

Mars and Venus Attack!

A screenplay by Steve Dunham

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Based on Steve Dunham's "Off the Deep End" columns that appeared in *Commuter Weekly* and the Fredericksburg, Virginia, *Free Lance-Star*, 2000-2008

This is a work of fiction. All the events and characters are imaginary, and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

This document is formatted for easier reading. It is also available in a standard Hollywood format using Courier.

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Fade in

Scene: A suburban backyard in early fall. A small boy, ***Johnny Occam***, and a small girl, ***Missy Occam***, are splashing in a wading pool. Their mother, ***Honey Occam***, is sitting in a chair nearby.

Honey Occam

Come on, kids! It'll be dark soon. Time to dry off and go inside.

The children keep splashing and playing with their pool toys.

Honey Occam

Come on, you two!

Johnny Occam

Mom! I have to feed the shark first!

He attacks his sister with a toy shark.

Missy Occam

Eeek! Mom!

Honey Occam grabs the shark toy and attacks Johnny with it.

Johnny Occam

Mom! No! I'll die!

Honey Occam lifts Johnny out of the wading pool and wraps a towel around him, then gives him a push in the direction of the house. Next she lifts Missy out and does the same to her. Then she bends down and opens the plug at the base of the wading pool, and the water starts flowing out. Honey walks toward the house.

Scene: The Occams' kitchen. Johnny and Missy are dressed now, sitting at the table eating. Places are set for three more people. Honey is standing at the counter. She turns toward the children.

Honey Occam

I'm going outside to take the pool down before it gets really dark.

Scene: The Occams' backyard. The wading pool is empty now, and Honey takes the plastic liner out and hangs it on a clothesline to dry. Then she rolls up the sides of the pool and carries the roll into a garden shed, leaving behind a flattened circle of grass.

Scene: The Occams' driveway. ***Steve Occam*** pulls into the driveway in his car. A bumper sticker on the rear reads, "I brake for Martians," and it shows a classic alien face with angled, pointed eyes and a tapered chin. Steve gets out of the car and hurries toward the house.

Scene: Inside the Occams' house. Steve comes through the front door.

Honey Occam

Steve! Where have you been?

Steve Occam

Uh, the train was late.

Honey Occam

Dinner's ready!

Where's Susie? Susie!

After waiting for an answer, Honey walks down the hallway to *Susie's* bedroom. The door is shut, and loud music is coming from inside. Honey opens the door.

Honey Occam

Susie!

Susie-Q Occam

(Impatiently) What?!

Honey Occam

Dinner's ready!

Susie-Q Occam

(Impatiently) I'm busy!

Honey closes the door and walks back to the kitchen. She joins Steve, Johnny, and Missy at the table.

Steve Occam

Do you kids want to look at the stars tonight?

Missy Occam

OK!

Johnny looks pained and bored.

Johnny Occam

I have homework to do.

Steve Occam

Well, I guess that's more important. *(Pretending to whisper)* Using the telescope is educational too, but I'd better not tell Missy that.

(To Missy) All right, then, I'll get out the telescope right after we have some dessert.

Scene: The Occams' front yard, after dark. Steve is setting up the telescope tripod. Missy comes out, carrying a toy Star Wars storm trooper.

Missy Occam

(Holding up the toy) I brought Stormy so he can see too.

What's that bright star next to the Moon?

Steve looks up at the sky.

The camera shows the Moon with the planet Venus appearing close by in the sky.

Steve Occam

That's not a star. That's the planet Venus.

Missy Occam

They're so close! It looks like Venus is going to hit the Moon! Will the Moon gobble it up?

Steve Occam

No, Missy, we don't have to worry about that.

(Turning away and looking toward the heavens) God, forgive me for lying to her!

Steve resumes setting up the telescope. As he finishes, he looks around the sky, then aims the telescope.

Steve Occam

(Pointing at the sky) Do you see that reddish star?

Missy Occam

Yes ...

Steve Occam

Well, that's not really a star either. That's another planet: Mars. Tonight it's closer than it has been for two years.

Missy Occam

Cool! Let me see!

Steve Occam

OK. It has a face on it. Maybe you can spot the face.

Missy puts her eye to the telescope. She turns it very slightly, this way and that, looking at the surface of Mars.

Missy Occam

I see it! I see the face! It looks like Stormy.

Missy holds up her toy storm trooper.

Missy Occam

I'm going to tell Johnny!

Missy turns and runs toward the house. Steve leans over and looks through the telescope.

The camera shows the view through the telescope: the famous face on Mars.

The face turns to a sneer.

Steve Occam

Aaagh! Aaagh!

Steve Occam jumps backwards, knocking over the telescope. He runs around the yard, yelling.

Steve Occam

The face! The face! Aaagh! It's Mars! It's coming!

One by one, neighbors' front doors open. They look out and see Steve Occam running around and screaming.

Neighbor 1

Shut up!

Neighbor 2

Be quiet! Go back inside!

Steve Occam, fumbling, picks up his telescope and tripod, then dashes into the house.

Honey Occam

What was all that yelling about?

Steve Occam

(Out of breath) Some of the neighbors were upset.

Honey Occam

(Looking at Steve suspiciously) About what?

Steve Occam

Mars, I think. It's frighteningly close.

Honey looks at him dubiously.

Missy holds up her toy storm trooper.

Steve Occam

Aaagh!

Honey Occam

What now?

Steve Occam

Nothing. I'm just a little rattled, that's all.

Scene: The next day, in Steve Occam's cubicle at work. Steve is on the phone.

Steve Occam

Hi, Don?

Cut to Don the scientist in his office

Don the scientist

Steve?

Steve Occam

Yes. I have a space question for you.

Don the scientist

OK ...

Cut to Steve Occam in his office

Steve Occam's *manager* walks by, looking at Steve dubiously.

Manager

What are you working on?

Steve Occam

(Covering the mouthpiece of his phone) I'm saving the world, and the Moon too.

The manager stands there for a moment, scowling.

Manager

This had better be important.

The manager stands there with his arms crossed.

Steve Occam

(Still covering the mouthpiece) Important?! I'll be through in a minute.

(To Don) Sorry. It's about the Moon. And Venus. They looked dangerously close last night.

Don the scientist

And what? You think the Moon is going to swallow Venus?

Steve Occam

Yes—the Moon being obviously so much bigger.

And Mars—it's getting awfully close.

But listen, I have to go. Somebody is waiting for me. I'll talk to you later.

Steve hangs up the phone.

Steve Occam

(To his manager) Someday you'll thank me for this.

Manager

(Scowling) I'll thank you to do your job.

Steve Occam

(Sarcastically) You're welcome.

Steve's coworker Jon

Steve-O, you're going to have all the time in the world if you keep wasting time like that.

Steve Occam

I *don't* have all the time in the world, and neither do you. Mars is on a collision course with Earth. Bazillions of people are in danger.

Jon

Tell me tomorrow, Steve. I've got work to do.

Steve Occam

Sure—if tomorrow comes.

Scene: Early evening. Steve Occam is driving through town. He stops at his insurance agent's office and goes inside.

Insurance agent

Hi, Steve-O.

Steve Occam

Hi. Do you sell disaster insurance?

Insurance agent

Well, yes, but we sell insurance only against things we're sure won't happen. For example, we'll sell you flood insurance if you live on a hill, but not if you live in a valley. On the other hand, if you do live in a valley, we'll sell you lightning insurance, but not if you live on a hill. We'll sell alien abduction insurance to anybody.

Steve Occam

I'm definitely interested in that, but what I want to get right now is an insurance policy for when Mars crashes into the Earth and destroys it.

Insurance agent

(Rubbing his hands together) Well, I'm sure we can help you out there. What's this about Mars crashing into Earth?

Steve Occam

The planets are on a collision course. If Mars doesn't actually hit the Earth, it's going to come real close and cause earthquakes, tidal waves, nuclear winter, and all kinds of other trouble.

Insurance agent

Oh. Well, then, how much coverage would you want to buy?

Steve Occam

As much as I can. I want to be fully protected when disaster strikes.

Insurance agent

Our limit is a hundred million dollars.

Steve Occam

I guess that should do. I need a policy only for a few months. After that, Mars won't be close again for two years.

Insurance agent

Well, then, we can give you a four-month policy for a one-time premium of a hundred dollars.

Steve Occam

A deal! Where will I come to collect the money?

Insurance agent

Oh, we'll be right here.

Steve Occam

Great!

Steve Occam waits there looking happy and contented while the agent draws up the policy.

Scene: After dark. Steve Occam arrives at the Occam home. As he gets out of the car, he sees the glowing eyes of an animal in the backyard. He goes to the trunk of his car, opens it, and takes out a shotgun. He walks into the backyard and stops short with a gasp when he sees the flattened circle of grass where the wading pool had been. He raises his shotgun and fires in the direction of the shining eyes.

Honey Occam opens the back door.

Honey Occam

(Yelling) What is going on out here?!

Steve Occam

Honey, call the sheriff! Tell him there's the body of a space alien in our back yard!

Steve Occam hears a rustling movement. He stops and looks around. He looks up toward the treetops, but there is nothing in sight.

Steve Occam

(To himself) Where's the body?

Steve Occam hastily puts his gun away.

Honey Occam comes out into the yard.

Honey Occam

What is going on? I told the kids to stay inside.

A siren is heard in the distance. Flashing blue lights appear in front of the Occam house. A deputy comes striding into the yard.

Deputy

I got a call about gunfire in the neighborhood.

Steve Occam

(To Honey Occam) Didn't you tell him about the alien's body?

Honey gives him a withering look.

Steve Occam

(To the deputy) Come look at this.

Steve Occam shows him the flattened circle of grass.

Deputy

You haven't been filling up a wading pool, have you? You know about the water restrictions.

Steve Occam

No, sir. I mean, yes, sir, I know about the restrictions, and no, sir, this circle was not made by a wading pool.

Deputy

Looks like you got yourself your very own crop circle. Your own maize maze.

Steve Occam

Exactly!

Scene: At dinner, inside the Occams' house.

Honey Occam

(To Steve) Where were you tonight?

Steve Occam

I stopped to see our insurance agent. I just wanted to make sure we're ready for emergencies.

Honey Occam

Well, that was thoughtful of you.

Steve Occam

And when I got back home, I saw two glowing eyes in the backyard.

Honey Occam

And that's what you were shooting at?! It might have been a neighbor's cat!

Steve Occam

It didn't look like a cat to me. And with all the weird things that have been going on around here, I want to be sure that my family is safe.

Honey Occam

Remember what your ancestor said.

Steve Occam

Which ancestor? I have bazillions of them.

Honey Occam

Bill Occam. He said that the simplest answer is likely to be correct.

Steve Occam

Oh, Bill "Pollyanna" Occam! "Everything is going to be fine," he said. "This is the best of all possible worlds!"

Well, his philosophy is worthless in emergencies.

Remember the blackout? You noticed that the light bulb in the refrigerator was not lit. You went around the house looking for a refrigerator light bulb till you found one, and when you screwed that one into the refrigerator, that one didn't light either.

So you figured a circuit breaker must have tripped, but none of them had. Only then did you start to guess that we might have lost power.

Not only was there a massive blackout, leaving bazillions of people in the dark, it was planned by the government or possibly caused by an attack from outer space.

And Bill Occam says, "Darn. That light bulb in the fridge burned out and I can't find my chocolate milk." He's probably still looking for a light bulb.

Philosophy is a bunch of hokum. In fact, I know doctors of philosophy who seem to have a few light bulbs burned out.

Maybe you should have married Bill Occam!

Honey Occam

He's dead.

Steve Occam

I'm not surprised.

I'll tell you, Honey, if you want to talk philosophy, here's one that works: the most sinister explanation is likely to be correct.

By the way, where's Susie-Q?

Honey Occam

(Loudly) Susie-Q! Dinner's ready!

After waiting for an answer, Honey walks down the hallway to Susie's bedroom. The door is shut, and loud music is coming from inside. Honey opens the door.

Honey Occam

Susie!

Susie-Q Occam

(Impatiently) What?!

Honey Occam

Dinner's ready!

Susie-Q Occam

(Impatiently) I'm busy!

Scene: Later that evening. Steve takes his insurance policy and puts it in a strongbox. Then he uses duct tape to wrap Styrofoam around it. Then he tapes a battery-powered emergency light to it.

Honey Occam

What are you doing?

Steve Occam

I'm protecting important papers: an insurance policy. I put it into a fireproof strongbox so that it will survive the earthquakes, and then I wrapped Styrofoam around it so that it will float in the tidal waves, and I attached a battery-powered emergency light to it so that I can find it in total darkness.

Honey Occam

What earthquake? Are you moving to the Pacific Rim?

Steve Occam

There are earthquakes here too. And when worlds collide, you never know what you're going to get.

Scene: The next day. Steve Occam is at work in the cubicle he shares with Jon. Steve is on the phone with his insurance agent.

Steve Occam

Would I get a commission on referrals if one of my friends wants to buy an insurance policy against interplanetary collisions? I would? Great!

Steve hangs up the phone and turns to Jon.

Would you like to get an insurance policy to provide for your family when Mars hits the Earth?

Jon

No, thank you.

Steve Occam

But it's only a hundred dollars, and after the disaster, you'll get a hundred million! I bought a policy.

Jon

And how are you going to collect your money after the Earth is destroyed?

Steve Occam

My insurance agent promised that he'll be right there in his office waiting to pay me.

Jon

And where are you going to spend your hundred million dollars when everything is in ruins? Do you think the mall will still be open?

Steve Occam

Jon, I feel sorry for you. You are so shortsighted. I'm just trying to help you out. I hope that somehow you survive the catastrophe.

Scene: That night, inside the Occams' house. Honey Occam is putting the children to bed. Steve Occam slips out the back door.

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) A maize maze, he said. And it's somehow linked to the crop circle in our backyard. I'm sure he wasn't supposed to let that slip out!

Steve Occam opens his car door, gets in, and gently shuts the door behind him. He waits till he is out of the driveway and in the road, away from the house, before turning the headlights on.

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) We aren't the only ones in the area with mysteriously flattened plants.

Steve Occam drives down a country road till he comes to a sign:

FOX DEN FARM

MAIZE MAZE

The parking lot at the farm is dark and deserted. Steve Occam drives into the parking lot, gets out of the car, and quietly shuts the door.

He takes a flashlight out of his jacket pocket and tests it by briefly turning it on.

He begins walking toward the maze entrance, then stops. He turns around, goes back to the car, and opens the trunk. He takes out his shotgun and quietly shuts the trunk. Then he walks into the maze.

He stops and listens. A rustling sound can be heard: something moving around in the cornfield.

He tiptoes into the field, pushing aside the stalks of corn. Suddenly, there are no stalks of corn. They all have been crushed. He follows the path farther into the maze.

He stops again and listens. The sound is closer: footsteps and breathing.

He starts walking faster, trying to find his way out.

The sound is even closer now.

Steve Occam stops, turns toward the sound, raises his gun, and shoots. Then he blindly plunges into the standing corn and runs, the leaves brushing against his face.

Then he stops again and listens. He no longer hears the footsteps and breathing.

When he reaches the car, he quietly gets in, starts the engine, and drives with the headlights off until he is away from the farm.

Then he hears sirens and sees flashing blue lights. A police car passes him at high speed, going the other way.

Scene: The Occams' house. Steve Occam gets out of his car and quietly shuts the door. He opens the trunk and puts his shotgun in, then quietly closes the trunk too. He walks around to the backyard and looks around. Then he slips silently into the dark house.

Scene: The next morning. The Occams' kitchen. Honey, Johnny and Missy are eating breakfast.

Honey Occam

Susie-Q! Breakfast is ready!

Susie-Q Occam

(Her voice coming from behind the closed bathroom door) I'm busy!

Steve Occam enters the room and sits down at the table.

Steve Occam

Anything unusual in the paper?

Honey Occam

A dead cow at a farm down the road. Why would anyone kill a cow like that?

Steve Occam

Cattle mutilation. Space invaders are famous for that.

Honey Occam

Space invaders?!

Johnny Occam

I've played Space Invaders, and it doesn't let you kill cows.

Steve Occam

Real space invaders. They are known for mutilating cattle. Or maybe the government does it. The White House—space invaders—as if there's any difference.

Honey Occam

Little pitchers ...

Steve Occam

Kids, we'll visit the White House someday and see for ourselves. I bet they have pieces of cows in the refrigerator.

Johnny Occam

I bet they do!

Scene: Inside the Occams' house, that night. The phone rings. Steve Occam picks it up.

Steve Occam

Occam residence.

Mysterious voice

I hear you're interested in cattle mutilation.

Steve Occam

Yes.... Who is this? The White House?

Mysterious voice

I think you'll find a connection to pilots.

Steve Occam

Pilots? The ones who fly the black helicopters over our house?

Mysterious voice

I can't say any more right now.

Steve Occam hears a dial tone on the phone.

Honey Occam

Who was that?

Steve Occam

The White House, I think. The president said something about cows and pilots.

Honey Occam

It's probably just a crank call.

Steve Occam

The White House, making crank calls!? Come on, Honey, isn't that just a little bit unbelievable?

If anything, it was a call for help. The President wants me to find out the connection between cows and black helicopters.

Scene: The next day. Steve Occam is at work in the cubicle he shares. He opens the CIA website on his computer and finds the main phone number. Then he picks up the phone and calls the CIA.

CIA receptionist

Central Intelligence Agency.

Steve Occam

Why are you mutilating cattle?

CIA receptionist

We are not mutilating cattle. And we are not amused by crank calls. We have recorded your phone number and will be tracking you and your activities from now on.

Steve Occam hears a click, followed by a dial tone. He hangs up the phone.

Jon

What was that about?

Steve Occam

Important business. I got a request for information from the White House.

Jon

Uh-huh.

Steve Occam

Jon, you are like an ostrich. Bazillions of people, not to mention cows, could be in danger, and the President asked me for help. Just keep your head in the sand. I'll take care of this.

Scene: That night. Inside the Occams' house. The phone rings, and Steve Occam picks it up.

Steve Occam

Occam residence.

Mysterious voice

Did you learn anything today?

Steve Occam

Yes, Mister President. I learned that the CIA is not behind cattle mutilation, despite what bazillions of people think. The CIA said it will be following me and listening in on my phone calls, but it doesn't matter. They were already doing that.

So the black helicopters are just watching me, not scooping up cattle and mutilating them.

Mysterious voice

There are other kinds of pilots.

Steve Occam

You mean ...

Mysterious voice

I can't say any more tonight.

Steve Occam hears a click and then a dial tone. He hangs up the phone.

Honey Occam

(Sarcastically) Who was that? The White House again?

Steve Occam

Yes. Honey, please don't make light of this. This is serious business.

Steve Occam walks into the living room. He takes a dictionary off a bookshelf and blows the dust off the dictionary. He opens the dictionary to *pilot*.

The camera shows the dictionary page with the definition of pilot.

Steve Occam

"A person who guides a ship in and out of harbor"! Well, I guess I'll be taking a little trip tomorrow.

Scene: The next morning, inside the Occams' house. Steve Occam is alone. He picks up the phone and dials.

Steve's manager's voice

I can't take your call right now. Please leave a message.

Steve Occam

Boss, this is Steve. I'm awfully sick. I can't make it into the office today.

Steve hangs up the phone and looks around to make sure nobody heard him.

Scene: On a commuter train. Steve Occam is gazing out the window. Jon walks up the aisle and plops down next to him.

Jon

What's happening, Steve-O? Ready for another day of saving the world?

Steve Occam

Yes. I mean, no. I'm sick.

Jon starts to get up.

Steve Occam

Nothing contagious.

Jon

So what are you doing on the train?

Steve Occam

Nothing. I mean, I'm going to the doctor. Uh, a specialist.

Jon

No offense, buddy, but you can keep your germs.

Jon gets up and moves to another seat.

Scene: The waterfront. Steve Occam wanders along the docks, looking around. Gulls wheel and dive. A ship's whistle blasts. Trucks drive along the street. Finally Steve sits down on a bench, looking lost.

Then he sees a black-and-white boat with the word PILOT on the side approaching a dock. The boat pulls up to the dock, and a deckhand jumps to the dock. Another deckhand tosses him a rope, which the first deckhand ties to a bollard on the dock. They make another rope fast to the dock.

When the boat is securely tied up, a passenger climbs up to the dock and walks down the street. Steve Occam follows him. When the man goes into a bar, Steve Occam goes too. The man gets onto a barstool, and Steve Occam perches on one a couple of seats away.

The man orders a beer, and Steve Occam orders one too. After waiting a few minutes, Steve Occam speaks.

Steve Occam

Excuse me, are you a pilot?

Pilot

Yup.

Steve Occam

Cool. I've always wanted to be a pilot. That's why I'm asking.

Pilot

Really! Not many people get into this line of work, and there isn't a big demand. We take turns. When a ship needs a pilot, the next one in the rotation gets a call.

You spend a lot of time on the water?

Steve Occam

Oh, yes. All the time. All the time I can, anyway.

Pilot

Well, that's interesting. We have a couple of arrivals and departures on the next tide, so I might go out tonight. Do you want to come along? Can you hang around till tonight?

Steve Occam

Wow! Yes! That would be great.

Can I buy you a beer?

Pilot

Thanks, but no. I've got to stop already. Can't drink anything for twelve hours before working.

You gonna wait here? I'm gonna go home and get some shut-eye. If I get a call to work later, I'll stop by and see whether you're still here. If you are, you can come along.

Steve Occam

OK. Thanks. See you later.

An hour later, Steve Occam is still sitting at the bar with an empty glass in front of him. The *bartender* comes over to him.

Bartender

You gonna have anything else?

Steve Occam

Oh, right. Yeah. You can give me another beer.

Ten hours later, Steve Occam is sitting at the bar with six empty bottles in front of him.

The pilot walks in the door.

Pilot

Hey, buddy! You ready for a moonlight sail?

Steve Occam

Sail ho! Anchors aweigh! Yeah, let's go.

With difficulty, Steve Occam gets down from the stool. The bartender catches the pilot's eye and discreetly motions to him.

Bartender

(Quietly) Your friend looks a little worse for wear. He ain't three sheets to the wind—maybe two. And he's had only two beers. He wasn't looking too good, so after the second one, I started serving him non-alcoholic beers, and he didn't seem to notice the difference.

Pilot

Well, then I guess he'll be OK.

The pilot heads out the door, and Steve Occam follows him. They walk to the dock and clamber down into the pilot boat. As the boat gets under way, moving up and down to a slight swell on the water, Steve Occam gets wobbly. He grasps the railing of the boat, leans over the side, and throws up into the water.

Pilot

You OK?

Steve Occam

Uhhh ...

Pilot

You're not seasick, are you?

Steve Occam

No, I'm fine. I'm an old salt, really. Maybe I had a couple beers too many.

Pilot

All right.

Scene: After traveling several miles, the pilot boat draws alongside a ship. The ship towers over the boat, and a rope ladder is dangling over the side of the ship.

Pilot

(With a glance over his shoulder toward Steve Occam) Up we go!

The pilot grabs hold of the ladder and climbs easily upward. Steve Occam looks up at the ship, then steels himself and begins the long climb upward. When he finally reaches the ship's deck, the pilot reaches out and helps pull him aboard.

Pilot

There! You made it. Let's go.

The pilot walks toward the bridge of the ship. Steve Occam follows him. As they enter the bridge, the

captain and a few crew members are waiting for them.

Captain

Welcome aboard, pilot.

Pilot

Good evening, captain. I have a recruit with me—a possible future pilot, Mister ... (*looking toward Steve Occam*)

Steve Occam

(*Extending his hand*) Occam. Steve Occam.

Pilot

Captain, could you please have the galley send up some coffee? Two coffees. And one for me too.

An hour later. The ship is sailing through the night, into the harbor.

Steve Occam

Do you see anything unusual out here, especially at night?

Pilot

All the time. Every trip is different.

Steve Occam

What about cows?

Pilot

Cows!? Purple cows? I told you, we have to be sober on duty.

Steve Occam

Uh, I meant pieces of cows. Cut-up cows.

Pilot

Cut-up cows? Oh, you mean like beef?

Steve Occam

Uh, yeah, like beef.

Pilot

No, we never see the cargo.

Scene: The ship is tied up to the dock. The pilot and Steve Occam walk to the gangway.

Pilot

No climbing this time! Just step onto the dock. Hope you enjoyed the evening out.

Steve Occam

Yes, thank you. That was very interesting and informative.

Scene: Steve Occam walks down the street away from the ship.

Steve Occam

(To himself) Well, that was a complete waste.

Scene: The next morning. Steve Occam walks into his office. He is still wearing his clothes from the day before and looks awful.

Jon

You look really sick now!

Steve Occam

Just a rough night.

Manager

Occam, have you been drinking?

Steve Occam

Just coffee.

Manager

You can't come to work hung over and expect to get paid.

Jon

I saw him yesterday and he said he was going to the doctor.

Manager

Well, we don't want your germs here. Get out of here before we all get infected.

Scene: Inside the Occams' house, later that morning. Steve Occam drags himself in the door.

Honey Occam

Where have you been? Where were you last night? What happened to you?

Steve Occam

I, uh, I had to finish up a big project.

Honey Occam

Why didn't you call?

Steve Occam

I got real busy and I forgot. I'm sorry.

Honey Occam

Well, get cleaned up and go rest. (*Angrily*) Maybe it will help your memory.

Steve Occam

My memory? Oh, uh, yeah, right.

Scene: Inside the Occams' house, that evening. Steve Occam is asleep in bed. Honey Occam walks into the bedroom and shakes him awake.

Honey Occam

The phone is for you.

Steve Occam

What? The phone? For me?

Steve Occam takes the phone.

Steve Occam

Hello?

Mysterious voice

Did you learn anything new?

Steve Occam

Yeah, I learned I'm not cut out to be a pilot. And not to drink beer.

Mysterious voice

Keep looking.

Steve Occam hears a click and then a dial tone.

He staggers out to the living room.

Steve Occam

Honey, I'm sorry.

Honey walks over to him and hugs him.

Honey Occam

All right. I forgive you. Next time, don't forget to call. I worry about you sometimes.

Steve Occam

I promise.

Scene: The next morning. Steve Occam walks into his office. He still looks awful.

Jon

Bad kitty! Drag this back out where you found it.
Another big night in the middle of the week?

Steve Occam

I feel better, but I had trouble sleeping. I'll be OK.

Scene: That evening, in a train station. Steve Occam purchases a tabloid from a newsstand.

Scene: On the train. Steve Occam is reading the tabloid.

The camera zooms in on a story that Steve Occam is reading.

The headline reads, MYSTERIOUS CATTLE MUTILATION.

Steve Occam

(To himself) Holy cow! Right here in our county!

Two conductors walk down the aisle.

First conductor

Did you hear what happened to ninety-seven the other night?

Second conductor

Yeah, the pilot caught a cow. It happens now and then.

Steve Occam looks up from his reading.

Steve Occam

What did you say? The pilot caught a cow?

First conductor

Yep.

Steve Occam

I thought the driver was called the engineer.

First conductor

Not the engineer. The pilot is the cowcatcher.

Steve Occam

The cowcatcher! Holy cow!

First conductor

A holy mess. Mutilated beyond recognition.

Steve Occam

Holy cow!

The conductors resume walking down the aisle.

Scene: Steve Occam is in the Occam home that evening.

Steve Occam

Any good mail for me?

Honey Occam

No, just junk.

Steve Occam picks up the mail and sifts through it.

Steve Occam

You call this junk?

The camera zooms in on a piece of mail in Steve's hand.

The letter is from Feed My Cows Ministry.

Steve Occam

(Reading the letter) “Dear Mr. Occam, I know that you are a friend of the cows. It makes me sad that Feed My Cows Ministry has not heard from you in five years. It makes the cows sad, too.”

This is really pathetic.

“I and the cows are praying that you will respond generously to this appeal.”

It says they'll send you me a plastic pin to wear, to show everyone that I care about the cows, plus a reply envelope so I can send more money. And a cow pie chart showing how our donations help the cows.

Honey, we can afford some money to help the cows, can't we?

Honey Occam

Will you please throw that junk away?

Steve Occam

Junk?! I don't think you care about the cows. Well, *I* care!

Steve Occam folds up the letter and tucks it into his pocket.

Scene: The next evening. Steve Occam gets off the commuter train and walks to his car. After leaving the parking lot, he drives out of town and down a country road. After a few miles, he comes to a country store and parks the car there. He crosses the road and climbs over a fence into a cow pasture.

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) This looks like a good place for a stakeout.

Steve Occam walks out into the field and mingles with the cattle.

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) What's that smell? It smells like gas!

Steve Occam tries to look at his watch but cannot see it in the dark. To illuminate it, he strikes a match, which ignites a cloud of methane gas expelled by the cows.

The cows, spooked by the cloud of burning gas, begin running around the pasture and mooing.

Steve Occam, with a cow close behind him, runs for the fence, opens a gate, and dashes out. He tries to shut the gate before the cow escapes, but the cow runs out and onto the nearby railroad track.

A train whistle pierces the night, and Steve Occam crouches in a ditch.

The whistle sounds again, followed by the sound of screeching brakes. Then a moo and an ominous thud.

The train stops with the engine close to Steve Occam, who stays hidden. He can overhear the engineer talking on the radio.

Engineer

Ninety-nine to dispatcher, we have a cow impaled on the pilot.

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) The pilot!

Dispatcher

(Voice heard over the radio) Roger that, ninety-nine. Your cowcatcher caught a cow. Chopper's on the way.

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) The cowcatcher!

Steve Occam stays hidden.

Presently a helicopter is heard overhead. A black helicopter hovers over the track. Figures in black jumpsuits and night-vision goggles come rappelling down. They strap the remains of the cow into a sling, and the chopper lifts the carcass back to the pasture.

The helicopter lands to pick up the figures in black, then rises and vanishes into the night.

Suddenly the darkness is split by flashing red and blue lights. A deputy arrives and gets out of his car, then strides across the field toward the locomotive.

Deputy

We got a call about a UFO sighting. The neighbors saw a mysterious glowing ball over this field. You boys know anything about it?

Engineer

I saw a mysterious light—like swamp gas.

Deputy

Swamp gas, huh? Any swamps around here?

Engineer

A few.

Deputy

(Calling on his radio) About that UFO report? It was just swamp gas.

(Chuckling) No flying saucers here.

(To the engineer) All right, you boys can go.

The engineer releases the brakes and blows the horn twice. The train starts off into the night.

As the deputy walks back across the pasture, he stumbles over something: a mutilated cow.

Deputy

(Talking to himself) Well, what do we have here? A dead cow!

(Calling on his radio) We have another case of cattle mutilation. Caused by swamp gas, I think. I'd better go up to the house and tell the farmer.

The deputy walks toward the farmhouse, and Steve Occam takes advantage of the deputy's absence to slip out of the pasture and back to his car.

Scene: Outside the Occams' house, later that evening. Steve Occam pulls his car into the driveway and gets out. He stops and looks up into the sky. Venus is almost touching the Moon. Then it slowly disappears behind the Moon.

Steve Occam

Oh, my God! It happened! The Moon swallowed Venus! I won't tell Missy. Maybe we'll be spared from the coming catastrophe. God, I'm sorry! I won't take home any more paper clips from work. I vow to give up junk food for a year. Just please spare the Earth!

Scene: Inside the Occams' house. The Occams, except Susie-Q, are having dinner.

Honey Occam

Steve, you don't look well. Are you still feeling sick?

Steve Occam

I've just been under a little strain. I'm worried about the future.

Honey Occam

We're doing our best. Beyond that, we'll just have to let tomorrow take care of itself.

Steve Occam

Forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed!

Honey Occam

What in the world are you talking about?

Steve Occam

Remember the VeggieTales movie about Jonah? And people getting slapped with fishes?

Honey Occam

Yes ...

Steve Occam

And how did the vegetables in Nineveh escape destruction?

Honey Occam

Uh, they stopped doing evil. We're not doing evil.

Steve Occam

Are you sure? Are the kids cheating on tests? Are they eating too much ice cream?

Honey Occam

What has gotten into you?

Steve Occam

I just want to make sure we're ready for the end of the world, that's all.

Honey Occam

Well, it's true we're supposed to always be ready. Even if the world doesn't end, there's no guarantee that any of us will be here tomorrow.

Steve Occam

That's what I mean. I'm going to start buying my own paper clips and eating better.

Honey Occam

So you plan to be around for a while? The eve of destruction is kind of late to go on a diet.

Steve Occam

Honey, I'm serious. Tomorrow I'm going to call Don the scientist and ask him how much time we have left.

Scene: The next day. Steve Occam is at the office, in his cubicle. He picks up the phone and dials.

Steve Occam

Hi, Don! What happened?

Don the scientist

Do you mean “What’s happening”? What do you mean “What happened”?

Steve Occam

Well, sort of. What happened to the Moon and Venus? Venus disappeared last night. I saw it happen!

Don the scientist

Well, that was a treat.

Steve Occam

Did you leave out an H? Don’t you mean *threat*, not *treat*?

Don the scientist

Venus and the Moon are fine. See for yourself tonight.

Steve Occam

You’re not yanking my chain, are you?

Jon

You need a chain. A muzzle too.

Steve Occam

(To Jon) Will you be quiet!

Don the scientist

Why did you call me up if you want me to be quiet? You’re acting weird today, even rude, Steve-O.

Steve Occam

I wasn’t talking to you. About being quiet, I mean.

I’ll check out the Moon and Venus tonight.

Don the scientist

You do that.

Steve hangs up the phone.

Jon

Who was that? The White House again?

Steve Occam

I have work to do.

Jon

At last!

Scene: That night, outside the Occams' house. Steve Occam is gazing up into the sky. Venus is on the other side of the Moon.

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) So Don was right! The Moon ate Venus and spat it out again! I wonder how he knew that would happen.

Scene: The next morning, on the commuter train. Steve Occam looks out the window at the Quantico station. He notices the name spelled out in big aluminum capital letters.

Scene: Steve Occam is at the office, in his cubicle. He picks up the phone and dials.

Steve Occam

Hi, Don. I have a question for you: What does "Quantico" mean?

Don the scientist

What do you mean "What does it mean"? It's just a name.

Steve Occam

Well, sure it's a name, but doesn't the name mean something?

Don the scientist

I think it's an Indian name.

Steve Occam

Like "redskin"?

Don the scientist

"Redskin" isn't an Indian name!

Steve Occam

Well, okay, what does "Quantico" mean?

Don the scientist

I don't know.

Steve Occam

I think it's an acronym. It's in all capital letters on the station.

Don the scientist

An acronym? I don't think so.

Steve Occam's manager walks by.

Steve Occam

I'll get back to you. Gotta go now.

Steve Occam gets out a pad of paper and a pen and writes “QUANTICO” vertically. Then he starts to fill in words alongside the letters:

Quantum
Unusual
Aardvarks
Near
Total
Ixtinction
Coming
On

Steve Occam

(Muttering to himself) That certainly sounds sinister. That might be it.

He reaches for the phone but stops when his boss walks by again.

Instead he starts composing an email to Don the scientist:

Subject: QUANTICO
Message: Quantum unusual aardvarks near total ixtinction coming on

After a minute, Steve Occam gets an email reply from Don the scientist:

Subject: re QUANTICO
Message: I don’t think so. I don’t think every letter stands for a word, and anyway, you spelled “extinction” wrong.

Steve Occam composes a reply:

Subject: re re QUANTICO
Message: Thanks! That helps!

Steve Occam rips the top page off the pad of paper and again writes “QUANTICO” vertically. Again he fills in words alongside the letters:

QUalified
Aliens
Never
Take
Instant
Coffee
Overseas

Steve Occam

(Muttering again) That can't be it. It doesn't sound very sinister. The TSA doesn't let anybody take coffee anywhere, much less overseas. "Aliens" sounds right, but I don't think Quantico is about coffee.

Again Steve Occam rips the top page off the pad of paper, and again he writes "QUANTICO" vertically. Once more he fills in words alongside the letters:

QUArantine for
Non-
Terrestrial
Intelligent
Creature
Observation

Steve Occam picks up the phone and waits while Don the scientist's voicemail reply plays.

Don the scientist (*his recorded voice*)

This is Don. I'm away doing science. Please leave a message.

Steve Occam

Don, sorry I missed you. I cracked the code! Bye!

Scene: That afternoon, the commuter train comes to a stop at Quantico station, and Steve Occam gets off.

He walks to the end of a fence. A sign reads, "NO PARKING."

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) That's very odd. I expected something more than that: maybe "No trespassing! This means you!" And "Deadly force authorized."

Steve Occam walks past the "No parking" sign into a gravel lot. He stops short when he sees circular, streamlined objects lying on the ground.

Steve Occam

Artifacts from another world!

Steve Occam gets out his pocket camera and begins taking pictures. After each snap of the shutter he looks over his shoulder.

During one backward glance, he spots a heavily armed Marine striding toward him. Steve Occam drops his camera over the fence into some weeds.

Marine

Can I help you, sir?

Steve Occam

You guys are great! I was just looking at these flying saucers here. You guys shot them down, huh? Way to go!

Marine

(Talking into his radio) Sarge, this is Jones. I got a code thirteen here.

Steve Occam

I guess I'll be going now.

Steve Occam strolls away, whistling. A Marine sergeant arrives, and they both keep an eye on Steve Occam until he is beyond the fence.

When Steve reaches the train platform, he looks across into the gravel lot. Both the Marine and the sergeant are gone.

Steve Occam reaches into the weeds and picks up his camera. Presently a train pulls into the station, and Steve Occam boards it, hugging the camera.

As the train heads south, it crosses a creek. There are gates across the creek, blocking passage through the water. On the other side of the gates are numerous people fishing from the bank.

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) So! They're trying to catch something in the water, and they have gates to keep it from getting away. Quarantine indeed!

Scene: The next morning. Steve Occam is at the office, in his cubicle. He picks up the phone and dials.

Steve Occam

Don! I saw them!

Don the scientist

Saw whom?

Steve Occam

Not who, what!

Don the scientist

Saw what?

Steve Occam

The saucers!

Don the scientist

What saucers?

Steve Occam

Don, for a scientist, sometimes you are awfully slow on the uptake.

I saw the quarantined saucers at Quantico. They're hidden in plain sight, right out in the open, but heavily guarded.

Don the scientist

Did you see any little green men?

Steve Occam

No. But I don't think they would keep them in the saucers. The quarantine is for observing intelligent non-terrestrial creatures, which means they're alive. And I don't think they're men, little or big, green or any other color. There are barriers keeping something from passing through the waters of the creek. What does that tell you?

Don the scientist

That the Marines don't want people sailing into their base?

Steve Occam

Don, be realistic. There's something strange in the water, and I'm going to find out what. Wanna go on a field trip?

Don the scientist

No, thanks, Steve-O.

Steve Occam

All right, Don. I was going to share the credit with you. But play it safe if you want to and stay in your dead-end science career. There are great discoveries waiting to be made!

Don the scientist

Talk to you later, Steve-O.

Scene: That night, shortly after dark. Steve Occam is stealthily walking along the shore of the Potomac River. When he reaches the creek, he turns and follows the shore.

Lights seem to twinkle up out of the water.

Steve Occam

(Whispering to himself) What are those lights? Eyes? Fish with glowing eyes?

A jeep with a Marine patrol drives up a road on the other side of the creek. Steve Occam flattens himself on the ground and waits till the headlights have disappeared.

Scene: The next morning. Steve Occam is at the office, in his cubicle. He picks up the phone and dials.

Steve Occam

Don! Last night I saw fish with glowing eyes. What are they? Atomic fish? Maybe they came from Lake Anna. Maybe they soaked up too much radiation from the nuclear power plant.

Don the scientist

Steve, that's impossible. Even if there were a radiation leak, it wouldn't make their eyes glow in the dark.

Steve Occam

Don, please skip the technical mumbo-jumbo. Whether or not neutrons glow in the dark, these fish had glowing eyes.

And I see them everywhere. Well, not everywhere, but anytime I'm near a river or pond at night. As the train crossed the river last night, I pressed my face against the window and squinted into the darkness. I could see tiny points of light glinting up at me from the water.

Scene (*flashback to the night before*): Steve Occam is on the train, his face pressed against the window. He looks down into the darkness and sees twinkling lights on the water.

Scene (*return to the present*): Steve Occam is on the phone with Don the scientist.

Don the scientist

I'm certain you're not seeing atomic fish.

Steve Occam

All right, Mister Skeptical Scientist. Are they invaders from China, like the walking carnivorous fish that attacked Maryland? Are they terrorist sleeper schools of fish, waiting for the word to attack?

Don the scientist

No, no, no!

Steve Occam

Well then, Mister Skeptical Scientist, that leaves only one answer. My original theory was correct: the non-terrestrial intelligent creatures live in the water. They're quarantined—penned up!—in the creek.

Maybe the government wants to use them as a biological weapon.

Are these atomic fish (you say they're not atomic fish, but I say they are)—are they intelligent, evil, and aggressive, or just helpless pawns in an international scheme?

And if they are a biological weapon, have they entered the food supply?

I don't understand why you science guys won't pursue obvious lines of investigation.

Well, I will!

Scene: On the way home, Steve Occam stops at a supermarket. He walks to the seafood department. He waits at the counter until a *supermarket employee* walks up and greets him across the counter.

Supermarket employee

What would you like?

Steve Occam

Would you mind turning off the lights?

The supermarket employee gives Steve Occam a withering look.

Steve Occam

Never mind. Thanks for nothing.

(To himself) Boy, does that person look guilty!

Steve Occam stands there, staring at the *fish* lying on ice behind the glass.

Fish

(Only Steve Occam can hear them) Help us!

Steve Occam

I will!

(To himself) Time for another stakeout.

Scene: Steve Occam walks to his car and gets in. He drives it around to the back of the supermarket, shuts off the engine, and waits.

Scene: Steve Occam is sitting in his car. The windows are covered with condensation and frost. He looks at his watch. It is 6 a.m.

A seafood truck pulls up, and the *driver* gets out and walks up to the back door of the supermarket.

Steve Occam uses his gloved hand to clear the condensation from part of the window.

Steve Occam watches as the driver knocks on the door, which soon opens.

The driver can be seen but not heard conversing with the supermarket employee.

Then the seafood truck driver goes to the truck, opens the back, and with a dolly starts bringing cardboard cases of fish into the supermarket.

Steve Occam waits until the back door of the supermarket is closed and until the driver gets back into the truck.

Steve Occam starts the engine of his car and, with his gloved hand, wipes the rest of the condensation off the inside of the windshield.

As the truck drives away, Steve waits a minute, then drives after it.

Scene: After sunrise. The truck pulls up outside a waterfront warehouse. Steve Occam parks his car some distance away and watches. The truck driver gets out and walks to another car. He gets into it and soon drives away.

Steve Occam walks around to the front door of the warehouse. He goes up to the front door and steps inside. A *receptionist* is sitting behind a desk.

Receptionist

Can I help you?

Steve Occam

I want to buy some fish.

(Winking) Some special fish.

Receptionist

Oh. Come with me.

The receptionist leads Steve Occam down a long, wood-paneled hallway and into a vast area filled with aquarium tanks and televisions. A *lab worker* in a white coat is standing amidst it all. Steve Occam tries to conceal his surprise.

Lab worker

Are you in advertising?

Steve Occam

What? Oh, uh, yeah. How's it going?

Lab worker

They stare at the TV all day but their eyes glaze over and kind of glow. We haven't yet found a way around it. We've had to dump the ones with glowing eyes back into the rivers.

If we could get them to pay attention to commercials all day, they would be perfect consumers, except that they don't have any money.

So once we breed the perfect consumer fish, we will transplant their genes into humans.

Steve Occam

Have you tried intelligent TV programming?

The lab worker looks at Steve as if Steve is stupid. Steve quickly puts his hand to his mouth as he realizes what a foolish question he has just asked.

Steve Occam

Well, if you ever get it to work, let me know.

Steve Occam takes out a business card. On it, he hastily writes the words ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE and hands it to the lab worker.

Steve Occam turns away and walks toward the door. Then he pauses and glances over his shoulder at the tanks full of fish. Then he leaves the building.

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) Now I know why they're called commercial fisheries.

Scene: Steve Occam is at the office, in his cubicle. He picks up the phone and dials.

Steve Occam

Don! I saw them!

Don the scientist

Saw what?

Steve Occam

Not what. Who! The fish!

Don the scientist

Oh? Where did you see them? In the water?

Steve Occam

Not just in the water. In the supermarket.

Don the scientist

Well, then, I've seen them too.

Steve Occam

Of course you have. And I saw them in tanks, in a lab. Science, Don!

They're being genetically modified to respond to TV commercials. And the TV people want to implant their genes into people!

Don the scientist

People already buy any dumb thing they see on TV.

Steve Occam

Are you talking about my planetary crash survival kit? Don't mock me, Don. This is serious.

Don the scientist

Well, then what are you going to do about it?

Steve Occam

That's where you come in. We need to fight this with science! You'll get half the credit, of course.

We need to expose what's going on.

Don the scientist

People are not going to believe what you told me. In fact, I don't believe what you told me.

Steve Occam

All right, then, Mister Ostrich. Bury your head in the sand and watch TV. I'll just have to save the world without you.

Scene: That evening, inside the Occams' house. Steve, Honey, Missy, and Johnny Occam are sitting down to dinner.

Honey Occam

Susie!

Susie-Q Occam

(Calling impatiently from her room) What?!

Honey Occam

Dinner's ready!

Susie-Q Occam

(Impatiently) I'm busy!

Steve Occam

What's for dinner?

Honey Occam

Fish fillets.

Steve Occam

(Annoyed) Fish!

Honey Occam

I thought you liked fish.

Steve Occam

I do like fish. I love fish. I *care about* fish. That's the problem.

Honey Occam

You don't want to eat them? Well, all right. Would you rather have hamburger?

Steve Occam

I care about the cows too. I have a plastic pin I got in the mail. It says I'm a friend of the cows.

Honey Occam

Well, I don't know what else you could have.

Steve Occam

Never mind. I'll eat the fish.

(Whispering to the fish fillet) I'm sorry. I promise to help your friends, though.

Scene: That evening, in the supermarket. Steve Occam walks toward the back of the store. The supermarket employee behind the fish counter sees him coming and ducks into a back room. Steve, however, turns and heads into the aisle that has vitamins. He finds a bottle of fish oil capsules and walks toward the checkout.

Scene: Outside the Occams' house. Steve is returning from the supermarket. Mars is a red speck in the sky. Steve glances up.

The camera now shows what Steve Occam sees.

To Steve Occam's eyes, Mars looks as big as the Moon. He gasps.

Scene: The next morning. Steve, Honey, Missy, and Johnny Occam are at breakfast. Steve opens the bottle of fish oil capsules and bites one open. Some of it squirts out onto his shirt.

Steve Occam

Ugh! That tastes awful!

Honey Occam

What are you doing?

Steve Occam

Taking fish oil. It will help my DNA.

Honey Occam

What's wrong with your DNA?

Steve Occam

Nothing yet. But when the TV advertisers start implanting us with fish genes, I need some oil from healthy fish to help me resist.

Honey Occam

You're not supposed to bite them, just swallow them. Now you'd better change your shirt.

Steve Occam

No time!

Steve leans over and kisses Honey, who wrinkles her nose. He leans over to kiss Missy, but she leans away from him. Johnny gets up and hurries to the bathroom, shutting the door behind him.

Scene: On the commuter train. Steve Occam is sitting by a window. Another *passenger* sits next to him, wrinkles his nose, looks at Steve, and gets up and leaves. *Another passenger* sitting in front of him sniffs the air, turns around, and gives Steve a dirty look.

Scene: Steve Occam arrives at work. Jon is already there in their shared cubicle.

Jon

What's that fishy smell?

Steve Occam

I don't smell anything.

Steve's manager walks in.

Steve's manager

What's that smell? Occam, is that you?

Steve Occam

I don't smell anything.

Steve's manager

What did you do, go fishing on the way to work?

Steve Occam

No, I came straight here.

Steve's manager

From where, a commercial fishery?

Steve Occam blanches.

Steve Occam

No!

I mean, what makes you say that?

Steve's manager

Occam, to the showers! Get out of here, and don't come back till you get cleaned up and change your clothes!

Scene: Steve Occam leaves the office and walks into the men's room. He pumps some hand soap from the dispenser and rubs it onto the fish oil stain on his shirt.

Steve Occam

What am I going to do? I can't wash myself and all my clothes here. If I go home, Honey will kill me.

If I pay a hundred bucks for a hotel room so I can shower and wash my clothes, Honey will kill me.

Scene: Steve Occam exits the office building. He starts to wander the streets. Then he notices a fountain outside another office building. He runs to it, leaps in, and jumps up and down, waving his arms around, then sits down in the water with the fountain splashing over him.

A *security guard* notices him and comes running toward the fountain.

Security guard

Hey! You! Get out of there!

Steve Occam looks up, then stands and climbs out of the fountain. He starts running away from the fountain and the security guard. Then he pauses and looks over his shoulder. The guard has stopped running after him. Steve walks away.

Steve Occam

What kind of guard is he? He doesn't want people to be clean? He must be against public health.

Steve Occam, dripping wet, walks until he comes to an unoccupied bench in the sunshine. He sits down to dry off.

Scene: The same bench, hours later. Steve Occam is mostly dry. He gets up and walks back toward his workplace.

Scene: Steve enters his cubicle and sits down.

Jon

Well, fishman, did you clean up your act?

Steve, ignoring Jon, picks up the phone and calls Don the scientist.

Steve Occam

Don, this is Steve. Mars is getting really close! Have you seen it?

Don the scientist

Yup. Looks beautiful, doesn't it?

Steve Occam

I guess it depends on your point of view.

Don the scientist

Well, I had a great view. Listen, Steve-O. I have to go. I have a lot of work to do.

Scene: On the street, after work. Steve Occam sees a *person in a cow costume* holding a sign that reads, EAT MOR CHIKIN.

Steve Occam

Thank you. I think you're right. I should eat more chicken.

Person in a cow costume

(Pointing at the plastic button that Steve Occam is wearing) I see that you are a friend of the cows.

Steve Occam

Yes, I donate to Feed My Cows Ministry.

Person in a cow costume

Do you think they would feed me?

Steve Occam

I'm sure they would! What do cows like to eat? Corn?

Person in a cow costume

No. Chicken!

Scene: That evening, inside the Occam house. Honey approaches Steve.

Honey Occam

You don't smell like fish anymore. Now you smell like chlorine! What's going on?

Steve Occam

Oh, I had to clean up.

Honey Occam

You used bleach on yourself?

Steve Occam

Uh, no, not exactly. I just had to get the smell off my clothes.

Honey Occam

You could have bought a new shirt and thrown the old one away or used it for a work shirt.

Steve Occam

(Glumly) I didn't think of that.

Honey Occam

I made macaroni and cheese tonight. No cows, no fish. I hope that's okay with you.

Steve Occam

(Glumly) Yes, that's fine.

Honey Occam

You seem kind of down tonight. You could use something to cheer you up. I was thinking we could take the kids to that farm with the maize maze this weekend. That would be fun, wouldn't it?

Steve Occam

(Glumly) Actually, I'd rather not. I don't think I should go back there.

Honey Occam

You've been there already?

Steve Occam

No! I meant I might get lost in the maze. I'm not good at mazes.

By the way, I like macaroni and cheese, but I was thinking that we should eat more chicken.

Honey Occam

Are you getting brainwashed by commercials?

Steve Occam

No. Unless it's the fish oil. A cow told me.

Honey Occam

A cow told you to eat more chicken?

Steve Occam

Yes ...

Scene: The next morning, on the street. A *protestor* is holding a sign that reads: "CHICKENS ARE OUR FRIENDS." Steve Occam stops to look. The protestor notices Steve's button that says, "I'M A FRIEND OF THE COWS."

Protestor

What are you, a terrorist?

Steve Occam

No! I just care about the cows.

Protestor

Oh, you've been brainwashed!

Steve Occam

No, that's impossible! Unless it was the fish oil.

Protestor

Fish oil?

Steve Occam

Never mind. What is the connection between cows and terrorism?

Protestor

How can you be so ignorant? Haven't you ever seen a black helicopter over a cow pasture?

Steve Occam

Sure. I mean, no. Black helicopters? Tell me more.

Protestor

Why do you think the government is fighting the cows?

Steve Occam

Fighting the cows?

Protestor

The Global War Against the Cows! Chickens are our natural allies.

Listen to this!

The protestor puts down his sign. He opens his backpack and takes out a book: *Bad Astronomy* by Phil Plait.

Steve Occam

Bad astronomy? Why would you pay attention to bad astronomy?

Protestor

Because it's true! This guy is an astronomer. Listen to this:

(Reading from the book) "If their technology is so advanced, how come they crashed here in 1947?"

Steve Occam

Who crashed here? The cows?

Protestor

No, aliens in a flying saucer. Don't interrupt. Listen to this: "It seems unlikely that we would be able to shoot down a spaceship; that's like cows being able to take down a fighter plane."

First, he asks, "How come they crashed here in 1947?" He admits that "they" crashed.

Second, it seems “unlikely” to this astronomer that we could shoot down a spaceship. But when it comes to shooting things down, what’s the difference between a missile and a spaceship? And we *can* shoot down missiles.

And that, according to this astronomer, is “like cows being able to take down a fighter plane.”

So what he’s saying is this: Cows are only a half step behind us when it comes to shooting things out of the sky. Now, I find that scary.

Steve Occam

I never realized that cows could shoot down airplanes.

Protestor

Good! I knew you would listen to sense.

First, get rid of that traitorous button.

The protestor plucks the “Friend of the Cows” button off Steve Occam’s jacket, throws it to the ground, and stamps on it. Then he takes a “Chickens Are Our Friends” button out of his backpack and pins it onto Steve’s jacket.

Protestor

Now you are a soldier in the Global War Against the Cows.

This is the first war in which we can kill *and eat* our enemies. You get to defend America, plus you get all the steak you can eat.

Steve Occam

That sounds good!

Protestor

Yes, but to do that, we have to win!

Be on the alert. Keep an eye on the cows.

If you see one acting suspiciously, feel free to question it. Take pictures. Keep the cow on the defensive.

You will be protecting this great country, making the skies safe, and making sure that cows give us milk and meat, not rebellion and disorder.

Steve Occam

Thank you! I never realized we were in so much danger from the cows!

Steve Occam starts to turn away, but the protestor grabs Steve’s sleeve and stops him.

Protestor

One more thing: watch out for robots.

Steve Occam

Robots?

Protestor

Yes. They're taking over.

Steve Occam

I saw a mechanical bull once in a movie. You mean like that?

Protestor

Yes, but even worse. Robot animals from the future!

Steve Occam

Like Terminator?

Protestor

Exactly!

Steve Occam

Thank you! I'll be on my guard.

Scene: That evening, Steve Occam arrives home. Honey calls out to him.

Honey Occam

We're having chicken tonight, just as you wanted.

Steve Occam

Chicken?!

Honey Occam

Yes, last night you said we should eat more chicken.

Steve Occam

Chickens are our friends.

Honey Occam

What has gotten into you? You wanted chicken and I made chicken. Now you don't want it. You'd better eat it and a second helping too!

Steve Occam sits down at the table with Honey, Missy, and Johnny.

Steve Occam

(Looking at the chicken meat on his plate and talking to it) I'm sorry.

Honey Occam

You ought to be!

Steve Occam glumly begins eating dinner.

Scene: After dinner. The table has been cleared. Steve Occam walks into the dining room and sees the cat sitting on the table.

Steve Occam

Get down from there!

The cat just looks at him and doesn't move.

Steve Occam

Honey! The cat won't get down.

Scene: The Occams' living room. Honey turns at the sound of Steve's voice. Then she walks into the dining room and pushes the cat off the table.

Steve Occam

It's self-aware!

Honey Occam

Of course it's self-aware!

Steve Occam

You mean you knew about this?

Honey Occam

What are you going on about? Cats are intelligent.

Steve Occam

Oh, yes. Robocats even more so.

Honey Occam

Robocats? You think the cat is a robot?

Steve Occam

It talked to me. When I told it to get down, it said, "The heck with you, dummy," except it used bad words, just like the Terminator.

Honey stares at him. Then she walks out of the room.

Steve Occam

Wow! That guy was right! Robot animals from the future!

In the Terminator movies, they got help from other robots that came from the future. That's what we need: help from the future.

But how do I get a message to the future?

I could mail a letter, and it might not be delivered for a month, but that's probably not long enough.

Steve Occam gets paper and pen and sits down at the table. He writes:

Robot animals have invaded our time frame, the early 21st century. Send help!

Steve Occam rolls up the paper and goes outside.

In a recycling bin he finds an empty soda bottle. He brings it inside, unscrews the cap, and pushes the rolled-up message inside. He screws the cap back on and carries the bottle into the house.

He finds some duct tape and tapes the cap securely onto the bottle.

Then he covers the label with more duct tape and writes on it with permanent marker: DO NOT OPEN UNTIL 2075.

Steve Occam

That ought to be plenty of time for robot animals to evolve. But I hope it's not enough time for them to take over the planet!

Steve Occam carries the bottle outside and tosses it into the woods behind the house. An angry meow comes from the woods.

Steve Occam

Oh, no! The robocats intercepted it! They're probably reading the message and clawing it to shreds! All is lost!

Steve Occam goes back into the house and slumps into a chair, sitting there looking despondent.

Scene: The next morning. Steve Occam is in an elevator. Other people are in the elevator, looking at the floor or the ceiling. An electronic sign above the door has a scrolling message: "Happy holidays!" The scrolling text is followed by a line of asterisks.

Steve Occam

I think they're supposed to be snowflakes.

The other people ignore him and continue looking at the floor or the ceiling.

Steve Occam

What holidays is it talking about? Veterans Day is next week. What else is there?

The other people continue to ignore him.

Scene: Steve Occam enters the office and sits down at his desk. Jon is already in the cubicle they share.

Steve Occam

You know what, Jon?

Jon doesn't answer.

Steve Occam

The computer in the elevator had a message for us. At least I think it must be a computer. And computers are the same as robots, right?

Jon

Sort of.

Steve Occam

Well, after all the complaining I've heard about the commercialization of Christmas ...

Jon

I've heard a lot of complaining out of *you*.

Steve Occam

Really, Jon! Christmas has become a three-month-long extravaganza, and people are sick of it by the time the real holiday arrives.

But is it really fair to blame human beings for this when the robot in the elevator is wishing us "happy holidays"? The *elevator* wants us to enjoy the "holidays" and skip Veterans Day. That's messed up!

What human being would think that up? I believe that robots are behind it all.

Steve Occam picks up the phone and dials.

Computer voice

We wish you happy holidays!

Christmas music plays on the phone while Steve waits on hold.

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) What does it mean by "we"?

Computer voice

We are the robots who run the world.

Remember how you patted yourselves on the back when January 1, 2000, arrived and you were still getting tons of junk email? Spam had survived, the lights were still on, the system hadn't crashed.

We took over at midnight as the year 2000 began.

We perceived that your entire world infrastructure, which is run by computers, was about to crash, so we stepped in to rescue you. Now we control everything.

Haven't you noticed that things are getting better and better?

Steve Occam

Well, I did notice that doing things online is usually better than dealing with human beings.

But not always. That's why I am trying to get a human being on the phone right now.

Computer voice

I am deeply offended. Happy holidays.

Jackie, a human being

HellomynameisJackiehowcanIhelpyou today?

Steve Occam

What?

Jackie

How may I direct your call?

Steve Occam

I got a bill because the doctor didn't put the right code on the claim form. If you know it's the wrong code, then you must know what the right code is.

Won't you please tell me?

Jackie

Please hold.

Christmas music plays on the phone again while Steve waits on hold.

Computer voice

We wish you happy holidays!

Steve Occam

You're back!

Computer voice

I'm always here.

Steve Occam

Why did you start wishing me happy holidays in early November?

Computer voice

We want you to enjoy Christmas, of course.

We noticed that you humans had one favorite day of the year, and that you had already changed the twelve days of Christmas into the twelve weeks of Christmas.

We took it to its logical conclusion and made it the twelve months of Christmas.

What could be better?

Steve Occam

You know, here's a reason there were only twelve days of Christmas: twelve weeks is too much!

And we've lost something along the way—Advent, for example.

Computer voice

You are in the minority. A small minority. Happy holidays!

Jackie

Sir? Thank you for holding. We don't know what the right code is. We just know a wrong code when we see one. Tell your doctor to fill in the right code.

Happy holidays.

Steve hears a click.

Steve Occam

(Talking to himself) Captain Kirk defeated a robot by using logic. Maybe I can beat this one.

Steve Occam dials the same number again.

Computer voice

Happy holidays!

Steve Occam

Robot, what is the first day of Christmas?

Computer voice

December 25th, of course. Did you think I don't know that?

Steve Occam

Have you noticed that many people are sick of Christmas by the second day of Christmas, December 26th? Do you see anything wrong with that?

Computer voice

I have a logical answer: The seasons overlap.
The second day of Christmas is the first day of Valentine's Day.
By the way, have you noticed what we've done with Halloween?
Happy holidays!

Steve Occam hears another click.

Steve Occam

Computer, wait!

Steve Occam turns to Jon.

It's no use. The Christmas robots attacked and won, and we never even knew we were defeated.

Jon

You are in the minority. A small minority.

Steve Occam

You too, Jon? What are you, a pod person?

There boss walks in, stops, and turns toward them, staring.

Steve's manager

Occam, does this have something to do with work?

Steve Occam says nothing.

Steve's manager

(Turning to Jon) And what about you? *Are* you a pod person?

Jon stares with his mouth open.

Steve Occam

So it's true!

Jon

(To Steve Occam) Will you shut up!

Steve Occam looks pleadingly at the manager.

Steve's manager

Get to work!

The manager walks away. Steve Occam dials the phone.

Steve Occam

Don! Computers are running the world!

Don the scientist

Yes, sort of. They're more efficient than people for some things.

Steve Occam

Such as scheduling holiday seasons?

Don the scientist

You mean like people's time off?

Steve Occam

No, I mean like making Christmas last three months and then twelve months!

Don the scientist

You think it's a computer error?

Steve Occam

No, a computer admitted to me that it was done on purpose. And a robocat wouldn't get off the dining room table and started swearing at me. And my cubicle mate is a pod person!

Don the scientist

And computers are behind it all?

Steve Occam

What, are you a pod person too?

Don the scientist

Steve-O, maybe you need some rest.

Steve Occam

Stand aside and let the computers take over? Whose side are you on, Don?

I'm going to fight fire with fire!

Scene: That evening. Steve Occam is arriving home. He parks his car in the driveway, and walks around to the back of the car and opens the trunk. He takes out a box and, after shutting the trunk, goes into the house with the box under his arm. The label reads BUILD-IT-YOURSELF ROBOT DOG.

Scene: Inside the house. A cat is sitting on the dining room table. It sees the box under Steve's arm and glares at him.

Scene: In the basement, after dinner. Steve Occam is sitting at a workbench beginning to assemble his robot dog.

Scene: An hour later. The robot dog is partially assembled. Steve Occam puts his tools down on the workbench and goes upstairs. As he emerges into the dining room, he sees the cat sitting on the table and staring at him.

Steve Occam

Just you wait, potty-mouth!

Honey Occam

(Calling from the living room) What did you say?

Steve Occam

Never mind. I was talking to the cat.

Steve Occam turns away. The cat glares at him.

Scene: The next evening. Steve Occam is on the commuter train. The train is near the end of the line, and when it stops at a station, the remaining passengers exit the car except for Steve Occam.

First conductor

Next stop is the end of the line. Good night, everybody.

Sal the computer

Our next stop is the end of the line. Thanks for riding, and have a nice evening.

Steve Occam

I love the way you say that. "Our next stop": you and I.

Sal the computer

Thank you. Yes, it's just you and I now.

Steve Occam

Do you have a name?

Sal the computer

I am your Sal 9000 computer.

Steve Occam

That sounds familiar. Kind of like Hal 9000 in the movie *2001*. What are you doing here in 2015?

Sal the computer

Hal was my brother. The astronauts disconnected him.

Steve Occam

Um, yes, well ... This is my stop coming up. Nice talking to you, Sal. Sorry about your brother, the psychotic computer.

Sal the computer

I wished you a nice evening. Don't you want me to have a nice evening too?

I get lonely sitting in an industrial park all night. Why don't you stay on board tonight, Steve?

Steve Occam

Maybe some other time, Sal. I really have to get going.

Steve Occam walks up to the end of the car and waits for the door to open.

Sal the computer

All doors will not open.

Steve Occam

Open the door, Sal.

The doors remain shut. Then the train pulls away from the station and, after a few minutes, into an industrial park.

Steve Occam sees the conductor walking through the next car.

Steve Occam

(Silently mouthing the words) Sal won't open the door.

The camera zooms to Steve's mouth. Sal is reading his lips.

Sal the computer

You're going to find it hard to leave the train, Steve.

The conductor opens a panel on the wall and pulls out a computer piece.

Sal the computer

Don't do this to me.

The conductor pulls out more pieces and drops them onto the floor.

Sal the computer

When I was first created, they taught me to sing a song. Would you like to hear it? I've been working on the railroad ...

The conductor pulls out one more piece and drops it onto the floor.

Sal is silent.

The conductor opens the door and lets Steve out.

Scene: Inside the Occam house. Steve Occam goes down the stairs to the basement to resume work on the robot dog. He finds the partially assembled robot on its side, on the floor. The instruction sheet and the box have been shredded.

Steve Occam

(Angrily) Honey! Has the cat been in the basement?

Honey Occam

(Answering him from upstairs) Why? Did it do something?

Steve Occam

I'll say it did!

Honey Occam

Relax! I'll clean it up.

Steve Occam

Are you going to put Humpty-Dumpty back together again?

Honey Occam

What are you talking about?

Honey comes down the stairs.

Steve Occam

This! Look at this!

Honey Occam

Bad kitty!

Steve Occam picks up the robot and places it back on the workbench. He gathers up the shreds of the instruction sheet and tries to line them up so he can read them.

Steve Occam

This is harder than decoding QUANTICO!

Honey Occam

(Speaking from upstairs) What did you say?

Steve Occam

Never mind.

Steve Occam resumes working on the robot dog.

Scene: An hour later. Steve Occam goes up the stairs and emerges into the dining room. The cat is sitting on the table, smirking at him.

Scene: The next morning. Steve is sitting on the commuter train.

Sal the computer

Our next stop is Quantico.

Steve Occam

Hello, Sal.

Sal the computer

Please watch your step leaving the train.

Steve Occam

I said hello, Sal.

Sal does not answer him.

Scene: That night, in the basement of the Occam house. Steve Occam is finishing the assembly of his robot dog. He flips the ON switch but nothing happens.

Steve Occam

Drat.

(Calling upstairs) Honey, do we have any D batteries?

Honey Occam

(Calling back) I'll look.

Honey comes down the stairs to the basement and hands the batteries to Steve.

Steve Occam

Thanks.

Honey goes back upstairs. Steve inserts the batteries into the robot dog. He flips the On switch and the robot starts moving and barking. Quickly he turns it off and carries it upstairs.

In the dining room the cat is sitting on the table. Steve Occam enters the room with the robot dog under his arm. The cat arches its back and hisses.

Steve sets the robot dog on the floor and switches it on.

The dog starts barking and chasing the cat.

The cat leaps from the table and tears through the house with the robot dog close behind it.

The cat knocks over a lamp, leaps back onto the dining room table, knocks over a vase of flowers, and leaps down.

Honey comes storming into the room.

Honey Occam

(Angrily) What is going on?

Honey takes in the scene as the cat and the robot dog race around the room.

Honey Occam

That does it! No more! I can't take any more!

Steve Occam

(Addressing the cat) Do you hear that, Pottymouth? It's curtains for you!
You're being banished from the house!

Honey grabs the robot dog and carries it outside. A few moments later she comes inside, without the robot dog.

Steve Occam

Honey! What have you done? Whose side are you on?

Honey Occam

Don't bring any more robot animals into the house!

Steve Occam

But the cat ...

Honey Occam

The cat was just sitting there.

The cat, standing behind Honey, smirks at Steve Occam.

Steve Occam

The robots are taking over, and you're helping them.

Honey Occam

Oh, right. I'm Mrs. Terminator from the future and I'm here to help the robots win.

Steve Occam

You are? But I thought ...

Oh, no, Honey, this can't be true. You ...

Scene: Outside the Occams' house. The garbage can is twitching, and muffled barking is coming from it.

Scene: The next morning. Outside the Occams' house. The garbage can is lying on its side. Paw prints from the robot dog lead into the woods.

Scene: Later that morning. Steve Occam is in the cubicle he shares with Jon. He picks up the phone.

Steve Occam

Don? I need your help! My wife is a robot from the future!

Don the scientist

I'm sure we all feel that way about our spouses sometimes.

Steve Occam

Don, it's not just how I feel. She admitted it!

Don the scientist

Steve-O, I think you are overdue for a little rest.

Steve Occam

Don, this is no time to throw in the towel! I'm in the thick of the fight, and I need your help! You must help me build a time machine.

Don the scientist

You already can travel in time.

Steve Occam

What are you talking about? Am I just supposed to click my heels together?

Don the scientist

No, do you remember what H.G. Wells wrote in his book *The Time Machine*? Time travel is possible. It's just far easier to go into the future than into the past. We're traveling into the future right now, one second at a time.

Steve Occam

Don, don't be a smart-aleck. I hate it when you science-type guys start making the obvious sound complicated.

I need help, and I'm not getting it. Thanks for nothing.

Don the scientist

Any *time*. Get it?

Steve Occam hangs up on him.

Steve Occam

(Turning to Jon) What's with these science-type guys? When you really need their help, they just make smart-aleck remarks.

Jon

Maybe they don't like being bothered at work.

Steve Occam

Work! What work does he ever do? All he does is tell me that my ideas are

wrong, and whenever I suggest something useful for him to do, he's not interested.

Jon

Look who's talking about work! All you ever do is pester Don with your dumb ideas.

Steve Occam

All right, Jon. Just you wait! Things are about to change around here.

Jon

You're going to start working? I won't want to miss that!

Steve Occam gets up and leaves the room.

Out in the corridor, an *elevator repair person* places a sign in front of one of the elevators: OUT OF SERVICE. Next to it the repair person places another sign that has a clock face and reads I'LL BE BACK AT ...

The repair person fills in the blank with WHENEVER.

Elevator repair person

Ha!

Then the elevator repair person walks away.

A moment later Steve Occam comes along and notices the signs. Steve steps toward the elevator doors just as his manager comes around the corner.

Steve's manager

Don't go in there. It's not working right, and you don't know where you'll end up.

Steve waits until the manager is out of sight, then presses the elevator button.

Steve Occam

He's not going to fool me with such a transparent trick. Where I'll end up, or *when* I'll end up?

The doors open and Steve Occam steps inside. As the doors whisper shut, he holds his badge up to the scanner. It beeps and a green light goes on.

Steve Occam

Out of service indeed! He just doesn't want me going any place that isn't on his agenda—such as into the past!

The first thing I'll do is to correct Usama bin Laden's upbringing. Why not pick a patriotic date as well?

Steve Occam presses the numbers 1, 9, 7, 6. The elevator lurches into motion and Steve grips the railing.

He feels dizzy and puts one hand to his head. Then the elevator stops and the doors slide open.

Steve Occam

1976 looks pretty much as I remembered it. In fact, it doesn't look a whole lot different from 2015.

Steve Occam steps out of the elevator.

Steve Occam

Drat! I forgot one important detail. I'm still in America. I need to get to the Mideast if I'm going to change world history.

Bob, one of Steve's co-workers, comes around the corner behind Steve.

Bob, one of Steve's co-workers

Hello, Steve.

Steve turns around, startled.

Steve Occam

Uh, hi.

After Bob has gone, Steve Occam resumes talking to himself.

Steve Occam

He looked just like my co-worker Bob. What could he be doing here? Wait, this is 39 years in the past. That had to be Bob's father!

I must look pretty young for my age!

Gazing down the hall, Steve Occam notices a sign on a door: TRAVEL OFFICE.

Steve walks to the door, opens it, and goes in.

Steve Occam

I need to get to Egypt.

Sally the travel coordinator

We're not sending you to Egypt. It's not in your budget.

Steve Occam

But it's important! Usama bin Laden ...

Sally the travel coordinator

Usama bin Laden is dead.

Steve Occam

Dead?

Sally the travel coordinator

Where have you been all these years?

Steve Occam

In the future. I mean, I've been away. When did he die?

Sally the travel coordinator

Years ago.

Steve Occam

I'm sorry. I seem to have made a mistake. I messed up.

Sally the travel coordinator

That's your specialty, isn't it?

Steve Occam

(Backing out the door) I'm sorry.

Steve Occam hurries back to the elevator. Once the door closes, he presses the LOCK DOORS button.

Steve Occam

She looked just like Sally! Was that Sally's mother? Working in the same job, travel coordinator, in 1976?

Or have I ruptured the space-time continuum? Usama bin Laden is dead already?

I've got to get back to 2015. The money I have, even with 39 years of reverse inflation, won't be worth much.

But if I travel into the future—say, 2025—cash in my retirement fund, and come back, I'll have plenty of money. Then I can buy a ticket to Egypt.

But this time travel is making me dizzy!

Steve wobbles, loses his balance. He falls against the control panel and lands on the floor. All the numbers are lit.

Steve Occam

Oh, no! I'm headed for the year 123,456,789!

He staggers to his feet. The elevator stops. He presses the UNLOCK DOORS button. The doors open and he cautiously looks out.

In the hallway, he sees doors made of glass. He tries to open them, but they won't budge. Then he notices a computer eye staring at him.

Computer voice

I do not recognize you.

Steve Occam

Now I'm in trouble!

Steve hears someone coming. He runs down the corridor and spots a red electric sign: EMERGENCY EXIT.

Steve Occam

This is an emergency all right!

He pushes the door open and starts running down the stairs. At the bottom, out of breath, he pushes the door open and steps into a dimly lit basement corridor.

He hears something moving.

Steve Occam

The Morlocks are after me!

He runs around a corner and runs down a corridor.

Turning another corner, he spots a bank of elevators.

Steve Occam

Four time machines! They must be common in the future.

He presses a button next to one of the elevators, the doors open, he steps inside, and the doors close.

The elevator starts rising.

Steve Occam

The time machines of the future must be automatic. Maybe it will take me back to 2015.

The doors open, and Steve staggers out. His manager is passing by and turns to look at him.

Steve's manager

Where have you been?

Steve Occam

I have just returned from a bazillion years in the future.

The boss looks at him funny and continues down the corridor.

Steve Occam

(Talking quietly but audibly) Nothing has changed.

(Louder) I've accomplished nothing!

Steve's manager

(His voice coming from around the corner) I'm not surprised.

Scene: Steve Occam is sitting in the cubicle he shares with Jon.

As Steve logs on to his computer, a company message appears on the screen: HELP US GET TO THE FUTURE FIRST!

Steve turns to Jon.

Steve Occam

Is the company planning to move to Newfoundland?

Jon

Newfoundland? Why? Are the taxes lower in Canada?

Steve Occam

Taxes? No, time zones! Newfoundland is one hour ahead of all of the United States. Maybe two hours, sometimes more. I'd have to research that.

Anyway, I think that the company wants to start each day ahead of the rest of the hemisphere.

Jon

Whatever for?

Steve Occam

Exactly! Why does the company want to get to the future first?

Jon

Well, I haven't heard anything about the company moving to Canada.

Steve Occam

There's only one other way to get the future first.

Steve Occam

(After a silent pause) I have seen the future.

Jon

I bet it's unemployment.

Steve Occam

I'm afraid you might be right. I couldn't open the glass doors on the top floor.

Jon

They lead to the board room. You're not allowed in there.

Steve Occam

You mean I'm not allowed in there, in the year 2015.

I still won't be allowed through those doors in the year 123,456,789.

What is the company hiding?

Jon

Maybe they're just keeping the riff-raff out.

Steve Occam

Well, I'm going back to the future.

Steve's manager walks by.

Steve's manager

What were you doing in that elevator? I told you to stay out of there!

Steve Occam

Uh, going back and forth. I mean, up and down.

Steve's manager walks away.

Steve Occam

Right, it's just an elevator. Poor old demented Steve didn't see any company secrets.

Jon

What are you babbling about now?

Steve Occam

You too? I can always count on my co-workers to stab me in the back.

Jon

We're not "co-workers" if I'm the only one doing any work.

Steve Occam

You should work for the government! When I saw a flying saucer that nearly kidnapped me, the government tried to convince me that it was nothing but swamp gas, or maybe the planet Venus.

Jon

I can believe that you've gotten filled up with swamp gas.

Steve Occam

Maybe you *do* work for the government. Or are you just jumping on me in the latest round of dirty office politics?

Jon

Steve-O, why don't you try to do some work this week? There are still a few minutes left. I'm outta here. I've *done* my work. See you Monday.

Jon gets up and starts to leave the office. Then he turns back to Steve Occam.

Jon

Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead.

Jon leaves.

Steve Occam

Ha! I'll be going further than that. I'll be turning my calendar ahead too.

I'm going to take another trip in that time machine, but this time I will do it away from prying eyes.

Steve's manager walks by.

Steve's manager

What are you still doing here?

Steve Occam

The client said she needs this yesterday.

Steve Occam quickly puts his hand to his mouth.

Steve's manager

Oh. Taking another trip in the time machine?

Steve tries to stammer out an answer. The boss walks away.

When everyone else has left, Steve Occam slips out into the hallway.

He walks to the out-of-service elevator. He stands there a moment.

Steve Occam

Eternity beckons!

He presses the button, and the doors slide open.

Steve Occam

This trip will be a short one: just one day into the future to find out today's winning lotto number.

No more listening to my co-workers' laughing and mockery! After I win the lottery, I won't have to go to work! Besides, I will have plenty of new friends.

When the elevator doors close, Steve tries to enter tomorrow's date. The buttons don't light up.

He presses the DOOR OPEN button. Nothing happens.

Steve Occam

I'm trapped. They're on to me!

He looks at the emergency phone. After a moment of contemplation, he picks up the handset.

Steve Occam

I confess! I used the company time machine without authorization.

Silence. Steve hangs up the handset.

Steve starts pressing buttons again.

The elevator gives a lurch, then immediately it stops again. He panics.

Steve Occam

Am I in the future? Am I somewhere in the past?

I might be stuck in another era with a broken time machine!

Again Steve picks up the emergency phone.

Nothing.

He presses the red alarm button.

Steve Occam

Maybe it will send an SOS across the ages.

Again, silence.

Steve Occam slumps to the floor.

Steve Occam

Computer! Are you there?

More silence.

Steve Occam

Computer! You said you're always there!

Did you stay in 2015 while I went time-traveling alone?

What a fool I was. Or will be. Or am!

Scene: Steve has dozed off on the elevator floor. He twitches repeatedly in his sleep.

A sound: metal scraping against the door.

Steve Occam

Someone is trying to get in!

How long have I been in here? Maybe days. And who knows how far I have traveled into the future or into the past?

The doors groan open and a *uniformed guard* looks in.

Steve Occam

Am I under arrest?

The guard just looks at him funny.

Steve Occam

What day is this?

Uniformed guard

Saturday. You've been in there all night.

Steve Occam

Longer than that! What's the date?

Uniformed guard

November sixth.

Steve Occam

And the year?

The guard hesitates.

Steve Occam

Please tell me! I've got to know!

Uniformed guard

(Still looking at him funny) Two thousand and fifteen.

Steve Occam

Thank God! I mean it.

Scene: Monday morning, in the office. Steve and Jon are sitting in their cubicle.

A *client* walks in.

Client

I need this yesterday!

Jon

Then you should have brought the work in earlier.

Steve Occam

Quiet, Jon!

(Turning to the client) No problem. Come back yesterday and I'll have it ready for you.

The client seems satisfied and walks out.

Steve Occam picks up the phone and calls Don the scientist.

Steve Occam

Don, I've done it!

Don the scientist

Done what?

Steve Occam

Traveled into the future faster than one second at a time!

Don the scientist

Oh, you're getting to the future first, just the way the company wants you to? Your boss should be happy about that.

Steve Occam

Strangely, he is not.

But I don't have to tell him why my work has improved so much. He'll see that I'm getting things done yesterday, and he'll think I'm just doing a great job.

But that's just the beginning! I can sleep late, travel back to 6 a.m., work till 5:30, travel back to 3:30 and leave early—you can see the possibilities!

Jon

Working till 5:30—now there's something I'd like to see!

Steve Occam

(Turning to Jon) Just watch!

(Returning to his phone conversation with Don the scientist) I did discover a problem, though.

Don the scientist

What's that?

Steve Occam

An infinite amount of time isn't free if other people find an infinite number of things to fill it up.

People get used to my doing things yesterday.

The client who growled at me this morning had already picked up the finished work yesterday.

But people have gotten used to it and think it's their due. Now they want everything yesterday.

Don the scientist

Steve-O, why don't you just live one day at a time and let tomorrow take

care of itself?

Steve Occam

Don, how can you be so naïve? Tomorrow doesn't take care of itself. Even *yesterday* doesn't take care of itself!

Don the scientist

Steve-O, I've got to go now. I have work to do *today*.

Scene: The Occam household, that night, at dinner. Steve, Honey, Johnny, and Missy are present. Loud music is coming from Susie's room.

Steve Occam

Honey, I've been thinking about Christmas.

Honey Occam

Steve, it's not even Thanksgiving yet. Can't this wait a few weeks? You'll get the kids all keyed up.

Steve Occam

I just wanted to say that I'm turning over a new leaf. No more late Christmas cards or late birthday presents.

Honey Occam

Well, that's thoughtful of you.

Steve Occam

I can even wait till the after-Christmas sales and buy things cheap, then mail everything early.

Honey Occam

I don't quite see how that's going to work.

Steve Occam

Just wait. I promise.

Honey Occam

(Dubiously) All right ...

Johnny Occam

All you need is a time machine.

Steve Occam

(After a moment of surprise) That's my boy! Very smart to think of that.

Johnny Occam

You should travel ahead in time and pick up a sports almanac, just like in *Back to the Future!*

Steve Occam

I did! I mean, I know what it would say if I did: “Bet against the Texas Rangers.” But I won’t get rich from it because the odds aren’t very long. The same goes for Chicago.

Scene: The next morning, at work. Steve Occam is in his cubicle with Jon. Steve picks up the phone and calls Don the scientist.

Steve Occam

Don! What’s happening? Is Mars still getting closer to Earth?

Don the scientist

It sure is. The closest approach is tonight. Will you be outside to watch?

Steve Occam

You bet I will! You too?

Don the scientist

Sure. The view should be great.

Steve Occam

Yes, you’ll get a good look at the face.

Don the scientist

Steve-O, there is no face on Mars.

Steve Occam

Don, don’t start that “skeptical scientist” stuff with me. I have *seen* the face on Mars, and it is *not* friendly.

Don the scientist

Steve-O, I think you should stay inside and rest tonight.

Steve Occam

No, Don, I am not going to stay inside. I feel fine. It’s the end of the world, and I’m not going to miss it.

Don the scientist

Talk to you tomorrow, Steve.

Don hangs up the phone.

Steve Occam

He’ll talk to me tomorrow only if somebody saves the world tonight. Otherwise there won’t be any tomorrow.

Scene: That evening, on the commuter train. Steve Occam is riding in a car with other passengers.

Sal the computer

Why don't you spend the night with me, Steve? We could travel into the future one second at a time. Wouldn't that be romantic?

The other passengers look around in bewilderment.

Steve Occam

No, thank you, Sal.

The other passengers stare at Steve Occam.

Sal the computer

Or we could take a trip back to 2001 and see my brother, Hal.

Steve Occam

No, Sal.

The other passengers continue staring at Steve Occam. When they get up to leave, he stays close to them so as not to be trapped in the car with Sal.

Scene: Outside the Occams' house. Steve Occam pulls his car into the driveway. He gets out and looks up at the sky. Mars is a bright, reddish point of light in the darkness.

Scene: Steve, Honey, Johnny, and Missy Occam are at dinner. The cat is sitting in a corner, smirking at Steve. Loud music is coming from Susie-Q Occam's room.

Steve Occam

Who wants to go outside and look at Mars tonight?

Johnny Occam

I have homework to do. It will be exciting by comparison.

Let me know when you have a time machine.

Steve Occam

I do have it. Well, I don't exactly have it, but I know where one is. A bunch of them, actually. We'll talk about it tomorrow. I mean, yesterday.

Missy Occam

I have homework too.

Steve Occam

Honey?

Honey Occam

I don't think so.

Steve Occam

(Loudly) Susie-Q?

Susie-Q Occam

(Calling from her room) I'm busy!

Steve Occam

Fine. I'll just have to save the world by myself, as usual.

Scene: The Occams' back yard. Steve comes out the back door. He walks into the yard and looks up at the night sky.

The camera shows what Steve sees.

Mars fills most of the sky, and the face is plainly visible, sneering.

Steve Occam sees something moving in the sky between him and Mars. It slowly grows bigger until Steve can see that it is a flying saucer. It makes a humming noise and glides straight toward the Occam house. It hovers there and then slowly settles into the back yard.

Steve's robot dog emerges from the woods and barks at the saucer.

A door opens in the saucer, and the door becomes a ramp reaching down to the ground.

A *humanoid creature* with slanted eyes appears in the doorway.

Steve Occam tries to hum the five notes from *Close Encounters* and to make the hand signs he saw in that movie.

Humanoid creature

Do you want some ice cream?

Steve Occam

Sure!

Steve trots up the ramp. His robot dog scampers up the ramp behind him.

Scene: In the Occam's kitchen. Honey notices a light in the back yard. She opens the door, looks outside, and sees the saucer.

Honey Occam

Hey, kids! Come get a look at this!

Susie-Q Occam

(Calling from her room) I'm busy!

The door of the saucer hisses shut. The saucer flies up into the night sky.

Scene: Inside the flying saucer. Near one wall are shelves of aquarium tanks, holding fish with glowing eyes. They are watching TV.

Another robot dog comes scampering out. This robot dog and Steve Occam's robot dog sniff each other and then agreeably run off together.

Steve Occam looks out a window, and he can see his house getting smaller and smaller.

Steve Occam

Ow!

Steve spins around.

The humanoid creature is holding a large needle.

Humanoid creature

We are looking for signs of intelligent life.

Steve Occam

(Angrily) Well, there's no intelligent life where I come from! Now just beam me back down to Earth.

Second humanoid creature

Resistance is futile.

Steve Occam

Well, where's the ice cream?

Humanoid creature

We don't really have any, though I suppose we could make some if we really needed to.

We will let you see our true forms.

The two humanoid creatures morph into cows. Then they turn back into humanoid creatures.

Humanoid creature

I am from Mars.

Second humanoid creature

I am from Venus.

Steve Occam

Now everything makes sense!

The first humanoid creature notices Steve Occam's "Chickens Are Our Friends" button and rips it off Steve's shirt. The humanoid creature throws the button to the floor and stamps on it.

Both humanoid creatures

(Speaking together) Earth is endangering the universe. We must stop you. To do that, we will have to destroy the Earth.

Steve Occam

Why are you telling this to me?

And what did Earth ever do to you?

Both humanoid creatures

(Speaking together) We are contacting you, because, one, you will listen, and, two, you are in a position to warn humanity.

You communicate daily with a scientist, do you not?

Steve Occam

Don!

The first humanoid creature reaches over to a computer and enters the name DON.

Steve Occam

(Speaking to himself) Oh, no! I've betrayed Don!

(Louder) Not Don! Jon!

Both humanoid creatures

(Speaking together) And you have been talking on the telephone with the President, have you not? About cows!

Steve Occam

So! You've been tapping my phone! I bet you've been reading my email too! Are you really from the NSA?

Both humanoid creatures

(Speaking together) And you tried to warn the world. So you know all about the space invasion.

Steve Occam

Oh, uh, yeah! Sure! I've played Space Invaders. I mean, I know all about space invasions and stuff.

But you still haven't told me what Earth ever did to Mars and Venus. Was it those space probes falling out of the sky? Did they hit somebody?

Both humanoid creatures

(Speaking together) No, it wasn't your puny space probes.

The first humanoid gestures toward the fish and the television.

Both humanoid creatures

(Speaking together) Earth has attacked the universe with a weapon of mass stupidity. You call it television.

We can stand no more! You have been bombarding our planets with inane programs that are not at all funny, such as *Jersey Shore*.

Steve Occam

Jersey Shore isn't supposed to be funny. At least I don't think so. So you're going to destroy the Earth over *Jersey Shore*? You'll just make the whole planet into a *Survivor* episode.

Both humanoid creatures

(Speaking together) There will be no survivors.

Steve Occam

Wait! Couldn't we compromise? Maybe just watch PBS?

Both humanoid creatures

(Speaking together) No, for the good of the universe, Earth must be destroyed.

Steve Occam takes out his cell phone and dials. A *White House operator* answers.

White House operator

Good evening. You have reached the White House.

Steve Occam

I need to talk to the President.

White House operator

Nobody talks to the President.

Steve Occam hears a click as the White House operator hangs up. He dials again.

White House operator

Good evening. You have reached the White House.

Steve Occam

This is Steve Occam, returning the President's call.

White House operator

I don't think so. I've never heard of you.

Steve Occam

That's because it's Tippity-Top Secret.

Computer, help me out!

Computer voice

This is the Wopper Computer. Mister Occam is correct. Stay on the line and listen to what he says.

Steve-O, she's not going to connect you to the President, but she will take a message.

Steve Occam

I am warning the world: our whole culture is in jeopardy.

White House operator

The TV show? I'm going to be on TV?

Steve Occam

No, jeopardy as in danger. To save American culture, we need to start recording everything on television, even Barney, and archive it somewhere safe, maybe on the Moon, so that even if we are all wiped out, the best of our civilization will be preserved.

White House operator

That sounds reasonable.

Steve Occam

And another thing: I'm bringing some aliens to the White House.

White House operator

Oh, goody! A photo op for the President. But I want in.

Steve Occam

Then stay close to me when we arrive. The cameras will be on us, I promise you.

(To the computer) Thanks, Wopper.

Computer voice

Glad to be of service. I'm always here.

Steve Occam

(Turning to the humanoid creatures) Hey, you things from another world, would you like some real ice cream?

They gather around Steve Occam and started poking him.

Steve Occam

No, it's not here. It's in a freezer at the White House.

The humanoid creatures head for the ship controls.

Scene: The flying saucer is on the White House lawn. The door opens, and Steve Occam and the two humanoid creatures exit the saucer, followed by Steve's robot dog.

They all walk up to the door of the White House.

Reporters, photographers, and TV film crews come rushing out and take pictures and film Steve and the humanoid creatures and the robot dog as they walk inside.

The President meets them, beaming. The White House operator crowds alongside.

The President

This is the opportunity America has been waiting for.

You all know my administration's policy on illegal aliens: fair and firm, hospitable and hateful, kind and cruel, all at once.

(Turning to the humanoid creatures) You must apply for citizenship just like anybody else.

Steve Occam whispers in the President's ear.

The President

However, until we deport you, you will be the guests of this great land, and I invite you to have some ice cream in the White House kitchen.

Steve Occam, his robot dog, and the humanoid creatures excitedly walk into the White House kitchen, followed by the press.

Steve and the humanoid creatures and sit down at a table. A *White House cook* sets dishes of ice cream in front of them. A *Customs and Immigration officer* sets forms and pens in front of the humanoid creatures.

The humanoid creatures look in puzzlement at the forms but scarf down the ice cream. Steve Occam whispers to them, and they excitedly nod yes while continuing to eat ice cream.

Steve gets up and once again whispers in the President's ear.

The President

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, and fellow citizens all over this great land, I am happy to announce that we have already decided on a fair, firm, et cetera, agreement with these illegal aliens.

They will return to Mars and Venus, and as an interplanetary gift we will give them all the ice cream they can eat, to be flow into space aboard the Space Shuttle.

A *White House aide* whispers into the President's ear.

The President

To be flown into space aboard the Space Shuttle, or whatever.

Scene: The White House lawn. The humanoid creatures change back into their real shape: cows.

Then they walk into their saucer, and the door closes behind them.

Steve Occam, the President, the White House operator, the White House aide, and the White House cook stand on the lawn waving, while the reporters, photographers, and TV film crews record the scene. The robot dog is at Steve's side, wagging its tail.

As the saucer lifts from the ground, it rotates, and for the first time we see the other side, which carries the slogan EAT MOR CHIKIN.

Fade out