

Starship: Excelsior
"Afters"
(Season 6, Episode 8)
By James Heaney

Transcribed by Peter Stine

Note: Lines in brackets were recorded but interrupted. The complete line is left here for fuller context:

SCENE 6X-01**LOCATION: LARGE CONFERENCE HALL**

(Underwood paces around the room)

UNDERWOOD: In conclusion, my former exec - my fellow captain - my friend cannot be held responsible for the terrible events that led to the loss of my old starship. Placed in an impossible situation, Captain Aleczahnder Lorhrok made an impossible decision. He used his authority, tempered by experience, to help his crew accept it. He knew that the alternative would lead many of his shipmates to their deaths. (pause) He was correct. While Captain Lorhrok was held captive by a mutinous barkeep, seventy-three crewmembers, nearly ten percent of the ship's complement, were lost and are presumed dead. Twenty-one more were dead upon recovery. If not for the blind luck of encountering Isaac Brahms, there would have been no survivors from the Starship Excelsior. Captain Lorhrok made a series of correct decisions that were unlawfully -- and fatally -- resisted. I would not want to remain part of a service that faulted him for that. The defense rests.

(Underwood walks to a table and sits)

(A tribunal bell is rung three times)

PARKER: The total loss of the U.S.S. Excelsior, NCC dash Two Thousand dash C, with so many dead or crippled, is a disaster. However, in light of the evidence presented, this tribunal has no choice under the law. We find Captain Lorhrok Not Responsible for this loss.

(A high-pitched whine builds and sustains)

PARKER: Mister Lorhrok, you are hereby granted four weeks' leave, at the end of which you will receive new orders. You are free to go.

(He rings the bell again. He, the other two members of the tribunal, and the prosecuting attorney, all file out.)

UNDERWOOD: (muffled) Captain. (pause) Captain Lorhrok. (pause) Exec. (pause) You w[on. You're free to go.]

UNDERWOOD: (While knocking on the desk) Knock-knock.

(Sound returns to normal)

LORHROK: Captain.

UNDERWOOD: You won.

LORHROK: Okay.

UNDERWOOD: Is that all?

(Pause)

LORHROK: Thanks.

(Pause)

UNDERWOOD: I thought you would uh... well, I suppose I thought it would help.

LORHROK: No.

UNDERWOOD: Well... try and make good use of the leave at least, Exec.

LORHROK: A few of the funerals were scheduled on the same day, but on different planets.
(deep breath and sigh) I need to visit the gravesites.

UNDERWOOD: Is that a... good idea? For you?

LORHROK: You're a captain.

UNDERWOOD: I've never lost... well, what you've lost.

LORHROK: You've lost enough to know that it doesn't matter what it does to me.

UNDERWOOD: No... I suppose it doesn't.

SCENE 6X-02**LOCATION: PARKER'S READY ROOM**

PARKER: Well, General Hanas, it's over. Lorhrok is Not Responsible.

HANAS: *You called me on holocomm halfway across the Federation to tell me something I'll see in tomorrow's paper?*

PARKER: I wanted to be the first to tell you you'd got what you wanted.

HANAS: *I didn't "want" this, Admiral. Frankly, I didn't care much one way or the other.*

PARKER: Because you made a key witness unavailable, I wasn't able to bring the evidence I needed to convict.

HANAS: *Convict? That sanctimonious child? (scoffs) Come now, Admiral. I want him discharged more than you do, mark that, but we both know he wasn't to blame. The Bolian blew up the Excelsior. And you dealt with him in short order.*

PARKER: Notice how carefully you avoid mentioning the contribution of your own, mysteriously unavailable, agent.

HANAS: *Commander Yubari is not "mysteriously" unavailable. I know exactly where she is.*

PARKER: She's been missing for six months.

HANAS: *Yes. And probably for the next eighteen. That's Intelligence. You're just salty there's something the great Admiral Parker isn't allowed to know.*

PARKER: The clearances I've been denied, it must be something crucial to Federation security.

HANAS: *Not really. I just don't like you, Athos. And I wanted you to know, when all your little spies and sniffers started poking around, that I have the power to keep things from you.*

PARKER: So now, while you play games, a dangerous man stays in the center seat.

HANAS: *(Sigh) Oh, come off it, Athos. You know he's innocent.*

PARKER: But too young, too naive. Dangerous.

HANAS: *Of course, but dangerous in all the ways you can't help admiring. (pause) Oh, yes, I see through you, Admiral. If you'd really wanted to destroy him, you would have found a way. You couldn't, because, beneath all your chessmen and your shades of gray, you're an idealist.*

PARKER: Is that a challenge?

HANAS: *Yes. The Federation is dying of idealists.*

PARKER: A lesson from your old commander.

HANAS: *General Brahms.*

PARKER: He takes a different view now.

HANAS: *He never really believed it, either. (pause) That's why we fell apart.*

PARKER: Where would you send Lorhrok?

HANAS: *After what he pulled at Romulus? The bottom of my darkest pit. The heart of a supernova, maybe?*

PARKER: Assume he's still a command-level officer in good st[anding.]

HANAS: *Why, Athos! Are you asking me for advice?*

PARKER: No. A perspective.

(Pause)

HANAS: *Well, we can't afford to have him in a position where he can change Federation policy again. Not after what he did to Vulcan.*

PARKER: Not Vulcan. Ni'Var. He took them from the brink of war to reunification -- just like he tried to do for his shipmates.

HANAS: *I didn't ask for your perspective, Parker. My advice? Put him away.*

PARKER: A distant outpost?

HANAS: *No, no, no. (small laugh) The edge of the frontier? Come on... That's asking for trouble. Why not put him in command of a stockade? It's where he belongs anyway.*

PARKER: (gasps) (snaps his fingers) U.P.

HANAS: *Excuse me?*

PARKER: The fleet yards, near Mars. He's an engineer, and there's a fifteen-year starship design project getting underway that needs a C.O.. I'll send him to U.P..

HANAS: *You're welcome. Now just do me one favor? Make sure he hates it.*

PARKER: I didn't thank you, General. I suppose it all depends how much he enjoys working with temporal tensors. That's the basis of the Oracle project, after all.

HANAS: *The what?*

PARKER: Oh, you must have been briefed. Atium-based tactics, chroniton weaponry... the U.S.S. Oracle project.

HANAS: *Ugh. Stupid name.*

SCENE 6X-03**LOCATION: BAJOR - A WINDSWEPT HILLOCK CEMETARY**

(Wind howls quietly in the background)

LORHROK: raka-ja ut shala morala... ema bo roo kana... uranak... ralanon Hahjes... propeh va nara ehsuk shala-kan vunek...

COX: Excuse me.

LORHROK: (Gasp) Captain!

COX: I'm sorry, I thought you were finished, um... you speak very good Bajoran.

LORHROK: Only the graveyard prayer. (takes a breath and sighs) Nine years and I still always think you're Captain Cortez. Can I help you, Skipper Cox?

COX: I'm the one who should be asking you that, Captain.

LORHROK: I'm fine. Thank you. Excuse me. I've an appointment.

(Lorhrok starts walking away)

COX: Oh, I like that. My go-to was always "I'm sorry, I've taken a vow of silence."

(Lorhrok stops.)

Translation: do not let him walk alone... guide him on his journey... protect... the one named Hodges... take him into the gates of the Celestial Temple...

LORHROK: That didn't actually work, did it?

COX: Usually surprised them long enough for me to make a break for it.

(Lorhrok walks back)

LORHROK: Look, Skipper, I do appreciate you taking a trip all the way to Bajor to, I guess, check in on me? But I'm working with an excellent counselor. And I do have a flight to catch.

(Lorhrok starts walking away)

COX: Hold your horses. I wanted to know if you were interested in a job.

(Lorhrok stops)

LORHROK: I've already received orders. Two weeks, Utopia Planitia Fleet Yards, further details upon arrival.

COX: And you'd do very well there, I'm sure. But you wouldn't see darkspace for a decade. I'm part of a small organization, (she walks closer) fully integrated with Starfleet, by the way, that goes everywhere and does everything.

LORHROK: I thought you were in the Teamsters Union.

COX: Wouldn't have it any other way. But on loan to Starfleet. My, uh, Committee has an opening for someone with your knowledge and experience.

LORHROK: Has Admiral Parker cleared this?

COX: Oh, no, I am very much going behind his back for this. He's not your biggest fan right now. But he owes me two favors and thirty kilos of leola root. I can twist his arm. But only if you're interested.

LORHROK: I'll bite: What's so special about my "knowledge and experience"?

(Footsteps approach from behind them)

COX: You know about the Sword of Damocles.

LORHROK: No, thank you. I appreciate the offer. But no. I have to be on the shuttle to DS9 by fifteen hundred.

GRAVEDIGGER: I've been waiting for you lot to come up.

LORHROK: Excuse me?

GRAVEDIGGER: Kallis Ren. Groundskeeper of this cemetery. (Bangs his shovel on the ground) I don't see how you expect young Hahjes Antos here to meet the Prophets anytime soon if you can't be bothered to come do his rites. I've been saying his duranja for you, no need to thank me. And where are your earrings?

COX: What?

(The gravedigger bangs his shovel on the ground)

LORHROK: We, uh, we aren't Bajoran, Mister Kallis.

GRAVEDIGGER: What? Not his family, then? (scraps his shovel on the ground) Uh, I apologize. I saw you making duranja, sir, and I assumed.

LORHROK: No harm done.

GRAVEDIGGER: If you don't mind my asking then, sir, where is young Hahjes' family? They ought to be here once a tenday like everyone else.

LORHROK: They told me they don't believe in the Prophets.

GRAVEDIGGER: But you do?

LORHROK: No, I'm sorry, I don't. (pause) But Antos did.

GRAVEDIGGER: Why, then, that's very decent of you, sir. You'll pardon me. Need to dig space for a new resident in the next tessipate.

(The Gravedigger walks away, his shovel scraping the ground.)

COX: You don't think Hahjes Antos--

LORHROK: Leftenant. Leftenant Hahjes.

(The shovel scrapes the ground in the distance)

COX: Sorry, Lieutenant Hahjes.

(The shovel scrapes the ground in the distance)

COX: If you don't think he can hear you... why come here? Why pray?

LORHROK: After you lost the Anbar... didn't you do the same thing?

COX: Oh, sure. But I meant my prayers. No offense.

LORHROK: Thank you for the job offer, Missus Cox.

(He starts to walk away. Cox follows)

COX: Okay, look. I didn't just come here to check up on you, and I didn't just come here to offer you a job. I came because I felt guilty, and I was looking for some cheap grace.

LORHROK: Guilty. You? Why?

(They stop)

COX: We have a mutual friend -- well, we did. He undermined your authority, attacked you, kidnapped you, almost got you killed. And, somehow, he blames you.

LORHROK: I'm aware.

COX: If he'd tried those things out in the Big Empty, I'll be frank, I would have had to put him out an airlock. (Pause) Frankly, I'm surprised Parker didn't.

LORHROK: Are you going somewhere with this, Skipper?

COX: I've just come from visiting him, and, well... I just felt... I needed you to know I want to help make up for what he did. I want you to know whose side I'm on.

LORHROK: Sides. That's why it happened. It was never about sides, Skipper.

COX: I didn't really sell you on this new job, did I?

LORHROK: Don't worry. I was a "no" before you finished your first sentence.

COX: Before I put my foot in my mouth?

LORHROK: Uh-huh.

COX: Mind telling me why?

LORHROK: You promised an adventure.

COX: What's wrong with that? Who doesn't like an adventure?

LORHROK: Where has adventure gotten us? You're so restless you can't even live with the people you spent your whole life saving. I lost everything! And him... well, you say you just saw him. (pause) Where are our lives, Skipper? Is this it?

COX: You're right, Captain: you need a break. Build your starship. The galaxy will be here. And my offer stands.

LORHROK: Why? You're friends with him, but so was I. You don't owe me anything.

COX: I think... My cousin, Captain Cortez, I think she really believed in you. And I think you've proved her right. And I think it would break her heart to know where it all led you.

LORHROK: You never even knew Cortez.

COX: And you don't believe in the Prophets. Yet here you are. (pause) I'll leave you to catch your flight. I have to consult something called the Orb of the Fallen or something horrible will happen next week.

LORHROK: Where?

COX: No idea. Don't worry. The Committee's on the case. See ya, Captain.

(She walks away)