

NETIQUETTE

Episode 01.02

"Highly Technical Radio Signals"

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INT. STEVE'S ROOM - EVENING

STEVE sits at his computer, staring at the clock, a NETFLIX splash screen on the browser.

PETE appears at Steve's open bedroom door.

PETE

Steve.

STEVE

Yo.

PETE

Janelle's coming over at seven.

STEVE

Ah, the mysterious Jeanette. I finally get to meet the future ex-Mrs. Brown.

PETE

No. God. No. It's Janelle, not Jeanette. Don't call her Jeanette if you ever meet her. Just don't talk to her at all though.

STEVE

Why not?

PETE

Can you... get the fuck out of here tonight?

STEVE

Mate, my ass will be planted firmly in this chair from five tonight until eight a.m. tomorrow smashing out episodes of Luke Cage, it's just about to drop online. You're not watching it tonight?

Pete shrugs.

PETE

No. My *girlfriend* is coming over. I'm spending the evening with a *person*.

STEVE

Six hours where you're socially obliged not to fart or masturbate? Sounds like a fun night.

PETE
I'm closing your door okay, don't
come out here.

Pete pulls the door closed.

STEVE
(shouts)
I *will* come out, but only to see if
your girlfriend is hot at all.

Steve looks at the clock, seeing that it's 5. He refreshes the screen, watching it go white, then remain blank for an uncomfortably long time.

Steve slowly frowns, leaning ever more sideways to look at one side of the computer, as if the answer is there.

He leans back to center, squinting in at the network connectivity icon, which is showing a red X.

Steve grows concerned.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Pete furiously prepares food, looking up already harassed as Steve enters.

STEVE
The internet's down.

PETE
Okay?

STEVE
Where's the router?

PETE
Hallway cupboard.

Pete goes back to work.

STEVE
What *is* a router?

Pete looks up at him, almost answers, then keeps chopping.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

Steve slides open the hallway cupboard to reveal a standard ADSL modem/router. Two lights flicker on it. Steve looks back down the hall in Pete's direction, then back to the router.

He stares at the two flashing lights, PWR and DSL.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Pete snaps his head up again as Steve re-enters, immediately returning his focus to the food prep.

STEVE

What does it mean if the light is going off and then on again, then back off? How do I check the batteries?

PETE

(distracted)
Batteries? No, it has a power adapter.

Steve wanders away.

STEVE

Adapter. Okay.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

Back at the router, Steve unplugs the power adapter from the back, licks it like a pencil, then sticks it back in, watching the lights return to the same pattern for a long moment.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - EVENING

Steve leans awkwardly over the lounge room TV cabinet, pulling the power adaptors from a CD player, DVD player, and laptop.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

Steve removes the original power adaptor from the router, trying one of the others. The plug is too big for the router's socket. The next one he tries goes in and out, too small. The third one is just right.

Steve leans over the front of the router, watching the lights fail to come on at all. He flicks the on/off switch on the front of the router a few times, returning to watching and waiting.

The modem's air vent begins to waft smoke.

Steve continues leaning forward, watching it, waiting for the lights.

A concerning amount of smoke begins to erupt from the modem like a fog machine, wafting out into the cupboard and hall.

Steve reaches forward, flicking the on/off switch again. Smoke continues to pour from it, as the router gradually melts into molten plastic dripping through the shelf on which it sits.

When the router has entirely melted, Steve returns to his computer, looking at the red X on network connectivity, sighing.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Pete stands at the kitchen counter stirring a metal mixing bowl, reading from a recipe.

The BEEPING of a smoke alarm fills the room suddenly, Pete tossing the bowl on the counter to sprint for the oven, flinging it open.

PETE

Shit!

Close on Pete's curiosity at finding his chicken still only half cooked, while over his shoulder a rolling smoke creeps along the ceiling toward the kitchen.

Steve follows the smoke, eating an apple.

STEVE

Mate is the wifi signal supposed to be this thick and acrid?

Pete turns around, leaping to his feet.

PETE

Holy shit! What happened?

Pete runs to the kitchen sink, tossing the salad on the kitchen counter, filling the metal bowl with water.

STEVE

The router's booting up I think. How long does the wifi generally remain *opaque* like this?

PETE

What did you do to it?

STEVE

(shrugs)

Just switched it off and on, like
you always say to do.

Pete runs into the smokey hallway with the bowl.

A KNOCK at the front door. Steve walks to it, opening it
reveal JANELLE, who is caught off guard by the sound of the
smoke alarm and the smoke wafting out of the house.

JANELLE

Hi--is Pete here?

Steve ushers her in quickly.

STEVE

Yes, yes, come in, quickly, you're
letting all the wifi out.

He closes the door behind them, walking with her to the
kitchen.

JANELLE

Is something *burning*?

STEVE

I think Pete was cooking some
chicken out here, maybe that's what
you're smelling.

JANELLE

What's all the smoke?

STEVE

Ah, no, that's actually highly
technical radio signal coming out
of Pete's wifi modem router.

Janelle frowns.

JANELLE

I don't think that's how wifi
works. It smells more like an
electrical fire.

STEVE

Huh. That's an interesting concept.
Bare with me.

Steve leans into the smokey hall, squinting to see Pete.

STEVE

Pete? Jeanette says that one might
be an electrical fire, mate.
Careful with the water and the
metal bowl, yeah?

The lights and appliances all FLICKER severely, accompanied
by a loud crash, and the ringing of a metal bowl coming to
rest on a tiled floor.

STEVE

(looking at Janelle)
Doesn't bode well, does it?

Roll credits.