



"Aftermath"
1.05

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The view opens on a grande vista of deep space, stars glistening all around. Though something is slowly approaching on the horizon.

We slowly pan in through the expanse of space and come to see that the approaching dot is actually a small, battered old CARGO SHIP.

It's the ship that was owned by Thomas Hatch, and behind it is something much bigger on the same horizon, approaching threateningly.

We see the vast ion, plasma storm with it's sinister orange glow churning up the space all around it as it rapidly comes in.

The cargo ship doesn't stand a chance and is swallowed by the glowing orange storm, which rapidly and menacingly comes directly at our view.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. DIADEM - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

A sudden jolt wakes the perfectly manicured, handsome, blonde Captain GRANT JAMESON from his slumber. He's clearly had a nightmare.

The quarters around him are quite large, bright, clean and filled with tasteful decorations. It's the opposite of the Avalon.

Jameson groans as he wipes the sleep from his eyes, now realizing what woke him up was the beeping intercom next to his bed.

JAMESON

Damn it, this better be good.

Reaching over, Jameson presses the intercom.

JAMESON

This is Jameson, what is it?.

SERTOK'S COMM VOICE

Captain, sensors are picking up a distress signal from---

JAMESON
 (cutting him off)
 Commander Sertok, do you know what
 time it is?

SERTOK'S COMM VOICE
 Oh-four-thirty-hours, sir.

JAMESON
 In other words, downtime. Call me
 in the morning.

He goes to switch off the intercom.

SERTOK'S COMM VOICE
 (quickly)
 Captain, the signal is coming from
 Sector E-47.

This grabs the attention of Jameson, who refrains from
 switching the comm off and thinks.

There is a pause as Jameson considers.

SERTOK'S COMM VOICE
 Captain?

JAMESON
 Yes.
 (pondering)
 Pinpoint the exact co-ordinates of
 the distress call and set a course,
 warp five.

SERTOK'S COMM VOICE
 Understood sir. Sertok out.

The comm line goes dead and Jameson sits back in his bed now
 fully awake, and quite pleased.

He turns in his bed and reaches over to the stunning young
 woman who is lying asleep next to him, her Starfleet uniform
 discarded nearby.

It's Commander MELANIE MOURICK.

JAMESON
 (softly)
 Mel.
 (silence)
 Mel, honey.

Gently, he begins to wake her up and Melanie stirs slowly
 from her slumber.

She turns and sees Jameson looking at her. She smiles.

MELANIE

Hey, Captain.

(beat)

I was dreaming.

JAMESON

I woke you for a good reason, trust me.

(grins)

I think it worked.

MELANIE

(interested)

They found the shuttle?

JAMESON

(nods)

We're on our way there right now.
We'll know soon.

MELANIE

(smiles)

I can't wait to see his face.

JAMESON

Me neither. Hatch is gonna regret the day he let you go for the rest of his life.

MELANIE

All I need to know is that the best man won.

With a broad smile, Jameson leans in and kisses Melanie tenderly, but with a hint of passion.

Eventually he breaks off, leaving her wanting more.

JAMESON

(mock serious)

Now, get dressed, Commander. We're due on the bridge.

She laughs and mock salutes.

MELANIE

Sir, yes, sir.

On that, Jameson gets out of his bed and heads off to the bathroom.

Melanie is left watching him go as she lies in the bed, contemplating what comes next with a grin.

INT. U.S.S. DIADEM - BRIDGE

The turbolift doors slide open, allowing a now fully-uniformed Jameson and Melanie to step onto the jewel in the ship's crown: the bridge.

It is a vast, perfectly clean and operated flagship-type bridge, filled with Starfleet OFFICERS going about their business almost robotically.

Jameson and Melanie give each other a last personal look as they enter and adopt a perfect veneer of professionalism.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER SERTOK, a calm Vulcan science officer who has the conn, exits the Captain's chair as he sees them enter.

SERTOK
(loudly)
Captain on the bridge.

JAMESON
(firm)
Status report.

SERTOK
We've just reached Sector E-47,
Captain. Sensors are now scanning
the precise coordinates of the
distress signal.

MELANIE
(cagey)
Have we yet determined the source
of the transmission?

SERTOK
Yes, Commander. We believe the
signal is a standard automated
distress frequency of the Gamma 812
range Epsom-class cargo vessel.
(beat)
Not unlike the one that we
rendezvoused with twelve hours ago.

Melanie nods and exchanges a look with Jameson. They already suspected what the Vulcan said.

SERTOK

There is also evidence a violent ionic plasma storm quite unlike anything on Starfleet records passed through this sector just several hours ago. It's logical to theorize this storm may have been the cause of the distress signal.

JAMESON

(nods)

Acknowledged.

A nearby console beeps and a science OFFICER checks the readings.

OFFICER

Sir, we're in visual range of the distress signal coordinates.

Jameson again looks at Melanie, the hint of a smile exchanged between them.

JAMESON

On screen.

The viewscreen blinks into life and displays a vast expanse of space. And nothing more. Everyone looks confused.

MELANIE

(reflexively)

Where is it?

Jameson gives her a quick, sharp look to say nothing more which Melanie receives.

JAMESON

The Commander means the source of the distress signal. These are the correct coordinates?

SERTOK

(checks console)

Yes, Captain. The signal is still broadcasting.

MELANIE

(confused)

But from where?

(to science officer)

Scan for vessels within a five light year region.

OFFICER
 (scans; shakes head)
 Nothing, Commander.

A pause as Jameson tries getting his head around this. He's growing worried.

SERTOK
 (checking console)
 Captain, I'm picking up something.
 A metallurgical composite one
 hundred fifty meters off our hull.
 It's broadcasting the signal from a
 transceiver attached to its underside.

JAMESON
 A metallurgical composite?. In
 English, Sertok.

SERTOK
 A fragment, sir. Of a ship's hull.

Suddenly realizing what has happened, Jameson and Melanie exchange a look that encompasses shock, horror and a little panic.

SERTOK
 I believe whatever vessel
 transmitted this distress
 frequency--has been destroyed.

The view proceeds to pan away from the concerned looks of Jameson, Melanie and the rest of the crew, and moves out through the viewscreen.

EXT. SPACE

The view continues panning out and away, gradually revealing Excelsior-class Federation starship, the U.S.S. DIADEM, in all it's glory.

The view moves out and turns away from the Diadem, starting to focus in on something tiny hovering the space, emitting an intermittent red light.

Slowly, we pan in on what we see to indeed be a fragment of a ship's hull. The distress transceiver blinks red as it routinely transmits.

And next to it is imprinted in graffiti-like lettering the words 'LIFE'S A BITCH. THEN YOU DATE ONE IN STARFLEET'.

SLOW FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. U.S.S. DIADEM - BRIDGE

It's all at red alert. Officers run back and forth across the massive bridge, almost in a panic. It's clear the Diadem isn't at red alert often.

JAMESON

Begin a search on all bands for anything unusual at all. Cloaks, radiation, more fragments. I want a full report yesterday.

SERTOK

Aye, sir.

OFFICER

Not getting anything yet, sir.

Jameson is out of his chair, standing just before the Diadem's almost too-massive viewscreen.

JAMESON

Prepare a class six probe immediately. I want a full scan of the entire quadrant if we have to.

We pan over to Melanie, who is hovering over the science console.

MELANIE

Beam the fragment into the cargo bay.

SERTOK

Acknowledged.

MELANIE

And send every available science team down when it's ready. We need to find out what just happened.

Sertok nods, allowing Melanie to move over to Jameson. They lean together to speak in confidence.

They stare into space for a long moment before either speaks.

MELANIE

Do you think we...?

JAMESON

God I hope not.

MELANIE

It was just a prank, right? He was just supposed to get knocked around and we'd fix him up and all that?

JAMESON

Yes.

In fear, ignoring protocol, Melanie grabs and squeezes Jameson's hand.

JAMESON

We can keep hoping. Maybe a ship came by. Or he ran into one of those subspace pockets.

MELANIE

Grant, we may have to face it.

Melanie's face goes ash.

MELANIE

He might be dead.

JAMESON

That's the last thing I want to consider. His shuttle has to be floating around out there somewhere.

MELANIE

(louder)

But what if it's not!? Tom could be vapor out there.

Jameson moves to hold Melanie's shoulders to quiet her, but moves away to keep protocol.

JAMESON

We can't think of that right now, Mel. We have to keep thinking positive. We can't think of the consequences if he's...

MELANIE

(loud again)

Dead! Just say it, Grant. He might be dead. And we might have killed him!

Jameson turns serious as he looks at the other bridge officers.

JAMESON

Quiet Mel. No, we don't know that he's dead. It could have been the storm, an attack, his own crappy warp core.

MELANIE

Oh come off it! We sent him into that thing and look where it's got us!

The pair stands before the viewscreen for a long moment, pondering and worrying. Until--

SERTOK

Sir, the fragment has been brought aboard and initial scans have been completed.

Jameson turns around in a flash.

JAMESON

Yes?

SERTOK

It's just as I hypothesized. The vessel was destroyed by an ion burst within the storm.

JAMESON

Is there any indication of other wreckage out there? Even microscopic?

Sertok's expression sours. But not much, of course.

SERTOK

Curiously, there is none at all.

JAMESON

Not even subatomic particles? Any signs of other damage?

SERTOK

No, sir.

Melanie controls her voice poorly.

MELANIE

Try to investigate it. Take whatever time or resources you need.

SERTOK

Aye.

Sertok exits the view, going back to his station.

MELANIE

Oh, God.

Melanie and Jameson look at each other with very worried looks in their eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. U.S.S. DIADEM - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Jameson and Melanie, now out of uniform and looking extremely haggard, sit face-to-face on their bed. Jameson is himself sporting a small beard borne of a few days without shaving.

MELANIE

God, Grant. What did we do?

JAMESON

We didn't do anything. We just sent someone on their way and they happened to get caught in a freak storm.

Melanie is rapidly tearing up.

MELANIE

How can you be so callous about this!? You found that storm a week ago, you set it up. I just wanted him to be embarrassed for a bit. YOU wanted to send him into that thing!

JAMESON

(scoffs)

Me!? You pointed it out to me when we found it! This was all YOU! I wanted to just send a fake Klingon transmission at him.

MELANIE

What!? This is a great time to tell me, Grant.

JAMESON

You said it wasn't ambitious enough. You said I don't have that edge.

MELANIE

Don't pin this on me! Why can't you understand a poor man died because of us!?

JAMESON

Yeah, a poor man you've been humping just as long as me.

MELANIE

That's not... That's not even right Grant.

JAMESON

Oh, now you're the one to talk about what's right? I didn't even know about Hatch until last week when we got that message about his pickup.

MELANIE

And I chose you. I chose you over him.

JAMESON

Yeah, I recognize that tone. Trying to pad my ego and calm me down while you blame all of this on me. It's not going to work this time, Melanie.

MELANIE

What!? I'm just trying to tell you the truth. I'll admit it, okay? I was wrong keeping him from you. I was wrong in sleeping with another man while I was with you. But you forgave me.

JAMESON

Yeah, and now I'm regretting it as much as my decision to talk to you that first day.

MELANIE

So now you regret meeting me!?

By now, both people are flat out yelling at each other, the source of their frustration long off conversation.

JAMESON

Yes. If I'd known you were such a...

(pause)

...WHORE, I would have recommended you to spend the rest of your career doing laundry duty at the academy!

Melanie is brimming with seething anger.

MELANIE

I got my rank all on my own!

JAMESON

No you didn't! You're twenty five years old, Melanie. Your classmates are lucky to be lieutenants right now.

MELANIE

So what, you bumped up my rank to get me on the ship?

JAMESON

Exactly!

MELANIE

You bastard!

JAMESON

Face it, you're a good lay. A guy gets lonely in space, even a captain.

Melanie is stopped cold.

MELANIE

What?

JAMESON

Sometimes I just wish you were born on Orion just so you didn't have to talk so much-

MELANIE

(interrupting)

YOU SON OF A BITCH!

Jameson is suddenly angry and stone-faced. His demeanor changes completely.

JAMESON

That's SIR. You will address me as SIR, Commander.

MELANIE

Oh, now you get all formal with me after, what, six months in bed and an hour of shouting at each other?

JAMESON

Address me by my rank, COMMANDER, or I'll have you detained.

MELANIE

I don't have to do a thing, GRANT.
I'm not really a commander, anyway,
right?

Melanie, now openly sobbing, walks right out of Jameson's quarters.

Jameson stands like a statue for a moment after the door closes, staring at them as if willing Melanie back.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Diadem slips forward in space majestically, sliding past a red-orange star on its way to somewhere.

INT. U.S.S. DIADEM - LOUNGE

The lounge of the Diadem is everything you would expect a massive, late 23rd century vessel would have. One wall is entirely clear, giving a spectacular view of the distant star, bathing the room in red light. Another wall is broken by a real bar full of multicolored drinks and bottles of all kinds. The room is more than large enough to make Avalon's cargo bay seem like a mere closet.

We slide over gaming people of all species and genders, never really focusing on one to be of any importance. In fact, we scour very nearly the entirety of the lounge before we approach a sulking Melanie. She's palming, very surprisingly, a picture of her and Tom Hatch standing before a rather large crater on the moon. Hatch is wearing clothing similar to what one would wear while on a tropical vacation, making the picture quite possibly the most surreal image in the entire series.

Though she isn't crying a single tear, it's easy to tell that Melanie is still just as shaken from before.

MELANIE

Tom, I'm so sorry for the things I
said. We should have talked it out.
I should have helped you get on
your feet.

(pause)

I don't ask forgiveness. God knows
I'll never get it in my lifetime, I
just wish I could tell you I'm sorry.

She stares at the photo for a long moment.

JAMESON (O.S.)

Mel.

Melanie shakes with rage for a moment before calming.

MELANIE

What do you want?

Jameson sits next to her. Though Jameson has been a more or less a plastic mask from the moment we first saw him, he looks completely sincere in this scene.

JAMESON

I think we both need to apologize. I'm sorry for the things I said back there. I guess I'm just in shock about the whole thing.

Melanie laughs bitterly.

MELANIE

That's the biggest load of BS I've ever heard. You meant everything you said.

She looks into his eyes.

MELANIE

You're not even sorry he's gone. Just one less guy to claim your prize trophy.

JAMESON

That hurts, Mel. How can you sit there saying I'm callous at the death of another human being. A death WE'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR, if you've forgotten.

Melanie sighs deeply.

MELANIE

Stop trying to argue, Grant.
(beat)
Sorry, SIR.

JAMESON

I'm trying to apologize for that. I got out of line.
(laugh)
I guess I'm not as good a captain as I thought. Can't even go a day without an argument among a friend.
(MORE)

JAMESON (CONT'D)

(pause)

Look, I'm done trying to find excuses, okay? The truth is, we made a mistake and it led to the worst possible outcome in the universe. We let our pride and ego get in the way of our jobs and it cost a life. I don't hold any illusions we're going to get court martialled for this and even thrown into a penal colony for a few years. We deserve it.

Melanie's eyes raise in surprise.

MELANIE

That's the most mature thing I've heard from you since we met.

Seeing his opportunity, Jameson slips forward, nearly a centimeter away from Melanie's ear.

JAMESON

(whispering)

But we may be able to slip out of it.

MELANIE

What?

Jameson smiles devilishly.

JAMESON

I've been thinking, Mel. You just left him a few days ago. You should still have his codes, his account information, access to his records.

MELANIE

I think I do. But what does that have to do with anything?

JAMESON

What do people do when they move out of their houses to go on voyages that last for say--six years?

Melanie's face lights up with simultaneous joy and disgust.

MELANIE

You freeze all the accounts, sell the home and usually store all your possessions somewhere safe.

JAMESON

Exactly. And can't all of that be accomplished by someone with full access to another's private codes?

MELANIE

Yeah. But that's--that's WRONG.

JAMESON

Think about it. If we pull this off, no one will miss Hatch for nearly five years. After another two, he'll be officially considered dead and nobody will think twice.

MELANIE

How can you even be talking about this!? That's almost as illegal as taking a phaser to Tom himself!

JAMESON

It's not if they never know about it.

Melanie shifts in her seat, obviously conflicted. Jameson swoops in one more time.

JAMESON

I know you have the codes, Commander.

Jameson lets the last word hang in the air, the threat obviously intended.

Melanie's eyes widen.

MELANIE

Yes, sir.

Jameson is suddenly beaming.

JAMESON

Good! Good. Just think, in a few months we'll have forgotten about all of this and in a few years... nobody will care.

MELANIE

I just hope you're right.

While melanie stares at the photograph for a long moment, Jameson smiles and waves over a passing server for a large round of drinks.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. U.S.S. DIADEM - BRIDGE

We fade back in to see the Diadem's still perfectly trim and proper bridge, perfectly manned by perfect officers very much the cream of the crop. In fact, it would look exactly like the previous bridge scene if Jameson wasn't sporting a perfectly trimmed moustache and bald spot and Melanie's hair wasn't cut short and dyed from her regular red to a dark brown.

As we pan over this strange new scene, text appears on screen:

Four Years Later

Jameson suddenly pulls out a very expensive looking pair of reading glasses and places them on the edge of his nose. As he does, a young yeoman approaches with a large PADD in her hand. Jameson takes it with a smile.

JAMESON

(reading from PADD)

Thank you, honored delegates and members of the Federation senate for this honorable posting as Admiral of the fourth fleet. I'm expected to have a long speech glorifying all of you and how awe inspiring Starfleet is, but I'm hungry and so are all of you...

(beat)

Pause for laughter....

(another beat)

So once again I thank you for this promotion. Allow me to raise a toast to the continued security and prosperity of this Federation. May she last 'till the end of time.

(one last beat)

And take a drink and sit down.

He sets the PADD down on a small table near his seat.

JAMESON

It was good, but don't you think it's a bit self-deprecating?

Melanie approaches, her looks seem almost plastic with her new makeover.

MELANIE

That's the point, isn't it? A man who can make fun of himself has to be good for the job. Makes him more able to talk to underlings without them shaking in their boots.

JAMESON

How true.

(quietly, intimately)

What did I ever do to deserve you?

MELANIE

(winks)

I think you know what.

Jameson smiles broadly. His blonde moustache and half-bald head make him look very much the 1970's pornography star.

JAMESON

That reminds me, only one more year 'till it's all over.

MELANIE

(truly clueless)

The wha'?

JAMESON

You know...

(whispering)

Our little problem.

Melanie looks confused at first, but it slowly dawns on her.

MELANIE

Oooh... You know, I'd really forgotten about that.

(touching hair)

Didn't I do this for the second anniversary?

JAMESON

I think so. It's been so hectic lately I can't tell when what happened anymore.

MELANIE

(playfully)

And yet you can remember this particular moment?

JAMESON

Just one more year and I'll forget
about it just like I do everything
else.

MELANIE

You're one bad man, you know that?

Jameson smiles lewdly.

JAMESON

Really?

MELANIE

And I love it.

Melanie slowly moves forward, intent on something.

The top of her head obstructs our view.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. DIADEM - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Her head SLAMS back into view, quickly followed by the
balding scalp of Jameson! They run into his quarters,
quickly stripping each other's clothes off as fast as they
can manage.

Both of them moan and gasp in pleasure as they touch each
other's most sensitive parts.

As they move around, we can finally tell that the clothes
being so easily discarded are not their normal duty uniforms,
but fancier dress clothes. Similarly, when Melanie comes
into full view, we can see two glasses of Romulan ale half-
full in her grip.

MELANIE

It's been too long Admiral Jameson.

JAMESON

(between kisses)

I never thought... Admiral
Cartwright would shut up... ever.

MELANIE

(same)

At least your speech was nice and
short.

JAMESON

But this won't be.

The couple slides off camera directly down, straight into Jameson's warm sheets.

MELANIE

You really know how to talk to a lady.

Their smiles are drowned out by a long, passionate, french kiss. All the good action, however, happens under the blankets.

Jameson suddenly giggles quickly.

JAMESON

Whoa, hey, that's new.

MELANIE

One of the great things about having Deltans on board.

Melanie obviously does it again, causing Jameson to redouble his kissing efforts.

Both of them close their eyes in bliss.

EXT. U.S.S. DIADEM - CORRIDOR

We see the massive, clean and perfectly maintained corridors of the Diadem in all their glory.

But the glory is marred by a marching contingent of twelve armed and very gruff looking Starfleet security forces.

SECURITY OFFICER 1

This is it.

The officer in charge removes a small keycard from a hidden pocket and slides it into the door's keypad.

SECURITY OFFICER 2

(whispering)

MOVE!

All twelve armed beings suddenly storm into...

INT. U.S.S. DIADEM - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Jameson's room, where he's getting quite busy with Melanie! The dozen officers run in, covering every possible escape route, all of them pointing massive phaser rifles directly at the bed.

SECURITY OFFICER 1

Federation security forces! Get up and put your hands behind your head! NOW!

It takes a moment for the sexing couple to realize what's going on.

When they do, Melanie screams in shock and terror.

JAMESON

What in jumping jehosephat is going on?

SECURITY OFFICER 1

(tough)

Stand up and place your hands
behind your head now Sirs!

Jameson slowly stands, covering his modesty. Melanie rushes around to grab her undergarments.

SECURITY OFFICER 2

Stand up now!

Melanie, her eyes tearing up, stands next to Jameson, complying with the order. Jameson does the same, though still quite nude.

Two officers rush forward and slap cuffs on the pair.

JAMESON

As an Admiral in Starfleet, I
demand an explanation!

The officers don't respond, they just herd the pair on their feet and out the door.

JAMESON

Don't I even get some pants!?

Officer 1 nods to a subordinate, who sighs and grabs a pair of trousers on his way out. He holds them under Jameson's legs, allowing the new admiral to slide his legs in. The subordinate officer sighs once more and pulls the pants up, covering Jameson's private parts.

JAMESON

Thank you.

SECURITY OFFICER 1

Admiral Grant Jameson, Commander
Melanie Mourick, you are both
hereby charged with the murder of
Federation Citizen Thomas Hatch on
stardate 9613.4. You now have the
right to remain silent.

(MORE)

SECURITY OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)

Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of Federation law. An attorney can be appointed to you as per Starfleet charter sixteen-zeta-dash-b. If you choose to waive this right, you forfeit the chance for a trial by your peers and are subject to a military tribunal. Do you understand these rights as I have told them to you?

JAMESON

What? Yes, yes I understand.

The group of now twelve security officers and two half-naked Starfleet officers leave Jameson's quarters.

INT. U.S.S. DIADEM - CORRIDOR

The fourteen people march out, Melanie and Jameson quite a bit embarrassed at their state of undress.

As they round one perfectly polished corridor, Jameson is surprised to see Sertok waiting for them.

JAMESON

Sertok! OH, I'm so glad to see you. Can you tell these officers to let us go?

Sertok's Vulcan face falls slightly.

SERTOK

Unfortunately, no, Admiral.

JAMESON

What? Why not?

SERTOK

Because it was I who ordered your arrest.

The group stops right in front of Sertok just for this conversation it seems.

JAMESON

I can't believe that.

SERTOK

It is, Admiral. You see, I have been spending much of my off-duty hours recently going over your actions and logs immediately following Thomas Hatch's disappearance. Even immediately following the discovery of the only piece of wreckage, your behavior was uncharacteristic of an officer investigating circumstances such as these.

Jameson is completely baffled.

JAMESON

You went through my logs?

SERTOK

Indeed. Exactly fourteen months ago, I petitioned Starfleet to open an official investigation into Mister Hatch's disappearance. Surprisingly, Starfleet already had it on record that he was merely on a long vacation to survey the Alpha Quadrant on a private vessel, consequently, all of his accounts were frozen, his assets sold and his shuttle bought by an anonymous taker. It was quite airtight, to use the expression. Starfleet would not begin an investigation.

Jameson's confusing slips away, replaced by a cold anger.

JAMESON

So what convinced them to start one?

SERTOK

Four months and sixteen days ago, I noticed a strange call from your quarters to a less than reputable shuttle disassembly yard on Alpha Centauri. Following my curiosity, I traced the records of this yard and curiously found no traces of a Gamma 812 range Epsom-class cargo vessel beyond a very hastily written record of its disassembly.

(MORE)

SERTOK (CONT'D)

No parts, waste packages or even recycled materials were on record that should have come from such a shuttle's mass, hull type, well, it's very existence. With this new piece of evidence, I again went before Starfleet. It was then very easy to check your private logs, specifically those recorded directly after the incident in question.

(beat)

I believe it was... "I hope this works with every fiber of my being. If Melanie gets her codes wrong, we'll be arrested for sure." Again, with this, I quickly came to the conclusion that Commander Mourick did indeed use her past relationship with Thomas Hatch to claim his private codes and create this evidence of his simple vacation. When my case was compiled, I notified the Diadem's security forces.

Jameson and Melanie are stunned into silence for a very long moment.

Jameson, still cuffed, of course, LUNGES at the Vulcan, murderous rage in his eyes. The combination of six security officers and the Vulcan's far superior strength hold him down.

MELANIE

Grant! Stop it!

JAMESON

Damned Vulcan! I'll have you demoted back to cadet!

SECURITY OFFICER 1

(to Officer 3)

Record this.

SECURITY OFFICER 3

Yes, sir.

While Jameson shouts, roars, and yells expletives, the security officer removes a small camera and begins recording everything said.

We see this from the point of view of the camera, slowly lowering the quality of the image until we begin pulling back...

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERATION COURTROOM

We keep pulling back to reveal this scene being played out on a small screen right in front of a quite attentive jury.

As we pull back even more, we see that this courtroom is almost a dead ringer for one in the present day. Wooden benches, seats, judge's platform. All of it is exquisitely carved and polished. In fact, the only thing distinguishing this place as from the future is the massive Federation logo standing out on a massive flag behind the judge.

The video ends very quickly. We pan around the entire room, slowly coming to rest on the backs of Jameson and Melanie. Both are wearing gray prisoner uniforms and are shackled to their seats. They don't appear to be much different except for a very depressed look on both their faces.

PROSECUTOR

As you can see, it's quite evident former Admiral Jameson was perfectly willing to kill the very being who found them out.

DEFENSE

Objection! He never states that in the file!

The judge nods.

JUDGE

Sustained. The prosecution will continue WITHOUT trying to pry into thoughts not clearly established on record.

The PROSECUTOR, a rail thin human with a slight German accent, bows slightly.

PROSECUTOR

My apologies. I mean to say the former admiral was filled with a rage somewhat uncharacteristic of his person. It is quite odd to say the least.

The jury nods in assent.

PROSECUTOR

And notice how former Commander Mourick stays perfectly still in the whole ordeal. Another oddity, don't you agree?

Jameson and Melanie turn to the DEFENSE attorney, who shakes his head in frustration. It's easy to tell this is a losing battle for her.

JUDGE

Does the defense have a counterpoint to this piece of evidence?

She turns to Jameson and Melanie.

DEFENSE

I should have known he was going to bring this up. We're going to have to change our strategy.

Jameson and Melanie look at each other then to their defender.

MELANIE

What do you want to do?

CUT TO:

BLACKNESS

Like the very old and cliché spinning newspapers used in old newsreels and movies, a video screen suddenly activates, revealing a grid of moving pictures, all of them news reporters or archive footage with news tickers scrolling along the bottom.

Slowly, a grid piece at the bottom left moves forward, showing an Andorian reporter behind a desk. His antennae swivel around with interest as he reports.

ANDORIAN NEWS REPORTER

The newswaves are flying as this landmark trial reaches what some analysts call "round two." Former admiral Grant Jameson and his lover, Commander Melanie Mourick have fully admitted to killing the innocent victim Thomas Hatch in a simple prank gone wrong.

The reporter disappears to show the same picture of Hatch in a Hawaiian shirt and too-short shorts. Melanie is still there, though the picture has obviously been edited to put the emphasis on Hatch.

ANDORIAN NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

With this admittance, we go right into the sentencing phase, where inside sources say the couple's lawyer will try for an almost forgotten legal defense: temporary insanity. Unfortunately, since telepathic investigations have been banned by a recent Federation Supreme Court ruling, this defense may have a chance to succeed. We now go to our senior mental health correspondent, T'ziki.

He fades out slowly and the news report goes back to its place on the grid. Another one from the center comes forward, revealing a female Vulcan in black robes.

VULCAN NEWS REPORTER

(monotone)

In this completely illogical defense strategy, defendants Jameson and Mourick have chosen to admit they are guilty of the crime of high murder, but only because they were in a state of mind willing to do this at the time of the act. A defense such as this was invented on Earth several hundred years ago to explain several emotional outbursts with no other cause. It was, however, completely disbarred one hundred years ago when Court systems began telepathically scanning defendants for past states of mind.

(pause)

But with the new decision banning these scans in all further court proceedings, the Federation court system may fall into a quagmire of illogic and emotional decisions. To further this issue, we will refer you to...

She fades out once more, going back into the grid.

Finally, an ancient human male with a shiny bald head and thick moustache comes up from the very bottom of the grid.

HUMAN NEWS REPORTER

This tragic tale of love and loss began nearly a year ago when Commander Melanie Mourick fell into a relationship with two men. Thomas Hatch, a young man with a dead end job and no prospects in life and Grant Jameson, captain of the U.S.S. Diadem and a shoe-in for promotion within a few years. This double life continued until Miss Mourick grew tired of Hatch's lazy lifestyle and immature demeanor. In rage, she flew into the arms of her other lover and plotted a revenge plan to trap the poor man in an ion storm, shaking his vessel and proving a childish point against him. Unfortunately, neither officers could foresee the awesome and unpredictable power of this storm, and it lead to the untimely death of mister Hatch.

(beat)

Unfortunately, in grief, the pair tried to hide Hatch's death by using his private codes to make it seem like he merely left with no traces on earth. But by the heroic efforts of now captain Sertok, these two were finally brought to justice. The headlines have been active lately on their admittance of temporary insanity in this case, making them the first defendants in over a century to claim this...

He disappears back into the grid.

After he does, the entire grid drifts back into nothing, forcing us to:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. JAIL CELL

It's a rather comfortable jail cell, however. Though the walls outside the fifteen-by-ten foot cell are cold and made of featureless concrete, the interior of Jameson's cell holds several candles, a small bookshelf stuffed with PADDs and several ancient looking books and a bed with very fluffy sheets, blankets and pillows. The rest of the walls are covered with calendars, pictures of starships in deep space... and one framed picture of Melanie still with her long red hair.

Sitting outside the force field barrier to Jameson's cell is a very fat and unpleasant looking man. While his suit is impeccably pressed and clean over his muscular frame and he carries himself with professional grace, the very look of Jameson's lawyer, JONAH RAVEN, is one of sheer unpleasantness.

RAVEN

Tell me again, did she abuse you in any way? Harsh words spoken almost every night? Any physical fights?

Jameson sits up from his comfortable bed, looking Raven in the eye.

JAMESON

Absolutely not. I'll say again, our relationship was based on sex, nothing more.

RAVEN

Work with me, Grant. Your last pitiful defense bought you eighty years in here. Work with me, and you'll get off after only serving, what has it been, six months? Let's just find a way to make it all her fault while making you the victim. Even more than Hatch. The public'll love you so much, you'll probably get a medal they moment you walk off the transport shuttle.

JAMESON

But I can't betray Melanie like that! It's--just wrong!

RAVEN

More wrong than the act you're in dire trouble for? Look, just release a statement saying that Melanie was the true ringleader. Six months away from her in your own cell, plus weeks of counseling have finally given you the strength to tell the whole truth.

(pause)

That she mentally and physically abused you while on the Diadem. Enough to the point that you admitted to killing Thomas Hatch when she merely wanted to get rid of a former lover that somehow escaped her clutches.

JAMESON

Where is this coming from!? I can't say that!

Raven sighs and begins to pack up his briefcase.

RAVEN

Then I'm terribly sorry, Mister Jameson. There is nothing I can do for you.

He takes a few steps down the hall.

RAVEN

Enjoy the next eight decades.

Jameson sits resolute.

Raven shrugs.

Jameson lies back down.

Raven almost walks out of earshot...

Jameson's face cringes in deep thought.

Raven stops, slapping his shoes on the floor to mimic walking away. He smiles, mentally counting down the seconds...

Jameson sits up.

Raven mimics leaving through the jail's door...

JAMESON

Wait! Come back here you leech!

Raven raises his fist in triumph before calming down and walking right back to Jameson's cell.

RAVEN

Yes? What do you want?

JAMESON

Let's talk about this statement you want me to make.

RAVEN

Are you sure?

JAMESON

Yes, whatever it takes to get me out of here.

Raven looks into Jameson's cell.

RAVEN

I don't know, some people would kill to have the luxuries in that little room. Do you want to give them up so soon?

JAMESON

Yes, damn you! Yes! Get me out of here! I want my ship back!

RAVEN

Now, now. No need to get angry. I'm not the one who ruined it all for you. It's all her.

Jameson's eyes narrow with a coldness we've not seen even in the 45th century.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FEDERATION COURTROOM

We go back to the same courtroom from before. The only real difference is a distinct lack of Melanie and Raven taking the defense's place. The same prosecutor is grilling Jameson, who is squirming like mad on the witness stand.

PROSECUTOR

So now you come to us saying that, all of a sudden, you're man enough to admit your junior officer and lover for six months had been abusing you for the duration of your relationship?

JAMESON

Y... yes.

PROSECUTOR

And she had you kill Thomas Hatch as a test of loyalty, that if you didn't, you would die yourself?

JAMESON

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

Let me make it clear for everyone present. After six months of an eighty year sentence, you come to us with a story even more farfetched than a dramatic tale of "temporary insanity", expecting sympathy. Am I right?

JAMESON

Well... I.... uh...

Raven is on his feet.

RAVEN

(calmly)

Objection! The Prosecution is leading the witness on.

JUDGE

Sustained. Continue your questioning.

The prosecutor nods before walking over to the jury. Raven sits, his expression as blank as stone.

PROSECUTOR

A new story after your old one failed. A new light on an already open and shut case. What I'm having trouble understanding is why you didn't just say this earlier.

JAMESON

I was--still afraid of her.

PROSECUTOR

Ah, okay. You were afraid Melanie would somehow seek retribution from across several dozen light years from her own penal colony to yours.

Some jury members laugh. The prosecutor moves in to the kill.

PROSECUTOR

And yet, it was only one week after you hired mister Raven here to be your own attorney that you came out with this statement.

(a smile)

Do you know mister Raven's track record?

Raven looks at the Prosecutor, ready to jump in at a moment's notice. The judge does not look happy with this turn.

PROSECUTOR

We're all aware that Raven handles cases such as yours. Defending those charged with murder because they're so obviously innocent. Did you know his first case was exactly like yours? Two lovers charged with killing a third. Granted, they were a Denobulan marriage triumvirate, but the point stands, the defendants were found innocent of the crime because, guess what? They claimed...

Raven jumps up, loud and livid.

RAVEN

OBJECTION!

Expecting this, the Prosecutor keeps talking, trying to out-volume Raven.

PROSECUTOR

The couple claimed they were abused by the murdered party!

RAVEN

THIS HAS NO RELEVANCE TO THIS CASE!

The jury goes wild!

The judge is finally forced to bang his gavel. Just once, however.

JUDGE

Order!

All activity stops. Raven and the Prosecutor approach the bench on the Judge's beckoning.

JUDGE

The prosecution will be reminded that this is three times in this hearing she has made statements not pertinent to this case or has tried to lead the witness into a damaging train of thought. I advise you to stop this.

PROSECUTOR

But, your honor, this has EVERYTHING to do with this case. If I may continue, you will see why.

The Judge is quiet for a moment.

JUDGE

(long sigh)

Very well. But remember this may not be considered evidence if you make one false move.

PROSECUTOR

I understand.

The lawyers move off. Raven's face is pink in rage. The Prosecutor smiles and goes back to the jury.

PROSECUTOR

In this previous case, the defendants were found innocent because they claimed to have been abused by the murdered party and they were not in a sane state of mind when they bludgeoned his head with a hand phaser and threw his unconscious body into a plasma stream. Remember the case now?

Some jury members nod in acknowledgement.

PROSECUTOR

And didn't it seem odd that this story didn't come into play until the couple's second hearing? After they had hired Mister Raven?

Raven is red with rage. The Judge is a split second away from dismissing it all.

PROSECUTOR

So here we are again. Mister Grant Jameson claims that he had been abused by a woman and his executive officer for six months before the horrible murder of Thomas Hatch, and that this event was some sick test of his love for her.

The prosecutor runs up to Jameson.

PROSECUTOR

Is this your story now?

JAMESON

It is.

PROSECUTOR

Even after you never said this on your first hearing?

(beat)

When there was zero evidence of any abuse on you!?

The Jury mumbles quietly.

JAMESON

It... it... it was... all mental in the last two months.

PROSECUTOR

It was? Really? Then you still must have mental trauma because just a few minutes ago, you claimed she would harm you in some way if you had admitted to the abuse any sooner. So what is it? Did she stop the physical abuse two months before the incident? Or do you...

(pause, chooses words)

...not really remember?

The Jury is murmuring loudly.

PROSECUTOR

No further questions.

The Prosecutor sits, allowing Raven to stand and take her place.

RAVEN

Yes, the prosecution has raised issues with what look like flaws in Mister Jameson's statement. Flaws in his logic, it may seem. How no one knew about this abuse before his statement a few days ago. How there seems to be little evidence of said abuse. How it suddenly came out shortly after I was hired. Truly damning, isn't it? And now, because of a new governmental decree, I cannot just submit a telepathic log that shows the absolute truth of poor Mister Jameson's story. His horrible abuse, his tragic life for six months and the final, brutal murder of a young man that lead Jameson into this very courtroom.

Raven surveys the unimpressed jury. He concentrates hard, looking for any means to salvage his position.

RAVEN

May I bring up the woman in question here.

Raven brings a PADD out from his briefcase, tapping a few buttons as he does. Quickly, Raven shows a picture of Melanie to the entire jury. When they all see her, he slides the PADD into a projector before the judge's bench. A wall-sized screen on the far side of the courtroom reveals the image at monster proportions.

RAVEN

Melanie Mourick. Born in Moscow, Earth to a family of Starfleet officers stretching three generations, it was an unquestioned part of her destiny to join Starfleet upon her eighteenth year of life. At the academy, she excelled in command studies as well as physical education, gaining a proficiency at many sports both Terran and not. She had average grades for the remainder of her study career.

(MORE)

RAVEN (CONT'D)

(short beat)

Her first posting was aboard the U.S.S. Constellation on stardate 7748.3. She reached the ranks of both Lieutenant junior grade and full lieutenant on the Constellation, all of it happening within five years. After a rather heartfelt letter of recommendation from Commodore Decker, Mourick was promoted to lieutenant commander and sent--forgive me--transferred to the U.S.S. Diadem under then-captain Shir'ka. Following her reassignment to Starbase 47, the promotion of Captain Jameson, and finally the untimely death of Commander Williams to a faulty plasma converter, she achieved a field promotion to Commander that stayed with her for the rest of her career. The rest, as we know, is history. Jameson finally took notice of Mourick at the same time she took a liking to Mister Hatch. Their triangle, then, of course, was cut apart by his death and the trial you see before you.

Raven stops to take a breath.

RAVEN

Let us go back to the mention of Mourick's family. She was born in a family where almost every member had at least some rank in the Federation Starfleet. Now, I ask you, members of the jury, is that an environment to raise a child in? Even the most dedicated of parents would have had maybe three months every year to see their dear child, less so if they were aboard a deep space vessel or of rank below Commander. So it's easy to assume little Melanie spent much of her youth without parental influences in her life. No one to raise or guide her in social norms and basics of niceties that found this civilization.

(MORE)

RAVEN (CONT'D)

Oh sure, she did have a good education and several documented friends, but none of them compare to the needed influence of parents on children.

(beat)

And there is ample evidence that a lack of parents in a child's life can lead to all manner of mental problems that don't manifest themselves until adulthood... one of them being a need to control those closest to her, even if it means resorting to cruel words or even physical violence.

Raven stops again. The jury is at least interested in his words now. The Prosecutor is on pins and needles, waiting to tear his argument apart.

RAVEN

So is it very hard to believe that Miss Mourick, abandoned as a child because of a military family, would manifest some kind of disorder because of it? And is it harder to imagine she would manifest these disorders on the man she claimed to love? The one she was closest to? The one who filled a deep-seated psychological need to have someone in her life, no matter what it cost him?

The jury murmurs once more...

RAVEN

So if all of these things are easy to assume, why can't we also agree that six months of horrible abuse would scar this man as much as she was scarred... if not more so? Melanie was never physically struck in her life as far as we know and yet here we are. A reputable man who has openly admitted to committing the most abominable crime on our law books now has somehow mustered the strength to admit the wrongs done to him and the circumstances that lead to Hatch's death.

(MORE)

RAVEN (CONT'D)

So I ask you, good members of the jury, to consider all of this. A woman who grew up with no parents, mostly likely suffering from a disorder because of it, has snared a man into her terrible net and even forced him to murder another man in the same web. How can you convict this man to spend the rest of his natural life in prison when he has already suffered enough?

To keep the act going, Raven's eyes begin to moisten with his plea. Jameson begins his own waterworks on cue.

RAVEN

Can we be so heartless? I beg of you... let justice be done to those who are truly behind the crime, not the innocent bystanders who happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time.

(beat)

Thank you.

Raven sits down, his smug smile stretching from ear to ear.

Several members of the jury are not only misty-eyed, but some alien members are openly crying.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EARTH - FEDERATION COURTROOM

The outside of the austere building is filled with people both news-related and just cheering. Several shuttles and personal vehicles hover overhead, getting awesome panoramic shots of Jameson's release from prison.

Slowly, the massive wooden doors of the courthouse creak open, allowing at least twenty Starfleet security officers to march out with Jameson in their center. As they march out, the group is literally swarmed by newshounds, reporters and general fans. They fill the entire street, making it look like a living wave.

The scene slowly goes silent...

HUMAN NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

And today on a very unexpected move, the grand jury has found Grant Jameson not guilty on all charges pertaining to the murder of Thomas Hatch. All of the Federation's attention now falls on Melanie Mourick, where new evidence tells a very disturbing story of mental disorder, abuse and death. The complexity of this story continues to deepen as they days pass, it seems...

As he fades out in volume, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. SPACEDOCK - SUBSPACE DISTORTION BAR - FRONT BOOTH

The front booth of the Subspace Distortion bar is literally packed with representatives of every species in local space. But not sex. There is nothing but women of every variety around the table, fawning over something in the center seat.

And that something is none other than ANTON BYRON. His debonair looks seem a little crushed by the year or so since we last saw him. But every bit of his rough charm is still present. He looks positively elated as four females offer him the same drink simultaneously.

FEMALE 1

Tell us again, Anton. Please.
Tryessa hasn't heard your story yet.

Byron looks over to a human-looking woman with green hair.

BYRON

She hasn't? Poor girl.

Byron clears his throat and sets his drink down. He waves his arms around to gather the women closer.

BYRON

First of all, I have to assume
you've seen even a minute of the
news around the Federation?

Almost all the girls nod.

BYRON

Good. Good. Then you know my good
friend, Tom Hatch was brutally cut
down a year ago by--by...

Suddenly, Byron is caught by tears! The women closest to him begin to coo and hold him softly.

After a needlessly long moment, Byron regains his composure.

BYRON

Thank you.

(weeping)

Yes, he was killed. And now all the
news can talk about is the bad side
of him and the stuff he did.

(MORE)

BYRON (CONT'D)

Didn't finish Starfleet academy, lived in a small apartment when he could live anywhere, how he swore a lot even though no one else on Earth does so. But did you know about the time Hatch and me were stuck hovering over a gas giant while a Klingon war vessel hunted us?

Several girls gasp in horror. Byron nods in sympathy and waits a moment to continue.

BYRON

You see, we had just come from station K-12 and were shipping some trellium to a Vulcan observatory for some kind of spectrum analysis of another galaxy or something complicated like that. Anyway, on our way back, we heard this call from the Klink neutral zone. Being the guy he was, Tom went over there to see if someone needed help.

The girls "aww" in cute appreciation.

BYRON

But, of course, it was all a trap. All that was there was a Bird of Prey, weapons hot and ready for us. Fortunately, Tom knew about a nearby gas giant and got us there without the bastards getting a shot at us.

FEMALE 2

What happened then?

BYRON

Well, when we got to the planet...

We go very close to Byron as he speaks, his face filling the screen completely...

INT. FEDERATION SUPREME COURT

We pull back to the massive chambers of the Federation supreme court. Jameson sits in the prosecution chair this time. His moustache is gone, as is his bald spot. In fact, if he wore a Starfleet uniform instead of civilian clothing, it would be impossible to tell he had aged at all. The defense table is filled with official looking people of at least six species.

Byron keeps speaking as we explore the room. The fifty Justices in the court all stare at him as he speaks at the podium before them.

BYRON

We got to the planet and the Klingons just kept pounding us. I wanted to just go to warp and go to the nearest base, but Tom said they would just catch up and blow us to atoms before we got a light year out. He actually DOVE into the atmosphere of the planet, dodging the storms and whatnot to get away. The Bird of Prey followed and got caught in a lightning storm. We got out with some burns on the hull, they were torn to shreds.

The supreme court is silent as Byron stands nervously before the justices.

The CHIEF JUSTICE, a very old Tellarite, leans forward slightly.

CHIEF JUSTICE

Thank you, Mister Byron. That testimony was--unique.

Byron nods and walks off in a hurry. The Chief Justice turns to the smugly smiling Jameson.

CHIEF JUSTICE

Mister Jameson, you have brought this case before us because you say your Starfleet rights were violated during your arrest. You claim your rank of Admiral gave you the right to protest the violation of your quarters and sudden arrest as well as gave you the ability to request all pertinent details of your case before the trial. Am I correct?

JAMESON

Affirmative.

CHIEF JUSTICE

And in your statement, you say these rights were violated?

JAMESON

I do.

CHIEF JUSTICE

And you only wish to be given your rank and old posting in Starfleet back before the arrest? As if nothing happened?

JAMESON

I do, your honor.

Everyone in the courtroom, even some justices, murmur quickly.

The Chief Justice continues speaking, but we don't hear him as other voices, those of the news reporters from before, take over.

HUMAN NEWS REPORTER

In the twelfth day of this unprecedented supreme court session, former Admiral Grant Jameson, found not guilty of the murder of Thomas Hatch, now requests his old rank and post back before the arrest. He claims his most basic of rights were not only ignored, but violated on many accounts. The star witness today was Anton Byron, a close friend of Mister Hatch, who told tales of the victim's past and his possible actions that lead to his murder.

(pause)

As we know, after Jameson's trial, Melanie Mourick was taken from the New Zealand penal colony to a mental rehabilitation facility on Mars following new evidence of mental health problems no one knew of before.

(another short pause)

The swing vote in this case will be the six human judges, all of whom have made it clear that they disagreed with the verdict those few months ago, but yet are also the most staunch supporters of keeping rights firmly enforced in every circumstance.

(MORE)

HUMAN NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)

You might remember the case of Sallis versus Starfleet, where a simple case of human error let a previously convicted telepathic rapist go free because of these six judges.

(pause)

Needless to say, the outcome of this case will be very interesting for future examples of Starfleet officers placed under arrest...

He fades out, leaving audio room for the voice of the:

ANDORIAN NEWS REPORTER

This reporter can honestly say he is confused by the appearance of Anton Byron in this case. His testimony was almost completely false tales of heroism and valor we know Hatch was not capable of...

The reporters fade out once more, along with the entire scene.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TALK SHOW STAGE

The quietness of everything is suddenly interrupted by loud SHOUTS of applause as what looks like a very familiar daytime talk show fades back in from commercial.

After only a second, a strange logo in alien writing comes on, with english translations under it. They read:

THE TYRIK HANNRI SHOW! This episode: "The Amazing Tale of Grant Jameson"

The camera moves away from the cheering audience to an obviously over-made-up Trill sitting behind a large wood desk. This is TYRIK HANNRI.

HANNRI

Welcome back to the show! As you know, all week we've been talking about the appearance of Commodore Grant Jameson, who will talk about his extraordinary experience both in the mire of the Federation legal system and out of it.

The audience cheers and "oohs" in awe.

HANNRI

So without further ado, let me
introduce... Commodore Grant Jameson!

Hannri stands and applauds with the crowd as Jameson arrives from behind the stage. He is once again in the red jacket and black trousers of a Starfleet uniform, but the extra gold trim and medals signify a significant jump in rank from his previous Captain uniform.

Jameson shakes hands with the eager Hannri before sitting down. It takes a moment before the crowd calms down enough for him to speak.

HANNRI

Good to have you with us.

JAMESON

Thank, Tyrik. Been a fan of your
show since it was on Holonetwerk 17.

HANNRI

That long? That was what, sixteen
years ago?

The crowd laughs politely.

JAMESON

Well, a captain needs some
entertainment out on those long
voyages.

More polite laughter. Hannri looks at a card on his desk for a moment before continuing.

HANNRI

So it's been a while since that
monumental decision in the supreme
court. Want to fill in those who've
been in the Delta Quadrant for the
last year?

JAMESON

Well, I don't think I can go into
everything just yet, but needless
to say that they saw my side of the
story and agreed with my case.

HANNRI

But we can see you didn't get your
FULL rank back.

JAMESON

(small chuckle)

No, you're right. It was something Starfleet wouldn't allow. I hadn't been an Admiral long enough for something. So they made me the second only Commodore in Starfleet. The other being a commander of Starbase Sixteen I think.

HANNRI

I heard they've been working to get rid of that rank.

JAMESON

You heard right. You see, I wanted to prove to everyone in the Federation that anyone can reform themselves, anyone can find their way back in life after even the worse of disasters.

HANNRI

And we can all agree that this was a pretty rough one for you.

Jameson chuckles again.

JAMESON

You could say that.

HANNRI

Well, let me congratulate you on being the first person in history to bounce back so completely from such a terrible ordeal.

The crowd roars in agreement.

JAMESON

Thank you. Thank you all. I'll admit, it's been rough for me, but I think I'm finally putting it all behind me.

HANNRI

That's good. Very good.

Both men smile phony smiles. A musical cue sounds over the stage.

HANNRI

Well, that's my cue to break for commercial. Thank you, Commodore, for visiting us. I know you're busy and have to get out of here.

JAMESON

True. I'm being sent to investigate a trading post on the neutral zone.

HANNRI

Very nice, very nice.
(beat, into camera)
We'll be right back.

The same logo from before, plus a cartoony version of Hannri's face, fills the screen as we:

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

A brand new spaceport floats in space. Small ships and shuttles buzz about it like bees around a nest. Only one Constellation-class vessel is docked at an airlock, making it the only hint of Starfleet on the scene.

This is station 56, the previously mentioned trading post on the neutral zone.

INT. STATION 56 - LOUNGE

The lounge of the station is filled with people both Starfleet and not. It's a chaotic scene of revelry and partying, confusing in its scope.

We pan around, looking at the nearly drunken revelry until we fall on a finally older-looking Jameson. He's got a large drink in one hand and the arm of an elegant human woman in the other. He takes her over to a secluded table not filled with people or even much light.

JAMESON

Here we go.

ELEGANT WOMAN

I've never seen this table before.

JAMESON

Privilege of command, my dear. I haven't been commander of this station for six years for nothing.

ELEGANT WOMAN

And now I'm your first officer. How romantic, isn't it?

JAMESON

Very.

Jameson and the woman smile, sharing a brief kiss.

ELEGANT WOMAN

Promoted to executive officer, taken to a fancy party AND shown a private booth in a lounge I've been to hundreds of times. Is this new year's day going to get any better?

Jameson looks on in surprise.

JAMESON

New year's?

ELEGANT WOMAN

I'm sorry, I thought you knew. Morale's been low lately, so I checked all the calendars aboard. And according to the Human calendar, it's December 31st 2299. I organized a party for everyone.

She checks a very old looking wristwatch.

ELEGANT WOMAN

Only a few minutes left 'till the twenty fourth century begins.

JAMESON

Wow. Have I really been alive that long?

They laugh quietly. The partying continues outside the booth.

ELEGANT WOMAN

Come on, it hasn't been that long.

JAMESON

According to that calendar, I was born in the 2260s. I was in diapers when Kirk was out in space.

A shadow falls over the elegant woman.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

I'd say you still were in diapers.

Jameson and his escort look out to the source of the voice. The woman, however, is obscured by the bright lights from the party.

JAMESON

Can I help you?

FEMALE VOICE

I need to talk to you. Alone.

ELEGANT WOMAN

Well, whatever you can say to him, you can say to me.

FEMALE VOICE

No, I can't. Get out.

The woman and Jameson share a look. He nods to her.

JAMESON

It's okay. I'll catch up with you later.

ELEGANT WOMAN

(smiling)

Your quarters or mine?

JAMESON

(same)

Mine.

The woman leaves, staring long and hard at the obscured woman for a long moment.

JAMESON

Sit down, Melanie.

Melanie walks out of the light and into the booth, taking the woman's place.

MELANIE

I didn't think you would recognize me after all these years.

Indeed, Melanie looks extremely different from last we saw her, now seven years ago. Her hair is back to its old red hue, but still short. She is thinner than before, almost malnourished. And her left eye now has a long scar over it, making it jet black in a creepy way.

JAMESON

I knew it from the moment I walked in here.

(pause)

What happened to your eye?

MELANIE

Two years on a private trader with Orion contacts. Had to fight my way out a few times before I got here.

JAMESON

Sorry.

Melanie's eyes flash, barely concealing a rage far beyond anything seen before.

MELANIE

Don't apologize to me.

Jameson takes a sip from his drink, not really caring what Melanie is saying.

MELANIE

Do you have any idea what I've been through ever since you sold me out!? Five god damn years in a psych ward trying to find out what was wrong with me. Ever been mind melded six times in a row in ten minutes? I can barely figure out who I am sometimes...

JAMESON

Well, you deserve it. You did abuse me and kill someone else...

Melanie stands up in a rage, and rears back to SMACK Jameson!

JAMESON

Ah ah ah! Hit me and you go back in a microsecond. Say what you want to say and leave me alone. You're out of the ward now. Let's just get on with our lives.

MELANIE

No, I don't think you realize why I'm here. I want MY life back, just like you got yours, Commodore.

JAMESON

And what do you want me to do? Snap my fingers and put you back on the Diadem? She's out in deep space last I checked. Sertok's doing a pretty good job in my place.

MELANIE

No, you damn jerk! I just want a posting as far away from you as possible! Anything! Just give me something!

Jameson sets his drink down.

JAMESON

Any why should I? What do I owe you? You're the one with a murder on your record.

Melanie takes a PADD out from a pocket. Text scrolls by lazily.

JAMESON

What's that?

MELANIE

My logs. My journals ever since I was a little girl. Visual records of our time on the Diadem. Oh, and my psychiatric logs. You see, while I didn't always have my parents around, your brilliant defense seemed to have glossed over the fact that they had an open link to me at all times. Visual and audio over subspace. My diary talks like they were there with me my whole childhood.

Jameson is not impressed.

JAMESON

So? The case is closed. That's nothing.

MELANIE

And my psych logs show zero mental problems. Five years of tests, all fucking clean.

JAMESON

I don't know what you're trying to prove with this.

MELANIE

And a visual record of us on the
Diadem...

Melanie presses a button on her PADD, bringing up a video. It's Jameson and Melanie talking calmly... about Hatch's murder that first night. We can't hear it very well, but it's the moment he brought up using Hatch's codes to cover up the murder...

Jameson's eyes widen suddenly.

JAMESON

I'll have that proven as a fake.
You can't use that!

MELANIE

Oh but I can. Anyone with eyes can
see this is genuine and perfectly
legitimate evidence in court.

(beat)

You know, it's a wonder this was
never used in your trial.

She presses another button, showing another security recording, this time of Raven and the Prosecutor talking. He holds up the same video just shown and palms a phaser pointed directly at the prosecutor...

MELANIE

Face it, I have enough evidence to
have you executed. Give me what I
want or this gets released.

Jameson looks very scared now.

JAMESON

Look, Melanie, there's nothing I
can do.

MELANIE

You'd better figure something out.

JAMESON

But I can't!

She reaches out and bundles up her PADD, placing it back in the pocket.

MELANIE

Then you're going to suffer just as
much as me.

She stands.

JAMESON
Wait! I can. I mean, it's not much...

She stops.

MELANIE
What?

JAMESON
I'll sign a letter to Starfleet
saying I give my consent to your
reactivation.

MELANIE
And where will I be posted?

JAMESON
I can't decide that.

She palms the PADD, Jameson almost yelps.

JAMESON
I can't promise it, maybe an ensign
on a deep space survey?

MELANIE
As long as it's away from you, fine.

She doesn't smile, but both parties look relieved.

MELANIE
Happy new year.

As Melanie walks away, the crowd outside suddenly shouts and
sings as the twenty fourth century dawns... Jameson looks
nearly psychotic as he watches Melanie disappear.

JAMESON
Too bad that letter won't leave my
desk.

Jameson laughs to himself as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACKNESS

The grid appears once more. A green-skinned Orion female
stands before the Starbase 56 airlock as Jameson is once
again escorted by Starfleet security officers, handcuffed
and everything.

ORION NEWS REPORTER

An anonymous source six weeks ago submitted damning evidence against the long-ago freed Commodore Grant Jameson in his involvement in the murder of Thomas Hatch. This source provided security tape evidence of both Jameson planning the entire coverup as well as his attorney, Jonah Raven, forcing the prosecutor to ignore this evidence at gunpoint. Both men have been arrested on charges of perjury and, once again, murder in Jameson's case.

The reporter keeps talking as the grid fades away to:

EXT. GRASSLAND

We fly over a verdant grassland on a nameless world. A small settlement is there, full of people of many species building, farming and just settling a new world.

Melanie stands up from off screen, wiping sweat off her brow.

ORION NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Some people claim the anonymous source was none other than Melanie Mourick, recently released from her rehabilitation colony, but that cannot be proven. We do have evidence, however, that she has finally found the peace she rightly deserves after all these years.

As the reporter speaks, Melanie smiles and runs into the strong arms of a shirtless settler. They kiss passionately.

This nice scene slowly loses its color as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE

Back to sector zero-zero-three. The very site where it all began...

ORION NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

And now, on the tenth anniversary on the murder of Thomas Hatch, we remember this strange story that had the entire Federation on pins and needles.

(MORE)

ORION NEWS REPORTER (V.O.; CONT'D)
 The case of murdering Starfleet
 officers. The case that will
 probably have echoes farther into
 the future than this reporter would
 like to admit.

As her voice cuts off, the empty space EXPLODES out into orange fury! The storm is back...

And meeting it is a Starfleet Excelsior-class vessel. Not the Diadem, but one of similar build. As the storm boils and rages, the vessel fires a single probe into its maw, taking readings.

When its done, the vessel slowly moves off and warps away.

We:

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

Space is empty again, save for the presence of a Galaxy-class starship!

The storm returns, as does the ship firing a lonely probe into it...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

A Sovereign class vessel is now here...

FADE TO:

Then a Nova Class...

FADE TO:

A Prometheus Class...

FADE TO:

A ship that well over two kilometers long...!

FADE TO:

A ship like the Enterprise-J featured in ENTERPRISE.

FADE TO:

Then a ship obviously of similar design to the previous ship, but with a significantly darker hull...

FADE TO:

A Wells-class vessel...

And then it goes black.

FADE OUT.

Until the storm EXPLODES out one last time! It doesn't last very long at all, but when it fades away...

A small, battered and very crappy looking shuttle drifts out of it. We can see a man through the windows, looking injured and very frightened.

And in the very extreme distance, a triangular shaped vessel with green nacelles slowly approaches.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END