

Star Trek: Excelsior

Season Two: Boxing Day Episode

Episode S2EB: "Lockdown"

By Johnathan Huslage

Audioplay by Johnathan Huslage

THE WRITING CREDITS MAY NOT BE FINAL AND SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR PUBLICITY OR ADVERTISING PURPOSES WITHOUT FIRST CHECKING WITH THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT.

(NOTE: THERE IS NO LEGAL DEPARTMENT. THIS IS PUT HERE FOR MY OWN PRETENTIOUS AMUSEMENT.)

Copyright 2009 Excelsior Productions. All Rights Reserved. This script is not for publication or reproduction. No one is authorized to dispose of same. If lost or destroyed, please notify the Script Department. (Note: There is no Script Department. Just me, James Heaney, being pretentious again.)

FIRST DRAFT  
07 June 2009

**Cast List**

Rachel Cortez  
Alcar Dovan  
Alec Lohrok  
Alex Rol  
Asuka Yubari

Lt. Rhodes  
Ensign Jameson  
Ensign Davis  
Admiral Ryans  
Captain James  
Lt. Cmdr. Thrash

**SCENE 2001**

INT. *EXCELSIOR* READY ROOM

MUSIC: "Baltar Speaks With Adama"

0:00 - 0:20 or until call from the Bridge.

CORTEZ:

Captain's log, supplemental. Starfleet has deemed the past several missions that the *Excelsior* and her crew have been on more than a tad dangerous. Our new orders take us along the edge of the neutral zone, where we are to relieve the U.S.S. *Bozeman* and take over conducting scientific scans of nearby gaseous clouds and nebulae. While I feel this assignment is well under what the *Excelsior* and her crew are capable of, I am privately relieved to come across a mission so mundane. **You can only cheat death so many times before your luck runs out.** Thankfully, our first few scans have revealed nothing of interest.

Hear audio chime.

DOVAN:

Captain Cortez to the bridge, please.

The captain switches off her computer and rises from her chair.

CORTEZ:

I knew better than to type that. [steps out onto the bridge] What do you have, Commander?

DOVAN:

While running a sensor sweep of this area, we came across a Federation space suit adrift off our starboard hull. No life sign detected.

CORTEZ:

Run out of air?

DOVAN:

No, the spacesuit was just empty. We beamed it on board and found an isolinear data chip inside. *Lorhrok* is bringing it up as we speak.

CORTEZ:

I wasn't aware that Chief Engineers made errand trips to the bridge.

Turbolift doors open, Lorhrok steps out.

LORHROK:

What can I say, I missed my Captain. The chip is pretty banged up but I was able to manage to get a set of coordinates off of it.

CORTEZ:

Is there anything else on it?

LORHROK:

A few corrupted files at first glance. I'm going to have to take it down to engineering to see if I can't get it cleaned up.

CORTEZ:

See what you can do, Lorhrok.  
[hear turbolift doors as Lorhrok exits while she continues]  
Lt. Rol, lay in a course for those coordinates, warp 7.

ROL:

Yes, ma'am.

DOVAN:

Captain, a word?

CORTEZ:

Very well. Lt. Yubari, you have the bridge.  
[They move into the ready room]  
What is it, Commander?

DOVAN:

You sure are ready and eager to investigate this, Captain.

CORTEZ:

What exactly are you implying, Commander?

DOVAN:

There is a reason Starfleet ordered us to patrol the Neutral Zone. We're not scanning nebulas for the good of the Federation, we're scanning nebulas for the good of the ship. What will Starfleet say when we go off and start investigating when the *Bozeman* is only a few lightyears away?

CORTEZ:

I will not have this chip hanging over my head in the interest of self preservation. As Starfleet officers, we have a duty to investigate any possible distress another ship might be in and render aid accordingly. Starfleet will just have to wait to get their invaluable neutral zone data.

DOVAN:

Of course, Captain, I'm just trying to look out for your best interests.

CORTEZ:

I understand that. But I can't, in good conscious, put my worries above a possible distress call. Especially when it will only take minutes for us to reach the coordinates as opposed to almost an hour for the *Bozeman*. [beat] If you want to be Captain someday, Dovan, you're going to have to learn to trust your gut as opposed to Starfleet regs.

DOVAN:

That is a day that will hopefully not come for awhile, Captain.

CORTEZ:

Don't worry. I wasn't planning on handing the keys of the *Excelsior* over to you just yet, Commander.

YUBARI:

[hear audio chime] Captain, we've arrived at the coordinates.

[They exit the ready room]

CORTEZ:

All stop. On screen.

ROL:

It appears to be a centaur class starship, serial number NCC-4213, identified as the *U.S.S. Ajax*. Preliminary scans detect multiple hull fractures and minimal power.

CORTEZ:

Life signs?

ROL:

It's hard to tell. There's an energy signature emanating from Deck 4, aft section. It's interfering with the sensors.

CORTEZ:

What kind of energy signature?

ROL:

I am unable to tell.

CORTEZ:

Commander, I want you to form an away team and investigate that ship. Check for survivors and try to find out what happened. I'll inform Lt. Lohrok so he can prepare an engineering detail. To see if they can try and salvage what's left. Synch your readouts with Lt. Yubari, that way we can start assessing problems and get them fixed as fast as possible.

DOVAN:

Understood, Captain.

CORTEZ:

And Dovan...if there is something wrong, if something happens, return to the ship immediately. Something doesn't feel right and I will not have you or the crew in any kind of jeopardy over this.

DOVAN:

I knew there was a reason I stuck with you for so long.  
[hear turbolift doors]  
Engineering.

[hear hum as the turbolift activates] Let's just  
hope there is no reason to worry.

## Scene 2002

Int. Starship Excelsior Engineering

Hear turbolift doors open.

DOVAN:

Lt. Lorhrok! How are preparations coming?

LORHROK:

I have Ensign Rhodes and the rest of engineering team alpha meeting us in Transporter Room 2. We're taking over a power generator and some sensor equipment. Hopefully that will be enough to give us a good impression at where we are in terms of repairing the *Ajax*.

DOVAN:

Excellent. [hear doors] Deck 3. [hear hum]

LORHROK:

So, we're really going over to a ghost ship, eh, Commander?

DOVAN:

Ghost ship? Been reading a few scary stories in your downtime, Lt.?

LORHROK:

A ship adrift, no lifesigns detected, multiple hull breaches where the damage looks like it came from the inside? Sounds like a ghost ship to me.

DOVAN:

How do you know the explosions came from the inside?

LORHROK:

Preliminary sensor scans to see if it's warp capable.

DOVAN:

And is it?

LORHROK:



Of course not, it's got more holes than swiss cheese. That doesn't bother you?

DOVAN:

What, the non-warp capabilities or the swiss cheese?

LORHROK:

Actually [hum stops, doors open] that the explosions came from the inside.

DOVAN:

Well, that's my job to figure out. You just focus on making it run.

LORHROK:

If it's possible.

DOVAN:

Doubting your engineering prowess, Lt.?

LORHROK:

Oh I never doubt my abilities, sir. I'm afraid it's the ship that I doubt. Lt. Rhodes! That new pip on your collar looks good on you.

RHODES:

Thank you sir.

LORHROK:

Don't thank me, you earned it. [beat] Ok, you can thank me a little. Where's Knight and Yeoson?

RHODES:

There was a problem with the generator, sir, so they took it back to Engineering. Said it shouldn't take more than twenty minutes.

LORHROK:

Well, then, they can catch the next transport over. [beat] After you Commander.

## Scene 2003

Int. Excelsior Bridge

CORTEZ:

Yubari, status report.

YUBARI:

Commander Dovan prepped the teams and they have successfully transported over to the *Ajax*.

CORTEZ:

Good. Excelsior to Commander Dovan.

DOVAN: [over the comm.]

Go ahead, ma'am.

CORTEZ:

What do you see over there, Commander?

DOVAN: [over the comm.]

Captain, the ship is practically destroyed. Minimal power and life support, everything below deck 6 is in a vacuum and the shuttle bay is a disaster. I'm not sure what went on here, but it doesn't look good. No life signs detected. I'm heading to the bridge now.

CORTEZ:

Lt. Rhodes?

RHODES: [over the comm.]

Sorry, ma'am, there was a bit of a delay in getting to Deck 4. Part of the hallway had collapsed so we had to crawl through a series of Jeffries tubes. We should be at the energy signature in a few moments.

CORTEZ:

Understood. Lt. Lorhrok, what do you have?

LORHROK: [over the comm.]

Prelim scans indicate communications array is offline, as well as weapons, shields, warp drive and sensors. Most of the major subsystems are damaged beyond repair.

CORTEZ:

Do you have any good news Lt.?

LORHROK: [otc.]

Yes, ma'am, this morning I had bacon and eggs in the mess hall.

CORTEZ:

And that pertains to the ship, how?

LORHROK: [otc.]

Never said it pertained to the ship. Unfortunately, that's just the only good news I had.

CORTEZ:

How is that good news?

LORHROK: [otc.]

I like bacon and eggs.

CORTEZ:

Keep me posted on something besides your meals, Lorhrok. Excelsior out.

## Scene 2004

Hear turbolift door scratching its way open as Dovan steps out onto the destroyed Ajax bridge. Flickering of a computer panel can be heard.

DOVAN:

Just ignore Lorhrok, it's not a ghost ship. [hear taps] Ok, let's see, sensor logs...wiped. Personnel data...damaged. Personal logs...corrupted. Maybe if we try bypassing the data filters. (hear noise) Drat. How about rerouting the files to another undamaged part of the system...(hears noise/static). Hello, what have we here?

[Possible MUSIC CUE: "Assassination" by Cliff Eidleman. ~2:37-3:41, depending on the pacing of the scenes.]

THRASH:

I don't have long. My name is Lt. Cmdr. James Thrash of the U.S.S. Ajax. The crew has turned against me, including the captain. I don't know how we got infected but it's spreading faster than I could have predicted. I've done as much as I could to combat it, but I don't think I'm going to make it. I've made sure, though, that I'm taking them with me.

DOVAN:

Uh oh. I don't like the sound of that.

THRASH:

I've programmed a failsafe. Once the ship achieves lockdown, there won't be any stopping it. I must contain it here. Can't be allowed to take it from me. Can't be allowed...Invisible to everyone...and no one. Can't be allowed...[hear static/screen goes off]

DOVAN:

Excelsior, come in.

CORTEZ: [otc.]

Go ahead, Dovan. You have something?

DOVAN:

Captain, I think we have a problem.

Alarms sound and the doors seal shut.

LORHROK:

Ok, Jameson, reroute power through the tertiary junctions.

JAMESON:

Roger that.

Jameson taps on the console. The computer sparks before a slow hum fills the room.

LORHROK:

Excellent. She's got a pulse. Bringing internal sensors online. Jameson, run diagnostics on the injectors, maybe we can bypass-[hear alarms and doors shutting] What was that?

RHODES:

Ensign, begin repair log. Beginning external scans of the device. On first observations, it is an egglike object, has a Federation symbol and a serial code that's been scratched off. It also appears to be tied into the ships power and has a cylindrical exhaust tube filled with some kind of green gas. I can see a power coupling behind it, so I'm going to remove the tube in order to access it's data logs.

He tries to remove the glass but drops it. He cries out in pain as the glass shatters.

DAVIS:

Lt.! Are you ok?

RHODES:

It's nothing. Just a mild plasma burn. Log continues, I dropped the tube, but continuing to run scan.

DAVIS:

Lt., power and rad levels are rising.

Alarm sounds and the doors shut.

RHODES:

Now what?

CORTEZ:

What do you mean, suddenly lost communication?

ROL:

I'm not picking up any comms signals, ma'am. It's like everything just shut off.

YUBARI:

We can't. Their signals have disappeared.

CORTEZ:

Excuse me?

YUBARI:

It's not just them, I can no longer scan the *U.S.S. Ajax*. It's like she's not even there anymore.

CORTEZ:

Like a ghost ship. Lt. Rol, begin running sensor scans of the surrounding areas. Is there something that is affecting our ability to run scans on the *Ajax*?

ROL:

Not that I see, ma'am. It's like she just disappeared.

CORTEZ:

Yubari, go over their last readouts. What were they doing before we lost contact?

YUBARI:

Lt. Rhodes and Ensign Lynch were on deck 4, about to run a sensor analysis on the device when they noted a power spike. Lt. Lorhrok and his team were running a diagnostic on the plasma injectors and coolant systems in engineering and Cmdr. Dovan was accessing a personal log on the bridge.

CORTEZ:

Did Rhodes find out what the device causing the energy disturbance was?

YUBARI:

I'm sorry, the blackout happened before we received that information.

SHARP: [otc.]  
Captain Cortez, come in please.

CORTEZ:  
Go ahead, Doctor.

SHARP: [otc.]  
Captain, I am no longer receiving vitals on any  
of the crew members on board the *Ajax*. What's  
going on?

CORTEZ:  
I'm sorry, doctor, but we're trying to assess the  
situation right now. As soon as we know  
anything, you'll know.

SHARP: [otc.]  
Understood. Sharp out.

ROL:  
And when will we know?

CORTEZ:  
I don't know.



## **Scene 2005**

Int. Ajax Bridge.

Dovan stares at a blank computer screen as he taps his combadge, an air of uneasiness in his voice.

DOVAN:

Dovan to Excelsior, come in please. (static)  
Dovan to Rhodes. [static] Dovan to Lorhrok, come in [static]. Well, this could be going better. Let's see if we can't find any more answers. [few computer beeps] A Captain's log? Sounds like a promising start.

CAPTAIN:

Captain's log, star-[static]-brought on board the *U.S.S. Ajax*. The crew is excited, as well they should be. We have been long overlooked for an important mission. During the Dominion War, we did nothing. During the Elios incident, we did nothing.

DOVAN:

Elios Incident?

[Possible MUSIC CUE: "An Incident" by Cliff Eidelman. May need to be adjusted depending on the time it takes for the Captain's monologue.]

CAPTAIN:

Now, Starfleet Intelligence has finally decided to let us test one of the most important experimental devices that could shift the control of power back into the Federations hands. We set a course for a small desolate moon near the Neutral Zone to run proper simulations before we test it. If all goes well, we should be done and back home within a week. I feel bad for asking the crew to postpone shore leave for another week, but the importance of this mission is not lost on them. The safety of the Federation and the mission comes first. This device is strange though. I've had my Engineers analyze it and there seems to be a problem with -[static]-third crewmember to be sent to sickbay-[static]-Thrash has taken an interest-[static].

DOVAN:

The rest of it is corrupted. I'm not even sure if that answered more questions than it brought up. [taps the computer pad] There has to be answers somewhere.

RHODES:

Anyone, come in. [static] Well, Davis, it looks like it's just you and me for now. What have you got?

DAVIS:

Well, sir, I'm not sure what activated it, but the device's power signature just increased by 197 percent. It's strange, it's not even drawing power from the ship anymore. I've never seen anything like it.

RHODES:

Effects?

DAVIS:

Hard to say. For some reason my tricorder is having some trouble with the scan of the device itself.

RHODES:

Alright, let's pack it up and head to the transporters.

DAVIS:

Transporters? Shouldn't we try and hook back up with the rest of the away team, sir?

RHODES:

Dovan gave us explicit instructions. Anything goes wrong or feels bad, we are to return to the ship immediately. I'd say finding a mysterious device that we can't scan and losing contact with the rest of the away team fills that bill. Now move it, Ensign.

DAVIS:

Yes, Lt. But what about your hand? It's starting to blister.

RHODES:

It'll be fine until we return to the Excelsior.  
Where is the closest transporter room? We need  
to evaluate its status.

DAVIS:

Secondary Transporter Room, Deck 3, section 12.

RHODES:

Then let's get moving.  
[hear them gathering things]  
What are you doing, get away from that!

DAVIS:

Sir, you ordered me to pack it up.

RHODES:

I'm sorry, Ensign, I...I'm just not feeling-. Look,  
I'll take care of it, ok? Just pack up our gear.

DAVIS:

Yes, sir.

RHODES:

[whispers to himself] What is going on?

LORHROK:

Don't start with what we don't know, Jameson,  
that's counterproductive! Start with what we do  
know.

JAMESON:

First, we assembled Engineering Team Alpha in  
Main Engineering-.

LORHROK:

Not that far back. I meant about this ship. We  
conducted our scans, started running power to  
secondary systems. Emergency life support,  
internal sensors, communications array was a  
joke, so we skipped it.

JAMESON:

Could this be an intruder alarm?

LORHROK:

Yes, yes, now you're thinking, Jameson! [hear computer padd] Looks like someone did some modifying of an old 'Changeling' protocol.

JAMESON:

Changeling protocol?

LORHROK:

During the Dominion War, when changelings started impersonating officers, you could activate a type of lockdown. Usually, it involved emergency force fields, but if you didn't have the power, say (more taps, smug) if someone had blown the power relays, which we noted in the scans.

JAMESON:

So, instead of force fields, they just shut and locked all the doors on the ship?

LORHROK:

Precisely.

JAMESON:

But why would he lockdown the ship? I doubt there was a changeling.

LORHROK:

Unfortunately, that's not our department. Dovan is going to have to figure that out. We just have to find a way off of this ship.

## Scene 2006

Int. Excelsior Bridge

The constant taps of the computer can be heard as Cortez has everyone on the bridge scanning for every possible thing she can think of. She is unusually on edge.

CORTEZ:

Theories.

YUBARI:

We can speculate all we want, Captain, but without knowing what it is that is causing the interference, everything we say won't make a difference.

ROL:

It's like we know an answer without knowing what the question is.

CORTEZ:

I don't care if it's fact, theory, or wild speculation, we need to get them off that ship.

YUBARI:

[few beeps] Captain, you have an incoming Alpha One priority transmission.

CORTEZ:

I'll take it in my ready room. When I come back, we need to figure this out.

Cortez hurries off to her ready room, the door barely has time to close before the computer on her desk is on and an older gentleman's face peers at her.

ADMIRAL:

Captain Cortez.

CORTEZ:

Admiral Ryans. I assume any call from the Starfleet Intelligence Division is not a social one.

ADMIRAL:

You assume correct. Am I to understand that you have rendezvoused with the *U.S.S. Ajax*?

CORTEZ:

I'd ask how you knew that considering we haven't relayed our position to Starfleet Command yet, but I'm fairly certain I won't get an answer. We have an away team and an engineering detail trapped on the *Ajax* as we speak.

ADMIRAL:

Trapped?

CORTEZ:

Yes, sir, some kind of lockdown activated after they beamed on board. We are unable to scan the vessel and our teleporters are useless. It no longer registers on our sensors. If it wasn't right in front of us, we wouldn't even know it was there.

ADMIRAL:

No doubt you ran preliminary scans when you first arrived. Tell me, did you detect an unusual power signature?

CORTEZ:

Yes, we did. Admiral, what is this all about?

ADMIRAL:

Captain, you are under direct orders to retrieve that device, no matter the cost.

CORTEZ:

Cost, admiral? I'm sure a Starfleet admiral would not be referring to my crew as expendable, right?

ADMIRAL:

Tell me, Captain, do you know what the Treaty of Algeron is?

CORTEZ:

Yes, it's the treaty we signed with the Romulans that restricted us from developing cloaking technology.

ADMIRAL:

Wrong. It is the restrictions that the Federation has placed on itself in order to maintain peace. A fool's errand. So what we have to do, in order to play by the rules, is to find a way around it.

CORTEZ:

Admiral, are you telling me that the device on board the U.S.S. Ajax is a cloaking device prototype?

ADMIRAL:

No, Captain. It is a sensor jammer. Basically, the equivalent of a cloaking device without actually cloaking. It causes sensor and transporter blackout without having to raise the shields. Coupled with the metamaterial we developed on the hull, it is virtually invisible unless you are staring straight at it. Not a cloak, but as close as we can get to one.

CORTEZ:

Admiral, with all due respect, you can't-.

ADMIRAL:

[very tense, as this is a sensitive subject]  
Can't what, Captain? All you have to worry about is your ship and your crew. We are responsible for billions of lives, colonies and planets, and every ship in the fleet. If an enemy has an advantage, we have to neutralize that advantage, do you understand me? The entire Federation could be in jeopardy!

CORTEZ:

No offense, sir, but right now the only people in jeopardy are my crew that are trapped with your science experiment.

ADMIRAL:

[challenging] You WILL recover that device, Captain.

CORTEZ:

[not afraid to back down from the challenge]  
We'll keep you informed, Admiral. Cortez out.

She taps the computer off with such intensity that she almost slams it off her desk. She takes a moment to recompose herself before heading back onto the bridge.

ROL:

Captain?

CORTEZ:

We need to get them off that ship. Now.



## Scene 2007

Int. Ajax Engineering Room

Hear some computer beeps as Jameson slams his fists onto the computer.

JAMESON:

We just can't do it, Lt. We don't have the power!

JAMESON:

And that's why you'll never be Chief Engineer, Jameson. Not with an attitude like that. Just let me move this to this, a pinch of that here, a soupson of this there...Aha! That ought to do it!

[hear beep, doors]

And that, as they say, is how it's done.

[Hear warp core breach noise]

Uh oh.

[more beeps/shuts off alarm]

Lorhrok to Dovan.

DOVAN: [otc.]

Lorhrok! I never thought I'd be happy to hear your voice. It looks like you've lifted the lockdown. What's your status?

LORHROK:

Well, do you want the good news or the bad news, sir?

DOVAN: [otc.]

The bad news.

LORHROK:

Really? Are you sure? Because I thought that you, as a Bolian-

DOVAN: [otc.]

Very well, what's the good news?

LORHROK:

I have successfully managed to lift the lockdown, sir.

DOVAN: [otc.]

[pause] Thank you for informing me of that, Lt. I wouldn't have known otherwise. And the bad news?

LORHROK:

I may have accidentally, inadvertently, possibly activated Thrash's failsafe in order to lift the lockdown.

DOVAN: [otc.]

And that would be?

LORHROK:

We have less than three minutes until a warp core breach. [Break]

[Possible MUSIC CUE: "The Battle for Peace" by Cliff Eidelman, ~:55 to ??. This clip can be played until the end of the warp core sequence. The timing is too imprecise to give an accurate estimation.]

DOVAN: [otc.]

Why hasn't the alarm sounded throughout the ship?

LORHROK:

Probably because Thrash deactivated the audio warnings. Didn't want anyone to try and stop it.

DOVAN: [otc.]

Well, find a way to stop it. What about Rhodes?

LORHROK:

I can't get a hold of him.

DOVAN: [otc.]

What about Excelsior?

LORHROK:

I can't get a hold of them either.

DOVAN: [otc.]

I thought you said you lifted the lockdown.

LORHROK:

I did. Something else is interfering with the outside communication and transporter abilities. I think it might have something to do with that

energy signature on Deck 4. I don't know what's going on, but Rhodes just isn't responding.

DOVAN: [otc.]

There's not much more I can do up here. I'll look for Rhodes, you focus on stopping that breach.

LORHROK:

Yes, sir, Lorhrok out. [end comm.]

JAMESON:

Why isn't Rhodes answering his comm.? Surely, something's wrong.

LORHROK:

Jameson, in two and a half minutes, it's not going to matter.

**Scene 2008**

Int. Ajax Destroyed Hallway.

Davis is leading a now limping Rhodes who tightens his grip on the device.

DAVIS:

Two more sections and we'll be there.

RHODES:

Excellent. The sooner we get off this ship, the better. [coughs]

DAVIS:

Sir, are you ok? You don't look well.

RHODES:

I'm fine.

DAVIS:

But sir-.

RHODES:

I said I'm fine, Ensign. Now keep moving.  
[coughs and hacks]

DAVIS:

[hear tricorder] Sir, you have blood on your uniform. You're bleeding internally and have major organ degradation.

RHODES:

Get to the transporter, Ensign, that's an order. Or is there some reason that you don't want us to get off this ship?

DAVIS:

Sir?

RHODES:

First you try to steal the device, MY device, and then when you can't have it you delay us getting to the transporter room with these false readings.

[coughs again/knocks tricorder out of his hand]  
Tell me, Ensign, who was it that ordered you to

turn on me? Dovan? Cortez? Or did you just volunteer for the chance?

DAVIS:

Lt., you're ill. That device is making you sick, we need to get rid of it, before it-.

RHODES:

You disgust me, Davis. Only thinking about yourself. What about the mission? We have a job to do and we're going to do it! [hear him draw his phaser] We will do it.

DAVIS:

Sir, even if we get to the transporter room, there's no guarantee that-.

RHODES:

The only guarantee right now, Davis, is that unless you move, you're going to stay aboard this ship...permanently.

DOVAN:

Holster that weapon, Lt.

RHODES:

[a bit puzzled/disoriented, as if in a dream] Commander Dovan. What are you doing here?

DOVAN:

Lorhrok's been trying to reach you, Lt. We were getting concerned.

RHODES:

You really shouldn't be, sir. We have the mission objective well in hand and are returning to the *Excelsior* to complete it.

DOVAN:

And what objective is that, Rhodes?

RHODES:

[in disbelief] The recovery of the device, sir.

DOVAN:

We're here to check for survivors, Lt, not to take that aboard. Drop it, now.

RHODES:

I knew it. I knew you were with Davis.

DAVIS:

Commander, he's sick, he has-.

RHODES:

Shut up! [hits Davis and fires on Dovan; shot misses and hits a wall] You're not stopping me from completing my mission!

DOVAN:

Davis, you ok?

DAVIS:

Sir...

DOVAN:

Stay down, Ensign. [hear doors open] Get away from there, Rhodes. [hear another phaser shot]

RHODES:

You disgust me, Commander!

DAVIS:

[aside to Dovan] It's ok, he was disgusted with me, too.

RHODES:

The device is coming with me and we're going to the *Excelsior*. You two can stay and rot for all I care. Once I tell Cortez how you betrayed the mission, she'll leave you here, no problem.

DOVAN:

You're not going to make it far, Rhodes. The *Excelsior* won't stand for you deserting the away team.

RHODES:

No, you deserted the away team! You deserted the Federation by not focusing on the mission!

DOVAN:

Davis, what's going on? Why does he keep focusing on the mission?

DAVIS:

Not sure, sir. He was experiencing sharp pain and became more paranoid the longer he's been in contact with that device.

DOVAN:

What kind of device is that?

DAVIS:

We never found out. We were taking it back to the *Excelsior* for analysis.

DOVAN:

That must be the mission he keeps referring to.

The computer beeps as Rhodes continues to frenetically push buttons.

RHODES:

I can hear you down there! Plotting! Planning! Well, plan all you want. It won't matter soon.

DOVAN:

You have no idea how true that is. Rhodes, Lt. Cmdr. Thrash had a failsafe. He was trying to blow this ship up and I'm starting to think that it was because of that device right there.

RHODES:

You're wrong...You're wrong! [fires phaser again][hear more beeps as the transporter hums to life] I'm taking this to the *Excelsior* and you're not going to stop me.

DOVAN:

Rhodes, stop. Think about it. If he didn't want anyone to get off this ship, why would he leave the transporters on?

RHODES:

You're trying to trick me. It won't work.

DOVAN:

No, Rhodes, I'm trying to save you. Not get off that transporter pad. That's an order.

Hear the transporter turn on.

RHODES:

The mission first.

DOVAN:

No!

Rhodes screams as the transporter starts fluctuating. Dovan and Davis just stare helplessly as Lt. Rhodes turns to ash and his suit and the device fall helplessly onto the pad. Dovan walks over and picks up the device as well as Rhodes combadge.

DAVIS:

Sir, I wouldn't pick that up if I were you.

DOVAN:

You're concerns are noted, Ensign, but unfortunately we need to find a way to shut this thing off. The best place to do that is in Engineering.

DAVIS:

What if...I mean, what happens if you turn into something like...Rhodes?

DOVAN:

If anyone can find a way to deactivate this thing, it's Lohrok. Don't worry, ensign.

DAVIS:

Yes, sir.

The doors hiss open as Davis heads out.

DOVAN:

[out of earshot of Davis] Leave the worrying to the senior staff.

As they leave, Davis grunts in pain.

DOVAN:

Davis, what is it? [looks at his hand] Your hand has blisters.

DAVIS:



[out of breath, exasperated] We don't have long.  
These were the same symptoms that Rhodes had.

DOVAN:

Come on, Ensign. We have to get to Engineering.

**Scene 2009**

Int. Ajax Engine Room

LORHROK:

Ejection system?

DAVIS:

Disabled.

LORHROK:

Of course it is. Time.

JAMESON:

One minute, twelve seconds.

LORHROK:

[snaps his fingers] Ensign, please tell me you still have the sensor equipment from the *Excelsior*.

JAMESON:

Yes, sir.

LORHROK:

Good. Find the interphasic compensator while I reroute power to the deflector array.

JAMESON:

Sir? I don't follow. How is the deflector array going to help us?

LORHROK:

[madly presses buttons] One of my friends on DS9 said he read a report that said Cmdr. Sisko used an interphasic compensator and routed power from the core to the deflector in order to avoid a warp core breach. [more beeps] There. Let's just hope that the deflector still works.

JAMESON:

Deflector reading operational. How will we know it worked?

LORHROK:

In seven seconds, if we're still here, then it worked.

JAMESON:

Five...four...three...two...[drawn out]one.

They stand, tense and waiting. The ship shudders and then falls quiet.

LORHROK:

No boom. [gleeful] No boom! Ha ha!

The doors hiss open and Dovan and Davis walk in.

LORHROK:

No boom Commander!

DOVAN:

Excellent job, Lt. Lorhrok, I knew you could do it. Now, we just have to find a way to shut this off.

LORHROK:

You can't let me have just one minute, can you?  
[takes the device] What is it?

DOVAN:

Something that helped murder this entire crew...plus one more.

JAMESON:

Rhodes?

DAVIS:

He didn't make it. [coughs]

DOVAN:

And neither will we if we don't shut this off.  
Suggestions?

DAVIS:

Fire a phaser?

LORHROK:

That could be a food replicator or a miniature warp reactor. A phaser probably isn't the best idea.

JAMESON:

What if we try to sabotage its power supply?

DAVIS:

Internal power supply. Rhodes was trying to access its power couplings when he got burned by plasma. If it's a booby trap or a freak coincidence, I don't think we can take that chance.

DOVAN:

Wait a second. When I accessed the logs earlier, Thrash said something about 'invisible to everyone and no one.' I thought he was just rambling...

JAMESON:

I'm sorry sir, but that sounds like rambling to me.

DOVAN:

But when are you invisible to everyone and no one?

LORHROK:

[beat] When you're cloaked. Everyone on the outside can't see you, but everyone inside the ship still can.

DAVIS:

[hacks] Are you telling me that they were testing a cloaking device? Even after the Pegasus Incident?

DOVAN:

Cloaking has always been a dicey subject in Starfleet. There are many out there who would say we're at a serious disadvantage and more still who would gladly look to rectify that error.

DAVIS:

[sorrowfully]  
In looking to rectify one error, they commit so many more.

DOVAN:

We can discuss this at a later time. Lorhrok,  
can you shut it off?

Lorhrok inspects the device, almost like a challenge, one  
that won't get the best of him.

LORHROK:

I told you, I don't doubt my abilities. They've  
gotten me through so far. Assuming this is  
indeed a cloak, one way to try and disable it  
would be to create a miniature tachyon pulse.  
Hopefully that will cause an overload in the  
power couplings long enough for us to beam out of  
here.

DOVAN:

Get it ready.

As Lorhrok and Jameson set about their work, Davis grunts  
in pain, louder than before.

DOVAN:

Hang in there, Davis. We'll get you out of here.

DAVIS:

I'm sorry, Commander. I should have done more to  
stop Rhodes. I should have done more...Can't  
forget his scream.

DOVAN:

Davis, I want you to remember that you did not  
drive Rhodes to do what he did. That device did.  
So I don't want to hear you say that you didn't  
do enough. Is that understood?

DAVIS:

Yes, sir, it's just-.

DOVAN:

You are not responsible for his death, Ensign.  
That's final. We're going to get this device  
shut off, and then we're going to get you back to  
the *Excelsior*. Just stay with me.

DAVIS:

[yells in pain]  
It...hurts...sir.

DOVAN:  
Lorhrok, where are we on that pulse?

LORHROK:  
Bringing it online now.

DOVAN:  
On your feet, Davis. We're getting you out of here.

DAVIS:  
[very weak, mumbles his words now]  
No sense in arguing with a superior officer.

LORHROK:  
Assuming this works, we should have a window of about...nine seconds.

JAMESON:  
Nine seconds?

LORHROK:  
Emergency power is practically non-existent.  
Nine seconds is generous.

DOVAN:  
[his nervousness finally shows]  
It'll be enough.

LORHROK:  
Activating pulse in three...two...one.

Lorhrok taps a few buttons and activates the pulse. A high-pitched whine echoes throughout the room as it fires, powering down everything. Dovan taps his communications badge.

DOVAN:  
Dovan to Excelsior, come in.

CORTEZ: [otc.]  
Commander Dovan! It's so good-.

DOVAN:  
No time, Captain. Emergency transport. Four to beam directly to sick bay.

CORTEZ:

Yubari, now.

The transport begins as the device becomes active once more.

## Scene 2010

Int. Excelsior Medical Bay

A quiet series of blips can be heard as the vitals from the four away team members. The door opens as Cortez steps in.

CORTEZ:

Dr. Sharp. How are they?

SHARP:

They're holding up well. Davis will have to stay longer than the others, but he should be ok within a few weeks.

CORTEZ:

What can you tell me?

SHARP:

Theta radiation poisoning. According to Davis' report, Rhodes got the worst of it. He dropped a tube of theta exhaust, possibly a byproduct of the device. It lead to his symptoms getting worse much faster than they were supposed to. The device continued to leak it until we beamed them back aboard.

CORTEZ:

What were the symptoms?

SHARP:

Skin irritation, lesions, paranoia, hallucinations, followed by major organ failure. Thankfully, Davis was in the beginning stages of organ failure. Another twenty minutes and it would have been another story.

CORTEZ:

[very shaken]

Thank you, Doctor. That will be all.

SHARP:

Of course, ma'am.

Cortez heads for the door, lost in her own dark thoughts and deep regret when Dovan calls out to her weakly.



DOVAN:

Captain.

CORTEZ:

[tries to hide her feelings by pretending to not be bothered]

Commander. You should be resting. You need your strength.

DOVAN:

I do need that, yes ma'am. But I also know what that look is.

CORTEZ:

What look is that, Commander Dovan?

DOVAN:

We've been serving to long for you to try and feign ignorance with me, Captain. Just speak your mind.

CORTEZ:

I never should have sent you on that ship. I should have contacted the *Bozeman*. Why can't I follow the regs, Dovan? If I had, than Rhodes would still be alive and none of you would be in sickbay.

DOVAN:

[contemplates this for a second]

That's very true, Captain, we might not be here. But then again, the crew of the *Bozeman* might not have been there either.

CORTEZ:

What are you talking about, Dovan?

DOVAN:

What if we are put in these positions, not because we were just unlucky, but because we are the only ones who can do what it takes to survive them. There's no guarantee that the *Bozeman* crew would have fared any better than us.

CORTEZ:

A glass if half full kind of guy?

DOVAN:

The way I see it Captain, there are only two ways to look at life. One way will have you jumping at shadows, constantly fearing and always doubting. We do that and when the time comes, we won't have the strength necessary to do our jobs.

CORTEZ:

And the other way?

DOVAN:

Lt. Lorhrok doesn't doubt his abilities. Today, he lifted a lockdown, stopped a warp core breach, and managed to deactivate a possible cloaking device long enough to save four people. So you tell me which one you would rather believe in because I know which one I would.

CORTEZ:

I see your point, Commander.

DOVAN:

Just make sure you don't tell Lorhrok I said so many nice things about him. I'll never hear the end of it.

LORHROK:

[distant, almost in a trance]  
Should I pretend I didn't hear as well?

## Scene 2011

Int. Excelsior Bridge.

Captain Cortez returns after her visit to the sickbay.

CORTEZ:

Lt. Yubari, I want you to fire on that vessel.

YUBARI:

Captain?

CORTEZ:

You heard me, Lt. I want that ship destroyed.

ROL:

Ma'am, are you sure that's wise?

CORTEZ:

Lt., that vessel has a device on board that killed their entire crew and almost killed our away team. I will not have anyone else risk their lives in the retrieval of that device. If anyone has any objections, say them now and I will note them in my log.

YUBARI:

[long pause]

Locking weapons. [hear computer] Firing.

The Excelsior fires two photon torpedoes, striking the Ajax and causing her to explode. There is a moment of silence as the three senior officers watch the pieces float away into space.

CORTEZ:

Thank you, Lt. I'll be in my ready room, writing my report.

YUBARI:

[long beat]

Captain, before you go. I seem to recall that Ensign Jameson mentioned something about a warp core breach.

CORTEZ:

He did.

YUBARI:

Well, who's to say that it didn't reactivate once the away team left the ship?

ROL:

Or perhaps when he activated Deflector control, the energy he shunted wasn't enough to contain the breach, merely delay it.

CORTEZ:

[sounds happy for once]

That's very true. [pause] Thank you, Lt. Both of you. I'll be in my ready room.

The doors open as she walks in, sitting down at her terminal with a heavy sigh.

CORTEZ:

Computer, music. Something soft.

A beep of acknowledgement and a soft tune starts playing. [POSSIBLE MUSIC CUE: "Moonlight Sonata" by the Boccherini Quartet. I have the music if you need it.]

CORTEZ:

Captain's personal log. With the Ajax destroyed, I am hopeful that the research on cloaking devices will stop once Starfleet Intelligence receives my report. I am at a loss, as I don't even know the names of the crew to whom I mourn for. We are returning back to the neutral zone to finish our surveys of the surrounding sectors.

Hear an audio chime.

CORTEZ:

This is Cortez, go ahead.

JAMESON:

Ma'am, you said you wanted to know when we finished restoring the information on that data chip.

CORTEZ:

Thank you, Ensign. Shouldn't you still be in sickbay along with the others?

JAMESON:

Sorry, ma'am, I was going a little stir crazy in there. Plus, with Lorhrok still in there for a concussion and Davis still out. Would you like me to return to sickbay?

CORTEZ:

No, that's ok, Ensign. Just go ahead and send me the file.

JAMESON:

Yes, ma'am routing through to your terminal now.

[Possible MUSIC CUE: "The Olympic Carrier" by Bear McCreary, ~4:20 until the end of the monologue.]

JAMES:

This is Captain James, of the U.S.S. Ajax, issuing the following Code Blue Command. Do not, I repeat, do not come for us. Thrash has become unstable, a result of spending too much time with the jamming device we were assigned to test.

It's been leaking theta radiation and poisoned half the crew. In wishing for more for my crew I have condemned them to death. Thrash has disabled the ship, and locked down every deck.

[His hard tone becomes soft as he thinks about the men and women he lost]

He...he even vented the lower decks. In a matter of seconds...over 120 people, dead.

[His hard tone resumes]

I have ordered Hughes and Larensch to disable as many traps as they can, but...Stay away from this ship. It is filled with nothing but death and regret. Attached are our crews last wishes to family back home. Take this and make sure that these people have closure.

[His voice becomes hollow once again]

One mistake. It only takes one.

The message cuts to static. The Captain turns the screen off. She activates a comm. To the bridge.

CORTEZ:

Roll, plot a course for Earth, maximum warp.

ROL:

Yes, ma'am.

CORTEZ:

[to herself]

Don't worry, Captain. I'll get the message there.

END