90 Degrees South

SEASON FOUR

EPISODE TWO: WHERE SILENCE FALLS AND THE SKY HOLDS ITS BREATH.

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by

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**INTRO SONG**

**ACT I**

**FADE IN**

**IN A CONFERENCE ROOM, MEETING IN PROGRESS. THE ROOM IS FILLED WITH THE DEPARTMENT HEADS ON THE STATION. ZEKE IS LEADING THE MEETING.**

 ZEKE

…But above all else I want to make sure everybody takes precautions and observes safety procedures in advance of the Ice-feet coming back for the season.

 THOMAS

 [UNDER HIS BREATH]

*Bumbles.*

 LANDRY

I done took all da valuables — and dem, uh… *qu’est-ce que c’est*… da fragile lil’ things — outta dem summer huts, no worry there. We gonna chain dem doors up *real tight*, like a crawfish boil lid, and make sure all dem gator lights charged up full to burst.

Fire crew is on the job!

 LANDRY FRED

FIRE-CREW! FIRE CREW!

 ZEKE

Remember that nobody walks over to or back from any of the science stations without a buddy and a strong light. Radio in if you see, hear, or most likely. . .SMELL any Icefoot around

 THOMAS

 [UNDER HIS BREATH]

*Bumbles.*

ZEKE

Okay. Um… what else we got Tommy?

 THOMAS

Satellite time for research projects.

 ZEKE

Right, right! Doctor Jovac and I posted the schedule for the next four weeks and allotted equal time and based priority access against the schedules all departments submitted. Ya’ll need to keep in mind we’re about eight weeks out from Lawman’s senate review. If’n he’s called to testify there may be a need to rotate schedules to accommodate; but we’ll deal with that as it gets closer!

 JOVAC

 [STARTLED AWAKE]

PANCAKES?!?!

 ZEKE

Not yet doc. . .almost!

 JOVAC

Always missing out. . .on pancakes for these dang-burn things.

 BASS

Flapjacks notwithstanding, appreciate you rotating schedules for me Zeke.

 ZEKE

Let’s see next up. . .

 THOMAS

A-pod maintenance.

 ZEKE

 [CONFUSED]

Say what now?

 THOMAS

A-pod is due for mechanical and operational inspections.

 ZEKE

No, I know what it is, Tommy. Who authorized that? First I’m hearing about it and I’m the chief!

 **PAGES FLIPPING**

 THOMAS

 It was. . . .was . . . um… oh. . .Keenan.

 ZEKE

Up here less than a month and he’s already gunnin’ for my job! [PONDERS, TOUNGE CLICK] you know what. . .okay. . .alright . . .if youngblood gonna schedule like he in charge, he can be in charge of the inspection. Make a note in the duty roster that he’s on point for the work. Oh, Lucille gonna love this one!

 LLA

Oh um, hey there Zeke. I has a question for you.

 ZEKE
Go ahead Ms. Alice.

 LLA
Well, now I don’t want to be a bother; and I sure as shootin’ appreciate all the hard work you folks are doing down there in the arches. . .but. . .we’ve been having problems with the food deliveries coming up.

 ZEKE

Whatcu’ talkn’ bout Lunch Lady Alice?

 LLA

Well.. we’re sending our weekly grocery list down to the logistics arch, but. . .errm. . .we don’t always get all the goodies we send down for.

**CROWD MUMBLES A BIT IN AGREEMENT**

 FRED

Yeah! Asked for more Icy-Hot in the gym and we got girly smelling body lotion.

 LANDRY

Dat why you smell like my Aunt Lola, Francine?

 RANDO 1

 [FROM THE BACKGROUND]

We ordered more printer paper and got 3-ring binders from the L.O. arch.

**MORE CROWD MUMBLES**

RANDO 2

 When will the decaf coffee be replaced already?

**MORE CROWD MUMBLES**

 JOVAC

 PANCAKES!

 ZEKE

I see you people! I do. Promise! Give me a day to figure this out and we’ll see about getting the logistics arch to be more accurate with their shipments up from the arches. For right now please give Tommy a list of anything *critical* you need and don’t have, and we’ll get them to you quickly. That cool?

**CROWD MUMBLES**

 ZEKE

Okay then. Think that’s all we have today then. Thanks for coming by and I’ll see you on the flip side!

**CHAIRS PUSHING BACK AND PEOPLE FILING OUT OF THE ROOM**

 ZEKE

 [HEAVY SIGH]

 BASS

You’ll get this figured out buddy. You’re still getting used to the new role and responsibilities. Don’t beat yourself up!

 ZEKE

Naw! I get that lawman, I do. It’s just. . . so many big changes hitting all at once. This gig from Waynewright to me. You becoming Marshal, all the president’s restrictions on foreign nationals, Last minute staffing changes… Not saying that I expected this to be easy; but I wasn’t thinking there would be a stacked deck either!

 BASS

I don’t know that I’d call this a stacked deck exactly. To me it looks more like you stepped in to help fill a gap.

 ZEKE

Oh, I’m stepping in it alright! [SIGH] We get changes around here Bass, no arguing that. Just not so many big ones all at once. If’n I didn’t know better. ..

**THREE BEAT**

 BASS

 If you didn’t know any better…what?

 ZEKE

 I’d say it’s the Ice making things go faster.

 BASS

 [CONFUSED]

 The Ice? How?

 ZEKE

 [INDIGNANT]

Oh, don’t just sit there and look at me like you don’t see some hand or force controlling things down here! Like I have all the answers!

 BASS

Look. I’m not saying things down here aren’t. . .unusual; but sometimes things are just the way they are! No mystery or higher purpose. Just life. Doesn’t mean that fate or the Ice or. . .God

 ZEKE

 [WARNING]

Careful now Lawman!

 BASS

…I was going to say that none of them are necessarily messing with you. . .or us. What’s that saying, God doesn’t give you more than you can handle.

 ZEKE

Yeah, spoiler alert; that ain’t nowhere in the bible. It’s a misquote of Paul in Corinth. . .nevermind all that now.

**TWO BEAT**

 BASS

Alright then. Tell me what I can do to help Zeke? You know I’ll do it.

 ZEKE

I appreciate that Bass. [DEEP EXHAIL] Gimme a couple of hours to come up with some plan, and if’n I see anything…

 THOMAS

 [URGENT, NERVOUS]

HEY! GUYS!

 BASS

 [STARTLED]

THOMAS!

 THOMAS

 [URGENT]

Sorry, I’m sorry it’s; well, you better listen to this. One of the dexters was reviewing incoming radio logs from last month before deleting them. They flagged this just now. It came in on the last official day of the summer season, which we were celebrating the return of Sydney and everything thing else

**CLICK OF A RECORDER PLAYBACK AND EMERY’S WARNING MESSAGE FROM THE END OF SEASON 3 EASTER EGG.**

 BASS

 [ANGRY]

Why are we only being given this now?

 THOMAS

Gosh, it came in after the last flight departed. Even if we had heard it, there would have been no way out.

 ZEKE

Oh great, now on top of this I’m gonna get blamed for everybody dying! Anything else go wrong today lord? Wanna have me persecuted for anything else while you at it?

**DOOR OPENS**

 JOVAC

Just wanted to say thanks Zeke. We were in here so long; they ran out of pancakes in the gally! Logistics didn’t send up enough batter! I’m having a bad day!

**FOOTSTEPS WALKING OFF**

JOVAC

Bet they’d have Pancakes if Neil Degras Tyson were here!

**FADE OUT**

**ACT II**

**STATION PA CHIME**

 CHERYL-LYNN:

 (VO / OVERHEAD SPEAKER)

Good morning, Ya'll and I hope all my poleies are doing wonderful this morning. Today is Thursday, March 9th, and it's 09:00 on the tick. This is Ms. Cheryl-Lynn here with your South Pole daily announcements!

**TRUMPET FANFARE**

oOh! Now listen up, if you’ve been wantin’ to spike that volleyball or dive for the save, now’s your chance. The Amundsen Ice-Picks are havin’ their tryouts this week, so mark your calendars, ‘cause we’re gatherin’ at 16:00 sharp on Saturday for some good ol' fashioned competition. Coach Glenn’s been workin’ hard to get us ready for the Summer 2023 season, but he did ask me to kindly remind team captain Landry that we might wanna lay off the Cajun Hoodoo curses this year—especially when we’re playin’ against the McMurdo Mud Dogs.

We want a fair game, not one where the other team gets struck by an unexpected swarm of locusts or somethin’! So, bring your A-game, but leave the hexes at home. Let’s see who’s got the chops to make the team!

**TRUMPET FANFARE**

Alright, folks, y’all ready for a little entertainment to kick off the evenin’? If you’re lookin’ to watch somethin’ that’ll make you scratch your head and maybe even question your life choices, we’ve got two movies lined up tonight that fit the bill. First up at 19:00, we’ve got “The Enchanted Llama,” a film that critics have been callin’ "the most baffling train wreck of 2022." If you enjoy watching CGI llamas tryin’ to solve crime while inexplicably bursting into song, this one’s for you.

Then, at 21:00, we’ve got “Jurassic Werewolves,” which is exactly what it sounds like—a bunch of werewolves who’ve somehow gotten their paws on dinosaurs. It’s as wild as it sounds and has been called “a cinematic nightmare.” But hey, maybe you’re into that kinda thing? You can catch ‘em in the B-1 lounge if you’re feelin’ brave enough to sit through ‘em.

**TRUMPET FANFARE**

Oh, look at this now! We’ve got some big news from the National Science Foundation; yup, they’re lookin’ for input on the upcoming major station upgrades, as part of what they’re callin’ the South Pole Station Master Plan, or SPSMP. That’s a whole lotta letters, but what it means is they’re gonna be modernizin’ the station and puttin’ in some shiny new infrastructure to support the future of science here at the South Pole.

They’ll be considerin’ everything from the redevelopment of the existing buildings to possibly puttin’ up some new ones, and they want to hear from YOU, the people who live and work here, ‘bout what’d make your day-to-day life a little easier or better.

Now, I reckon some of y’all might have some wild ideas but let me give you a couple to start us off. How ‘bout a Professional corn-hole stadium or even a fancy ballroom for all our parties and events! But seriously, send in your thoughts ‘cause they’re listenin’!

**DINNER TRIANGLE BELL**

Oh boy! I sure hope you’re ready for a mighty fine meal today, 'cause Lunch Lady Alice got some good eatin' lined up for you. So, gather 'round and let me tell ya what we’ve got cookin' for lunch and supper today.

For lunch, we’re servin' up two real tasty options:

First up, we got fried chicken—crispy, golden, and just like mama used to make. We’ve also got a side of mashed taters with gravy, and don’t forget the buttermilk biscuit, honey!

Now, if you're lookin’ for somethin’ a little lighter, we’ve got a grilled chicken salad, with all the fixins: fresh greens, tomatoes, cucumbers, and a nice ranch dressing to top it off.

And for my vegetarians out there, we’re takin’ care of y’all, too:

We’ve got a vegetable stir-fry, made with all kinds of fresh veggies—zucchini, peppers, and onions—tossed in a sweet soy glaze. You won’t be missin’ the meat, I promise!

Or you can try our stuffed portobello mushrooms, filled with a hearty mix of quinoa, spinach, and cheese, and baked to perfection.

Now, for dinner tonight, we've got two more options that'll make your taste buds do a little happy dance:

First, we’ve got a slow-cooked pot roast with all the trimmings: carrots, potatoes, and onions cooked just right. Y’all, this is comfort food at its finest.

If you’re in the mood for somethin’ a little lighter, try our grilled salmon, served with wild rice and steamed broccoli. It’s a nice healthy choice that’ll fill you up without slowin' you down.

And for my vegetarians again, don’t you worry, Alice has ya covered:

A veggie lasagna, made with layers of tender pasta, ricotta cheese, spinach, and marinara sauce. Y’all won’t miss the meat one bit!

Or, how ‘bout a chickpea and spinach curry? It’s got a nice, spicy kick and comes served over a bed of jasmine rice.

**TRUMPET FANFARE**

Finally, I have an announcement from our new station manager, Ezekiel Bustamante.

Please submit a list of any sundries ya’ll need to Thomas so we can work to get the supply distribution problem resolved as quickly as possible.

He wants to thank all of you for being patient while he, and many others are getting acclimated to their new jobs and responsibilities. He’s gonna work to get all this static cleared up quick as he can. [HAPPY] Bless his heart!

So, there you go!  You take care now my polies. Ya’ll need anything between now and my announcements tomorrow; ya’ll just hollar at me or Mister Kelley.  You have a wonderful and blessed day! Thank youuuuuuuuuuuuuu!

**PA CLOSE CHIME**

**ACT III**

**FADE IN. INSIDE OF THE BARN.**

**EMERY’S MESSAGE IS BEING LISTED TO BY THE BARN TEAM, INCLUDING SYDNEY WHO HAS JOINED THEM.**

BASS

That was the message ops center recorded a month ago.

 FRED

So, the little crunch berry is still alive after-all! Good for him!

 KENDRA

Kinda a scary message. We’re all going to die if Bass doesn’t leave the station. . .didn’t leave the station before winter started?

 THOMAS

I was able to intercept it before the Dexter who first heard it logged it in. Doctor Jovac, Waynewright. . .none of the Atlas team know this exists yet.

 ZEKE

And I want to keep it that way. No sense in letting them in on this. It does, however, beg the question. . .

 PATRICK

Right!. . .like. . .What’s he doing for food?

 ZEKE

What?!? No! The question of what we going to do with this information.

 RICHARD

Actually, it’s a square tack! From what you all tell me. Kid wasn’t exactly a featherweight palooka. Liked to tie on the ol’ feed bag. If he’s been out there for a whole year nobody brought C-rations to last; what’s he been taking on?

 CHRIS

 [NOT SURE HOW TO TAKE THAT]

Hey! …I think.

 KENDRA

Let’s stay on topic here people. [BEAT] Sorry Sydney, our meetings aren’t usually this scattered.

 SYDNEY

No need to apologize. I’m the new kid in the class and learning the ways you all have already established. Please, go ahead.

 KENDRA

[DEEP BREATH] This isn’t exactly established science. Somebody jumping from one timeframe to another through. . .well I guess a wormhole or null space corridor perhaps; but we don’t know if time there is the same here.

 FRED

Oh, here we go! Strap in Doc Bremmer. They about to go all nerdy on us!

 CHRIS

No no, Doctor Jennings is absolutely correct! Sometimes in Star Trek the time dilation correlation isn’t always one to one. Even though 12 months have passed here, for Emery. . .it may have only been two months.

 THOMAS

Or maybe 24 months if it moves faster where he is.

 CHRIS

I prefer my theory more.

 KENDRA

 [REIGNING THEM IN]

The point: everybody is there are things we absolutely know, and things we can only speculate on for now. We don’t know how much time has passed for Emery, but we know he’s alive. Distortion in the recording notwithstanding, he sounded like his old self. He was joking about cartoons in the first message Chris got during Christmas. He was joking about still being alive in this one. He’s in good spirits, not distressed. This would indicate he’s healthy, and not starving and safe as possible. So, let’s pivot back to Zeke’s question. What do we do next?

 CHRIS

 [INSISTANT]

We get EM back!

 ZEKE

Well, no shit we get him back Chris; but step one is. . .how the hell we get there? Hell, really that is step two. Step one is more like. . .where is. . there anyway? Where is the station going to appear? Lots of Ice out there.

 SYDNEY

I assume just because you’re head of the station now doesn’t necessarily mean the . . .Atlas team is keeping you in the loop?

**MIND READ**

 ZEKE

No, they are not. I’m not in the secret handshake club. Don’t have any more information than the rest of you all.

 THOMAS

Even if they aren’t bringing you up to speed on Atlas; well golly; they must still want you to go with them. You are the chief engineer still, and you’re already aware of the station.

 ZEKE

They haven’t said, and I don’t think they will. Non Atlas people going last year caused a mess of things. I’m betting they want to put the cover back on the undercover mission.

 RICHARD

So, then we’re still on a trip for biscuits!

**[THREE BEAT]**

 PATRICK

 [LIGHT BULB GOES OFF]

Oh. . .oh hey. . .HEY HEY HEY! What we do know. . . .[SNICKER] what like we do know is the when! Right?

 BASS

 [CONFUSED]

What?

 PATRICK

No no, the ‘when’ Marshal duder, sir. Not what.

 BASS

 [CONFUSED]

Still. . .deputy duder for now, and I’m not sure I’m following Doctor Dobbers.

 SYDNEY

Wait. . .who?

 PATRICK

No, [flustered] com’n people! Not who, not what. . .[PUNCH THE WORD] the WHEN!

 SYDNEY

 [LEANING OVER TO KENDRA]

When did Patrick get his doctorate?

 KENDRA

I’ll fill you in later Sydney. Bass, Sweetheart, he’s saying even if we don’t know the ‘where’ we do know the when. I think Patrick is onto something here.

 PATRICK

[SNAP FINGERS] Exactly that! You said when ol’ Doc Waynewright first filled you all in, that the time travel station appears every year at the exact same time. Just, different places inside of an area. [CHUCKLE] Like how my cousin Jimmy always hid his stash in his garage from his parents; but never could remember exactly WHERE. No wait! Aw man, now I’m doing it. . .when. . .not where.

The when, is April 12th!

 THOMAS
I’m still not clear how knowing the when is going to help us get Emery back.

**MIND READ**

 PATRICK

C’mon people we got this. Exactly what Doc Jennings said. What we know and what we speculate all over.

 BASS

Keep going Doctor Dobber, I think I now see where you’re heading. Very nice work!

 PATRICK

Okay okay. . .so, we know the bad guys are going to be heading there right? I mean, they too… know when; but they have a way to know the WHERE TOO!

 THOMAS

The satellite imaging system. Just like how I found out last year!

 SYDNEY

Couldn’t we just use that system to tell us the ‘where’? Like last year?

 KENDRA

After Doctor Waynewright discovered we knew about the base; they took steps to lock those systems down and paid off the satellite technicians to forget all about it.

 BASS

Don’t we issue satellite time and priorities anyway for the station’s usual research projects? Can’t we just do that?

 ZEKE

Nah. It’s a good idea, but there are some areas where they blackout permitted use. That whole portion of the Ice is a big ol’ no-go.

 PATRICK

 [ANOTHER LIGHTBULB]

How!

 ZEKE

Any request we submitted for Sat-time and Sat-imaging has to go through Beau-low. They’d flag it for sure and not…

 PATRICK

No . .[FRUSTRATED HUFF]… you all just need to open your minds! Think outside the icebox!

 JOHNSON

I ain’t getting hooked on no reefer there paly!

That stuff makes you all loopy and will send you to a laughing academy!

 CHRIS

Where?

 PATRICK

No not Where. How!

 FRED

I don’t know, THIRD BASE!

**[FOUR BEAT OF SILENCE]**

 FRED

What, none of you ever see the Abbot and Costello baseball bit? Fricken’ classic!

 SYDNEY

This would all make for a VERY interesting paper!

 ZEKE

Focus now people. Patrick, go-on & give us the how.

 PATRICK

How to get to the where! Probably the easiest part of the whole Chimichanga! How will the bad guys get to the where? Anybody wanna guess?

 FRED

First ones of youse says ‘how’; POW!, right in the kisser, Alice!

 ZEKE

 [GETS IT]

The Noddy’s! Aw Patrick that’s brilliant. Just for that, I’m gonna overlook the greenhouse grow operation a couple more months! We tag the Nodwell snowcats! Waynewright and his crew will need one to get to the station.

 CHRIS

And each one has an internal GPS tracking device for life-safety purposes.

 BASS

But you have to figure that Joyclyn will know about the GPS, find it and disable it.

 ZEKE

She might know about the main GPS system; but I can have a backup installed and not let anybody else know. During the winter we only keep one Noddy active. Not like people are driving around out there in this weather. The rest get decommissioned until just before Summer.

I’ll grab a GOS unit out of the stored ones and put it in the active Noddy. I’ll also bring one of the others out of mothballs early, say a few days before so when they go out, we can be an hour or so behind them. Solid plan there Patrick!

 PATRICK

Yup! I’d say I earned my special treat today!

 THOMAS

Gosh! Whose going to go this time?

**MIND READ**

 CHRIS

Me!

 THOMAS

Aw heck Chris, that was already assumed! But who else?

 FRED

Don’t look at me. I had enough time traveling with the Halen jumps!

 ZEKE

I’m in.

 BASS

No, buddy that’s not a good idea this time.

 ZEKE

Say what now?

 BASS

You’re the boss now Zeke. I don’t know what’s going to happen when we just happen to roll up on the Canadian station by quote unquote “coincidence”. It would help if we had a high ranking person backing up why we were there. Like

The new station manager. Protect our cover story validate how it really was a coincidence.

 KENDRA

He’s right Zeke. I know how much you’d like to go, but it’s probably best for you to stay back this time. I’ll go.

**TWO BEAT**

 ZEKE

 [THINKING ALOUD]

Yeah, if’n we going to come up with a valid reason why I’d send out a Noddy team onto the ice in the Winter; I can think of like two; maybe three reasons. But uh. . .none of them would be making sense why the head of Dark Sector was out there.

 RICHARD

What if the G-man wanted to take the doll-face out for a midnight sonata! He’s dizzy for the dame and wanted to drive her out for some parking; huh? Huh!

 KENDRA

120 miles out…in the cold… for sex?

 FRED

 [SUDDENLY PAYS ATTENTION]

Kathrin and I are in! We’ll make it a foursome! See what I did there, Doc! Like golf, but NOT! Know what I’m sayin’?

 KENDRA
Eww!

 BASS
Yeah, I don’t see that one playing either. [DEEP BREATH] Alright, I have some paperwork I need to send to the chief of staff’s aid. Zeke, you rack your brain and see what makes the most sense. Go ahead with your plan for the GPS monitoring. Sydney: Glad we were able to convince you to join us.

 SYDNEY

Glad I got the invite. I don’t often get to witness group psychosis on this magnitude!

**CHUCKLES**

 THOMAS
Gosh Doctor Bremmer, we’re not foolin’ here. If you saw. .

 SYDNEY

 [REASSURING]

I was joking with you all Thomas.

 THOMAS

 [RELEIVED]

Oh! [Chuckles].

**SOUND OF SHUFFELING AND A SUDDEN SCRAPE**

 BASS

 Kendra? You okay?

 KENDRA

 [BIT WOOZY]

 I’m fine honey, just. . . stood up too fast.

 CHRIS

The air in here is a bit off. Patrick and I will hold back and check the heater and ventilation systems.

 ZEKE

Keep me posted, but for now. . .I have to go figure out how we gonna get this supply issue fixed and soon! Tommy let’s hit the L.O. arch on our way back.

 BASS

See you all for the weekly meeting on Sunday afternoon.

**TEAM STANDS AND BEGINS FILING OUT.**

**ACT IV**

**BASS’ RECORDER**

**RECORDING STARTED**

**FOOTSTEPS UP STAIRS AND A DOOR OPENS. WE HEAR THE SOUND OF BACKGROUND MUSIC PLAYING AND SOMEBODY RUNNING ON THE TREDMILL. *(ACTOR NOTES) The two will be jogging/running through the scene, so please give me heavy breathing and line delivery as if jogging)***

BASS

 [FRUSTRATED]

Oh, just perfect! I get one night, all alone with this place to run five miles with my own thoughts, and I have to share the gym with you! Didn’t think you’d be the type to come to a gym, honestly. Thought you were more of a "watching from the shadows" type.

 JOYCLYN

 [FIRING BACK]

Then jog on, lad. I’ve got a rare night off and need to burn some steam before I kip. You don’t own the gym, you know. And hey—bit past your prime for chasing down crims, aren’t ya, Marshmellow?

**BASS CHUCKLES, THE SOUND DEEP AND GRUFF**

BASS

 [FRUSTRATED EXHAIL]

If I knew you were going to be here, I would have brought my headphones to drown you out.

**PUSH OF BUTTONS ON A TREDMILL MACHINE, AN ELECTRONIC COUNTDOWN AND THE MACHINE STARTS. BASS BEGINS JOGGING.**

**THREE BEAT**

 JOYCLYN

I hear your mate is making a right mess of being the new station leader. Bolloxed up even the most routine of matters his first month on the job.

BASS

 [QUICKLY]

You think you know everything, huh? Maybe you should focus on your own little job. Looks like you’re stuck with it going forward. Larry gets the promotion, not you. No action. No fun. No future!

**JOYCELYN**

[A SLIGHT SMILE IN HER VOICE]

Could say the same for you, like. Least I’m not leggin’ it after dodgy old blokes with warrants and weak knees, eh?

BASS

Surprised you’d even notice with how. . .absent you are most days. Off doing whatever government lackey things those with the real power in the D.I.A. have you lackey piss-ants do.

 JOYCLYN

Oh, come on Bass. As insults go that isn’t even on the pitch. You’ve thrown better skip-passes in your time. I’d think a man in his. . .what. . .60’s could do better.

**BASS**
You're so cute when you're trying to act like you matter. I mean, it must sting, right? That the most exciting part of your day is making sure your boss Waynewright’s coffee order is correct.

 JOYCLYN

The term is client; Not a Boss you tosser. My paycheck still comes from the D.O.D. Not Beauregard-Lowing. I don’t work for Waynewright.

**[TWO BEAT]**

 BASS

Client? I thought the term was “A john”. Oh wait, I’m sorry. . .that’s for prostitutes. That’s right.

 JOYCLYN

[SCOFF]Still not even close to top tier insults Grandad. I’m embarrassed for you! But then again, Rumor has it your performance has suffering all around. Even late at night with the Good Doctor? Don’t be ashamed Marshmellow. Loss of stamina happens to most lads in their winter years!

**BEEP OF THE TREADMILL AS JOYCLYN INCREASES SPEED, JOGGS FASTER.**

 BASS

I can promise you there aren’t any complaints; my Stamina is just as strong as my resolve to make sure nothing you and your pals are doing down here puts anybody in danger.

**BEEP OF THE TREADMILL AS BASS INCREASES SPEED TO MATCH JOYCLYN, JOGGS FASTER.**

**[THREE BEAT]**

JOYCLYN
 [LAUGHS, BUT WITH AN EDGE]
You know, sometimes, it’s not about the action. Some of us like working in an agency that doesn’t burn out its Marshals by running them into the ground. I mean, look at you, Grandad. You’re practically dust. I’m surprised you’re knees aren’t aching.

**BASS**
[NODS SLOWLY, LOOKING STRAIGHT AHEAD]

Right, sure. You say that now but just wait. That corporate world won’t be so shiny when you find yourself out of the D.I.A.. People like you don’t have staying power, Joycelyn. You’re disposable.

JOYCLYN
[SNORTS]Disposable? Oh, please. At least I’ve got a purpose, something worth fighting for. You can’t seem to go two weeks without somebody trying to kill you. [CHUCKLE] must be that Yank charm you ooze. You should probably see to that and not worry about things that don’t concern you. I mean really! You’ve been playing this lone wolf routine as long as I’ve known you. How many funerals have you been to recently? Or is it just the same old people you can’t help anymore?

**BASS**
 [PAUSE, THEN DARKLY]
I’m not the one who's got no one in her life to even notice when she's gone. Who’s going to care when you get that promotion? A cat? A houseplant? Your imaginary friends?

JOYCLYN
(slightly breathless, her pace increasing)
Funny. I’d say you’re the one who’ll be alone. Who’s going to want you when you’ve got one foot in the grave, huh? You’re old news, Bass. You just haven’t realized it yet. And just why you still wearing that body camera for exercising? Do you ever take it off? Oh, please do tell me you don’t have it on while you snog your doctor Jennings. Nobody wants to see geriatric groping of a young girl half his age.

BASS

Oh, you’d be surprised just what you can pick up on these things when you aren’t expecting it. Little tid-bits here and there that people let slip when they think they’re not being paid attention to. Comes in handy, truly. And Kendra isn’t 25; but I’ll pass along the compliment.

JOYCLYN

That must be why you’re here, keep the heart in shape and don’t pop your clogs after the workouts she gives you. [GAG] Sorry, almost lost my dinner thinking about all that gray hair I saw when you two did the 300 club run. She looked phenomenal by the way. Very delectable. {STRAY THOUGHT] Careful Marshmellow. I might be tempted to take another of your toys from you like in Cincinnati!

**BEEP OF THE TREADMILL AS JOYCLYN INCREASES SPEED, JOGGS FASTER.**

BASS

Right, forgot you liked AC/DC. You know…I’m surprised with having so many more choices for a lover you can’t seem to ever find anybody. Sure would be a shame for you to die alone at old age. Forgotten, only remembered as a footnote in Waynewright’s self-righteous inevitable autobiography.

JOYCLYN
[SLIGHTLY BREATHLESS, PACE INCREASES]

Funny. I’d say you’re the one who’ll be alone. Who’s going to want you when you’ve got one foot in the grave, huh? You’re old news, Bass. You just haven’t realized it yet. And if we’re being honest; I’m not sure why I should be taking love advice from you after the way your last relationship ended!

**BASS SEES INSTANT RED, BREATHING INCREASES BUT HE IS STRUGGLING NOT TO TAKE THE BAIT, NOT TO LET HER WIN AGAIN.**

**FOUR BEAT AS WE LET THAT LAST JAB SIT IN WITH THE LISTNERS]**

**BEEP OF THE TREADMILL AS BASS INCREASES SPEED TO MATCH JOYCLYN, THEY’RE NOW AT A MEDIUM RUN.**

**BASS**
And you? What, you think people give a shit about you at your level? People like you always think you’re climbing but guess what; you’re still stuck with that same tiny position, same lonely routine. And no one to back you up. That’s the job you’ve chosen, right? Alone at the top of nothing.

JOYCLYN
Oh, I’m not alone. I’ve got something much better than anything you’ve ever had, Bass. I’ve got stability. A future. Sure, it's not glamorous, but at least I’m not chasing ghosts with one foot in the past and the other in his own grave.

**BASS**
[LAUGHS DRYLY, SHAKING HIS HEAD]

What, you’ve really convinced yourself of that? You’ve convinced yourself that your little secret agent job matters? You're the one who’s chasing an empty future.

JOYCLYN

 [A LITTLE OUT OF BREATH, DEFINAT]
You keep thinking that Marshmellow. You keep thinking I’m just a nobody. Meanwhile, I'll be on my feet when your body’s too busted to catch anyone. But hey, maybe that’s all you’ve got left—your pride.

**BASS**
 [LOW VOICE]

Oh, I’ve still got plenty left. And you’ll see that when you're alone and forgotten.

JOYCLYN

You mean like you were after Diane?

BASS

Nope. More Like when Charlie refused to choose you over his wife! Some people simply aren’t worthy of love I guess!

**THE SOUND OF THE TREDMIL CANCEL BUTTON. ONE SET OF JOGGING FEETFALLS SLOWS. THE SNAP OF A TOWEL BEING TAKEN OFF THE MACHINE’S RAIL AND WALKING. THE PUSH BAR ON THE DOOR IS KICKED OPEN VIOLENTLY AND CLOSES BEHIND HER.**

**BASS TURNS OFF HIS OWN TREDMILL AND STARTS WHEEZING A BIT.**

**FIVE BEAT WHILE THE MACHINE COMES TO A REST AND BASS’ CATCHES HIS BREATH.**

BASS

[HONEST REGRET, IN BETWEEN BREATHS]

Over the line, Bass. You went too far that time. You’re better than that. [DEEP SIGH AND HEAVY BREATHS]

**FADE OUT**

**ACT V**

**DIGITAL RECORDER TURNED ON.**

**WE’RE IN THE GALLY FOR THE BREAKFAST RUSH. SOFT JAZZ IN PLAYING IN THE BACKGROUND AND WE HEAR THE OCASIONAL CHATTING DINING SOUNDS.**

 BASS

March 10, 2023; current time 07:18 hours; this is Supervisory Deputy Marshal Bass Marlow reporting. No active investigation. We’re four weeks into the winter season and things are starting to slide into their natural routines on station.

I’m continuing my conversations and preparation efforts with Ms. Sally Kirkland with the President’s chief of staff team. Late yesterday I received work the judicial review committee officially said they had gathered all the paperwork and details they needed to conduct their thorough reviews.

In speaking with Marshal Murphy, she said the amount of hoops I’ve been jumping through was not anywhere close to the background and paperwork she had to fill out for her senate confirmation. I’m fairly sure the volume of data has to do with whatever the President and his co-horts have planned to try and get my nomination rejected. Sydney says it’s best not to make a mountain out of a paperwork molehill just yet; to sit back and wait to see what the next step should be without over-thinking it. Yeah, good luck with that one!

The hearing to begin the formal review of the nominations hasn’t been scheduled yet. Ms. Kirkland says we’re still around 6-8 weeks away most likely. Most times the senate board will review non cabinet level nominees in bulk and issue a blanket approval or rejection. She did say it wasn’t unusual for one nominee to be reviewed separately if there was something of concern in the background. [SARCASTIC] Gee, I hope that doesn’t happen to me!

We’re. . .I should say the gang is getting ready and preparing for next month and for events [HESITANT] which I can’t really get into on an official recording. Sydney has acclimated himself very easily into our team and no surprise; the crew all love having him there.

I know we’re all adults; but Sydney is that calm, cool voice of adult reason the rest of us can lack sometimes. As far as I go; he’s a perfect balance of wisdom and knowledge to my knee jerk reactions and spontaneity. Yes. . .I can in fact be spontaneous, when I need to be.

 JOVAC

 [IN THE BACKGROUND AND ON CLOUD NINE]

On happy day, a huge stack of pancakes and grape Jelly everybody! [HAPPY LAUGH] You’re not the only astrophysicist who ranks a big stack of flapjacks, Neil! Suck it Professor Degrass-Pluto Hater! [WITH PANCKAES IN HIS MOUTH] Punk-ass!

 BASS

 [CHUCKLES]

As you probably heard, the supply snafu issues have been addressed. I have to hand it to my best buddy; Zeke really went outside the box for this fix.

He figured since Mister Kelley was the most efficient person on station; and as Cheryl-Lynn has all the gossip and knows what’s going on; that the two of them could work together to get supply lists down to the arches for everything needed. It’s only been 24 hours so far, but Damned if it isn’t working! He’s putting in for a seasoned logistics pro to be hired on at the start of summer as a permanent fix; but for now, this seems to be a band-aid solution that will hold until then.

Nothing more from Josh Nichols since the winter season started and none of us accepted his ultimate of leaving; or else! From what I’ve seen, I can’t say that I’m too surprised. Bragging for the sake of bragging isn’t his style. No, I have no doubt he’ll be back in contact again; but it will be part of something much larger.

So, for now, we’ll just take things day by day while we wait for that other shoe to drop.

**OUTRO AND END CREDITS**