

Exeter Compile 28

Dates: December 1, 2020 to December 7, 2020

Mission: Murder on the Exeter Express, Days 1, 2

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Mission: Murder on the Exeter Express

Day: 1

Stardate: 2445.12.01

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(USS Exeter - Counselor's Office - CO, Captain Trip Williams - 0700)

(USS Exeter - Nine and Dine - ACEO, Lt. JG Alistair Brightwood - 0900)

(USS Exeter – Nine and Dine- Ensign Janice Hammerfield - 0901)

(USS Exeter – Captain's Ready Room - CO Trip Williams and FO Ailynn Bracken - 0915)

(USS Exeter - Biology Lab - SO, Ensign SG Christopher West - 1000)

(USS Exeter - Security Office - Tac/Ens.(Sg) Stan More - 10:01)

(USS Exeter - Security Office, Forensics Lab - ACTO, Lt. JG Cade Blackwell -1030)

(USS Exeter - Holodeck - Ensign Rylee Page & Ensign Zot - 1934)

(USS Exeter - Deck 1- Conference Room -COO Ensign (sg) Paul Sleeford 20:05)

(USS Exeter - Captain's Dining Room - CO, Captain Trip Williams - 2010)

(USS Exeter - Captain's Dining Room - Tac/Sec Ens.(Sg) Stan More - 21:11)

(USS Exeter - Captain's Dining Room - CO, Captain Trip Williams - 21:11)

(USS Exeter – Captain's Dining Room - Ensign Janice Hammerfield - 2112)

(USS Exeter – Captain's Dining Room - Tac/Sec Ens.(sg) Stan More - 21:13)

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Mission: Murder on the Exeter Express

Day: 2

Stardate: 2445.12.02

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(USS Exeter - Personal Quarters - The Murderer - 0300)

(USS Exeter - Personal Quarters - CO, Captain Trip Williams and Dir. R&SE Ashlyn Williams - 0305)

(USS Exeter - Mortuary - FO Cmdr Ailynn Bracken - 0330)

(USS Exeter – Mortuary – ACMO – Ensign Dural Methor Dr.PH – 0333)

(USS Exeter – Mortuary – FO Cmdr Ailynn Bracken– 0335)

(USS Exeter - Crew Quarters- SPC Chief Armory officer PO2 Sytuk-0459)

(USS Exeter - Personal Quarters- CSO Lt Jg Erin Cortez - 0501)

(USS Exeter - Personal Quarters of Cortez- SPC Armory Chief PO2 Sytuk- 0502)
(USS Exeter - CTO Office - CSO Lt Jg Erin Cortez & CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok - 0531)
(USS Exeter - Personal quarters - Lt Jg Greta Smith - 0541)
(USS Exeter - Personal quarters - CFO – Lieutenant – Ire Williams- 0543)
(USS Exeter - Crew Quarters- (NPC) Sec officer Ensign T'kel -0544)
(USS Exeter - Crew quarters corridor - NPC Security officer Ensign T'kel-0546)
(USS Exeter - Personal quarters - Lt Jg Greta Smith - 0546)
(USS Exeter – Turbolift - CFO – Lieutenant – Ire Williams -0549)
(USS Exeter -Deck 8- Security center - NPC Security officer Ensign T'kel-0552)
(USS Exeter -Deck 8- Security center – CFO – Lieutenant – Ire Williams -0554)
(USS Exeter - Crew quarters corridor - CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok & CFO Lieutenant Ire Williams- 0556)
(USS Exeter - Crew Quarters- SPC Chief Armory officer PO2 Sytuk-0648)
(USS Exeter - Crew Quarters - Tac/Sec Ens.(Sg) Stan More 06:49)
(USS Exeter - CTO Office - Sec. Officer Ensign Stan More &CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok - 0651)
(USS Exeter - Torpedo Storage - Lt Jg Greta Smith - 0702)
(USS Exeter - Deck 5 - Quaters - COO Ensign (sg) Paul Sleeford 07:30)
(USS Exeter - Civilian Quarters section- SPC Chief Armory officer PO2 Sytuk-0750)
(USS Exeter - Civilian Quarters section- Caity Dubois - 0752)
(USS Exeter - CTO's office- CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok & Caity Dubois -0800)
(USS Exeter - Deck 13- COO's office - NPC Security officer Ensign T'kel-0806)
(USS Exeter - Deck 13 - COOs office COO Ensign (sg) Paul Sleeford 08:07)
(USS Exeter - CTO Office - aCOO Ensign Paul Sleeford &CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok - 0822)
(USS Exeter - Deck 8 - Aft lounge - COO Ensign (sg) Paul Sleeford 09:00)
(USS Exeter – Nine and Dine- ACEO, Lt. JG Alistair Brightwood - 0905)
(USS Exeter – Nine and Dine- Ensign Janice Hammerfield - 0907)
(USS Exeter – Deck 8- CTO office- CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok- 0908)
(USS Exeter – Deck 9- Nine and Dine- NPC Sec. Officer Ensign T'kel- 0911)
(USS Exeter - Deck 8 - Aft lounge - Ensign Rylee Page - 09:11)
(USS Exeter - Deck 8 - Aft lounge - COO Ensign (sg) Paul Sleeford - 09:12)
(USS Exeter – Nine and Dine- Ensign Janice Hammerfield - 0913)
(USS Exeter – Deck 9- Nine and Dine- NPC Sec. Officer Ensign T'kel- 0915)
(USS Exeter – Main Science Lab - CSO Office - CSO Lt Jg Erin Cortez - 0918)
(USS Exeter – Main Engineering – CEO Office – 2O/CEO – Lt. Cmdr. Keira Merek – 0932)
(USS Exeter - Deck 8- CTO's office- CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok-0947)

(USS Exeter - Security Office - Tac/Sec Ens. Stan More -10:17)
(USS Exeter - Biology lab- CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok-1022)
(USS Exeter - Biology lab- Tac/Sec Ens. Stan More -10:23)
(USS Exeter - Biology lab- CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok-1025)
(USS Exeter - Biology lab - Tac/Sec Ens.(Sg) Stan More - 1026)

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Begin Compile

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Mission: Murder on the Exeter Express

Day: 1

Stardate: 2445.12.01

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(USS Exeter - Counselor's Office - CO, Captain Trip Williams - 0700)

Trip was groggy, tired, and cranky. Even though he tried falling back to sleep after being awoken due to the discovery of Tyko Nix's body, it was not the best sleep. He felt like he was going to need a double dose of caffeine. Still he did his best to look his best. He sighed as he walked into the counselor's office, holding a large can of an energy drink in his hand.

"Lieutenant Corsica do you have a moment?" He said as he walked by the receptionist and peered his head into the open doorway of Corsica's office. Thankfully she was in.

(reply Corsica)

"Thank you Lieutenant." he said as he walked in and instructed the computer to shut the door.

"I'm assuming you've heard some of the rumors going around the ship as of late."

(reply Corsica)

"Well they're true. I'd like you, when you get a chance, to get in touch with Lieutenant Ravok. As we get closer to finding a suspect, it would be valuable to get a psychological perspective on them to help the investigation."

(reply Corsica)

"Thank you, Lieutenant. One last thing, how familiar are you with dreams?"

(reply Corsica)

(USS Exeter - Nine and Dine - ACEO, Lt. JG Alistair Brightwood - 0900)

"Thanks for joining me Ensign," Alistair said as he looked at Ensign Hammerfield as they walked into the Nine and Dine.

(Reply Hammerfield)

"I know you've only been on the Engineering job for a couple months, not sure you've been on many Replicator fixing jobs." Alistair said with a smile.

(reply Hammerfield)

The two had been called to the Nine and Dine due to a busted replicator. It was important that a place like the Nine and Dine had working replicators, or else there might be some unruly Ensigns wandering around the halls. It wouldn't take long as Alistair figured it was probably a busted isolinear chip. That was usually one of the more common reasons for a malfunctioning replicator. Alistair led Hammerfield to the broken replicator behind the bar and knelt down to remove the panel. Doing so he was confronted with a metal cylinder that was somewhere it wasn't supposed to be."

"Well that's odd."

(reply Hammerfield)

Taking it out Alistair examined it. It was a metal rolling pin, slightly dented, with the words property of the Nine and Dine engraved on it.

"Why would someone stash a metal rolling pin behind a panel?"

(reply Hammerfield)

(reply Hammerfield)

(USS Exeter – Nine and Dine- Ensign Janice Hammerfield - 0901)

"Thanks for joining me Ensign,"

"No problem – anything to help out," she gave a short stretch of her arms having just started her day and rather oblivious to the events unfolding.

"I know you've only been on the Engineering job for a couple months, not sure you've been on many Replicator fixing jobs." Alistair said with a smile.

"Your kidding me right...?" she gave an exasperated sigh, "I swear when I find out who's been jamming these things up there going to get my size nine shoved into them." Taking a small moment she tapped her trusty engineering kit and gave a small smile back, "which one is it today? I feeling like I know them all intimately."

Janice followed him over to the malfunctioning device and slowly helped to pull the casing away, "You know I serviced this thing just last week. It was perfectly fine then," Putting the casing to one side she heard Alistair's surprised tone.

"Well that's odd."

"Huh?" she quickly looked over, "Thats not supposed to be there..."

Show original message

Janice looked at it then back to one of the hands. "Excuse me?" she shouted over, "When did you guys get into the habit of storing utensils in the replicators?"

"No idea what your on about," one of them gave a confused looked back.

(reply Alastair)

"Something like that doesn't exactly end up in here by accident," she looked at it then paused before turning to face Alastair, "Wait – hold on - what was that last thing you said there? For a moment I thought you said murder?"

(reply Alastair)

She looked at him- then back to the pin as her security training kicked in pulling him back from the replicator, "Hold on – don't touch anything. This classifies as something odd enough to get looked into properly. Might be innocent but who leaves something like that in there ?"

(reply Alastair)

(USS Exeter – Captain’s Ready Room - CO Trip Williams and FO Ailynn Bracken - 0915)

Ailynn strode at full pace down the corridor, she’d changed scrubs, but her mind remained on the autopsy table. She had failed, of all the things that niggled at her, that she could be accused of, being a failure was the thing that she hated, detested being.

Other Officers saw her bear down the corridor, her demeanor of fierce concentration and absolute focus forced them out of her way. Few on the Exeter had seen her at this level of focus, she tended to go through the day at a steady pace, challenges coming and going. Now though, she was back being a medic, and fate had challenged her, and if there was something that caused her to awaken her full, immeasurable, intellect, it was the challenge.

Fate had thrown down the gauntlet.

~Bitch...it's on.~ her mind had replied as she'd burst out of sickbay. All of the medics looking horrified, apart from Staff Nurse Carter, who'd known Ailynn from Mars and had seen this mood before. She'd gently calmed down a few new nurses who'd been worried by the amazonian figure bursting out of the mortuary, turning it into a teaching point about focus, devotion to duty and preparedness. ~Chances were that the medic that burst out of an autopsy looking like that would burst back in sooner rather than later demanding a second autopsy.~ The ghost of Millie's

own mentor; Fleet Matron Callie Weston patted her on her back. Callie had been Ailynn's personal surgical nurse most of her fleet life, until her untimely death.

Ailynn exited the turbolift and swept furiously across the bridge, and straight into the Ready Room, she waited for no door, and there, only there, did she sit down, her point of focus never changing, she sat at the couch, in her habitual seat, no word was uttered, no emotion shown, her utter unbreakable focus on an imaginary point somewhere way off where was the only indication as to her mental state.

Her brain, her complete and total intellect, was running at one hundred percent. Absently, she picked a lock of hair, and began to chew it, thoughtfully.

“Hungry?” Trip said looking at his First officer, obviously perturbed. It wasn’t often that Ailynn Bracken dropped all etiquette and just came in without knocking to sit down. If she was this laser focused it meant that she had met a challenge that her mind just couldn’t wrap her head around just yet. So Trip knew the best thing he could do right now, is sit, listen, and help her talk her way through it.

Ailynn shook her head, and scowled briefly. Still sat silent and chewing her hair. Her thoughts slowly beginning to order themselves in her mind. She was glad that Trip knew her on a level that was so far beyond a normal CO/FO relationship.

“Alright Lynn, talk it out, you don’t chew your hair unless you’re brain stuck.”

“Can’t find it...missing something. Cause of death.”

“Well have you tried checking the body?” Trip said with a laugh. He knew she couldn’t stand his “dad” jokes in moments like this, but it often helped get her mind out of a rut.

Her face flickered annoyance, but her eyes smiled. “Arse.” She continued, her brain now able to at least partly release on the thought it had stuck focussed on. “I can’t find it T. I’ve got lots of incidentals.”

“Such as?” he asked.

“Cardiac toxins...not enough to kill him; stomach toxins...not enough to kill him; the entire rear base of his skull utterly caved in...”

“Well wouldn’t that be the cause?” Trip asked.

“Done post mortem. He was already dead. No agglutination or blood pooling.” She sighed, “I’ve got nothing.”

“Sounds like though, regardless of the cause, this was intentional, as in someone either killed him, or wanted to make it look like someone killed him.”

“An otherwise healthy person doesn’t just die. No one passes my table and remains a mystery.” she half snapped at him, knowing that she could. “It’s like I’m doing a jigsaw, but I can’t see the pieces and they don’t match the picture on the box.”

“Well ok, let’s take a step back alright. And again, I’m not a medical expert. But let’s just take a step back and think alright. So we have what two different types of toxins in his system. Blunt force trauma to his head. So obviously the killer wants to leave some red herrings. Make things look like one thing, but not really. Just enough to confuse you. So they obviously have what, some knowledge of how the body works.”

Ailynn nodded. “You’re right. Forensic countermeasures. So the killer likes CSI: Federation.”

“So think of it this way, and I’m not saying you are a suspect. But, you’re the scientist. How would you have killed him, if you would have then later given him toxins and a bonk on the head.”

“Toxins in the stomach are incidental. Poor diet, damage to cardiac arteries support that. He had a rhubarb tart for dessert. Bolian rhubarb has high ortho-oxalic acid content. Toxins irrelevant.”

“That still doesn’t answer my question.”

“What would I do? Based on the two people I’ve already killed? A knife to be honest.”

“And where would you stab?”

Ailynn suddenly drew a sharp intake of breath, and held up a hand. “Upward angle, rear three-quarter between sixth and seventh intercostal space. Impossible to shout for help.”

“Pretty efficient I might say.”

“Mother...#!@. Oh you stupid stupid girl.”

“Umm, you alright there Lynn?”

She looked up at a plushie of Fluffy Rabbit that Ash had made Trip have on a shelf. “Its his fault he’s been distracting me...”

“What, my stuffed rabbit?”

“Jigsaw...” Her tone was breathless, impressed even. “Oh that’s good...Oh you clever clever girl.” she jumped to her feet, her mind awake once more.

“Lynn, you’re starting to worry me.”

“You were right. Countermeasures”

“Well I mean, a broken clock is right twice a day. Why don’t you spell it out for me though.”

In her mind she started to piece together the image that she’d memorised earlier. She grabbed a holoimager, “Computer display scan Bracken 00245-alpha-theta”

The image of Nix’s body appeared and she immediately leapt to work. Her hands manipulating the image in front of her. “Bajoran skull. Not pretty given the damage. What do you see?”

“Umm....I see the reason why I didn’t take any medical classes in the Academy. What do you see?”

“It’s a jigsaw. A rather gross one, but all the skull bits go together? I know what killed him.” Her hands moved quickly in the air positioning tiny fragments of bone into their proper place. Eventually, the skull was intact, leaving...

“Broken neck, Cervical vertebrae C1. Death instantaneous. Blitz attack, unexpected from the rear. Snapped neck, brutal motion to the left. Suspect is a medic, or has shown significant interest in anatomy.”

“Or was instructed by one on what to do, I still am not sure this was a solo job. It’s just not sitting right. Too many bread crumbs easily picked up.”

“Agreed.”

“Did you get Ravok’s brief on who he is interviewing?”

“Trip...We’ve known each other since you were in nappies. Are you asking me if I know my girlfriend is a suspect, one of my closest friends too?”

“Yes.”

“I heard.”

“Just checking, don’t want you surprised.”

“Does that seem weird to you? Murder is an odd crime, tends to be very personal, this feels like a....I dunno.”

“Yet all of them have had arguments with the deceased. All of them have weak alibis. I don’t like it, it’s three of my department heads on the list. And it seems too easy. But I don’t know, what idea is worse. That one of my Department heads committed a calculated crime of passion or that there is a conspiracy. I don’t know?”

“Look. I understand, here’s the thing, we all have a dozen conversations a day, where the slickest lawyer could focus on a single misspoken word. Trip...are you asking me if I could shop my closest friends or girlfriend? Seriously?”

“No, I know you. I trust you. And I would never put you in a position where you would have to sell out Erin or Caity. Because I know you would always tell the truth. Even if it meant that you and Caity would be done. Even if she wasn’t even charged, if you were on the stand and the murderer’s defense attorney asked you if it was possible Erin or Caity or hell anyone you’re close to. If they asked you, ‘But isn’t it possible that say it could have been done by Caity DuBois. Even if you knew it was not likely but a possibility, even if you knew saying yes might end your relationship. I know you would say yes and always tell the truth.”

“It’s a curse.” She admitted.

“Likewise I know you would fight like hell to find the truth. But I don’t want to put you in that position.”

“I know. I can fight my own battles, but I appreciate it...”

“The one benefit for Caity and Erin, is I don’t know if they’d have the strength to snap Commander Tyko’s neck. Unless of course it was a tag team effort.”

“Blitz attack...You’re stronger than me yeah? Turn around.”

Trip moved from behind his desk and turned around.

In the three seconds that he had taken to turn around and swept up to him, whipping her right arm right around his neck and tensing her arm muscles briefly, then relaxing. She then massaged the tortured muscles.

“My apologies. Easy as that though. He knew his attacker.”

“But you’re forgetting something.”

“Go on...”

“Go to the door. I’m gonna close my eyes, when you’re ready come at me, I’ll be facing the window.” Trip breathed in and out and closed of his empathic abilities.

She did as he asked. “Here.”

“Sure.”

“From here there’s no chance...” It was terrible, but she adored these moments, her intellect against his, a macabre playfulness.

“No I want you to come attack me.”

“You know I can’t. I know I can’t. I have to be closer.”

“Get as close as you need, and strike when you’re ready don’t say a thing. Don’t tell me when.”

Ailynn nodded. Looking into his eyes and recognising the game that they were playing. She drew a breath, and half turned. “These shoes are killing me, going to pull them off.” She said, describing her actions a few seconds after they had happened.

Trip turned his back to Ailynn and closed his eyes.

Ailynn snapped round, her focus utterly on her target. Whipping her arm around Trip’s head she felt an opening, it was intimate.

Trip listened to everything he could here, the rustle of her clothes as she moved closer. He knew that she was coming, not just because he asked, but because he was trained. As she went for his head, he moved his left elbow stopping it in time to touch her gently in the center of her chest. In real speed it would have been enough to stop her from being able to use the full speed of her attack.

“Okay...hold...”

“You were expecting that, victim didn’t; held back, killer didn’t”

“Right, but more to the point. The victim was a trained SFI Agent. He would have been trained to hear and react to the little things, the little noises.”

“Agreed.” She fell silent for a moment, listening to Trip as her mind worked.

“Now if Foxglove was on board, she’d be the only one I think who could do it without him even knowing.”

“Naked.”

“Excuse me?”

“Ailynn Bracken...you are incomperhensably stupid.”

“Umm, well no, actually, lets sit with this for a moment.”

Exstatic in joy, she smiled. “No no no no no! He was naked. Did you take his clothes off?”

“How stupid do you think I am. I wouldn’t mess with evidence.”

“I know...You’re...”

“Ailynn, could he have been given a paralyzing toxin?”

“I’d find it.” A tone of joy, “You hear me? I WIN!” she screamed at the universe. “oh....This was goooooood. Clever.” her mannerism was intense her eyes wide, her whole being utterly switched on.

“Ummm, Ailynn....we’re forgetting something. He called security before he died.”

“That was the wildcard, I haven’t worked that out yet...ignoring that what...do...you...have...?”

“He knew he was going to die... knew he was being attacked, but thought he couldn’t handle it?”

“I grew up hating my brain... You remember when I started? That I’d just sit in the treehouse and cry? Now...He wasn’t expecting the attack. Suggests he thought he had a physical advantage. Why...? He hadn’t had intercourse, but I didn’t check if he was expecting it...!”

“Lynn, what was the time of death?”

“0145 give or take like 30 seconds.” it wasn’t a boast, more a confirmation of her ability.

“Then he didn’t call security. Someone using his voice did. The call to security came in at 0150. Security arrived around 0155. Meaning, his attacker wanted us to find him like that.”

“Time of death is absolutely 0145. Other issues not my problem. Get Merek.”

“Or Ravok.” Trip laughed, “Or we could just go back and forth with insane theories. Such as how erect was he when he died.” Trip walked over to the couch and sat down.

“It’s a standard check...not very...however presence of seminal fluid suggests he was expecting intercourse.” She smiled. “I find it weird to use that sentence around you.”

“Eh, It’s for science.”

“I’ll speak to the department.”

“So he knew his attacker enough to get naked with them. I heard him mentally before he died. But I think, I think at that point he might have been resigned to his fate. Then the killer killed him. Bashed his head. Used some device to call security and peaced out?”

Ailynn nodded. “Is about the size of it.”

Trip giggled and then recomposed himself. “Go ahead and get your findings to Ravok, see what he has, try and get a better picture. But I don’t think this was a passion kill.”

Ailynn nodded. “Passion kills are always to either the face or the genitalia, this has none of those hallmarks”

“No they don’t. @\$#% It’s murder.”

“Murder is personal, this isn’t.” She frowned. “Why would you kill? Hit me...first thoughts...no hesitation...”

“Ailynn....we’re going in circles. We still need more of the puzzle. If its not murder it’s an assassination....”

“Same thing...Look...I’m going to talk to the body really nicely and ask for secrets.”

“You ass.” he smiled. “Look, check the body and double check the cause of death then get your report to Ravok. I’ll reconvene the Command Staff around 1200 hours to discuss.”

“I’ll be there. Time of death can be considered solid.” She stood up, and moved toward the door, and smiled gently, “Thanks ‘T’ You’re the only one that understands my moods.”

“Lynn, look, Caity, maybe Erin too, who knows. They both might want to talk to you for comfort. If they do, be there, listen. I trust you, and I trust you to not reveal anything you shouldn’t. I trust you implicitly.”

She looked at him, and the years disappeared, “Love you too James.”

“But if it’s too much, let me know, and I’ll take you off this. Hopefully it clears up soon and clears both. I just... I don’t want you to hurt.”

“I will but...” She leant forward and pecked him on the cheek, “I’m the one who walks the line.”

“Just....take care of yourself ok.”

She smiled and winked, and then walked out the ready room, her mind already three steps ahead.

(reply none)

(USS Exeter - Biology Lab - SO, Ensign SG Christopher West - 1000)

Chris walked into one of the science labs to monitor a few of the experiments he was in charge of monitoring. There had been rumors of a murder circulating all morning. He tried to stay away from the rumor mill, but sometimes rumors were hard to ignore. Still he was a scientist not a security officer, he was going to just keep to his business. Speculation and joining the rumor mill would not be beneficial. It was none of his business and he didn't want to get to the point where he couldn't trust his fellow officers.

He checked the first two experiments, nothing out of the ordinary. Then he saw something amiss. There was a sealed glass closet that was supposed to hold certain biological agents, that were carefully sealed because of how dangerous they were. And as he walked by it, out of the corner of his eye that something was amiss. As he looked closer, he realized that some of the vials that were supposed to be in there were missing. He checked the official log, and it looked like no one had opened the case in days. It made him worried. There was supposed to be a log every time it was opened. With the rumors circulating it made him nervous. Had one of the science officers taken something and used it for a nefarious reason. He didn't know who had died or how, but it made him feel uncomfortable.

"Biology Lab to Security."

(reply Any Security)

"This is Ensign Christopher West, ummm, it looks like we had unauthorized access to a case containing dangerous materials."

(reply any security)

"I'm not just sure yet what has been taken, but most of the items in there could be mixed into many fatal cocktails. The log says no one has opened it, but its pretty clear if you've checked the case every day for months, that something is gone."

(reply any security)

"Thank you, Ensign West out."

(reply any security)

(USS Exeter - Security Office - Tac/Ens.(Sg) Stan More - 10:01)

Stan had been going over Alpha teams schedule. He had been unhappy at their slow response times. More wanted to give them more training time in the holodeck. There was a rather gruelling race through the Scottish highlands. That if it was not completed in a set time. The racers were covered in a slimy goo. It encouraged the racers not just to complete it quickly. But also to help the others in the group. As the race was only finished. After all the participants crossed the finish line.

=^="Biology Lab to Security."=^=

“ Security here? “ Stan said

=^="This is Ensign Christopher West, ummm, it looks like we had unauthorized access to a case containing dangerous materials."=^=

“ Can you tell what has been taken?” Stan asked

=^="I'm not just sure yet what has been taken, but most of the items in there could be mixed into many fatal cocktails. The log says no one has opened it, but its pretty clear if you've checked the case every day for months, that something is gone."=^=

“ You will need to put together a full list. So we know what to search for. Plus it might be a prudent idea to let our forensic people have a see. So try not to move anything unless you really have to. I will pass this on to Lieutenant Ravok immediately. Thank you for your diligence Ensign West.” Stan replied.

=^="Thank you, Ensign West out."=^=

This was serious especially with recent events. He tapped his comm. badge.

“Ensign More To Lieutenant Ravok come in please.”

(Reply , Ravok)

“ Sorry to burden you sir but we have another problem.” Stan went on to explain his recent conversation with Ensign West.

(Reply , Ravok)

“ I told him not to move anything unless he had to. Until our forensic team had a look see. Is there anything else we should do?” Stan asked

(Reply , Ravok)

(USS Exeter - Security Office, Forensics Lab - ACTO, Lt. JG Cade Blackwell -1030)

Cade was exhausted. He had been up for a long while now helping Lieutenant Ravok comb through footage, logs, recordings, so that he would have everything he needed for the interviews. When that was over it was his responsibility to go through and examine some of the smaller things that they found in and near Commander Tyko's quarters. He found this kind of forensic work tedious and boring, but thankfully there were techs whose job was to handle it. He just needed to supervise to make sure the investigation was above reproach.

"Sir, begging analysis of the clump of hair we found outside the Commander's quarters." Said one of the techs.

"Alright, thanks this should be helpful for the investigation."

"Sir, looks like the hair isn't human or humanoid."

"Oh, what does it belong to?" Cade asked confused.

"It's fur, dog fur."

"Dog fur?"

"Yes sir, specifically, looks like the breed is a german shepherd."

"Roger that." Cade said as he walked to a corner and tapped his commbadge. "Blackwell to Lieutenant Ravok."

(reply Ravok)

"Sir we identified the clump of hair we found outside the commanders door, it's dog fur sir."

(reply Ravok)

"German Shepherd sir."

(reply Ravok)

(USS Exeter - Holodeck - Ensign Rylee Page & Ensign Zot - 1934)

Walking into the holodeck, Rylee instantly felt at peace. The programme that Zot had created for her was running and the soft breeze with the hint of ozone on the air was intoxicating.

Carrying a small picnic hamper in one hand and a blanket in the other, she was dressed in a light summery dress and took a seat on a bench near the holodeck entrance.

She smiled as she waited. Their relationship had grown, they had grown close and she found herself growing to really enjoy their time together.

Zot Entered the holodeck wearing a traditional Eunepian body suit. He looked over at the bench and saw Rylee sitting there.

"Hello Ens...I mean Rylee" Zot corrected himself. She had asked him to stop referring to her by her full name and rank.

Smiling at him, Rylee nodded, "see, not that hard to do is it?"

He reached his hand toward the basket in a manner which suggested an offer to carry it and with his other hand offered it to her to help her up. "I have just read a few interesting compiles of text on male and female relations. Most cultures view females as fragile or precious. I however am perplexed because you are physically stronger than I am and although I am a male among my species, you and I are so different that I am finding trouble on how to treat you in the manner in which you deserve."

"Deserve? I don't deserve anything. Just be yourself."

"Although a traditional physical relationship between us is impossible I do feel compelled that we alert Ensign Sleeford of the recent escalation of our situation." He said as he led her to a spot near the water.

"Oh.... You do?" She replied, as she began unfolding the blanket. ~is he really that serious?~

He helped her rest the blanket on the ground. "I am technically a superior to you, yet we have not been sexual. We can not copulate. Therefore our relationship is the equivalent of good friends who care a great deal for each other."

Blushing a little, she sat down on the blanket and began unpacking the basket,

"Is that all I am to you?" She asked, teasing.

"No, you are much more than that to me. I have a fondness for you I have never had towards any other sentient being. Your existence in my life has brought me comfort, trust and a sense of the unknown." He said as he sat down on the ground.

"Physical things... sometimes we rush into that. So us not... being physical with each other is not a problem.

For me, I need that connection with someone. Not physical but here." She replied, touching his forehead gently,

"And here." She moved her hand to near his heart.

Zot knew too what she was referring to. His metaphorical heart. He had two anatomical hearts, one on each side of his chest.

"Is this really something we need to tell Ensign Sleeford about?"

He grabbed her hand that was on his chest.

" Deceptive or secretive ways are not the practice of my people. We understand their usefulness, however I will not conceal this bond we share. I am assistant chief of operations by circumstance not because of desire. If I have to step down I will. Most federation cultures have a stigma about those in close relationships serving in a capacity that involves their personal and professional relationships. We Eunepians however do not share this stigma. We view closeness to individuals as a strength. "

Rylee looked away for a moment, then looked at him, "I would not let you do that. Not for me. If it needs it, I will transfer departments."

" Correct me if I am wrong, but isn't the Captain the uncle of his first officer? Also the Second and Third officer of this vessel are romantically involved." Zot remarked.

Smiling widely, she nodded, "that is true."

"It seems the Exeter crew is more Eunepian than they know." Zot said as he opened the basket .

She watched him for a moment and then pulled out a small bowl and a spoon. "Forgive me if I got this wrong but I think I remembered rightly."

Handing him the tub, she smiled softly, "Vanilla pudding for the gentleman."

He took the container. " Yes, it's one of the flavors I can taste. " He said as he opened it . " I am surprised you remembered. "

"I have a good memory. Well, for some things."

He took the spoon and scooped a bite of the pudding into his mouth. " Perfect."

"I remember the first time we came here. After that really hard physical therapy session. We stood here, you were holding my arm to keep me steady and we didn't say anything.

I was so frustrated with myself and I just couldn't help it. I teared up. I wanted to lash out so much and do you remember what you told me?"

" Yes I do. I told you that lashing out was only you allowing your impairment to overtake you and that I wouldn't allow that to happen and I remarked that since I don't sleep I would stay here with you all night until you alright....I also told you that I prefer your smile over your tears, your success over your failures. But no matter what I wasn't leaving you alone." Zot said remembering the events of that day in vivid detail.

Smiling, she took his hand and looked at him, "that was the first moment I realized that there was something between us.

Something that transcended physicality and was something I wanted to explore. So, if Sleeford says that one of us has to move, it's going to be me."

" That will not be necessary..." He was cut off by her.

"No arguments. You are one of the first of your race to be here and I won't let you give up your position. Not for me."

" I won't argue. But ambition for the benefit of an individual is not our way. We seek ambition for the benefit of all." Zot responded. " I have no ambition to lead others. "

"I've heard many joined trill talk about how difficult it can be when they get into relationships with others because of previous issues. Me, it's simple. I am who I am. You see that and that is something worth exploring.

So, let's enjoy this moment."

Zot tilted his head and looked at her.

" Moment...This moment is yet a string of connected moments that I have shared with you. Some cultures have described some moments as being an eternity. If that is the case I find myself most fortunate. "

"Fortunate? How so?" She asked as she rested her head on his shoulder.

" Because If a moment can be an eternity, a forever, then I have several eternities with you. That I am thankful for Rylee...and pudding." He said, taking another bite.

Smiling, a thought entered her mind and, as quickly as it had entered, she dismissed it.

"I'm thankful for you. I don't think I would have persevered as much with the therapy had you not been there.

I would have given up a long time ago, accepted my fate and been cashiered out of the fleet."

Zot listened as she talked. As always giving her his undivided attention.

"But then, I wouldn't be sat here with you and pudding." She replied, dipped her finger into the pudding and dabbed some in his nose.

He flinched slightly. " Was that attempt to get me to smell the pudding ? If so I have no sense of smell." He smiled as he wiped the pudding off with his hand.

"You missed a spot. " she replied and, gently, wiped it with a napkin. Looking into his eyes, she smiled and kissed his cheek softly.

He was caught off guard by her impulsive habit of kissing him.

"Sorry, was that too forward?"

" No, I find it fascinating. It is something we don't do where I'm from. " He said and pulled her towards him and kissed her back. An intense feeling of happiness came over him, but it was immediately followed by an immense guilt. He pulled away from her. " I'm sorry "

“What for?”

" There is much you don't know about." He said and looked down at the woven fabric of the blanket they sat on.

Sighing, Rylee poured herself a drink and looked at him, “Well, if this is serious enough for you to want to tell Ensign Sleeford, you had better spill.”

" My people have a biological imperative to return home during " Our Time" as we call it."

“Oh.... your time as in... death?”

He raised his hand and shook his head.

" No, not death...Life. We are driven to return to the place of our birth and sire offspring. "

“Oh.... i see. And when does that...”

He shrugged his shoulders.

" It happens well into maturity. We have a clause in our terms of service to Starfleet that if the urge that we call Sovim comes that we are to be medically released to return home."

Zot paused.

" I am sorry if I ruined your time" He said with saddened tone. She wanted to enjoy a moment yet he felt like he robbed her of that.

"It's fine. We have so much to learn about each other. When it comes to that time... do you have to go? What happens if you don't?"

Zot hesitated to tell her, but felt that she deserved to know. " I would have to go. If I don't I would become ...out of favor with my family structure."

"Oh, i would never stop you. Never. If it means that you have to go home for a while but you come back, then that's fine."

"I am sorry that this complication will arise." Zot said as he held her hand.

"Look, you know how i feel about you. I don't pretend to understand a lot about your customs but i am willing to learn. To me, it's like... if i had to take a symbiont. I would be the same person that you care for just with some added memories.

If you can deal with that, i can deal with you going home to sow your wild oats."

He tilted his head. " Sow wild oats? I am not a farmer and My world doesn't have oats. "

Smiling, Rylee leant her head on his shoulder, "It's a terran phrase. Means Well if you need to go procreate, do it. Just come back."

He closed his eyes.

" Physical Affection is not something practiced among my people. I can refuse to go home" He said, knowing right and well refusal to adhere to his biological predisposition would be extremely detrimental to him.

"But...why? Why would you do that?"

" Right now home is here and here is good." He said.

(Reply no-one)

(USS Exeter - Deck 1- Conference Room -COO Ensign (sg) Paul Sleeford 20:05)

Sitting at the table between Erin Cortez and the new counsellor, a small glass of wine at his right hand and a half finished plate in front of him.

Seems my reputation precedes me." she replied with a smile.

Laughing Paul shook his head, "No not really, as a security officer, I needed to know who was who, where they worked, rank and so forth. Its the paperwork that gets me, how the captain and FO spend all that time doing paperwork and still have a life amazes me. "

"I agree though, it's a little daunting. It's taken me this long to get used to the paperwork alone."

Taking a sip from his glass, Paul laughed, "I'm thinking of getting a young yoman, she can sit in the office all day and do the paperwork and I can get on ding Department stuff like, oh I dont know drinking coffee. "

“So, tell me about you, Ensign? I hardly get a chance to speak to many of the crew any more. Perils of being the mad scientist I suppose.” She asked with a wide smile on her face.

Smiling Paul shrugged, "Not much to tell really, I was born on Earth, raised on New Caledonia, a small colony world around about twenty light years from Earth, my mother raised my sister and myself as a single mother for around three years, she meet a farmer James Sleeford, lived on the farm until I was eighteen, joined the Marine corps officer training card, got injured, joined Starfleet and the rest is history."

“Do i detect a hint of an accent on your voice there?” Erin asked with a genuine curiosity.

"A slight one, Caledonia was originally a colony with peoples of Scottish and Irish descent, over the years as more and more people came to Caledonia the language was diluted and changed. To be honest it's not too bad place to live"

(USS Exeter - Captain's Dining Room - CO, Captain Trip Williams - 2010)

"Oh of course," she stammered a little bit being put on the spot, “Well.. parent are career Starfleet so ive been around ships and outposts most of the time. Didn’t really see anywhere else to go. Starfleet just feels more like an extended family now. You know?”

"I think that's something I know very well. Also a fleet kid, as is commander Bracken. I think it's one of those places that just feels like home, what else is there that can be as fulfilling. What do you think Ailynn?"

(reply bracken)

"Yes exactly like that," she exclaimed, "Apart from that I majored in tactical but a swap over to Engineering seemed like a nice change of pace at the moment. I like keeping myself in shape and some quiet relaxation. What I dislike is cheese getting trapped in replicators,"

"Have you found the transition hard, going from Tactical to engineering? I know that sort of transition can be tough, it requires a certain level of know how. Not quite sure if I'd be able to make the jump."

(reply Hammerfield)

"Well if you ever need any help, Lt. Comamander Merek and Liutenant Brightwood are more than capable teachers, so I've been told."

(reply Hammerfield)

"Stan" Trip said moving the metaphorical spotlight off of Janice, "You were placed in a department that wasn't your major right? Science to Security, how has that transition been?"

(reply Stan)

Trip nodded, "See there is something you and Janice have in common, learning a department that may not be second nature to you just yet. How's the soup Stan, is it to your liking?"

(reply stan)

(reply Bracken, Hammerfield, Stan, Adala iyw)

(USS Exeter - Captain's Dining Room - Tac/Sec Ens.(Sg) Stan More - 21:11)

More shook his head as he was offered a glass of wine. Stan was not keen on alcohol of any type. This would be considered a crime against Scotland in the olden days. A Scotsman who did not like alcohol. What a scandal! But it was true More preferred a good glass of apple juice. The Exeter's replicators did a passable glass of apple juice. Which if needed could be passed off as a glass of scotch or whiskey.

Sitting down the meal began. Was that? No? It couldn't be? Could it? His favourite! Cream of mushroom soup!

"Stan" Trip said moving the metaphorical spotlight off of Janice, "You were placed in a department that wasn't your major right? Science to Security, how has that transition been?"

" Well apart from a few early problems. It is going very I am very happy in Security. Plus Lieutenant Ravok is now tutoring me in Bridge Officer work. Which is very exciting." Stan said with unbridled glee in his voice.

Trip nodded, "See there is something you and Janice have in common, learning a department that may not be second nature to you just yet. How's the soup Stan, is it to your liking?"

" Sir. This has to be the best cream of mushroom soup I have ever tasted." Stan said happily.

(Reply , Bracken, Hammerfield, Trip , Adala , iyw)

(USS Exeter - Captain's Dining Room - CO, Captain Trip Williams - 21:11)

The meal had gone by smoothly with a lot of laughs and conversation and Trip was finding himself rather full. Addison, the waitress laid out a glass of Limoncello in front of the assembled guests and Trip smiled.

"Well I hope that you all had a good dinner, and I feel like I have a much better pulse on who all of you are as individuals and officers. Had we been on a planet, I'd offer you all cigars, but the ventilation in here, well just isn't conducive to that." Trip said with a chuckle. "Now then before

we depart, I just want to say that I expect great things from all of you and I know you will make myself and Commander Bracken proud."

(Reply Hammerfield, Sleeford, Adala iyw)

"Now then Ailynn, is there anything you'd like to add?"

(reply Bracken)

"Echoing Commander Bracken's sentiments, I want all of you to know that our doors are always open if you want to chat." Trip paused, "Not always open, I do need to get some work done." He chuckled. Trip found himself very amusing. "That being said, dinner is over, all of you are free to go as you please." Trip took a sip of his limoncello and smiled. "Of course, I think I've had just enough wine and food that at this point if you ask me anything, I'm probably gonna answer truthfully, as long as it's not classified. So feel free to use this moment to ask me anything. As for Commander Bracken, I'll let her decide how much if any she wants to say." Trip laughed again. It was the point in the evening he found himself hilarious.

(Reply Bracken iyw)

"Any Questions?"

(reply Hammerfield, More, Adala)

(reply Hammerfield, More, Adala, Bracken)

(USS Exeter – Captain's Dining Room - Ensign Janice Hammerfield - 2112)

"Well I hope that you all had a good dinner, and I feel like I have a much better pulse on who all of you are as individuals and officers. Had we been on a planet, I'd offer you all cigars, but the ventilation in here, well just isn't conducive to that." Trip said with a chuckle. "Now then before

we depart, I just want to say that I expect great things from all of you and I know you will make myself and Commander Bracken proud."

"Well no pressure then," she nudged whom was seated beside her and winked.

(Reply Sleeford, Adala iyw)

"Now then Ailynn, is there anything you'd like to add?"

(reply Bracken)

"Echoing Commander Bracken's sentiments, I want all of you to know that our doors are always open if you want to chat." Trip paused, "Not always open, I do need to get some work done." He chuckled. "That being said, dinner is over, all of you are free to go as you please." Trip took a sip of his limoncello and smiled. "Of course, I think I've had just enough wine and food that at this point if you ask me anything, I'm probably gonna answer truthfully, as long as it's not classified. So feel free to use this moment to ask me anything. As for Commander Bracken, I'll let her decide how much if any she wants to say." Trip laughed again.

"Questions – I have a hundred," Janice pipped up, "But not one of them at all relevant. Thank you for having me – us - for dinner and thanks for making me feel welcome. Not to speak for everyone else but im sure they feel the same?" She looked to either side of her at everyone else and took a small sip from her drink before relaxing back into her seat.

(reply More, Adala, Bracken)

(USS Exeter – Captain's Dining Room - Tac/Sec Ens.(sg) Stan More - 21:13)

Stan felt something prickling his collar. Rubbing his hand around his neck. He found a few of Lillian's dog hairs. Now that she was six months old. The German Shepard puppies adult coat was starting to come through. This meant she was starting to shed her puppy coat. But how these strands had got into his dress uniform. Had More quite mystified. This distracted him from the conversation until he was dug in the ribs.

“Well no pressure then,” said a voice to his left.

(Reply , Bracken, Hammerfield, Trip , Adala , iyw)

"Any Questions?"

“Questions – I have a hundred,” Janice pipped up, “But not one of them at all relevant. Thank you for having me – us - for dinner and thanks for making me feel welcome. Not to speak for everyone else but im sure they feel the same?” She looked to either side of her at everyone else and took a small sip from her drink before relaxing back into her seat.

“ Here here” Stan said before standing.

(Reply , Bracken, Hammerfield, Trip , Adala , iyw)

“ I would also like to echo my esteemed colleges words. Although I have no questions to ask at this time. I would also like to thank our hosts. For this extremely scrumptious meal. Therefore I would like to raise a glass and make this toast.” Stan raised his glass. “ To our hosts! Thank you for inviting us.”

They all stood raising there glasses to Trip and Ailynn. Then they all sat down.

(Reply , Bracken, Hammerfield, Trip , Adala , iyw)

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Mission: Murder on the Exeter Express

Day: 2

Stardate: 2445.12.02

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>><<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<

(USS Exeter - Personal Quarters - The Murderer - 0300)

The deed had been done. Tyko nix was no more. He was getting dangerously close to discovering the truth, and that meant that he had become a liability. He needed to be taken off the chess board. For all his gruff exterior and ass holish demeanor, Tyko Nix was actually very good at his job. Too good. The unknown assailant made their way to their bed and climbed under the covers. By now security was probably scanning all the footage they could find on potential suspects, people that had interacted with Nix. People who didn't get along with him. Thankfully there was a long list. This played into their favor. The man didn't have many friends.

~Pity~ They thought to themselves as their head hit the pillow and their eyes closed. ~If only they knew how good of an actor he was.~

For the gruff exterior that he placed, not many knew it was all an act, that Tyko Nix was actually a very nice and pleasant guy. But he found early in his career that for some reason people were more likely to slip up, talk, reveal things they wish they had concealed, when they were flustered and pissed off. While the adage went it was easier to catch flies with honey than vinegar, Nix found that people were less guarded with a "spy" when they thought they knew the kind of person he was, loud and rude, rather than wondering if the sweet pleasantries were all an act. A philosophy that served him well. He had gotten a large piece of the puzzle, was close to finding out the secret. That led him to the Exeter. That was when they knew what they had to do. To preserve their secret, to preserve their mission, Nix needed to die, the sooner the better.

Everything was in place, everything went off without a hitch. Right now the clues were pointing elsewhere, especially thanks to some unfortunate statements made by some likely suspects. They yawned happily as they drifted off to sleep. The deed was done, another chess piece of the table. They were one step closer to pulling of their Master's plan.

(reply none)

(USS Exeter - Personal Quarters - CO, Captain Trip Williams and Dir. R&SE Ashlyn Williams - 0305)

It was a little after 3 in the morning when Trip returned to his quarters. He had held his mood for most of his time in public, but he was fuming. He was pissed. That someone on his ship would resort to murder, it made his blood boil. Even worse it was an SFI Agent, so who knew what the motive was. By his count the Exeter was probably 3 hours from the rumor mill just taking over.

He was stressed, upset, and knew he was going to have to make some awkward calls in the next 24 hours. More than that he felt like it was a failure that reflected on him. He probably should have just got to bed, but he didn't. He poured himself a glass of bourbon and sighed. Then without even thinking he grabbed one of the dining chairs and just threw it across the room watching it break against the wall.

“@#%&!!!”

He took his glass and sat down on the couch.

Ash was torn out of a deep sleep by the crash. Jumping out of bed, and pulling a robe on she stormed out of the bedroom. A feeling of terror at the thought of what she might see. Seeing the broken chair and trip sitting there with a bourbon at 3am flipped her mood instantly. She wasn't one to lose her temper, but couldn't stop it now.

"WHAT THE BLOODY HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE YOU DOING?" She yelled at him.

"Sorry" He sighed as he took a drink. "Lt. Commander Tyko Nix..... he's dead. Looking likely that it's.....foul play. Ailynn is doing an autopsy, Ravok and Merek are doing some investigating."

"So you thought that we had too many chairs." Her temper was waning, she sat next to him, holding his hand.

"There was a murder on my watch Ash...." He took another sip.

"Okay, firstly you don't know that yet, secondly if it's true, you have the best people in the right place."

"Ash...he's the one who called in the emergency.....he was a guy a lot of people didn't like..." Before he could finish Ash cut him off.

"Lastly 3am bourbon is never a good thing. I've seen where it goes babe." She kissed his cheek.
"Okay. So now, breathe, talk to me."

"I had the dream again, the one where the mystery woman whose face I can't see is in our bed."

"Same as always? Or different?"

"She guided me around the ship, and then acted like she knew this would happen. I think it was just the last bit of my enhanced abilities going away. But I heard his voice in my head,

Commander Tyko's that is. He knew that someone had entered his room to kill him. Then the mystery woman kissed me, and I was awoken by security calling me to his quarters after discovering his body."

Ashlyn nodded. "You're upset about the murder, I get that, but this is getting to you more isn't it."

"A bit... yeah.."

"Look I know the answer, but do you...fancy someone else?"

Trip put his glass down. "@#\$% no! It's not the dreams, though the recurring dream of some mystery woman replacing you does have me a bit....upset....I just think it's more me picking up other people's dream thoughts, hopefully. Trust me, I'm a one girl kinda guy and I have you. But..."

"I know, and I don't even know why I asked. I worry so much about you." Ashlyn said, holding his hands.

"It's more that someone would even think of murdering someone on my ship. It's, it's like a slap in the face. I should be more upset he's dead. Like that should be my main concern of rage and outrage, but it's almost like a disrespect ya know. It's like rookie captain, let's cause some mayhem and murder. I don't know, its dumb. It's just the thought that someone who would put on this uniform could bring themselves...to that....It just....@\$%@ Ash, it just makes me mad."

"I know...Sssh ssh ssh" She spoke gently. "Look, you're going round in circles. Close your eyes and calm down."

Trip sighed and did as he was told.

"Honey, You are my troubles, its okay, it's why I'm here. You can not take this to heart; take it on the chin and roll with it, despite what everyone says about the society that we live in, you can not tell me that all ill feeling has been eradicated, this type of thing will always happen."

"I'm just... what if it's part of larger conspiracy?"

Ashlyn leaned on him. "You have the most gifted staff in the Federation working under you as your Command team. Merek and Ravok are Officers beyond compare. Ailynn is now very widely regarded as a Command Officer and Medic by her own reputation, not her mother's daughter. Trust your staff."

"Yeah, I know. There is nothing I can do about it now. We just have to let the process play out."

"I can't remember much about Kadaya, my foster mum. However I remember one thing really clearly. I was worried about going to school. She looked me in the eye and said, 'Ash, don't go borrowing trouble.' It's always stuck with me."

"You're right. If I look for grave conspiracy I'll find it. Just need to trust." Trip then yawned.
"But I'm not gonna figure it out without sleep."

Ashlyn took the glass off bourbon and put it on the side, pulling him up to his feet and slipping an arm around his waist. "Your staff are doing their thing. Use this chance to sleep where you can." Ashlyn felt her heart fill as it always did when she worried about her husband.

"I know, and I will try, but I just, hopefully I can."

Ashlyn led him gently to the bedroom smiling gently, and helped him off with his uniform, folding it and placing it on the chair.

"But you're right, I'm no good to this crew if I don't sleep. Thanks for the pep talk sweetheart." He said as he kissed her on the top of her head.

"I love you baby. But you have got to learn to lean on me too." She pulled his head down and kissed his brow, before gently lifting the bed covers and slipping in behind him. Carefully and gently she ran her fingers up and down his back and over his shoulders.

“Computer set alarm for 0600”

[Confirmed]

“Good night Ash, hopefully things wont be too topsy turvy in the morning.”

“Good night pumpkin.” She then slid closer to him and pulled him gently into her, her arm draped over Trips waist.

As Trip drifted off to sleep he sighed. He had a good team, he needed to trust his team. They would have his back.

(reply none)

(USS Exeter - Mortuary - FO Cmdr Ailynn Bracken - 0330)

Having cleared the area around the body, Ailynn had made all the recordings that she needed to, and transported the body straight onto the table in the mortuary. Now, she walked slowly into sickbay, drawing gasps, and glances from the medical staff, a lot of whom had forgotten or simply not known that she was a surgeon with a considerable reputation in her own right.

Finally reaching the mortuary right at the back of sickbay, she greeted Dural as she entered the room, a sad smile, and nod of greeting as Ailynn stopped by the table, and sighed deeply.

“Good Morning Doctor. My apologies for keeping you, I had hoped that I’d be able to catch up again under better surroundings.”

(Reply Dural)

She turned to the body on the table and spoke gently, sadly even. “Oh, Commander. What has happened to you that you end up in here eh? I’m so terribly sorry about all this, but we need to find out what killed you. You have my deepest apologies Commander.”

(Reply Dural)

“Computer. Begin recording. For purposes of this autopsy, Leading will be myself, Dr Ailynn Bracken MD FTCS FDCM Commander, and also present Dr Dural Methor MD Ensign Senior Grade. Patient is a 45 year old Bajoran male. No known medical issue at time of death. External examination shows no outward sign of incision or contusion, no trace of hypoxia or cyanosis of extremities.” She pulled back each eyelid. “No petechial hemorrhaging. No defensive wounds to palms of hand, or visible debris under the nails.” She began taking the normal scrapes and sweeps. Under each nail, and swaps at the back of the throat and nasal passages. “Sample analysis and Toxscreen thank you.” She dropped each sample and swab into the tubes that Dural was holding up.

(Reply Dural)

(USS Exeter – Mortuary – ACMO – Ensign Dural Methor Dr.PH – 0333)

It was a pleasant surprise to get a message from the First Officer requesting his medical assistance, obviously a physician of her stature and abilities wouldn’t *need* him and his abilities specifically. Her surgical skills surpassed his own, by a great margin, and the assistance wasn’t required for anything to do with his specialty. It was good to get some one on one time to speak with anyone from the old Mars group, however the circumstances were less than desirable. She had informed him the reason she called him at such an early hour was the need for an autopsy to be performed on the intelligence officer Tyko Nix. Foul play was suspected, and so regulations and Captain’s order demanded an autopsy be performed. Dural had arrived first and so began setting up the autopsy suite for the arrival of the officer’s remains.

“Good Morning Doctor. My apologies for keeping you, I had hoped that I’d be able to catch up again under better surroundings.” The Commander said walking through the entrance. It was noteworthy that the Commander was one of the very few females that was as tall as Dural.

“None necessary, Commander,” Dural said pleasantly. “With Dr. Vesper on temporary convalescence, your list of accompaniments is shorter than it should be. I am honored you chose me in his stead.” He then turned to less pleasant conversation. “I had just enough time to prepare the area and receive the remains.”

The Commander turned to the body on the table and spoke gently, sadly even. “Oh, Commander. What has happened to you that you end up in here eh? I’m so terribly sorry about all this, but we need to find out what killed you. You have my deepest apologies Commander.”

Dural found how cultures treated their dead macabre but fascinating. The Klingons treat their dead as just an empty shell, and other than a warning shout to the dead that a Klingon warrior is about to arrive, they dispose of the remains in an efficient way. Many humans bury the deceased with stone markers indicating the area so family can return and still honor them for years to come. He had even heard of a species in the Delta Quadrant that sent theirs through a naturally occurring spatial fissure or anomaly believing that they are ushering them to the next consciousness when in reality they were appearing light years away in another system’s planetary rings.

“Everything is prepared Commander, when you’re ready.” Dural stated simply, and left his musings in his head. He prepared several test tubes in a rack for samples Bracken would take per protocol.

She wasted no time. “Computer. Begin recording. For purposes of this autopsy, Leading will be myself, Dr Ailynn Bracken MD FTCS FDCM Commander, and also present Dr Dural Methor MD Ensign Senior Grade. Patient is a 45 year old Bajoran male. No known medical issue at time of death. External examination shows no outward sign of incision or contusion, no trace of hypoxia or cyanosis of extremities.” She pulled back each eyelid. “No petechial hemorrhaging. No defensive wounds to palms of hand, or visible debris under the nails.” She began taking the

normal scrapes and sweeps. Under each nail, and swaps at the back of the throat and nasal passages. "Sample analysis and Toxscreen thank you." She dropped each sample and swab into the tubes that Dural was holding up. After all the samples were placed in their own tube, Dural set the rack down on a nearby table with the inverted caps on a sterile tray. Carefully not touching the rim of the test tubes, the inside of the caps or the tray so that they were all unaltered, Dural placed each cap on its designated tube one at a time until they were all capped.

He placed each tube into separate round slots in the machine which set about scanning all the samples at once. "We should have some answers shortly. Shall we continue?"

(Reply Bracken)

(USS Exeter – Mortuary – FO Cmdr Ailynn Bracken– 0335)

Dural placed each tube into separate round slots in the machine which set about scanning all the samples at once. "We should have some answers shortly. Shall we continue?"

Ailynn nodded, "Checking for signs of strangulation...negative. Hyoid bone intact, and no apparent cartilaginous damage. No signs of suffocation." Something caught her eye. "Tweezers."

(Reply Dural)

Ailynn took the tweezers and pulled a long hair that was entangled in Nix's, she dropped it into a tube that Dural was holding open. "Long hair, not from victim, Dark brown or black in colour. DNA trace if you can. Moving on to internal examination. Computer. Give me a complete scan of the body, I want everything recorded. Judging liver temperature taken at scene, and other factors, physiological time of death would have been... 0145"

[acknowledged, scan complete]

After finishing the scan, Ailynn took two more samples, one blood, and one urine, both using syringes that Dural had offered. "Full blood sweep, disease and toxicology on both. Check the urine for bloods and glucose. I don't think he died from renal failure but it's worth a check.

(Reply Dural)

“Thank you. Scalpel please. I’m proceeding to internal investigation. She took the offered scalpel and made a textbook ‘Y’ cut, shoulder to base of sternum, and from there to the pubic bone.

“Fascinating. Bajoran cardiac physiology, mirrored along horizontal axis as you know, rather than in Terrans where it’s along the vertical. It’s this difference in axis that causes a greater chance of cardiac issues in Bajoran/human hybrids like yours truly.”

(Reply Dural)

She removed the heart and placed it on the scale, checking size, weight and morphology, before taking a small sample. “Toxicology please. No damage to heart, expected amount of deposits, no blockages.” She then moved to the stomach, and intestines the minutes swept past as she took samples from each organ for tissue and toxicology analysis. Having checked and weighed each single organ, she then replaced them carefully back into position, before closing the body back up with a sigh. “Final stage Doctor, the head.”

(Reply Dural)

(USS Exeter - Crew Quarters- SPC Chief Armory officer PO2 Sytuk-0459)

Sytuk walked up to the door of Lieutenant Cortez. His phaser was on his side and set to stun. He chimed the door pad

(reply Cortez)

" This is security officer Petty officer Sytuk."

(reply Cortez .)

" You are to follow me to the security center. Get yourself together " Sytuk said.

(Reply Cortez)

(USS Exeter - Personal Quarters- CSO Lt Jg Erin Cortez - 0501)

Having been awake for all of ten minutes, Erin was sitting on her couch, cup of coffee in hand and still in her pajamas when the door chimed.

"Unless you have breakfast, go away."

" This is security officer Petty officer Sytuk."

Groaning, Erin stood up and walked to the door,

"What do you want, petty officer?"

" You are to follow me to the security center. Get yourself together " came the response.

"Okay fine. Give me 5 minutes to get dressed unless you want to take me there in my pajamas."

(Reply Sytuk)

"I'll be there in five minutes!" She answered grumpily and headed into the bedroom to get dressed.

(Reply Sytuk)

(Reply Sytuk)

(USS Exeter - Personal Quarters of Cortez- SPC Armory Chief PO2 Sytuk- 0502)

After telling Lieutenant Cortez that she needed to follow him her response, loaded with irritation.

"Okay fine. Give me 5 minutes to get dressed unless you want to take me there in my pajamas."

He looked her in the eyes. " That can be arranged."

"I'll be there in five minutes!" She answered grumpily and headed into the bedroom to get dressed.

Sytuk stuck his foot in the main doorway if her Quarters to prevent the doors from shutting. After a few minutes he began the mental countdown to zero. He reached in her quarters and pressed the button to hold the door open and stepped inside fully. " Time Lieutenant "

(reply Erin if you want)

(USS Exeter - CTO Office - CSO Lt Jg Erin Cortez & CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok - 0531)

Sitting at the desk, Erin's mind was whirring. ~what is this all about? I haven't done anything unless you count bringing that denubian chocolate on board.~

Ravok walked in. " Good morning Lieutenant "

"Good morning to you. What is this all about?"

He motioned towards the walls. Blue strips illuminated the wall panels. " This conversation is being recorded. If at any time you wish to say anything off record, you may tap that button next to your right hand." He said as he sat down.

Erin looked down at the button and then at Ravok, "I understand but what is this all about? I haven't done anything to warrant this."

" Lieutenant, what was the nature of your relationship with Commander Tyko Nix?" Ravok asked her.

Raising an eyebrow, Erin looked at him, "Do you want me to answer that truthfully?"

" You are under no requirement to answer my questions with honesty, but dishonesty would be detrimental." He responded

"We slept together, once."

" How would you describe the last time you spoke with the commander ? " Ravok asked.

"Honestly, difficult. "

~ Not good.~ " Difficult because of rank ? Time restraints? "

"He... well, not to put to fine a point on it, he propositioned me."

Ravok leaned forward and his chair and rested his arms on the desk. " Lieutenant the commander was found dead "

It took her mind a second to realize what he had actually said and it was then that she realized that her hand was at her mouth.

He sat and watched Erin process the news.

"He's dead?"

" Yes, cause of death has not been determined. He did however contact security with an emergency before he was found dead. "

"Wait.... Is that why I am here? You can't think that I would have...?"

Ravok took a deep breath. " You are here because of your interaction with him in Bean me up. Can you account for your whereabouts from 2300 to 0200 ?"

Sitting back in the chair, Erin went quiet. The news of Nix's death had hit her hard. ~he's dead....~

" Lieutenant?" He knew this was hard for her to hear.

"I'm sorry.. I was in bed, asleep. And before you ask, I was alone."

" Was there anything you accessed during that time in your quarters to prove you were there ? " He asked. He didn't want to mention the hacking of the ship's biometric systems. So he was thinking of anyway to prove she was where she claimed she was.

"Accessed.... No. I got back after the meal we were both at and went to bed. Look, I know how it looks but, nix and I were old news. I'm with someone now."

" Lieutenant, I am not trying to find you guilty of anything. The cause of death hasn't been determined , I am however trying to rule out all possibilities. You were with him yesterday. I watched the security file. Your entire conversation. Then later he is found dead. The man was a fellow officer. I am trying to help him and help you. "

"I... lieutenant, I wouldn't do this. Yes, he asked for sex. Yes, I told him no. In fact i think i may have said how dare he suggest that. He... will always be someone special to me for reasons i don't want to go into. But kill him? No."

" In any of your interactions with the commander did he ever mention anyone who may have had a problem with him? " Ravok asked.

"Our conversations... we didn't talk much the first time. But the last time I spoke to him, no he mentioned nothing. In fact the only real thing he did tell me was something personal about himself and his past."

Ravok nodded.

Taking a deep breath, Erin closed her eyes for a moment and then looked at him, "Do whatever you need to do. If it means locking me up to prove my innocence, fine."

" I'm not locking you up Lieutenant. You mentioned his past, something personal. I know as an intelligence officer he probably had loads of secrets but if this is information that could lend help to the investigation. I need to know ."

"Just an old tale about naussicans. Something that happened to him. He was making a point about how I used to be, hiding behind what happened with Dulon."

Ravok looked down at a silent alert on his screen. " Lieutenant did you talk to anyone about your dealings with Commander Tyko Nix? "

"The only other person who knew was Commander Bracken. "

" Are you sure?" Ravok asked.

Looking at him, Erin felt a sudden pang of worry, "what do you mean am I sure? She was the only person I told."

" Lieutenant I am just asking. I think I have everything I need. I am going to recommend you speak with counselor Corsica and keep your doors locked." Ravok said.

"Okay." Erin responded quietly.

" I can have a member of the security teams to check on you periodically to ensure your safety." Ravok said as he ended the recording process.

"My safety? Why would I be not safe?"

" Your comfort and safety is one of my highest concerns Erin. I will make sure you are kept safe.

"

"Does this mean I am benched? Can I work?"

"I don't have the authority to make that call. I do however suggest you don't try to leave through an airlock anytime soon." He said with a hint of humor to ease the tension.

"I just... I'm concerned now. Why would I be at risk?"

"Your close connection with Tyko could make you a potential victim or a suspect if this is in fact ruled a homicide. Which I hope it's not. "

"Close...., sleep with a guy once and it marks you."

Ravok stood up. " You're free to go, If anything comes to mind or you need anything let me know. Your compliance will only help you in the long run. "

Standing, Erin nodded. Her mind was still reeling from the news. She turned away and then turned back,

"I didn't.... " she paused a second and then continued, "He was a character, yes. But he was a good man at heart. He didn't deserve this."

Ravok took a deep breath. " I believe you. If this is ruled a homicide and you are declared a suspect. I will have Counselor Corsica handle the aspects of the investigation that deal with you. Our friendship makes this situation difficult, but I will perform my duties as required. As your friend I urge you to seek legal counsel if this is indeed a homicide . As the Head of security on this vessel I urge you to not consider my friendship a weakness to exploit. "

Erin nodded, didn't say any more and left the room. She could feel the news weighing heavily on her mind and needed the solitude of her office. She needed to be alone.

Ravok sat down and placed his head in his hands. He read the alert on his screen, it was from starbase freedom. It was an odd report from a betazoid woman who was present during one of Tyko's conversations of interest.

(reply none)

(USS Exeter - Personal quarters - Lt Jg Greta Smith - 0541)

After having slept like a baby, Greta woke suddenly. Looking over at Ire, she smiled softly as he snored. Creeping out of bed, she pulled on a robe and walked quietly into the living area, grabbed a fruit juice from the replicator and sat on their sofa.

Picking up the PADD that was on the table, she began to read through some of the morning reports that had started to filter through. Pulling up one, she felt her blood run cold.

~oh no.~

Putting the PADD back down, she walked back into the bedroom and knelt next to Ire.

"Hey... lovebug. You awake?"

(Reply Ire)

"That guy you told me about yesterday, Nix?"

(Reply Ire)

"He's... dead."

(Reply ire)

(USS Exeter - Personal quarters - CFO – Lieutenant – Ire Williams- 0543)

"Hey... lovebug. You awake?"

Ire's fluttered open and saw the look of concern on her face.

"Yes, you okay?"

"That guy you told me about yesterday, Nix?"

He frowned "Yes what happened?"

"He's... dead."

Ire sat bolt upright in bed.

"What, when, how?"

Suddenly the door chime sounded, and voice came over the speaker.

=^= This is security officer Ensign T'kel. I am here to speak with Lieutenant Williams=^=

~Ow this is not good~

“Yes I am Williams.”

He rolled off the bed and grabbed a clean uniform from the cupboard.

=^=You are to follow me to the security center=^=

“Of course, Ensign I'll be there in a moment.”

He paused for a moment and looked over at Greta.

“I am sure it's just route about his conversation yesterday.”

(Reply Greta)

“Do you think it was an accident or something.”

(Reply Greta)

“Sorry I'll stop asking question that you don't know.”

He leant forward, kissed her on the forehead and gave her a slight smile.

“Have a good day at work. I’ll see you later.”

(Reply Greta)

He nodded turn towards the door. He paused for a moment composed himself and opened the door. He saw Ensign standing in front of him and his eyes flickered to the phaser at T’kel’s hip.

~Okay then let’s what they got to say~

“Okay lets go.”

(T’kel IYW)

He stepped forward going first as he knew the ship but also knowing that T’kel was not going to walk ahead of a potential suspect.

~Suspect, lets not jump to conclusions shall we~

(Reply Greta, T’kel, any)

(USS Exeter - Crew Quarters- (NPC) Sec officer Ensign T’kel -0544)

T’kel walked up to the door of Lieutenant Williams. His phaser was on his side and set to stun. Straightening his posture he alerted the occupants of the quarters of his presence.

(reply Ire)

“ This is security officer Ensign T’kel. I am here to speak with Lieutenant Williams. ”

(reply Ire.)

" You are to follow me to the security center. "

(Reply Ire)

(USS Exeter - Crew quarters corridor - NPC Security officer Ensign T'kel-0546)

"Okay lets go." Ire said .

T'kel noticed the Lieutenant's eye's focus on his phaser.

Ire stepped forward going first.

T'kel walked side by side with Lieutenant Williams to the turbolift. He pressed the button to open the door and they both stepped in. " Deck 8" T'kel said.

He looked at Lieutenant Williams.

" You have no need to worry about my phaser Sir. "

(reply Ire)

" You are however in range of what is most commonly referred to as a Vulcan nerve pinch, but an officer of your standing has nothing to worry about Sir." T'kel said as he turned his head forward

(reply Ire)

(USS Exeter - Personal quarters - Lt Jg Greta Smith - 0546)

"What, when, how?"

=^= This is security officer Ensign T'kel. I am here to speak with Lieutenant Williams=^=

Greta looked at Ire, her eyes widen slightly,

~Wait, what? Why is security here?~

Greta sat on the edge of the bed as Ire got dressed and talked with the officer outside their door. Her breath caught in her throat as she fought against the rising panic within her

"I am sure it's just routine about his conversation yesterday."

"I suppose." She replied, her voice a little shaky.

"Do you think it was an accident or something."

Looking up at him, she knew her eyes flashed annoyance, "Hoe am I supposed to know!"

"Sorry I'll stop asking question that you don't know."

He leant forward, kissed her on the forehead and gave her a slight smile.

“Have a good day at work. I’ll see you later.”

“Be careful.” She replied as he headed out of the door. She stood and began to get dressed, her stomach doing somersaults.

~Ire... just be careful. Don't back yourself into a corner.~

(Reply none)

(USS Exeter – Turbolift - CFO – Lieutenant – Ire Williams -0549)

“ You have no need to worry about my phaser Sir. ”

~Says the one who is armed~

“Yes Ensign.”

“ You are however in range of what is most commonly referred to as a Vulcan nerve pinch, but an officer of your standing has nothing to worry about Sir.”

~And they say the Vulcan’s have no sense of humor~

“That’s good to know Ensign. Thank you.”

He waited for the turbolift to reach its destination.

(USS Exeter -Deck 8- Security center - NPC Security officer Ensign T'kel-0552)

The doors of the turbolift opened and T'kel led Lieutenant Williams into the security center, but through a back entrance, as to not cause the Lieutenant any unwarranted negative attention.

T'kel gestured his hand toward the door of The CTO's office. " You may enter Sir." T'kel said.

(reply Ire)

(reply Ire)

(USS Exeter -Deck 8- Security center – CFO – Lieutenant – Ire Williams -0554)

He followed T'kel into the security center and realized that they were going in the back way rather than through the main entrance.

~That's interesting~

They walked down the corridor moving through the security center and stopped in front of the CTO's door.

" You may enter Sir."

Ire nodded.

“Thank you Ensign.”

He paused for a split second before touching the intercom panel by the CTO's door.

~Oka Ravok lets see what this is all about~

The doors opened, and he entered.

(Reply T'kel, Ravok, any)

(USS Exeter - Crew Quarters- SPC Chief Armory officer PO2 Sytuk-0648)

Sytuk walked up to the door of Ensign More. . He chimed the door pad

(reply More)

" It's Petty officer Sytuk."

(reply More)

" You are to follow me to the security center Sir." Sytuk said.

(Reply More.)

" All will be explained shortly Sir." Sytuk said and gestured his hand toward the direction of the turbolift.

(reply More)

(USS Exeter - Crew Quarters - Tac/Sec Ens.(Sg) Stan More 06:49)

Something bad had happened. Stan had been woken from his sleep by Lilian. The puppy had howled three times. He did not realise her vocal cords were mature enough to make such a sound.

As he placed his feet on the floor. Stan could feel something almost tangible in the air. More noticed that neither the yellow or red klaxons were ringing out. He quickly showered and popped on a uniform. After eating he was on the verge of calling security. When his door chimes sounded.

“ Who is it?” He asked

“ It's Petty officer Sytuk.”

Sytuk? Stan opened the door. The officer looked at Stan. With a coolness usually reserved for perps.

“ Hello Sytuk. How may I help you this day?” Stan asked

“ You are to follow me to the security center Sir.” Sytuk said.

“ What's happened?” Stan said

“ All will be explained shortly Sir.” Sytuk said and gestured his hand toward the direction of the turbolift.

“ Let's go then.” Was it Stan's imagination or was his other hand. Hovering over his hand Phaser?

They began to walk to the Exeter's security office. A couple of security officers , who Stan knew. Had just come off duty from a night shift.Both moved past them as they walked along.Did Stan here one of them say.

“ Do you think he did it?”

Did what? More realised Sytuk was under orders. So there was no point to continual ask him. What was going on. But a dark feeling was growing on Stan. This was not good.

(Reply , No one)

(USS Exeter - CTO Office - Sec. Officer Ensign Stan More & CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok - 0651)

Apart from some odd looks from off duty security guards. Stan still had no idea what was going on. No one would tell him what had happened. But judging by this amount of activity at this time of day in security. Whatever was going on was major.

He was escorted into Ravoks office.

Ravok stood up when Stan entered.

" Good morning Ensign"

“ Good morning sir.” Stan said surprised at how serious Ravok looked.

Ravok sat down and motioned to the walls. " Everything said here is being recorded. If at anytime you wish to say something off the record. You may press that button right there to cease the recording process. " He said pointing near Stans hand.

What was going on? This had all the makings of a.....

“ Sir. Please. What’s going on?” Stan asked

" There has been a death on the Exeter." Ravok responded.

“ My goodness.....who sir?” Stan said. He could not believe that on a ship like the Exeter. Such a thing could happen.

” Commander Tyko Nix was found dead last night.” Ravok said .

It was odd. His first reaction should have been satisfaction. That global karma had finally caught up with Nix. But no. Instead he felt revulsion. No one , no matter how much an SOB they were. Deserved to have their life ended. Before their life had come to its natural end.

“ Of course sir I am one of the prime suspects. It’s no secret that we almost came to blows. Plus I did threaten to leave him unconscious drooling in a puddle of his own spitol. I fully understand sir.”

Ravok raised an eyebrow.

” I never said it was murder. In fact the cause of death is still being investigated.”

“ I understand that sir. However technically you mentioned murder not I. But it’s no secret Nix had a way about him. That unfortunately brought out the worst in people. As he was released from Sickbay after the kidnapping incident. Any health ending issues he suffered. Would have been addressed. So the only option left is murder.” Stan said

” You are here because policy mandates that I interview the people who had conversations with him, you are one of those people. Ensign. ” Ravok informed him.

“ Understood. I will fully cooperate. From when would you like to start? ” Stan asked

” Your implication of this being a murder is unfortunate, but not surprising as the rumor mill has already started. What can you tell me about your last conversation with the commander ? ” Ravok questioned.

Stan should not of mentioned murder. But the cop in him had come forward. Only problem is perhaps they should of kept quiet. If Stan was not chief suspect before he walked in. He was now.

“ He came up to us at the station. While we were relaxing at the Promenade cafe.” Stan said

“ Go on Ensign.” Ravok said.

“ Lillian, my German Shepard puppy. If anything she had murderous thoughts towards him.” Stan said

After a pause Stan continued.

“ We talked about the recent mission. Plus he asked about Lillian.. I was trying to be nice to him. But Nix kept trying to turn the conversation into an argument. I think he got angry I would not take the bait.” Stan said.

“ I am sorry you had to endure that. For what it's worth I'm glad you didn't act.” Ravok said with a smile.

“ I hope you understand you aren't a suspect ,this is simply an inquiry. I watched the security file from starbase freedom. Everything you told me matches up. With what I saw.”

“ Thank you sir. Will this halt my bridge training?” Stan asked

Ravok shook his head. “ No, not at all. You aren't guilty of anything.” Ravok said

~ So far ~ Stan thought

“ Och thank goodness.Yer had me worried sir.” Stan said

“ It isn't like you acted on your thoughts Ensign. You held your composure.” Ravok said dropping a hint that he knew.

“ I suppose this means I canna help in the hunt for the killer?” Stan said

" For the time being this is a closed investigation. Policy doesn't allow an interviewed person to help directly in the investigation. But you can indirectly help by keeping your ear to the ground. If anything comes up , anything at all please let me know. Any piece is still a piece of the puzzle."

" I understood sir," Stan replied

(USS Exeter - Torpedo Storage - Lt Jg Greta Smith - 0702)

Walking into the torpedo storage room, Greta took a deep breath. She could hear a couple of voices at one end of the room and knew instantly the subject of their conversation. By now, news of something bad happening would have spread through out the ship and theories, rumours would be abound.

Sitting down at the console that had almost become her second home, she pulled up the current data on their armaments and began to cross check everything. The resupplying they had done was already logged and the next thing to do would be to conduct a visual inspection of the new torpedoes.

~Make sure they are ship shape and bristol fashion as dad would say.~ she thought to herself as she picked up a tricorder.

The voices that had been talking had gone quiet. The two young ensigns had realised she was there and fallen silent, either because they didn't want to get caught gossiping or they had been talking about Ire and him being called into Security. Greta didn't care. She walked past them and said, bluntly,

"Visual inspection. You two make sure all the other new additions are in working order and, if i catch you two gossiping again, i'll be making you clean every single torpedo with a toothbrush. Understand?"

The two nodded, a look of something close to fear flittered over their faces as she walked past them and headed to where the new torpedoes had been stored. ~Ire, be calm, be safe and just don't say anything stupid.~

(reply none)

(Reply none)

(USS Exeter - Deck 5 - Quarters - COO Ensign (sg) Paul Sleeford 07:30)

Sleeford woke with a slight headache, he'd not drunk that much, a couple of glasses at most, it had been long day, with the launch from the station, duty rosters and the various other duties that the chiefs position entailed.

After showering Sleeford dressed and grabbed a coffee from the replicator and headed out to the office. Walking through the corridors he found it unusually quiet for the time of the morning. He passed people in the corridors, some looked at him as if he was the devil incarnate, others just stared, entering the turbolift he rode down to deck 13.

Walking out he saw a couple of crew women, turn from the doors and walk away, in the opposite direction, shaking his head he walked the short distance to his office, sitting at the desk he opened the terminal and began the days tasks for a department head.

(USS Exeter - Civilian Quarters section- SPC Chief Armory officer PO2 Sytuk-0750)

Sytuk walked up to the door of Caity Dubois . . He chimed the door pad

(reply Caity)

" It's Petty officer Sytuk."

(reply Caity)

" You are to follow me to the security center ." Sytuk said.

(Reply Caity.)

" Follow me" Sytuk gestured his hand down the hall toward the direction of the turbolift.

(reply Caity)

(USS Exeter - Civilian Quarters section- Caity Dubois - 0752)

Smiling to herself, Caity was in a good mood. A particularly nice date last night and waking up content and happy, she had already been dressed, remotely checked the stores and was about to head out of her door as the chime went.

As the door slid open, Caity smiled widely, "Good morning. Do I know you?"

" It's Petty officer Sytuk."

"And how can I help you this fine morning?"

" You are to follow me to the security center ." He replied.

~oh fantastic. Someone has reported me for dating.... No that can't be it.~

"May I ask why?"

" Follow me" Sytuk gestured his hand down the hall toward the direction of the turbolift.

"Okay, no nonsense. I respect that." She replied as she stepped out of the door. heading to the turbo lift, she stopped at the door and looked at Sytuk,

"What's this all about?"

(Reply Sytuk)

(USS Exeter - CTO's office- CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok & Caity Dubois -0800)

Caity walked into the room. Ravok stood up and greeted her. " Hello Ms. Dubois , please take a seat."

"Okay." Caity replied, the nerves beginning to show a little as she sat and began playing with a lock of her hair.

~what is this all about?~

" Before we begin I am obligated to inform you that this conversation is being recorded, but as you are not a member of starfleet you have the right to declare a legal advocate under civilian regulation 17.4 sections 6 through 14. However you are not being detained and you are not as of now a suspect. I am also required by federation law to inform you that all questions asked and information provided are in nature concurrent with sections 8 and 9 of article 42 of the civilian compliance mandates. This interview of information obtainment is about the death of starfleet officer Commander Tyko Nix."

"Death... wait, what? You think I...." Caity went silent. She closed her eyes as she knew why she was here.

" If you have any questions I am here to help you. " Ravok said.

"Help? Help me how exactly?" She replied looking over his shoulder, almost scared to look at him directly.

Ravok leaned forward. " Ms. Dubois, I am simply conducting an investigation into the death of a fellow officer. In the past 24 hours you were one of the people to have direct conversation with him. What can you tell me about this conversation?"

"Not much. It was a conversation. He came in for a drink and I expressed some displeasure at his attitude regarding..." she paused, not wanting to name names.

Ravok became intrigued.

" You can continue. Any information you provide is a huge help to the investigation. The commander by many accounts was a difficult man, but at the end of the day he was a good man and a tremendous officer."

"I passed comment about his treatment of lieutenant Cortez. The way he.... Slept with her and just disappeared.." she mumbled and looked down.

" Ms Dubois" Ravok said softly.

" I saw the security file. I know what was said. If you don't wish to state it for the record you don't have to. It would be great if you did though. "

"I don't remember the exact words but I told him that I didn't think it was particularly good of him that he slept with her and left without saying goodbye. I may have said that this crew was dear to me and that he should respect that."

Ravok cocked his head slightly.

" Is that the language you used ?"

"I don't remember. "

He spun the terminal to face her and played the appropriate time index.

=^=This crew means a lot to me. All of them. You tread carefully here, Commander=^= Her voice played from the audio.

Her eyes dropped as her shoulders sagged.

" I think our time is done here Ms. Dubois. I will be in contact with you. " Ravok said.

She nodded, stood and looked at him with tears in her eyes, "I didn't.... I couldn't. "

Ravok stood up. " Goodbye Ms. Dubois "

She turned on her heels and left, wiping her eyes.

(reply none)

(USS Exeter - Deck 13- COO's office - NPC Security officer Ensign T'kel-0806)

Ensign T'kel walked into the operations department and proceeded directly to Ensign Sleeford's office. He chimed the door pad

(reply Sleeford)

" It's Ensign T'kel from security." He said as the door opened.

(reply Sleeford)

T'kel had a high level of respect for Ensign Sleeford. If he had emotions he would have felt sadness in his heart.

He hesitated for a second. " Ensign Sleeford...Sir. " He said looking at floor trying to fight the urge to let a single drop of emotion come to the surface

" I need you to come with me to the security center." He said as he raised his head back up.

(reply Sleeford)

" I can't tell you Sir. Please don't ask. Just follow me. We can take the back ways so no one sees you"

(reply Sleeford)

(Reply Sleeford)

(USS Exeter - Deck 13 - COOs office COO Ensign (sg) Paul Sleeford 08:07)

Closing his eyes Sleeford sighed, not for the first time he'd regretted taking the chief's job, paperwork had never been his thing, he could do it, it just took longer, for the umteenth time he wondered how the CO managed to find the time to do the paperwork, be a husband and a personal life all within the 24 hour day. The door chime broke through his thoughts.

"Yes who is it?"

" It's Ensign T'kel from security." He said as the door opened.

As the door opened Sleeford was surprised to see an armed security officer standing there.

" Ensign Sleeford...Sir. I need you to come with me to the security center."

Seeing the conflict on the face of T'kel, Sleeford stood, "Understood Ensign. Can you tell me why?"

Knowing that the answer would be to the negative, Sleeford shouldn't have asked, he'd been in the same position on more then one occasions.

" I can't tell you Sir. Please don't ask. Just follow me. We can take the back ways so no one sees you"

Shaking his head once, Sleeford grabbed his jacket from the back of the chair, slipping it over his shoulders he picked up the mug of coffee.

"No need Ensign T'kel. Let them see me, unless getting drunk is now a crime I've nothing to hide."

(Reply none)

(USS Exeter - CTO Office - aCOO Ensign Paul Sleeford &CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok - 0822)

Ravok singled for Ensign Sleeford to be brought in.

Walking into the security office, Sleeford noticed the blue lights on the wall, raising his eyebrows slightly as he stood in front of the desk and waited. ~So a formal interview, interesting
~

When Sleeford walked in, Ravok stood up.

" Hello Ensign sorry for the wait. It's been a long morning."

Looking at Ravok, Sleeford shrugged slightly, as a former security officer he knew how to play the game from both sides, something was going on, T'kel could hardly meet his eyes, for a Vulcan that was nearly a shout out that he was distressed, smiling slightly, Sleeford assumed that someone had complained about something he'd done or said.

" Please have a seat." Ravok said.

Taking the offered seat, Sleeford, placed his hands in his lap and waited.

" Before we begin I must let you know that this is being recorded. Of at anytime you wish to say anything off record please tap the button next to your right hand. " Ravok instructed.

Nodding Sleeford looked at the wall, "I noticed the lights as I walked in. So may I ask what this is about?"

" Ensign Sleeford what can you tell me about your last conversation or direct interaction with Commander Tyko Nix?" Ravok asked.

Laughing Sleeford shook his head, "That man has a nasty habit of causing trouble. He came by the Ops office yesterday morning around 10 am, sat down calm as you please and tried to get into my face. Started by taking a dig about my move to Ops, something along the lines of it costing me an arm and a leg, well a leg.", Pausing for a second, "He then insinuated that the constant transitions were a burden on my mental well being. "

Sitting there Sleeford looked at Ravok, "So Lieutenant, where's this going?"

Every word Sleeford spoke was true to the recording. " Commander Tyko Nix was found dead last night in his quarters by security after an emergency call was sent by him. We are all hoping it was a death of natural causes, but it is still being determined."

Laughing Sleeford looked at the table for a second, "You have a thankless task, been there, done it."

" Yes I do. It's not something I enjoy having to do ,but if I can help provide some answers. Then I will continue to seek the truth. I wanted to ask you about the conversation you had...."Ravok stopped as Sleeford began to speak.

"What you really want to know is did I kill Commander Tyko Nix, well the answer is no. However the thought was there, me and several others, hell a whole planet's worth for all I know.

Oh I know we had a run in on the first day of the last mission, to be honest I let a situation get out of control, said things that we're, well unprofessional at best and damn right stupid, I paid for that with bruised knuckles when I hit the wall outside the cargo bay, it was that or hit Tyko Nix.

“

Ravok nodded his head.

" The commander had a talent for that apparently. Yet he was a highly decorated and devoted starfleet officer, but above all that he was a man of flesh and blood. Even if he did manage to piss off a lot of people along his journey in life, he still deserves our respect in these dark hours."

Ravok paused.

Sleeford nodded, while he disliked the man, he didn't deserve to die, a good punch on the nose, yes but his life being snuffed out, no one deserve that, the security training he'd had years ago, kicked in, although he was no longer in the department he still felt an affinity with the members of the department.

“Do we know when it happened? I suppose there's no file recorded in the area of the commander's quarters, so you have no visual record of who went in or out.”

Ravok shook his head. " No , I have your assistant chief of operations Ensign Zot conducting a thorough investigation. There was a computer security breach last night at Midnight. The biometric sensors were non functional for a duration of time. I am simply following protocols and orders. Tyko came to you yesterday and had a conversation. You are one of many on my list. The man certainly made his way around. "

Nodding Sleeford knew the procedure, get the people in, talk to them, make them comfortable,, hope they slip up, the thing that puzzled Sleeford was if someone had disabled the security systems, they knew their way around the computers, which meant, either a security officer or an operations officer, given that he'd been one and was now the other. Sleeford felt the ground open slightly, given the situation he'd have to be prime suspect. He had the history with the deceased, a motive, the only thing missing was the means.

" Do you have anyway to verify your location last night ? Between midnight and 0200?" Ravok asked.

"Well after the dinner in the Observation lounge, I went back to my quarters, showered and went to bed, the computer should be able to verify what time I entered and what time I was escorted here."

" The computer verified the movements of you entering your quarters. Did you happen to access any files in your quarters? Or the replicator? Something that could prove your being there during the time of the security breach with the biometric sensors ?" Ravok asked.

He was hoping to be able to clear Sleeford if this was indeed a murder. Hell Ravok was trying to clear everyone who would be innocent of such a gruesome act. Sleeford was a good man through and through. He had the life experience many can only dream of.

"After I got in I showered, lay on my bed for a while. I couldn't sleep, I guess what Tyko said got more under my skin then I care to admit, I got up around 00:35 ish, I wandered around deck 6 for a while, then headed to the arboretum. I spent about 30 or so minutes there, sitting with my feet in the stream, just thinking, heck i even threw in a couple of small stones," laughing slightly, " Not done that since i was a kid"

Sitting there Sleeford pondered his situation, the rumour mill would kick in and names would be dropped, two would come to the top immediately.

"You know the rumour mill will kick off soon and the first two names to come up will be Stans and mine, which is going to cause problems for you as an investigating officer."

" What makes you say that Ensign?" Ravok asked.

"Well for starters you're going to be accused of a cover up, a serving security officer and a former security officer are the prime suspects, any conclusions you come too regarding guilt or innocence of either of us will be tainted by supposition of... well you know how the crew can gossip."

" Justice , pure justice isn't impacted by rumor or gossip. If I am however accused of a coverup, they will have to prove my guilt in that matter. Just like someone will have to prove guilt of a suspect if this is indeed a murder. " Ravok sat forward.

"I'm not saying there will be problems, I'm just saying that people will have formed an opinion of who is guilty, rather than who is actually guilty. Some of the crew already think that I'm guilty, I had two of the crew turn and walk away, rather than be in the same lift as me and the escorting security officer. I fear people have already found me guilty."

" Ensign Sleeford. The captain ordered me to do an investigation. I intend on doing my very best to discover the truth...While on your walk last night did you notice anything strange or out of the ordinary? " Ravok asked, perhaps Sleeford saw something similar to what Ire had encountered during his late night jog.

"I don't know about suspicious, as I entered the arboretum the lights dimmed slightly, not for long, about .25 of a second and the water stopped flowing for, oh I don't know about twenty five seconds, i just assumed it was because it was late and i'd set it flowing again by entering."

Pausing he wondered if the person he saw as he came back was relevant.

"There was something, as I was coming back, there was a crewman, walking from the turbo lift to i would assume her quarters, she was from engineering, she may have finished Beta shift and was heading home for all I know"

Ravok raised his brow with interest.

" Could you describe her to me?" Ravok was also interested in the voice imprint signature that would be left from voice command in the turbolift. ~ This could be something~

"She was about 5 foot 6 inched, brunette, slim, well built, looked like she could take on the entire Klingon defence Force, the Tal Shir and Starfleet Security and not break sweat, i've not seen her before, but then there's a lot of new crew, replacements, transfers and the like. Other then that,

not really, I cant even tell you what room she went to, she turned into section 12 as I walked past, but that means nothing."

" Thank you Ensign, you've given me a lot of good information. You are free to go. If you happen to recall anything else please let me know. " Ravok said as he ended the recording and stood up.

Standing Sleeford nodded to Ravok and left the security office, turning left he walked towards the turbolift and wondered if it would be easier to just book a cell and save trouble later.

(reply None)

(USS Exeter - Deck 8 - Aft lounge - COO Ensign (sg) Paul Sleeford 09:00)

Paul sat at the rear of the aft lounge, staring out the window, the death of Tyko Nix bothered him, not so much because of the death, but that someone on board the ship had resorted to murder, he knew as a marne and a security officer he may have to take a life as a last resort, a very last resort.

Some one on this ship had a large enough grudge against a man that they would go to his quarters and take his life. To Sleeford that took courage, anyone could shoot someone at 400 yards, hell even at 100 and feel nothing, but up close and personal took guts, to look someone in the eye and, and... Sighing, Paul closed his eyes, he'd never been in that position and he hoped to whatever deities existed that he never was.

Hearing the doors open and close Paul opened his eyes and glanced over to see who had come in, seeing two engineering officers standing there staring, as one started to walk to the small bar the other placed a hand on his shoulder and pointed to Sleeford with his chin and shook his head.

"I don't like the smell in here, lets go to Nine and Dine, hell we might even survive breakfast"

Shaking his head Paul picked up his mug and finished his coffee, standing he looked out the window, ~So it begins, took longer than I expected~

Leaving the lounge he walked along the corridors, ignoring the stares, blanking out the comments, entering the turbo lift, riding up to the bridge, as the doors opened he stood there, for the first time ever unsure what to do.

(replies none)

(USS Exeter – Nine and Dine- ACEO, Lt. JG Alistair Brightwood - 0905)

"I wonder if this has anything to do with the murder that everyone was talking about while I was getting my coffee this morning. Otherwise, Janice, you have any clue how this could have gotten in there?"

"Something like that doesn't exactly end up in here by accident," she looked at it then paused before turning to face Alastair, "Wait – hold on - what was that last thing you said there? For a moment I thought you said murder?"

"I did indeed. Did you not go to the mess this morning? It's the daily scuttlebutt,"

She looked at him- then back to the pin as her security training kicked in pulling him back from the replicator, "Hold on – don't touch anything. This classifies as something odd enough to get looked into properly. Might be innocent but who leaves something like that in there ?"

"Someone who is trying to hide something. At least that's why I'd stash something there. Someone who might have been in a hurry." Alistair took a gander at the circuitry behind the panel. "Yeah it definitely looks like the isolinear chip was damaged by someone trying to put that in there without being careful. Because with a pit of care and patience you could probably stash it in here without damaging anything, but a rush job, say if someone was panicked, well that could do some damage."

(reply Hammerfield)

"Janice, why don't you take this to the Security Offices for analysis while I fix the replicator. Granted you have the security experience, if it would be better to call someone in, we can do that too."

(reply hammerfield)

(reply Hammerfield)

(USS Exeter – Nine and Dine- Ensign Janice Hammerfield - 0907)

"Someone who is trying to hide something. At least that's why I'd stash something there. Someone who might have been in a hurry." Alistair took a gander at the circuitry behind the panel. "Yeah it definitely looks like the isolinear chip was damaged by someone trying to put that in there without being careful. Because with a pit of care and patience you could probably stash it in here without damaging anything, but a rush job, say if someone was panicked, well that could do some damage."

"Agreed," she nodded making a mental note to check the daily news before heading out now.

Show original message

"We should leaving it as is," Janice nodded to him, "We don't want to contaminate this with us moving or touching anything. Hopefully its nothing but.. It doesn't really look like it,"

(reply Alistair)

Tapping her com badge she moved back a bit from the replicator, "Hammerfield to security, medical – we have a suspicious item in one of the replicators in the Nine and Dine. We could do with someone down here to investigate and take some forensic samples,"

(reply Medical / Security)

NRPG: Room for more if needed

"Understood," she replied closing the channel, "I can stay here and look after this Sir -Not keep you from the ret of your day,"

(reply Alistair)

(USS Exeter – Deck 8- CTO office- CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok- 0908)

=^=Hammerfield to security, medical – we have a suspicious item in one of the replicators in the Nine and Dine. We could do with someone down here to investigate and take some forensic samples=^=

Ravok slapped his commbadge almost as if waiting for a call

" This is Lieutenant Ravok. I am sending someone to your location now."

(reply hammerfield.)

" Thank you Ensign. Ravok out " He took a deep breath and slapped his commbadge again.

" Ravok to Ensign T'Kel "

=^= Yes sir.=^=

" Head to the Nine and Dine and locate Ensign Hammerfield , she found a suspicious item. Bring a containment case with you and detail the scene with that vulcan intellect of yours."

=^= Understood Sir. =^=

Ravok cut the communication and resumed his investigation

(reply Hammerfield if you want.)

(USS Exeter – Deck 9- Nine and Dine- NPC Sec. Officer Ensign T'kel- 0911)

Ensign T'kel came into the Nine and Dine with clear purpose. In his hand was blue containment case, used for transport of evidence. On his hip was his phaser.

He walked over to Ensign Hammerfield. He remembered her from when she checked in her rifle

" Ensign Hammerfield" T'kel said as he walked behind the counter and opened the case. " I have been sent here to collect your findings "

(reply Hammerfield)

" You can place it in this container, I won't soil it with my biological imprint. " He said as he slid the container towards her.

(reply Hammerfield)

(reply Hammerfield)

(USS Exeter - Deck 8 - Aft lounge - Ensign Rylee Page - 09:11)

Rylee walked into the lounge, biting her lip. This was a conversation that she was not looking forward to having but knew that it had to happen.

She had grown close, very close to Zot. So now it became a matter of procedure. Having tracked down Ensign Sleeford, she stood for a moment a little way off from him and sighed.

~this could go one way or the other~ she thought to herself. She had heard the rumours and knew that he had been talked to by security due to the death of some Starfleet intelligence man. But all that was not bothering her as she walked to him,

"Sir?"

(Reply Sleeford)

"May I sit? I have something I need to talk to you about?"

(Reply Sleeford)

(USS Exeter - Deck 8 - Aft lounge - COO Ensign (sg) Paul Sleeford - 09:12)

Sleeford sat at the window the mug of coffee stone cold, his third since leaving security, the two engineering officers had gone elsewhere to eat, not trusting that Sleeford wouldn't slit their throats while eating. Something was eating at him, as a former security officer, something was hammering on his skull for attention, but he couldn't grasp it, something that didn't make sense to him.

"Sir?"

The announcement of someone trying to gain his attention brought Sleeford back to the present. Looking up he saw Page standing there looking like she'd just been given the command of the ship.

"Ensign Page?"

"May I sit? I have something I need to talk to you about?"

Raising his eyebrows slightly, Sleeford pointed to the seats opposite.

"What can I do for you?"

(Reply Page)

Sleeford sat and listened as Page spoke, smiling slightly as she explained about herself and Zot. Allowing her to finish Sleeford looked across the table.

"I'll be honest, when you sat, I did wonder what you wanted. I have two questions, firstly, do you think it will affect your duties? Secondly, do you think it will cause any dramas. as you know ZOT if the assistant COO, will that cause you both problems?"

(Reply Page)

"Then I see no problem with your relationship, if however at anytime you feel there's a problem or a conflict of interest, I trust you'll inform me. "

(Reply Page)

Nodding Sleeford smiled, "In that case I wish you both well. "

(Reply Page)

(USS Exeter – Nine and Dine- Ensign Janice Hammerfield - 0913)

" Ensign Hammerfield" T'kel said as he walked behind the counter and opened the case. " I have been sent here to collect your findings "

"T'Kel – good to see you again," she motioned him over to one of the replicators, "Hopefully this is nothing but we found this in the back of the replicator – seems a bit odd."

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Janice looked at him and raised her brow a bit, "Hold on we just found this less than ten minutes ago – we need to holo image the area first. Get this units forensics in first. Its ok we been careful not to touch anything in there once we found it." She looked about as people started to come in and motioned to them to move over to the other side of the room away from the area.

"I contacted medical to come down two to give it a quick scan. Lt Brightwood and I are in agreement that this would have to be put in rather hap hazard to cause the damage in there. Who knows what other evidence could be in there. Assuming that someone just didn't toss it in there." She paused for a moment and noticed her arms folded up against her. Immediately she dropped them back down – it was difficult still not think like she was part of security, "Look - I'm not wanting to step on toes. On any other normal day sure but today isn't normal - we cant just pluck it out."

(reply T'Kel, any)

(USS Exeter – Deck 9- Nine and Dine- NPC Sec. Officer Ensign T'kel- 0915)

"I contacted medical to come down two to give it a quick scan. Lt Brightwood and I are in agreement that this would have to be put in rather hap hazard to cause the damage in there. Who knows what other evidence could be in there. Assuming that someone just didn't toss it in there." She paused .

"Look - I'm not wanting to step on toes. On any other normal day sure but today isn't normal - we cant just pluck it out." She said.

T'kel raised his eyebrow and without breaking eye contact with her ,pulled a small triangular shaped device from his pocket and held it towards the replicator. The device emitted an orange glow for an instant and casted a blue screen on the access panel of the replicator's isolinear containment unit.

On the blue screen green fingerprints showed up. The device flashed green 3 times. Capturing the images.
" There you go Ensign. Now the fingerprints have been documented."

(reply Hammerfield.)

T'kel looked at the patrons who he could tell were trying to figure out what was going on, he turned and addressed them.

" I suggest getting your morning consumables from another place on the ship. We need this area closed until further notice."

He said as he stood there with his arms folded behind his back and watched as people made their way out of the door.

Once the people had left he turned back to her . " I believe the correct phrase is ..the floor is yours , Ensign. "

(reply hammerfield)

(USS Exeter – Main Science Lab - CSO Office - CSO Lt Jg Erin Cortez - 0918)

Sitting at her desk, Erin leant her head in her hands. Everything that had happened over the last few hours was beginning to hit her. After leaving the interview, she had spent the next couple of hours just wandering the deck of the ship. Not knowing where to really go or what to do.

The knowledge that Nix was dead had come as a huge shock to her and the memories of their time together were beginning to flood her mind. As she closed her eyes, she began to remember.

The walk to the turbolift and how they had nearly gotten caught embracing in the turbolift by some younger crew. The walk from the turbolift to her quarters, the feel of the scruff of his chin still on her neck and then, the moment the doors had closed and they had been alone.

What had followed was something that she would always remember. A night where nothing was out of the question and a night that had made her understand what he had said to her earlier in that evening. That she was worthy of intimacy and physical comfort.

Sighing, Erin rubbed her eyes and looked at the PADD in front of her. Something that Ravok had said to her had stuck with her. "Because of that night, i am either a suspect or a target." she remarked to no-one.

~What happened to him wasn't fair. Sure he could be an ass but, somewhere deep down, he was a decent guy. Now, we'll never know. Whoever did this.. ~ she took a deep breath and pulled the console nearest to her towards her.

Knowing that she couldn't get involved in the investigation at that moment, that she couldn't help to find the person or persons responsible was hurting because she wanted to help, to get justice for Nix. A thought entered her mind, something that had been circling around in her brain since speaking to Ravok.

~I can't help. They know now what transpired between Nix and I. Everyone knew. Even Jimmy had heard. Ailynn must be involved in the investigation. Anything i say to anyone will be put under a microscope so i can't talk to her, for her own sake. I can't put her in the position of having to repeat something i say to her in confidence.

I can't talk to Ravok either. He's leading the investigation. There's no-one really that i can talk to but that is for me to worry about. Right now, i am staying here. Staying put and locking

myself down. At least if i am here, i can still help somehow. I am grateful that i insisted on a couch in here so at least i can sleep.~

Pressing a few buttons on the console, Erin locked her office. ~ No-one can enter now without my permission~.

After a moment, she knew now that she was here for the long haul. This way, she would get eliminated quickly, either by the investigation or whoever had committed the act, they would know where she was. Replicating a cup of coffee, she sat down on her couch and sighed.

(Reply No-one)

(USS Exeter – Main Engineering – CEO Office – 2O/CEO – Lt. Cmdr. Keira Merek – 0932)

Keira walked over to the replicator in her office. After being at it for several hours, she needed some kind of caffeine to get the motor going, so to speak. After being introduced to pumpkin-spice lattes by one Captain Williams before he attained that rank, back on Mars, and finding out that there were more flavored coffee beverages in the replicator library she found herself reaching for them more often than not. Before she ordered she asked herself one question. ~Am I addicted?~

“One peppermint mocha latte, double sweetener.” She ordered. In the brief time the beverage took to materialize in the replicator slot, she muttered something to herself. “Damn you, Trip.”

She brought the brushed metal travel mug up to her nose and inhaled the aroma. The pleasant cool of the peppermint got her thinking. She back tracked though what she had done to make sure she didn’t miss anything. She took a thorough scan of the scene Tiko’s quarters, everything a hand tricorder could do. She sent all the biological findings to Medical referencing the case. She checked and reviewed for transporter signals, there were none. The lock wasn’t tampered

with that she could tell. Mechanically it was untouched. She checked the entry and exit logs, which were deleted, not gone, just empty of useful data. The file was still there, the information it contained was replaced with scrambled, random unformatted numbers. So either the killer did it to hide their activities or Tiko himself did it to hide his activities. He was an intelligence operative and as such he may want to hide his contacts so as not to reveal them. She took a sip of her sweet, minty-mocha solution.

~Wait. The file size is unchanged. Just parts replaced with gibberish.~

It had been a while since she had done this crunchy of a bit of programming. She brought up the source code for her copy of the file. Each entry or exit logged into the system, who entered and who left. Using her own entrance and exit as an example the characters in the alpha numeric were odd, for each entry. Once the person exited and entered, the whole section was even numbered again. She took another sip of her caffeinated beverage.

She looked at the characters in the scrambled section. Odd number. Getting a total count of the characters, there was enough bulk data to have two people enter and leave and have one person either, enter by the door and leave by another means or enter by another means and leave by the door. As it was more advantageous to be seen leaving but not entering than be seen entering but not leaving Keira believed it was more likely the killer entered by some unknown means and then exited by the front door. With the missing timestamps (not missing, scrambled) the next registered person to enter was the person who discovered the body. The one just previous to the scrambled portion was Tiko himself entering his room, never to leave again upright.

She took another sip of her beverage and began working into the late morning.

(Reply none)

(USS Exeter - Deck 8- CTO's office- CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok-0947)

Ravok had taken the time to check in on his daughter. The Nanny hologram in his quarters had confirmed that Rayna had already woken up and ate , brushed her teeth and is currently playing with her toys.

A much needed touch of joy that he needed in his day. An oddly placed potential weapon was brought to security for examination a short while ago. The item was hidden in a replicator isolinear chip panel. From the Nine and Dine.

Ravok also had taken the time to review some of Nix's logs. It felt it was Ironic that he was now getting to know the man more in death than he ever did in life.

The commander had spoken to Ravok on a few occasions, mostly in passing. Nix never made an attempt to get under his skin, but on one occasion in the turbolift Nix did ask how much Ravok had known about his uncle Tyren Shara. Truth be told Ravok only knew as much as anyone else. His father had barely spoken of him and Ravok didn't care to know much. Tyren Shara was an agent of the Tal Shiar. That was more than he cared to know. So Ravok's response to Nix was " Not too much, but more than I care to know."

Nix changed the subject quickly to talk about interesting holodeck programs on Deck 9.

Ravok leaned back in his chair " Computer play the next long entry "

The computer chirped as the log began to play.

=^=Personal Log of Lt. Commander Tyko Nix, Stardate: 2445.09.16 Supplemental.

Just got back from the Nine and Dine. Nice establishment. Not sure about the manager. She has a shady past, though as a civilian I don't have access to it. Whatever it is. Not that I really care. But I found her quite combative. A bartender should know the pulse of the crew. But she seems to be more fixated on the beauty that is the Ships First Officer. I don't really blame her, I mean Ailynn Bracken, Meow. But Ms. Caity DuBois did get rather defensive when I called out her obsession with the First Officer as a reason she didn't know the crew as well as she claimed she did. Might have struck a nerve there. Should avoid her for the rest of my time here. Something just seems off about that one.=^=

The log ended and Ravok pondered what he had just heard for a moment.

" Computer Next log"

Again the computer chirped as the next log played.

=^= Personal Log of Lt. Commander Tyko Nix. Stardate: 2445.12.01 Supplemental

"Ran into Erin today, she has a boyfriend now. Bugger. I was hoping for a round two. Though my fear is that she's using this new relationship once again, as a way to not have to deal with the bigger issues she face, a coping mechanism if you will. Oh I feel so much better. Yay. Boyfriend. Oh bugger but now this negative thing happened. Oh boyfriend save me. Maybe I'm just jealous. Though she didn't appreciate it when I implied that. I don't think she'll ever know how special I find her. On the other hand, I think Ms. DuBois still has a bee in her bonnet about my implying her obsession with the FO was detrimental to her role as bartender. Rumor has it they're a thing now. But even though I apologized to Ms. DuBois, and I thought we left things in a good place the last time we met. Apparently she still is either uber defensive about her relationship with Commander Bracken or she hates me. To the point she came close to openly threatening me. Might need to have a word with her boss about that one.=^=

Ravok stood up and paced around his office. So far he had listened to a total of 11 logs from Nix , several stuck out like sore thumbs. Several gave a pure insight into Nix's mentality.

~ Erin and Ailynn are friends. Erin told Ailynn about her and Nix. What if Ailynn told Caity?...What if Caity wanted to seek the approval of Ailynn in some sick and twisted way thought...~ Ravok shook his head " Damn it Nix , why did you have to be so distant from people." Ravok said out loud to himself. As an intelligence officer had purposely distanced himself from forming meaningful relationships , yet according to most of his logs he often made reference to wanting or wishing for things to be different.

Ravok walked to his desk and tapped on the next file.

=^= Personal Log of Lt. Commander Tyko Nix. Stardate: 2445.12.01

"Well I'm back on the Exeter again, for a brief bit. They're my ride, officially, but the real reason, well I'm not dumb enough to share that in a log that can be accessed by anyone. I ran into Lt. Ire

Williams and Ensign More and Sleeford this morning, as well as Dr. Vesper. Dr. Vesper seems to have mellowed. Good for him. Ire, I tried to see if I could get that spark back in Ire's eye. Nothing. Dude might just be too good natured. Not even a twinge of Jealousy when I mentioned how Lt. Ravok was being Favored. Unless Ire is good at hiding that rage, I think I officially am no longer considering him as a future agent. He truly may be the best of us. Sleeford seems more settled, but I could tell he is still irritated by my presence. More on the other hand. I think he has mellowed some, but he is still too easily frazzled. Then again, it's really hard to look a man in the eyes if you've threatened to kill him already. I think More is still haunted by our first encounter."

=^=

Ravok stopped in his tracks near the beginning of the log. ~ The real reason? Does Trip know?~

=^= Biology Lab to Security.=^= A voice said coming across the comm. Ravok went to answer it and it was answered by Ensign More.

Ravok listened to the exchange.

=^=Ensign More To Lieutenant Ravok come in please=^=

" Yes Ensign "

=^=Sorry to burden you sir but we have another problem." Stan went on to explain his recent conversation with Ensign West.=^=

" I heard the comm channel." Ravok said back to him.

=^= I told him not to move anything unless he had to. Until our forensic team had a look see. Is there anything else we should do?=^=

" Meet me there immediately, do not enter until I arrive. It's absolutely imperative that you remain outside. Ravok out"

Ravok locked down his terminal and walked out of his office and headed for the biology lab.

(reply none needed.)

(USS Exeter - Security Office - Tac/Sec Ens. Stan More -10:17)

Stan swore under his breath. As he found another dog hair on his uniform. He had nearly been late for his shift this morning. Making sure there were no dog hairs on him. It was not Lillian's fault her canine body was changing from puppy to adult. It was just annoying. To find hairs after brushing down his uniform. Taking them off he found a bin and threw them inside it.

(USS Exeter - Biology lab- CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok-1022)

Ravok arrived with 2 additional security team members and nodded his head to Ensign More who was patiently waiting outside the lab. " Ensign." Ravok said as he gestured for Stan to follow them inside the lab.

(reply More)

When they entered Ravok looked at Ensign West. " Sorry about the delay Ensign, where is the case ?"

(reply west)

Ravok stepped over to where the case was located and took out his tricorder to scan the area. " Interesting ". He said as he moved the tricorder around the area.

(reply any in the lab)

" Whoever accessed it didn't want to be discovered. This area was previously flooded with radiated ionic particles. Not harmful to us now , but definitely corrupted any residual molecular material that would have been left behind by the culprit. " He said as he slammed his tricorder closed.

(reply Any in lab.)

" Ensign West do you have a list of everything that is normally stored in this case ? " Ravok asked.

(reply west)

Ravok took the PADD from Ensign West and showed it to Ensign More.

" Correct me if I'm wrong but all of these chemicals are lethal if mixed tiger in the right combination. " he said to More.

(reply More)

(reply More , west)

(USS Exeter - Biology lab- Tac/Sec Ens. Stan More -10:23)

Ravok sounded different to Stan. Did it mean he no longer trusted the young Scot? Was that why he had been asked to wait outside? Stan could not even help in the murder investigation. As he was a suspect and the rules forbade him. He could do it privately?But that could have Implications that More, could only dream of in his nightmares. So best to keep out. If his late Grandfather the legendary Butch McTaggard was watching over him. He would be found innocent of Nix's murder.

Stan stood and waited for Ravok to arrive.

He arrived with 2 additional security team members and nodded his head toward More. The two others barely even looked at Stan. He knew them though and was glad they were not on team one. Stan knew they had a problem with the term not guilty until proven innocent. Plus it was rumoured that one of them only graduated Starfleet academy down to a relative being an Ambassadors aide.

" Ensign." Ravok said as he gestured for Stan to follow them inside the lab.

" Lieutenant Ravok." Stan looked his escort in the eye as they passed him. Why were they sneering at him?

When they entered Ravok looked at Ensign West. " Sorry about the delay Ensign, where is the case ?"

(reply west)

West pointed and they stepped over to where the case was located. The Lieutenant took out his tricorder to scan the area. " Interesting ". He said as he moved the tricorder around the area.

Stan could feel eyes peering at him. But looking away quickly when they thought , he was looking at them.

~ Take a deep breath Stan. Ravok is a fare man. Even if he has concerns about me. He will be fair. ~ Stan thought

(reply any in the lab)

" Whoever accessed it didn't want to be discovered. This area was previously flooded with radiated ionic particles. Not harmful to us now , but definitely corrupted any residual molecular material that would have been left behind by the culprit. " He said as he slammed his tricorder closed.

“ So who ever did this had scientific knowledge....” Stan said out loud. Did someone just say something under their breath? More held his composure. But he knew it was one of the two. Who had arrived with the Lieutenant. He did not like the way they were looking at him.

(reply Any in lab.)

" Ensign West do you have a list of everything that is normally stored in this case ? " Ravok asked.

(reply west)

Ravok took the PADD from Ensign West and showed it to Ensign More.

" Correct me if I'm wrong but all of these chemicals are lethal if mixed tiger in the right combination. " he said to More.

Why was he asking Stan? Did he suspect him? Was that why he had brought the micro brain twins? Out of all his fellow security officers. These two were more then capable of stunning him. Then happily dragging his drooling body to the brig.

Stan looked over the padd. He gave Ravok a nod.

" Aye sir. I am afraid they are indeed." This time one of the two definitely said a remark. That people on the Bridge could hear. But More withheld the inner urge to ask the person. To say it louder because someone in the Delta quadrant did not hear.

(Reply , Ravok , West)

(USS Exeter - Biology lab- CTO/3O Lieutenant Ravok-1025)

" Aye sir. I am afraid they are indeed." Stan said

" Of course he would know." one of the security officers said .Ravok felt the remark was unprofessional and uncalled for. He turned to the Ensign who said it.

" ENSIGN HYRU!" Ravok yelled loudly.

The Ensign snapped to attention.

" Sir I didn't...." Hyru mumbled

" You didn't what ? Remember your an officer of Starfleet and expected to act with a certain standard?" Ravok said angrily as he got in the Ensigns face.

" Got anything else you want to say ?" He asked the Ensign who just insulted More.

" No Sir." The answer replied.

Ravok leaned in his face flushed green with anger. " Get the hell out of here, you are off duty and confined to quarters until you can learn some damn respect for that uniform. " Ravok ordered with fury as he pointed towards the door.

Ensign Hyru left immediately.

Ravok turned to the other Ensign and glared at him, daring him to make a remark. Ravok then turned his gaze to Ensign West.

" Sorry Ensign, apparently there are some people who have no respect nor honor."

(reply west iyw)

He looked Ensign More. " This case contains dangerous substances and can only be opened with Beta 2 clearance and an alpha 1 authorization on top of that. The only people on this ship with alpha 1 privileges are Commander's Bracken and Merek and Doctor Vespers. Beta 2 privileges are held by all department heads. " Ravok said with frustration in his voice.

(reply More)

" This entire day keeps get weirder and weirder. " Ravok said as he looked around the biology lab.

Suddenly his commbadge buzzed.

=^=Blackwell to Lieutenant Ravok.=^=

Ravok looked at More and West.

" Excuse me" He said as he stepped off to the side.

He tapped his commbadge.

" Go ahead Lieutenant ." Ravok said cupping his hand over his commbadge to keep the communication private and out of the earshot of Ensign's More and West.

=^=Sir we identified the clump of hair we found outside the commanders door, it's dog fur sir.=^=

" Dog Fur? What breed Lieutenant?" Ravok asked worried about the response.

=^=German Shepherd sir.=^=

Ravok hung his head. Knowing right and well this wasn't good.

" Good work Lieutenant, I will see you soon. Ravok out." He said ending the call.

Ravok walked back around the corner and over to Ensign More.

" That was Lieutenant Blackwell. They just ran an analysis in the lab." Ravok said as his eyes scanned More's uniform. If his dig was anything like Venus there would no doubt be hair on Stans uniform. A sample that would be easily obtained. His eyes landed on the prize.

" You have some fur on your uniform Ensign. " Ravok said as he grabbed the single strand from his uniform.

" German shepherds shed a lot this time of year" Ravok remarked.

(reply More)

" Let's finish up here. I have to head back to Security soon." He said.

=/= Ensign T'kel to Lieutenant Ravok=/=

Ravok sighed and tapped his commbadge.

" Go ahead Ensign" Ravok acknowledged.

=/= Sir DNA analysis is complete and confirmed on the collected samples from the Nine and Dine. It's a match for Commander Tyko Nix Sir.. =/= T'kel said.

" Thank you Ensign, Ravok out." Ravok tapped his commbadge, ending the communication. He looked again at More. " Did I mention this day is getting weirder and weirder?" Ravok asked rhetorically.

(reply west iyw, reply More)

(USS Exeter - Biology lab - Tac/Sec Ens.(Sg) Stan More - 1026)

Stan's respect for Ravok increased by 100% as the mouthy guard left.

He looked Ensign More. " This case contains dangerous substances and can only be opened with Beta 2 clearance and an alpha 1 authorization on top of that. The only people on this ship with alpha 1 privileges are Commander's Bracken and Merek and Doctor Vespers. Beta 2 privileges are held by all department heads. " Ravok said with frustration in his voice.

" I see " Stan said.

" This entire day keeps getting weirder and weirder. " Ravok said as he looked around the biology lab.

Ravok's comm. badge chirped and he went to a quiet corner, to answer it. Even though you needed all the authorisation. From senior staff before opening the cabinet. It still could be falsified. Stan was not off the suspect list yet.

Ravok walked back from around the corner. He did not look happy as he neared Stan

" That was Lieutenant Blackwell. They just ran an analysis in the lab." Ravok said

Stan did not like the sound of this. Why was Ravok looking at his uniform like that?

" You have some fur on your uniform Ensign. " Ravok said as he grabbed the single strand from his uniform. " German shepherds shed a lot this time of year" Ravok remarked.

" Unfortunately for Lillian double. She is losing her puppy coat. Her adult one is coming through. It will be a lot darker than her puppy one is now." He said

" Let's finish up here. I have to head back to Security soon." He said.

Stan put two and two together in his head.

~ The Lieutenant just took those strands off my uniform. But I did not see him throw them in the bin. So he is keeping them. Why? Why? Blackwell was analysing something in the lab. Dog hair.

They must of found dog hair. He mentioned German Shepherds.....Oh my.....I may as well surrender my Phaser now. ~ Stan thought.

Stan waited until Ravok was finished with his second call. Then he walked up to Ravok. Standing before him Stan gave him his Phaser.

“ Sir. I formal surrender myself to you.” He said sadly

(Reply , Ravok)

“ Your comment about German Shepard’s after Blackwell spoke to you. I deduced that a German Shepard dog hair was found. As I am the only person on board the Exeter with that breed of dog. That makes me your chief suspect. It’s alright sir I understand fully.” Stan said.

(Reply , Ravok)