90 Degrees South

SEASON FOUR

EPISODE EIGHT: When Fever Spreads and the Shadows Holds Their Secrets.

DRAFT 1: MAR 11, 2025



by

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**BMB Productions LLC**

**SONG AND INTRO**

**ACT I**

**RECORDING STARTED**

**OUTSIDE, WALKING IN SHOW AND HEAVY WINDS.**

 THOMAS
 HE DIDN’T GIVE YOU ANY IDEA AT ALL?

 BASS

NOTHING! JUST SAID GRAB YOU, GRAB YOUR SOCKS AND HEAD OVER TO THE BARN IMMEDATLEY.

 THOMAS

 WHY SOCKS?

 BASS

I DON’T KNOW. IT’S ZEKE. WHEN HE GETS EXCITED ABOUT ANYTHING, HE JUST USES RANDOM WORDS OUT OF PLACE. YOU’VE KNOWN HIM LONGER THAN ME MISTER KELLEY!

**THERE IS THE LOUD SWING OF A METAL DOOR AND THEN IT CLOSES, KILLING OFF THE WIND NOISE. THE GUYS UNZIP THEIR OUTER LAYERS AND OPEN THE INNER DOOR.**

 ZEKE

 [WORRIED]

The hell took you two so long? Didn’t I say damn quick?

 BASS

Jeeze Mister Station Manager! Sorry we had all that blizzard to wade through.

 ZEKE

 Naw, naw lawman, I’m sorry. It’s just…damn it!

 THOMAS

 [CONCERNDED]

 Zeke? What happened? What’s the matter?

 ZEKE

Man! [DOESN’T KNOW HOW TO SAY IT] Okay its…it’s like…

BASS
Okay, you’re freaking me out here buddy. Just…there…sit down and let’s talk this through.

 **SIT AT CONFERENCE TABLE**

 ZEKE

Ok, ya’ll remember last month, before you all headed out to Emery’s station, we had a meeting out here? Patrick had been updating the wiring and was sleeping in the back room for a few days?

 THOMAS

Yeah, hard to forget that smell. Made me kind of lightheaded.

 ZEKE

Remember when we said we had that other room that could be cleared out to make a second room ? Where the kitchen area for the old pole would be. Well, I figured since things were going fairly smooth recently, I’d head on over there and start some clear out. I started moving old crates and boxes, when I found one that looked like them soft isolated cooler bags.

BASS
Go on.

ZEKE

Well, the flap was open, and I looked in to make sure it was empty. And uh…well It wasn’t.

 THOMAS

What was inside of it?

**UNZIP OF JACKET**

 ZEKE

I took a photo before I walked the whole thing outside and buried it for safety. Put a marker flag over it into the ice so we can find it again.

**CLICK OF THE CELL PHONE FINDING PHOTOS**

THOMAS
 [NERVOUS]

 Uh-oh!

 ZEKE
 You damned right uh-oh. You look lawman.

 BASS

 Uh-oh. Is this…

 ZEKE

Yep, That’s a biological hazard warning sticker on the inside. That vial within, notice how the contents leaked out and stained the inside of the case. Also, look at the label.

 BASS

 [READING]

Beauregard-Lowing Viral Research Department

B.S.L. Dash three. Cox….Cox\*i? ….. Coxiella Burnetii. June 1, 1993. [SIGH] Well, I think it’s safe to say Coxiella Burnetii isn’t a researcher’s name! This bag was in the room behind where we have the bedroom set up.

 ZEKE

 [GUILTY]
Yeah. Damn Lawman! I’m so sorry! We were so excited to set this place up for you that it just never occurred to us that we should first check the rest of the joint out! Stupid!

 BASS
Zeke! C’mon man. This isn’t your fault! It’s not anybody’s fault other than some moron from 1993 who didn’t secure samples properly. Guys let’s take a few breaths here and logic this out.

 THOMAS

 [COVERS HIS NOSE AND MOUTH]

Gosh! Is it even safe to breath in here anymore?

 BASS

GUYS! Seriously…okay, this picture says the sample was out here in 93, what is that, almost thirty years ago? The vial is broken. The bottom of the…cooler or bag or whatever is stained! Frozen liquids don’t tend to stain, so any exposure occurred long before the station was shut down in the early two thousands. It’s been exposed to air all that time, in constant below freezing temps. We may not have anything to worry about here.

 THOMAS

 [STILL COVERING HIS MOUTH AND NOSE]

I don’t know Deputy Marshal. I think we ….

 BASS

We will Mister Kelley! We will. First, let’s take this photo in and show it to Doctor Timms. If she doesn’t know what Coxel…whatever is; she can look it up and tell us if there is reason to worry, and if there is, how much worry.

 ZEKE

I’m kinda with Tommy on this Bass. I need to think like the station manager on this one. I got all these people I’m looking over and taking care of.

 BASS

I get that buddy, I swear I do. Look at the facts first. That bag with the vial has been sitting here at least since ’98; maybe all the way back to 93. Even if it’s airborne and we’ve been infected

 THOMAS

[GASP]

 BASS

…which I’m NOT saying we are; we’ve been exposed to it for over three months now since we first stating using the Barn. We’ve been back and forth from the main station to here, for the main station to the external science buildings. If….\*IF\* there is contamination potential, it may have already spread station wide.

 ZEKE

You trying to help this here situation Lawman or trying to give me higher blood pressure?

 BASS

My point is…if it got out, isolation of the 9 people who’ve been in the Barn wouldn’t matter. We’re all stuck here at Amundsen-Scott until October and the Summer season anyway. De Facto quarantined. Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let’s go talk to Doctor Timms?

 THOMAS
 [HAND OVER MOUTH AND NOSE]

Not to…alarm you Deputy Marshal; but hasn’t Doctor Jennings been under the weather several times recently?

BASS
[REMAINING CALM, BUT KNOWS THOMAS IS RIGHT]

You’re correct Mister Kelley; she has been but again…we don’t know what symptoms we’re supposed to be on the lookout for. Let’s get more information, understand what this is and what we should do, what to look out for and how to deal with it…then we’ll be in a better place.

**POCKET ZIP**

**RADIO SQUAK**

 BASS

Doctor Timms?

**PPT**

 KATHERINE

Go ahead Marshal. Just finishing up me eggs and potatoes.

**RADIO SQUAK**

BASS

Doctor, Zeke and I need to chat with you. Privately. We’re…in one of the exterior buildings but we’re heading back. 15 minutes.

**PPT**

 KATHERINE

There’s a bit of worry in your voice there, Marshal. Alright lads, we’ll have a chat in my office once you’re back. I’ll see you then, yeah?

**FOOTSTEPS TOWARDS THE DOOR AND IT OPENS…**

**RECORDING OFF**

**ACT II**

**FADE IN**

**WE’RE INSIDE CLUB MED. INSIDE OF THE PRIVATE OFFICE. OUTSIDE WE CAN HEAR MUMURING OF TWO MEDICAL ASSISTANTS AND STANDARD HOSPITAL SOUNDS.**

KATHERINE

 [SHOCKED/ANGRY]

*Sweet suffering Jaysus*, what in the name of all that’s holy made ye think *that* was a grand idea?!

 BASS

 Doctor! It’s not like he knew that it was…

 KATHERINE

Oh, I don’t remember asking you a single thing Marshal! You’ll get your turn I promise! Now, out with it Ezekiel. You see a vial with BSL-3; Bio Safety Level three on it and you stick your nose in the case?

 ZEKE

I didn’t know what was gonna be inside!

 KATHERINE

The scary looking forked togues making a circle on the yellow background didn’t give you a clue?

 ZEKE

Okay now to be fair! The one on the outside bag was facing away from me. It wasn’t until I opened the top that I saw the one inside.

 BASS

Besides, who puts contaminates inside of a food storage area?

 KATHERINE

I suppose I shouldn’t even be asking you boys what you were doing inside the old pole anyway? Something to do with where Fredrick sneaks off to every so often. Sneaking some booze are we?

 BASS

[DEFLECTING]

It’s um….it’s complicated Doctor.

 KATHERINE

Fine, fine! Keep your secrets if you must. I’ve heard of this disease of yours before. It’s also known as Q Feaver. It’s zoological based and can be passed to humans through dried animal fluids. Birth products, urine, feces or milk which becomes aerosolized and inhaled.

 ZEKE

That’s how we think we got it doc. By inhaling the air in the room next to where the open container was.

 KATHERINE

But if I remember correctly human to human transmission is almost…

**CLICKING OF KEYS**

 KATHERINE

Yes, as I thought. Human to human transition is exceedingly rare, and when it does occur, it’s through blood transfusions, sexual contact, close intimate exchanges. That sort of thing.

 BASS

 So then, if we do have it….

 KATHERINE

The changes you brought it back are as close to zero as they can get. Only exception would be if you’re having relations with anybody on station.

 BASS

Like Kendra and I; or Mister Furgerson and…

 ZEKE

 Oops!

 KATHERINE

 Oh, you boys, you boys!

 ZEKE

So then, what imma hearin is that we have less to worry about than we thought when we first walked in.

 KATHERINE

It not all smooth sailing lads. I’m going to want to run a full panel of blood tests on each of you.

 ZEKE

Aw man! I hate needles!

 KATHERINE

Oh, would ye cop on, Ezekiel! I’ll be stickin’ a *tiny* needle in yer arm, not hackin’ it off with a butter knife!

Of the nine people you listed off that are part of your little Hallions group, anybody have any unusual symptoms? Symptoms like fatigue, nausea & vomiting, dizziness or lightheadedness – blood pressure issues or muscle aches, joint pain ?

**THREE BEAT**

That look you two are passing between each other tells me it’s a yes. Who will we be starting with?

 BASS

 [GRIMLY]

Kendra has every symptom you just described. Level with me Doctor Timms; is this thing curable?

 KATHERINE

It is. If any of you turn out to have it, the tests should say if it is acute or evolved into chronic. If it’s mild to moderate, I’ll have you on an antibiotic like Doxycycline for a couple weeks and you’ll be right as rain. If it’s taken hold and progressed, it’s still treatable, but with some concerns to the heart valves or liver. Let’s see what tests come back with before we start prescribing treatment there Marshal.

I’m assuming since you didn’t want to talk about this in the open you want me to also be discrete with the blood tests?

 ZEKE

Probably for the best, yeah Doc.

 KATHERINE

Why am I not surprised. Alright. We’ll start with Kendra then. One of you two buffoons can explain to her why she needs to come in and I’ll start Blood Draws, Serology Processing, CBC & Liver Function Tests and throw in PCR testing since you’re ruining my day!

Because it’s just me doing the drawls and testing, this will take about a day for each person tested.

 BASS
I understand. Thank you doctor. Very much.

 KATHERINE

We’ll do everything we can Marshal. Don’t go worryin’ too much now.

**FOOTSTEPS OUT THE DOOR INTO THE MAIN MEDICAL FACILITY. BEGIN FADE OUT**

**ACT III**

**WE ARE INSIDE THE NON-SECURE CONFERENCE ROOM. THE TEAM HAVE ALL GATHERED, THE FIRST MEETING SINCE RETURNING FROM ROBERTA BONDAR.**

 SHEPARD

 [PROUD,HAPPY]

…working even better than any of our previous forecast models were predicting. I know, Doctor Waynewright, that the loss of time from having to ensure the station didn’t break up going through the bulk wasn’t planned. However, to call Event four a failure would be a massive disservice.

 LARRY

 [CONTEMPLATING]

I must admit; leery as I may have been at first; this latest data is turning out to be a wonder surprise. You say this is the third verified signal recorded.

 SHEPARD

 [HAPPY]

The third. At this point I am more than confident in saying, unless there are unforeseen external environmental factors introduced, the ability to fully track the station is more than confirmed.

 KARL

Indeed, indeedy-do! With this new information and tracking the unique gravimetric resonance frequency from the beacons signature against the local bane background, we can monitor the station as it move within null space and its bane, superimposing the intersection points and time with our reality. Wonderful news.

 JOYCLYN

So, when she re-appears in a year; we can have a strike force armed and ready to secure the station. Was a bit surprised to see that recommendation to Beauregard Lowing and the Defense Intelligence Agency coming from you, Waynewright.

 JEMMA

Do you all honestly believe it’s going to be necessary to take such, drastic and direct steps? I mean Emery is there.

 JOYCLYN

Don’t go getting all soft on us luv! Remember that Marlow and his mates have now bullocks things up not once, but TWICE on that station. Interfering in classified government operations and jeopardizing national security.

 JEMMA
Don’t forget saving your life. Oh, and most likely the rest of ours as well from stopping you during your psychotic episode.

 JOYCLYN

 [DEFENSIVE]

His uninvited and constant presence no doubt amplifying the effects of the background I’m sure. Had he not buggered his way on station without an invite, my reaction most likely, would have only been mild irritation and not as pronounced.

 JOVAC

 [SERIOUS, NOT SARCASTIC]

Snuck up from behind and sedated by a man with a ventriloquist dolly. We’ve all been there, right! Right?

 LARRY

Be that as it may…I must agree with Doctor Lorenz. Let not be too hasty with Mister Waters. His familiarity with the station and the artificial intelligence may be a valuable commodity.

 JEMMA

He’ll never betray the station, or Kylie and willingly share data with us!

 SHEPARD

 [PROUD OF HIMSELF]

Oh…I think the situation isn’t as complicated as you believe, Doctor. I was waiting until we could all be present and gathered together to share this little tidbit.

**PAUSE FOR EFFECT**

 SHEPARD

I implanted the malware virus while on station.

**STUNNED SILENCE**

 LARRY

 [ANGER]

You did what?

 SHEPARD

 [ANNOYED]

Don’t everybody rush to thank me all at once!

 JOYCLYN

 [SURPRISED]

You mean it was deployed after all?!?

 LARRY

 [FURIOUS]

I was to be consulted…BEFORE that plan was implemented.

 JOYCLYN

And if it had been \*me\* who initiated the plan, I would have. Nobody could have predicted what was going to happen. Dellham made a split second call. [CONFUSED] but how did you get access, get past the AI Trollip?

 SHEPARD

When beacon three went down and had to be wiped and software reinitialized, I was the only one left in the room. Doctor Dobber had left previously and Joyclyn stormed off to find the intruder, leaving behind her bag with the virus on the cell phone. I had to be given basic access rights to upload the beacon and tie its systems in with the other three. When I was given that access…I uploaded. It was successful.

 JOVAC

 [CONFUSED}

What are we talking about now?

 JEMMA

I still think is an overly aggressive direction.

 SHEPARD

 [PURTURBED]

I’m sorry, I though the goal of this ENTIRE project, was not simply to locate and secure that station…but to **[SO HEAVILY REDACTED]** for the security of the country? Removing the firewall that A.I. represents and is in our way is a problem. I just introduced a solution to that problem, and you all want to criticize me?

 JOYCLYN
I for one, think you did a bang-up job. Stepped up when I was…incapacitated.

 LARRY

Nevertheless…[SIGH] what has been done is done. I’ll need to notify Beauregard-Lowing once we’re concluded here. We’ll need to ensure plans going forward take this factor into consideration.

 JEMMA

 [SARCASTIC]

Your plans to storm the battlements and secure the castle? With this ‘strike team’ you proposed?

Nothing like securing the station for five days with a team of grunts with twitchy trigger-fingers and brutish demeanors. No offense agent.

 LARRY

Oh, I don’t just plan to secure the castle for five days doctor. My proposal is to continue and coordinate project Atlas, in conjunction with the team here in Amundsen Scott, from within the Canadian station. Myself and two teams of specialist will be attending Event 5, where we will take up permanent residence until the station can be stabilized.

SHEPARD LORENZ KARL

What? What?!? Oh, I love a great

plot twist!

**FADE OUT**

**ACT IV**

**FADE IN**

**WE’RE INSIDE THE AMUNDSEN-SCOTT DATA CENTER, NEW ROOM WE’VE NEVER BEEN IN FOR PAST EPISODES. A LOT OF FAN AND COOLING NOISES.**

 BASS

Okay, thank you everybody for showing up quickly. I assure you all wouldn’t be here right now if this wasn’t important.

 PATRICK

Like, why are we inside the computer aquarium and not the Barn?

 JOHNSON

[IMPRESSSED WHISTLE] Wow! Look at all the electronic doohickeys. These the things that help us get to the moon in ‘69?

 FRED

Sixty-nine! Nice one blue guy. Know what I’m sayin’

 ZEKE

 [SERIOUS]

Come on now ya’ll. This here is serious. Need you all to listen up. Now..ahem. [NERVOUS] Look first off I need to say how sorry I am. There was no….aw man…ain’t no easy way to say this…

 THOMAS

[MATTER OF FACTLY]

Zeke was cleaning up inside the rooms behind the barn and found a viral infectious agent from 1993.

**DEAD SILENCE FOR A FEW SECONDS**

 THOMAS

What? My mom always said don’t sugarcoat issues. Just spill the news so you don’t have to pay for cavities later.

 ZEKE

 [RELEIEVD BUT SHOCKED THOMAS DID THAT]

Thanks Tommy!

SYDNEY

Oh my!

 CHRIS

Wait, are you guys being serious right now?

 FRED

What kind of infection we talking about? Is it like…the gout? Does the station have the right medicine?

 BASS

It’s not the gout Mister Ferguson, look…everyone…please… we’ll tell you everything we know and what next steps should be.

 KENDRA

 [NERVOUS]

Is this …is this why I’ve been so sick?

 BASS

We think so. Maybe. [TWO BEAT AND THEN TO THE GROUP] Look, this is what we know.

Earlier today Zeke was cleaning up that storage room behind where the bed space in the barn sits. Was going to make it ready to be another usable berth. Anyway, there was a collapsible foam insulated cooler and inside that cooler was a lab vial from 1993. It had been damaged and leaked contents out into the bag.

 ZEKE

That bag had been sitting there in that room. Since the 90’s when the old pole was shut down and until today when I found it. I took it, walked out about 200 feet and buried that contained in the ice. Marked it and called in Tommy and the Lawman.

 BASS

We immediately went to doctor times with pictures of the vial so we could figure out what it was. According to her it’s called Q-fever.

**TWO BEAT, EVERYBODY LOOKS AT EACH OTHER**

 CHRIS

A virus that will make us omnipotent? Like Q from Star Trek

 FRED

Whoa whoa whoa. If this gout can take out little Fred, we have to do something like NOW!

 THOMAS
What, no. He said OM-NIP-OTENT…not…

 FRED

 [WORRIED]

Ain’t nothing nipping my tent!

 KENDRA

[SCARED]

WILL YOU ALL SHUT THE FUCK UP AND LET HIM TALK!

**LET THAT LAND FOR EFFECT**

 ZEKE

 Hey Doc, it’s gonna be okay!

 KENDRA

 [SCARED]

 How can you possibly know that?

 SYDENY

Look everyone, I know I’m the newest kid in the club here, but maybe we should let the fellas get the whole story out. Tell us everything about what Katherine told them and then we can ask questions once we have the full story? Would that be okay?

 PATRICK

Makes sense to me.

 KENDRA

Yeah, same here.

**MIND READ**

 **Mind read**

 SYDNEY

 Go ahead Bass. You were saying…Q-Fever?

BASS
Right, thanks Syd. Um…So based on the scientific name on the vial, she said it was also known as Q-fever. That it comes from farm animals, livestock and infects humans from the excrement that dries and is spread through the air. It’s not fatal, extremely easy to cure if we have it with medicine she has on station, and it’s only serious if the exposure was extreme or goes untreated for too long.

**A COMBINED AUDIBLE SOUND OF RELEIF FROM THE GATHERING.**

 PATRICK

So, like…even if we have it, we take two Advil and get on with our bad selves?

 CHRIS

 What are the symptom of the Virus?

BASS

Um, it was…muscle and joint pain. General low energy, lightheaded, feeling sick and vomiting were the ones I remember.

She wants us all to come in for blood testing. Even though this virus can’t really be spread person to person; we want to avoid station panic. So, we’re going to go in one at a time and Doctor Timms will run a series of tests on each of us.

We’ll start with anybody who is exhibiting any of the symptoms I listed or if you have any other concerns like low immune system.

 KENDRA
 [NERVOUS]

Well. I know I’ve had all those and them some since we’ve been using the Barn.

 ZEKE

 [FEELS HORRIBLE]

I am so sorry about that Kendra. I should have search everything more fully before we started using it. I can’t fix what’s already happened, but I can sure as hell make sure there ain’t nothing else nasty in there. I…I hope you can forgive me.

 KENDRA
It’s not your fault Zeke. You had no way of knowing. Nobody would suspect a highly dangerous virus would be left in the open and in a highly public place in 1993. You did nothing that needs forgiving.

 BASS

Anybody else have symptoms?

 JOHNSON

I’m fine fiddle G-man. I don’t have the same guts and gizzards I had before becoming a puppet. Pretty sure I’m aces.

 PATRICK

But like…what about the big guy? HEY…GERMAN MOUNTAIN?!? YOU ALL … CHILLIN?

 JOHNSON

The Palooka is all good hop-head! Never get sick or takes it on the chin. All the same, I’d have the moose here check in with the paddy-croaker and get the old high-hey-howdy. [THOUGHT} Maybe have her take a look at the old war wound downstairs while I’m at it.

 FRED
OHH! I ain’t ever fought no puppet before, but you try any of that furry stuff on my girl; gorilla or no gorilla behind you; we gonna have words! Know what I’m sayin’?!?!

SYDNEY

Am I the only one curious, why Amundsen Scott was storing dangerous biological viral agents back in the 90’s? The only one alarmed at the carelessness and disregard of how sample were handled.

 KENDRA
It’s top of my mind Sydney, trust me!

 BASS

If we’re going to keep on using the barn, we’ll need to do a complete search of the other rooms to ensure no more little surprises.

 THOMAS
 [WORRIED]

We don’t have biohazard suits or any Tyvek gear. The closest thing we have would be Fire gear and respirators.

 BASS

That will have to do then. Let’s figure out the order of blood testing, tell Doctor Timms and then later Today Fred and I can gear up and do a full search of the rest of the barn building.

 FRED

Better not get no gout, know what I’m sayin’?

 BASS

I’m going to walk Kendra over to the clinic and get her started with blood work. For the blood testing order, just put me last.

 ZEKE

Last one after me, got it.

 KENDRA

Honey, I appreciate the offer, but I want to go by myself. I’m okay…sort of.

 BASS
You sure?

 KENDRA
I’m sure.

 BASS

Alright.

**KISS ON CHEEK**

BASS
I’ll come see you later tonight, after Fred and I are done with the Barn.

 **FOOTSTEPS DOWN THE SERVER ROOM.**

 **FADE OUT**

**ACT V**

 **DIGITAL RECORDER START**

 **INSIDE OF BASS’ OFFICE**

 **BASS**

Tuesday, May 2, 2023.  It’s um… 13:40 hours. Supervisory Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Marlow.

During routine activities here on station, a discarded vial of what later turned out to be a contagious viral agent was discovered.

Using the date printed on the vial’s label as the oldest date and the formal decommission date of the area it was found in, would put the sample somewhere between fifteen and twenty years since contamination. Despite the sample being exposed to the elements during this time, we are not taking this lightly.

With research, our doctors found that while dangerous, it is not easily passed human to human, and thankfully, there is a cure. The nine of us who were potentially exposed are submitting for blood testing, starting with Kendra, who has shown symptoms known to be caused by the virus.

We’re keeping this potential exposure contained within just our group and Doctor Timms, avoiding any potential scare of the rest of the station. Because of this, Doctor Timms will be conducting all the blood pathology herself, which will take approximately 12 hours per person for the tests to fully have results.

She can run some tests in parallel; however, this will take about a week to fully test everybody. I’m worried about Kendra. I mean… not just about the potential exposure, but between this, the stress of her new position, late nights preparing for the Senate confirmation hearings… she looks worn out. Tired. This health scare is the last thing she needed. Any of us needed, really.

Um… next item… my nomination has formally been forwarded to the Senate for a full vote, scheduled for a few weeks from now. That is the last hurdle before being formally sworn in as U.S. Marshal. Not getting my hopes up. A few weeks here is like a few years anyplace else, and a lot can happen.

As expected, the President’s chief of staff and his office have distanced themselves—not out of concern for appearances, but because they failed to discredit me and know I see the railroading for what it is.

If I thought I was getting media interest from the Dream Wax drug interdiction, now it’s ten times the requests. Zeke suggested I actually take up a few media requests for interviews and—

**PAUSE, AUDIBLE SIGH**

Right. Like that’s what I need—more people trying to pick apart my words, twisting them into something else entirely. I told Zeke I’d think about it, but honestly, what’s the upside? I give an interview, and suddenly, I’m either the poster boy for justice or the villain in some political hit piece. No thanks. I’ve got enough on my plate.

I’m getting a few emails in from senate staffers on how events will unfold if I am fully approved. Obviously I won’t be able to travel to Washington to formally be sworn in. I can get my badge and credentials except through the mail and once the summer season arrives. Plus, I’ll need to start selecting some staff that I can assign to…

**SATELLITE PHONE RINGS**

**DESK DRAWER OPENS, PHONE EXTRACTED AND PLACED ON THE DESKTOP**

**CLICK SPEAKER PHONE**

 BASS

 Supervisory Deputy Marshal Bass Marlow speaking.

 GABLE

Marshal Marlow, or is that not fully presumptive right now?

 BASS
Deputy Marshal would be preferred; I’m sorry may I ask who this is?

 GABLE

*I’m answering the message you placed in the* Poughkeepsie Journal. I’ll fully admit that I wasn’t 100% sure you were the one who placed it until I heard you answer. Marshal Goodwin said you’d be contacting me if anything happened to him.

BASS

Mister Gable?

 GABLE

Just Gable is fine. Congratulations on the judiciary hearing and out maneuvering Hawkes and his band of malcontents by the way, masterfully done.

 BASS

 [A LITTLE TAKEN ABACK]

I didn’t think you’d actually….that you’d be calling…I have so many questions.

 GABLE

Well for security reasons, we’ll need to limit our first chat to only a few minutes. I need to assess just how vulnerable two-way communications will be with you at the pole. In the interest of time why don’t you ask me the most burning question you have; we’ll work from there.

 BASS

Who killed Charlie and Janet Goodwin?

 GABLE

I still have my ears towards the intelligence community. After it happened the prevailing theory was D.O.D.. Your old friend Joyclyn Fowler with Defense Intelligence the obvious choice as the assassin, which is why I discounted it right away. I only met her one time, but it seemed to up and close and personal for her.

It took some digging, but the Ministry of State Security, Chinese intelligence was flagged. They had the right assets in Honolulu at the time. The used the same method to kill several politicians in Taiwan and Austrillia a few years ago, making it look like Mossad was responsible. I was able to verify the murder was approved and ordered by Chen Wenqing, head of the MSS at the time. Several months later the bastard got promoted for that by President Jinping.

 BASS

So, it was the Chinese government that killed him and Janet.

 GABLE

Yes.

 BASS

If the intelligence knows this, then what are they doing about it?

 GABLE

Officially, nothing. Unofficially, it’s just one more excuse President Campbell has been using the further his isolationist policies. The murder has also been exploited internally by non-government agencies. The evidence that was found a few months ago inside the home of that Beauregard-Lowing Vice President, the one being accused of treason…he was set up.

 BASS

Let me guess. By DARPA?

 GABLE

You’re smarter than I gave you initial credit for being Deputy! Avory Maddox, currently the number two man inside of DARPA. Most likely. I expect it was originally intended to be placed inside the home of…

 BASS

Madaline Dantes. Doctor Waynewright’s predecessor and director of research and development military technologies; now Chief of Operations inside of Beau-low.

 GABLE

Which answers my next question. Marshal Goodwin sent you the data and information I gave him last year. Excellent. This means I don’t need to waste time in bringing you up to speed.

 BASS

What is it you’re after Gable? Why give all that information to Chuck? Why reach out to me after I sent the information to the Poughkeepsie Journal?

What’s your goal in all of this?

 GABLE

I thought that be obvious by now Deputy Marshal. I intended to bring down Beauregard Lowing, DARAP and current factions within the United States Government. It’s why I have a shoot on site order pined on me. That and information our government, and a dozen other know I have. They’re scared that I’ll attempt to use it to do…exactly what I’m attempting to do.

**THREE BEAT**

 BASS

Section 3093.

 GABLE

Deputy Marshal, you’re reinforcing my opinion of you minute by minute. I need to cut this initial conversation short. I need to assess what steps may or may not have been taken to intercept this call so I can tailor my next communication with you.

 BASS

That’s a bit presumptive. How can you be so sure I’ll reach out again?

 GABLE

You want Tesla’s Journal. Scratch that…you NEED Tesla’s journal. You need it to ensure it stays out of the hands of people both you and I want to keep it from. Dantes and Maddox. You’ll call again, especially since I’m absolutely positive the journal is somewhere in Antarctica. Still.

 BASS

So, I should use the same method next time. To contact you?

 GABLE

No. Next time submit a legal notice using the words ‘Lyon County School District’ in the title. Spell Lyon with a Y and not an I.

Cut and paste whatever you want in the main body of the text. Say all questions must be asked by April 1, 2024, and give the phone number for the main desk of the US Marshals Office in New York City. I’ll know that’s you and you want to talk.

One last thing…

 BASS
Go ahead.

 GABLE

After the senate judiciary hearing. Your name has become lit up within the intelligence community. The amount of interest you had on you previously has doubled. You know the term ‘head on a swivel’?

 BASS
Intimately!

 GABLE

Make it your new mantra. I’ll be in touch.

**DISCONNECT SOUND.**

**PHONE HUNG UP.**

 BASS

[DEEP BREATH AND EXHAIL. ALOUD TO NOBODY IN PARTICULAR] I don’t have enough on my plate already?????

**DIGITAL RECORDER TURNED OFF.**

**ACT VI**

**FADE IN**

**WE HEAR THE BACKGROUND OF THE BARN. RESPIRATOR NOISES CAN BE HEARD FROM TWO BREATHING UNITS.**

 FRED

 [WORRIED]

I’m telling youse! My boys have been more itchy than normal, since this afternoon when you said we was exposed. What if this Q-thingy makes me important?

 BASS

 [ANNOYED]

That’s impotent. Itchy testicles and impotence wasn’t even one of the symptoms of the virus. You’re fine Mister Ferguson! It’s all in your head! Let’s keep focused here. We’re almost done.

 FRED

 [WORRIED]

I just know I have that gout! What if…what if little Fred can’t stand tall no more? Can’t be saluted? Know what I’m saying?

 BASS

 You’ll be fine. When do you go in for testing?

 FRED

Katherine has me in day after tomorrow. After Chrissy.

BASS
Good. Then I don’t have to hear about you misrepresenting what ‘gout’ is anymore after that. Is that box clear?

**BOX RUMMAGING**

FRED

Yes. Bunch of paperback books. Some yellow writing pads with science scribbles. Just more junk.

**BOX RUMMAGING**

BASS

Documents. Files. Looks like some lab tools, various items. Nothing hazardous. What’s always bothered me, is that the old pole structure was said to have been fully dismantled and taken off station. Right as the new station was being opened.

 FRED
Don’t look at me boss. I’ve only been down here a year longer than you. I mean yeah, a small handful of us knew she was still out here, but until your little secret club was formed, nobody gave two shits about this place. Always been off limits.

**BOX RUMMAGING**

 BASS
Last box. Okay we have…packaging materials. [CONTENT HAPPY DEEP BREATH, REMOVES RESPIRATOR]

Looks like whatever the bag was that Zeke found; it was the only vial of nasty stuff.

**FRED REMOVES RESPIRATOR**

FRED

Yeah. Even so…unless youse all find out the world is ending, it may be a while before I want to come out here. I don’t need no sores or gout on little Freddy!

 BASS

Mister Ferguson, your grasp of the here and now is perplexing to say the…check that out!

**FOOTSTEPS OVER**

 FRED

 [NERVOUS]

What? We suiting back up?

 BASS

No. No not that. Nothing bad…look at that artwork on the wall. It’s a framed chart or…map.

No, actually two maps side by side. The left is obviously the Amundsen Scott region. There’s us in the new station. The arches. Here’s where the dome was, and we are now. The dark sector, clear sector. Goes out beyond Spreso 8 kilometers and even further. They jotted down land features, existing cervices, points of interest.

 FRED

 [SARCASTIC]

Wow, fascinating! Can we go back now?

 BASS

The other side…well it’s absolutely McMurdo, well Mudtown back over ten years ago, but it has the same general area all around mapped…WHOA!

 FRED

Wish you’d stop getting surprised over there, boss! Making me antsy!

 BASS

Both of these are signed and dated by who I’m guessing is the person who drew them. S. Lukasik, January 2008.

 FRED

He like the Steve Jobs of map drawing or something?

 BASS
No. Think back Mister Ferguson! From the files my father in law left me about the journal. S. Lukasik. Doctor Stephen Lukasik! The last person we know had the journal in his hands. January 2008. The month the new station was dedicated.

**TWO BEAT**

This can’t be a coincidence. This has to be why the old pole was left partially standing. So, somebody would find …this! Help me out here, I’m moving this thing back into our Barn area.

**SMACKING OF A FLASHLIGHT ON THE SIDE.**

 FRED

Yeah, give me a second here Boss. My light is flickering. I think it may have the gout too!

**SOUND OF WIND OUTSIDE INTENSIFIES; IN THE BACKGROUND THE HEATER NOISE STARTS SPUTTERING.**

 **MORE FLASHINGLIGHT SMACKING**

 BASS

Now mine is acting up. Let’s get this thing down and head back… [SURPRISED JUMP] RODNEY!

 GHOST OF MARK

 [GHOSTLY FILTER]

I may have been the first…

 FRED

I’ve been waiting for this moment! IT’S PAYBACK TIME YOU SUCKER-PUNCHING, FRUIT PIE EATING DEAD-BOY!

 BASS

FRED NO!

RUNNING FOOTSTEPS AGAINST THE PREFAB FLOORING AND A GRUNT AS FRED LEAPS AT THE GHOST, FLYING THROUGH AND SMACKING AGAINST THE WALL. FRED LET’S OUT A GROAN.

 GHOST OF MARK

 [GHOSTLY FILTER, EVIL LAUGH]

But I won’t be the last. You will all…SUFFER!

 BASS

 [STANDING HIS GROUND]

Doctor Rodney. Can you understand me?

**SILENCE, JUST FRED BREATHING HEAVY. FRED SCRAMBLES TO HIS FEET**

 FRED

I ain’t ‘fraid of no ghost! Not even one who punches like a fairy! Float like a ghost, sting like MY FIST!

**FRED AIR PUNCHES AND GRUNTS. THE GHOST LAUGHS AGAIN. SAYING ONE LAST ELONGATED WORD AS HE SLOWLY FADES OUT OF SIGHT.**

 GHOST OF MARK

 Sooooooooooonnnnnnnnnnnnnnn!

**THE SPUTTER HEATER IN THE BACKGROUND STABILIZES AND GOES BACK TO WORKING. HEAVY BREATHING FROM THE TWO GUYS.**

 BASS

Seriously Mister Furgeson? Doctor Rodney’s vengeful spirit appears and. You want to slug him for payback? Being murdered wasn’t enough?

 FRED

Not my fault he got all corpse-i-fied! Punk-ass died before I got my due! I still owe him a punch to the face. Being dead is just an excuse from where I stand.

 BASS

 [STOPS TRYING TO TALK LOGIC TO HIM]

Just…help me bring this frame into the Barn and onto the conference table. I want to study it more.

**FRAME COMES OFF OF HOOK ON WALL.**

 **FOOTSTEPS OVER**

 FRED

Yeah, I’m coming. Hey, you think them eggheads know how I can right cross his see-through ass?

 BASS

We’ll figure that out later Mister Furgison. Grab that side.

 FRED

Little punk better start training, cause next time I’ll be exorcizing!

**FADE OUT OF FOOTSTEPS AND GRUNTING.**

**ACT VII**

**BASS’ RECORDER: RECORDING STARTED**

**WE’RE WALKING IN THE STATION HALLWAYS, ON THE WAY TO CLUB MED. THE FOOTSTEPS ARE HURRIED, BUT NOT RUSHING. BASS AND KENDRA TALKING EN ROUTE.**

 BASS

…but that we’ll deal with this together. It’s important to remember what Doctor Timms told us. It’s curable even if any of us did contract it.

KENDRA
I know all that sweetie. I just want to start feeling better regardless of how it happens. If that is with the antibiotics she has, then so be it. I’ve been on pins and needles since she started the testing yesterday.

**DOOR TO CLUB MED OPENS. STANDARD BACKGROUND NOISE**

BASS

Evening all. Is Doctor Timms in?

 MEDTECH

 She’s in her office.

 KENDRA
 Thank you.

**FOOTSTEPS OVER AND A KNOCK ON THE DOOR**

 KATHERINE

 Come in

**DOOR OPENS**

 KENDRA

 Doctor Timms?

 KATHERINE

Come in Doctor Jennings. Oh, you brought the Deputy Marshal with ya? You two, come on inside and have a seat.

 KENDRA

 [WORRIED]

Please tell me the news is all good.

 **THREE BEAT**

 KATHERINE

 The news is inconclusive for the moment.

 KENDRA
 [CONFUSED]

 What?

 BASS

 I don’t…understand.

 KATHERINE

I ran the PCR test myself and the first run came back negative for Coxiella Burnetti, but only one of the three markers could be found. IS1111, com1 & ICD. Your first test came back with only ICD present. If it had been any of the other two, I’d be confident you had the virus. Those two are unique to Q-fever. ICD is simply an additional, confirmatory marker. It’s common with bacterial infections such as eColi or Salmonella.

I wanted to make sure it wasn’t cross- contamination of the blood or equipment, so I started the sample early for Thomas. His test came back negative for any of the markers, so I could rule that out. I ran a second test with sample of Kendra’s blood I had left over and stored. This time it came back with clear ICD as with the first test, but this time I saw extremely weak results if IS111. So again; and to put it into the Deputy’s lingo. Q-fever is a subject of interest, but not a strong suspect yet.

 BASS

 [ANXIOUS]

So, what do we do now?

 KATHERINE

 [FRUSTRATED]

Deputy. Kendra is the patient at the moment. I need to be addressing her; not you. I know your heart is in the right place lad, but please cork your hole for now. Kendra…

 KENDRA
 [HEART SANK]

So, we run a third test?

 KATHERNIE

My first thought was to go ahead and get you on Doxycycline now; until I’m more confident I don’t want to be putting you on antibiotics if there isn’t a bacteria to fight. That would just be a bad idea all around and waste or resources.

The decision is up to you, but what I’d recommend is a full physical exam, including another round of testing yes. Because of the first two results, I’d normally suggest we do an IFA test, but we’re not set up for that here.

 KENDRA
What’s IFA?

 KATHERINE

Indirect Immunofluorescence Assay . It’s the gold standard, the Cadillac of blood testing. It is also the most definitive test that would absolutely tell us one way or the other. Unfortunately, this facility doesn’t have the right equipment. What we can do, and equipment I do have is a Hi-res digital fluorescent microscope. With another sample I can capture and transmit images of the results. We’d need to set up familiar and trained technician to handle and analyze the images and data transmitted. It’s known as Telepathology. I’d also have to get Mister Bustamante to fully dedicate a Passover of Lifeline 8 satellite to this test. Satellite 8 has the slowest pass and longest data transmission of four hours. I’ll need every bit of that.

 KENDRA

How long will all this take to have set up and the results back?

 KATHERINE

We can start the exam right now. Due all the blood testing and panel screens we need. I’ll need to call into the NSF to find and arrange a qualified technician who can be on standby to perform the testing…normally this would take two to three weeks to arrange; but with the NSF we should be able to cut that time down to 1 week, maybe five days.

 BASS
 [FRUSTRATED]

Five days?!?

 KATHERINE

Given where we are and the limitations on getting here…I’d think you’d be thanking your lucky stars that it’s only five days!

 BASS
I’m, sorry, I’m sorry doctor. You’re right. Kendra?

 KENDRA
Let’s get started.

 KATHERINE

I’ll take you over to exam one. Deputy, you’ll excuse us won’t you?

 BASS

Of course. Meet you in the galley afterwards Sweetheart.

 KENDRA
 [NERVOUS]

Bass?

 BASS

Yes?

 KENDRA
I love you.

 BASS

I love you too sweetheart, but let’s keep positive thoughts okay.

**FOOTSTEPS OFF AND FADE OUT**

**SONG AND OUTRO.**