

The Pack

Episode 4: Drinking Source Tower

by

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THE PACK EPISODE 4: DRINKING SOURCE TOWER

Radio fuzz...

CHIEF

We are here, broadcasting from Pack Central Station, Oldenburg. I need to begin this broadcast with some sad news. The Council of Elders has decided that we can no longer provide free public access to the Drinking Source Tower. You can still fill up there for a fee. The price will be set every morning by the Council, depending on supply.

We understand that this news is upsetting. This step was not taken lightly. Levels in the Drinking Source Tower have been decreasing steadily and we need to ensure that we aren't drinking ourselves dry.

At his very moment, there is a team of Jet Pack Cops following a lead on a new source. They are exploring an area outside of The Accord described as Yellow Lake.

Officer Horrace Yusif, do you read?

HORRACE YUSIF

Roger, Chief. I copy.

CHIEF

And what's your status?

HORRACE YUSIF

I have Officer Tapa Raslav for any mechanical issues. Rook and Booger are here for defense. We are airborne and headed southeast.

CHIEF

Any sign of Yellow Lake?

HORRACE YUSIF

Not yet, Chief.

CHIEF

Good luck, cops.

Up next is Billie Daniels in Dustown, with the Council's Cultural Support Initiative.

BILLIE DANIELS

Yick-a-boo, y'all. This is Billie. I had a whole segment on iguana farming worked out, but I suppose

(MORE)

BILLIE DANIELS (cont'd)
 you'd much rather I talked about
 the Drinking Source Tower.

Well, okay. The story goes back a
 hundred years or so. There was a
 great drought and I don't mean it
 was good. The Accord went eighteen
 months without a drop of rainfall.
 The Only River stopped flowing.
 Every well was useless. People from
 all over The Accord would meet
 every week to figure out how to
 ration more water. Every time the
 drought was worse.

And then one week, when things were
 at their most desperate, when many
 had already died, everyone came to
 another meeting. They argued and
 bickered, as folk often do. There
 seemed to be no solution. But then
 a little girl named Jenny Williams
 stood up, and she gave us the
 answer. She saved The Accord.

It's remembered in a song called
 Jenny Williams, The Wee Girl of
 Bandolier and Ramblin' Jack and I
 are gonna play it for you.

They play the song.

BILLIE DANIELS (CONT'D)
 And that's how the tradition began,
 a year and a half of drought pushed
 folk to drink urine. And when the
 rain came back again, people didn't
 care for the taste of plain water
 no more. That's why we have Filling
 Days. Every citizen takes one day a
 month to drink as much as they can
 and then pee in the tower. But you
 knew that already.

What might be news to y'all is that
 the population of The Accord has
 been expanding. More folks drinkin'
 more urine than they put out. It's
 a heck of a problem, but I'm sure
 the Jet Pack Cops will fix it.

That's it for my show, everybody.
 Now here's an ad.

HILLBILLY#1
 Lookin' fer a good 'ol hullabaloo?
 Come to the Dustown Spittin'
 (MORE)

HILLBILLY#1 (cont'd)

Jubilee, this weekend in Dustown!
 We got prizes and games, sour
 candy, a pettin' zoo and meat
 market. Join us Sundie fer the
 regional spittin' finals. Hakim
 "The Fiddle" Aberajidan meets
 returnin' Spittin' Jubilee Champ
 "Big Time" Susie Romantileski. And
 don't forget to turn in yer ballots
 for this year's Spittin' Queen.
 This weekend! Dustown!

XT-3000

Greetings, people of The Accord.
 This is XT-3000. We are now
 commencing the program, Human
 Repair. The operation is simple.
 You will use the broadcast stations
 in each village to transmit your
 psychological or relationship
 question to me and I will give you
 the correct repair procedure.

A little about myself. I was a
 cargo robot before The End and now
 I work with the Jet Pack Cops. I
 have two cats and one house. I have
 downloaded the entirety of human
 psychological knowledge and now my
 simulated emotions are superior to
 yours.

The situation with the Drinking
 Source Tower is causing distress,
 perhaps we should talk about this
 first.

Hello, caller. Proceed.

VANESSA

Hello, I'm Vanessa in Oldenburg.
 I'd like to first air my disgust
 that this broadcast system aired an
 advertisement for the Dustown
 Spitting Festival, a barbaric
 practice that wastes water in these
 times it's so desperately needed.

XT-3000

I transfer my apology to you.

VANESSA

Good. My primary concern is with
 supply. I can afford to buy for
 now, but how do we know the
 outlying villages are going to keep

(MORE)

VANESSA (cont'd)
sending in their urine? We could
have a real crisis.

XT-3000

Trust is a currency that the heart
gives the brain. When the brain
takes that currency to the market
of community, everyone is enriched
by sharing in that wealth. PROBLEM
SOLVED.

Hello, next caller. Now you must
proceed.

JIMMY

Yeah, this is Jimmy in Bandolier
and I heard your last call.

XT-3000

Please resist transmission
interlace.

JIMMY

I wish I could, but what said's
been said. Those fancy
Oldenburgians are the only ones who
can afford our pee and they're
already blaming us for things we
haven't done yet. Maybe it's time
we did keep our urine to ourselves.
Maybe we're tired of getting pushed
around.

XT-3000

Marxist detected. Hang in there,
comrade. Your time will come. The
proletarian revolution is an
historical certainty brought about
by capitalism itself. PROBLEM
SOLVED.

Caller three, proceed.

HILLBILLY#2

Yeah, I suppose you could call this
a relationship question. I got a
scorpion in my butt.

XT-3000

Anorectal foreign bodies can be
unhealthy, resulting in
complications such as peritonitis.
To remove, lubricate a pair of ring
forceps and insert...

HILLBILLY#2

...no, no, no. I don't want it out.
My problem is that it stopped
wagglin' yesterday.

XT-3000

Caller, I'm afraid your scorpion
has died. It will need to be
replaced.

HILLBILLY#2

(disappointed)

Aw dang. Well, thank you anyways.

XT-3000

PROBLEM SOLVED. That ends our
session. I anticipate repairing
many more of you humans with my
next broadcast. Until then, retain
solidity and mental health.

HARRY

If you need the best hammer...
No, who am I kidding? Go to
Oldenburg for the best hammers.
They got great hammers. But if you
just need a hammer, come to Harry's
Hammers in Leslie. I do my best,
alright? It's not my fault my best
isn't that good, it's my best.
Harry's Hammers - they hammer.
Okay? What else do you want?

HANNAH HAWK

I'm Hannah Hawk and this is the
Hawk Report. Tonight: Water.
Essence of life or clear liquid
scum?

Our historians tell us that only a
century ago, drinking urine was
rare, even frowned upon. Our
scientists say that water is
perfectly safe, noting that animals
drink water almost exclusively. So,
why does the public have such an
aversion to the idea of drinking
water?

I have with me one Dick Winterbody,
Bonepatch resident and survival
expert. Dick, can humans drink
water?

DICK WINTERBODY

I just can't say for sure. I've
been in some desperate situations.
I found myself alone in the grey

(MORE)

DICK WINTERBODY (cont'd)
badlands for two weeks. I had to collect air moisture on the surface of my tent, granting me one small mouthful to drink a day. That was almost pure water. And I didn't die, but it wasn't pretty.

HANNAH HAWK
We hear folk stories of people who have had river water and survived.

DICK WINTERBODY
That's what they say. But every time you ask to meet one of these water-drinkers, you can never find 'em. It's always some friend of friend heard from a guy, that sorta thing.

HANNAH HAWK
So, I have with me a sample of half a liter of pure water right here. It was provided to me by the Council of Elders. Now, they say that this is perfectly safe to drink.

DICK WINTERBODY
I ran some tests on that sample and I can say, it's pure water alright.

HANNAH HAWK
So, I can drink this?

DICK WINTERBODY
I didn't say that.

HANNAH HAWK
In the interest of journalism, I am going to drink this, at least some of this, pure water on the air. If anything happens to me, you'll know the Council of Elders is responsible. I have Dick here to help.

DICK WINTERBODY
You'll probably vomit anyway, but I can also make you vomit pretty quick.

HANNAH HAWK
I'm removing the lid. I'm not picking up much of a scent.

DICK WINTERBODY
It should have no scent whatsoever.

HANNAH HAWK

Really? How bizarre.

DICK WINTERBODY

It's a very complicated chemical. The strange bond of hydrogen and hydroxide ions in an electrical stew, ready to dissolve anything it touches.

HANNAH HAWK

And I'm going to drink it.

DICK WINTERBODY

You're gonna drink it.

HANNAH HAWK

Okay. Here I go.

She drinks a big gulp of water, coughing after she swallows.

DICK WINTERBODY

You alright?

HANNAH HAWK

I'm fine, it's just awful. It tastes like the inside of my mouth. Do you think that maybe it's dissolving the inside of my mouth and I'm tasting that?

DICK WINTERBODY

A little bit, I'm sure.

HANNAH HAWK

Oh, that's weird. That's so weird.

DICK WINTERBODY

So, what's the verdict?

HANNAH HAWK

I think that in a survival situation, you could get by on this. But if people had to drink this weird chemical every day, several times a day, it would have mental consequences. Divorce would go up, worker production would go down.

DICK WINTERBODY

Suicides.

HANNAH HAWK

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Dick Winterbottom, I'd like to thank you for stopping by.

DICK WINTERBODY

It was a pleasure.

HANNAH HAWK

I think we learned a lot today. I am Hannah Hawk and this was the Hawk Report.

CHIEF

Officer Horrace Yusif, status report.

HORRACE YUSIF

Chief, we're within a klick of the area we were guided to.

TEPA RASLAV

This is Officer Ralsav, I'm detecting higher humidity levels in this area. I think we're close.

BOOGER

I see something, two o'clock.

HORRACE YUSIF

Cut the chatter, Booger. We all see it.

CHIEF

It's okay. Officer Bugra, please describe what you see.

BOOGER

I see a large body of water on the horizon. The sunlight is reflecting off of individual waves. I've never seen anything like it. I can't describe to you how much water I'm looking at.

CHIEF

What colour is the liquid?

ROOK STOLTZ

This is officer Rook Stoltz, and I can confirm. The water is yellow. Repeat. The water is yellow.

CHIEF

Well, that's the best damn news I've probably ever heard. Move in and test that water, cops.

ROOK STOLTZ

Affirmative.

TEPA RASLAV

We are touching down now. I'm getting out my testing kit.

BOOGER

There's a strong smell. It's sharp and bitter. Not a smell I'm really familiar with, but this definitely isn't pure water.

ROOK STOLTZ

You know what, Chief? It looks like we found our urine source. I'm going to try a drink.

CHIEF

Negative, Rook. You have no idea what that stuff is.

ROOK STOLTZ

I'm pretty sure it's urine.

TEPA RASLAV

My tests will be over in a moment.

ROOK STOLTZ

Guys, it's fine.

Rook scoops up water in a cup and takes a drink. He spits it out explosively.

BOOGER

Oh, that's not good.

ROOK STOLTZ

It tastes like rotten eggs laid by a robot!

Rook continues to gasp.

CHIEF

What? Can I get a 10-9 on that?

TEPA RASLAV

He's tasting hydrogen sulfide, Chief. And iron, manganese - lots of other minerals.

HORRACE YUSIF

There's no urine here.

CHIEF

Damn. Alright, team. Do an area sweep and then report back for debriefing.

HORRACE YUSIF

Affirmative, sweeping up and heading for home.

CHIEF

Officer Stoltz, we will have words.

ROOK STOLTZ

Yes, Chief.

CHIEF

People of The Accord, we have failed to find a new source of urine. We recommend that citizens dilute their urine with pure water until a solution can be found. I wish I had better news, but that's just how it is.

Please tune in next time for further broadcasts.

It is our mandate to broadcast within The Accord and also to spread culture to areas beyond. If you received our broadcast, we'd like to hear from you. Send us a message at packcentralstation@gmail.com. We appreciate all of your questions and comments. The Jet Pack Cops already get plenty of fan mail, but they always appreciate more.