers, displays, whiteboards, cables, etc. meticulously arranged.