90 Degrees South

SEASON FOUR

EPISODE ONE: ALL ALONE IN THE NIGHT

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by

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ACT I

Fade in

We’re inside of Bass’ office. The standard sound of the heater in the background is audible, as is the sound of mopping from the hallway. As is the single click clack of one finger typing.  Quick sip of coffee and the approaching sound of footsteps moving with purpose.

A DOOR FLIES OPEN

ZEKE

[FRUSTRATED, INTENSE]

You knew about this lawman, didn’t you!

TYPING STOPS

BASS

Hey buddy.  I had an idea, yeah.

ZEKE

And you didn’t do nothing to stop it?

BASS

Stop it? I was one of the people on station who recommended it! So, with that said; let me be the first to congratulate the new official Amundsen Scott Station Manager!

ZEKE

[HESITANT]

Man, I only agreed to do it for 30-days while the NSF selected the fulltime replacement.  I didn’t know that part time was gonna be the start of a full-time gig!

BASS

Zeke, I can’t think of anybody else around here who loves and will care for this station more than you!

ZEKE

Man! Do you know how much paperwork this job includes?

BASS  
Better you than me!

ZEKE

If’n they think I’m leaving the VMF to Keenan they can slurp my big fat ass!   Pardon my language lord. Humility and whatnot!

BASS

Zeke, you’re going to have a lot on your plate now.  Kennan has got this.  Look. . . .I was talking to him last week at breakfast.  Hard to get a word in edgewise with the kid. . .but you’ve trained him well!  He’s gonna be a good replacement.

ZEKE

I’m still thinking it over.  Waynewright managed to run this station and do his day gig science-ing, Ain’t nothing says I can do the same with Engineering-ing

BASS

Zeke!

ZEKE

Lawman!  Youngblood is good. He’s a solid choice but being given something and earning it are two very different things.  I don’t want somebody running my VMF. . .hell my station that reeks of ganja and cheap ass Walgreen’s cologne!

BASS

Well, you’d know better than me whose best to take over from you. Only bit of advice I’ll offer up is to make sure Lucille is on board when you do decide!

ZEKE

That goes without saying.  [GLANCES AROUND] Speaking of paperwork, the hell you working on that has your desk so messy? That ain’t like you!

BASS

(Sigh) Between all the usual forms I have to fill out on daily activity at the three stations: I’m also filling out and completing a massive amount of questionnaires from the FBI on my background and history as part of the Presidential nomination.

ZEKE

[CONFUSED]

Um, don’t they do all that before you get to wear your badge? Why they go all through that again?

BASS

We get backgrounds run when we first sign up, yes; But keep in mind for me that was half-a lifetime ago.  This one now will cover everything of importance from then to today. Most of it is in my O.P.F. DASH 66 but they always want to dig deeper.

TWO BEAT

ZEKE

The hell is a O.P.F.?

MIKHAIL

[FROM HALLWAY OUTSIDE]

*Yeah you know*. . . .sorry, Mikhail. . .did not hears right.

DOOR CLOSES

BASS

Oh, sorry! Official personnel folder. O.P.F. It’s basically your work history, performance reports, any write ups or disciplinary actions. Also, anytime there is an incident review and the outcome.

ZEKE

You mean like that cat from the government that came out to talk to us after you shot Wilford?

BASS

Exactly.

ZEKE

How many of thems is in your O.P. . whatever?

MIKHAL

[THROUGH CLOSED DOOR]

*Now you’re just being means you two!*

BASS

More than I’d like.  Each one will be picked through, re-investigated and double checked. Fionna told me the Honolulu FBI office is swarming with fact-checkers going through my files.

ZEKE

But. . .not like they gonna find nothing; right?

BASS  
No. All my shoots were good and cleared by the US attorney general’s office. (Pause) eventually. Apparently, It’s all part of what the Senate Judiciary Committee reviews before the confirmation hearing. They ask for whatever clarification they need in that meeting.

ZEKE

Yeah, how’s that going work since you stuck down here on the Ice for seven more months?

BASS

They’re arranging it so I can teleconference from here to attend the hearings.  With the additional lifeline data Satellites from Beau-Low launched a few months back, we’ll have constant signal. 8AM start time in Washington DC is 2AM here, so there won’t be much competition for bandwidth in the middle of our night.

ZEKE

I’ll make sure priority is given to you for satellite time; have the ARO weather team and Ice-cube hold off on transmitting anything from 2 till 7AM. [DISTRACTED, TALKING ON AUTOPILOT] Seems that’s something new I’m able to do now [SNAP BACK]is that a suit over the back of that chair?

BASS

[EMBARRASSED]

Dude. . .don’t make this a big deal!

ZEKE

How’d you get. . .why’d you get a suit? You hate suits!

BASS

It’s a gift from Reno. He was able to get my measurements. . .how I can only suspect and had a Henry Poole suit tailored and sent down, so I’d have something official to wear during the hearing.

ZEKE

That a fancy suit company or the name of the dude what made the suit?

BASS

Company. Out of London. It’s not cheap, which just makes me feel guilty since you can’t exactly return tailored suits for a refund.  I tried to give him the money, but the old man is being stubborn.

ZEKE

So, you gonna model it for us?

BASS

[STERN]

No.

ZEKE

[TEASING]

Aw! Come on now Lawman. You know what I mean! Do your little turn up on the catwalk!

BASS

[STERN]

No.

ZEKE

[TEASING, SINGING LYCRIS]

Yeah, on the catwalk! On the catwalk, yeah!  
Do your little turn on the catwalk!

THREE BEAT

BASS

[SERIOUS]

. . .You done?

THREE BEAT

THOMAS

WOW, nice Suit Deputy!

BOTH GUYS JUMP AT THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE

ZEKE

OH SWEET CAROLINE!

THOMAS

Sorry! Sorry guys.

BASS

Mister Kelley? How did you get in here?

THOMAS

Through . . .the door.  Like always.

BASS

I didn’t even. . . [RESIGNED SIGH]. . .never mind. Everything alright?

THOMAS

Well; Gosh no Deputy!  It’s almost 10AM and I need Zeke to sign off on formal winter season inventories, to review the staff meeting agenda for next week. We need to update N.S.F. operations on research schedules for the next 30 days, duty rotations have to be finalized, reservations for the large and small conference room need approval and the music rotation in the galley needs to be selected.

BASS

Sounds like you have quite the morning ahead of you, buddy!  Heaven forbid we don’t get classical music during lunch.

ZEKE

On those days are done! Tradition says the station manager picks the galley music. Waynewright may have liked that high-brow classy music; but for me it's gonna be jazz or R&B!

THOMAS

Well. . .ARE you gonna BE coming with me so we can get all that knocked out in time?  We really should have ironed all this out yesterday.

ZEKE

Gotta run Lawman. Training for the new job never stops!

DOOR OPENS

THOMAS

We’ll get you there Zeke. Just like training a new puppy. Just takes time and patience!

BOYS WALK OFF

ZEKE

Yeah, let’s find another analogy Tommy. After hearing about Fred and Doc Timms pet names. . .that’s just icky!

DOOR CLOSES AND WE FADE OUT WITH ONE FINGER KEYBOARD TYPING.

ACT II

JOYCLYN’S RECORDER: RECORDING HAS COMMENCED

WE HEAR THE BACKGROUND SOUNDS OF THE ATLAS MEETING ROOM. GRUMBLES AND FINGERS TAPPING ON A DESK.

JOVAC

Fifteen minutes. . .Fifteen minutes late!  Lawrence has never been one for being tardy! Especially when it’s a meeting he called. Galley better not run out of frosted flakes; I don’t do fruit loops on Tuesday. . .this isn’t  Mardi Gras after all.

SHEPARD

The man gets fired from the NSF; then hired as Director of R&D Defense & Military applications by Beauregard Lowing thirty seconds later and suddenly he’s not just a tyrant any longer, he’s a dictator with no regard to the schedule of others!

JEMMA

I’m still not clear on that. Did Madeleine Dantes leave Beau-Low?

JOYCLYN

After what’s-his-face—Senior VP lad who got nicked by the Feds for sellin’ secrets to China; well, that’s when they handed her the job. Dantes is now number two in the whole bloody firm.

JOVAC

[SNICKER] You said number two!

JOYCLYN

The suits didn’t fancy losin’ Waynewright’s brain on the project, so they lobbed him in Dantes’ old chair. Looks like Grandad’s still seen as ‘value added,’ eh?

JEMMA

So. . .then; as an employee of Beauregard-Lowing Defense Contractors; isn’t he contracted to the NSF? To us? Aren’t \*we\* the clients?

JOYCLYN

The DoD’s got you lot and Beau-Low on strings under one big posh R&D deal. NSF runs gear, Beau-Low builds it. That’s the set-up.

.  The NSF is an independent agency as opposed to say the Department of Justice, or Defense, or Foreign Affairs. Here, Beauregard lowing is providing the funding and technology. NSF the labor to work that equipment.

JOVAC

Number two is a scatological reference, you see. Poop is funny.

TWO BEAT AND FINGERTIPS TAPPING ON THE DESK

JOYCLYN

Right! I’m givin’ this muppet sixty more seconds, then I’m off. Got better things to be doin’.

SHEPARD

I’ve been meaning to ask you. Your accent is. . .off for a Brittan! Not Cockney, Brummie or West country. Definitely not R.P.

JEMMA

[IN BREATH OF AIR] Oooooooh she’s not fond of that question!

JOYCLYN

[FAUX POLITENESS]

Nah nah, love; it’s alright. You’re right, Doc, me accent’s not your usual Brit job, cos I’m not really ‘British,’ am I? Born in Sale, yeah, but I did my growin’ up all over: Jo’burg, Athens, Falklands, Canberra, Belmopan, you name it.

Military fam. We got dragged all over. So, when someone pipes up about me accent, what *I* hear is: “You sound weird, can I laugh at ya?” That what you’re doin’, Doctor Delham? Havin’ a chuckle?

JOVAC

I think I just number two’d myself a little!

DOOR SLIDES OPEN

LARRY

[DISTRACTED, HALF PAYING ATTENTION]

Very good, very good people. Let’s get this meeting underway shall we?

SHUFFLING IN SEATS

SHEPARD

We were ready to get underway 15 minutes ago; you know when the meeting was scheduled to start!

LARRY

Was. . . I. . .present in the room fifteen ago Doctor Delham?

SHEPARD

No! That’s the whole point!

LARRY

No, Doctor Delham. The point is the meeting starts when I arrive, not when it’s scheduled to start.

JOYCLYN

Want me to go get another chair, Director Waynewright?  One so both you AND your ego can be comfortable.

JEMMA SNICKERS

LARRY

How droll agent.  Once more I’ve had my standard of expectations LOWERED for the repartee I can expect from the US Government. Now, what is the latest with preparations for event four?

JEMMA

We’re approximately 30-days away from the projected reappearance. With the Laser Interferometer Doctor Waynewright…you procured, we’ve mapped out the optimal point to rally and wait for the station to appear. We have it down to ½ square miles, or 320 acres of ice.

SHEPARD

Once the station returns. . .which we estimate to be at 6:30PM April 14th. . That’s station time of course. . .we'll be at the front gate within 30-45 minutes. Leaving more than enough time to scout the station and begin planning for event five and extraction.

JOVAC

Well. . . .what about Emery?

LARRY

Mister Waters? What about him?

JOVAC

What if he’s still alive? What if he was able to find enough food sources to sustain him? Null. . .food bars or Funyuns or something?

LARRY

We have nothing to suggest that the human body would be able to survive passage into and out of the anomaly. None of us saw any signs of bodies or people.

JEMMA

But there were the Spiders!  They obviously were able to cross into and out of the event horizon.

LARRY

I don’t have any interest in contemplation of arachnid physiology nor survival estimates. If Mister Waters is in fact still alive upon our arrival, we’ll deal with it then and there. Our first and foremost priority is to put the [REDACTED LONG TIME] in place and ensure monitoring.

SHEPARD

The beacons are being finalized. We’ll have two dozen to spread around the complex and each has a power cell that will last over a year: well into event five taking place. Other than the time we’ll have to wait . . .the only point of concern thus far. . .

JEMMA

Is Kylie.

JOVAC

MINOGUE??

JEMMA

What?  No. Emery’s future artificial intelligence that runs the station. We’re worried she’ll figure out what we’re doing and the purpose of the beacons.  Stop them or interfere in some way.

JOYCLYN

Already sorted, that. On me last run—after dumpin’ that DARPA knob head who took a shot at Marshmellow—I had some of me DIA lads pull summat special together.

TWO BEAT

LARRY

Do you intend to finish that thought anytime this month, Agent Fowler?

JOYCLYN

Can’t say much just yet, need-to-know and all that. But let’s just say: the little geek’s computer girlfriend won’t be a problem.

JOVAC

[LOW VOICE]

Wanted it to be Kylie Minogue! Love that Aussie songstress.

SHEPARD

That’s rather cryptic Agent Fowler.

JOYCLYN

Right—so what I’m hearin’ is I talk *and* think funny now, yeah? That the game we’re playin’?

LARRY

ENOUGH! [SIGH] Keep your little secrets if you must agent.  However, keep in mind that I am tasked with determining who will be on the expedition for Event four.  AS such if you wish to be assigned you’ll inform me of everything you intend to do BEFORE departing.  Is that clear?

JOYCLYN

I hear you [PAUSE FOR EFFECT] but let’s jog your memory: you might’ve pinched Dantes’ title, but *I* still work for Uncle Sam, not for you.

LARRY

[UNIMPRESSED]

Consider your words then before you speak them Agent.  Now, let’s move on.

BEGIN FADE OUT

The next round of monitoring is to begin tomorrow at. . . .

ACT III

FADE IN.

WE’RE INSIDE ONE OF THE LOUNGES THIS TIME. SOME GENERIC TV   SHOW DVD IS BEING LARGELY IGNORED WHILE BASS AND KENDRA CHAT. THEY HAVE THE ROOM TO THEMSELVES.

BASS

[CONFUSED]

Okay, I’m lost here.  Who is this guy?

KENDRA

Senior partner at the firm. He’s a huge sleaze-ball but is one of the best lawyers around. He has a vested interest in the murder trial taking place.

BASS

Right, right. . .okay I got it.

THREE BEAT

BASS

So, what’s the general consensus on bringing Sydney into the Barn-Crew fold?

TWO BEAT

KENDRA

Hrm?  Oh. . yes.  I think generally everybody is on board. They think it’s a good idea and he’d bring value to the table.  How much does he already know?

BASS

Only the broad strokes as far as I’m aware. He may have picked up on some of the more sensitive things from hearing me think about them, but until he formally commits, I don’t want to read him into the more. . .inflammatory aspects.

KENDRA

Security minded as ever. . .did he just say he was planning a motion to suppress?

BASS

Yeah. Something about having a foursome with the opposing counsel.

KENDRA

WHAT?

BASS

I think he was talking about golf sweetie, not sex.

KENDRA

Oh, you don’t know Chase Rockwell! He’s been around the block more than a few times!

TWO BEAT

Oh, wow I like that business suit oh her. . .but I don’t miss wearing pencil skirts!  Ew.

BASS

Is that what it’s called? A pencil skirt?  Weird name. I bet you could still pull it off!

KENDRA

Not much call for it here in Antarctica sweetie.  Plus, don’t be so quick to sing its praises until you try walking up or down stairs in one.  They’re THAT tight.

BASS

Don’t see that happening for me. . .like ever.

TWO BEAT

BASS

So, wait. . .he’s a high powered lawyer. A Senior partner. He’s a boozer, addicted to Vicodin but drives a Hyundai Sonata?

KENDRA

Yeah, his stepdaughter crashed his Jag a few episodes back after his rant on the Abyssinia crisis in 1936. He took her car in retaliation but hasn’t discovered the 10 Keys of cocaine she was smuggling in the trunk yet. It’s a side plot-point.  How’s your confirmation planning going?

BASS

I completed the third round of questionnaires the Judiciary committee requested. There’s nothing I love more than providing the same information six different times. [PAUSE] Ms. Kirkland says they’re looking for any inconsistencies in my answers to try and slip me up if they decide they need me to testify.

KENDRA

[TEASING]

Oh. . .SALLY said that?

BASS

[DEFENSIVE]

No. Miss Kirkland said that. I’d prefer to remain on a professional and formal basis.

KENDRA

[TEASING]

Obviously she doesn’t. I’ve heard her on the speaker phone with you.  [OVERLY GIRLY ACCENT IMPRESSION] *“Oh I’m sure you got this down Bass.”  “Oh, Bass you are SOOOOO committed to this.” Oh, Bass you’re gonna WOW them with that square jaw!”*  [CHUCKLE]It’s so adorable you can’t tell she’s flirting.

BASS

[DEFENSIVE]

She is not!

KENDRA

[TEASING]

Oh, she absolutely is!  She’s smitten. She’s a little smitten kitten!

FOUR BEAT

BASS

Is not.

KENDRA

Bet she has pencil skirts!

BASS

Is this pick on Bass Day or something? First Zeke and now you!   Why is that kid giving orders to the legal team. He’s like 14.

KENDRA

Jimmy Calwell. Super smart child savant who passed the Bar at 12.

BASS

This show is confusing.  He doesn’t actually try cases does he?

KENDRA

Sure does.

TWO BEAT

KENDRA

So, what is Zeke teasing you about this week?

BASS

Reno got me a suit as a nomination present.

KENDRA

[SHOCKED]

A suit?   Okay, I don’t typically pause “Verdict: Impossible!” for just any occasion, but this qualifies.

TV DIALOGUE PAUSES

BASS

[DEEP EMBARRASSED SIGH]

Reno had a suit tailored so I’d have something formal to wear for if I get called to testify before the senate committee and if I get the confirmation.

KENDRA

[HAPPY GIGGLE] Does it fit?

BASS

Yes, it fits. Still don’t know how he did it, but it’s tailored to my exact measurements.

KENDRA

[two and two put together]

So that explains that giant plastic bag you got in the mail just before Winter started? I thought it was just Marshal stuff.

BASS

It’s a suit alright.  To be honest I expected that it was you who gave Reno my measurements.

KENDRA

Nope.  Wasn’t me.  I mean other than peaking at the size tags in your clothes;  I wouldn’t know how I’d get them without you knowing.  I don’t exactly walk around with a measuring tape.

BASS

[CONTEMPLATING]

Huh.

KENDRA

Can we go to your berth so you can try it on for me?

BASS

It’s in my office, not my Berth.

KENDRA

Perfect, it’s right around the corner then!

BASS

Kendra!

KENDRA

Oh c’mon Bass. I’ve seen you in a tux. I’ve seen you in your sport coat. I’ve seen you naked; but I’ve never seen you in a suit!

BASS

Seriously?

KENDRA

Yep. Seriously.  Let’s Go!

BASS

But. . .we’re watching the show you begged me to watch with you!

KENDRA

1. It’s paused.

B. I asked you, I didn’t beg, and

C. Yes. . .seriously sweetie.

BASS

[RESIGNED SIGH] FINE!

STANDS UP FROM THE COUCH, WALK TO THE DOOR AND START WALKING DOWN THE HALL TO THE A POD BERTHS

KENDRA

“Verdict: Impossible” will be here when we get back. I’ll explain more about the Psychic Paralegal before I un-pause.

BASS

I’m only planning to wear it if I get called to testify during the nomination hearings. Not around here as daily wear.

KENDRA

Yeah yeah yeah! We’ll discuss that after I see how it looks on you.  [PAUSE] speaking of; has any date been set for the review process to be completed? When you may be called to testify?

BASS

No.  Nothing concrete yet.  I think. . .I HOPE I’m done with all paperwork and questionnaires. Ms. Kirkland and Chief of Staff Linus said it would be a month or so for the committee to review everything for all 17 proposed nominations, but they’d let me know as soon as we get any word.

WE QUICKLY LEAVE THE HUM OF THE EMPTY HALLWAYS AND ENTER THE OPS CENTER. IN THE WINTER IT'S JUST MISS JUNE AT HER DESK.

FAIRY GODMOTHER ENTER CHIMES

CHERYL-LYNN

There ain’t no way possible she’s Lady Whistledown. Gladys! you’re being about as sharp as a marble with that one. But I’ll tell you sumtin’. If anybody gonna figure that mystery out, it gonna be my sweet Eloise!  [PAUSE] Well hey ya’ll.  What you two kids up to today?

BASS

Hi Miss June. Nothing much, just need to get something. . .

KENDRA CUTS HIM OFF

KENDRA

Reno Dave got Bass a new suit and he’s gonna model it for me!

BASS

[EMBARRASSED, UNDER HIS BREATH]

Kendra. . .

CHERYL-LNNN

No, you heard right Gladys! A suit! He’s fixin’ to try it on for us just now!

BASS

Us? Wait what?

TWO BEAT AS SOMETHING IS SAID ON THE PHONE

CHERYL-LYNN

[TAKEN ABACK]

Gladys! He’s spoken for!  It ain’t like he’s strippin’ down in front of. . .

TWO BEAT AS SOMETHING IS SAID ON THE PHONE

CHERYL-LYNN

No, I ain’t got no dollar-bills! [HUFF] I’mma let you go before you sin more into my ear!

CLICK OF PHONE

CHERYL-LYNN

Okay Shug! You sashay that cute caboose into your office out yonder and change. Us ladies will hold court here and wait!

   TWO BEAT AND THEN WE HEAR BASS WALKING DOWN THE HALL

BASS

I blame you for this Kendra!

KENDRA

[RAISED VOICE BACK DOWN HALL]

I love you too sweetheart! We’ll be right here.

FAIRY GODMOTHER EXIT CHIMES

BASS’ RECORDER

RECORDING STOPPED.

ACT IV

BASS’ RECORDER  
 RECORDING STARTED

SOUND OF FABRIC BEING ADJUSTED AND THE ZIP OF TROUSERS.

BASS

[FRUSTRATED]

Can’t believe she talked me into this.

FOOTSTEPS TO THE DOOR. DOOR OPENS AND HEADING DOWN THE HALLWAY.

BASS

[FRUSTRATED]

Okay, get ALL your comments in now because. . .hey! Where’d you guys go?

CHERYL LYNN

[FROM A DISTANCE]

In here Shug!

WE HEAR BACKGROUND SOUND FROM OPERATIONS GROWING AS BASS APPROACHES. FAIRY GODMOTHER ENTER CHIMES

ZEKE

It’s not that I don’t believe you Joe, it’s just that I’m not seeing it.

RANDO

I promise you, it's there one minute for 15 seconds and then gone.  According to the logs it’s the 3rd time in two days.

THOMAS

I saw it this time too Zeke.  It was there.

KENDRA

Can somebody clue us in on what all the excitement is about?

ZEKE

Oh, sorry my bad.  Okay Doc, so [SEES BASS IN A SUIT] . . .why’s Lawman in his suit?

CHERYL-LYNN

(GASP) If I were twenty years younger, not married and you wasn’t already spoken for. . .(whew) Okay ya’ll, I’mma just gonna excuse myself and pray hard for that one.  Ain’t enough pixie dust to make them thoughts wholesome. Damn you Gladys!  Deputy, you shine up right nice.

CLACKING HEELS AND FAIR GODMOTHER CHIMES OUT.

BASS

[PUT-OUT]

(SIGH) You were saying Zeke?

ZEKE

‘bout what?. . .oh yeah yeah yeah. So, last two days there’s been reports of a radar hits about thirty miles out. Couple thousand feet up but it only stays visible for 40 seconds or so each time.

KENDRA  
Well, could it be a system glitch or technical issue?

ZEKE  
That’s my first thought too. I’m gonna get Chris and his computer guys to check the software to make sure.  I had my guys go up and check the radar hardware already and everything checked out.

    THOMAS

What about. . .(clears throat) our pals from the great white north?

RANDO

Huh?

ZEKE

Yeah um. . .hey Joe, why don’t you go get yourself some coffee. We need the room right quick.

RANDO

No problem chief.  See you guys later.  [MOCKING] Deputy G.Q.!

BASS

[POINTED]  
I know where you sleep Joe!

FOOTSTEPS OUT AND DOOR OPENS

CHERYL-LYNN

[BETWEEN DOOR OPEN AND CLOSE FROM A DISTANCE]

  …finer than a frog’s hair split four-ways Gladys!

DOOR CLOSES

THOMAS

Do you think it might be the future Canadian station? Roberta Bondar?

KENDRA

That wouldn’t make sense. Last year Doctor Waynewright said it reappeared every April. We’re still a month away.

BASS

Plus, the station was almost two hundred miles out. Assuming this isn’t a software blip, it’s too close and too soon to be the Canadian station.

THOMAS

Well then gosh…what else could it be?

ZEKE

[JOKING]

Maybe the Ice feet learned to fly.

KENDRA

You don’t think it could be like. . .

THOMAS

[INSERTS QUICKLY]

Bumbles.

KENDRA

Something military or . . .Darpa?

ZEKE

Good thought but, nah I doubt they’d be able to operate any surveillance plane that low over the ice and especially in that weather and darkness out there. I don’t think they’d even risk a drone going this low.  I dunno, something with all this ain’t right.

THOMAS

Next closest station is Troll-2.  Do you want me to contact them to see if they can cross-verify the radar hit?  If they had it too; we can rule out any type of software or hardware glitch.

ZEKE

Damn Tommy, why didn’t I think of that! Damned fine idea son.  Go ahead and get on the horn with Eislin’s people and see if they recorded anything.

THOMAS

I’ll call them up now.  [Under breath] Bumbles.

RADIO SOUNDS & THOMAS CHATTING OFF-MIC

BASS

So, if it’s not a glitch, not a malfunction.  Not the Canadian station, almost implausible to be military given the altitude and extreme winds. . .What does that leave us?

[FOUR BEAT OF SILENCE]

ZEKE

[MATTER OF FACTLY]

Aliens.

BASS

It’s not aliens, Pal.

ZEKE

Got everything else from the time-life series up in here, why not lil’ green dudes?

KENDRA

[ASSURING]

Zeke, the distances between Earth and any other star able to support life would be impossible to. . .

ZEKE

Bass and I time traveled twice last year. Through time-door and to Roberta Bondar, the Canadian station. You said that was impossible!  So, I’m putting twenty bucks on Aliens.  Lawman?

BASS

I haven’t won a bet against you in two years; but you know what buddy, not only will I take that bet that it’s not aliens; I’ll even give you three. . .no five to one odds!

ZEKE

You on!

SOUND OF HANDSHAKE

KENDRA

[TO HERSELF]

I swear it’s like working with ten year olds sometimes!

ZEKE

Hundred bucks gonna buy me a lot of Taki’s!

BASS

It’s most likely just something new we haven’t seen yet.  Something. . . .[REACHING] I don’t know. . .could be one of; Doctor Hunt’s A.R.O. weather balloons!

ZEKE

Just like they said in Roswell to cover up the. . . say it with me now. . . .A\*LEE\*INS, ain’t that right lawman?

KENDRA

[TO HERSELF]

Maybe 8-year olds now that I see more.

THOMAS

HEY GUYS!  Just spoke to the team at Troll II. They checked their archived data, and their radar picked up the same thing as ours did. Same time and same location; all three events thus far.

BASS

Well, that nails it. Not a malfunction.

ZEKE

I’ll call Chris and see if’n the brain-crew can whip up some program that sends out a notification if there are more appearances.  If this were the summer season we’d have somebody manning the board all day.  In the winter, just ain’t no need let-alone bodies to fill. Um. . just ya’ll do me a favor.

KENDRA

Sure.

ZEKE

Don’t go mentioning Aliens to Firefighter Fred. He’s got this phobia about them and abductions.

BASS

Seriously Zeke, not aliens!

THOMAS

Aliens? When did that happen?

ZEKE

Just say’n. Could be. You don’t know!

BASS

I do too know! It’s absolutely ridiculous

KENDRA

Well, these two will be busy for the next ten minutes. They do this all the time. [IDEA] Thomas, would you join me for coffee?

THOMAS

[HAPPY]

I’d love to Doctor! Allow me!

FOOTSTEPS LEAVING THE RANGE OF THE BODYCAM MIC. THE BOYS CONTINUE ARGUING AS WE BEGIN FADE OUT.

ZEKE

Oh, I see! You put the man in a new suit and suddenly he’s the authority on everything.

BASS

Am not!

ZEKE

Are too!

BASS  
You’re being impossible, again!

ZEKE  
and you’re being pig-headed, again!

FADE OUT

ACT V

FADE IN

SYDNEY’S OFFICE. SESSION IN PROGRESS

BASS

They all keep telling me that it’s their decision to make. And. . . .okay fundamentally, I know they’re right. I just don’t want to be putting them in danger.

SYDNEY

How would you be putting them in danger? From. . .; well from everything you’ve told me it seems they’re fully aware of the consequences, the risks and yet they want to stay.

DEEP SIGH FROM BASS

BASS

[ALMOST RESIGNED}

I don’t know if I can keep doing this anymore. I mean… the job, the people. The risks. Every day, I feel like I’m putting the woman I love, my friends, everyone in this icebox in danger, and I just keep making enemies. And now? Now I don’t know if I can trust anyone. Even the government seems to be turning on me.

MIND READ

[TWO BEAT]

I chose this. I chose the job, I chose this life, but they didn’t ask to be a part of it. They didn’t sign up for the consequences.

SYDNEY

*[LEANING FORWARD, CALM PRESENCE]*

Bass, it sounds like you’re carrying a heavy burden. The fear for your family, your friends—it’s weighing on you. But I want you to take a step back for a second. You said you made these choices, right? You chose the job, chose your path. But I think there’s a bigger picture here that we need to address.

BASS

*[EXASPERATED]*   
It’s not just the job. It’s the consequences. I’m bringing all of it home. The threats, the danger, the people who want to hurt me—or worse, hurt the people I love. I’ve made enemies who will do anything to get to me. And the worst part? I’m starting to think I can’t even trust the ones who are supposed to have my back anymore.

SYDNEY

*[CALM BUT GENTLE]*

I hear you. And I understand why you’re feeling the way you are. But Bass, I want you to understand something fundamental. You’re not responsible for the actions of others. Not for the choices they make, not for the harm they might try to inflict.

BASS

But what if they hurt someone because of me? Because of what I’ve done? How do I just… let that go?

SYDNEY

*[PAUSE, ALLOWS SPACE FOR BASS’*

*FEELINGS]*  
I want you to think about something. You said you made these choices. You chose to become a U.S. Marshal, you chose to be a lover, a father, a friend. And each of those roles is important. Each of them has something in common.

BASS   
What do you mean?

SYDNEY  
They all share one core trait. You’re a protector, Bass. You protect your family. You protect your friends. You protect the people you love & the people you swore an oath to serve. And in that, you’ve put yourself in a position where you carry a responsibility that, frankly, most people never have to consider. But the thing is, you can’t protect everyone all the time. You’re a Deputy Marshal. The Ice Sheriff. You’re not God.

BASS

[SCOFFS]

Ice Sheriff. It's a nickname that I barely tolerate.

SYDNEY  
Seems to me It's a term of affection that you find difficult to accept from everybody you try to protect.

BASS

*[FRUSTRATED]*  
I’m not trying to protect everyone, Syd. I’m trying to protect the people I love. And it feels like no matter how hard I try, no matter what I do, the world is just getting bigger and scarier, and I can’t keep them safe. I’m failing them. [SIGH] You probably think I’m being paranoid.

SYDNEY

Being paranoid? No, not in the least.

BASS

[DOUBTFUL]

Okay, but how can you be sure?

MIND READ

SYDNEY

Well, I’m a therapist for one. OH! and then there’s the four murder attempts in the past two years that sway my opinion on the matter. [CHUCKLE]

BASS, you’re human. And no matter how much you want to shield your loved ones from the world’s dangers, the truth is, there are forces beyond your control. You can’t stop everything, no matter how much you wish you could. And blaming yourself for things that are beyond your control… that’s not fair to you. You’re setting yourself up for a burden that isn’t yours to carry.

BASS

[VOICE LOWERS, SOMBER]  
But they’re my responsibility. I swore an oath. And when you swear an oath, you don’t get to walk away from it. Not even when it’s this hard.

SYDNEY

*[GENTLEY]*  
I’m not asking you to walk away from your responsibility. I’m asking you to redefine it. You can’t control everything, Bass. And you have to recognize that everyone in your life is capable of making their own choices. Kendra, Zeke, Thomas — They are their own people. They have their own lives. They understand the risks you face. They know what it means to love someone in your line of work.

BASS

*[QUIET, ALMOST TO HIMSELF]*  
But if something happens to them because of what I do… that’s on me. I’m the one who put them in this position.

SYDNEY

[CALM BUT FIRM]  
I get it. It’s hard. You don’t want them to suffer because of your decisions. But you have to remember, BASS, that they choose to stand by you. They choose to be with you, even knowing the risks. They love you. And in that love, they accept the dangers that come with it. That’s not a burden you place on them. It’s something they carry with you, because they’re with you, in this life. You, better than ANYBODY else on this station should have realized. . . Pain is unavoidable; It’s part of living. The suffering, that’s the part that’s optional.

BASS   
But it’s not the same, is it? They didn’t sign up for this. They didn’t ask for this kind of life.

SYDNEY

[SOFTLY]   
No. But people don’t always get to choose their circumstances. Sometimes, they choose the people they want to be with, and that’s where their responsibility lies. You’re not forcing them into this role. They’re walking beside you. And remember, BASS, you’re not alone in this.

MIND READ

THREE BEAT, LET THAT LINE HIT

BASS

[DEEP BREATH]   
I’ve just… been so focused on the threats, the danger, the nomination. I guess I haven’t really thought about how they feel. About the fact that they choose to be part of this.

SYDNEY   
That’s a good start. You’re realizing something important. That you can’t control the world’s chaos. But you can control how you face it, and how you communicate with those you love about it. Let them share in that burden, too. Let them be a part of your fight. You don’t have to carry this weight alone.

BASS  
I don’t want to let them down.

SYDNEY  
You’re not going to. [CHUCKLE] I honestly don’t think it’s possible for you to know how to. And remember this; being a protector doesn’t mean carrying every burden. It means helping others stand strong, even when they feel weak. You protect them by allowing them to be strong alongside you. It’s not about shielding them from everything; it’s about facing the world together, as a team.

BASS

I guess I’ve been so focused on what I can’t control that I forgot what I *can* control. How I react. How I communicate. Maybe I’ve been shutting them out… thinking I have to carry it all.

SYDNEY  
It’s easy to fall into that trap. But you’ve got a family, Bass. A strong one. And they’re there to support you. Just like you’re there to support them.

BASS

Thanks, Syd. I don’t know if I’m ever going to stop worrying about them, but… I think I understand now. It’s about balance. About being there for them, without trying to control every possible outcome.

SYDNEY  
Exactly. This may come as a shock to you, but You’re not perfect, Bass Marlow. None of us are. But you’re trying. And that’s what matters. You protect your friends by showing them that you trust them to walk this path with you. That’s a powerful thing.

BASS

I’m gonna go talk to them. Let them in a little more. I need to stop assuming they can’t handle this. I’ve been making it harder on all of us.

SYDNEY   
You’re on the right path. Take it one step at a time.

BOTH STAND

BASS

Thanks for listening, Syd. I really needed this.

SYDNEY

Happy to do it!

DOOR OPENS

BASS

[REMEMBERS]

Oh, hey before I forget; we’d like to show you more of the background of everything that’s been going on down here. What we’ve found thus far.

SYDNEY

I get to learn the secret handshake. I’d be honored!

BASS

We all want to make sure you know we value you not just as a therapist,  but as a friend as well.

MIND READ

SYDNEY

[AMUSED]

Being a therapist and being taken for granted are kinda synonymous, but that aside; just let me know when and where and I’ll be happy to be there.

OUTRO AND THEME MUSIC