

FADE IN:

EXT. - THE CITY OF TAMMOK

From a distance, the city of Tammok is massive and consists of LARGE SPIRES that appear to be a cross between thin skyscrapers and beehives.

MONTAGE

-In the city itself, there are streets with Sephosians walking on them and minding their daily tasks, but no vehicles to be seen. FOURWING and TWOWING Sephosians FLY everywhere, but not everyone has the same wing-style; some are avian and some are insectoid.

-A WINGFREE BEGGAR SEPHOSIAN is walking about a busy street approaching winged Sephosians for change; they rudely brush him off. A Fourwing wearing a uniform similar to the uniforms worn by the Sephosians in the forest grabs the wingfree beggar and whisks him away.

-WINGED SEPHOSIAN CHILDREN are carrying their belongings as they fly around a spire.

-A giant GREEN PHOTON TORPEDO STRIKES THE SPIRE, catching the children in the blast.

-More green photon torpedoes are fired, and more of the spires are destroyed; winged Sephosians careen away from the carnage.

FREEZE FRAME

ORANGE-FACED PUPPET (V.O.)
You can consider this a worst-case scenario of what will happen to the Yearlar capital city of Tammok if you don't abidcate your position within the next five hours, Tabuler Shenti. Millions of Sephosians will die because you did not want to accept the change that the lowest among your society clamor for. And as for those lowest-

-Among the WIDESPREAD WRECKAGE of Tammok, wingfrees LOOT STORES.

-Wingfrees attack twowing and fourwing survivors.

ORANGE-FACED PUPPET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They will stand atop you for all time in the new world, they will seek vengeance against you for your many crimes against them, and they may even decide to eradicate you entirely. And

when they have erased you from history,
then we will give them the better world
that we now offer to you as an
alternative to the mess you're in
charge of now.

ORANGE-FACED PUPPET

ORANGE-FACED PUPPET (CONT'D)
Today, one way or another, all of your
society will begin its journey to a
better, everlasting future. Accept
that future, or die with your heinous
past.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

INT. TABULER SHENTI'S OFFICE

SHENTI, a broad-shouldered Sephosian with four wings, is sitting on the edge of his desk in his massive office while observing the Orange-Faced Puppet's transmission on a large, OVAL FLATSCREEN TV. He is well-dressed by Sephosian standards. The SYMBOL OF THE TAMMA BLANKS is embroidered into the office's carpet.

Several similarly well-dressed, four-winged Sephosians are sitting in chairs crafted to accommodate their wingspans. Everyone appears to be deeply concerned.

TEASER END

INT. TABULER SHENTI'S OFFICE

SHENTI
Surlyn Reisz, any updates?

REISZ, a sitting female fourwing wearing a gold Tamma-Blanks dress uniform, faces Shenti.

REISZ
We haven't gotten close enough to it yet, but the extraterrestrial ship that was shot down is most likely un-salvagable, and based on radar activity surrounding the ship prior to its destruction, we can also assume that they deployed escape pods.

SHENTI
To where?

REISZ
All over, Tabuler Shenti, but we won't be able to round them all up within five

hours. If you would like my opinion on the matter-

(motions to the screen)

-whatever is in space is our primary problem for the moment.

SHENTI

(scoffs)

And do you have any idea on how to solve it?

REISZ

With all due respect, Tabuler, the YAF has pushed for decades to have our funding increased in order to create the means to monitor space so we could stay better abreast of situations such as this one. And every time we've pushed, it was decided-

MORZ

The Tabuler hardly has time for blame games, Surlyn. According to that alien trash, apparently, the world as we know it is going to end in six hours.

REISZ

Then our first duty is to warn the public.

SHENTI

It's crazy that you'd even suggest such, Reisz. If we warn the public about an alien invasion and it turns out that this so-called Greater Court is bluffing, the wingfrees will do exactly what he says they'll do; they'll think some space-based savior has come to balance some non-existent racial scale. I don't think anyone in this room would look forward to a full-blown wingfree insurgency, or what would have to be full-measure responses to that insurgency from the Tamma-Blanks defense branches.

(shrugs)

And I do mean full, drastic, and final measures.

Everyone becomes solemnly silent, and Shenti stands erect.

SHENTI (CONT'D)

We aren't without our means to deal with this, correct? By virtue of the fact that the Skeltians told us where to find Maxes-dur-Lailen right as he was about to participate in this scheme means that we have allies.

REISZ
I've received no confirmation
regarding the completion of my team's
mission.

SHENTI
Did the aliens successfully extract
him Maxes?

REISZ
If any craft lifted past the
stratosphere, we'd know, and they
haven't. No...any aliens that have
landed are either dead or still here.
And to be honest, esteemed Tabuler, I
do not believe we should again rely upon
the aid of the Skeltians for the
duration of this matter. Or ever.

MORZ
You would alienate our only allies,
Surlyn?

REISZ
We had no contact or technology grant
from the ones that call themselves the
Skeltians for thirty years, Second
Tabuler, and we're just now hearing
from them on the day of our invasion
from one of the space factions they
warned us about?

SHENTI
And within the span of thirty years,
they've taken no hostile actions
against us to justify your suspicions-

MORZ, the fourwing sitting to Shenti's immediate right, sighs.

INT. VENGEANCE-CLASS CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

STANULIS sits behind a chair and SALIT stands over him.

SHENTI (O.S.)
-right now, we need all the friends we
can get.

STANULIS
Computer, mute audio.

Stanulis leans back into his chair and folds his hands in his
lap.

STANULIS (CONT'D)
Finally.

SALIT

Finally what, Admiral?

STANULIS

A clue. Greater Court Intelligence hasn't been able to discern who made the Tamma-Blanks aware of the galactic political atmosphere, not in five planetary surveys, but finally, we have a clue...the Skeltians.

SALIT

Never heard of them.

STANULIS

(shrugs)

Neither have I. Computer, can you locate any profile or information for a race known as the 'Skeltians' in any of your databanks?

COMPUTER (O.S.)

Negative, Admiral.

STANULIS

Search the G.C. libraries, including entries classified 'top secret.'

COMPUTER (O.S.)

There is no record of the race known as the 'Skeltians' in Greater Court records, Admiral.

Stanulis shakes his head.

SALIT

The Skeltians themselves may not exist, but they could be a front for anyone with stake in the affairs of Sephos.

STANULIS

I already have my guesses.

Stanulis stands up and exits the ready room, followed by Salit.

INT. "HORIZON" BRIDGE

As it was in the previous episode, the "Horizon" bridge is that of a Vengeance-class starship. Stanulis moves the ORANGE-FACED PUPPET away from the captain's chair and sits in it.

STANULIS

We apparently have the Skeltians to thank for the failure of the extraction mission. The Tamma-Blanks will dissolve in five hours or we'll be forced to eliminate them.

SALIT

I may appreciate your assistance in this matter, Admiral Stanulis, but I do not appreciate all of your methods. You've already killed eleven-hundred people today.

STANULIS

Oh, my dear Salit-
(looks up)
-Computer, tranya.

A MARTINI-GLASS FILLED WITH TRANYA materializes on the right armrest of Stanulis' chair.

STANULIS (CONT'D)

Tabuler Shenti will believe that I'm bluffing about bombing Sephosian cities because I am. I would never wreak that kind of havoc upon non-military targets.

(mock frowns)

I'm sad that you'd think I'd ever do such a thing.

SALIT

Don't give me those sad-child eyes, Admiral. We both know how old you really are.

Stanulis snickers and sips his tranya.

STANULIS

But right now, this ship is monitoring everything Shenti does, and I can eliminate him and most of the Tamma-Blanks leadership with a single fire-at-will command. Only he and his have to die for our mission to be successful.

SALIT

It's possible that no one else has to die today, sir. We aren't in the wild-era of the Greater Court anymore.

STANULIS

You have a better idea?

SALIT

One-thousand-to-one, the Sephosians can't beat an elite 309th Marine squad.

STANULIS

They sure whipped your extraction team, all respect due to the dead.

SALIT

The team was most likely ambushed. If not to capture all of the Tamma-Blanks, we'll need an assault team to deal with the Starfleet forces that got away from you.

Stanulis laughs and sips more tranya.

SALIT (CONT'D)
Don't think they'll just lie low, sir.
How many escaped, anyway?

Stanulis taps several buttons on his left-side armrest, and a DIGITAL TOP-VIEW MAP with several RED BLIPS appears in front of him.

STANULIS
From that Andorian ship, the entire crew, and they've taken measures to ensure that I can't just beam them up. But my drones found them near Maxes-dur-Lailen's extraction zone when I was checking on the status of your extraction team. When Starfleet reinforcements get here and I make it clear to them that I have de-facto prisoners of war on the surface, they'll be open to a few...negotiations.

SALIT
It'll be better if I beam down a team to either contain or capture them. And the Presidio's crew?

STANULIS
Six escapees down on the surface, and armed survey drones tracked them. Unfortunately for them, I've already got all the hostages I need. Computer, bring up a video feed on XL-03.

DIGITAL SCREEN - VULCAN FEMALE STARFLEET OFFICER IN A RED UNIFORM RUNNING WITHIN A DESERT

EXT. SEPHOS DESERT - DAY

The Vulcan female Starfleet officer runs within the desert, which appears to be endless. She has a backpack strapped to her back.

A PHASER BEAM, fired from an aerial-vertical angle, RIPS THROUGH HER UPPER-BODY from behind and she falls dead.

ARMED SURVEY DRONE HOVERING

INT. "HORIZON" BRIDGE

Stanulis faces Salit.

STANULIS

Within the past ten years, Admiral Salit, Starfleet has prevented the Greater Court of Caliphax from intervening upon twenty-two worlds. Twenty-two. That's well-over a trillion lives that could've been bettered if we'd just taken our gloves off sooner. Computer, video feed for XL-04.

EXT. SEPHOS BEACH

As a HUMAN MALE STARFLEET OFFICER wearing red exits his ESCAPE POD, he looks up to see an ARMED SURVEY DRONE.

HUMAN MALE STARFLEET OFFICER

No!

The Armed Survey Drone FIRES.

EXT. SEPHOS DESERT

Four Starfleet officers, two wearing blue uniforms and two wearing red, are SETTING UP A CAMPSITE near their abandoned escape pods.

TWO AIRBORNE ARMED SURVEY DRONES ABOVE THE CAMPSITE

BACK TO SCENE

An OFFICER IN A YELLOW UNIFORM manages to draw their phaser, but they are SHOT by one of the drones before they can fire. The drones fire three more blasts, slaughtering the remaining officers.

INT. "HORIZON" BRIDGE

Stanulis grins while Salit appears stern.

STANULIS

There, now we've had enough bloodshed. Send your away teams to secure the Tamma-Blanks leadership on the surface, as well as proceed with the extraction of 309th asset Maxes-dur-Lailen. You are not authorized to bring any member of the Tamma-Blanks leadership onto a 309th vessel.

SALIT
Aye, Admiral.
(taps combadge)
Salit to Winchester, beam-back.

STANULIS
Also...let your marines know that when they encounter that stranded Starfleet crew on the surface, we don't need all of them alive.

SALIT
So much for 'had enough bloodshed.'

Salit is BEAMED OUT.

EXT. SEPHOS FOREST - DAY

MAXES-DUR-LAILEN is walking through the forest; the other characters are not yet seen.

MAXES
A "wingfree" can only go so far in most of this world's societies. They may hold the occasional public office or make a few million, but not even those things happen for a wingfree unless the fourwings allow it to. Is such a system rare for the primitive societies you visit?

CORINTH walks in pace with Maxes through the forest.

CORINTH
Actually, there hasn't been a race discovered by the Federation, my own included, that hasn't practiced discrimination of some form within its history.

MAXES
But the societies in your Federation have all overcome it?
(shrugs)
So there is hope for my people.

ANGLE ON - THE DESPERADO CREW MARCHING THROUGH THE FOREST

Some among the crew of seventy-seven carry LARGE CRATES.

BACK TO SCENE

CORINTH
Discrimination is a natural part of social evolution and eventually, most

societies reach the point of dissolving discrimination when they collectively realize that it impedes their overall progress.

LILLI is walking forward, but a TRANSPARENT DIGITAL VIDEO FEED is being displayed in front of her face.

LILLI
When my people evolved past discrimination, we solved all our ills within a generation.

Corinth nods.

CORINTH
And the discrimination-phase of Miss Decker's people, humans, was pretty bad when compared to that of my people, or the Bajorans.

Corinth motions to ELEMUD, who is walking next to Lilli.

ELEMUD
Internal discrimination, maybe. But then the Cardassians brought us their own brand of hate.

MAXES
Yes, but how many people will suffer and die over the years before we reach our point of dissolution? I follow you now because I have little other choice, Commander Rowe, but know that I'm not quite in agreement with the 'not my problem' attitude of your Federation.

A chime-melody is heard; Maxes reaches into his left pants-pocket and removes a cellphone-like device. Corinth glares at the device.

CORINTH
Can the Tamma-Blanks track us with that?

MAXES
No...but they have many other ways to track us. It's like I told you, one cannot hide from the Tamma-Blanks for long.
(presses a button)
Margis.
(listens to caller)
We'll be there.

Maxes presses a button and pockets the cellphone-like device.

MAXES (CONT'D)

There is a road to the north of where we are right now; ten minutes walking. We'll be picked up by one of my contacts.

CORINTH

If you can, call them back and tell them we'll be there in five.

(turns to crew)

Double-time!

While Maxes pulls out his calling device, the entire crew begins to jog ahead; when Maxes observes this with bewilderment, he jogs along with them.

Lilli still has her screen up.

LILLI

Commander, the drones are picking up activity in the form of what appears to be a large insect swarm less than half-a-kilometer away.

CORINTH

Company, halt!

MAXES

I'm pretty sure that's not an insect swarm-

Maxes looks up.

MAXES' P.O.V. - DOZENS OF AIRBORNE WINGED MASKED MEN IN THE DISTANCE

MAXES (CONT'D)

It's a hit-squad!

Corinth looks over his shoulder to Lilli.

CORINTH

Shield, medium-radius.

Lilli immediately reaches into her large field backpack, removes a long, multi-chambered device, and places one end of the device onto the ground.

LILLI

On, medium-radius.

Ground supports extend from the interior of the device and the shaft of the device extends upwards until the device itself appears similar to a camera tripod. TRANSPARENT BLUE LIGHT is fired upwards from the base of the device, and at twenty-feet, the light extends across the area and to the ground until the entire crew is standing beneath a DOME OF BLUE TRANSPARENT LIGHT.

The hit-squad, consisting of dozens of four-winged masked men, fly over the shield firing an endless stream of burst-fire rounds upon the shield for several seconds.

The Desperado crew stands within the field with their weapons raised, but none of them appear worried. Eventually, the firing stops, and the hit-squad flies past the crew and into the opposite distance.

CORINTH
(faces Maxes)
Do not move from the spot you're
standing in. At all. Lt. Thompson!

REA, who is standing within a group of crewmen dressed in yellow/black jacketed uniforms armed with phaser rifles, sneers as she looks up to the sky.

REA
Cover positions, double-time!

With military speed and precision, the entire Desperado crew hurry from the safety of the shield to find their way to cover positions behind the forest trees. Maxes doesn't move.

LILLI
They're coming back around; estimated
twelve seconds! Eleven...Ten...

REA
Heavy stun! Company, peek out and
prepare to fire in two..one...

The entire Desperado crew steps out from their respective cover positions and raise their weapons; Corinth raises his twin phaser pistols and glares at the targets.

Thirty-feet in the air, the hit-squad of winged masked men fly toward the Desperado crew.

REA (CONT'D)
Now!

All members of the Desperado crew step out from behind their cover positions and fire at the swarm of winged masked men; a LIGHT SHOW OF PHASER-BEAM FIRE streams towards the sky, and most of the winged masked men are struck by the beams.

CORINTH'S P.O.V. - THE WINGED MASKED MEN

They literally plummet to the ground below like flies.

BACK TO SCENE

REA (CONT'D)

Cover! Fire in the opposite direction
on four...three...two...

The twenty winged masked men still in the air open fire on the Desperado crew as they fly overhead, but their assault rifle rounds only hit the trees. They fly further overhead.

REA (CONT'D)

Fire!

All members of the Desperado crew fire their weapons directly upwards and HIT THE REMAINING WINGED MASKED MEN, who fall to the ground, scattering themselves within the covered Desperado crew.

Under the shield, Maxes is awestruck.

REA (CONT'D)

Ops, report!

Though she is holding a hand-phaser and is in cover behind a tree, Lilli is still monitoring her display. Several other members of her engineering team, all wearing yellow/black jacketed uniforms, observe her display.

LILLI

I've got ground movement 0.025
kilometers to the to the north,
twenty-six unwinged Sephosians.

CORINTH

The wingfrees we fought earlier
couldn't have just walked here. We need
confirmation on the location of a
ground or air vehicle, and you better
not tell me you can't find it.

LILLI

Aye aye.

Lilli turns to four members of her engineering team, and they holster their weapons long enough to bring up their own digital screens.

Doug is shown to standing behind a tree not far from Corinth.

DOUG

We gotta move. For all we know, they
can bomb this location, and I doubt
Maxes' ride is going to wait for us very
long.

Corinth considers the suggestion, and then steps out from cover.

CORINTH

You've got command over the main
formation.

(turns to his right)

Miss Thompson, pull six and follow me.
Miss Decker, toss that screen over to
Miss Thompson.

Lilli presses several buttons on her utility belt, and then flicks her right wrist towards Rea; a duplicate of Lilli's display screen appears in front of Rea's face.

Rea turns around and faces several members of security team, who are dressed in yellow/black jacketed uniforms.

REA
(points)
You, you, you, you, you, you. Let's
roll.

Corinth jogs northward with his pistols drawn, followed by Rea and her security team.

EXT. SEPHOS FOREST - LATER

Deeper in the forest, Corinth stops jogging and takes cover behind a large tree. Rea and the other security officers follow suit, and Rea still has the display screen in front of her.

REA
We can't hear 'em, but they're close.

CORINTH
Rea, you're with me, and we're going
straight ahead. I need three to go
thirty-feet to the right of this
position, three to go thirty-feet to
the left. When I fire up into the air,
both sides move on their flanks.

The security team members nod and break; when focus is again on Corinth, BASTISTE ROWE is standing behind him again.

BASTISTE
Heh. For someone that doesn't like me
much, you love stealing my desert
combat maneuvers.

Corinth apparently pays no attention to Bastiste and moves ahead from tree to tree flanked by Rea.

REA
This is good.

Rea touches a button on her belt, and the digital display screen disappears.

When focus returns to Corinth, Bastiste is gone. Still behind cover, Corinth blind-fires, and the entire area around him is riddled with gunfire seconds later.

CORINTH
Stun grenade.

Rea un-clips a round-shaped grenade from her waist and blind-tosses it forward. The surrounding area is sprayed down by heavy gunfire for several moments, but the salvo is interrupted by a loud blast.

Corinth and Rea simultaneous emerge from cover, and both of them fire three shots each; each shot hits a wingfree masked man that's twenty-feet ahead, and some of the masked men are already on the ground from the stun grenade. Immediately after their combined six shots, Corinth and Rea swoop into new cover with a practiced precision. Again, the area surrounding them is sprayed down by gunfire.

Corinth unhooks a stun grenade from his belt and blind-tosses it. As it was before, there is more gunfire, but the grenade goes off and the masked men SCREAM, but Corinth and Rea do not emerge from cover after the STREAM OF GUNFIRE ceases.

Corinth and Rea glance at each other, and a grizzled black-male wearing a cowboy hat, AUGOR ROWE, steps into view.

AUGOR
They've stopped shouting. They've
composed themselves. You don't have
'em spooked enough yet.

Seeming to ignore Augor, Corinth fires several phaser blasts into the air; seconds later, he hears several phaser beams being fired at once, followed by more gunfire and the shouting of more masked men.

AUGOR (CONT'D)
Now they're spooked.

Corinth and Rea emerge from cover and jog straight-ahead with their weapons raised and aimed.

CORINTH'S P.O.V. - THE REMAINING WINGFREE MASKED MEN, STANDING

BACK TO SCENE

Corinth's left and right arms move in a cycling motion as he fires his left and right-hand pistols. After four cycles...

CORINTH'S P.O.V. - THE REMAINING WINGFREE MASKED MEN, DOWN

REA (O.S.)
Right flank.

Three wingfree masked men on Corinth's right flank are seen raising weapons, but Rea shoots all of them down with three perfect successive rifle blasts.

CORINTH (O.S.)
Screen up.

REA (O.S.)
Two in retreat.

A thin, purple phaser beam streams north through the air twenty-feet above Corinth and Rea followed by a loud, pained shout. Another thin, purple phaser beam streams south briefly after the shout.

REA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
All clear.

CORINTH (O.S.)
Almost thought M'tak forgot about us.

BACK TO SCENE

CORINTH
How far is the rendezvous?

REA
0.025 kilometers.

CORINTH
Seeing how M'Tak's got my back, you and the security team go back to the main formation and tell them to double-time to the rendezvous. I'm going to move ahead and make sure it's secure.

EXT. SEPHOS FOREST - LATER

Rea and her security team reach the main gathering of the Desperado crew, and Rea approaches Doug.

REA
Commander Rowe's moved up ahead to secure our exit, and M'Tak is covering him.

DOUG
So we're good to go?

REA
Yeah, 'cuz.

Elemud is inside of the shield dome, tinkering with the shield generator.

ELEMUD
Lilli, call your drones back.

LILLI

Why?

ELEMUD
You'll see.

Doug turns around.

DOUG
Miss Decker, how about that
transportation vehicle?

Lilli and her engineering crew close their screens, and Lilli's
two drones land in front of her.

LILLI
Got nothing, sir.

DOUG
That's exactly what the Skipper
doesn't want you to say.

Lilli begins to pack her drones into their case.

LILLI
I guess it's a good thing you aren't
the Skipper.

DOUG
Miss Decker!

LILLI
For twenty-miles, X-0, there are no
vehicles of any kind except for the one
coming to pick us up. There's only two
explanations for that: one, their
Sephosian Fairy Godmothers tapped our
assailants with her wand and magically
jumped them all over here, or-

MAXES (O.S.)
They *flukard*, Miss De-kaar.

Doug, Rea, and Lilli face Maxes, who has stepped out of the
domed-shield.

LILLI
It's pronounced Deck-err. And what's
flukard?

MAXES
It's when they move from one location
to another in an instant with the aid
of a machine.

LILLI
(faces Doug)
Transporter-tech.

REA

How the hell do they have transporter technology before warp technology?

MAXES

The existence of flukard technology is kept secret from even most of the Tamma-Blanks, and not even I have uncovered solid evidence of its existence. So flukard is a theory, but if you're willing to entertain the theory, it might be to your advantage to assist in proving it true.

DOUG

We're out of time either way.
(turns around)
We're northbound! Double-time!

With Rea at the lead, the entire Desperado crew runs north in a loose formation. Doug stays behind and quietly gets a headcount of the crew as crewmates pass him.

After everyone has passed him, there is only one person left:

DOUG'S P.O.V. - ELEMUD, TINKERING WITH THE SHIELD GENERATOR

BACK TO SCENE

DOUG (CONT'D)

Ellie, just blow the damn thing up and c'mon.

ELEMUD

I had something else in mind, Doug.

Elemud presses a button on shield generator, and it begins to beep rapidly as though its going to explode, but instead, the TRANSPARENT SHIELD EXPANDS AND DEMATERIALIZES.

Seconds later, three ARMED SURVEY DRONES fall from above within the area surrounding Doug and Elemud.

DOUG

From the Horizon?

Doug walks over and picks up one of the survey drones, which he examines.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Nice job. Sure you got all of them?

ELEMUD

I'm sure. Once we leave this area, the Horizon won't be able to easily find us again.

Doug tucks the drone under his arm, faces Elemud, and smiles.

DOUG
Another one from your Ma's freedom
fighter bag of tricks?

ELEMUD
And that bag is very, very full.

EXT. SEPHOS FOREST - LATER

At a cautious pace, Corinth proceeds through the forest with both
pistols drawn.

CORINTH'S P.O.V. - FIVE 309TH MARINES BEAMING DOWN

BACK TO SCENE

Corinth covers himself behind a nearby tree.

309TH MARINE SERGEANT (O.S.)
Our orders stand; heavy-stun only, no
enemy casualties.

309TH MARINE SPECIALIST (O.S.)
There's one close-by, according to my
scan.

Corinth gulps, but stands firm.

309TH MARINE SERGEANT (O.S.)
Advance.

Corinth can hear the light, slow footsteps of the 309th marines
as they grow closer. When it is apparent that they are very close,
two THIN, PURPLE PHASER BEAMS stream through the air towards the
marines.

309TH MARINE SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Sniper!

Corinth emerges from the right-side of his cover and charges at
the marine squad's right flank. Upon reaching the right-most
marine, he launches a HAYMAKER that stuns the right-most marine
long enough for him to PISTOL-WHIP two more marines.

Another THIN, PURRPLE PHASER BEAM is fired at the 309TH MARINE
SERGEANT, but it is blocked by a BLUE SHIELD that only becomes
visible around the sergeant when the phaser beam hits it.

Corinth side-kicks the 309th sergeant in the stomach, wraps him
into a body-shield position, and rapidly fires left-hand pistol
at the remaining marines until his shots penetrate their SHIELDS,
causing them to COLLAPSE.

Another FOUR 309TH MARINES BEAM DOWN. Corinth kicks the 309th Marine sergeant that he's holding FACE-FIRST INTO A TREE, and then fires four successive shots at his back to knock him out.

DOUG (O.S.)
Commander!

CORINTH
Fire-at-will!

Doug and the rest of the crew, with weapons drawn, approach the area of the 309th encounter, but no one is able to reach cover before phaser beams are fired in their direction.

DOUG
Doc, cover the civilian!

PtatsnatchesMaxesbythecrookofhisarmsandrainsintheopposite direction with him, but Maxes tears himself out of Ptats grip.

MONTAGE

-Doug fires a phaser rifle at a 309TH MARINE, but the beam is blocked by the Marine's personal shield.

-A 309TH MARINE ARMED WITH A PHASER ASSAULT RIFLE burst-fires towards the Desperado crew; TWO RED SHIRTS NEAR REA are hit and collapse.

MAXES
Enough. No one else is getting hurt for me.
(turns around, waving arms)
Cease fire! Cease fire!

Maxes runs ahead and waves his arms around despite Ptats attempts to pull him back.

INT. VERITAS-CLASS BRIDGE

The interior design of the Veritas-class starship's bridge is designed as a futuristic version of a 22nd century (real-world) battleship command center; there isn't even a captain's chair.

Salit and several of her officers are hunched over a horizontal DIGITAL TOP-VIEW MAP which display scattered GOLD DOTS AND SCATTERED WHITE DOTS.

309TH MARINE CAPTAIN (O.S.)
Ma'am, I've got visual confirmation of the extraction target. He's calling for a cease fire.

SALIT
Cease fire and wait for the enemy troops to do the same.

EXT. SEPHOS FOREST

309TH MARINE CAPTAIN
Company, cease fire!

All of the 309th Marines immediately cease fire and drop into cover behind trees.

CORINTH
Company, cease fire!

The Desperado crew immediately ceases fire and with the exception of Corinth, they all drop back into cover. Maxes jogs forward and stops waving his arms as he steps in front of Corinth.

CORINTH (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

MAXES
You told your people that you were protecting our right to choose our fate, right? Don't I have the right to choose mine?

The 309th Marine Captain approaches and taps his combadge, which is a metallic version the 309th FLEET INSIGNIA.

SALIT (O.S.)
Am I being heard?

CORINTH
Yes, you are. I am Commander Corinth Rowe of the USS Desperado...one of two ships your fleet has attacked.

INT. VERITAS-CLASS BRIDGE

Salit is still hunched over the map.

SALIT
And I am Admiral Sotal Salit of the CDF Winchester. Yes, we did attack, and neither you nor Starfleet will receive an apology for it. The Greater Court of Caliphax is no longer willing to tolerate, neither in a diplomatic nor a military sense, Starfleet's further intervention into G.C. affairs.

EXT. SEPHOS FOREST

CORINTH
Then this is an act of war.

SALIT (O.S.)

You lack the authority to declare war,
Commander Rowe.

As Rowe and Salit converse, Doug tosses the ARMED SURVEY DRONE to Elemud.

DOUG
(whispers)
Track its point-of-origin.

Elemud places the drone on the ground, and removes a THIN, FUTURISTIC TABLET-PC from her backpack. She connects a USB cable to a USB port located on the survey drone's right side, and a series of 0's and 1's SCROLL across her tablet's screen.

Although she holds a phaser rifle, Lilli stands in cover surrounded by her engineering team.

CORINTH
You must not consider us prisoners of war, Admiral. Believe me when I tell you that we still have the means to resist, and we would be resisting right now if not for Maxes-dur-Lailen. I have decided to respect his decision to make a choice.

SALIT (O.S.)
There is integrity in your course of action, Commander.

Corinth nods to Maxes.

MAXES
Admiral. Were you the one who initiated contact with me two weeks ago to plan this extraction?

INT. VERITAS-CLASS BRIDGE

SALIT
Agents on my behalf did, yes. And it is important for you to know that with or without you, our intervention is going down within hours. It would go a lot smoother if we had your support.

A KLINGON VERITAS-CLASS BRIDGE OFFICER moves SEVERAL GOLD DOTS on the top-view map around so that they are COMPLETELY SURROUNDING THE RED DOTS ON THE MAP.

The Klingon bridge officer looks up to Salit as though seeking her approval; she nods.

EXT. SEPHOS FOREST

MONTAGE

-FIVE 309TH MARINES ARE BEAMED DOWN to the far-left of the Desperado crew and Maxes.

-ANOTHER FIVE 309TH MARINES ARE BEAMED DOWN to the far-rear of the Desperado crew and Maxes.

-ANOTHER FIVE 309TH MARINES ARE BEAMED DOWN to the far-right of the Desperado crew and Maxes.

BACK TO SCENE

CORINTH

He doesn't know nearly enough about galactic politics to make an informed decision, Admiral.

MAXES

No, Commander, but I can judge one's character rather well.

Maxes sighs and takes a step forward so that he is standing between Rowe and the 309th Marine Captain.

MAXES (CONT'D)

The Greater Court is in favor of intervening in the affairs of troubled, developing cultures, is that correct?

SALIT (O.S.)

It is.

MAXES

(faces Corinth)

And Starfleet is against that, but for the purposes of preventing long-term cultural damage, is that correct?

CORINTH

Yes.

MAXES

Commander Rowe. This wingfree of my planet, and to a lesser-extent, the twowings, have been the target of several genocides over the course of seven-hundred years known as 'Liberations.' Are you telling me, now that you know me, that if there was a Sixth Liberation...you would let me die?

Corinth holds strong eye-contact with Maxes.

CORINTH

Yes, I would. Because I know my involvement would only make things worse.

MAXES

(surprised)

You have such little faith in yourself, your crew, and your government?

CORINTH

I'm not perfect, Maxes, and my crew isn't perfect, and neither is my government. And you know what else I'm not?

(points at Maxes)

One of your people. I can have a planetary survey that goes on for a million pages worth of classified documents, but I wasn't born and raised on Sephos. I haven't suffered through some of the hells you have, and I proudly admit that I'm in no position to presume that I can come in and solve all of your problems overnight. That would be nothing more than hubris.

Maxes becomes quiet and faces the 309th Marine Captain.

MAXES

You both claim to be people of peace and diplomacy, yet you're apparently itching for a fight, so let me be clear: I don't care if you both destroy each other, but I think we can all agree that my homeworld should never be your battleground.

Corinth and the 309th Marine Captain nod.

Lilli is checking her DIGITAL TOP-VIEW MAP, which appears similar to the top-view display on Salit's Veritas-class.

LILLI

We're surrounded.

(turns to engineers)

Set up six mortars in a porcupine-formation. We'll need to fire in all directions-

ELEMUD (O.S.)

(hushed)

Lilli!

Lilli looks over to Elemud while the ENGINEERS PULL MORTARS OUT OF AN OPEN CRATE. Elemud motions for Lilli to join her.

Lilli snaps her fingers, the digital map fades, and kneels next to Elemud. Lilli looks down at Elemud's tablet screen and then her lips curve into a VERY DISTINCT FROWN.

LILLI
You can't be serious, Ellie.

ELEMUD
Please help.

Lilli shakes her head towards Elemud, still frowning.

LILLI
Don't have much of a choice, do I-

Lilli takes the tablet and LOOKS UP, as though trying to remember everyone's position on the field. Lilli then taps the screen rapidly.

CORINTH AND THE 309TH MARINE CAPTAIN

Corinth and the Marine Captain walk in opposite directions, but Maxes remains between them. Doug approaches Corinth.

DOUG
Well?

CORINTH
Peace is always a preferred option,
Doug. Doc!

Ptат, who is TREATING SEVERAL WOUNDED CREWMEN, runs up to Corinth and Doug.

CORINTH (CONT'D)
They're open to diplomacy.

PTAT
(nods)
Always a preferred option, eh? Well, I got some bad news for you. Given our tactical position, we're in *no* position to negotiate anything. In case you didn't notice while you were jaw-flappin' over there, they have us surrounded.

CORINTH
I noticed. In fact, our conversation right now only exists so that Lilli has time to set up mortars and you have time to get our wounded to cover.

PTAT
Aye, Skipper. And good luck.

Ptат walks off.

DOUG
Were you really interested in a truce?

CORINTH
My terms would've been the withdrawal of G.C. forces from the system and the arrest of whomever destroyed the Madrid. Early-on in the parlay, I got the impression that neither of those terms were going to be met.

DOUG
At least you were willing. Orders?

CORINTH
They're likely going to start shooting when enough of them are in position. Take Rea's security team and-

Lilli jogs up to Corinth.

LILLI
Moment of your time, Skipper?

INT. SEPHOS FOREST - LATER

Corinth and Lilli approach Elemud.

CORINTH
What's up?

Elemud shows her tablet's screen to Corinth in a VERY SHEEPISH MANNER. Corinth takes one look at the screen and LOOKS AWAY IN DISGUST.

CORINTH (CONT'D)
Damn it, Lieutenant.

LILLI
Commander, do you see any better options?

CORINTH
Do you really grasp what she's done? We've vouched for her to Starfleet Command all this time, and now she's made us look like fools!

LILLI
Yeah, she has.
(glares at Elemud)
But unless you like bloody shootouts, it is what it is.

Corinth glowers at Elemud, but she looks away.

CORINTH

Forty-seconds.

Corinthre-approaches Maxes, and the 309TH Marine Captain returns.

Within the formation of the 309th Marine that stands to the Desperado crew's rear, a 309TH BAJORAN MALE MARINE CORPORAL focuses ahead:

ELEMUD

BACK TO SCENE

The Bajoran male taps his combadge.

INT. VERITAS-CLASS BRIDGE

An 309TH ORION MALE BRIDGE OFFICER approaches Salit from the rear.

309TH ORION MALE BRIDGE OFFICER
Ma'am, one of the Marines has spotted
Elemud C'Serra among the enemy crew.

SALIT
Who?

309TH ORION MALE BRIDGE OFFICER
Ever hear of the *IMPounder* app?

Salit's huge eyes grow even wider and she leans over the map.

SALIT
Captain, secure that crew, now! Open
fire!

Several seconds of silence.

309TH MARINE CAPTAIN (O.S.)
They're gone, Admiral.

SALIT
What?!

EXT. SEPHOS FOREST

The entirety of the 309th's forces in the forest, but the entire Desperado crew is gone.

309TH MARINE CAPTAIN
They. Are. Gone.

INT. "HORIZON" BRIDGE

Stanulis drums his fingers along the left-side armrest of his captain's chair, and his tranya is held in his right hand.

STANULIS
I have a pretty good idea where they
are, my dear Salit.

Stanulis looks to his right:

CORINTH POINTING A PHASER PISTOL AT STANULIS' HEAD

Stanulis sips his tranya and narrows his eyes at Corinth.

STANULIS (CONT'D)
Do I have to ask the obvious?

CORINTH
You beamed me up here, how else would
I get up here? My turn: did you destroy
the Madrid?

Elemud, with the armed survey drone FLOATING NEXT TO HER, Lilli, Rea, Doug, and Ptat stand in different spots on the Horizon's bridge.

STANULIS
Nice try, Trillie, but a JAG will do
the talking for me from this point on.

Corinth grins and motions for Stanulis to stand up.

CORINTH
Whoever the hell you are, you are now
a prisoner of war under paragraph
38.912 of the Starfleet's Uniform Code
of Military Justice. You do have the
right to a JAG, and you do have the right
to remain silent.

STANULIS
You can't even hold me anywhere. Ha.

Corinth faces Elemud.

ELEMUD
IMPounder, visual.

A CARTOONISH, TRANSPARENT FURRY PURPLE IMP HOLOGRAM MATERIALIZES

The hologram is very rudimentary; completely unlike most complex, life-like holograms seen in the 25th century.

IMP
Tee hee hee! What do you want, bitch?

Rea and Doug exchange glances indicating bewilderment, Lilli giggles.

ELEMUD
Target the brig.

IMP
Brig.
(pause)
Scanning firewall-
(pause)
Wow! This thing is thicker than a Saurian's skull! Tee-hee!

ELEMUD
Is it crackable?

IMP
Gee-whiz, this security system is pretty darn unfamiliar to me...never seen nothin' like it! But it's got similar algorithms to...oh, screw it. I'll just get to work! Whee!

Imp skips around the captain's chair, dances around the lower-level of the bridge, and even WIGGLES ITS BUTT at Corinth.

IMP (CONT'D)
Hack completed; eight-hundred million lines of code scanned and re-organized in five-point-three-point-

ELEMUD
(rubs right temple)
Imp, deactivate personality.

DOUG
Actually, Lt., I think he's kinda cute. Take pride in your work, especially if you're probably going to prison for even having IMPounder later.

REA
Not rehab, but jail.

ELEMUD
Imp, list brig clearance holders.

IMP
Stanulis. No last name. He is the only user.

ELEMUD
Access duty roster.

IMP
Stanulius. He is the only listed crewmember.

CORINTH

You're really the only person on this ship?

PTAT

Pretty typical of a Feserian captain, actually.

Stanulis faces Ptat.

PTAT (CONT'D)

The First Federation have been Starfleet's true-blue allies since the 2360's. The only way you'd be part of a government that opposed us is if you're a outright-defector.

STANULIS

(scowls)

And like you, Starfleeter, the First Federation lets other races suffer through aeons of agony while they sit on their pillows, drink tranya, and party all day.

CORINTH

Lt. C'Serra, can you grant me full control over the ship?

STANULIS

You're insane if you think you can fly this thing.

CORINTH

No, you're insane. At least, I'm sure you'll plead that at your court marital.

ELEMUD

Imp-
(glances to Doug)
-Personality on.

Imp hops into the air and spins.

IMP

That's what's up!

ELEMUD

Initiate Master Control Protocol.

Imp rubs its chin.

IMP

Sign: Are you sure?

ELEMUD

Countersign: Coreys-Abs.

Elemud shies her face away, clearly embarrassed. This time, Rea is the one giggling.

IMP
Right away! Whee!

CORINTH
Kill the visual.

ELEMUD
Imp, audio-only. Override computer upon completing operation.

IMP FADES AWAY

IMP (O.S.)
Ding! I'm done.

CORINTH
He's done?

ELEMUD
The ship is yours, Commander Rowe.

Corinth blinks at Elemud.

ELEMUD (CONT'D)
Yes, IMPounder is that awesome, in fact, it's my masterpiece. Why do you think I've kept it for as long as I have?

CORINTH
Imp?

IMP (O.S.)
What do you want, jerk?

CORINTH
Beam Mr. Stanulis to a cell in the brig.

Stanulis is BEAMED OUT.

DOUG
Now what?

REA
I know...exactly how did we get up here?

Everyone turns to Elemud, who suddenly stands erect and appears confident as she saunters down to the lower-level of the bridge from the upper-level, followed by the (now hers) armed survey drone.

ELEMUD
Survey drones like this one are almost always remote-controlled by their

ship. I was able to get the space coordinates of this ship by re-activating the drone and connecting it to my tablet, but then I took it a step further. I used the drone and the IMPounder program to hack into this ship, its transporters, and its shields. And this ship is in fact capable of beaming up seventy-seven people at once.

CORINTH
Where's my crew, Lt.?

LILLI
Cargo bay one. I did the transporter-locking once she hacked into the ship.

CORINTH
And Maxes is there, too?

LILLI
Yes.

The bridge is suddenly ROCKED; everyone grabs hold of something to keep from falling over.

CORINTH
Imp, what was that?

IMP (O.S.)
What do you think, jackass? You're being shot at!

CORINTH
Imp, on-screen.

CORINTH'S P.O.V. - THE 309TH FLEET WITH THE WINCHESTER AT THE LEAD

BACK TO SCENE

IMP (O.S.)
You're being hailed by one of the ships, designation 'Winchester.'

CORINTH
Patch it through.

Salit appears on the VIEWSCREEN.

SALIT
Resorting to flagship piracy now, are we? Surrender the ship and Admiral Stanulis now, and we will escort you

to the nearest Starfleet base
unharmd.

CORINTH
Stanulis is under lawful arrest, and
it will be determined if he should stand
trial for war crimes.

SALIT
If he answers to anyone, it'll be us.
Last warning.

CORINTH
If you destroy this ship, you kill your
admiral.

SALIT
I only need to disable your ship in order
to beam aboard and arrest you. And if
that happens-
(mocking tone)
"Commander," you will not be granted
quarter.

The transmission is suddenly cut off; the bridge is ROCKED again.

CORINTH
Does anyone have any clue how to operate
this thing?

Everyone remains woefully silent for a few moments.

CORINTH (CONT'D)
Just checking.

Corinth settles into the captain's chair.

CORINTH (CONT'D)
Imp, patch me through to the entire
ship.

IMP (O.S.)
You're live!

CORINTH
Crew, this is Commander Rowe speaking.
I think we can all agree that down on
the surface, we were faced with a
situation that would've undoubtedly
ended in a great deal of death on both
our side and the enemy's. Our senior
staff saved us from such a fate-

INT. "HORIZON" CARGO BAY

All members of the Desperado's crew are gathered in the bay, and
all of them appear to be confused.

CORINTH (V.O.)
-but we're not safe yet. For right now,
remain in your current positions with
your weapons drawn. Do not attempt to
explore the ship, and if you encounter
enemy crewmembers, lethal force is not
authorized. That is all.

INT. "HORIZON" BRIDGE

The bridge is ROCKED again.

CORINTH
Imp, end transmission. Raise shields to
maximum. Senior staff, you're gonna
have to make some educated guesses in
terms of where your bridge stations
are, and how to operate them. Get to
it.

ALL
Aye, captain.

The entire senior staff save Ptat scurry about the bridge. The
bridge is ROCKED again.

IMP (O.S.)
Forward shields at 97 percent!

LILLI
Captain-

CORINTH
Hm?

LILLI
-in checking out the schematics of this
ship, there's no mistaking it; its got
all the hallmarks of a Federation
design!

CORINTH
You sure?

LILLI
(short chuckle)
It's built like an old-school
Constellation-class except a whole
hell of a lot bigger.

Rea operates her console.

REA
Its armament is pretty advanced,
though.

AUGOR ROWE appears next to Corinth's chair.

AUGOR

Some of the best fights of my life were
on Constellations.

Corinth taps the armrest of the captain's chair.

CORINTH

Lilli, Rea, you're in the right spots
for ops and tactical. Doug, primary
helm is the console to your right. Elle,
the science console consists of
everything from where you're standing
right now and everything to your left.

Doug SWITCHES SEATS and Elemud moves to her left to operate the
ENTIRE SCIENCE CONSOLE. The bridge is ROCKED again.

LILLI

Aft shields down to 90 percent.

REA

They've surrounded us. I count
twenty-two hostiles total.

CORINTH

No time for a full tactical evaluation,
Miss Thompson. Use your best judgment
with this ship's armament and
fire-at-will.

REA

Aye, captain.

DOUG

Elle, this ship used some kind of viral
matrix to disable the Madrid's shield
generators and ours. See if you can find
it the ship's computer.

ELEMUD

(operating console)
And if I do?

DOUG

Use it on the Winchester.

EXT. SPACE

SIX GREEN QUANTUM TORPEDOES are rapid-fired from the aft of the
"Horizon," at a DEFIANT-CLASS ship that is already firing PHASERS
at the "Horizon's" aft. The Defiant-class's shields hold until
the last torpedo, which penetrates its hull.

FOUR STREAMS OF PHASER BEAMS are fired directly at the
Veritas-class WINCHESTER; its shields hold.

A GREEN KINETIC CUTTING BEAM is fired from the "Horizon's" starboard at a KLINGON BIRD-OF-PREY, immediately breaching its shields and leaving its HULL EXPOSED.

INT. "HORIZON" BRIDGE

REA
Enemy Bird-of-Prey disabled.
(shakes head)
This ship's firepower is insane,
captain.

CORINTH
Let's not be afraid to use it, then.
Miss Decker, priority-power to
weapons, borrow from the shields if you
have to. Balls-out!

EXT. SPACE

As the ENTIRE 309TH BATTLEGROUP converges on the "Horizon," the "Horizon's" forward, aft, starboard, and broadside PHASERS, TORPEDOES, and KINETIC CUTTING BEAM fire in all directions to counter the 309th's onslaught.

Despite the ENDLESS BOMBARDMENT upon the "Horizon," its shields hold.

INT. VERITAS-CLASS BRIDGE

Salit is examining a MAP OF THE SPACE BATTLE, and the GOLD BLIPS have surrounded the "Horizon's" GREEN BLIP.

309TH ORION MALE BRIDGE OFFICER
Admiral, we're not punching through
and the 'Azura,' the 'Libertas,' and
the 'Axiom' have already been
disabled.

SALIT
Damned Stanulis and his god-ship.
Broadcast to the entire battlegroup;
full power to weapons. All we need to
do is get her shields down.

Salit faces the 309TH Klingon bridge officer.

SALIT (CONT'D)
Prepare a boarding team.

EXT. SPACE

The Winchester fires a LONG STREAM OF CANNON FIRE at the "Horizon's" front, but still, the "Horizon's" forward shield holds.

The "Horizon" continues its all-sides defense; FOUR ESCORT CRAFT to its rear are HIT BY TORPEDOES that leave their HULLS EXPOSED.

INT. "HORIZON" BRIDGE

REA
Four more down, captain!

LILLI
Um, captain?

CORINTH
Yes, Miss Decker?

LILLI
Apparently, this ship is
cloak-capable.

Corinth looks over his shoulder.

CORINTH
You're joking.

LILLI
I joke you not.

CORINTH
(pause)
Full power to impulse and Doug, set us
straight ahead. We're going to put them
in front of us instead of around us-

DOUG
(operating console)
We're moving ahead, captain.

CORINTH
Miss Decker, activate cloak in three,
two, one-

EXT. SPACE

The "Horizon" suddenly CLOAKS.

INT. "HORIZON" BRIDGE

CORINTH
X-O, move in a zig-zag so they can't
"guesstimate" where to fire and hit us.
Given long enough, they'll be able to
detect us while cloaked.

DOUG
Aye, taking evasive maneuvers.

CORINTH
Now get us six kilometers from the
battlegroup and make a hard u-turn!

Several seconds pass, and the bridge TILTS HARD.

EXT. SPACE

The 309th ships fire at empty space ahead of them; many beams and torpedoes miss, but others hit the invisible "Horizon" and cause explosions against its shields.

INT. "HORIZON" BRIDGE

DOUG
We're facing them, six kilometers out.

CORINTH
Miss Decker, all power back to weapons.
Miss Thompson, get ready to open up on
them with everything this crazy bird
has, and I do mean everything.

REA
(operating console)
Ready, Skipper.

CORINTH
Miss Decker?

LILLI
Power to weapons.

CORINTH
Deactivate cloak in three, two, one-

EXT. SPACE

MONTAGE

- The "Horizon" DE-CLOAKS and opens fire on the ENTIRE 309TH FLEET in front of it with a BARRAGE of PHASERS, TORPEDOES, and CANNON FIRE.

- THREE AKIRA-CLASS STARSHIPS are STRUCK BY TORPEDO FIRE to the point they are sent spinning out of control.

-FOUR DEFIANT-CLASS STARSHIPS are STRUCK BY CANNON FIRE to the point their HULLS ARE EXPOSED.

-FOUR VENGEANCE-CLASS ASSAULT DRONES are LAUNCHED from the "Horizon" and fire at a group of three MIRANDA-CLASS STARSHIPS.

-The Winchester, still at the lead of the battlegroup, FIRES FOUR STREAMS OF PHASERS at the "Horizon's" forward.

INT. "HORIZON" BRIDGE

LILLI
Forward shields down to 10 percent!

REA
Captain, if she gets our forward down, I'm guessing she knows this ship well enough that she knows how to beam an assault team to the bridge-

Corinth draws one of his phaser pistols and places it in his lap, but he doesn't stand up.

CORINTH
Target the Winchester. Cut off the head.

EXT. - SPACE

The "Horizon" and the Winchester HIT EACH OTHER WITH THEIR FULL ARMAMENTS as they draw closer to each other. Finally, the Winchester fires a phaser blast that pierces the "Horizon's" shields and causing an EXPLOSION AT THE SHIP'S NECK.

INT. VERITAS-CLASS BRIDGE

309TH ORION MALE BRIDGE OFFICER
Admiral, we're through their forward shields!

SALIT
(smiles)
Beam the assault team over to the bridge-

309TH KLINGON BRIDGE OFFICER
(frowns)
That's a negative, Admiral.

The ship's bridge is ROCKED.

309TH KLINGON BRIDGE OFFICER (CONT'D)
Our forward has been down for a little under a minute. One of their hull-hits They've knocked out our transporters.

SALIT

What?! No!

EXT. SPACE

The "Horizon" continues WAILING AWAY at the Winchester with phasers and torpedoes, causing explosions all over the ship's exterior to the point it appears the Winchester will be destroyed altogether.

INT. "HORIZON" BRIDGE

REA

The Winchester's disabled, hull integrity is at 25 percent!

CORINTH

Cease fire, Miss Thompson. Miss Decker, cycle power away from weapons and into shields.

LILLI

Aye.

CORINTH

Miss C'Serra, hail the Winchester.

The "Horizon's" bridge is rocked.

VIEWSCREEN - SALIT

CORINTH (CONT'D)

Admiral-

Ptata steps forward.

PTAT

I've got this, Skipper.

(faces the viewscreen)

It must've been your beauty that got you into the Greater Court's admiralty, because it sure wasn't your skill in combat. Call off your attack.

SALIT

Get this old, fat fool out of my sight. I don't deal with flunkies.

PTAT

You'll deal with me or you'll deal with the vacuum of space! You and your strongest ships are disabled and the rest, the best they can hope to do is peck at our shields until maybe they knock just one down. Are you gonna take the chance that we don't wipe you out

same as your chief admiral tried to wipe
us out?

Salit says nothing, and simply glares at Ptat.

INT. "HORIZON" OBSERVATION DECK

The observation deck is massive, and its interior design is similar to that of an upscale restaurant. Corinth stands near the door with his arms crossed while looking upon:

SALIT, GUARDED BY 309TH MARINES, ARGUING WITH PTAT

BACK TO SCENE

Elemud enters from the door to Corinth's rear.

ELEMUD

(looks on)
Doesn't look like negotiations are
going well.

CORINTH

Nah. Their intensity is pretty normal
for any Tellarite conversation. It's
made worse by the fact that Ptat's a
dirty old man and he thinks Salit is
hot. I can tell she's not interested,
though, and that complicates
negotiations.

(faces Elemud)
News on reinforcements?

ELEMUD

Starbase 877 received the distress
beacon and they've been mustering for
a response this entire time. Eight
ships from the 8th Fleet are ten minutes
out.

CORINTH

Lt. Elemud C'Serra, today you saved
many lives, and the crew and myself are
extremely grateful for your
quick-actions that ensured what will
hopefully be a total success of today's
mission.

(deep breath)
But you are now under arrest for the
possession, and apparent maintenance
of the high-level contraband
application known as 'IMPounder,' and
in doing so, you've also breached your
rehabilitation contract with
Starfleet.

Elemud defiantly turns her back on Corinth.

ELEMUD

Imp is in control of this ship right now, and I'm the only one really in control of Imp. I can escape if I want to.

CORINTH

And go where, Elle?

Corinth approaches Elemud.

CORINTH (CONT'D)

Intelligence will catch up to you like they did last time, or worse...the Greater Court isn't going to forget your role in their defeat today. In fact, we've all made the hitlist.

Elemud turns and locks eyes with Corinth.

ELEMUD

This isn't about protecting me, Corey, this about protecting your career. You think I've made a fool of you.

CORINTH

You have.

(headshakes)

I can't tell you how many times I've gone to bat for you, against the senior staff, against the crew, against Starfleet Command. All of them believe two things: that you're a compulsive hacker, and that our relationship has too much influence on my command. You once stood before a Federation court and promised that not only would you never build or run another piracy script, but that you'd serve Starfleet with the distinction demanded of your uniform.

Corinth turns away from Elemud and rubs his right temple.

CORINTH (CONT'D)

So, Starfleet is likely to be rid of you at the very least. Which means today I've lost my ship and you, the two things I love most. But what's done is done.

Elemud's eyes widen.

ELEMUD

What?

Corinth goes silent.

ELEMUD (CONT'D)

You...you wait until *now* to say you love me, you cruel son of a bitch? You know what, Corey? I think I prefer a cell to you right now. Imp-

IMP (O.S.)

(high-pitched)

Hmmmmmmmmmmmm?

ELEMUD

-beam me to a brig cell and secure it. Under no circumstances are you to allow voice-recognized user 'Corinth Rowe' to access to the brig itself. And change the IMPounder counter-sign from 'CoreysAbs' to 'CoreysAnAsshole'.

Elemud turns away from Corinth as she's BEAMED OUT.

INT. "HORIZON" CORRIDORS

MONTAGE

-Rea and six officers from her security team carefully proceed down an empty, wide "Horizon" corridor with their weapons raised.

-Doug, followed by TWELVE SECURITY AND MEDICAL/SCIENCE OFFICERS in total, proceed across two different corridors with their weapons raised.

-Lilli, flanked by her entire security team, traverses down another set of corridors.

INT. "HORIZON" ENGINEERING ROOM

-Lilli and her engineering team operate the vast engineering room's consoles.

"HORIZON'S" MASSIVE WARP CORE

MONTAGE END

INT. "HORIZON" OBSERVATION DECK

Doug enters the observation deck, and a sullen Corinth is still watching Ptat and Salit argue.

DOUG

The ship's unmanned, and Lilli says all of the ship's calibrations are at a

factory-default state for a Federation-built ship. I'm thinking Stanulis took this ship out before it was ready.

CORINTH
Any information on how this ship was able to produce the Horizon illusion in the first place?

DOUG
She hasn't gotten that far.

CORINTH
Elle's in the brig.

Doug doesn't respond immediately.

DOUG
Understandable, Skipper, but poor timing. We need her program to control the ship.

CORINTH
When reinforcements get here, we won't need the ship anymore.

DOUG
It would a long-term tactical mistake to give this thing back to an enemy of Starfleet. It's too powerful.

CORINTH
I'm not giving it back. When our ride home arrives, you and I are going to petition to self-destruct this damn thing. After what it did to the Madrid and the Desperado, just being on this thing disgusts me.

DOUG
If Starfleet approves, thumbs-up. But if they don't?

GATCHA (O.S.)
Then screw 'em.

GATCHA, HIS ARMS CROSSED

Corinth peers at Gatcha out of the corner of his right eye so that it might appear he is actually looking at Doug, but Corinth doesn't actually acknowledge Gatcha at all.

BACK TO SCENE

CORINTH

The Greater Court is not getting this ship back, end of story. Take command of Elle's science team and merge with Lilli's engineering team for the time being, put both teams to work; I want to be an expert on this ship within the hour.

DOUG

Aye, Skipper.

CORINTH

Also, the crew needs to fill their usual roles as soon as possible, so for the sake of familiarity, I will be addressing the crew as though we are still serving aboard the *Desperado*, and when referring to this ship, make sure that you and everyone else refer to it as '*Desperado*' instead of *Horizon*. In order for us to work this monstrosity for however long we have to, we need to think of it as being ours.

Doug nods and leaves the observation deck, but Corinth remains and continues to observe Ptat and Salit as their ARGUING BECOMES MORE INTENSE.

INT. TABULER SHENTI'S OFFICE

Shenti sits behind his desk, carefully reading from several sheets of paper.

A SEPHOSIAN-DESIGNED MOUNTED NEWSCAMERA is positioned directly in front of him, and several of the same people with him in his office before are standing behind the camera.

NEWSCAMERA P.O.V. - TABULER SHENTI

SHENTI

(speaking Sephonian,
subbed)

Good evening, fine people of Yearlar. In the past and as it is now, the Tamma-Blanks faction is wholly dedicated to bridging all perceived cultural and class gaps that divide the peoples of our free country. However, invisible elements of insurgency within our communities have recently been the cause of threats which require a swift response, and unfortunately, full-and-final measures to ensure the safety of all Yearlar citizens. As such, effective immediately, the Tamma-Blanks party, starting with the

city of Tammok will supervise an effort to liberate all free people of Yearlar from the scourge of domestic terrorism, and I urge docile cooperation among you, the Yearlar populace, with this effort. Thank you, my people.

BACK TO SCENE

Shenti remains seated. Morz approaches and places his right hand on Shenti's shoulder.

MORZ
(speaking Sephonian,
subbed)
A difficult decision, esteemed Shenti.

SHENTI
(speaking Sephonian,
subbed)
Not so difficult, my friend. If we don't
get to run our own world-
(looks up)
-the wingfrees won't live to run
it, either.

FADE TO BLACK.