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Nelson Bond was born on November 23, 1908 in Pennsylvania. His writing career spanned genres, from sci-fi to stamp collecting to sports writing. He wrote fiction, non-fiction, novels, short stories, as well as scripts for radio, television and stage. Much of his time was spent running his own public relations firm and focusing on becoming a well respected antiquarian book seller. In 1998 he was honored as an Author Emeritus for Lifetime Achievement by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America.

The very short story *Vital Factor* was first published in the August 1951 issue of Esquire magazine. It was adapted for radio by Howard Rodman. And first aired on August 15, 1951. That same year *Vital Factor* was adapted for ABC television's *Tales of Tomorrow* and broadcast on October 26, 1951. X Minus One produced the story on November 30, 1955.

Howard Rodman, who generously adapted the short story by adding characters and developing the arc of the protagonist, was born in New York on February 18, 1920 and died on December 4, 1985 in Los Angeles, California. Rodman attended Brooklyn College and the Iowa University and went on to write scripts and screenplays for CBS, NBC, and ABC as well as independent productions.

In this story the protagonist, who has lost his humanity in the pursuit of power and wealth, comes face to face with someone who literally lacks humanity but possesses more human qualities than himself.

[episode 44]

DIMENSION X
Vital Factor
August 15, 1951

NBC ANNOUNCER: (drum roll) Adventures in Time and Space told in future tense. (cymbal crash) Dimension X - x - x - x - x... (trails off and blends with sound of repeated gong) The National Broadcasting Company, in cooperation with Street and Smith, publishers of Astounding Science Fiction, bring you DIMENSION X.

theremin blends in to hectic percussion

HOST NORMAN ROSE: I doubt that anywhere on earth there's a man or a woman or a child who doesn't know the name Wayne Crowder. I doubt whether there's a human being who hasn't at one time or another used one of the Crowder products, the can opener or the razor blade or the patented tooth powder dispenser or the Crowder improved slide-less fastener. There's a fortune in such products, and Wayne Crowder was the man to squeeze that fortune out, penny by penny. And he did. And in the magazines which write about men of business he was described as a man of ice and stone and ink and steel. No warmth, and a heart to pump blood, not feel human emotion. And he took some of his money and he built himself a towering skyscraper. And he placed his private office at the very peak. And he built a battery of buttons into his desk so that when he wanted something, all he ever had to do was press a button. And like genies springing out of a bottle, the proper personnel would come running.

FX: buzz of intercom

SECRETARY: Yes Mr. Crowder.

CROWDER: Get me my engineers.

SECRETARY: Yes sir, right away Mr. Crowder.

FX: click, dial of rotary phone

SECRETARY: Mr. Crowder wants his engineers at once.

musical transition

FX: knock, knock, knock, knock, knock, door opens

SECRETARY: Here are your engineers sir.

CROWDER: All right, close the door and get out.

ENGINEERS: muffled sound of muttering

CROWDER: Now gentlemen, sit down.

FX: shuffling footsteps, chairs scraping against tile

CROWDER: Gentlemen, I hired you because you're the best engineers I was able to find. They tell me you can do anything. They tell me if there's a scientific fact known in the world, even if it was discovered six hours ago, you gentlemen are up on it. All right, I want to put that to work. Gentlemen I want you to build me a spaceship.

ENGINEERS: (as a group, overlapping) What? What? Huh?

ENGINEER ONE: A spaceship sir?

CROWDER: That's right. I've decided that I am going to be the man who gives space flight to mankind. Any questions?

ENGINEERS: muffled sound of muttering

ENGINEER ONE: Well I don't know sir, we can design such a ship. That part's not too hard. The basic blueprint has been in existence for many years. The submarine is the model for the shape and the form, but, uh --

CROWDER: Yeah?

ENGINEER ONE: But we have no way of providing the motor to power such a ship.

CROWDER: When the ship's ready to fly, there'll be a motor.

ENGINEERS: muffled sound of muttering

ENGINEER ONE: Sir, I-I don't like to contradict you, but you see scientists have been searching for a motor power for spaceships for decades now without success. You'll have a ship, but we can't lift that ship from the Earth's surface. That is, not to the point of free flight at any rate.

PHILIPS: (clears throat) Mr. Crowder, you see, you'll be spending millions of dollars, hundreds of millions perhaps, for nothing.

CROWDER: What's your name?

PHILIPS: Philips, sir.

CROWDER: You're fired.

PHILIPS: What?

CROWDER: Go down to cashier and draw your pay and get out.

PHILIPS: But, Mr. Crowder.

CROWDER: Get out. Nobody who works for me thinks of how much something costs. We use money. We don't let expense provide a rationalization for not beginning a project. (pause) Philip, what are you waiting for? Get out.

FX: chair scrapes against tile, footsteps, door opens and closes

CROWDER: Gentlemen, any other comments?

ENGINEER ONE: The ship will be built, of course, Mr. Crowder, but the fact still remains. We can't power it.

CROWDER: You design the ship. I'll find the motor for you.

ENGINEER ONE: Where, sir?

CROWDER: That's a fair question. The answer is, I don't know. But somewhere in the world there's a man who does know the secret. Long before Henry Ford, there was Leonardo da Vinci, and long before him there was Archimedes. And long before him there was some stone-aged genius who invented the wheel when the only thing the mob could conceive was dragging things around on their backs. I want that motor. And I'll root out the man who has the theory which will let us build it. I'll find him. Money will be available to him and organization, my backing, and we'll get what we want.

ENGINEER ONE: You're going to be plagued with a host of crackpots, sir.

CROWDER: Obviously. So it's going to be your job to separate the wheat from the chaff, but anyone who shows up with a promising idea, no matter how fantastic it sounds, is going to have a chance to show what it can do.

ENGINEER ONE: How quickly do you want this done, sir?

CROWDER: Yesterday.

ENGINEER ONE: Yes, sir.

CROWDER: Anything you need?

ENGINEER ONE: Well, Mr. Crowder, we'll need construction yards, sir, and certain machinery and a great many materials, of course. A labor force.

CROWDER: Get them. Send me the bills. I don't want to be bothered with minor details.

ENGINEER ONE: Yes, sir. Uh. One more thing, sir. Philips, sir.

CROWDER: Yes?

ENGINEER ONE: We need him, sir. He's a top man on electronics. He's a vital cog in our team.

CROWDER: I don't want Philips working for me. That's clear, I hope. Who else in the country knows what he does?

ENGINEER ONE: Not one in this country, sir. There's a man in Asia, though.

CROWDER: Get him.

ENGINEER ONE: We've tried before, Mr. Crowder. He's working on an important project for his country.

CROWDER: I'm not concerned with details. Now, get that man. Pay him what he wants, but get him.

ENGINEER ONE: Sir, you don't understand.

CROWDER: I understand men.

ENGINEER ONE: If this man quits his job, that whole project will collapse. It means the welfare of many people, millions of people in his country, and he has a high sense of patriotism.

CROWDER: Buy that sense of patriotism. Now, that's all. I don't want to see you again until you have a report of work in progress.

ENGINEER ONE: Yes, sir.

FX: muffled sound of muttering blends with chairs scraping against tile, footsteps, door closes, click of intercom

SECRETARY: Yes, Mr. Crowder.

CROWDER: There's a man named Philips going to draw his pay, I want two company policemen to meet him at the cashier's office and escort him from there directly off the premises, and I want them to be emphatic about it.

SECRETARY: Yes, Mr. Crowder.

CROWDER: And notify the newspapers, the television, and the radio networks, periodicals, and the scientific journals that I'll receive the press in my office this afternoon at 3:30. I have an important announcement to make.

musical transition

FX: blended voices of crowd, clinking of glasses

CROWDER: Gentlemen? (pause) Gentlemen? (pause) You can finish your drinks later. Gentlemen of the press and ladies, it's my pleasure to be able to tell you that I'm in the process of constructing a spaceship.

FX: faint murmur of crowd

CROWDER: Any questions?

PRESS MAN ONE: Did you say a spaceship?

CROWDER: That's right.

PRESS MAN ONE: That's what I thought you said. I knew the drinks weren't that strong.

FX: faint laughter of crowd

CROWDER: (CHUCKLE) Well, I expected it might be something of a shock to you all.

PRESS MAN TWO: Mr. Crowder, is this spaceship under construction now?

CROWDER: It is.

PRESS MAN TWO: Well, according to your plans, is it intended for interstellar flight or merely for flight between planets?

CROWDER: This is a beginning only, and my intentions are quite modest. I expect the ship to be able to pursue a course between Earth and Mars or between Earth and Venus, but for the present any longer trips are not contemplated.

PRESS MAN TWO: You've solved the problem of motor force then.

CROWDER: No, I haven't.

PRESS MAN TWO: What sort of-- (pause) you mean you don't have any means of propulsion for this spaceship?

CROWDER: That problem is not solved as yet.

FX: talking crowd

CROWDER: It will be. That's why I called you in this afternoon. I want you to announce that I have \$100,000 in cash waiting for the man or woman who first brings me the basic idea for such a motor. That's all I have to say for now. Finish your refreshments, ladies and gentlemen. I'll-I'll let you know from time to time how things go.

PRESS MAN ONE: Mr. Crowder, one more question, please.

CROWDER: Yes.

PRESS MAN ONE: Do you have a name for this spaceship yet?

CROWDER: No, not yet.

PRESS MAN ONE: Then let me suggest one.

CROWDER: Yes?

PRESS MAN ONE: Crowder's Folly.

FX: laughter

CROWDER: Quiet, all of you. Quiet! What is your paper?

PRESS MAN ONE: The Daily Times, sir.

CROWDER: Inform the company police that under no circumstances is any representative of the Daily Times ever to be allowed on company property again.

musical transition

ANNOUNCER ONE: Wayne Crowder is offering \$100,000 to any inventor who can produce an engine capable of driving a spaceship.

FX: Morse Code

musical transition

ANNOUNCER TWO: Wayne Crowder is offering \$100,000 to any inventor who can produce...

ANNOUNCER THREE: ...an engine capable of driving a spaceship.

FX: Morse Code

musical transition

NARRATOR: It was Crowder's Folly, but the word of what he wanted circulated to the far corners of the globe, and it was known in the white ice-block huts of the Eskimos and in the grass-batched villages of Central Africa, as well as places less remote.

musical transition

NARRATOR: And the Crowder office became the Mecca and the Heaven for the lunatic fringe of humanity. Their blueprints and scale models clogged its corridors, and more applicants came to the great skyscraper.

FX: disorderly voices overlapping

NARRATOR: I told you, don't let these people in my office till they're screened. Now get out! Get out!

FX: door slams

CROWDER: (SIGH) Every time I open that door they surge in like a tidal wave.

ENGINEER ONE: I have a progress report for you, sir, on the construction of the ship.

CROWDER: Go ahead.

ENGINEER ONE: I've spent \$13 million for the yards, the equipment, including three gantry cranes, several dozen presses, thousands of dies, and so forth.

CROWDER: Go on, go on.

ENGINEER ONE: We have 12,000 people working for us directly, not including subcontractors and their labor force.

CROWDER: What about the ship?

ENGINEER ONE: Mr. Crowder, the ship is finished as far as we can go. Certain additional construction cannot be done now because it depends on the shape and the mass of the engine, on the type of fuel, and the weight of that fuel.

CROWDER: I see. All right, lay off everybody we don't need.

ENGINEER ONE: I've ordered that, sir. Mr. Crowder, is it possible that no one will turn up with a motor?

CROWDER: That's the one thing that's not possible. He will come. Money and determination will buy anything. Now close the door on your way out.

ENGINEER ONE: Yes, sir.

FX: footsteps, door opens, disorderly voices overlapping, door closes, click of intercom

CROWDER: Order the proper department to put a name on the forward end of the ship. I want letters in pure gold, one foot high. The name of the ship is Crowder's Folly. Get it done today.

FX: click of intercom

musical transition

NARRATOR: The sun rose in the morning and glinted rose on the silver sheen of the hollow ship's skin. The sun set at night and glinted rose on the silver sheen of the hollow ship's skin. The golden letters on the prow held out the fury of Crowder for the world to see. A staff of 50 was employed, as time went on, in taking rust preventive measures to ensure the ship's well-being. In a year, the first experiment seemed ready to bear fruit and a test was held: the atomic fission motor.

FX: vibrating humm

ENGINEER: In exactly 45 seconds now, we'll hold the test, Mr. Crowder. The actual trial of the motor is taking place three miles from here. Now this dial here registers the nucleonic activity, and this dial right here is thrust. Over here, this dial is a measure of the effectiveness of the shielding in terms of outside radioactivity. That sound you hear is our generators, right here, building up power to supply the motor by remote control. Now if this needle goes around to the part of the dial marked in red, there will be an explosion. Are there any questions, sir?

CROWDER: Proceed with the tests.

FX: sharp click, scraping click, sharp click

ENGINEER: Watch the needle, sir. 8,000. 8,500. 9,000. 10. 11. 12. 15. That's an overload now, sir. 18. 20. I don't know how much more it can stand, sir.

FX: static

CROWDER: What? What happened? Your generator blew out. What kind of--

ENGINEER: I beg your pardon, sir. The motor blew up.

CROWDER: What are you talking about? I'd hear--

FX: whooshing boom

ENGINEER: There, you see, sir, it takes a while for the vibrations of an explosion to travel three miles and then reach through 15 feet of concrete.

CROWDER: I see. Well, there are other experiments in progress. Let me know when they're ready for testing.

ENGINEER: Yes, sir. Uh, Mr. Crowder, the inventor of that motor had to be with it, of course, during the tests, but he has, uh, that is he had, a family.

CROWDER: The fool knew what he was doing. He understood the danger. Now line up those experiments and don't turn anyone away if he seems to have the remotest possibility of success. Now I'm telling you, my man will come. Money and determination will buy anything.

musical transition

NARRATOR: And strangely enough, Crowder was right, because one day there came to his office a stranger, a small man. He looked even smaller in that tremendous room. He was an unusual visitor in that he carried no briefcase full with blueprints, schematics, or formulae. He was unusual in that he neither blustered, cowered, nor deferred to his host. Oh, he was a pleasant little stranger, bird-like of eye and movement, bright and smiling.

FX: door opens and closes

WILKINS: Mr. Crowder, my name is Wilkins. I can power that ship you want.

CROWDER: So?

WILKINS: Of course, what I have in mind won't be anything like that meaningless heap you've built.

CROWDER: What?

WILKINS: Well, Mr. Crowder, my motor requires a different sort of ship.

CROWDER: Where are the plans.

WILKINS: Here, in my head.

CROWDER: It so happens that I am presently supporting half a dozen people who make that same claim. None of them have been successful. What makes you think your idea will work?

WILKINS: Simple enough, the common magnet.

CROWDER: What?

WILKINS: Electromagnetism. Utilization of the force of gravity, or its opposite in this case, counter-gravity.

CROWDER: Thank you very much. If you'll forgive me now, I have--

WILKINS: Just a moment, Mr. Crowder. There's one thing more: this.

CROWDER: I've seen pieces of metal before, thank you.

WILKINS: How high from your desk would you say I'm holding it?

CROWDER: I'm very sorry, Mr. Wilkins, do you want to leave, or do you want to be escorted out?

WILKINS: This will only take a second, sir. How high from your desk would you say I'm holding this piece of metal?

CROWDER: (FRUSTRATED SIGH) A foot and a half.

WILKINS: And if I let go, then in less than a second, a fraction of a second, it should fall to your desk.

CROWDER: Now look, I don't want the surface of that desk marred.

WILKINS: But will it be? (pause) You see, I *have* let go of the metal, is that right?

CROWDER: (GASP) What? Good lord.

WILKINS: Many seconds ago it should have crashed to the desk, am I right?

CROWDER: This is incredible.

WILKINS: Well, if you want to speak to me anymore, I'll be right outside.

FX: footsteps, door opening

CROWDER: But it hasn't fallen.

WILKINS: That's right, sir, it hasn't fallen.

CROWDER: It floats in the air.

WILKINS: That's right, sir, it floats in the air.

CROWDER: How do you do it?

WILKINS: Why don't you call your engineers and ask them? I'll wait outside.

FX: door closes, click of intercom

CROWDER: Get me my engineers immediately.

musical transition

CROWDER: All right, Mr. Wilkins, you're quite right. This piece of metal is apparently counter gravity. My engineers can give me no explanation.

WILKINS: Thank you, sir.

CROWDER: What do you want?

WILKINS: I want to build a spaceship using this material. No great expenditure, a hundredth of the cost of your behemoth sitting out there in your building yard, and three other things: A workshop, expert mechanical assistance, and an answer to one question.

CROWDER: What is the question?

WILKINS: Why do you want so much to build this ship?

CROWDER: Frankly, because I love power, because I'm ambitious. I want to be the master, not only of one world, but of worlds.

WILKINS: That's an honest answer. And, ah, that's as far as your thinking goes?

CROWDER: What else is there?

WILKINS: Well, there's my answer. I want to leave this planet and go to Mars, because there are strange wonders there, because there will be scarlet sunsets over barren wastes, and in the star-strewn night the thin cold air of a dying world stirring in restless sighs across the valleys of the dry canals. You may laugh out loud if you wish, Mr. Crowder. I prefer that to the peculiar repressed smile you're exhibiting now.

CROWDER: You're a very lucky man, Mr. Wilkins, to have scientific talent because your talents as a poet are inferior and very sentimental. Well, all right, you're a sentimentalist, and I'm a man of logic. No matter, we can work together, you and I. Your workshop will be ready by morning. If you need money or materials or personnel, just tell my engineers, and you'll get it, or I'll know the reason why, and that's all.

WILKINS: Thank you, sir.

FX: footsteps, door opens and closes, click of intercom

CROWDER: Get me my engineers.

musical transition

ENGINEER ONE: Yes, Mr. Crowder.

CROWDER: We have 50 men working on preserving that useless hulk out there in the construction yard. Lay them off. Now, how many others?

ENGINEER ONE: But the ship will deteriorate if we do that, sir.

CROWDER: Let it rot. Lay them off.

ENGINEER ONE: Yes, sir.

CROWDER: Now, how many other employees are still working for us on the project?

ENGINEER ONE: About 3,000, sir, including the people working on experimental motors.

CROWDER: Get rid of them.

ENGINEER ONE: But, sir...

CROWDER: Get rid of them.

ENGINEER ONE: Mr. Crowder, I never thought you'd drop this project. You were so adamant on it.

CROWDER: I'm not dropping anything but dead wood. You saw what Wilkins had to offer. He's my man, and the rest is junk.

ENGINEER ONE: Mr. Crowder, he might fail. We ought to have a minimum of protection against--

CROWDER: I say he won't fail. You just lay everybody off that isn't needed. Give them two weeks' pay and my thanks for a thankless job well done. That's all.

ENGINEER ONE: Yes, sir. I'll get it done, sir. But, a year's work...

FX: footsteps away

CROWDER: Yes, and 10 years or 20 years and I'd do the same thing. That's why you're an engineer and I'm an executive. That's why you work for me, because when I have to, I can be ruthless with my own mistakes. (pause) What are you waiting for?

FX: footsteps coming closer

ENGINEER ONE: I was just thinking, Mr. Crowder, what would happen to me if my usefulness to you were over? I've worked for you for 30 years now.

CROWDER: Just don't give me any occasion to consider your usefulness terminated. That oughtn't be too hard.

ENGINEER ONE: Hmm, yes, yes...

CROWDER: What?

ENGINEER ONE: Nothing, sir. I'll make the arrangements at once.

musical transition

FX: door opens

CROWDER: Who are you? What do you want?

SECRETARY: I tried to stop him, sir.

CROWDER: Well, speak up, man.

CHAR: My name is Char Vizerchorim. I am an electronics expert.

CROWDER: Oh, yes, I remember. You're the, uh, Asian. Well, come in, come in.

SECRETARY: Do you want me, sir?

CROWDER: Never mind, never mind. Just stay outside. Close the door behind you.

SECRETARY: Yes, sir.

FX: door closes

CROWDER: (clears throat) Uh, sit down, Viz...erch...orim.

CHAR: Thank you, no. I want to give you a gift before I leave.

CROWDER: Oh, are you leaving? I thought we still needed you.

CHAR: I resigned.

CROWDER: Well, I'm sorry to hear that. I'm told you're a good man.

CHAR: I want you to understand what's behind this gift. I was working on a power project in my country which would have meant a tremendous rise in the standard of living for millions of my people. I was unable to resist the money you offered.

CROWDER: Had you resisted, even more money would have been forthcoming. I placed no limit on your worth to me.

CHAR: I understand. But you see, I did not come without a sense of guilt because there was no one in my country who could take my place.

CROWDER: I would assume that.

CHAR: And now I discovered that what I did was for nothing. The spaceship on which I worked is being dismantled.

CROWDER: That's right.

CHAR: So I have been corrupted by you at a whim. I think you have too much power, sir. I think you use your power for evil, selfish purposes.

CROWDER: Selfish, yes. Only sentimentality is evil.

CHAR: I think otherwise. And so in order that you shall not corrupt anyone else, I have this gift for you. Here you are, sir.

FX: bang, groan, thud

CHAR: And just one more shot for good measure, to make sure you are really dead.

FX: bang

CHAR: Good.

musical transition

CROWDER: There's a man on his way out by the name of Char Vizerchorim, an engineer, he's not to be molested. He probably won't stop at the cashier, so I want a check for six months salary in advance mailed to his home address. The man showed a certain quality of ruthlessness which is deserving of recognition. And, um, have the chief of the company police bring me a new bulletproof vest. This one seems to have been dented in two places.

musical transition

NARRATOR: The new spaceship, according to Wilkins' plans, as executed by Crowder's engineers, was finished within four months. It was small. It was shaped like a disc. It gleamed brightly, even in the smoky haze of an October sunset. Inside, Crowder and Mr. Wilkins, in a small cubicle at the heart of the machine, were surrounded by many instruments of a complicated nature. Outside, huge crowds gathered to witness the test. They stirred and murmured, waiting restlessly, as inside the control

room of the craft, Wilkins installed the final secret part he had not revealed to those who built his driving apparatus.

FX: vibrating hum

CROWDER: Well, Wilkins, what's holding us up?

WILKINS: Nothing now, or, sentiment perhaps.

CROWDER: What?

WILKINS: A wish to look once more on Earth's familiar scenes.

FX: clatter

WILKINS: Here, now the screening is removed. Look, look at the people out there.

CROWDER: Never mind looking out there.

FX: clatter

CROWDER: Let's leave that thing closed. You're a sentimental fool. Or are you afraid? Or did you decide at that last minute that your invention won't work?

WILKINS: It will work. Oh, sit down, Mr. Crowder.

CROWDER: (GRUNT)

WILKINS: Do me a favor. When I press this button, will you please press the button on the arm of the chair you're seated on? I'll tell you when.

CROWDER: Turn on your motor. I want to hear it roar and feel its tug as we cut loose from Earth's gravity and fly outward into space. That might be a moment in which I'd share your sentimentality.

WILKINS: Press your button now, sir. Thank you.

FX: whirr

CROWDER: This is all a hoax. (pause) I'm beginning to distrust you, Wilkins. When are we going to take off? You said at five

sharp, and it's two minutes after five now. Well, do we move or don't we?

WILKINS: Mr. Crowder, we're already moving. The button you pushed was to nullify the effects of acceleration. If you don't mind, I'd like to open the screen again.

FX: clatter

WILKINS: Now, if you care to look for yourself.

CROWDER: (GASP) Wilkins, we're in space. Look down at Earth. How far we've come. Why it's—it's no bigger than a toy balloon, a dime, a firefly. Man, Wilkins, you've done it.

WILKINS: Yes.

CROWDER: I swore to be the first man to conquer space, and I've done it. It's a triumph of power and ambition.

WILKINS: And sentimentality.

CROWDER: Blast sentiment, your maudlin dreaming would have died unborn except for me. I made this possible, Wilkins. Don't ever forget that. My capital, my forcefulness, my will. Look out there. Space. Stars that never were seen from Earth. But this is only the beginning. We—we'll build a—a larger model, one great enough to hold a hundred men, a thousand, and cargo besides. I'm the master of the planets. (GASPING SIGH OF EXUBERANCE) Wilkins, turn back now.

WILKINS: No.

CROWDER: What? I said turn back.

WILKINS: No.

CROWDER: But we've proved the ship can fly, now turn back. I want to start work at once in preparation for the long flights to come.

WILKINS: Not so. We will go on.

CROWDER: What are you doing defying me? You crazy? I'll break your puny little body into pieces.

WILKINS: Mr. Crowder, can you control this ship? Would you like to be stranded out here in space? Just adrift in space without control? Would you like that?

CROWDER: Turn back.

WILKINS: No.

CROWDER: You're crazy. You're crazy.

WILKINS: Crazy? No. Sentimental? Yes. Your money and ambition paved the way, that's true. But sentiment was the vital factor that sent me to you. Uh, you'll forgive me if I remove these primitive clothes.

CROWDER: Who are you?

WILKINS: It's all right, Mr. Crowder. There is no need to be so terrified because you've had your first close look at a Martian going home.

musical conclusion

HOST NORMAN ROSE: You have just heard another adventure into the unknown world of the future, the world of-- (with echo) Dimension X - x - x - x (trails off and blends with sound of repeated gong throughout announcement) A private detective receives many strange assignments, but none has ever received one quite like that given to the investigator we're going to tell you about next week, as we bring you from the pages of the September issue of Astounding Science Fiction, Untitled Story.

Theremin interlude which plays throughout announcement

NBC ANNOUNCER: Dimension X is presented each week by the National Broadcasting Company in cooperation with Street and Smith, publishers of the magazine Astounding Science Fiction. Today, Dimension X has presented The Vital Factor, written for radio by Howard Rodman from the story by Nelson Bond. Featured in the cast were Raymond Edward Johnson as Crowder, John McGovern as the engineer, and Luis van Rooten as the Martian. Your host was Norman Rose. Music by Albert Buhrman. Dimension X is produced by William Welch and directed by Fred Wiehe.

repeated gong