

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

12x10 - "Where the Heart Is."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*

and on the *Star Trek* tie-in novels  
by Pocket Books

incorporating elements from

*Star Trek: Articles of the Federation*

by Keith RA DeCandido

### **TNG 17x10 - "HELDENTOD"**

*Enterprise* arrives, and Kadhata lets Spock, Seven and LaForge out to go to the [Planet Killer](#). While Picard and Worf wait in the brig, several Borg-controlled starships arrive. *Enterprise* takes heavy damage, and Kadhata begs Picard to take command again. He will, but only if she, Leybenzon and T'Lana promise to obey him. The Planet Killer comes to life and destroys the ships, but then zooms away. *Enterprise* gives chase. Picard reveals that LaForge had a back-up plan - the Endgame virus ([TNG 5x23 "I, Borg"](#)). The destructive programme was never used, so the Borg should have no defence. *Enterprise* gets back to Earth just in time to see the super-cube absorb the Planet Killer, but then explode, destroying them both. Luckily Spock and LaForge escape in time. After the pseudo-mutiny, Kadhata begs forgiveness, and Leybenzon will transfer, but T'Lana absolutely refuses to work with Picard any longer, and the *Einstein* is still out there...

### **TTN 1x10 - "THE PROPLYDIAN ACCORD"**

Pa'haquel leader Qui'hibra calls a conclave of all the local hunting tribes so that Riker can present his idea. They do this at the Proplydian, a massive space-going lifeform that is literally a living star system, which the Pa'haquel revere as a pinnacle of space life. Riker suggests teaching the jellies how to communicate with the Branchers, and use them as weapons instead. It depends on the jellies agreeing, but after a shaky start, it seems to be working. Not all the Pa'haquel tribes agree to it, but Qui'hibra thinks it will catch on eventually, and thanks Riker. Keru realises that his dislike of Torvig was because the innocent young Choblik is cybernetic - like the Borg, who killed his lover Sean. Keru asks Torvig's forgiveness. *Titan* then goes back to the jelly breeding world for shore leave, where they witness a jelly-baby being born. Troi asks Riker - when are we going to start a family?

### **VOY 10x10 - "LONG LIVE THE QUEEN"**

Aboard the Planet Killer, Seven takes control and drives the machine to attack and destroy the Borg-controlled starships. That done, she zooms back to Earth and fights Janeway's super-

cube, but the cube wins. Absorbing the Planet Killer also absorbs Seven, and with her the Endgame virus. As Seven tries to force the programme into the Borg's systems, Janeway emerges - the real Janeway, not the Queen. She tells Seven how proud she is of her, then drops the firewalls, allowing the virus in. The super-cube is destroyed, seemingly taking Janeway and Seven with it. But Seven is saved by the freighter captain Vargo, who had been watching from a safe distance. Some time later, Janeway wakes up in a white space. The female Q offers to take her somewhere warm and safe, where there is plenty of coffee. Janeway accepts, so she and Q walk off together into the light.

## TEASER

FADE IN:

### **1 EXT. SPACE - PLANETARY ORBIT**

Looking down upon the planet's green-swirled surface, as a small fleet of ships rise up out of the atmosphere to meet us. Two advanced Starfleet super-shuttles of the type seen in TNG "Insurrection" are at the fleet's centre, with other Federation-but-non-Starfleet support vessels around them.

As we TURN TO FOLLOW the small fleet's passage, we see where they are heading for...

...the USS *James T Kirk*. The Akira-class cruiser stands in orbit of the planet, strong and sturdy.

The two Starfleet shuttles slowly approach the *Kirk*, while the support ships hold back. As we grow closer and closer to the *Kirk*, we can see the large bank of SHUTTLE BAY DOORS along its leading edge. These doors slowly rumble OPEN, revealing the expansive shuttle bay inside the ship.

The two Starfleet shuttles head directly for these open doors, passing through the FORCEFIELDS that cover their apertures and into...

### **2 INT. KIRK - MAIN SHUTTLE BAY (CONTINUOUS)**

...a gigantic shuttle bay. As the shuttles make their slow, controlled way into the room, we see the CONTROL BOOTHS staffed with junior officers watching them pass.

We TURN TO FOLLOW again, revealing a massive, multi-floor complex with room for more than 50 auxiliary craft of various types - worker bees, shuttles, runabouts, and even single-person fighters. These have all been racked up and moved out of the way, leaving room in the middle...

...for the two super-shuttles to gently lower to the deck. They settle in parallel, engines quieting.

Captain ELIAS VAUGHN, dressed in flawless dress whites that suit him perfectly, steps forward, with Commander ROGEIRO just a step behind, and a phalanx of security officers.

The doors of both shuttles HISS open, and out of both step a black-suited non-Starfleet SECURITY OFFICER, a private protection detail. They each quickly scan around visually, both the area immediately around their shuttle and the room at large. Apparently satisfied, they turn and nod permission for their charges to proceed.

Out of the first shuttle steps ASHANTÉ PHIRI, one of the President's deputy chiefs of staff. Vaughn raises a slight eyebrow at this, but then looks across to the second shuttle and understands...

...because out of this shuttle steps NANIETTA BACCO, the President of the Federation. Her personal bodyguard, WEXLER, stays far enough away to give her space but close enough that he can be at her side in a split second.

Vaughn steps forward again, heading towards the second shuttle. Rogeiro and the *Kirk's* security detachment follow. Meanwhile Phiri, Wexler, and a handful of other support staff move from their shuttles to join.

They meet in the middle, where Vaughn officially welcomes the President with a polite bow.

VAUGHN

Madam President, welcome aboard the *James T Kirk*. It is an honour to have you aboard.

BACCO

Glad to be here, Captain.

VAUGHN

I am Elias Vaughn. Please allow me to introduce my first officer, Commander Anxo Rogeiro.

BACCO

(nods)

Commander. Anxo - that's Portuguese, isn't it?

ROGEIRO

Indeed, ma'am. It means "Angel".

BACCO

I should set you up with my chief  
of staff, Esperanza.

ROGEIRO

With respect, ma'am, Esperanza is  
a Spanish name, not Portuguese.

BACCO

Exactly - imagine the fireworks.

She grins - clearly she's making a joke. Vaughn and Rogeiro  
both chuckle politely. She is the president, after all.

BACCO

Right, Captain. Let's get this  
show on the road, shall we? You  
have no idea the trouble Esperanza  
went to to arrange this timetable,  
God bless her, and she'll kill me  
if she hears I messed it up.

VAUGHN

Certainly, Madam President.  
(turns to Rogeiro)  
Commander, if you would, please.

ROGEIRO

Aye, sir.

Rogeiro steps away from the group and taps his combadge.

ROGEIRO

Rogeiro to the bridge.

MAGRONE (comm)

Go ahead, Commander.

ROGEIRO

The president is on board. Please  
co-ordinate with the other vessels  
in her entourage, set course for  
the Cestus system, and engage at  
your discretion.

MAGRONE (comm)  
Understood, sir. Bridge out.

Meanwhile, Vaughn is guiding Bacco towards the exit, with the Starfleet security team leading the way and the president's entourage following. They pass out into...

**3 INT. KIRK - CORRIDOR (CONTINUOUS)**

...the corridor leading from the shuttle bay. They walk and talk, security ever present.

BACCO  
Quite a ship you have here,  
Captain.

VAUGHN  
She is indeed, ma'am. I'd be happy  
to give you a tour, if you have  
the time.

BACCO  
I'm sure I can fit it in. But  
first, I need to get these shoes  
off and get a *raktajino* in me.  
Please tell me your replicators  
can handle that?

VAUGHN  
Absolutely, ma'am. I realise we  
may not have the palatial luxury  
of a Galaxy-class, but our finest  
guest quarters are yours, with the  
surrounding quarters set aside for  
your support staff. It's not every  
day we transport the President of  
the Federation, after all.

BACCO  
I appreciate the effort, Captain.  
I wasn't kidding about the time  
table, by the way. This goodwill  
tour has been in the planning  
stages for months, and I think the  
final itinerary was only agreed  
the morning I left Earth.

VAUGHN

Why so difficult, if I may ask?

BACCO

Oh, just fitting in around a dozen planets' various public holidays and holy days and travel times and security requirements. Did you know the Lembatta system basically shuts down and meditates whenever they have a solar eclipse? The whole system, every single person.

VAUGHN

Fascinating.

BACCO

I swear Esperanza actually moved some star systems around to make it work. That's probably how you ended up with this detail instead of my usual berth on the *Venture*. The only way she could get it all to fit together.

VAUGHN

(evasive)

Yes, I'm sure that must be it.

The group stops as they reach a turbolift. Vaughn and Bacco step aside as Wexler enters the already-waiting turbolift and scans it both visually and with a tricorder.

BACCO

But this particular visit is the one I'm most looking forward to.

VAUGHN

Naturally - Cestus Three is your homeworld, that's to be expected.

The security officer nods permission for them to proceed. Vaughn and Bacco both step aboard the turbolift, with Wexler and one Starfleet security with them.



BACCO

It's not just that. Every year since I became planetary governor, I've been there for the opening day ceremonies of the Cestus Baseball League. I wasn't about to let my becoming responsible for several trillion lives stop me from keeping that tradition.

VAUGHN

You're a fan, I take it.

BACCO

I sometimes feel like it's the only thing that keeps me sane in this job.

Bacco chuckles at her own joke. Vaughn does not. He does not trust this woman, no matter how friendly she seems. As the door closes on his stern, suspicious face...

**4    EXT. SPACE - PLANETARY ORBIT**

The *Kirk* moves slowly out of orbit. As the other ships in the president's retinue move into formation around the capital ship, they all move off together, and one by one, they JUMP TO WARP, streaking away into space.

FADE OUT

**END OF TEASER**

**ACT ONE**

FADE IN

**5     EXT. SPACE**

The fleet flies at warp, with the *Kirk* at its head and the support ships trailing behind.

**6     INT. KIRK - GUEST QUARTERS**

The stars streak by the window at warp, lighting the most luxurious quarters available on the ship. Bacco herself sits on a couch underneath the window, her back to the stars as she reaches down and rubs her naked feet.

Ashanté Phiri sits on a low chair opposite, reading from the padd in her hand, coffees on the table between them.

PHIRI

Once we arrive at Cestus, you'll  
be greeted by Governor Gari -

BACCO

Still weird hearing you call her  
that. Feels like only ten minutes  
ago that was my job.

PHIRI

- and then there'll be a short  
reception before you head off to  
Ruth Field for the Opening Day.

BACCO

(stretches)

Better warm up my pitching arm  
then, hadn't I?

The door chime sounds.

BACCO

Come in!

The door opens and Wexler pokes his head in.

WEXLER

Captain Vaughn to see you, ma'am.

BACCO  
Come in, Captain!

Vaughn enters. Bacco stays where she is, sat down, rubbing her feet. She is a "this is who I am, accept it" kind of person. Vaughn has changed back into his regular uniform.

VAUGHN  
Madam President - your tour?

BACCO  
Oh right, yes. With you in a moment, Captain.  
(to Phiri)  
Ashanté, call ahead to Gari and make sure she knows I don't want too much fuss. I'm the president, I'm not God.

PHIRI  
Not yet, perhaps.

BACCO  
Hey - that's not the kind of thing I want Esperanza teaching you, okay? Go on, off you pop.

PHIRI  
(standing)  
Madam President. Captain.

She leaves the room. Bacco looks back up at Vaughn, then reaches for her shoes, puts them back on with a wince. Then she stands again with an impish grin.

BACCO  
Time to impress me, Captain.

Half-bowing, Vaughn after-you's her to the door.

7 **EXT. SPACE**

Still flying at warp...

8     **INT. KIRK - MAIN SHUTTLE BAY**

The door opens and Vaughn, Bacco and Wexler (at a discreet distance) re-enter the shuttle bay. As they explore...

VAUGHN

You'll remember the main shuttle bay, of course.

BACCO

I remember it was a cavern and a half. Even the *Venture* doesn't have this many shuttles.

VAUGHN

The *Akira* is one of Starfleet's most heavily armed classes. That extends to its auxiliary craft.

BACCO

"Auxiliary craft"... you mean fighters.

VAUGHN

The *Kirk* saw action as a carrier during the war, yes. But the number of shuttles also serves us during humanitarian missions. Evacuations, for example.

BACCO

Damn this place is big. Looks like it goes right through the ship.

VAUGHN

It does. The bay covers three whole decks and stretches fore to aft, with airlocks at both ends. That way, more can be launching from the front while the first return at the back, and they also have the protection of the split hull as they come in. The entire ship is basically built around this shuttle bay.

BACCO

Well... I did ask you to impress me, I guess. But you've also daunted me, Captain.

VAUGHN

Doesn't the President deserve the highest protection Starfleet can offer? Cestus is right on the border of Gorn space, after all.

BACCO

You're expecting conflict?

VAUGHN

I try never to expect it, ma'am. But I'm always prepared for it.

Bacco doesn't look especially appeased by that. Vaughn still keeps a close eye on her, watchful and wary...

**9    INT. KIRK - BRIDGE**

The main bridge, with Rogeiro sat in the centre chair. The rest of the senior staff are on duty - Vulcan helm T'LARIK, Betazoid male tactical MAGRONE, human male ops DUNLOP, and the familiar *chan* Andorian science officer SHAR.

Rogeiro receives a small ALERT on his side panel, and stands sharply from his seat.

ROGEIRO

All hands, stand to attention.

They do. A moment later, the turbolift door opens, and Vaughn and Bacco enter the bridge, Wexler ever present.

VAUGHN

...and this, of course, is the bridge. The nerve centre of the *James T Kirk*. My senior staff - Lieutenant Magrone, Lieutenant Dunlop, Lieutenant Commander T'Larik and Lieutenant ch'Thane.

BACCO

Thirishar ch'Thane? Well, it's an honour to meet you, Lieutenant.

SHAR

(taken aback)

Oh... well thank you, ma'am. Why?

BACCO

Andor was my first stop on this tour, you know. And your name was on everyone's lips. I understand you've been doing remarkable work on your people's genetic issues. I spoke with a Professor sh'Veileth and she couldn't stop gushing.

SHAR

That's very flattering to hear, ma'am. But I'm happy to help.

Vaughn and Bacco continue around the bridge.

VAUGHN

Helm, how long to our destination?

T'LARIK

(checks panels)

The *Kirk* is three hours and six minutes from the Cestus system, Captain. As specified in the schedule provided by the President's staff.

VAUGHN

Perfect. Just enough time to get some lunch in the crew lounge.

BACCO

Now that is the best thing I've heard since I came onboard.

VAUGHN

Commander Rogeiro, as you were.

Vaughn, Bacco and Wexler head back to the turbolift.

10 INT. KIRK - LOUNGE

A rather simpler affair than a Galaxy or Vesta class lounge, more along the lines of *Voyager's* mess hall. It is nevertheless half-filled with off-duty crew and a handful of civilians, including some of the President's own staff.

The doors open and Vaughn and Bacco enter, with Wexler once again trailing at a distance. Vaughn leads them over to the bar, where he speaks to the civilian bartender.

VAUGHN

Could we see the menus, please?  
(turns)  
Mister Wexler?

WEXLER

No thank you, Captain.

Wexler prefers to watch. The bartender provides two menus.

BACCO

Oh, I'll just have whatever you recommend.

VAUGHN

Very well. Two chicken parmigianas with Berengarian ale, please.

The bartender nods acknowledgement and moves away to the replicators. Vaughn after-you's again for Bacco, over towards the tables in front of the window.

BACCO

Ale? Aren't we both on duty?

VAUGHN

Synthale. You have to ask the captain for the proper stuff.

BACCO

In the Palais, the replicators are specifically reprogrammed not to produce anything with real alcohol during working hours. More than once I've thought about tracking

down whoever made that decision  
and reprogramming them.

They reach the tables under the window, where Vaughn asks a pair of civilians already sitting at one table...

VAUGHN  
Mind if we join you?

And now we see that these people are SISKO and KASIDY. Sisko immediately jumps to his feet and grabs Vaughn in a big back-slapping bro-hug. Kasidy stands more demurely.

SISKO  
Elias!

VAUGHN  
(laughing)  
Hello, Ben. Good to see you too. Perhaps you recognise Nanietta Bacco, the President of the Federation?

KASIDY  
Oh my goodness. Madam President, of course. I wasn't expecting to meet you. It's an honour.

VAUGHN  
Captain Benjamin Sisko and Kasidy Yates.

BACCO  
Sit, please. No ceremony for me.

The four sit at the table together, casual and chummy. The bartender brings food and drink for Bacco and Vaughn.

VAUGHN  
Ben and Kasidy are also on their way to Cestus for the baseball season. Since I was passing Bajor on my way to meet you, it seemed only right to offer them a lift.

KASIDY



I still have family there, so  
we're taking the chance for a bit  
of a reunion.

BACCO

Family... wait, did you say Yates?  
You're not related to Kornelius  
Yates, are you?

KASIDY

He's my brother!

BACCO

Oh good lord. Captain, Kornelius  
Yates is the star hitter for the  
Pike City Pioneers. I feel like  
I'm in the presence of royalty!

SISKO

Well, we have dugout seats waiting  
for us at the first game. I'm sure  
we could pull some strings.

KASIDY

You know, given that you used to  
run the entire planet.

BACCO

Dugout seats? Who do you think's  
throwing out the first ball?

Sisko whistles, impressed. As the three of them gossip  
about baseball over lunch, Vaughn sits back and watches.

Despite the company of his friends, he is still wary of  
Bacco. He watches this seemingly happy, guileless woman  
laugh and enjoy her food, sure she is up to something...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

FADE IN

**11 EXT. SPACE - PLANETARY ORBIT**

The small fleet, with *Kirk* still in the lead, pulls into the orbit of another planet - this one yellowish in colour.

**12 INT. KIRK - MAIN SHUTTLE BAY**

Now Bacco and her entire retinue are preparing to get back into their two super-shuttles. Vaughn and a phalanx of security are there to see them off.

ROGEIRO (comm)  
Bridge to Captain - we have  
achieved orbit of Cestus Three.  
You are clear to proceed.

VAUGHN  
Acknowledged, Commander. Vaughn  
out.

Vaughn taps his combadge to close the channel, then turns back to Bacco and her staff.

VAUGHN  
My crew confirms you are clear to  
depart at your leisure, Madam  
President.

BACCO  
Much appreciated, Captain. Hope  
I'll see you down there. You look  
like you could use a day out as  
much as the rest of us.

SISKO  
Oh, he always looks like that.

Revealing that Sisko and Kasidy are now a part of the president's entourage. Vaughn turns a jokingly withering look on him, but Bacco BARKS with laughter.

BACCO

Alright, come on you two. You're with me.

She heads towards her shuttle. Kasidy joins her, but Sisko hovers, and speaks to Vaughn more personally.

SISKO  
She's right, Elias, you do look stressed. You should let me take you out to the ball game.

VAUGHN  
I'll be down later, Ben. Just some shipboard business to take care of first. You know how it is.

SISKO  
Don't work too hard.

Sisko turns to join the party as they enter the shuttles. Vaughn watches them go, then turns sternly.

**13    INT. KIRK - BRIDGE**

Vaughn enters the bridge from the turbolift, and heads immediately towards his ready room without even looking.

VAUGHN  
Mister Magrone, please join me in my ready room.

He continues, expecting Magrone to do as ordered. Magrone shares a look of muted surprise with Rogeiro, but moves to follow the captain. An EXTRA takes his place at tactical.

**14    INT. KIRK - CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM**

Vaughn takes his seat behind the desk, waits for Magrone to enter and stand at attention before his captain.

VAUGHN  
Take a seat, Lieutenant.  
(he does)  
I was wondering, what's your impression of the President?

MAGRONE

Oh. Umm, well I haven't been able to spend much time with her. But she seems like a very straightforward, no nonsense woman.

VAUGHN

And what do your Betazoid senses tell you?

MAGRONE

(hesitant)

I'm not sure I understand the question, Captain.

VAUGHN

Don't be obtuse, Lieutenant. You're a telepath. In your brief interactions, has President Bacco given you any reason to believe she's not being entirely truthful?

MAGRONE

Sir, I have not performed any unauthorised scans of the President. Nor do I have any intention of doing so.

VAUGHN

Nor am I asking you to. But you can't have helped but pick up some general impressions, whether you intended to or not. Those natural Betazoid senses are as valid and ethically neutral as my own human ones, and as my tactical officer, I hope to hell you'd incorporate them into your tactical analysis.

(calm, but with no room for refusal)

Tell me your impressions of the President, Mister Magrone.

Magrone takes a deep breath. This feels wrong, but Vaughn has made a compelling argument. Reluctantly, he speaks.

MAGRONE

She's eager to see her home and friends again. Looking forward to the baseball game later. Exhausted by the pace of her timetable, but refusing to back down from it.

VAUGHN

All of which she's said out loud. I need more. Do you trust her?

MAGRONE

I see no reason not to, Captain.

VAUGHN

You're absolutely certain? You have no impression that she's keeping things from us?

MAGRONE

Captain, she's the President of the Federation. I have no doubt she's keeping lots of things from us - things it's not our business or right to know. But do I trust her? Yes. Yes, I do.

Vaughn sighs, disappointed. It's not what he wanted.

VAUGHN

Alright. Thank you, Lieutenant. Dismissed.

Just as Magrone gets up from his chair, the comm sounds.

ROGEIRO (comm)

Captain to the bridge.

As YELLOW ALERT lights begin to flash, Vaughn instantly gets up and chases Magrone back onto the bridge...

**15 INT. KIRK - BRIDGE (CONTINUOUS)**

Magrone returns to his tactical station, relieving the Extra. Rogeiro stands to make way for Vaughn at command.

ROGEIRO

A Gorn warship just entered orbit.  
They're on an intercept course.

VAUGHN

Tactical analysis.

MAGRONE

Balaur-class, inferior to the *Kirk*  
- under normal circumstances.

ROGEIRO

These are no normal circumstances,  
sir. The President and her retinue  
are still within range, and they  
need our protection.

SHAR

They're hailing us.

VAUGHN

On screen, Mister ch'Thane.

Vaughn takes his seat, Rogeiro beside him, both attempting to convey calm and confidence. After a moment, the main viewscreen changes to show a GORN, its heavy reptilian form looming large and HISSING through bared teeth.

S'ALATH (screen)

I am Sss'Alathhhh of the Gorn  
Hegemony.

VAUGHN

Welcome to Cestus Three, Captain  
S'Alath. I am Captain Elias Vaughn  
of the starship *James T Kirk*. How  
can we help you?

S'ALATH (screen)

You have Bacco?

VAUGHN

I'm sorry, I'm not sure I  
understand the question.

S'ALATH (screen)

Bacco! Isss she with you? On your vessel?

VAUGHN

What would lead you to think that?

S'ALATH (screen)

Do not play gamesss, mammal! Show me Bacco, now!

VAUGHN

Captain S'Alath, I can say with absolute truth that President Bacco is not on board the *Kirk*.

S'ALATH (screen)

I am tired of ssspeaking to you, human. Show me Bacco, or I will open fffire on you.

VAUGHN

Captain, please. There is no need for battle here. I am not capable of fulfilling your request. But if you insist on pushing the matter, I assure you the *Kirk* is fully capable of answering in kind.

S'Alath gives a furious yet dismissive HISS, and cuts the channel. Vaughn immediately turns to Shar.

VAUGHN

Mister ch'Thane, get me a secure comm channel to the President's shuttle, now.

SHAR

Aye, sir.  
(works panels)  
I have them.

Vaughn nods, and the viewscreen changes to show Bacco sat in the luxurious rear cabin of the shuttle, with Sisko, Kasidy and Wexler also visible.

BACCO (screen)

Captain, is there a problem?

VAUGHN

I'm afraid so, Madam President. A Gorn warship has arrived, and its captain, S'Alath, is demanding to speak to you or he'll open fire.

BACCO (screen)

(thoughtful)

S'Alath, eh?

VAUGHN

I assure you, we are prepared to defend you as necessary, ma'am.

BACCO (screen)

No, there's no need for that. I'll talk to him.

WEXLER (screen)

Madam President, I recommend returning to the *Kirk*. We'd be less vulnerable there.

SISKO (screen)

If you turn the shuttle around, they'll know you're onboard.

VAUGHN

I have a solution for that. Mister ch'Thane, prepare for transporter protocol Ro Eleven, please. You'll find it under my own file.

(back to screen)

If you'll allow me, ma'am.

BACCO (screen)

Go ahead, Captain. I trust you.

That causes Vaughn to wince a little with guilt. But he covers it quickly and turns to Shar again.

VAUGHN

Engage, Mister ch'Thane.



Shar works his panels... and Bacco MATERIALISES in the centre of the bridge. Vaughn stands to greet her.

VAUGHN

Hail the Gorn, Mister ch'Thane.

Shar works his panels - S'Alath returns to the viewscreen.

S'ALATH (screen)

Nan Bacco! They sssaid you were not on board. They lied.

BACCO

What do you expect, S'Alath, when you come breathing down our necks without so much as a hello?

S'Alath LAUGHS - a gurgling sound that puts Vaughn's teeth on edge. To his surprise, Bacco laughs along with him.

S'ALATH (screen)

I exssspect them to let us enjoy a tankard of cold Meridor together!

BACCO

It's good to see you too, S'Alath. Are you coming down for the game?

S'ALATH (screen)

Human gamesss are boring! Where are the teeth?!

It's becoming clear that these two are old friends. Vaughn is feeling a little indignant at having been misled.

BACCO (screen)

I'll make sure the Governor sets aside several large seats for you.

S'ALATH

And don't make it sssso long nexsst time!

With a toothy grin, S'Alath signs off. Bacco turns back to Vaughn, smiling. He is not so impressed.

VAUGHN

"A tankard of cold Meridor" ?

BACCO

You said Cestus is right on the edge of Gorn space, Captain. It's a good thing to make friends.

VAUGHN

Forgive me, ma'am, but if they're such good friends, why did they threaten to fire on us?

BACCO

Well, you did show up at Cestus in a ship named after James T Kirk. S'Alath is the same Gorn captain who first fought with Kirk over who got to colonise Cestus.

VAUGHN

The very same man? But that was over a hundred years ago.

BACCO

I don't think either one of us has any business complaining about someone living for a long time, Captain. Right! Let's get me back on that shuttle, shall we? There's a game to get to!

She turns and heads back towards the turbolift, job done. Vaughn watches her go, feeling angry and embarrassed. He is really starting to not like her now...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

FADE IN

**16 EXT. CESTUS - RUTH FIELD BASEBALL STADIUM - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT** of the entire stadium - the traditional baseball diamond, a perfect green ground around it, and bleachers packed with thousands upon thousands of ROARING fans. It is a glorious sunny day, the perfect weather for a game.

**17 EXT. CESTUS - RUTH FIELD BASEBALL STADIUM - DAY**

A view of the DUGOUT, with the not-currently-playing members of the batting side all on their feet and enjoying watching the game as much as the crowd. These are the PIKE CITY PIONEERS, the local baseball team, and among their number we identify one KORNELIUS YATES - Kasidy's brother.

**PAN UP** from the dugout to the first row of seats directly behind-and-above it...

...where we see our characters. Ben Sisko, Kasidy, Vaughn, Shar, Bacco, plus JAKE and RENA. To one side stands Wexler, constantly on the lookout for threats to the president. On the other is S'Alath, the hulking reptilian Gorn captain.

Everyone save for Wexler is in civilian clothing - this is a day out and they are enjoying the hell out of it. All but Vaughn and Rena are on their feet, HOWLING cheers and cat-calls and exhortions to success, as the SOUND of the game goes on off screen - balls thrown, balls hit, balls caught.

Rena sits back in her bleacher seat, enjoying the day and the sun, but not really understanding what the fuss is all about. Vaughn sits back likewise, things on his mind.

RENA

Do you have any idea what's going on here?

VAUGHN

(chuckle)

Not a clue. If you don't follow the game, why are you here?

RENA

(shrug)

It makes Jake happy. It makes all of them happy.

VAUGHN

Ben mentioned you'd been on Earth. I didn't realise you were visiting Cestus as well - quite the tour of the Federation you're making.

RENA

Jake and Ben's family is back on Earth. Kasidy's is here. Plus... there's something Jake and I need to talk to them about. Something we need to tell them.

VAUGHN

Oh my goodness... are you pregnant? Congratulations!

RENA

(laughs)

No, I'm not pregnant. But don't worry, it's good news. I think.

A particularly impressive play on the field gets the crowd ROARING - our characters right along with them. Especially the Gorn captain S'Alath - that guy can make some noise.

RENA

What about you? This not your sport either?

VAUGHN

Oh, sorry. Just the pressures of command. Always... thinking.

The rest don't seem to have any problems. Ben, Kasidy, Jake and Bacco are having the time of their lives - relaxed and enjoying the game. As they SCREAM with excitement again...

CUT TO

A room of baseball fans all likewise CHEERING as they watch the game on TV screens set behind the bar and on the walls.

Civilian EXTRAS are packed into the tight spaces of this old-fashioned sports-fans' pub. The walls are decorated with baseball MEMORABILIA - players' shirts, trophies, gloves, bats, photographs, everything you can think of.

Vaughn and Jake stand at the bar waiting for their order.

JAKE

Well, what do you think now you've finally met her?

VAUGHN

Met who - Rena? We've met before.

JAKE

Not Rena, Bacco. The President.

VAUGHN

I told you we would not discuss that, Mister Sisko.

Vaughn remains stony-faced. Jake shrugs - whatever. Seven frosty glasses of ale are handed over. With thanks, Vaughn and Jake grasp hold of them and turn to gradually manoeuvre through the crowd, trying not to spill the precious cargo.

Across the bar, there is a big round TABLE set into a semi-separated booth. Sisko, Kasidy, Jake, Shar and Kornelius sit there waiting for their beers. Fans occasionally stop to shake Kornelius' hand or high-five him in congrats.

SISKO

They really love you here.

KORNELIUS

Ah, not all of them. Half the commentators seem determined to write me off these days. "Yates is past it. He's so far past it he's on another planet."

KASIDY

Well, you showed them. When you made that long slide into home...

KORNELIUS

(grin)

Gotta keep the home crowd happy.

Meanwhile Shar and Rena chat, separate from the others.

RENA

So how are you handling being away from home again?

SHAR

In what sense?

RENA

Nog told us you went back to Andor after the Ascendant thing. And you had your baby. Congratulations.

SHAR

Thank you.

RENA

I just thought... it must be weird. Being away from home for so long, then suddenly being back, then suddenly leaving again.

SHAR

None of it was sudden, Mrs Sisko.

(off her glower)

Rena. My apologies. But all these things were long in the planning. I always knew that home could not offer me all that I craved - the chance to roam and uncover the mysteries of the galaxy. But the reason I craved that... was so that I could help my home.

RENA

You mean your people's fertility issues.

SHAR

Indeed. Everything I did was for them. And although I thought I had to sacrifice my place in that home in order to help it... that was not the case. And now I am content to leave home again, because I know that home has not left me.

RENA

(smile)

I like talking to you, Shar.

Shar smiles shyly, just as Vaughn and Jake arrive with their beers. As they are passed around the table, Shar and Rena hutch along to let Jake and Vaughn sit beside them.

JAKE

What did we miss?

RENA

Just talking about home.

JAKE

Right to the point, then.

SISKO

What do you mean?

Jake exchanges a look with Rena - are we doing this? She nods back - go ahead, might as well. Jake takes a breath.

JAKE

I'm glad you're all here, because Rena and I have some big news.

KASIDY

Oh my god you're pregnant!

JAKE

(chuckle)

No, that's not it.

(to Rena)

Right?

RENA

I'm not pregnant. I am questioning my fashion choices, though.

JAKE

The thing is, when we went back to Earth to visit Grampa Joe, I also had an interview... at Pennington.

SISKO

The journalism school? You're thinking of applying again?

JAKE

Not just thinking of. I'm in. Term starts in the spring.

KASIDY

But that would mean...

JAKE

Yeah. Rena and I are moving back to Earth. We'll live with Grampa, and Rena will learn how to run the restaurant while I go to school.

SISKO

Jake, that's...

JAKE

It's big, I know. But we've been thinking about going home for a while. I didn't want to say anything in case it didn't work out. But now that it has...

Jake shrugs again, apologetically. Vaughn raises his beer in cheers, and after a moment, Ben does as well.

VAUGHN

Congratulations, Mister Sisko. And Mrs Sisko. You'll both be sorely missed, I have no doubt.

Kasidy grabs hold of Ben's hand, offering support.

SISKO



My boy's growing up. At least I know you'll be safe at home. Dad would die before he let anything happen to you. Good luck, son.

JAKE

Thanks, dad. We'll be fine.

A CHEER goes up around the bar - everyone looks around. On the SCREENS, the moment is replaying when Bacco threw out the opening ball of the game - the 90-year-old white-haired old lady pitching that baseball like a professional. At the table, everyone grins - everyone except for Vaughn.

SISKO

They really love her as well.

KORNELIUS

Best governor we ever had.

VAUGHN

Then why did she leave?

KORNELIUS

They asked that in an interview. She just said, "Blame Esperanza."

VAUGHN

Where is the president anyway?

JAKE

I was trying to tell you earlier. She's holding a town hall.

VAUGHN

A what?

KASIDY

She used to do it every month when she was governor. She would just grab a room and anyone who wanted could come and talk to her about anything they felt like. Never missed a single time, not one.

VAUGHN

That's... very admirable.

JAKE

Min Zife never did it, that's for sure. From what I read, in his entire seven years in office, he never went on a goodwill tour. No open meetings, no listening to the ordinary people who voted him in power. Not once.

SHAR

He did nothing to help my people either. President Bacco is the first Federation leader to visit Andor in over a decade.

JAKE

And she's only been in power for six months.

RENA

It wasn't that long ago you were convinced she was evil incarnate.

JAKE

I just thought it was a bit weird how no-one had ever heard of her, and suddenly she's the president.

KASIDY

No-one except for this entire planet, you mean.

JAKE

But I did my research, I followed the facts like a real journalist, and... I changed my mind. I mean, here she is, comes all the way across the Federation just so that everyone can see her enjoying a baseball game and being a real person. Whatever else may be going on, I think she genuinely cares about the people she represents.

Jake shares a pointed look with Vaughn, trying to make his case to him silently. Vaughn takes it without reaction.

ROGEIRO (comm)  
*Kirk to Vaughn. Kirk to Vaughn.*  
Please respond, sir.

A little puzzled, Vaughn reaches into his pants pocket and pulls out his combadge, taps it to receive the signal.

VAUGHN  
Commander? What's the problem?

ROGEIRO (comm)  
Captain - Admiral Ross has been urgently trying to get hold of you and the President. I need you both to come back to the ship as soon as possible, sir.

VAUGHN  
What's going on, Commander?

ROGEIRO (comm)  
There's been an attack, Captain.  
An attack on Earth.

Off everyone's reaction to that...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT THREE**

## ACT FOUR

FADE IN

### **19**    INT. KIRK - BRIDGE

The viewscreen shows clips from a BATTLE - the battle seen in VOY 10x09 "Hungry". A giant, misshapen BORG CUBE is under attack by an entire fleet of Starfleet vessels, including the one which is recording this encounter.

As we watch, the cube literally ABSORBS a Starfleet ship. It sucks the ship in, folding it into its own body, eating it whole. This happens again and again with more Starfleet ships, the cube shrugging off any attempts to destroy it.

PAN AROUND until we see the rest of the bridge. Vaughn, Shar, Rogeiro and the entire bridge crew of the *Kirk*. Sisko, Kasidy, Jake and Rena. Finally Bacco, Phiri and Wexler. They all stand silently, watching the slaughter.

Bacco stares dumbfounded at the screen, tears in her eyes.

Kasidy is holding Ben's hand. Rena is holding Jake's hand. Then Jake reaches out and holds his father's hand as well.

The image on screen changes to Admiral ROSS, looking tired and haggard into the camera.

ROSS (screen)

Madam President, the first battle took place in sector 108. Three dozen ships faced the cube. Only a handful survived. The entire thing took... ninety-seven seconds. The cube then proceeded to Earth.

On the screen, the recording switches to another BATTLE - this the one as seen in TNG "Heldentod" and VOY "Long Live the Queen". The super-cube is now in battle with a PLANET KILLER - the very same one from TOS "The Doomsday Machine."

The cube likewise ABSORBS the giant crystalline machine... but a few moments later, the entire construction EXPLODES in a giant ball of fire. Our POV shudders with the force of it, and quickly scoots out of the way before being caught.

As the crew flinch back from the bright light, the image returns to Ross.

ROSS (screen)  
Captain Picard of the *Enterprise*,  
Professor Hansen and Ambassador  
Spock had managed to acquire the  
so-called Planet Killer from the  
storage facility at Epsilon Sigma,  
and were finally successful in  
using it to destroy the cube.

BACCO  
(quiet, haunted)  
Loss of life?

ROSS (screen)  
Unknown as yet, ma'am. However,  
one loss is confirmed by Professor  
Hansen - Admiral Kathryn Janeway,  
formerly of the starship *Voyager*.

Bacco digests this with quiet dignity. While everyone else is crying or holding their head in their hands or otherwise expressing their grief, Bacco is holding it together. And Vaughn has his eyes firmly on Bacco. Eventually...

BACCO  
Admiral, thank you for letting me  
know. Please tell Esperanza I'll  
be returning to Earth immediately.  
And I'm going to want to have a  
chat with whoever was running  
Starfleet when I get there.

ROSS (screen)  
Understood, ma'am. Palais out.

The signal drops. Bacco sniffles her tears away and turns to Vaughn, who meets her gaze with sympathy.

BACCO  
Captain, if I could impose upon  
you...?

VAUGHN

Without hesitation, ma'am.

Bacco turns and heads towards the turbolift, Phiri and Wexler by her side.

BACCO

Ashanté, contact the governor and make my apologies. Duty calls.

PHIRI

Understood, ma'am.

Meanwhile Vaughn approaches the Sisko family.

VAUGHN

It's up to you, Ben. We can take you all with us, or...

SISKO

I think we'll stay here for the moment, Elias. If you could just transport us back down...

VAUGHN

As you wish. Lieutenant ch'Thane will escort you to the nearest transporter room.

After a cursory check by Wexler, the small party enters the turbolift - Bacco and her people, the Sisko family, Shar.

BACCO

Captain, I'll be in my quarters if you need me.

The door closes and they are gone. Vaughn turns to Rogeiro.

VAUGHN

Commander, recall all crew to stations. Set course for Earth at maximum warp as soon as we get clearance from Cestus control.

ROGEIRO

Aye sir.

As Vaughn turns to enter his ready room, Rogeiro snaps orders to the crew, breaking them out of their horror.

ROGEIRO  
Dunlop, send the recall signal immediately. T'Larik, set course for Earth. Magrone, communicate with Cestus control and request priority one clearance.

They do as they are told.

**20**    **INT. KIRK - TRANSPORTER ROOM**

Sisko, Kasidy, Jake, Rena and Shar enter the room. Shar nods for the ENSIGN on duty to leave her station - she does. Alone now, Shar turns to the Sisko family.

SHAR  
I am sorry for what has happened.

SISKO  
We'll be fine, Lieutenant.

SHAR  
To see one's home in danger... it is a terrible thing. But that is why we do what we do. To protect it to the best of our ability.

Sisko reaches out and shakes Shar's hand. Jake does too. Rena grabs him for a quick hug. Then Shar turns to take the transporter control station as the others climb the stage.

SHAR  
(working controls)  
I am in contact with the Starfleet control facility on the surface. They are ready to receive you.

SISKO  
Energise, Lieutenant.

He does, and the Sisko family disappear in a TRANSPORTER beam. Shar watches them go...

21 **EXT. SPACE - PLANETARY ORBIT**

The *Kirk* moves out of orbit from the planet below, leaving the president's small fleet of support vessels behind.

Once it is clear, the *Kirk* jumps to WARP.

22 **EXT. SPACE - THE KIRK**

The ship flies at maximum warp, the stars streaking by...

23 **INT. KIRK - CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM**

Vaughn sits behind his desk in his personal space, thinking hard about everything that has happened.

After a few moments of silence, the door CHIME sounds.

VAUGHN

Come in.

The door opens and Bacco is there, Wexler just behind her. As she steps through the door, Vaughn stands to greet her.

VAUGHN

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me, Madam President.

She nods subtly to Wexler, who steps back, allowing the door to close. Vaughn and Bacco are now alone.

He after-you's her to the couch. As they both take it...

BACCO

You know, Captain, a woman in my position is not accustomed to being summoned.

VAUGHN

Oh, please don't misunderstand, ma'am. I'm sure my problems must be very low down your list right now. So I appreciate any scant moments you can spare.



BACCO

What's this about, Captain?

VAUGHN

Well...

(hesitates, stands)

Where are my manners - can I get you anything from the replicator?

BACCO

I'm fine, thank you.

VAUGHN

Are you sure? It's no trouble.

BACCO

Okay then yes. There is one thing I'd like - I'd like you to stop dithering and get to the point.

Vaughn smiles and sits back down. This is the president.

VAUGHN

Madam President, I feel the need to... I suppose "confess" is the only appropriate word.

BACCO

I'm nobody's priest, Captain.

VAUGHN

No. But whether you know it or not, I have wronged you. And I wish to apologise for that.

BACCO

I'm rarely unaware when someone doesn't like me, Captain. But I also rarely make the mistake of giving a damn.

VAUGHN

Nor should you. The fact is this. When you were first elected, I... I didn't trust you.

BACCO

Why?

VAUGHN

That's what I've been asking of myself. Trying to understand why I reacted so badly. The fact that you were a relative newcomer on the astro-political scene. No terms served on the council. Going from responsibility for just one "small" world -

(Bacco bristles)

- on the outskirts of Federation space to responsibility for more than one-hundred-fifty of them. And this sudden change right on the heels of the first resignation of a sitting president in the Federation's history -

BACCO

If this is your version of an apology, Captain...

VAUGHN

I'm sorry, you're right. I think it comes from my training.

BACCO

You mean your eighty years in intelligence and special ops.

(off Vaughn's  
surprise)

My staff is very thorough.

VAUGHN

Yes, that's exactly what I mean. I consider myself an expert in spotting lies, having had so much experience at telling them myself. Unfortunately, that has led more than once to me expecting everyone to be a liar. A good friend warned me off that path only last year... and I stepped right back on it.

BACCO

Captain... I don't care if you don't like me. I'm sure you're not the only one, but I have too much to get done to waste my energy worrying about it.

VAUGHN

I'm afraid there's more to it than that, ma'am. I realise that what I'm about to say may well count as treason, and if you wish to call for my resignation or arrest, I'll surrender without protest. But you should know that in my mistrust, I used my resources, my eighty years of intelligence training, as you say... to investigate you.

Bacco slowly gets to her feet, takes a few steps away. She is not angry - or at least not openly so.

BACCO

You're a brave man, Captain.

VAUGHN

My training taught me to be on my guard against all threats to the Federation - from without and from within.

BACCO

And you thought I was that threat? Is that what your investigations told you?

VAUGHN

Until recently, my investigations were... inconclusive.

BACCO

(realises)

You arranged to be my transport to Cestus... so you could watch me?

VAUGHN

Yes, ma'am. And I'm glad I did.

BACCO

Why?

VAUGHN

Because, to quote young Mister Sisko... I changed my mind. Seeing the people who you governed for so many years missing you, wanting you back. Seeing how you would share a drink with a Gorn to keep your people safe. And seeing how you held yourself together in the face of unimaginable slaughter and tragedy, despite what it must have cost you... I changed my mind.

BACCO

(deadpan)

I'm honoured.

Vaughn also stands, approaches her, hoping to mend fences.

VAUGHN

I also wanted you to know that all those resources, all my years of intelligence and experience... I now offer them to you. I no longer doubt. I no longer distrust. I am yours to command, Madam President.

As the two veterans stare each other down...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN

**24 EXT. SPACE - PLANETARY ORBIT**

This time the *Kirk* is in orbit of an identifiable blue-green-white world - Earth.

As we PAN around from this view, we see a massive FIELD OF DEBRIS in Earth orbit - both Borg and Starfleet. Tiny work bee vessels are picking through the debris, searching for survivors or useful salvage.

**25 INT. KIRK - MAIN SHUTTLE BAY**

Vaughn and Lieutenant Magrone are there to see Bacco off. A RUNABOUT has been prepared for them.

VAUGHN

It was a genuine pleasure to be able to spend this time with you, Madam President. Please know that you're always welcome on the *Kirk*.

BACCO

It's certainly been an interesting experience, Captain. But right now I think I'm needed at home.

VAUGHN

Weren't you just at home, ma'am?

BACCO

Captain, Cestus may be my home, and Berengaria may be yours. But Earth is all of our homes.

Vaughn smiles. She has a point there. Wexler pops his head out of the open runabout hatch.

WEXLER

We're ready to go, ma'am.

BACCO

Right behind you, Steven.

Bacco follows Wexler back into the runabout. With her out of earshot, Lieutenant Magrone steps up to Vaughn.

MAGRONE

Sir, I was wondering - is it your intent that I scan the president during this journey? Because if so, I would like to make it clear that I would only follow those orders under extreme protest.

VAUGHN

No need, Lieutenant. I shan't be giving those orders. Take good care of the president, please.

MAGRONE

Happily, sir.

Magrone follows the president into the runabout, and soon after, its hatch closes, and the runabout powers up.

Vaughn steps back, letting the runabout LIFT OFF from the deck, slowly move towards the FORCE FIELD out onto open space, pass through with an electric FIZZ and move off.

That done, Vaughn looks around the giant shuttlebay.

VAUGHN

Vaughn to bridge.

ROGEIRO (comm)

Go ahead, sir.

VAUGHN

The president has left the *Kirk*. Please contact orbital control and offer the services of our many auxiliary vessels in salvaging that debris field out there. They need all the help we can give.

ROGEIRO (comm)

Understood, sir.

VAUGHN

In the meantime, I'll be occupied  
in holodeck one. Please see that  
I'm not disturbed. Vaughn out.

Vaughn walks towards the exit.

**26 INT. KIRK - CORRIDOR**

Vaughn strides along the corridor, nodding polite greetings  
to the occasional crew who cross his path. He turns a  
corner and comes upon the double HOLODECK doors...

**27 INT. KIRK - HOLODECK (CONTINUOUS)**

Much like *Voyager's* holodecks. Vaughn strides in, allowing  
the doors to close behind him.

VAUGHN

Computer, seal the doors, no  
interruptions. Authorisation  
Vaughn nine-epsilon-one-eight-  
purple.

The computer BEEPS affirmatively, followed by a heavy CLUNK  
of locking doors.

VAUGHN

Now create a multi-directional  
subspace holographic link-up  
according to program Vaughn  
three-one-alpha.

COMPUTER

Working.

Vaughn strolls the empty holodeck while waiting for the  
computer to do its work. After a few moments...

COMPUTER

Connection established.

VAUGHN

Activate.

With another BEEP from the computer, a pair of holographic figures materialise onto the otherwise empty holodeck grid - Admiral MARTA BATANIDES and Commander RO LAREN.

BATANIDES

Elias? Is everything alright? I wasn't expecting to hear from you today, considering.

VAUGHN

I appreciate your time, Marta. I'm sure Starfleet Command is busy. But I have news regarding our mutual suspicions.

RO

Is this a secure connection? Can we talk freely?

VAUGHN

It's as secure as I can make it, Laren. Why, is there a problem?

RO

Only that I had to kick Morn out of a holosuite on a moment's notice. I'm sure he's talking Quark's ear off about it right now. And Quark's wondering why. Don't worry, I can handle them.

VAUGHN

To business then. I've now had the opportunity to spend time with the object of our concerns, and I've come to the conclusion that we've been going about this all wrong.

BATANIDES

What does that mean?

VAUGHN

She's blunt. Impolitic. Aware of her own strengths. But she's not the threat we took her to be.



BATANIDES

Elias, my instincts rarely fail me. They were involved in this. You know as well as I do their fingerprints are all over it.

VAUGHN

I don't deny it, not for a moment. But I do not believe that she was a willing participant. I don't believe she even knows they exist.

RO

I've made some enquiries into my own target at this end. Honestly, I haven't spotted anything out of place here either. I was starting to think you were imagining it.

VAUGHN

I may well have been, at least for your part in this. If we go with the idea that my own target was not directly involved, then it follows that yours wasn't either.

BATANIDES

Elias, please - I know what I'm talking about. Something is rotten in the Palais de la Concorde.

VAUGHN

I believe you, Marta. But she is not it. I'm certain of that.

BATANIDES

What does your reporter friend have to say about it?

VAUGHN

I haven't heard from her in some weeks. I'm not sure whether to take that as a problem, or if she's just busy doing her job.

RO

So then what do we do now?

VAUGHN

The investigation isn't over. We just come at it from a different angle. If Section Thirty-One were involved in the election of a new president, but without that new president being party to it, then this goes deeper than we thought. So, we have to go deeper too.

BATANIDES

Anything concrete, Elias?

VAUGHN

You trust your instincts, Marta. So do I. So follow them. Let them take you to the truth. I have no doubt that they will.

RO

What about me? What can I do?

VAUGHN

Just be on standby in case I need you. But I suspect I won't.

BATANIDES

(sudden thought)

You didn't tell her what we think, did you? God, Elias, please tell me you didn't let her in on it.

VAUGHN

I did not. And I don't intend to. She's a good woman, Marta - the kind of woman we need in that office. I believe that without equivocation. And I'd rather not dirty that with what we know.

BATANIDES

I hope you're right, Elias.

RO

Me too.

BATANIDES

Because if you're not, we just welcomed a criminal into the most powerful office in the Federation. And then we let her stay there.

VAUGHN

Both of you, please just keep your eyes and ears open. I will too. And stay in touch.

RO

Fine. Signing off, then, I guess.

Ro's image dissolves into nothingness. Batanides' image lingers for a moment, her expression a clear warning to Vaughn. Then she too disappears.

Vaughn is left standing alone, abandoned on the empty holodeck grid...

FADE OUT

**END OF SHOW**