

SubSpace Interference



Ship's Communications of the USS *Rendezvous*

Stardate: January 2000

From the Bridge...

Wow! Another year has gone by. It's time to make and break another set of New Year's resolutions. For those of you who made it, we had a great time at Marla's parents' house ringing in the new year. We figure there were eighteen of us at the high point of the party. With Star Wars role playing, video games, and a puzzle going on, there was something for everyone. It was fun bringing in club members as characters the regular Star Wars players got to interact with. We found out that Tom is more than a little trigger happy, but it helped the others escape as he attracted most of the attention of the locals.

I hope nobody was too disappointed by the lack of 'armageddon' with Y2K. We had our candles ready and a little spare water for the party, but when midnight hit, nothing happened. The lights stayed on, the computers kept working, and the phone still rang. It was a very satisfying disappointment. The captain and Julie Wall happened to be in Macy's on the 31st. It was a madhouse! The checkout lines were $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down the aisles. People were stocking up on canned goods, meat, and toilet paper, expecting the worst. There was an air of hysteria with these people. I wonder if they felt a little ridiculous when nothing happened that night. I'm glad I wasn't one of them.

The only glitch I saw personally was on my work computer. One value in its CMOS changed on its own, but without any effect on my computer. Everything else was business as usual.

With the new year before us, now is the time to make our new year's resolutions. What can we do as a club to help each other and to reach out into the community? Think of some fun service projects we can do as a club that will help others see us for who we really are.

It looks to be a great year. The club is going strong. We've got a great captain (and that's not just a biased opinion) who's got some great activities

planned for us this year. Join in on the fun and participate. Don't ever be shy to give suggestions for club meetings or to write something for the newsletter. Curtis Kidd wrote this month's story. His stories from the other side of the Neutral Zone are always worth waiting for.

If you don't feel up to writing the *Rendezvous* Saga, submit a departmental report. These can be Science Fact or Science Fiction. A great example of this type of submission is the weather logs we receive from Derrick Hughes. Don't forget that newsletter contributions will earn you points towards your next promotion.

It's going to be a great year. We're glad you're aboard.

Commander Ross Trowbridge
Executive Officer
USS *Rendezvous*

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Coming Events

- January 15th- Monthly meeting of the USS
Rendezvous at 10:30 AM in the USU Food and
Nutrition building.
- January 17th- Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday
Observed.
- February 14th- Valentine's Day
- February 19th- Monthly meeting of the USS
Rendezvous at 10:30 AM in the USU Food and
Nutrition building.
- February 21st- President's Day
- March 17th- St. Patrick's Day
- March 18th- Monthly meeting of the USS Rendezvous
at 10:30 AM in the USU Food and Nutrition
building.

Top ten signs found on the Enterprise

- 10 On trash can in holodeck: "Thank you for keeping
the holodeck litter-free."
- 9 On shuttlecraft: "I brake for Klingon Birds of Prey"
- 8 In Deanna's quarters: "Chocolate is my life"
- 7 Anywhere: "Garage sale on deck 11!"
- 6 In Ten Forward: "For good time call..."
- 5 Outside Data's quarters: "Warning: aggressive Felis
domesticus!"

- 4 Anywhere: "Phasers don't kill people; Klingons do"
- 3 In Beverly Crusher's quarters: "My son is on the
Honor Roll at Starfleet Academy"
- 2 "Daily Holodeck maintenance from 2 AM - 11 PM"
- 1 Anywhere: "Have you hugged your starship captain
today?"

Top Ten Reasons to Believe the Ship Is Falling Apart...

- 10 Something seems out of place when Sonic runs by,
spin-dashing the Romulan ship on main viewer.
- 9 The only way to get the replicators to do their thing
is by asking, "Pardon me, but do you have any
Grey Poupon?"
- 8 The warp core suddenly falls out of the ship. All
unfortunate "Engineering extras" are blown out the
resulting hole before the special doors can drop.
(Alternative: They can't get out BECAUSE the
doors are down!)
- 7 Halfway to their destination, the crew watches
helplessly as the warp nacelles fly by on main
viewer.
- 6 Replicators' wiring gets crossed with warp
control...they start creating anti-food!



- 5 There's snow on the viewers and Riker has to go up and fix the antenna.
- 4 Connected with the ship, Data suddenly blows a gasket. La Forge becomes frantic when he can't find any gaskets!
- 3 Connection with the computer results in Data's thoughts being shown on the main viewer. (A combination of two main themes...?)
- 2 A missed request by Picard results in a hole in front of his path. He falls into the Captain's Yacht, which then takes off at Warp 55.
- 1 The ship's phasers, badly aimed, shoot first the main viewer, then the cameraman! (Oh well, it was a nice series...)

Rendezvous Saga

by Curtis Kidd

QurtIS glowered at the commscreen. "What do you mean you can't support me on this?" he demanded.

The voice from the other side gave the Klingon equivalent of a sigh of frustration, something closer to a howl of outrage. "Your crew was decimated," began the response, in a tone that barely hovered in the range of patience. "If I stand up and demand that you remain in command, on active duty, while this investigation is underway, it will draw suspicion!"

"So what am I supposed to do while this inquest is underway?" the Klingon captain growled. He had no patience for political squabbles, but they always seemed to catch up with him sooner or later.

"They're going to need to get your statement in front of the Council. Don't do anything!"

QurtIS bashed the wall next to the viewscreen in rage. "Do nothing?!?! My crew was slaughtered! You know as well as I do that we were sent out there to be killed!"

The voice on the other end of the comm channel snapped in response. "Yes, I do!" The response halted the captain's tirade. "I also know that, since that plan failed, they are going to try and kill you again...you're notorious in that sector, the chances that you could rally a following are too high for them to gamble with. They MUST eliminate you as a political

threat, which means discrediting you. They've got a good start toward that, but we can fight them. You have a lot of support on the Council, more than you think. But if they can kill you before this inquest is resolved, no one will continue the inquest. You'll get shoveled into a pile of paperwork and forgotten, which will serve their purposes almost as well."

Much as he hated to do it, QurtIS admitted the logic behind the argument. "So just where am I supposed to go to do this 'nothing?'" he asked, resignedly. The battle was changing grounds, and his tactical knowledge in the political arena was limited. He would have to let someone else take up the battle, much as that galled him.

"Go home," was the reply. "They will be watching for you to take any potentially hostile action. The safest thing you can do right now is visit family."

"I've got no family," QurtIS responded. "Did you forget? My father died in the Dominion War, my mother was dead years before that."

"Then go visit childhood friends...go get roaring drunk. Just don't do anything that would be considered incriminating!" QurtIS shook his head at that, wondering how he would pass the time before his call to appear before the Grand Council. Maybe he'd get lucky and someone would try and assassinate him again. That, at least, would be interesting.

"It's really odd, Marla," Commander Ross Trowbridge said. He was still adjusting to wearing both hats as Executive Officer and Captain's Spouse; it sometimes left his head spinning. However, it did have advantages; he was now free to state his opinion of upcoming missions, so long as he did it off the record, as Captain Trowbridge's husband.

"There's no identification on it, nothing official other than the fact that it was a priority channel used by the Klingon High Command."

"Why would they be inviting us to Kronos?" Marla wondered aloud. "And why then?"

Ross shrugged. "Too bad the VaQwI' is patrolling the far side of the sector right now. QurtIS could probably give us some insights into the protocols."

Marla nodded. "But the Romulan incursions have been increasing in that area. Much as we could use that ridge-headed pain-in-the-backside, his first duty is to the Empire." She reached over and took the bowl out of the replicator. "After breakfast!"

The time away from the ship had actually done him some good, QurtIS decided. His first week on-planet had been awkward...the lack of a regular schedule, ordered watches and such, had disturbed him, and his rest was haunted with images of crewmembers getting cut to ribbons in a firefight they'd been ill-prepared for. He was still resentful of the fact that duty to the Empire had forced him to abandon them to their fates; however, someone had to go back to the ship and signal for reinforcements. The cease-fire with the Romulans hadn't lasted far beyond the end of the Dominion War, and his crew had been caught right on the front lines of the first major outbreak of fresh hostilities.

He drained his mug of blood-wine and signaled for another, drinking to the memories of the crew. It had been years since he'd returned to his home world; it had been odd, at first. Many of the people he'd grown up with had moved on, and the few that remained had all but dismissed him as lost in battle. Only the occasional report of his activities had made it back home. It was a relief, in a way. No one asked him for painful details of past actions. He was having an easy enough time remembering how many crewmen he'd lost in battle over the years. His new drink arrived, and hoisting it easily in one hand, he moved over to join the group singing the glories of fallen heroes of the past. It wasn't good music, but he was just drunk enough not to notice that everyone else was as out-of-key as he was.

"I want that sensor sweep verified!" Derrick ordered. Things had gotten shaken up over the years he'd been aboard the *Rendezvous*, and he had never really anticipated being in charge of Sciences. The responsibilities still sometimes overwhelmed him; but right now, there was a protocol to be followed that protected him from worrying about it.

"What's up, Mister Hughes?" Ross asked. The Commander walked over to the science console.

Derrick looked up at the Andorian. "I'm not exactly certain, sir," he answered. "The best I can give you right now is a potential cloaked vessel two parsecs off our port side, heading into Klingon space."

Ross cocked an eyebrow and rubbed tentatively at one antenna. "Why would a ship need to be cloaked going into Klingon space..."

"Unless it's not a Klingon vessel?" Derrick finished the thought. "The contact could just be an

anomalous tachyon burst, but if it's actually a vessel, it's not Klingon...the energy signature of the tachyons is all wrong for a Klingon cloak output."

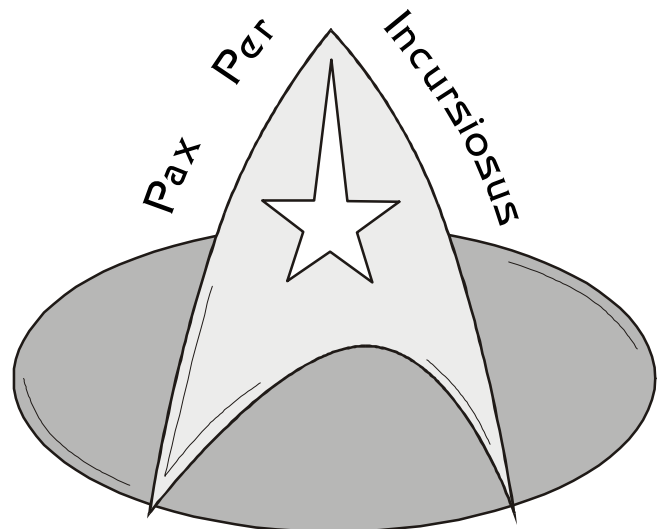
Ross nodded. "Keep me posted...launch a probe if you have to. We're supposed to be heading in that direction soon, and I would really prefer to avoid any unnecessary surprises!"

"Yes sir!"

Ross scowled as he turned away...and proceeded to the Captain's ready room. The benefit to being First Officer is that you only had to make the really tough decisions when the Captain wasn't on-board.

Something nagged at the back of QurtIS' mind as he boarded the warp shuttle...an unsettling sensation that something was wrong somehow. But, orders were orders, and he had orders to travel to Qo'noS to report to the Grand Council. He would have preferred transit aboard a regular ship; but with a state of hostilities present, he could hardly expect to be chauffeured about the Empire. At least they'd sent the shuttle for him, rather than insisting he arrange his own transport.

He was almost surprised to see that he was the only passenger...he had expected that there would be someone else that would need transport to the capitol. However, as he thought about it further, this was something of a priority transit. He sat back and ignored the pilots as they went through their systems'



**U.S.S. RENDEZVOUS
NCC-1896**



checks, letting himself doze lightly to pass the time. He barely noted when they lifted off, and hardly shifted in his seat when the warp engines came online and the little ship leapt away from orbit. Even if he had been fully conscious, he was far enough away from the cockpit that he never would have seen the co-pilot activate a small transmitting device.

“It’s confirmed, Captain!” Derrick called out, barely suppressing the excitement in his voice. “Romulan cloaking field. However, it just went to warp, on course deeper into the Empire.”

“Do you have any sort of a course heading on it?” Marla asked, anxiously. Romulans invading the Klingon Empire were nothing new...but this one was getting a little too close to Federation Space.

Derrick double-checked his instruments. “Ummm...nothing definite,” he answered, apologetically. “I can give you a general heading, but we could be off by a couple of degrees. Depending on how far we travel...that could be a big discrepancy.”

Marla debated for only a moment. She’d gotten far more impetuous since landing in the ‘big seat’. “Let’s do it,” she answered.

Ross went into action without further prompting. “Helm, bring us about, match course with the science officer’s readings. Tactical, activate the cloak. All stations, yellow alert!”

As the bridge went into a new frenetic level of action, he grinned down at Marla, a grin she recognized, but one that could have scared almost anyone who didn’t know the Andorian. “We’re going in,” he said simply.

At first, QurtIS simply thought he was reliving that final firefight a little too vividly. Eyes closed, he

was going through events to try and prepare himself for the grilling questions he knew he would be facing...and suddenly, he could smell blood, and heard a muffled groan of pain.

However, as he concentrated on it, the smell didn’t fade away. In fact, it got abruptly stronger. His eyes snapped open in time to see the assassin’s knife descending. Reflexively, he swung his arm to parry the blow.

If he’d been up and swinging with his full body, he probably would have knocked the co-pilot across the cabin. As it was, his seat-restraints held him up enough that the knife didn’t actually make contact. It clanged off the wall above his shoulder, and the assassin lost his grip as knuckles banged into the bare metal of the bulkhead.

As the would-be assassin scrambled after the knife, QurtIS slapped the quick-release on his restraints, spinning free of the seat as the blade swung at him again. The captain mentally cursed the fact that he’d listened to his ‘political advisor’ and left his bat’leth...though in these quarters, such a weapons could almost be a hindrance. It had been a long time since he’d fought with anything as small as a knife.

However, he’d had plenty of bare-handed experience. He drew himself into a defensive position as he analyzed his opponent. The assassin was obviously no novice, and had realized that the element of surprise was lost...he took up a cautious offensive stance, a position QurtIS wasn’t familiar with.

QurtIS allowed himself a quick glimpse of the knife. It was a Romulan design, he recognized it. His features hardened--and the assassin lunged, taking advantage of the Klingon’s fixation on the blade. QurtIS moved to counter the attack, with partial success. The blade did not bury itself in his torso as

intended; but it did bite deeply into his side. As the assassin was going past, QurtIS grabbed the knife arm and threw his attacker against the bulk-head.

As the stranger pushed himself off the bulkhead, a new smell filled the air...and QurtIS recognized it as he recognized the discoloration on the bulkhead. His attacker was a Romulan, surgically altered to pass for Klingon. QurtIS cursed his own inattentiveness...he now knew why things had felt wrong when he boarded.

The Klingon moved a couple of times to test how severe his wound was, as they circled each other. His wound burned far more than it should; from what he could tell, it wasn't that deep.

"Does it hurt, petaQ?" the Romulan asked, with false concern. He feinted with the knife a couple of times. "Neuro-toxins can do that."

QurtIS grimaced. He would have to finish this fight quickly, even if it meant abandoning any caution. At least, he consoled himself ironically, he was already poisoned. If he got stabbed again, it wouldn't matter much, provided it wasn't anywhere fatal. He began playing scenarios in his mind, everything he knew about Romulan hand-to-hand techniques, trying to find something to give him an edge.

Then a thought dawned on him. He was fighting a Romulan, yes...but a Romulan that wasn't used to having a Klingon appearance. The captain shifted his position ever so slightly, exaggerating the wince of pain that shot across his face, apparently leaving an opening.

The Romulan almost didn't go for it, but he was apparently rattled at being stuck in a hand-to-hand battle when he'd prepared himself to do in his target with a single stroke. When the opening started to

close up again, he lunged in desperation, thinking the Klingon was distracted by the pain.

QurtIS forced the pain aside as he met the lunge with a pair of actions. His left hand shot out and latched onto the knife-hand of the assassin in the manner least convenient for the assassin --he slapped his palm down across the point of the blade, taking the fist of the assassin in a crushing grip. His right hand shot forward and grabbed the Romulan by the tuft of hair on his surgically-altered chin.

Before the assassin could react, the Klingon drove one booted foot into the region of the solar plexus. He wasn't sure if there was a nerve bundle there in Romulans or not, but it didn't matter much. The spiked toe of the boot opened the Romulan's midsection from the bottom of his ribs to his belt-line.

"Don't wear a beard or long hair if you're not ready to have someone grab at it, ToDSaQ!" The Klingon spat the epithet as the assassin slumped to the deck. For good measure, the captain took the assassin's blade, which was still sticking out of QurtIS' hand, and plunged it into the Romulan's back.

A wave of dizziness hit him as he straightened up. He hadn't lost enough blood for such a reaction, he knew; the neuro-toxin was taking effect. He had no idea how long he had left; but he was fairly certain it wasn't long enough to complete the transit to Qo'noS. He staggered forward, hoping there was some kind of medical kit in the cockpit...and drew up short when he saw the Romulan Warbird decloaking alongside the shuttle.

"Sensor report, Mister Hughes!" Marla called out. They were still trying to find the Romulan vessel, and had begun to broaden their sensor sweeps,



thinking they might be slightly off their pursuit course. Marla certainly hoped that was the cause of their failure to locate the Romulans...it was entirely possible that they had baited the Rendezvous into crossing the Neutral Zone to try and destabilize relations between the Empire and the Federation. Granted, the Rendezvous had been invited to come into Klingon Space...but they were a good twelve hours early. That would be hard to explain to the punctual Klingons.

“Stand by...something coming up,” came the response. A couple of seconds later, Derrick called out, “Contact! Romulan Warbird and a smaller vessel...appears to be a Klingon warp shuttle.”

“What the...?” Ross began to wonder aloud. Why a Warbird would be meeting up with any Klingon ship in this part of the Empire...

“What is the current status?” Marla demanded.

Derrick scowled at his sensor readout. “The shuttle appears to be attempting evasive maneuvers...very poorly! It looks like the pilot’s drunk or something.”

Marla cocked an eyebrow at that. “Do we have a visual yet?”

“Two seconds,” Derrick answered.

Just as the image of the massive Warbird and tiny shuttle appeared onscreen, Ross spoke up from the Communications console. “I’m picking up a distress call, Klingon open channel. The Romulans are scrambling it, but we’re close enough to filter out the interference.” Vickie Wiser punched a couple of buttons on the console, and the bridge was filled with a burst of static. Ross winced; and Vickie looked about apologetically as she adjusted a couple of instruments.

“...under attack,” came the voice, crackling with the static of the jamming. “Pilot dead, co-pilot...” more static cut in, “...currently wounded and without recourse for medical facilities.”

More static crackled, then the words, “...self-destruct if captured.” There was something tantalizingly familiar about the voice...if only the static were filtered more...

Marla rose from the command chair. “I’ll be spaced in my underwear before I’ll let anyone, even a Klingon, be taken captive by Romulans! Tactical, target the weapons array on the Warbird.” As soon as the order was acknowledged, she barked out, “Fire at will...and keep shooting until they can’t return fire!”

The first shot made a wreck of the disruptor emitter on the nose of the Warbird. “Prepare a tractor beam for that shuttle,” she ordered.

“No time, captain!” Derrick called out. “Registering one Klingon life-form aboard the shuttle, life-signs failing fast!”

The Romulans decided that the situation was not one for which they were prepared, apparently...with their primary weapons system damaged, they wheeled about and made off for Romulan Space, cloaking immediately.

That was all Marla needed. “Drop shields,” she ordered tactical. Hitting her comm panel, she called down to the transporter room. “Lock onto the occupant of that shuttle...beam him directly to sickbay!” She turned again to the tactical officer. “As soon as they get that Klingon aboard, I want shields back up and that shuttle tractor-beamed aboard.”

She turned to Ross. “Mr. Trowbridge, you have the conn. I’ll be in medical.”

As the captain left the bridge, Ross set about his duties...damage control of a different sort, he mused. “Mister Hughes! Do we have any sensor contacts?”

“None registering at this time.”

Ross snorted softly to himself. He doubted they were actually that lucky, but one could always hope. “Let’s get this boat cloaked again, before we end up with half the Klingon Empire asking why we’re here!”

To be continued...





U.S.S. RENDEZVOUS NCC-1896

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