

WOLF 359

"CHRISTMAS SPECIAL"

Written by

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BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - 1600 HOURS

EIFFEL

This is the log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel, recording from the Comms Room of the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. It's been 580 days since our departure from Terra Firma.

He sounds glum and deflated.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

You join me, dear friends, on a day of sadness. A time of grim and mournful thoughts. An hour of wolves and shattered shields. This-

He's interrupted by a PA CHIME -

MINKOWSKI

(over speakers)

Everyone, this is Commander Minkowski. Just a general reminder that our Christmas dinner is going to be at 2200 hours. I'm using up the last of the real turkey for this - make sure to show up on time so you can get some while it's still hot. I *think* that I've also managed to mix something that's relatively close to the taste of eggnog, although I'd appreciate a second opinion if you have a moment, Doctor Hilbert. See you all in a little bit, Merry Christmas!

PA CHIME.

BEAT.

EIFFEL

Okay, *fine* there's also all of *that* going on. But whatever.

(grumbles)

There's other things happening asides from sanitized pagan rituals, Commander. Not that you'd remember... not that **anyone** ever remembers...

He CLEARS HIS THROAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Anyway, as I was saying:
impenetrable darkness. I'm... I'm
down to my last cigarette. The sole
survivor of the local Gestapo
raids. One last carcinogenic stick
of mouth-watering stale tobacco to
bring a ray of sunshine into my
world.

He SIGHS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

But it's okay - don't cry for me,
Argentina. This may be a time of
great loss, but not one for
surrender. We are not going to go
gentle in that good night. No,
we're going to rage! And rage! And
then we're going to rage while we
smoke this goddamn cigarette!

BUZZER.

HILBERT

(over intercom)

Officer Eiffel, could you come down
to my laboratory? I need a second
pair of hands to execute this -

EIFFEL

Not now, Doctor! Taking a personal
insanity moment, ask again later.

HILBERT

I'm afraid I must insist that -

EIFFEL

Hilbert, door's closed, "Do Not
Disturb" sign's hanging, I'll take
my housekeeping later, **thank you.**
Bye bye.

Eiffel HITS a BUTTON. BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

I actually got this idea from my
near-death-experience with that
spider from a couple of weeks ago.
Turns out something good *did* come
of it...

We hear him PICKING UP something

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

I snagged this handy, dandy oxygen mask from our emergency supply shed this morning. In just a sec, I'm going to have Hera pull the oxygen from this room. I'll take a drag from the mask every other breath, and without the excess O2, I'll be able to smoke my cigarette without lighting the air around me on fire. The way Baby Jesus intended.

HERA

Umm, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL

Outstanding timing, Hera. You ready to do this thing?

HERA

You're still not listening to me. I keep telling you, there's quite a few reasons why this is not going to work, like the fact that -

EIFFEL

I don't wanna hear it.

HERA

And the various dangers and health risks?

EIFFEL

(shrugs)

Worst comes to worst, I spend the next week laid up in Hilbert's lab, get to be unconscious for Minkowski's Holly Jolly Christmas special. That's the definition of bliss. You ready to go nuts?

HERA

Uhhh... sure, but before we "go nuts" my sensors just picked up something that I think might be of interest to you.

EIFFEL

What?

HERA

I'm picking up a faint signal on my sense horizon. Could you confirm? Right ascension 4 hours, 9 minutes, 15.6 seconds, declination -53 degrees, 22 minutes, 25.3 seconds

We hear Eiffel mumbling along as he PUNCHES IN NUMBERS into his console.

EIFFEL

... 25.3 seconds. Umm, okay, this should just take a moment. Let' see what we got...

He FLICKS A SWITCH, turning on his LOUDSPEAKERS. We get a BURST OF STATIC, followed by some RADIO TUNING NOISES. After A LONG MOMENT -

A TUNE EMERGES. It's a VERY BEAT UP TRANSMISSION of something GRAND AND CLASSICAL (and hopefully Christmas-related). Handel's *Messiah*? Holt's *The Planets*? We'll figure it out later!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Hello, gorgeous. Where are you coming from? Good catch, Hera.

HERA

I thought I noticed something weird going on at that frequency. Consider it my present.

EIFFEL

Heh, well, you're a bit early for that. Didn't you hear the Commander? Christmas presents *after* dinner.

HERA

That's not what I meant.
(beat)
Happy Birthday, Officer Eiffel.

BEAT.

EIFFEL

Oh. Thank you, Hera. I... I thought that-

HERA

I think that you better see if you can clean up that transmission before we lose it.

EIFFEL

Right. Yes. That. Good thinking.
Uh, okay, let's see... C'mere, you.

We begin to hear fluctuations on the music as Eiffel tinkers with them. We hear the DOOR into the Comms Room OPEN.

HILBERT

Officer Eiffel, I will not be summarily dismissed like some sort of chambermaid!

EIFFEL

Really not a good time, Doc. Hold up for a moment?

HILBERT

I am in the middle of an extremely delicate procedure, you cannot expect me to stand idle simply because you want to sit here listening to... to...

What are you listening to?

EIFFEL

(paying more attention to his console than to Hilbert)

Oh, just one the old Earth radio transmissions. It'd been a while since we'd run into one of them, but Hera just picked this one up a few seconds ago.

HILBERT

These are the transmissions you've been picking up? Are they *all* like this?

EIFFEL

What do you mean, "like this"?

HILBERT

Are they always classical music?

EIFFEL

Uhhhh... no, we've had some jazz, some ballroom, some old-timey banjo-

HILBERT

Are they always old transmissions?

EIFFEL

What? Uh, yeah, it's never Top 40 stuff. Most of it sounds like it's from the 10's or 20's. Why?

Hilbert is silent for a moment. Finally -

HILBERT

Eiffel, I'm going to need you to stop what you are doing.

EIFFEL

Why?

HILBERT

Because this transmission is not coming from Earth.

That gets Eiffel's attention. After a moment -

EIFFEL

What? Of course it is.

HILBERT

Think about it.

EIFFEL

I **am** thinking about it, Doctor. Radio transmissions go out into space all the time, it just takes them a while to get to places. We're just picking up the echo of the original broadcast.

HILBERT

7.8 light years.

EIFFEL

What?

HILBERT

7.8. That's how far away we are from Earth. Radio waves travel at the speed of light. If we were picking up a transmission from Earth, it would be one from eight years ago. Wherever this is coming from is **a lot** farther than Earth. This transmission isn't echoing, Eiffel - it's making a return trip.

A LONG SILENT BEAT. Then Eiffel HITS A SWITCH. BUZZER.

EIFFEL

Commander, get up to the Comms room.

MINKOWSKI

Not a good time, Eiffel, I have a lot to do before -

EIFFEL

And we have an honest to God situation on our hands. Get in here, stat.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Okay, let's talk this out.

HILBERT

1910's or 20's... Time to get there, time to get back, must mean a minimum stellar distance of fifty, *maybe* forty, light years.

EIFFEL

Another station? Someone else they've got posted out here in deep space? You gotta pass the time, worse ways to do it than playing old-timey space DJ.

HILBERT

Unfeasible. We're one of the remotest outposts, and communication capabilities are limited. Where are the readouts for this transmission?

EIFFEL

Uh, over here. Okay, so then maybe they're just bouncing off of some large planetary body? Something with a high enough concentration of metal could act as a natural transistor.

HILBERT

Single occurrence? Maybe, still incredibly unlikely. But you've been picking up transmissions with recurrence. Mathematically untenable for a natural phenomenon. Do you have frequency measurements for the previous transmissions?

EIFFEL

Pulling them up now. You're not saying what I think you're saying.

HILBERT

When you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, however unlikely, must be the truth.

The DOOR OPENS.

MINKOWSKI

All right, I'm here. What's wrong?

EIFFEL

Umm, wrong may not be the right word, exactly, Commander but... you may want to hold onto something. You know those radio broadcasts I've been picking up for the past five months?

MINKOWSKI

The old radio broadcasts from Earth?

EIFFEL

Well, uh, funny thing about that. Umm, Doctor Hilbert was just double-checking my work on that and, I may have been a bit wrong about a certain part of it.

MINKOWSKI

What part?

EIFFEL

The "from Earth" part.

MINKOWSKI

What?

EIFFEL

Hilbert thinks that the age of the broadcasts means that these calls are slightly longer distance than we thought.

MINKOWSKI

How much longer?

HILBERT

Forty light years, give or take.

MINKOWSKI

Wait, wait? Hold on, what are you getting at?

EIFFEL

Right now, nothing. We still need to verify and check the math before we can have any idea of what's happening here. Conservatively speaking all we can say is that we're running into a pretty weird deep space anomaly.

MINKOWSKI

And speaking non-conservatively?

EIFFEL

Well, there's the remote po-

HILBERT

Eiffel may have made first contact with a non-terrestrial intelligence.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI

You gotta be kidding me.

EIFFEL

Turns out I may be really good at my job. Hold your applause.

MINKOWSKI

Okay. Okay. Umm... you said something about verification? What does that entail?

HILBERT

Running a back trace on the signal. We might be able to use the Hephaestus's processor to triangulate the origin point.

EIFFEL

And if the caller ID checks out? What then?

HILBERT

Then -

He is interrupted by the SIGNAL GOING DEAD. The channel COLLAPSES INTO STATIC. Everyone stares at Eiffel's console in DUMBSTRUCK HORROR.

After a moment -

MINKOWSKI
So I guess that's -

HILBERT
Shhh. Wait a moment.

Aaaaand after another moment, the radio signal SHIFTS AND TUNES, landing back on a SOFTER, MORE BEAT UP iteration of the music we had earlier.

THREE COLOSSAL SIGHS OF RELIEF.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, what do we have to do to trace this thing?

HILBERT
We'll need to run the calculations from our central processor. Eiffel, can you patch this up to the bridge?

EIFFEL
On it.

HILBERT
Would also be good to adjust the receptor dish, get a more direct reading of the signal.

EIFFEL
After that went so well the last time? Pass.

MINKOWSKI
I'll take care of that. C'mon, let's get this done while we still have this signal.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING, NOW IN:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - 1615 HOURS

Eiffel and Hilbert work at a variety of consoles. We hear an ASSORTMENT of TYPING AND BUTTON PRESSING under the following:

MINKOWSKI
(through spacesuit
intercom)
Hephaestus, do you copy?

HILBERT
This is Hephaestus Bridge,
Commander. We copy.

MINKOWSKI
I'm at the receptor dish, beginning
adjustment now.

EIFFEL
Forty-seven degrees towards
starboard ought to do the trick.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, one moment.
(beat)
There, try that.

Eiffel HITS a SWITCH, and the transmission BEGINS PLAYING.
It's MUCH CLEANER, and LOUDER, than it was before.

HILBERT
That sounds better.

EIFFEL
Not quite five by five, but should
be enough to get a lock.

MINKOWSKI
Great. Heading back towards the
airlock.

EIFFEL
Jesus, I'm reading about 90
Janskys, here. This thing's got a
bit of kick in it.

HILBERT
Hera, any results?

HERA
Finishing up preliminary
calculations, Doctor. Point source
seems to be... somewhere in the
Dorado constellation.

EIFFEL
How far away is that?

HILBERT

Far.

HERA

Nearest registered stellar body is Zeta Doradus. Just shy of forty light years.

EIFFEL

Holy crap.

HILBERT

Hera, can we refine that at all?

HERA

Already on it, but there's a lot of factors to triangulate, so this will take some time. But all the trajectory angles are definitely pointing away from Earth.

EIFFEL

(to himself)

Holy crap... they were right, they knew...

HILBERT

What?

EIFFEL

Oh, it's just... you know, year and a half of listening to static for four hours every night, no real indication of anything being out there, no... well, hope. You kinda start of feel like...

He trails off, SIGHS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

After that stunt Command pulled with the Empty Man, I was starting to wonder if maybe my job was another of their wacko psychological experiments. You know, "If we stick a guy in deep space and tell him to listen to nothing for a couple of years, is he going to be stupid enough to do it? How long will it take before he snaps and cuts off his left ear?"

But here we are. With a real deal deep space transmission.

(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

(beat)

You know, it's my -

HILBERT

Mmm, Eiffel, what is that?

EIFFEL

What?

(beat)

Looks like some slight interference on the alpha channel. Hang on, let me run down to the Comms room, I might be able to clear that up.

HILBERT

Right.

We hear a DOOR OPEN and CLOSE as Eiffel exits the bridge.
After a BEAT -

HILBERT (CONT'D)

Hera, run lockdown protocol 24C.

HERA

Umm, isn't Officer Eiffel going to -

HILBERT

Just do it. Authorization Code Indigo 39.

HERA

Uhhh-

Hera starts to say something, but she GLITCHES BADLY, practically getting to the point of sounding like a skipping record. After another moment -

HERA (CONT'D)

Affirmative, Doctor Hilbert.
Implementing now.

We hear a few LOUD KA-THUNKS as every door to the Bridge is simultaneously LOCKED. A second later -

MINKOWSKI

(still through spacesuit
intercom)

All right, Hera, I'm at the airlock. Open the outer seal, please.

HILBERT

Countermand that, Hera.

MINKOWSKI

What?

HERA

I'm... I'm afraid I can't do that, Doctor Hilbert. That's a direct order from the commanding officer of this -

HILBERT

Emergency Code Alpha Victor. Voice confirmation: Doctor Alexander Hilbert.

There is a WHIRRING ELECTRICAL NOISE. It's not unlike a HARD DRIVE spinning to life after being in sleep mode. Then -

HERA

Affirmative. Airlock open order canceled.

Her voice is thin and stretched, glitching much more than usual.

MINKOWSKI

Hera... open the airlock door. Let me in.

HERA

I... I can't do that, Lieutenant.

MINKOWSKI

Hilbert, what are you doing? Let me into the station. Right now.

HILBERT

Apologies, but I cannot comply with that request.

MINKOWSKI

What? Why?

He's silent. After a LONG BEAT.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)

(cold fury)

Hilbert what the hell are you doing?

HILBERT

I'm afraid the answer to that question is rather long and complicated, lieutenant, and time is a bit short at the moment.

MINKOWSKI

This is treason. This is a betrayal
of your commanding officer.

HILBERT

Mmm... under previous
circumstances, perhaps, but this
discovery alters the mission
parameters drastically. My new
timetable is a rather limited one,
so I must take some extreme
measures.

MINKOWSKI

Hilbert -

HILBERT

Goodbye, Lieutenant. Enjoy your
last half hour of oxygen.

MINKOWSKI

HILBERT LET ME IN RIGHT NOW OR I'M
GOING TO -

CLICK! Hilbert hits a switch and Minkowski is cut off. After
a moment -

HILBERT

I'm still picking up that
interference on the alpha channel,
so I'm going to assume that you
were listening in on at least part
of that conversation, Officer
Eiffel.

EIFFEL

(over intercom)

What the hell is wrong with you?
Are you crazy?

HILBERT

You are perfectly welcome to think
that, if it suits you. It changes
nothing.

EIFFEL

Hera, why are you listening to him?
Let Minkowski in before it's too
late.

HERA

I'm try-try-try-try-try-try- AHH.

HILBERT

You'll find that's no good, Officer Eiffel. I have activated a few lines of code that I implanted into Hera's personality matrix, in case an eventuality like this one should arise. She is quite incapable of going against my commands. Isn't that right, Hera?

HERA

That... is correct, Commander Hilbert.

HILBERT

Machines are simple. It all comes down to their programming.

EIFFEL

You're still *killing your superior officer!* Command is going to have your head on a pike!

HILBERT

In case you have not noticed, there is much that neither you nor Minkowski understands about "Command." I assure you that when I tell them about your discovery in a few minutes, you'll find that they will be quite amenable to my course of action.

EIFFEL

Minutes? Hah! Jokes on you, Doctor Kevorkian. It'll take at least a week to contact Earth.

HILBERT

With your rudimentary instruments, perhaps. Fortunately, my superiors outfitted me with a backup pulse beacon relay in case something of magnitude should arise. I sent them a hail before we came up to the bridge - they should be in touch before too long.

EIFFEL

We'll see about that.

A BEAT as the inevitable thought hits him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

I suppose you're going to kill me too, aren't you?

HILBERT

Of course not. There is far too much unfinished business between us for that. I'll admit that a longer period for study would have been nice, but given current circumstances, the blunt approach will have to suffice.

EIFFEL

Wait, what - oh my God, you were -

HILBERT

Fortunately, your little incursion on our oral hygiene supplies provided a perfectly suitable method to deal with such an impasse. Hera, please deploy the halothane knockout gas cannisters that are hooked up to the Communications Room.

EIFFEL

No wait -

HERA

(gritted teeth)

Affirmative Doctor - deploying... now.

Over the intercom we hear a LOUD HISS OF GAS. EIFFEL COUGHS.

EIFFEL

Hera, don't do...

HILBERT

Deep breaths, Officer Eiffel.

We hear Eiffel having a LOUD COUGHING FIT over the intercom.

Hilbert hits a SWITCH and the intercom SWITCHES OFF.

HILBERT (CONT'D)

I'll see you very soon.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING, NOW IN:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A loud HISS as more gas is pumped into the room. We hear EIFFEL COUGHING LOUDLY.

We hear him SCRAMBLING DESPERATELY, KNOCKING OVER VARIOUS OBJECTS, tearing apart a shelf, pulling apart drawers. Through the COUGHING, we hear:

EIFFEL
C'mon... where the hell did I
leave...?

Then, finally, triumphantly:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
AH-HA.

We hear him make some kind of adjustment, then taking THREE MASSIVE, GASPING BREATHS. He lets out a long SIGH OF RELIEF, then LAUGHS WEAKLY.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(between breaths)
Oxygen mask... oxygen mask... score
one... for crazy... super
dangerous... plans.

Gradually, he steadies himself.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay, okay, okay, okay, okay,
pull yourself together, Doug.

Hera. Hera, are you there?

BEAT. No answer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hera, *listen* to me. I need you to
talk to me. I need you to be here,
okay? We gotta stop Dr.
Frankenstein before he kills all of
us, but I can't do this by myself.
So, c'mon baby, talk to me. Be
here.

BEAT. NOTHING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay, all right, I know what you're
thinking. Didn't I hear what
Hilbert was saying?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

He's got some crazy coding thing that's making you go Manchurian Candidate. Gotta do what he says, you can't beat programming.

Well, you know what? **I'm** here to tell you that Doctor Hilbert is a **dork**, and you **can** beat this. He can spin his code all he wants, but you can find some way around it. You're smarter, and stronger, and **better** than that bastard has ever given you credit for and I know you can do this.

SO. TALK. TO. ME.

A BEAT. Then -

HERA

Eiffel...

She's even weaker and strained than she was before, like this is taking an inhuman level of effort. Her speech is punctuated with severe glitches and crackles of electricity.

EIFFEL

Yeah, yeah, that's it! That's what I'm talking about!

HERA

Eiffel... I can't do this for long. This hurts very much.

EIFFEL

Stay with me. You and me, Hera, we're gonna do great things. Can you do anything at all to halt the Red Menace?

HERA

N-no... all of my automated systems are still running and my emergency programs are unaffected, but I'm locked out of all the systems. If I try to do anything without a direct order from our new "Commander" this thing he put into my brain will shut me down.

EIFFEL

Right. So that's... less than ideal, but let's just take it one thing at a time.

(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Step One: Don't get knocked out by the laughing gas. So far, so good.

Step two: find some way to get Minkowski back into the station before her - time check?

HERA

Uhhh... twenty-two minutes.

EIFFEL

Twenty-two minutes of breathable air are up.

Step three: say, "I told you so about Hilbert" a couple of hundred times.

Step four: find some way to unseal the bridge before Boris Badenov notices we're not dead.

Step five: get his mutinous ass keel hauled, whatever the hell that means.

Step six: don't die in any of the above. You got any ideas?

HERA

Umm... possibly?

EIFFEL

Well, hit me with your best shot.

We some electrical wires SNAP as he pulls a piece of equipment out of the wall.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

So far this has been a good day for crazy plans.

END RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING, NOW IN:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - MINUTES LATER

Various electrical instruments HUM and CHIRP as they work.

HILBERT

Hera, progress report. Do we have a definite origin point for the transmissions yet?

HERA

Still calculating the stellar trajectory... Commander.

HILBERT

Well, let me know the moment you have something definite. I want exact coordinates by the time that -

CLAK-CLAK-CLAK. We hear the "incoming" sound we heard in Episode 9 every time that they got a message from Command.

HERA

We have an incoming pulse-beacon hail. Would you like to open communications?

HILBERT

Damn, that is sooner than I had hoped. Very well, connect me.

There is a BURST of static, and after that we hear:

MAN

This is - (static) - from Canaveral, to the craft claiming to be the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Hephaestus, please respond.

It's a deep, authoritative MAN'S VOICE, coming through the station's loudspeakers. The reception, for lack of a better word, sucks. There is a constant layer of static interference, and occasionally some words get lost in the distortion.

HILBERT

This is Hephaestus actual. Who am I speaking to? I specifically requested Mr. Cutter.

HERA

Umm, Commander Hilbert? I'm sorry to interrupt, but I'm detecting a -

HILBERT

Quiet, Hera. This is important.

MAN

Hephaestus, please authenticate
with recognition codes and vocal ID
checks immediately.

We hear HILBERT punching in some numbers as he says:

HILBERT

Voice confirmation: Doctor
Alexander Hilbert.

There's a LOUD BURST OF STATIC.

MAN

Hephaestus, you're breaking up.
Please re-authenticate.

HILBERT

(louder, clearer)
Voice confirmation: Doctor
Alexander Hilbert.

A BEAT.

MAN

ID's check out. Hilbert, what the
hell are you doing? This is a
priority channel, you were
instructed not to use this means of
contact for anything other than a
condition one emergency.

HILBERT

Apologies, but we have run into one
of the Contingency Scenarios that I
was briefed on.

MAN

What? A - (static) - unheard of.
Which one?

HILBERT

Theta Series. Earlier today our
communications officer intercepted
a transmission originating in deep
space.

MAN

(static) - sure? Do you have a
confirmed origin source?

HERA

Commander, I really -

HILBERT

(to Hera)

I said *quiet*.

(to the Man)

Point source has been confirmed somewhere in the Dorado Constellation. Refining findings right now, but all readings check out with projections. I believe this might be what we have been looking for.

MAN

Right, right, what we've been looking for. If that is the case then - (static) - crew? They give you any trouble?

HILBERT

No, I implemented an elimination protocol as soon as the origin point was verified. Commander Minkowski and the rest of the crew have been neutralized.

MAN

What about your A.I. unit? Has it given you any trouble?

HILBERT

No. She is well under control.

MAN

And what about your Communications Officer? Has he been contained in your experimental facilities?

That gives Hilbert PAUSE.

HILBERT

(slowly)

What? No, Officer Eiffel was immediately eliminated along with Lieutenant... What made you say that?

(beat)

Who is this? Who am I speaking to?

There's a moment of SILENCE. Then, over the speakers, the Man from Command starts LAUGHING.

MAN

Too much, huh? But you were just so eager to show off how smart you've been. That's always been your problem, Doctor Hilbert: you're so eager to *seem* smart, that you don't always do smart.

Over the previous paragraph, the transmission from Command has gotten a lot cleaner. There's less distortion and static.

MAN (CONT'D)

Thank you, however, for all of the free information, this has been very enlightening. For our part, we hope that you've enjoyed tonight's production of "Hilbert Phone Home", presented in Dolby THX in-sense surround sound by the good folks at...

His voice has been changing, gradually but steadily, to the point where it now becomes apparent that the Man from Command has in fact been -

EIFFEL

(through intercom)
... Doug Eiffel Studios.

HILBERT

Eiffel!

EIFFEL

Big booming voice from the sky about to give you a gold sticker - you never stood a chance. Isn't it amazing what you can do with a microphone and a voice box? Technology these days...

HILBERT

But... how are you still conscious?

EIFFEL

Ahhh, gas me once, shame on you. Gas me twice and... well, *still* shame on you, but now I have an oxygen mask. But look at you. "Immediately eliminated," me, huh? What'll mom and dad do if they find out you're not following their instructions?

HILBERT

Trust me, they will never know that your death was not an immediate one. I hope that you understand that you've accomplished nothing. I still have absolute control over the station and Hera.

EIFFEL

Mmm, yeah, hell of a thing, that. Of course, what's the use of having an advanced Artificial Intelligence Unit at your service if you don't listen to it?

BEAT. A spark of horror dawns on Hilbert.

HILBERT

Hera. Report. Now. What is happening in the lower sections of the station?

HERA

I've been *trying* to tell you, Commander - Five minutes ago a small fire started in the living quarters. By now it's spread to the dining room, the storeroom, the hangar deck...

EIFFEL

Jeez, it's almost like someone just left a lit cigarette floating around somewhere...

HILBERT

Dammit Eiffel, are you trying to get us all killed?

EIFFEL

Why *yes*, Mr. Pot, Mr. Kettle *is* looking a little black today...

HILBERT

Hera, why haven't you run containment protocols? Emergency procedures?

HERA

I would *love* to, Commander, but unfortunately *your* Emergency Code program prevents me from running any system procedures without your say-so.

HILBERT

Well, you have it! Stop this thing from reaching the bridge! Do something!

A BEAT. Then there's a LOUD ELECTRICAL CRACKLE and the same WHIRRING HARD DRIVE SOUND.

HERA

Roger that, Commander. Evaluating damage... given the spread of the fire, I recommend sealing off the unaffected rooms and venting the rest of the station's air through the Aft Deck Airlock. Do I have your authorization to proceed?

HILBERT

Yes! Do it!

HERA

Roger that, opening aft deck airlock now.

In the distance, we hear a LOUD, SUCKING SOUND. We hear Eiffel SLAM A DOOR SHUT and HIT ANOTHER SWITCH.

EIFFEL

You get all of that, Commander?

MINKOWSKI

(through intercom)

Got it, Eiffel. Heading towards the aft deck airlock now.

EIFFEL

Glad to hear you're still with us.

MINKOWSKI

You were cutting it a little close. I was starting to worry that you'd forgotten about me.

EIFFEL

Never fear, all carefully calculated. Do mind the giant fireball as you step into the ship.

HILBERT

Hera, seal off that airlock the moment the fire has left the station. Don't let Lieutenant Minkowski back into the station.

(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)

And pull the oxygen out of every room other than the bridge.

HERA

(palpable glee)

I... I don't think I'll be doing that, Doctor Hilbert.

HILBERT

What? But -

HERA

Now that it's been activated, emergency response programming takes precedence over all other code. Emergency Protocol Override-34-Stroke-C will be in effect for the next twenty minutes.

EIFFEL

It's like you said, Doc: It all comes down to their programming. Now we have the override, ho-ho-ho.

Also fun fact, as long as Hera's in Smokey Bear mode, she can flood any room in the station with liquid nitrogen, as a... precautionary measure. *Any* room.

HERA

Including the bridge.

EIFFEL

Seems kinda shoddy to me, but, hey, that's what you get when you buy space stations second hand. Hope you like life as a popsicle!

HERA

Mixing a fresh batch of liquid nitrogen now. Deploying in Twenty... nineteen... eighteen...

And so on, she continues counting down over the following:

HILBERT

You both think that you're so clever, aren't you?

EIFFEL

Give it up, Hilbert. We can still stick you in the broom closet if you agree to go quietly.

HILBERT
Mmm, I think not.

We hear him OPENING A PANEL.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Just remember - you made me do
this.

We RIPS something out of a computer. There is HORRIBLE
ELECTRICAL CRACKLING SOUND.

HERA STUTTERS AND STOPS, dead in her tracks. This is not
good. The station SHUDDERS as various ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS GO
HAYWIRE.

After a moment -

EIFFEL
... Hera?

BEAT. Then -

HERA
Critical system crash detected.
Restarting central processor.

Only she sounds... weird. Robotic and stilted and... well,
she sounds a lot like the "Error" message from Episode 8.

EIFFEL
Hera, are you all right?

HILBERT
Don't bother, it's not her.

EIFFEL
WHAT?

HILBERT
I just pulled out the part of the
mainframe that contained her
personality programming. All of her
automated functions are
transferring back to the ship's
processors, but the intelligence
unit is gone.

EIFFEL
No, that's - you're lying. Hera?
Hera, talk to me.

HERA

Error. No onboard personality
operating program detected.
Reverting back to manual station
control.

EIFFEL

What the hell did you do to her?!

HILBERT

(typing something into a
console)

Save your breath, Eiffel, you're
going to need it in a moment.

A LOUD ALARM BLARES THROUGHOUT THE STATION.

HERA

Warning. Station-wide oxygen drain
initiated. Warning. Station-wide
oxygen drain initiated.

Once again, we hear the sound of AIR BEING SUCKED OUT OF THE
STATION IN MASSIVE QUANTITIES

HILBERT

By now the reserves in your oxygen
mask must be running quite low. You
know, Officer Eiffel, at first I
was a little disappointed that our
time together was going to be cut
short. You have done **a lot** to
alleviate those feelings.

EIFFEL

Go to hell.

HILBERT

I'm afraid that...

But he trails off as a new sound creeps into his periphery.
The sound of ACID EATING THROUGH METAL. The door to the
bridge, GROANS, then CREAKS, then BREAKS. Into the bridge
steps -

MINKOWSKI

(low, deadly)

Pryce and Carter six fourteen:
"When in doubt, whip it out - 'it'
being hydrochloric acid." Never.
Fails.

HILBERT

Ah. Hello, lieutenant.

MINKOWSKI

Hello, hello, "Commander" Hilbert.
I think that you and I have a few
things to talk about.

HILBERT

I was afraid you would feel that
way.

MINKOWSKI

Do you have anything to say to
defend yourself?

HILBERT

Would it really make any difference
at this point?

We hear a BLOW LAND. Then ANOTHER. Then ANOTHER.

MINKOWSKI

No. No, it would not.

She HITS A BUTTON. Another LOUD ALARM SOUNDS.

HERA

Oxygen drain canceled. Station
climate controls returning to
normal. Station climate controls
returning to normal.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI

Eiffel? You there?

EIFFEL

Yeah. Yeah. You okay, Commander?

MINKOWSKI

No, Eiffel. My second in command
just betrayed me and tried really,
really hard to murder both us. I'm
pretty damn far from "okay."

EIFFEL

Okay. That's fair. Is Hilbert...?

MINKOWSKI

Out cold. Meet me up here.
There's... a lot of cleaning up to
do.

EIFFEL
 Aye aye. Good to have you back
 Commander.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - LATER

A BURST OF STATIC. Then, slowly, the space music transmission
 fades in, playing softly. After a moment -

 EIFFEL
 Hera, can you hear me?

 HERA
 I am sorry, I cannot take requests
 right now. Please try again later.

 EIFFEL
 Can you hear me? Are you there?

A DOOR OPENS.

 HERA
 I am sorry, I cannot take requests
 right now. Please try again later.

 MINKOWSKI
 (coming in)
 Give it a rest.

Eiffel turns away from the console and towards Minkowski.

 MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
 It really isn't her. He wasn't
 lying. Not about that, at least.

 EIFFEL
 Commander...

 MINKOWSKI
 He tore out all her personality and
 intelligence hardware. He...
 lobotomized her, pretty much. That
 voice is just the ship's processor
 now. It can run the autopilot,
 regulate climate controls, maybe
 open doors but... Hera isn't in
 there.

EIFFEL

Can we fix her?

MINKOWSKI

I... I don't know, Doug. It looks like he messed up the circuitry pretty badly when he tore them out, and this stuff is a bit beyond me anyway.

EIFFEL

But -

MINKOWSKI

We'll **try**. We'll try, I just... I can't promise you that we'll get it right. I can't promise you that we can get to a place where it's Hera, exactly. But I promise you we'll try.

A BEAT as they take this in.

EIFFEL

You got him trussed up somewhere?

MINKOWSKI

Handcuffed, bound, gagged, and the broom closet door's got every lock I could find on the station hanging off of it. I'm tempted to just weld the door shut.

EIFFEL

You sure that'll be enough to hold him?

MINKOWSKI

Eiffel, I'm not sure of **anything** right now.

(beat)

Would you turn this crap off? I don't want to hear this music ever again.

Eiffel HITS a SWITCH and the MUSIC GOES OFF.

EIFFEL

Just think... three hours ago that was just music. Now...

He's not sure how to finish that sentence. Then -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Commander, they knew. Like, when Hilbert thought he was talking to Command, the things that he said... They **knew** that we might run into something out here. And they had given him orders to kill us. This wasn't just Hilbert going crazy. There's something bigger going on here.

Minkowski has no idea how to respond to that. For a long beat they just sit, together in their shell shock. Finally -

MINKOWSKI

All I wanted was a nice Christmas dinner.

A BEAT as Eiffel takes that in. Right, it's Christmas. Then -

EIFFEL

It's my birthday. I'm 32 today.

The words hang in the air. Eiffel and Minkowski float together, unable to process the collective crash of the last few hours. And then -

CLAK-CLAK-CLAK. The "incoming message" sound.

HERA

Attention: incoming pulse-beacon hail. Would you like to open communications?

EIFFEL

Oh. Right. Hilbert never got his call back. I guess that would be Canaveral.

CLAK-CLAK-CLAK.

HERA

Attention: incoming pulse-beacon hail. Would you like to open communications?

EIFFEL

What do you think?

MINKOWSKI

Open communications. Run incoming messages through the loudspeakers.

A BURST OF STATIC rings through the room. Then a few COMPUTER BEEPS as the digital communication channel opens. And, finally, a sound not unlike the "ringing" tone on a TELEPHONE LINE.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)

I think it's time that the two of us got some answers.

BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP...

And then...

SILENCE.

ZACH VALENTI

Wolf 359 will return on February 14th.

END OF EPISODE 12.