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Repeat

STAR TREK

"POINT OF EXTINCTION"

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STAR TREK

"Point of Extinction"

CAST

CAPTAIN JAMES T. KIRK

MISTER SPOCK

DOCTOR LEONARD McCOY

MONTGOMERY SCOTT

UHURA

SARAS

DR. FRANCES BALLANTINE

MAETRIX

KLAS

VASHI

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STAR TREK

"Point of Extinction"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE

in flight about a small, silvery asteroid under a wan and dying red sun. Couple beats to establish, then from ship's underside (hangar deck), one of the light, two-man hovercraft-type landing vehicles is seen peeling out and down toward the asteroid -- the Enterprise routinely quartering off into space. CAMERA ANGLES DOWN and IN on the hovercraft as she descends.

McCOY'S V.O.

Enterprise Medical Log; Chief Medical Officer McCoy reporting. The Enterprise has made a routine stop at the asteroid code-named Q-214 at the request of the independent scientific team stationed here. The purpose of the team is to study the effects of a star which has been calculated to go nova in approximately ten years.

INT. HOVERCRAFT - CONTROL CONSOLE

McCOY and SCOTT behind the dual controls, manual steering barely necessary aside from an occasional routine flick of a switch -- the upcoming, arid terrain of the asteroid surface visible through view-screen in front and to our people's sides, as:

McCOY'S V.O.

(cont'd.)

My job is to conduct routine medical examinations of the team members; Commander Scott is along to deliver and assist in the installation of new equipment for the observatory, as well as to inspect the existing facility.

Scotty reaches into a cabinet above and between the two, brings down two of the life-support belts. He hands one to McCoy, McCoy nods and both begin to snap on their belts as the hovercraft settles.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - LOCATION #1

Barren, hot, mountains b.g. Literal waves of heat distort vision, "flow" across SCREEN. The hovercraft settles down.

McCOY'S V.O.

(cont'd.)

The Enterprise, meantime, is proceeding to drop off supplies elsewhere across the galaxy.

(beat)

We have landed at the coordinates radioed us by Saras, the Vulcan scientist... however, we now find that we have arrived some distance from the research station itself, protected from the asteroid's poisonous atmosphere only by the protective life-support belts we are wearing...

During above, hatch door WHOOSHES open, McCoy and Scott in visibly-pulsating forcefields emerge. The two confusedly look about, orient themselves. CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE. Finally...

McCOY

(irritably)

I've made some remote "house calls" in my time, but this... !

SCOTT

Aye. Not that I was expecting a marching band and bagpipes, mind you, but I'll wager the observatory wasn't built without a hangar-lock for vehicles like our hovercraft. It doesn't make sense they'd put us a mile out in this forsaken desert without reason!

McCoy glances o.s., past CAMERA. Motions.

McCOY

We'll know soon enough, Scotty. Here comes our welcoming committee...

Scotty follows McCoy's gaze, they see:

THEIR POV - REVERSE

SARAS and DR. BALLANTINE (both forcefield-encased), approach. The Vulcan in the lead, carries himself regally; the human woman's face reflecting some deep concern, however, she walks slightly to Saras' side and behind...

(CONTINUED)

which is less out of subservient tradition than the simple fact that she can't keep even stride with the taller Saras. Both are dressed in loose-fitting casual wear -- they rarely have occasion to venture outside of the research station. Saras raises a hand in the traditional Vulcan salute...

SARAS

Earthers -- Leonard McCoy and Montgomery Scott... you are bid welcome.

SHOT - SCENE

Saras, Ballantine move into SCENE. McCoy hesitates, then he and Scotty awkwardly return the formal hand-salute. Ballantine patiently observes.

McCOY

... er -- live long and prosper, Saras of Vulcan.

(down to business)

Your radio message didn't indicate any medical emergency. If you've declared a state of quarantine and for any reason we won't be able to enter the station...

SARAS

There is an emergency, Doctor. However, it is not precisely medical in origin.

Moment. Saras becomes aware of Ballantine, and, of course, formality dictates.

SARAS

(cont'd.)

But forgive me for neglecting the amenities. Allow me to present --

MED. CLOSE - BALLANTINE

The slightest expression of "get on with it" along with McCoy and Scotty, as:

SARAS' V.O.

(cont'd.; o.s.)

-- Dr. Frances Ballantine: our team's esteemed psychologist and biologist.

BALLANTINE

(overlapping)

Saras, I'm sure the newcomers are
anxious to hear about our problems...

MED. CLOSE - SARAS

A brief, distinctly Spock-ian twitch of an eyebrow;
then, back to business.

SARAS

Indeed. You see, the observatory's
artificial life-support functions
have momentarily been disrupted.
Without proper orientation,
conditions might have proven
harmful for you.

TWO SHOT - SCOTT AND McCOY

Scotty moves to rear of hovercraft, withdraws and
inserts metallic key, door slides open. At a touch
of an inner, pulsating control unit, an anti-grav
platform loaded with bizarre-looking equipment floats
out.

McCOY

All the more reason for us to
get right back with the stabilizing
units you requested...

SCOTT

(turning back to
CAMERA)

Aye, once I've hooked up these
babies --

BALLANTINE'S V.O.

(o.s.; interrupting)

Neither of you seems to understand
the situation -- !

SHOT - SCENE

SARAS

Our system -- has been deliberately
sabotaged.

McCoy and Scotty exchange slowly-comprehending looks.

SCOTT

(low)

I dinna ken... !

(up)

Didn't realize --

McCOY

Just one minute here. If it's true that we're the first visitors to this asteroid in the last few months...

SCOTT

(picking up on McCoy's line of thought)

... and this environment supports no natural forms of advanced intelligence... !

Saras nods.

SARAS

You are correct in your deduction that the sabotage was perpetrated from within.

BALLANTINE

(curtly)

If we'd needed detectives, gentlemen, we'd've notified Star Fleet. It so happens we already know the identity of the saboteur...

SARAS

It is our own environmentalist and communications operator, Maetrix.

McCoy and Scotty are all that more confused, as --

SARAS

(cont'd.)

Which is one more reason we could not risk your landing directly at the observatory... in his condition, Maetrix might not hesitate sabotaging your vehicle. And in the event of further internal damages, we may have need of this craft to evacuate Q-214.

BALLANTINE

Saras made a statement a moment ago -- that Maetrix's problem is not medical in origin. I disagree.

McCOY

Go on...

BALLANTINE

I've observed Maetrix for several months now, and in that time he's become increasingly antagonistic, particularly toward humans.

(MORE)

BALLANTINE (CONT'D.)

Oh, did I say... Maetrix is a
Wadget, Doctor.

SARAS

Highly-intelligent yet sensitive,
larval-developed life form.

McCOY

I'm familiar with the species, thank
you.

(beat)

You were recounting his symptoms,
Miss Ballantine... ?

BALLANTINE

I'll fill you in on the details
later, but I'm sure you will
recognize the syndrome and concur:
classic xenophobic paranoia. Cause
unknown.

SCOTT

(lost)

Dr. McCoy -- ?!

McCOY

(aside)

Means he's anti-social, Scotty.

(to Saras)

Which is obvious if he's sabotaging
equipment in an attempt to drive
the rest of you out!

SARAS

There is no apparent logic behind
Maetrix's actions. However --
given Dr. Ballantine's diagnosis
-- it is logical that there would
be no logic!

McCOY

(his dander up)

At any rate, nobody's leaving! Our
mission here is clear -- the personal
"demands" of your Mister Maetrix
notwithstanding. Now I suggest we
get on with it!

And that would seem to be that... for the moment,
anyway. Saras blinks, nods. Then without further word,
Saras turns and motions for the three to follow him,
Scotty with the equipment-laden anti-grav platform in
tow and as all start off, the CAMERA ANGLES AFTER to
note, in the distance, the dome shape of the research
observatory.

QUICK WIPE TO:

INT. OBSERVATORY - AIRLOCK - DAY

An inner corridor leading to the station proper. At the end of the corridor, a doorway, no door -- rather, a visible, colored forcefield indicating that life-support conditions between sections are independently maintained (in this case, in a concentrated "sterilizing" effect.) Outer door opens, Saras and Ballantine enter, followed by McCoy and Scott. At Scott's slight touch of a side control knob, the anti-grav platform remains suspended just outside the door.

SARAS

(as if continuing)

... the observatory has a main conference room and a laboratory with controlled environments all of us can tolerate without the use of forcefields. Personal quarters are individually designed to duplicate our respective planet conditions.

(beat)

The structure is not unlike that of your star ships.

MED. CLOSE - SCOTT

at wall panel monitors. These are labeled indicators like those above McCoy's diagnostic beds in the Sickbay, only smaller.

SCOTT

Keep your forcefields activated, everybody!

(turning back)

I doubt if anyone could tolerate this pressure -- it'd flatten Neuvian ore-crusher!

VASHI'S V.O.

(o.s.)

Saras! -- we've been wai
you! Maetrix is at it

ANGLE AT DOORWAY - VASHI

VASHI (forcefield-encased) ex-
PANNING as he rushes to con-
Tellarite (thick, fur-matte
race of short-tempered pug
and that means he may be more
-- it does not mean he is any
O.s. VOICES raised in argument are

VASHI

(cont'd.)

Neither of us can hold back that ... that insect! He's increased the pressure in all corridors from the central control room, and this time he's locked the controls!

(shakes head in frustration)

Klas is in there now trying to talk sense to him -- but I'm afraid the Klingon is no diplomat!

At mention of the word "Klingon," Scotty pulls his phaser.

SCOTT

"Klingon!" Why didn't somebody tell us the Klingons had attacked the station -- ?!

SARAS

You may holster your weapon, Commander Scott.

BALLANTINE

(as Scott hesitates)

Klas may be a Klingon, but he's also a brother in science -- and a member of our team.

SARAS

The nature of this expedition transcends all petty Federation disputes.

McCOY

(sizing up the situation)

Except your own, apparently.

A huge, bat-like creature with a four-foot wing-span suddenly flies into the corridor through the open doorway; and is immediately flattened (unhurt) against the floor. The thing WHIMPERS in sing-song melody belying its ferocious appearance.

VASHI

It's Maetrix -- he's releasing all our test animals! He says we won't have any further use for them... since we'll all be leaving shortly, anyway!

SARAS

That presumption is highly debatable, Vashi.

(MORE)

SARAS (CONT'D.)

(to the others)

We will have no further need of forcefields in the laboratory. Please follow me -- proceeding with caution...

Saras exits through doorway. McCoy and Scotty exchange looks -- what kind of a madhouse have they stumbled into? -- then follow. Ballantine tags slowly behind. Vashi shakes head, heads off in other direction, past CAMERA, muttering "Good luck!" or words to that effect as he goes.

INT. OBSERVATORY LAB - DAY

-- ANGLING to doorway as McCoy, Scott and Dr. Ballantine crowd in behind Saras, abruptly stop dead at what they see o.s. (Note: our people snap off their life-belts as they enter.)

KLAS' V.O.

(o.s.)

Six months' hard work and you're destroying all that in a matter of days! I thought my people were barbarians, Maetrix -- from you the Klingon Empire could take nasty lessons!

MAETRIX'S V.O.

(o.s.)

It's necessary, necessary!

FULL SHOT

-- revealing a startling sight: all manner of small alien creatures are running, flying and crawling free, their cages being upturned by the busy MAETRIX. KLAS the Klingon stands by, helpless as the squat, fragile-limbed and chirp-voiced Wadget scurries about. (Think of a Munchkin with an exoskeleton.)

MAETRIX

(cont'd.; as he's busy)

The animals can't be expected to survive here on their own -- once the rest of us have gone, now, can they? Can they!

Maetrix spies Saras advancing on him, dumps the final empty cage and moves to face the Vulcan.

MAETRIX

(cont'd.)

Ah, Saras, friend Saras -- you've arrived with the humans who'll be providing transportation for the rest of you out of here... good. All well and good.

SARAS

Our tests have as yet proven insufficient. Further time is required before conclusions are drawn. In short, Maetrix, we are unprovoked by your hostilities... and --

(indicating Scott and McCoy)

-- we now possess in the forms of a star ship's Chief Engineer and Ship's Surgeon, the ability to stem the internal havoc you have caused -- as well as to anesthetize you at any further sign of erratic behavior.

ANGLE - FAVORING McCOY AND SCOTT

indignant.

McCOY

Now, hold on here just one solar second -- !

SCOTT

We were called here to do a job for the good of the expedition -- not to take sides in a bloody civil war!

McCOY

We happen to be Star Fleet Senior Officers. The matter of our responsibility -- our responsibility

...

McCoy trails limply off as he finds himself staring into the beady eyes of Maetrix; CAMERA ANGLE TIGHTENING. After an awkward beat:

MAETRIX

You have no intention of utilizing your medical skill against me, human?

McCOY
(jaw set)
Not arbitrarily. No.

MAETRIX
Then may I take it that you
propose to help the others pack
up, pack up and return to your
ship before nightfall?

McCOY
You are mistaken in that assumption,
sir. The Enterprise is already
millions of light years from this
asteroid.

MAETRIX
(deadly quiet beat)
Then you are the one who is
mistaken, human. You are involved
in a civil war... the both of you.

Maetrix abruptly pulls out of SHOT.

WIDER ANGLE - SAME

Maetrix warily circling his way around the others, toward
doorway.

MAETRIX
(cont'd.; subdued
hysteria)
You've all had your chance -- I
gave it to you. The chance to
leave, I gave it to you and now
you've all doomed yourselves!

BALLANTINE
(calmly)
Maetrix, perhaps we can all sit
down quietly, and discuss this...

KLAS
I'll discuss it -- when that bug
that walks like a man is
dissected and under my microscope!

MAETRIX
(screaming)
Murderers!! -- you call yourselves
men of science, of science?!

MED. CLOSE - MAETRIX

at doorway. He's already wearing his life-support belt,
now he touches a stud and is immediately enveloped in
the protective field, as:

MAETRIX

(cont'd.)

Well, I call you assassins! But you won't get me. And you can't say I didn't give you your last chance -- last chance!

Exits. Others hurry into SHOT, hesitate at doorway. Saras holds up a hand, sighs.

SARAS

Perhaps -- it will be just as well to be rid of the Wadget.

SCOTT

One thing is for certain -- we cannot run around in forcefields for very long periods at a time, these belts are degenerative. If you'll show me to the control room, I can set to work at stabilizing conditions for now.

SARAS

Klas will show you the way, Commander.

ANGLE - FAVORING SCOTT

The Engineer's distaste is evident.

SCOTT

If you'll just point me in the proper direction...

KLAS

The pleasure of your company is no less distasteful for me, Terran. I've learned to force myself to behave as an objective scientist.

Klas snaps on his life belt as he exits. Scott ponders Klas' words for a long moment, then he snaps on his belt, embarrassed, mumbles incoherently:

SCOTT

I -- better get to work...
(exits)

ANGLE - FAVORING McCOY

as he's joined by Saras and Dr. Ballantine.

SARAS

With the equipment you brought,
the Engineer should have no
trouble affecting repairs.

McCOY

(short)

Scotty is more than capable of
handling his end. Now, Miss
Ballantine, if you'd be so kind,
I'd like to discuss the further
details of Maetrix's condition you
mentioned earlier...

FLIP TO:

INT. RECORDS LIBRARY - OBSERVATORY - DAY

CAMERA IS CLOSE on a video monitor on a console. Saras' hand reaches into SHOT, inserts tape cartridge into slot. The picture which immediately appears is of INT. LABORATORY - DAY - ANGLE ON MAETRIX. The Wadget is standing facing CAMERA, reading from a clipboard in hand.

MAETRIX

(on tape)

Scientific log, Star Date 5136.4.
Report of first twenty-four solar
hours of research team established
this star date, Q-214.

In b.g., various other team members pass through SCENE, including Klas, Vashi and several others whom we haven't met... a Felinoid Man and Wife team, an Avian, couple humans.

BALLANTINE'S V.O.

(o.s.)

This expedition started out with quite a cross of both Federation and non-Federation representatives. Whether or not we could all work side by side as scientists would have been as important an experiment in sociology as our research into this solar system's dying sun.

MAETRIX

(on tape; under)

Monitored exposure of test animals to radiation caused by sunspot activity has begun. Saras computes precisely two point three four solar months before effects manifest themselves.

ANGLE - McCOY, BALLANTINE, SARAS

sitting, viewing tape (AND TO INTERCUT.)

McCOY

Maetrix drove the others away?

BALLANTINE

The other humans were the first to go.

(wryly)

We homo sapiens seem to possess a low annoyance threshold, Doctor... although I must admit, Maetrix's "methods" are persuasive.

McCOY

You never would've known from the early tapes...

INSERT - CLOSE ON MAETRIX

indisputably a different Maetrix from the raving paranoid encountered just a few moments ago. Friendly. Considerate.

MAETRIX

Personal note. The scientists gathered for this experiment are of the highest skill and reputations. As a Wadget, it is my personal honor to be a member of this fine group... my honor, indeed.

Picture CUTS TO BLACK as Saras punches button.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SAME

Deep sigh of frustration from McCoy.

McCOY

The closest I've seen to this is the Vulcan state of pon far -- the mating urge which triggers an emotional frenzy.

SARAS

I see no reason to bring up insulting incidentals without bearing on the case at hand, Doctor.

BALLANTINE

I've studied Wadget medical records. Such an emotional metamorphosis has no basis in either physical or psychological life cycles.

MED. CLOSE - McCOY

He gets to his feet.

McCOY

I'd say it's time the doctor...
consulted his patient.

DIRECT CUT TO:

INT. MAETRIX'S QUARTERS - DAY - TIGHT ON MAETRIX

MAETRIX

Say what's on your feeble mind and
get it over with, human. I happen
to have a long journey ahead of
me!

WIDER ANGLE

Maetrix with his back to McCoy, is busy gathering up
materials, records and personal belongings, clothing,
etc., doing his "packing." McCoy is again forcefield-
encased (atmospheric conditions in here are ideal for
the Wadget: light gravity, air thin, temperature hot.)
McCoy has his tricorder in one hand, scanning
attachment in the other, running unobtrusive tests.

McCOY

(paying careful
attention to tri-
corder readings)

You think you're leaving -- but
I've already told you. The
Enterprise is long gone.

MAETRIX

(short)

I radioed my home planet days ago.
A robot ship is on its way to pick
me up in the desert.

McCOY

And Saras and the others? What
about your obligation to them, to
the mission?

ANGLE - FAVORING MAETRIX

drops what he's doing, whirls angrily on McCoy.

MAETRIX

"Obligation," you say! I have an
obligation -- to them?!

(MORE)

MAETRIX (CONT'D.)

All I've gotten from them for
the last six months have been
insults!

MED. CLOSE - McCOY

slowly turning his attention from tricorder... to Maetrix.

MAETRIX'S V.O.

(o.s.; bitter mimicry)

"Good old Maetrix, the bug-eyed
wonder!" "Pass the butterfly net,
Vashi -- here comes that walking
insect!"

ANOTHER ANGLE - SAME

MAETRIX

(cont'd.)

Don't you think a Wadget has
feelings, too? I've been treated
like some camp mascot!
(whirls away)

McCOY

(sincerely)

You have a right to be angry...
that's healthy. That's a release.
But you've gone beyond that.

CLOSE - MAETRIX

eyes shut, he doesn't want to hear:

McCOY'S V.O.

(o.s.; cont'd.)

You've disrupted an important
scientific project -- and endangered
lives. Maetrix, you may not be
responsible for your actions. Let
us help you!

ANOTHER ANGLE - SAME

HOLDING a brief moment on the tableau... Maetrix with
shoulders hunched, away from McCoy. And then, slowly,
his emotions welled up, Maetrix turns.

MAETRIX

... oh, wouldn't you like the
chance to help me, human -- help
me right into a cage! Well, no
thank you!

As McCoy shakes head helplessly.

MAETRIX

(cont'd.)

In the morning I'll be gone --
and the rest of you will wish you'd
left when I gave you the chance!

(evenly)

Now, if you'll be so kind as to
leave me, Doctor... ! The mere
presence of a human has never
been more physically repugnant to
me than at this moment!

CLOSE - McCOY

hesitates, mouth agape... what's to do? He turns and
defeatedly exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OBSERVATORY - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

INT. RECORDS LIBRARY - NIGHT

McCoy and Ballantine. OPEN CLOSE on tricorder graph in
McCoy's hand... CAMERA PANNING on McCoy's line, to
include console monitor playing back a similar graph
reading.

McCOY'S V.O.

(o.s.)

I managed a rough EEG equivalent
with my tricorder. And this --
(indicating graph
on monitor)

-- is the readout from Maetrix's
last medical exam, taken almost
seven months ago at Star Base 3.
You can see the radical brain wave
deterioration.

(beat)

My guess would be, due to prolonged
exposure to radiation -- possibly
through a leak in your building
shield.

We've WIDENED (after beat) to include both doctors.
Ballantine laughs at McCoy's last line. McCoy throws
her a sharp glance.

McCOY

(cont'd.)

You find this amusing, do you,
Miss Ballantine?

BALLANTINE

(continuing to
giggle slightly)

Not so much amusing -- as impossible,
Doctor. A radiation leak would
cause every alarm in the observatory
to go off.

McCoy considers this, nods, chuckles, rather loudly for
some reason even he can't quite fathom.

McCOY

Yes. I can't explain how, but I
know I'm right. Maetrix had a
legitimate grievance -- and perhaps
a deep-rooted dislike of humans to
begin with.

(laughs again,
despite himself)

The radiation pushed that up to a
genuine sickness.

BALLANTINE

We'd better go fill Saras in on
our findings...

McCoy agrees, they exit laughing. PAN SLOWLY UP to air
vent grating. A slight "hissing" SOUND accompanies the
invisible gas which, apparently, has been infiltrating
the room throughout scene.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Closet-sized chamber. OPEN TIGHT on bright yellow
canister labeled "Nitrous Oxide." The canister is
HISSING. WIDEN ANGLE to reveal that the canister has
been positioned in front of an air duct, above which
we read the legend: "Air Regeneration & Distribution."
Maetrix stands by. The Wadget's expression reflects a
pathological enjoyment of his sabotage. After a moment,
he turns and exits the room, as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

CAMERA IS CLOSE on Scott and Klas, head-to-head, engaged in heated "discussion."

KLAS

If you're accusing me of negligence, Earther, let me point out it's that bug-man who's supposed to be in charge of life-support!

SCOTT

You cannot slough off responsibility that easily, mate.

WIDENING ANGLE as McCoy and Ballantine enter.

McCOY

Trouble, Scotty?

SCOTT

Now there's an understatement! The dilithium crystal that generates this life-support system is already burnt to a sliver! Once that sliver gives out, we'll all sizzle like bacon in this planet's heat.

CLOSE - AIR VENT

Gas infiltrating...

SCOTT'S V.O.

(cont'd.; o.s.)

That is, if we don't choke to death in the poisonous atmosphere first.

SHOT - SCENE

Scotty increasingly perturbed as the others laugh; so does he!

SCOTT

(cont'd.)

There's wee little to laugh about in this situation, believe me. Come to think of it -- why am I laughin'?!

BALLANTINE
It looks like Maetrix wins.
We'll... have to abandon this
base -- after all!

MED. CLOSE - SARAS

Saras seated at corner computer station, tape readout
in hand.

SCOTT'S V.O.
(o.s.)
At least until a new dilithium
crystal can be shipped in.

SARAS
For a considerably longer time
than that, I'm afraid.

Saras rips tape, gets to his feet.

SHOT - SCENE

Saras facing group. He's sour-faced. The rest, struggling
to control themselves.

SARAS
(cont'd.)
Those of you who have been with
this project since its inception
will recall the projection at which
we all arrived -- the time factor
involved --

ANGLE - FAVORING KLAS AND VASHI

breaking up, under Saras' speech. Vashi has to reach
out, put hand on Klas' shoulder to steady himself.

SARAS' V.O.
(cont'd.; o.s.)
-- the calculable margin of safety.

VASHI
Oh, say what you're saying, Saras!
Then get on the radio and call back
the Enterprise so we can all get
out of here!

CLOSE - SARAS

A slight, barely perceptible smile from the Vulcan.

SARAS

I am afraid that will not be possible. Increased sunspot activity has ruled out normal sub-space communication.

CLOSE -ANOTHER AIR VENT

McCOY'S V.O.

(o.s.; laughing)

What the devil are you talking about. What "increased sunspot activity?"

SHOT - SCENE

All characters now shuffling about, moving, laughing hysterically, attempting to fight off the effects of the gas, fighting a losing battle. Saras, too, becoming increasingly giddy, as:

McCOY

(cont'd.)

That's not funny. Why do I think that's so funny?!

SARAS

There is decidedly nothing "funny" about our plight, Doctor. For the margin of safety originally anticipated --

(holds up fistful
of computer tape)

-- has just been negated by computer analysis. This system's sun is set to go nova... in considerably less time than we expected. In fact, in approximately three days, seven hours, and -- and...

CLOSE - SARAS

He's breaking up.

SARAS

(cont'd.)

There is an outside stimulus at work here, Dr. McCoy! By chance, did you happen to bring any nitrous oxide into this station with you -- ?

SHOT - SCENE

McCOY

Nitrous oxide -- laughing gas?
Of course! I had a canister...
in the hovercraft. For use as an
anesthetic... in case of routine
dental surgery.

SCOTT

Where's it comin' from -- ?!

Klas, hysterically stumbling toward doorway. Scotty,
others fall in behind.

KLAS

The control room!

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The CAMERA SHOOTs THROUGH the air duct grating, propped
in front of which is the canister. The canister is
HISSING. Klas, Scotty burst into the room, laughing
despite themselves. Scotty reaches out and wrenches the
canister valve shut, then slaps the silent canister to
the floor. Others crowd into doorway, their senses
slowly returning, during:

KLAS

(as they enter)

Maetrix is responsible for this!
When I get my hands on that slimy
creep -- !

SARAS

Save your energy, Klas. I am certain
the Wadget has made use of this
diversion -- to steal a land-skimmer
and make off for his rendezvous point.
He could not have known of the more
imminent danger.

McCOY

It doesn't make any difference if
he did. Scotty, how much longer can
the dilithium crystal last?

SCOTT

(grimly)

Five... seven hours, at best.

BALLANTINE

(beat)

Cut off from communication... we may
not even survive long enough to burn
up in a super-nova blast!

CLOSE - DILITHIUM CRYSTAL

in its casing. Little more than a faintly glowing piece of charcoal, as we...

DIRECT CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - EST. SHOT

Showing the planetoid in relation to its sun. Sunspot activity evident.

SCOTT'S V.O.

Enterprise Engineering Log; Chief Engineer Montgomery Scott reporting. Our routine mission to asteroid Q-214 has turned into a battle for survival.

EXT. OBSERVATORY - DAY

to ESTABLISH.

SCOTT'S V.O.

(cont'd.)

By shutting down non-essential life-support functions and lessening the burden on the remaining dilithium sliver, we can preserve its life by a matter of hours... however, time will be academic unless Doctors McCoy and Ballantine can locate the Wadjet and bring him back.

EXT. ASTEROID (LOCATION #2) - DAY

The stolen land-skimmer speeds along. Maetrix, features grimly set, is visible inside.

SCOTT'S V.O.

(cont'd.)

According to Saras, Maetrix is the only one of us skilled in communications to "punch a hole" through the radiation blockage and get a message out in time to save us.

INT. OBSERVATORY HANGAR - DAY

A not-too-large hold for surface vehicles, of which there is now only one left: a two-man, bloat-wheeled land-skimmer like those used by astronauts on the moon. Saras pats the vehicle. McCoy and Ballantine stand anxiously by. All are forcefield-encased.

SARAS

(to McCoy)

Maetrix destroyed your hovercraft so that the rest of us might not retreat to it when the dilithium crystal finally gives out. He stole one land-skimmer, yet neglected to destroy this other.

McCOY

(drily)

He probably didn't expect us to live long enough to chase him!

BALLANTINE

I can think of one reason for Maetrix leaving us one vehicle intact -- a psychological reason, however unconscious on his part.

SARAS

Indeed, Doctor? What might that be -- ?

CLOSE - BALLANTINE

BALLANTINE

(beat)

A cry for help.

DIRECT CUT TO:

INT. MAETRIX'S QUARTERS - DAY - CLOSE ON FORCE "RIP"

A slight, yet visible "rip," or tear in the outer force-field "wall." The rip is located just outside of the view-window, and below the sill. Scotty has the window rolled wide open so as to expose the rip.

SCOTT'S V.O.

(o.s.)

I located the source of the radiation leakage -- here. It's a slight fault in the shield -- a building error -- the alarms weren't triggered because the fault originally went undetected.

WIDER ANGLE

Scott steps back from window, rolls window shut. Saras, McCoy and Ballantine are present. Forcefields.

McCOY

That answers one question.

(to Saras)

What I'd also like to know is
-- how could you have been so far
off in calculating when this sun
would go super-nova?

SARAS

Calculating a nova within one
decade is relatively accurate,
Doctor. With the new and increased
activity, we can now calculate
even more precisely.

BALLANTINE

(mutters)

Great lot of good it'll do science
for us to burn up. That dedicated
I'm not!

McCOY

Scotty, are you sure you can make
out here while we're gone?

SCOTT

There's wee little choice, is
there? These force-belts haven't
much more life in 'em than that
dilithium sliver. The rest of us
can start constructing some natural
shelter against the elements...

(beat)

It's up to you and Dr. Ballantine
to bring Maetrix back here to send
out that SOS.

SARAS

Only the Wadget possesses the
necessary skill... punching a hole
through space involves esoteric
changes and techniques.

Scott places a hand on McCoy's shoulder.

SCOTT

Aye. And -- good luck, Bones.
We're all dependin' on you.

CLOSE - McCOY

McCOY

Funny, Scotty... I was about to
say the same thing to you -- !

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ASTEROID (LOCATION #2) - DAY - MOVING SHOT

The land-skimmer skips along...

INT. LAND-SKIMMER - DAY - CONTROLS

McCoy and Ballantine. Ballantine operates the controls.
After a moment.

McCOY
(the gallant
gentleman)
Oh, incidentally... if I haven't
said anything until now,
Dr. Francis Ballantine's
advancements in the field of
psycho-surgery are legend. I'm
a great admirer of your father,
Miss Ballantine.

BALLANTINE
(pointedly)
It's Doctor Ballantine, Dr. McCoy.

McCOY
Of course; I stand corrected.
(backs up, tries
again)
And I think it's admirable that
you've chosen to follow in your
father's footsteps.

CLOSE - BALLANTINE

throws McCoy the slightest look of bemusement; she's been
through this before.

BALLANTINE
My father was a zeenite miner.
He spent fifteen back-breaking
years in the mines to see me through
medical school and then Star Fleet
Academy.

CLOSE - McCoy

Befuddled reaction. It isn't often you can shut the
good doctor up.

BALLANTINE'S V.O.
(cont'd.; o.s.)
As for my papers on psycho-surgery
... I'll take it as a compliment
that you found them interesting,
Dr. McCoy.

TWO SHOT

Ballantine enjoys McCoy's uncomfortable silence for a brief moment, then her face becomes grim, she pulls back on a control stick.

EXT. ASTEROID (LOCATION #3) - DAY - RUNBY

The vehicle picks up speed, shoots past CAMERA.

DIRECT CUT TO:

INT. OBSERVATORY LAB - DAY

Scott, Klas and Vashi stand looking about the clutter of animal cages, work benches, etc.

SCOTT

This room'll have to do. We'll shut down all life-functions except for atmosphere in here. At least the planetoid's natural gravity is close enough to what we're used to.
(looks around)

Where's Saras?

VASHI

(indicating o.s.)

Last I saw of him, he was out there -- turning the animals loose.

SCOTT

I'll get him. You two start to work; strip the room down. Pile these cages out of our way.

Scott snaps on belt, turns and exits. Klas and Vashi exchange looks. Klas grabs up an empty cage, sneers, shoves cage at Vashi.

KLAS

Of course, human. Whatever you say, sir!

INT. AIRLOCK - OBSERVATORY - DAY

OPEN CLOSE on animal cage as Saras, on one knee, sets cage down by door. CAMERA PULLS BACK as Scott enters b.g. Saras slides the cage door open and a 6-inch tall, multi-colored tripoidal creature tentatively emerges.

SCOTT

Saras... !

SARAS

(voice low)

Please remain still and keep your voice low, Commander Scott. These creatures are peaceful by nature, however, they are an extremely nervous and defensive breed... and will attack to defend themselves at the slightest provocation.

CLOSE ON CREATURE

hesitantly inching its way toward open door, extending "feelers" ahead of itself.

SARAS' V.O.

(o.s.; cont'd.)

An aesthetically pleasing species, don't you agree? A life form indigenous to this planetoid, possessing natural antibodies against almost all forms of disease. Even sunspot radiation has failed to adversely affect it.

CLOSE - SARAS

whose face reflects genuine sadness, if only for a second.

SARAS

(cont'd.)

A pity -- that this species has reached its ecological point of extinction...

ANOTHER ANGLE - SAME

The creature finally scuttles out the door, and is gone. Saras presses button as he rises, hatch slides shut. Scott draws closer.

SCOTT

There's no one in greater danger of extinction at this moment -- than us, Saras!

(indicating)

Now will you come in and give us a hand? We're rigging up a makeshift safety chamber in the laboratory until the Enterprise can --

Saras turning to face Scotty, interrupts with:

SARAS

I regret to inform you I cannot be of service. I am a Vulcan. As a Vulcan, I find it illogical to expend energy on fruitless pursuits.

As Scott reacts in confusion.

CLOSE - SCOTT

SCOTT

(up slightly)

You were whistlin' a different tune an hour ago! What about McCoy and Ballantine, they'll bring Maetrix back -- !

SARAS' V.O.

(o.s.)

You do not understand.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SAME

As he speaks, Saras leans down and picks up the empty cage, starts toward doorway with cage in hand.

SARAS

(cont'd.)

Even if the doctors could persuade the Wadget to help -- an outside possibility in itself -- he would not be able. A physical impossibility. I should have remembered earlier. I am ashamed to admit it, but all of my faculties were not properly involved. Perhaps I was experiencing... anticipation --

Scott, temper flaring, grabs Saras by the arm, spins Saras to face him.

SCOTT

Man, you're talkin' gibberish! Say what you're sayin', already -- why won't Maetrix be able to help us -- ?!

SARAS

It is -- the nature of the beast.
(MORE)

SARAS (CONT'D.)

(beat)

What I failed to recall is that Maetrix is developed from a larval life form. His nature dictates that he hibernate for the next six months.

CLOSE - SARAS

SARAS

(cont'd.)

When Maetrix is picked up by his ship today, he will already be encased in a naturally-spun, and unbreakable... cocoon!

REACTION SHOT - FAVORING SCOTT

SCOTT

(slowly comprehending)

... cocoon?

SARAS

Precisely.

(beat)

Now, if you will excuse me, Commander... as a Vulcan, I have private religious meditation to attend to... in preparation for my demise.

With that, Saras detaches his arm from Scott's grip and exits PAST CAMERA. Scotty stares after, repeating to himself...

SCOTT

... cocoon?!
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FLIP TO:

EXT. ASTEROID (LOCATION #4) - DAY

The stolen land-skimmer comes to a stop in an area where the surface dips to form a narrow gully. We watch as Maetrix activates his force-shield, opens hatch, emerges from the vehicle.

CLOSER ANGLE - MAETRIX

CAMERA FOLLOWS as Maetrix, suitcase in hand, moves a short distance from the land-skimmer, to a sheltered area. He sets the suitcase down by his side. Maetrix adjusts a stud on his control belt, and his forcefield visibly widens. Then, he composes himself by folding both hands across his chest, and he begins to naturally "spin" a cocoon around himself, as we --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

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ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. ASTEROID (LOCATION #4) - DAY - ANGLE

McCoy and Ballantine in the land-skimmer, come to a stop beside Maetrix's abandoned vehicle. The two activate their forcefields, dismount. McCoy steps to, and looks inside the other land-skimmer. Slight HUMMING is heard, o.s.

McCOY

(after a beat)

I... didn't think we were that far behind Maetrix. He... may have been picked up already.

BALLANTINE

(reacting to something, o.s.)

Oh, no he hasn't, Doctor -- !

McCoy follows her gaze, they see:

THEIR POV - MAETRIX

A startling sight: still in the process of spinning his cocoon, the Wadget by this time is up to his neck in the shell. Maetrix's eyes blink; he's already in half-sleep; he frowns disapprovingly at the presence of the doctors.

MAETRIX

(voice slurred)

Humans... thought I'd seen the last of you. I've more important things to do... like sleep for the next six months... !

WIDER ANGLE

-- FEATURING McCoy and Ballantine as they move cautiously forward.

BALLANTINE

(urgently)

Maetrix, you've got to listen to us -- you're the only one who can help!

McCOY

When you left the base -- you'd sabotaged the life-support units and expected us to leave. What you don't know is that the sun flared up again -- it's going to go nova within three days! You're the only one who can send out a radio message for help!

BALLANTINE

You're in danger, too! Maetrix, do you understand... ?

MED. CLOSE - MAETRIX

apparently unimpressed. Slowly:

MAETRIX

I... understand your words, humans. I simply do not... believe them.

McCOY'S V.O.

(o.s.)

It's the truth -- !

MAETRIX

A lie. Another practical joke. You foul-smelling Earthers... are famous for that... !

WIDER ANGLE - SAME

MAETRIX

(cont'd.)

And if you insist on bringing me back against my will... please do so. How much use do you think I will do you... as an eggshell!

With that, Maetrix resumes his spinning activity. HUMMING rises in volume.

TWO SHOT - McCOY AND BALLANTINE

helpless.

McCOY

You've studied Wadget physiology -- can't we break him out of there?

BALLANTINE

(shakes head)

Not without killing him. We can't cut him out surgically, either.

(beat)

Any other bright ideas, Doctor?

McCOY

I'm an MD, not an entomologist!

At an apparent impasse, the doctors have no recourse but to return their attention to:

ANGLE ON MAETRIX

encased up to his eyeballs, as we --

DIRECT CUT TO:

INT. OBSERVATORY LAB - DAY - TIGHT ON SARAS

Eyes open, body at rest, Saras is in the traditional Vulcan state of meditation.

KLAS' V.O.

(o.s.; angry)

Look at him -- just sitting there. For every minute the Vulcan breathes our air, the rest of us die that much sooner!

WIDER ANGLE

showing that the laboratory has been stripped down; Klas and Vashi just setting the last of the emptied animal cages down to one side. Certain vents have been plugged; windows and the ceiling observation bubble have been sealed shut; a steel door has been set in the doorway where only a forcefield was before. Klas glares at Saras, who's seated out of the way, by the computer console. It's hot and sticky in here; effects showing on Scotty, Klas and particularly Vashi.

SCOTT

Leave him be, Klas. He's a Vulcan. In his state, his body's at rest and he's using up less oxygen than we three combined.

Scotty takes a final, all-seeing look about the room.

SCOTT

(cont'd.)

Well, we've pulled all leads
regulating artificial gravity,
pressure and temperature...

ANGLE - SCOTT

moving to door. He reaches out, touches door.

SCOTT

(cont'd.)

This steel door is makeshift, but
utilitarian. The forcefield was
an unnecessary burden on the
dilithium sliver.

(turns back)

TWO SHOT - KLAS AND VASHI

The Tellarite turning from cages, wipes perspiration
from face.

VASHI

It's no use -- I can't put up
with this furnace! I need the
controlled temperature of my
force belt --

Vashi urgently exits PAST CAMERA --

WIDER ANGLE

-- moves toward work table moved to side of room.
Piled on the table are the force belts. Scott intercepts
Vashi.

SCOTT

(level)

You leave those belts be, Vashi.

VASHI

You don't understand, Earther --
I need cold!

SCOTT

And all of us need to preserve
those belts until the last possible
moment. Between 'em, they haven't
got thirty minutes of energy
left -- !

Vashi makes a move for the table, and Scott pulls his
phaser.

SCOTT

(cont'd.)

I'm warnin' you, Tellarite --
don't make me stun you with this!

KLAS

Oh, give him my belt. I know I'm
not going to live long enough to
use it!

SCOTT

Don't talk like that!

(to Vashi)

Vashi, listen to me. When night
falls, the temperature will drop
to below zero. That should suit
you just fine --

KLAS

So what about the rest of us. How
do we expect to survive when the
Tellarite is happy covered with
icicles?!

MED. CLOSE - SCOTT

He hesitates, stuck for an answer. In sudden thought,
he holds up his phaser.

SCOTT

Why, we -- we'll use our phasers.
That's it!

CLOSE - SARAS

Face impassive, then Scott's words begin to make an
impression... notable around the Vulcan's eyes.

SCOTT'S V.O.

(o.s.; cont'd.)

We'll be able to heat up the walls
with the phasers. For a short
while, at least.

SARAS

(slowly)

Naturally...

SHOT - SCENE

All eyes turn toward the Vulcan.

VASHI

"Naturally"... what, Vulcan?

Saras gets to his feet.

SARAS

It is a means out of the doctors' predicament... which had not occurred to me previously. A natural solution -- to the Wadget's physiological problem.

SCOTT

If you've solved the problem -- then McCoy and Ballantine should know. Can we get a message out to 'em?

SARAS

Negative, Commander -- under the circumstances. However, the doctors are both able, and clever. I should compute the probability of their arriving at the solution themselves... at ninety-six point four percent positive.

MED. CLOSE - SARAS

SARAS

(cont'd.)

At any rate, gentlemen, the odds on our being rescued have just been considerably increased. Commander Scott -- I am now available for any further life-saving labor you may require.

ANGLE - THE OTHERS

Klas and Vashi exchange puzzled looks; Scott's expression remains guarded, suspicious. No wait now, as we --

DIRECT CUT TO:

EXT. ASTEROID (LOCATION #4) - DAY - ANGLE ON COCOON

A completed cocoon where Maetrix formerly stood. The enlarged forcefield around the cocoon is showing the strain, visibly winking in and out.

BALLANTINE'S V.O.

(o.s.)

His forcefield can't hold up much longer. If Maetrix needs to maintain a constant temperature for the cocoon --

ANGLE - FEATURING McCOY AND BALLANTINE

slowly encircling the cocoon; McCoy with tricorder in hand.

BALLANTINE

(cont'd.)

-- then he'll be in severe danger of retardation once that constant is disrupted.

McCOY

Breaking him out... he'd be disoriented -- resentful -- but he'll die unless we do something. The tricorder shows his brain waves and heartbeat haven't yet been too severely slowed.

(beat)

Doctor -- how would he come out of that thing? Under natural conditions?

CLOSE - BALLANTINE

BALLANTINE

On his planet, he wouldn't hatch until spring... when the temperature rises.

CLOSE - McCOY

McCOY

(thinking aloud)

Temperature... rises.

The idea hits him; he pulls his phaser.

McCOY

(cont'd.)

No reason why we can't affect the temperature -- right here! His forcefield won't ward off concentrated phaser heat!

SHOT - SCENE

Ballantine reacts, draws her phaser.

BALLANTINE

It's... risky.

McCOY

A risk we can't afford not to take. Neither can Maetrix.

McCoy sets the controls on the phaser; Ballantine follows his instructions, as:

McCOY

(cont'd.)

Set the controls at optimum -- stand on the other side of the cocoon. We'll have to be careful to apply phaser force evenly.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT

ANGLING DOWN past the cocoon; McCoy and Ballantine on either side of it. They level phasers.

McCOY

(cont'd.)

Now!

Both fire phasers in steady streams of energy, puddling the cocoon, moving evenly up and down, and then up again the cocoon.

ANGLE ON COCOON

being bathed. Forcefield weakening that much quicker.

INTERCUT: McCOY AND BALLANTINE

steadily applying phaser heat rays.

BALLANTINE

We haven't the power... to keep this up much longer, Doctor.

ANGLE ON COCOON

beginning to show an effect... some of the outer casing begins to crumble... an appendage breaks through... finally another appendage...

CLOSE - McCoy

McCOY

(wary)

No telling in what state of mind he'll come out of there. Be ready for anything...

SHOT - SCENE

McCoy and Ballantine kill their phasers. Last bits and pieces of the cocoon fall from Maetrix like flakes. Long moment. Maetrix, conscious and aware, is steaming mad!

MAETRIX

(finally)

I knew you humans were inferior irritants. I didn't think you were sadists, also!

As McCoy and Ballantine exchange looks.

MAETRIX

(cont'd.)

Denying someone his sleep -- even a Wadget... is there anything more inhumane?

McCOY

Now maybe you'll listen to us when we say we need you -- and we're not going back without you!

MAETRIX

You cannot force me without harming me.

BALLANTINE

(urgently)

And you can't stay here, Maetrix -- you've tapped your forcefield to its limit!

Before Maetrix can reply, a shrill SCREAM pierces the air. McCoy and Ballantine whirl about, they see:

ANGLE SHOT - PAST McCOY AND BALLANTINE

From behind a rock ledge appears an eight-foot tripoidal creature, huge cousin of the baby seen earlier. The creature rears like a great big lizard about to spring; eyes on the Wadget in particular.

McCOY

What... is it?

BALLANTINE

Don't move! It won't attack unless we provoke it.

The creature emits another sharp CRY.

McCOY
I'd say its hunger is provoking it.

BALLANTINE
(level)
Humans aren't on its diet, Doctor.

McCOY
(looking o.s.,
toward Maetrix)
No... but how about a nice, juicy
insect?

The creature SCREAMS once more and starts toward Maetrix,
down the ledge, tentacles groping ahead.

SHOT - SCENE

McCoy and Ballantine urgently move to flank Maetrix.

McCOY
(cont'd.)
I hope you don't think this is
some elaborately-staged trick,
Maetrix.

MAETRIX
I don't need your help --

BALLANTINE
You need someone's help. You can't
ward off that beast by yourself.

McCoy and Ballantine touch studs on their belts and their
force shields widen to combine with Maetrix's shield.
The creature leaps at Maetrix, and is repelled by the
force bubble. The creature SCREAMS in rage. The
collective force bubble shrinks slightly in size as
the Wadget's portion gives out entirely.

McCOY
That's it -- your shield is now
completely gone.

CLOSER ANGLE - FAVORING MAETRIX

MAETRIX
I don't believe you'll jeopardize
yourselves over my safety. Humans
aren't that noble.

McCOY
Maetrix, you experiment on animals
because animals are a lower form
of life.

(MORE)

McCOY (CONT'D.)

When man first reached out into space, he came into contact with alien life forms wildly different from his own.

The creature ROARS again, o.s.

McCOY

(cont'd.)

His intellect told him to treat aliens with respect -- unfortunately, human emotions are severely lacking in discipline, and logic. Even in scientists!

MAETRIX

You... sound more like Saras -- than a doctor.

McCOY

In this case, a Vulcan might make the best physician. He'd prescribe patience.

WIDER ANGLE - SCENE

The creature springs again, is repelled, this time not so forcefully. McCoy turns back to Maetrix.

BALLANTINE

We can't keep this up all day.
We've got to get back to the base.

McCOY

Maetrix -- will you help us?

CLOSE - MAETRIX

Moment's hesitation, then:

MAETRIX

We'd -- better get started. It'll take time for your ship to respond -- after I've sent the message.

SHOT - SCENE

The three start cautiously toward the land-skimmers as the creature continues to crouch, SNARLING viciously. Ballantine and Maetrix get into the first vehicle, McCoy into the second. They start up the engines, pull out.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The land skimmers pick up speed before the creature can pursue. It sits there, frustrated and probably very hungry.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE - FULL SHOT

The planetoid and its sun. In a sudden blinding flash, the sun goes nova... few seconds... and then returns to its original appearance.

KIRK'S V.O.

(o.s.)

Right on schedule. Looks like we pulled you out of there none too soon.

PULL BACK and ANGLE so as to show that the scene we've just witnessed is a visual magnification on the main viewscreen of the:

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - ANGLE FAVORING KIRK

KIRK and McCoy; SPOCK, Scott and UHURA at their stations. Other personnel present. Kirk, a smile tugging at his lips, spins in his chair to face McCoy and Scott.

KIRK

(cont'd.)

All in all, gentlemen, I'd say that was quite an adventure. You even managed to break diplomatic ice with a Wadget.

McCOY

(affected modesty)

All in the line of duty, Captain.

KIRK

Commendable, yes -- line of duty, no. At least, it won't go down in the log that way. You two volunteered for the mission, remember?

(big grin)

I hope you enjoyed your "shore leave."

MED. CLOSE - UHURA

swivels from her console.

UHURA

Captain -- I've got a message coming in from the scientists we just dropped off at Star Base 3. Saras would like permission to speak with Mister Scott and Dr. McCoy.

KIRK'S V.O.

(o.s.)

Put him on visual, Lieutenant.

Uhura flicks a switch.

ANGLE - VIEWSCREEN

The star system winks OUT; to be replaced by Saras and Ballantine, against a neutral background. Saras has hand raised in the Vulcan salute.

SARAS

Greetings, Captain Kirk.

(drops hand as salute is returned)

The Enterprise departed Star Base before we had proper opportunity to express our gratitude to your doctor and Chief Engineer...

AND TO INTERCUT: THE OTHERS

McCoy and Scotty beam.

McCOY

Well, at least someone appreciates what we did back there...

SPOCK

You disrupt an historic scientific project... and hasten the departure of the research team without regard to procuring all data and records meticulously assembled by that team.

(incredulous)

And of that you are proud, Doctor McCoy?

McCoy throws Spock a sour look, returns his attention to screen, as: