

THE HIZZARD

Written by
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INT. RADIO STUDIO - NIGHT

Clive sits alone in the dim, outdated studio, looking thoroughly fed up as he stares at the blinking CALL BOARD. He sighs, presses a button, and leans into the mic with visible reluctance.

CLIVE

(CONT'D)

Alright, next caller. Let's get this over with.

CALLER #2 (V.O.)

(whispering, excited)

Clive, it's the parakeets, alright? The green ones? They're not supposed to be here—they're spies. I've been watching them in the park. They're... observing us.

CLIVE

(stares in disbelief)

Parakeets? Aren't those... tropical birds?

CALLER #2 (V.O.)

Exactly. Immigrants.

CLIVE

Nope. We're done here.

He cuts the call immediately, looking horrified and muttering under his breath. Behind the glass, Vic, his producer, watches with bemused.

VIC

(over intercom)

Keep it up, Clive. Lines are buzzing—management's thrilled. (pauses) This might even help with, you know, that "incident."

CLIVE

One joke, Vic. One barely off-color joke, and they banish me to the twilight zone.

VIC

Hey, it's a gig. And tonight, you've got a real guest—Malcolm Keyes. Thinks he's found some creature he calls "The Hizzard."

CLIVE
(incredulous)
The... Hizzard. Right. Wonderful.

VIC
Guy's got "proof." Management
thinks it'll be a hit, so just...
play along, yeah?

CLIVE
Sure. Why not? The Hizzard. Just
what I needed.

Clive stares at the CALL BOARD as another light blinks,
looking as though he's questioning all his life choices.

INT. RADIO STUDIO - LATER

(THE SCREEN IS BLACK. CLIVE'S FLAT, UNENTHUSIASTIC VOICE

FADES IN AS THE CAMERA BEGINS TO PAN UP TO REVEAL HIM AND

MALCOLM IN THE STUDIO.)

CLIVE
Tonight, we have Malcolm Keyes, a
self-proclaimed "cryptozoologist"
who says he has evidence of... The
Hizzard. Malcolm, for the sake of
everyone listening, can you explain
what exactly a "Hizzard" is?

(THE CAMERA COMPLETES ITS PAN, REVEALING CLIVE SEATED ACROSS

FROM MALCOLM, WHO LOOKS OVERLY EAGER AND IS CLUTCHING A

FOLDER LABELED "HIZZARD RESEARCH.")

MALCOLM
(beaming)
Thank you, Clive! The Hizzard is an
evolutionary marvel—half-human,
half-reptile, and fully aware of
its surroundings. It can blend in
perfectly with the night, even
adopting the colors of its
surroundings.

CLIVE
So it's... invisible?

MALCOLM
(firmly)
In plain sight. It's right there,
but you wouldn't know it. That's
what makes it so dangerous.

Clive stares, dumbfounded, then glances at the CALL BOARD. He takes a deep breath, clearly not thrilled.

CLIVE
Alright, Malcolm, let's see what
our listeners have to say. We'll
take a few calls.

He presses the button on the CALL BOARD.

CALLER #1 (V.O.)
(inquisitive)
Malcolm, can the Hizzard... fly?
Like, if it had to escape, could it
just take off into the air?

MALCOLM
(without hesitation)
Not traditionally. But some say it
can leap incredible distances,
almost like gliding. There's one
account of it clearing a twenty-
foot gap, which is almost...
supernatural.

CLIVE
(frustrated)
Some say? Who are these people?

The CALL BOARD blinks again. Clive presses the button, visibly worn down.

CALLER #2 (V.O.)
(curiously)
Malcolm, what does the Hizzard
sound like? Can we hear it?

MALCOLM
(dead serious)
Oh, it's unmistakable. Imagine a
howl, but also a hiss, like air
escaping from a tire. But with
great purpose. If you hear it,
you're either incredibly lucky...
or you're next.

CLIVE
Jesus Christ, I'm losing my mind.

Clive's expression reflects his genuine exasperation as he stares at the photo, and Malcolm beams, completely serious. The CALL BOARD continues blinking, as Clive looks like he's ready to give up entirely.

INT. RADIO STUDIO - DAY

Clive is slouched at the console, staring blankly at his coffee cup. Vic enters, practically buzzing with excitement, holding a stack of reports.

VIC
Clive! Last night's Hizzard segment--unbelievable! The numbers are through the roof.

CLIVE
(sighing, disbelieving)
You're actually serious. People tuned in for that... lizard-man shit?

VIC
(nodding, oblivious to Clive's tone)
Not just tuned in--they're hooked. Management's thrilled. They're already asking when you're bringing Malcolm back.

CLIVE
More Malcolm. Right. Because apparently, people can't get enough of ridiculous fantasies about men in scales.

VIC
They can't! Clive, you're practically the cryptid king. You're finally reconnecting with people.

The phone rings. Clive glares at Vic, then picks it up with a weary sigh.

CLIVE
Night Talk. Clive Norton speaking.

TONY (V.O.)
(overly friendly)
Clive! Long time, mate. Just
listened to last night's show.
Really... different from your old
stuff, isn't it?

CLIVE
Yeah, Tony, very different. And I
can hear the smugness dripping
through the line, so go on—get to
whatever patronizing point you're
dying to make.

TONY (V.O.)
Oh, come on, Clive. I'm just...
appreciating the bold new
direction. Cryptids? Lizard men? A
bit niche, maybe, but hey, it...
suits you.

CLIVE
"Suits me"? Right. And you, Tony,
are just thriving at that regional
gig of yours, yeah? It's no lizard-
man fanbase, but hey, I'm sure the
locals love your traffic updates.

TONY (V.O.)
No, no! Just wanted to say congrats
on finding... your crowd.

Clive slams the phone down after his call with Tony,
muttering curses under his breath. His shoulders are tense,
his movements sharp. Vic leans casually in the corner,
sipping coffee, watching Clive with an amused smirk.

CLIVE
(muttering)
"Bold new direction,". Smug prick.
He'd love to see me crash and burn,
wouldn't he?.

VIC
(smiling)
Tony again? What'd he say this
time?

CLIVE

(imitating Tony, mocking)
 "Oh, Clive, it's niche, but it suits you." Oh sure, Vic, because spending twenty-five goddamn years building a reputation was all leading up to this—babysitting conspiracy theorists and peddling bullshit about imaginary lizard-men. Truly, the pinnacle of my career!

VIC

(sipping coffee)
 Well, bullshit sells. That Hizzard piece lit the board up last time.

CLIVE

(snapping)
 It's not selling, Vic. It's gawking. They're laughing at me, not with me.

Vic raises an eyebrow, swirling his coffee casually.

VIC

(lightly)
 Not sure I've heard you laugh in years, so what's the difference? At least they're still tuned in.

Clive glares at him, his jaw tight, but he doesn't respond. He spins his chair slowly to face the console, picking up a pen and tapping it on the desk.

VIC (CONT'D)

(grinning)
 Could be worse. At least they remember your name. Plenty of guys in your shoes would kill for that.

CLIVE

(glaring)
 Oh, brilliant. I'll put that on my résumé right next to 'award-winning journalist.'

VIC

(smugly)
 Well, one of those is still paying the bills.

Clive's pen stops tapping. He spins his chair back toward Vic sharply.

CLIVE

(snarling)

This isn't what I'm meant to be doing. I was the guy who took calls from MPs and journalists, not crackpots with sound effects and blurry photos.

VIC

(grinning)

Yet here you are. Funny how life works, huh?

Clive narrows his eyes, his irritation simmering.

CLIVE

Why are you so damn chipper about this?

VIC

(leaning against the wall)

Because it's working. Management loves it, the listeners love it, and deep down, you—

Clive cuts him off with a pointed finger.

CLIVE

Don't.

Vic smirks but says nothing, letting the silence hang for a beat. Clive leans back, exhaling sharply, and glances at the blinking call board.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

(firmly, to himself)

Fine. He's coming back.

Vic, leaning casually in the corner, raises an eyebrow.

VIC

(sipping coffee)

Thought you'd sworn him off for good.

CLIVE

(gesturing sharply)

Yeah, well, times change. If Malcolm's coming back, we're doing it differently.

(MORE)

CLIVE (CONT'D)

This time, I want someone credible in here—someone who can bury his ridiculous theories under a pile of actual facts.

VIC

(raising an eyebrow)

You're serious? You want me to track down an expert to argue with Malcolm about his swamp lizard?

CLIVE

(snarling)

Yes. A zoologist, a biologist—hell, even a bloody park ranger. I don't care. Just find someone who can make him look like the deluded idiot he is.

VIC

(mocking)

Oh yeah, I'm sure David Attenborough's just itching to drop everything for a guest spot on Night Talk.

CLIVE

(leaning forward, furious)

I don't give a shit who it is, Vic. Drag them in by their tits if you have to.

Clive makes an obscene grabbing gesture for emphasis. Vic grimaces, shaking his head.

VIC

(chuckling)

Christ, Clive, you really know how to sell it.

CLIVE

(ignoring him)

Just do your job and find someone. I want Malcolm out of here looking like a goddamn lunatic, not a fucking folk hero.

Vic stares at Clive for a long moment, his grin slowly returning.

VIC

Fine. I'll make some calls. But
just remember--when people tune in,
they aren't coming for facts,
they're coming for the Hizzard.

INT. RADIO STUDIO - NIGHT

The studio is dimly lit, the hum of equipment filling the air. Clive sits at the console, looking smug but tense. Across from him is Malcolm, grinning ear to ear, his ever-present folder clutched in his lap. Beside Malcolm sits DR. JANET HUGHES, a composed zoologist in her 50s, exuding quiet authority.

Clive clears his throat, leaning into the microphone.

CLIVE

(flatly)

Welcome back to Night Talk.
Tonight, we're joined once again by
Malcolm Keyes, who's here to
enlighten us further about the...
(mocking) mysterious Hizzard.

Malcolm beams, oblivious to Clive's tone.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

And, because I believe in giving
our listeners the full picture,
we've also brought in Dr. Janet
Hughes--a zoologist and actual
scientist--to, well, help us
separate fact from fiction. Dr.
Hughes, thanks for joining us.

DR. HUGHES

(nods politely)

Happy to be here.

CLIVE

Good. Let's get to it. Malcolm, why
don't you walk us through your
latest... evidence?

INT. RADIO STUDIO - NIGHT

Clive sits at the console, feigning polite interest. Malcolm is across from him, clutching his folder, and Dr. Hughes examines a wrinkled photo with a furrowed brow.

MALCOLM

(enthusiastically)

This photo was taken just after dawn near Ashcombe Woods. You can see the Hizzard here, blending into the tree line.

He points to what looks like a vague shadow among the branches.

CLIVE

(smiling tightly)

Fascinating. Dr. Hughes, as a scientist, what's your professional take on this... compelling evidence?

Dr. Hughes tilts the photo, squinting at it under the studio light.

DR. HUGHES

(flatly)

It's inconclusive at best. Likely just a shadow or a trick of the light. There's no clear indication of anything unusual here.

CLIVE

(leaning back, smug)

Well, there you have it, Malcolm. Science speaks. Now, about this Hizzard—

MALCOLM

(interrupting)

Wait, Dr. Hughes. Look again at the edges of the shadow. The curvature there? That's not natural. It's the outline of a tail in motion.

Dr. Hughes leans in again, frowning as she studies the photo more closely.

DR. HUGHES

Oh well, that's all my reservations cleared up, your right Malcolm this simply has to be the Hizzard.

Clive freezes, staring at her in disbelief.

CLIVE

(voice rising)

Sorry what?! You just said it was a shadow!

DR. HUGHES
(nodding thoughtfully)
Yes, but Malcolm's explanation
makes sense. The curvature is
unmistakably reptilian.

MALCOLM
(nodding gently)
Thank you, Dr. Hughes. I knew you
would come around.

Clive stares at both of them, in disbelief.

CLIVE
(half-laughing, half-
shouting)
That's insane! That's fucking
insane! He just told you a giant
lizard man lives in Devon and you
just believed him? How do you have
a doctorate!?

Malcolm reaches into his bag, pulling out a small recorder.

MALCOLM
If I may, I've saved the best for
last. A sound recording of the
Hizzard in its natural habitat.

He presses play. The studio fills with a cacophony of garbled
static, intermittent squawks, and a sound eerily similar to a
fax machine struggling to connect.

CLIVE
(staring at the recorder)
I mean, that's clearly nonsense.

MALCOLM
(earnestly)
The Hizzard's call. It's subtle but
purposeful—an apex predator staking
its claim.

DR. HUGHES
(listening intently)
The pitch variation is fascinating.
It could function as a form of
echolocation.

Clive grabs his head in frustration, his face red with fury.

CLIVE
Oh you silly bitch...Echolocation?!
That was clearly a fucking fax
machine!

Malcolm ignores him, turning to Dr. Hughes with excitement.

MALCOLM
If you listen carefully, you can
hear the dominance in its tone—a
creature asserting itself.

DR. HUGHES
(nodding)
Absolutely. That level of
complexity suggests advanced
communication skills.

CLIVE
(whinging)
It suggests you're both out of your
fucking minds!

The call board lights up, flashing furiously. Vic's voice
crackles through the intercom.

VIC
(laughing)
Oh, Clive, this is radio gold. We
have never had this many calls
before.

Clive can't even muster a reply, he just groans loudly

Malcolm and Dr. Hughes continue discussing the "Hizzard's"
echolocation as if Clive isn't even in the room.

MALCOLM
It's likely a hunting adaptation,
allowing it to track prey in dense
environments.

DR. HUGHES
(nodding)
Yes, and the frequency shifts
suggest it can modulate based on
its surroundings.

The call board blinks relentlessly as Clive buries his face
in his hands.

INT. RADIO STUDIO - NIGHT

Clive sits alone, glaring at one of Malcolm's blurry Hizzard photos. His fingers tap furiously on the desk, barely containing his anger. The door swings open, and Vic strolls in, holding up a newspaper with the headline: "Radio Host Clive Norton Sparks Hizzard Craze!"

VIC

(grinning)

What a sight. Clive Norton: The Hizzard Hunter. It's got a nice ring to it, don't you think?

CLIVE

(quietly, fuming)

Oh, sure. Just what I wanted to be Remembered for. The guy chasing imaginary reptiles. Real journalistic triumph, Vic.

Vic tosses the newspaper onto the desk, leaning against the wall with a casual smile.

VIC

Hey, beats the alternative. They were ready to toss you into archive duty after that "little incident."

CLIVE

It was one joke, Vic. One joke at a charity event--off-air, mind you--and everyone loses their minds.

VIC

Well, maybe next time, don't crack wise about... (pauses, grins) certain subjects.

CLIVE

(snapping)

Stop changing the subject, don't think I didn't notice how conveniently that expert rolled over for Malcolm's crap.

Vic raises an eyebrow, his smile unwavering.

VIC

(grinning)

Listen to yourself, Clive. All this conspiracy talk's making you hysterical. You need a holiday.

Clive stares at Vic, his expression unreadable, then shakes his head in disbelief.

CLIVE
(standing abruptly)
I'm done, Vic. Done with this
farce. You can take your Hizzard
and shove it. I quit.

Vic's smirk slips slightly, but he quickly recovers.

VIC
(softly)
Alright, Clive. If that's how you
feel, walk out the door. But let's
not pretend you've got a better
option waiting for you out there.

CLIVE
(angrily)
Anything's better than being
reduced to this--some washed-up
hack, pandering to nutjobs for a
paycheck.

Vic steps closer, his tone softening.

VIC
Pandering? Clive, you're giving
them what they want. That's what
this job is--knowing your audience,
staying relevant. You're not
pandering. You're surviving.

Clive hesitates, his anger wavering slightly.

VIC (CONT'D)
(leaning in)
You think the world's going to
remember that one bad joke? No.
They'll remember you for this. The
Hizzard craze? That's yours, Clive.
You made it happen.

CLIVE
(bitterly)
Yeah, by humiliating myself.

VIC
(sincerely)
And yet, here you are--front page,
top of the ratings, a household
name again.

(MORE)

VIC (CONT'D)
You've got their attention, Clive.
Isn't that what you've always
wanted?

Clive looks away, his jaw tightening.

VIC (CONT'D)
(softly, pressing)
You're angry now, I get it. But
think about it. You walk away from
this, and what happens? You vanish.
Forgotten. But if you stay? Who
knows where this could take you?

Clive glances at the newspaper, the bold headline staring
back at him. His fists clench and unclench as he wrestles
with his decision.

CLIVE
(low, uncertain)
I don't know, Vic...

VIC
Look, Clive, if your dignity's
worth more than this, then don't do
it. No one's forcing you. But don't
fool yourself--this shot won't come
again. So what's more important to
you? Your dignity... or a little
bit of fame?

Clive stares at him, unable to respond, torn between his
anger and the lure of fame.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO - PROMOTIONAL ADVERT FOR "THE HIZZARD HUNTER"

A melodramatic promo plays: Clive is shown creeping through
foggy woods, holding a flashlight, looking deeply
uncomfortable. Malcolm stands beside him, pointing
dramatically into the distance. The words "Clive Norton:
Hizzard Hunter" flash in bold letters as suspenseful music
swells.

VOICEOVER (V.O.)
This fall, join Clive Norton as he
uncovers the truth... behind The
Hizzard.

(MORE)

VOICEOVER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(The tagline appears: "The
Hizzard Hunter: Coming
Soon.")

FADE OUT.