

WOLF 359

"SUPER ENERGY SAVER MODE"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

BEGIN RECORDING:

SECTION 1

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 2000 HOURS

EIFFEL

This is the audio log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel, recording from the Comms Room of the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Welcome, everyone, to a very special transmission: it's our anniversary today, our 500th day orbiting around Wolf 359!

He BLOWS a PARTY HORN.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

I can't tell you how happy I am to have you here, dear listeners, as we celebrate another hundred days on this... creaky, miserable tin can. Just another two hundred and thirty days before we close shop and go home.

... unless Command decides to renew us for another year and a half. Then we're... less than halfway through this.

BEAT. He blows on the PARTY HORN again. It sounds much more pathetic and deflated this time.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Anyway, we now take you, through the miracle of the portable, hands-free recorder, to the crew anniversary party, already in progress.

And by "party" I mean, "Our autopilot helping me procrastinate my work shift." All right, Hera, here we are now, entertain us.

HERA

I'm afraid I'm still calculating the answer to your question from earlier, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL

"Calculating"? Hera, I asked you
for your Top 5 "Stick it to the
Man" songs, not 900th digit of Pi.

HERA

Well, there's lots of data to
collate. Year of composition,
active political regimes at the
time, complexity of chord
progressions... It may take a
little bit to have a mathematically
sound set of five. And it's three,
by the way.

EIFFEL

No, no, no, you're way overthinking
this. It's just a taste thing,
there's no wrong answer. Unless you
leave out Anarchy in the UK, that
would be mathematically unsound.
Here, I'll show you, ask me for my
top 5 of something.

HERA

Anything?

EIFFEL

Yeah, just go, first thing that
comes to mind.

HERA

Top five lanthanides?

BEAT.

EIFFEL

Try again.

HERA

Top five British naval battles of
the 1800's?

EIFFEL

Nope.

HERA

Top five celestial positioning
coordinates?

EIFFEL

You're just yanking my chain,
aren't you?

HERA

Well... I don't know what I want
but I know how to get it.

BUZZER.

HILBERT

Apologies for breaking into your
frequency, Officer Eiffel, but I
was wondering if I could have a
moment of Hera's attention?

HERA

How can I be of service, Doctor
Hilbert?

HILBERT

I am running an experiment with my
arc reactor, and I need additional
voltage directed towards my lab.

HERA

Negative, Doctor. You are already
at the maximum level for that wing
of the Hephaestus.

HILBERT

Then just reroute it. Divert some
power from the central processors.

HERA

I... would highly discourage that
course of action, Doctor. It would
put us over the acceptable safety
limits for -

HILBERT

I am taking every precaution, it
will be fine! Now stop wasting my
time!

BEAT.

HERA

Affirmative, Doctor Hilbert.
Rerouting power now, you should
receive it in about thirty seconds.

HILBERT

Thank you.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL

Wow... Are you upset? I didn't know
you got upset.

HERA

I am an MX500 Class Adjutant
Program, Officer Eiffel, I am
programmed to be friendly and
pleasant and I do not get upset.

(beat)

I can, however, get frustrated,
ruffled, and/or an eetsy, teeny bit
incensed when he takes that tone of
voice with me.

EIFFEL

Hey, don't let Hilbert get to you,
the guy's a whackjob. Did I ever
tell you about that time I thought
he was trying to kill me? Any of
those times?

HERA

Things don't "get to me", Eiffel.
I'm just afraid that sooner or
later that man is going to do
something reckless and some-

Halfway through the word "somebody" things goes horribly
wrong.

Hera's voice stutters and stops, going past her usual
glitchiness and into full-on scratched record mode. And then
her voice WINDS DOWN, DEFLATES, and GOES OFFLINE.

As do the lights, consoles, panels, loudspeakers, and
basically everything electric around Eiffel. It all WINDS
DOWN, STOPS, SHUTS DOWN, etc.

(writers note: from here onwards there will be very little,
if any music in this episode. We will, instead, be
emphasizing the sound effects of everything that Eiffel hears
around him)

SECTION 2

BEAT.

EIFFEL

... Hera? Are you there?

No answer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

One moment, dear listeners. We seem to be experiencing some... technical difficulties. Looks like we've lost our autopilot. And our lights. And anything that was plugged into a wall.

He taps the microphone on his recorder twice.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Recorder still seems to be running fine, though, so... score one for old school double A's. I'm sure this is just a small hiccup in the system, so let's just wait for this stuff to get sorted out, all right?

LONG BEAT. The ship CREAKS softly as the seconds tick by.
Finally:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Okay... maybe this isn't one of those wait and see things. Maybe it's one of those... imminent death things.

CLICK! He turns on his flashlight.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Let's go see if we can find any of the others.

We hear him opening the HATCH-like door into the Comms Room.
He exits going into -

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Eiffel moves through the dark, creaky ship.

EIFFEL

(calling out)

Hello?

The word ECHOES through the cavernous hallway, FADING slowly.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Hera? Minkowski?

No answer to either of those, just more ECHOES. A soft, distant RUMBLE goes through the corridor.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Cooooool. Geez, has this place
always been so Overlook Hotel-y?

Something CREAKS loudly right behind him, causing him to let out an IMPISH SHRIEK. He spins around, seeing nothing behind him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

All right, Doug, get a grip on
yourself.

(slapping his cheeks)
Just figure out what you gotta do.
Umm... what would Commander
Minkowski say if she were here
right now?

"Eiffel! I know minimal information
about the situation or its context,
but I am ready to place all the
blame squarely on *your* shoulders."

What!? That makes absolutely no
sense! You act like everything that
goes wrong on this station is my
fault!

"Everything that goes wrong around
here is your fault. Remember the
helium tank?"

Oh, here we go again! Look, I had
no idea what that dial did. I'm
really sorry Doctor Hilbert had to
amputate those toes, but it was an
honest mistake!

Underneath his dialogue, a SOFT NOISE begins.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

"What about the flight deck
airlock? Or that time you posioned
that liter of water trying to make
whiskey? I could do this all
night."

Oh yes, Commander, let's spend **more**
time on this, shall we? Here we are
on a potentially lethal situation,
and all you want to do is talk
about how much of a screw up I am!
God, you're useless.

The noises gets LOUDER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

"I'm useless? You are the most incompetent excuse for an enlisted man I have ever met. The only things you've done for the past 500 days have been sleep on the job, endanger our lives, and continually make stupid jokes just to hide the fact that you're -"

And then he hears it and stops dead in his tracks.

There is a VERY soft WHISPERING around him. Maybe it's coming through the loudspeakers. Or maybe it's coming from the walls of the Hephaestus themselves. It's too wispy to make out any of the words themselves - at times it almost sounds like a soft breeze - but it's definitely there.

And it's **definitely** doesn't sound like Minkowski, Hilbert, or Hera.

After a long silent beat -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Is... is somebody there?

No answer. The disembodied whispers continue.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Look, if this is a joke or something, it isn't funny!

The whispering SUBSIDES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

... all right, I suppose -

BANG! A loud clanging noise comes through the walls. It sounds like it's a room or two away.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

What the hell was that?

BANG! Again, only this time louder. Closer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Oh God...

SECTION 3

A long, anxious beat, then - WHAM! A heavy METAL HATCH FLIES OPEN.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel... is that you?

EIFFEL
Oh, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Are... why are you underneath that
table?

EIFFEL
Umm... reasons. Good ones.
Excellent reasons.

MINKOWSKI
Any idea what's going on? Looks
like the entire station's gone
dark.

EIFFEL
Hilbert asked Hera to give his lab
some juice from her central
processor. Maybe he blew a fuse?

MINKOWSKI
Hera's offline?

EIFFEL
I dunno, search me. Either that or
she's finally figured out how to
access her sleep mode.

Minkowski lets out an EXASPERATED SIGH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm guessing this isn't one of
those gets-better-by-itself
situations.

MINKOWSKI
If Hera's offline then practically
every system in the station is too,
and that includes life support.

EIFFEL
So we're gonna run out of air?

MINKOWSKI
That may be the least of our
worries. She also runs navigation,
orbital stasis, temperature
regulation... hell, probably even a
few that I don't know about.

EIFFEL

So basically we're barreling towards certain death. That's all you gotta say, barreling towards certain death. Okay, how's about we skip right up to the making it better part?

MINKOWSKI

Well, we'll need to reboot the system up at the bridge... but first we'll have to go down to engineering to realign the fuse couplings and restore power.

EIFFEL

Divide and conquer, Commander. You deal with the computer upstairs, I'll head downtown and plug 'er back in.

MINKOWSKI

Do you have any idea what you're looking for?

EIFFEL

No, but I've got you, and a pair of these.

Minkowski CATCHES something.

MINKOWSKI

Walkie-talkies?

EIFFEL

Been making a few of these out of old recorders. Pretty handy in a blackout. Careful though - the battery on 'em's pretty non-existent, so save it until you get to -

He is cut off as he catches a bit of the GHOSTLY WHISPERING again. It stops after a moment.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Did you hear that?

MINKOWSKI

Hear what?

EIFFEL

I thought... nothing, never mind.
C'mon, let's do this thing before
we fall into the star or something.

We hear the sound of a HEAVY HATCH being opened.

MINKOWSKI

This should take you down to
engineering, straight shot. Get
down there and wait for me - I'll
radio as soon as I get to the
bridge.

EIFFEL

Right. Talk to you in a sec.

The HATCH THUDS SHOT BEHIND HIM.

SECTION 4

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LOWER DECKS - CONTINUOUS

Eiffel moves through the lower decks of the station.

EIFFEL

All right, just... headin' down to
engineering. No big deal, no big
deal. Just gonna go down, flip some
switches, turn the lights back on
and then... go listen to some space
static for a couple of hours. Won't
that be nice?

We catch some loud METAL CREAKING as he goes.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Oh, it's spooktastic in here, baby.
God, I hate engineering. It creeps
me out even when we're not in super
energy saver mode.

I'm glad you're here to keep me
company dear listeners.

(mock announcer voice)

"We interrupt tonight's
presentation of Hammer Horror's The
Amityville Space Station to bring
you a quick word from our spons—"

Halfway through the preceding the WHISPERING starts again. It subsides after a second.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Okay, I swear to God, somebody's
talking to me.

He holds for a second, almost as if he's daring the whispers
to start up again.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Or maybe we're just running out of
O2 a little faster than
anticipated.

He's about to move on, when we hear a tiny snippet of
whispering. He snaps.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Okay, ENOUGH! I'm dealing with a
genuine life and death thing here,
so if Mr. Ooga-Booga Whispering
here wants to tango, he'll have to
take a number and have a seat
because my dance card is full at
the moment!

The whispering continues. In spite of himself, he's curious.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

H-Hera? Is that you? Look, if this
is some kind of... weird attempt at
being funny, it's - it's really not
cool.

The ghostly voice continues around him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

All right, all right, you got me!
Very funny. Hahaha... ha... ha...

The whispering continues, going up and down in volume. It
sounds like it's circling around him, almost like it's
stalking him. After a BEAT:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

W-Who is this? What do you want?

The whispering gets louder, and louder. It builds and builds,
getting clearer and clearer. It seems that we're about to be
able to make out what it's saying when -

A SUDDEN BURST OF STATIC!

MINKOWSKI

(over walkie talkie)

Eiffel, I'm at the bridge. Are you
in position yet?

The whispers vanish the second the static burst comes
through.

EIFFEL

Goddam... No, not yet. Commander,
there's something majorly weird
going on here.

MINKOWSKI

Yes... all the systems in the
station are powered down. Didn't we
already have this conversation?

EIFFEL

N-no! Listen: there's something
coming through the speakers. It's
like as soon as Hera went offline
they started picking up Stephen
King FM.

MINKOWSKI

That's not possible, there's
nothing powering them.

EIFFEL

I know what I've been hearing! And
it's been getting louder.

MINKOWSKI

All right, look: whatever that's
about, it'll be a lot easier to
sort it out with power and oxygen,
all right? So let's focus on
getting Hera back online first,
okay?

EIFFEL

Yeah... yeah, that's fair. Okay...
I'm at engineering.

We hear him OPENING a METAL DOOR and CLOSING it behind him.

SECTION 5

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING - CONTINUOUS

EIFFEL

What am I looking for?

MINKOWSKI

Go towards the back of the room,
you should see a big red breaker
box with a lightning bolt symbol on
it.

EIFFEL

Red... breaker... yeah, I see it.

MINKOWSKI

All right, go up to it and open it.
Now, this is gonna be real simple.

We hear Eiffel opening the panel.

EIFFEL

Holy crap. Real simple? Commander
there's like a bajillion switches
and cables in here.

MINKOWSKI

Just do exactly what I tell you.
See the switch at the very top? Hit
that, and I should get auxiliary
power for the consoles here.

CLICK! He flips the switch.

EIFFEL

Done.

MINKOWSKI

Uhh... okay, great. All right, give
me just one moment to start
inputting the reboot codes. Look
for switches number five, eighteen,
and thirty-two.

EIFFEL

Umm...

Softly, in the background, we start to hear the WHISPERING
come back.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Yeah I see them.

MINKOWSKI

Okay, go ahead and hit all three.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)

Okay, now you see the switch at the very bottom?

EIFFEL

Yep, I see it.

MINKOWSKI

Okay, that should power up the central processor again. Get ready to hit on my mark. Ready?

The whispering gets louder.

EIFFEL

Yeah, let's do this.

MINKOWSKI

Okay... three... two... NOW.

CLICK. Eiffel flips the switch. Nothing happens.

EIFFEL

Uhhh... Commander? Did we miss a step or something?

(beat)

Minkowski?

(beat)

Crap. The battery on my walkie's dead. Ummmm...

The whispering is finally loud enough that he can't ignore it. He looks around the room fearfully.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Look, I don't know... who you are, or what you want but I -

WHISPERS

... you're not the first...

It's the first words that we can clearly make out. They are, in fact, the only words we'll understand out of the whispers.

WHISPERS (CONT'D)

... not the first...

EIFFEL

What? What do you mean?

But they've reverted back to an amorphous mass and after another second they... STOP.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Wait, wait! What do you mean? I'm
not the first what?
(beat)
Hello?

And then BOOM! The entire station comes back online, and we hear all kinds of systems powering up. Lights come back on. And after a second:

HERA
-body's going to get hurt.
(beat)
Whooooaa, what just happened?
Did... did everything just kind of
blink around for a second there?

Eiffel lets out a LONG, WEARY SIGH.

EIFFEL
Hey Hera. Welcome back. We missed
you.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING, now back in:

SECTION 6

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 0030 HOURS

EIFFEL
Hey again everyone. It's been a few hours since I stopped the last recording, just wanted to give you a brief update. I think we crossed into a new day a little while ago. Day 501 on the galaxy's favorite little death trap.

Hera's up and running again. It's taken her a little bit to get all the systems back to normal, but it looks like we're not gonna suffocate or blow up anytime in the near future. Shouldn't expect warm showers either, but, hey, take what we can get and all.

I still don't know what those weird noises were about... I asked Hera about it, and she said that it was probably just some...

(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
residue of her vocal program
running on emergency power and
going haywire but... I don't know,
it sure as hell didn't sound like
Hera. Scans confirm that me,
Minkowski, and Hilbert are still
the only language-capable life
signs on the station but... I don't
know.

"You're not the first".... What the
hell does that mean? Not the first
what?

Beat. He lets out a frustrated sigh.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, from the Hephaestus Station,
this has been the audio log of
Communications Officer Doug Eiffel.
Good night, everyone.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 6.