

*Starship: Excelsior*

**"Shakedown"**

(Season 5, Episode 11)

by Michael Blais

Transcribed by Peter Stine

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

**SCENE 5X-01****LOCATION: USS RENEGADE - BRIDGE**

**NARRATOR:** *September Twelfth, Twenty-Three Seventy-Eight, four years before the Excelsior visits Valandria.*

**BRAHMS:** Tactical, what is our ETA to starbase?

**TACTICAL:** Four hours-forty seven minutes.

**BRAHMS:** Acceptable. Operations, what of repairs?

**OPERATIONS:** Ablative armor is still being patched. All primary systems are back online with damage control teams still working on secondary systems.

**TACTICAL:** Those pirates laid down some pretty heavy fire, but none of it was enough to penetrate the armor.

**BRAHMS:** Perhaps we should send them a thank-you card for giving the *Renegade* a proper combat test. I don't suppose we're at risk of being interdicted again between here and starbase?

**TACTICAL:** That depends.

**BRAHMS:** Don't be coy, Tactical. Depends on what, exactly?

**TACTICAL:** If the pirates were laying a trap, or they just got lucky. (pause) ...or unlucky, depending on the viewpoint.

**BRAHMS:** What does the Colonel think?

OPERATIONS: Colonel Hanas said she had no comment until she's had a little chat with our guest.

BRAHMS: "A little chat."

OPERATIONS: Her words, sir. As interim first officer, I presumed she had some discretion.

BRAHMS: (sigh) You presumed correctly, Operations. I have every confidence the Colonel will not abuse my sense of... decorum. Send her copies of your after-action reports; if the *Renegade* succeeds, she's first in line for the next *Kindred*-class starship.

OPERATIONS: Noted.

TACTICAL: Yes, sir.

(The turbolift door whooshes open. Colonel Hanas enters.)

HANAS: I have Engineering's report, General.

BRAHMS: Ah, Colonel, we were just discussing the future of the *Kindreds*. How has the *Renegade* performed on her shakedown cruise?

HANAS: In your office?

BRAHMS: If you'd prefer. Operations, you have the bridge.

OPERATIONS: Noted.

(Brahms gets up from his seat, then he and Colonel Hanas walk into the ready room.)

LOCATION: USS RENEGADE - READY ROOM

BRAHMS: Report?

HANAS: Given the crew's lack of experience with this ship class, the *Renegade* performed adequately.

BRAHMS: You don't think my crew measures up?

HANAS: I only think that the *Renegade* has many surprises. The specs we were briefed on depicted a stealth ship with a few teeth. The ship we just tested is nothing less than a warp-capable weapons platform. Just how much of the *Renegade* is stock, Isaac?

BRAHMS: In truth, very little. The *Kindred* is a fine scout, but Special Projects Division needed a more... robust starship. Ever since we finally grasped the Sword of Damocles, we've needed a front-line defense craft.

HANAS: Some off-the-books upgrades?

BRAHMS: Quite. No one can know, not even the section that gave us the ship. We stand alone.

HANAS: Sir, if I may?

BRAHMS: You may.

HANAS: Wouldn't it be wiser to bring in our allies against the Sword, at least the rest of Intelligence? Surely the benefits outweigh [the negatives...]

BRAHMS: The more people who know about the Sword, the sooner it falls. One leak and we are undone. Sloan imposed the information quarantine on his section himself.

HANAS: Sloan's no longer in play. (chuckle) Besides, Sloan quarantined everything.

BRAHMS: That's what the little black book demands, Colonel.

HANAS: Funny, I remember a time when you cared a lot less about the rules and a lot more about doing what needed to be done... Isaac, we are spread so damn thin.

BRAHMS: Wearing the stripes of a general means taking the long view of "what needs to be done." I'm not Alex Rol -- the *Yorktown* incident proved that -- but I won't risk the future just because I'm tired of putting out all the fires. I wish I had his grace. (snort) Might help me deal better with the interlopers.

HANAS: Interlopers? One leak and we're all dead. That's what you just said.

BRAHMS: Oh, this... this is nothing. Do you know Admiral Athos Parker, Union Colony?

HANAS: That's where they're building the new starbase, right?

BRAHMS: Nine-One-One, yes.

HANAS: So that's what you get for being the President's lapdog. (pause) Some of the materials for the *Renegade* were skimmed from that project, weren't they?

BRAHMS: Through back channels, yes. But the Admiral apparently has a nose for budget errors, because his subordinates keep popping up where they don't belong.

HANAS: You think he knows something?

BRAHMS: I think he plays the part of a career-minded yes-man a little too well. I think if he wanted to play at being spy, he's already ingratiated himself to all the right people. And I think the U.S.S. *Starfire*'s flight plan so closely matching ours all week isn't a coincidence.

HANAS: *Starfire*? One of Parker's support craft?

BRAHMS: Under Captain Hst, yes.

(Pause.)

HANAS: In the old days, this is where you'd ask me for advice.

BRAHMS: I remember.

HANAS: Now you're afraid of what I'd say?

(pause.)

BRAHMS: Sofia, I... I... think we should stick to business. Operations informs me that you have yet to interrogate our guest down in the brig.

(Pause.)

HANAS: Yes, I haven't had a chance. I've been pulling apart that interdiction device we captured after the ambush.

BRAHMS: The pirate toy can wait until we are back at base. I would like you to go and have "a little chat" with our guest. How did they find us?

HANAS: How far am I authorized to go?

BRAHMS: By the book, Colonel.

HANAS: The regular Starfleet book? Or the Special Projects edition?

BRAHMS: Does this look like a regular Starfleet ship to you, Colonel?

HANAS: Understood.

BRAHMS: I managed to acquire a set of Romulan mind probes from Captain Dalonna. For if our guest proves less than forthright, that is.

HANAS: One minute you want to stick to business, the next you're giving me an early Christmas present, Isaac?

BRAHMS: By the book, Sofia. Nothing permanent, nothing unbearable. What we must, and no more. Dismissed.

HANAS: General.

(Colonel Hanas exits the ready room.)

**SCENE 5X-02****LOCATION: USS RENEGADE - BRIG**

HANAS: So, Captain... uh... let me get this right, Archcaptain Taimok (tay-muk), you expect me to believe that your little fleet of retrofitted garbage scows set up a mobile interdiction field in an obscure sector of Federation space just hoping that something valuable came along?

TAIMOK: Lawyer.

HANAS: Pardon me?

TAIMOK: I'll wait for my lawyer. The one you pay for. I know your Federation.

HANAS: Are you a citizen of the Federation, Captain?

TAIMOK: No, but [what different does that make?]

HANAS: Do you have some sort of diplomatic status granted under treaties signed by the Federation and its allied worlds?

TAIMOK: What do you [mean by that?]

HANAS: "Yes" or "no", Archcaptain?

(Silence.)

HANAS: Then what exactly makes you think you're entitled to Federation rights?

TAIMOK : (snort) So much for that high horse you Starfleets are always riding around on. "Principles" and the rest of your *baktag*.



HANAS: Oh, we have principles -- for those who've earned them. But you're just a degenerate criminal putting on the airs of someone who counts.

TAIMOK: Who do you think you're talking to? I'm Archcaptain Taimok, Scourge of Drothmal and Tribune of Kaymota Five!

HANAS: Indeed? And have you ever killed a god? (pause) Old as the universe, and I snuffed him out like a candle. But this is not an afternoon tea, "Arch"captain. I will ask you again, why the Hromi Cluster? What were you expecting to catch in your little dragnet there?

TAIMOK: We were just hoping to catch a medical frigate or some courier or something. Not this... whatever this ship is.

HANAS: I still don't believe you, Captain.

TAIMOK: Why would we do it? You destroyed almost half of my entourage almost immediately. Why would anyone bring destruction upon themselves like that?

HANAS: This is Intelligence. Which means you're not ever going to see the outside of a cell again unless you answer the questions I ask you.

TAIMOK: That can't be legal!

HANAS: "Can't be legal"? You do realize the ridiculousness of you saying that? But since you can't deign to answer the only real question I've asked you, you leave me no choice.

TAIMOK: What do you mean?

HANAS: Jailer, bring me my little black bag.

JAILER: Understood.

TAIMOK: What is that?

(The forcefield zaps open, then zaps closed. A zipper can be heard as Hanas opens the bag.)

HANAS: It is noted in my log that you are an uncooperative prisoner. An uncooperative prisoner that refuses to volunteer critical information related to the security of this ship, and, by extension, the Federation.

TAIMOK: Now hold on [right there!]

HANAS: This fact allows me the use of enhanced interrogation techniques as per the Dominion War Detainee Treatment Act and Starfleet Security Proclamation of 2372.

TAIMOK: But the war [is over!]

HANAS: Is over. But they were good laws. Still on the books, too. You see these two devices here?

TAIMOK: *Hakka-puktala suni!*

HANAS: Whenever I get the chance, yes. Now, as you seem to realize, these are Romulan mind probes. Once attached to your head, they stimulate your cerebral cortices and hippocampus, essentially any parts of the brain that are used in memory formation and retention.

TAIMOK: (in background) Stop-- Stop it! He[y]-- Sto--

HANAS: After stimulation of these memory centers, the probes then scan and download the data and a computer program recreates the memories. So, one way or another, I am going to find out what you know. After all, the security of this ship and the Federation could be at stake.

TAIMOK: You crazy -- AH!

(Hanas activates the probes, which physically shocks Taimok.)

HANAS: The memory extraction process can be painful, especially if you resist. I could administer to you a sedative, but that could have a negative effect on the scanned memories.

(Taimok groans in pain.)

HANAS: Now, I want you to contemplate the fact that all of this was avoidable. I didn't have to get the probes out. All you had to do was answer the one question I asked you, multiple times even, honestly.

TAIMOK: Make it stop!

HANAS: You chose, and now I have to resort to these uncivilized methods. But what is one man's life when the safety of the Federation is at stake? (pause) ...Or his sanity, for that matter?

(Taimok whimpers.)

**SCENE 5X-03****LOCATION: USS RENEGADE - BRIDGE**

**BRAHMS:** Tactical, drop us out of warp.

**TACTICAL:** Yes, sir.

(He presses a control and the *Renegade* drops to impulse.)

**BRAHMS:** Signal our arrival to base and request docking clearance.

**OPERATIONS:** Base acknowledges our arrival. We are ordered to proceed on vector Epsilon-Niner-Tango and dock at berth one.

**BRAHMS:** Tactical, you heard the man.

**TACTICAL:** Aye, sir. Epsilon-Niner-Tango confirmed. Estimated final docking in five minutes.

(The turbolift opens and Colonel Hanas enters the bridge.)

**BRAHMS:** Colonel, you're just in time. We are just pulling in the driveway, as it were. What were you able to learn from our friend in the brig?

**HANAS:** Can we talk in your office again, General?

**BRAHMS:** We have a few minutes until we dock. After you. Operations, you have the bridge again.

**OPERATIONS:** Noted.

(They enter the Ready Room.)

LOCATION: USS RENEGADE - READY ROOM

HANAS: I didn't get much, though I was able to determine this was no random ambush. They were tipped off.

BRAHMS: By whom?

HANAS: Uncertain, but a name kept popping up in the memory scans: "Yubari Bezu."

(Brahms sits down heavily.)

BRAHMS: That's... not possible.

HANAS: So, you know this person?

BRAHMS: Bezu is dead, Colonel. Alex Rol killed him in a swordfight on Corsava Four... almost ten years ago. Could this pirate have mixed up Bezu with his sister? A marine, I think, newly graduated. Name's "Ashoka." Or something to that effect.

HANAS: I didn't get much, like I said. But Yubari's name and face -- it was a him -- came up more often than Taimok's own family and friends. Yubari even seemed to know about the Sword of Damocles. But, if you say he's dead...

(Silence.)

BRAHMS: I will have a word with our friend in the brig after we've docked. Have Security prepare.

HANAS: That might be difficult, sir.

**BRAHMS:** What do you mean by that, Colonel?

**HANAS:** I mean, the good captain resisted the mind probing. He's currently in sickbay, in a coma.

**BRAHMS:** (sigh) Colonel...

**HANAS:** I'm sorry, sir. In fairness, I did caution Mister Taimok that resisting would have... negative consequences.

**BRAHMS:** Did you not listen to a word I said, Colonel? I told you by. The. Book. If I review the security footage, will I see that you used the required sedative during the mind probing?

**HANAS:** I was afraid that the sedative might have a negative impact on my results.

**BRAHMS:** And now who knows when the hell he'll regain consciousness, if ever? Your work entails a rather large amount of collateral damage, doesn't it? This is not the Marine Corps; we do not charge into situations relying solely on the thickness of our foreheads!

(Brahms tosses the PADD onto his desk.)

**BRAHMS:** What happened to you, Sofia? I used to be able to trust you!

**HANAS:** What happened to you, Isaac? You never used to be a coward!

(Pause.)

**BRAHMS:** How dare you.

**HANAS:** You know what you should do about Admiral Parker? Kill Captain Hst! Use that gray poison, make it an "accident," but leave just enough doubt to send a message to his [superiors!]

BRAHMS: That is enough! (pause) I killed a thousand souls aboard the *Yorktown* because there was no other choice. You'd have killed them if it improved your odds by one percent!

HANAS: For one whole percent? By God, Isaac, I'd've killed a million! There are ten thousand billion people in the Federation, and every one of them is dead if we fail!

BRAHMS: I said that's enough!

HANAS: Why?! Because you know I'm right! You know that's where our logic takes us, but you're too much of a coward to admit it! Who are you lying to, Isaac? To me or to yourself?!

(Silence.)

BRAHMS: (deep breath) I'm going to overlook the insubordination I just saw. You should be aware, however, that I have been asked to recommend a C.O. for the next *Kindred*-class starship. As of this moment, I have decided to postpone that recommendation. Get your house in order, Colonel.

HANAS: The carrot instead of the stick? For someone who claims to dislike lording over others, you sure find a lot of chances to do it.

BRAHMS: I want you off this ship in ten minutes, Sofia. Dismissed.

(Pause.)

HANAS: Hmph. Be seeing you, Isaac.

(She leaves.)

(Pause.)

(Intercom beep.)

OPERATIONS: *Bridge to the General.*

(Brahms presses a button.)

BRAHMS: Go ahead.

(A dull thud can be heard from outside the ship, on the hull.)

OPERATIONS: *Final docking completed.*

BRAHMS: Right on time, Operations. I want your reports within the hour.

TACTICAL: *General, if I may? A question.*

BRAHMS: Of course, Tactical.

TACTICAL: *How circumspect should our reports be about the Renegade's capabilities? The ship we're piloting now is hardly the same ship that left drydock.*

BRAHMS: The ship is on loan from another section, so they will see these reports. We needn't invite their further attention.

TACTICAL: *Understood, sir.*

BRAHMS: Good. File your reports, call relief, and take a well-earned break. Chances are we'll be outbound again soon.

OPERATIONS: *Noted.*

TACTICAL: *Of course, sir.*



**BRAHMS:** Brahms out. (intercom closes) Computer, lock doors and begin log recording, Stardate Five Five Six Nine Seven Point Eight. Encrypt with sigma-twelve classification. The computer chirps in acknowledgement.

**BRAHMS:** Oh, and, computer?

(The computer chirps again.)

**BRAHMS:** Look up Bezu's sister. Ashoka... maybe "Asuka"? I may need to have a word with her.