

# SubSpace Interference



Ship's Communications of the USS *Rendezvous*

Stardate:

## From the Bridge...

The captain is in Oregon this week to help out her sister who had a baby boy on the 4th, so it's up to me to let you know what's going on in the fleet.

The big news is FanFest 2000, that was held on March 11th and 12th at the Utah State Fairpark in Salt Lake. The convention had quite a few guests, including:

- George Takei (Sulu)
- Frank Gorshin (Riddler, Commissioner Beale)
- Mike Lookinland (Bobby Brady)
- Todd Bridges (Willis on *Diff'rent Strokes*)
- Don Shanks (Nakoma on *Grizzly Adams*)
- RuDee Lipscomb (Disney Channel host)
- Ted White (Veteran hollywood stuntman)
- Robert Brooks (Jason from *Friday 13th Part 3*)
- Gunnar Hansen (Leatherface)

The *Rendezvous* was very busy at the convention. Marla was on the planning committee almost from the start. She also ended up finding most of the volunteers at the last moment when the person responsible didn't follow through. Members of the 7th Fleet came forward to fill in the missing slots.

Curtis did much of the make-up work for the convention and even walked around as a Klingon on Sunday.

The only disappointment to the convention was the low turnout of fans. In a way, this was great for the rest of us as we were able to spend more time with the guests. At one point, George Takei even sang '16 Tons' to a small group of us. It gave us a great chance to meet these stars and get to know them better. In fact, Todd Bridges is coming back to Utah in the next week or so and will be playing paintball with Captain Rex Rouviere and some of the 7th Fleet Paintballers.

Next year's FanFest will feature Mark Hamill as the guest of honor. The date and location will be

announced soon, so get ready to mark your calendars. If it's anything like this year's convention, it will be something you won't want to miss.

CONduit 10: Night of the Living CONduit, Utah's other convention, will be held this year on May 19, 20, and 21 at the Salt Lake Airport Hilton. We've attended this convention many times and always have a fun time. The guest of honor this year is Charles De Lint, with Brian Durfee as the artist guest of honor. Costs for the three day convention are as follows:

	Adult 18+	Youth 13-17	Child 7-12	Infant 0-6
Weekend (Before 4-21)	28.00	26.00	14.00	free
Weekend (After 4-21)	36.00	34.00	18.00	free
Friday Only	18.00	16.00	9.00	free
Saturday Only	22.00	20.00	11.00	free
Sunday Only	13.00	11.00	6.50	free

Check out their webpage at [conduit.sfcon.org](http://conduit.sfcon.org) for more information.

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## Coming Events

- 18 March- Monthly Meeting of the USS Rendezvous at the USU Food and Nutrition building. 10:30 AM.
- 15 April- Monthly Meeting of the USS Rendezvous at the USU Food and Nutrition building. 10:30 AM.
- 13 May- Monthly Meeting of the USS Rendezvous at the USU Food and Nutrition building. 10:30 AM.
- 19, 20, 21 May- CONduit 10 in Salt Lake City at the Airport Hilton.

## Rendezvous Saga

by Curtis Kidd

“I think he’s coming around.”

The voice was not Klingon. QurtIS fought the waves of disorientation sweeping over him, trying to get his bearings somehow. The last thing he recalled was the knife fight, being stabbed with the poisoned blade before finishing his attacker...then a hazy recollection of another ship alongside. A Romulan ship.

He lurched instinctively to a defensive position--or, at least, attempted to. His limbs were restrained. A brief moment of panic dissolved into cold resolution. A prisoner of the Romulans, was he? Well, they’d best keep him restrained, or he’d add to the body count of his abductors.

“Captain QurtIS?” There was something disturbingly familiar about the voice, but the Klingon couldn’t see anything. Then he realized his eyes were still closed.

The glare of an overhead light greeted him, along with a fuzzy image that slowly resolved itself into the shortest human starship captain he’d ever met, flanked by an unmistakable hulk of an Andorian. A groan escaped the lips of the Klingon captain.

“This can’t be Stovokor,” he muttered. “I’m in hell!”

Ross laughed. “He’ll be alright,” the Andorian commented. He turned to the medical officer. “You’ll probably want to keep him restrained for a little while longer...but not too long. If he breaks the restraints, he won’t stop until everything else in Sickbay is in the same condition. Including you.”

An hour later, Marla returned to Sickbay to check on their guest. She found him sitting upright in his bed, railing at the nurse on duty to release the rest of his restraints and take him to the bridge.

“Go ahead and release him,” Marla ordered. Turning to her Klingon counterpart, she gave a brief nod as a greeting. “Okay, Captain. Tell me the story of how we came to find you loaded with a Romulan neurotoxin.”

QurtIS almost grinned. There were times when Captain Brindley (Trowbridge, he corrected himself, trying once again to understand the human custom of changing names at marriage) was more Klingon than she would ever want to admit. He launched into the tale with a minimum of details. There were other lives besides his at risk here; and the fewer people who knew exactly which lives those were, the better...even his closest allies.

“We wondered about the corpses. We hadn’t examined them, since the cause of death was pretty



apparent on both...but everyone was very curious why one pilot's blood was such a different hue."

QurtIS grunted, then turned the tactics on Marla. "Now, Captain, you tell me why the Rendezvous is this deep in Klingon space. We weren't anywhere near the Neutral Zone...unless the co-pilot managed to change course without alerting either the pilot or myself."

"No, you weren't near the Neutral Zone. You still aren't. We were contacted by someone on your Imperial Council...someone who wanted to remain anonymous. We only know the signal's legitimate because of the priority signal."

The Klingon grunted. "Don't bet on that," he answered. "My shuttle was supposed to be a Council priority transport. Look at how legitimate that turned out to be."

Marla nodded. "Are you well enough to move?" she asked.

The nurse began to protest, rushing toward the bed. QurtIS pushed himself up from the bed and shot the nurse a glare that halted her in her tracks. "I'll live," he commented. He tested his flexibility, wincing slightly as he over-stretched the newly-closed wound on his side.

"Your medical people do good work," the Klingon commented.

Marla laughed. "After some of our earlier adventures," she explained, "I decided it would be prudent to make sure my medical personnel all had some background in Klingon anatomy and physiology." She led the way to the door.

QurtIS nodded, recalling some of those early encounters. He had learned, by observation, that the Klingon proverb about small packages being deceptive in their contents was also true by human standards. He followed the Captain.

"I'm certain my inquest was intended to be a trap. I was never intended to make it to Qo'noS," QurtIS stated a while later, in the Captain's ready room. "I'm just not certain whether you play into it somehow or not."

"How would we play into it?" asked Ross. He thought he knew, but Klingon politics often escaped him to some extent. Hearing QurtIS explain it would either clarify or confirm his theory.

The Klingon shrugged. "There has been, for quite some time, competing factions within the

Council. Some wish to maintain and extend the peace treaty with the Federation. Some wish to remain autonomous, minimize all contact with everyone. And some wish to destabilize all the treaties, to return the Empire to a state of war."

"The DuraS clan," Marla observed.

"Among others," QurtIS acknowledged.

"There are several groups that believe that the only hope for the Empire to maintain her glory is to conquer the Federation. Some of them believe that the only way they can accomplish that is to use the Romulans to incriminate the Federation to the Empire at large...they don't realize that they are showing the Romulans our weak points; or that the Romulans will not stand by if the Empire does go to war with the Federation."

Marla rose, striding a bit as she thought aloud. "So they've been setting you up to become the villain...make it look like you've fallen in with the Romulans?"

QurtIS shook his head. "They're not concerned with my image...my record against the Romulans speaks for itself. They simply want me out of the way. I've foiled a few too many plots and been in the right place at the wrong time a little too often. If they can discredit me in the process, so much the better...but their primary goal is my elimination."

Ross spoke up. "So why involve us?"

"I can think of several reasons." QurtIS grimaced with distaste as he named off a few. "By having you appear at Qo'noS, apparently unannounced and uninvited, doubt is created about how trustworthy the Federation is. If there's any record of you being in the area where my shuttle disappeared, they can say that you destroyed my ship, or that I defected to the Federation when it appeared I was going to have my command revoked.

"On the other hand, if the message was legitimate, you could be coming at this time to be a character witness for me...or against me. Depending on who's asking the questions, I can think of many comments you'd probably make that could be twisted against me." QurtIS banged his fist on the table. "I hate politics! Give me a real battlefield!"

Ross got a sly grin. "What if we turn this into a tactical situation?" he asked.

Marla shot her First Officer a stern look. "We were INVITED to come to Qo'noS," she said sternly. "We are not showing up with a raiding party!"

QurtIS caught the spirit of what the Commander intended, however. “Yes...” he trailed off, briefly. “A feint to one flank, then a thrust at the center...and prepare to circle around to cut off anyone who attempts to flee.” He shot a broad grin at Ross. “I like it.”

As expected, the request for orbital clearance was greeted with some consternation. When Marla explained it was for a Council inquest, there was a pause...then a grudging permission granted.

“I want you to keep monitoring all communications frequencies...especially anything encrypted and directed into Romulan space.” Marla looked at Vicki, who nodded. “Do whatever you have to do to keep the ship from appearing ready for combat...but be ready to chase down anyone who might try to flee the planet.” Matt nodded. “If QurtIS is right, things could get real exciting down there. Be ready to back us up.”

Marla turned and nodded to Ross. “Are you ready for this?” she asked.

Ross shrugged. “I don’t think anyone’s going to try and shoot us down. Just watch yourself.” He glanced around the bridge, noting that the command crew were all carefully paying scrupulous attention to their stations. He allowed himself a brief hug, then looked down at his wife. “Just remember to stay out of the crossfire, if anything goes wrong.”

The two stepped into the turbolift, calling their destinations for the Transporter Room, and the Shuttle Bay.

Reed stepped over to the Captain’s chair, suppressing a shudder. He’d been in command of a simulation just a few months earlier; and it still haunted him from time to time. “Okay people,” he began. “Battle stations! Engineering, charge phaser banks, load torpedoes, and have the megaphasers ready to fire with minimal warm up time. Charge capacitors for the shields. Helm, maintain standard orbit...” He got a faint smile as an idea crossed his mind.

“Sciences!”

Derrick looked up in surprise. His battle station was at the console, but he couldn’t imagine what Reed had in mind for his department in preparing for a fight.

Reed grinned over at him. “Launch a series of probes...communications packages. Create a network of them between Kronos and Romulan space. Maybe

we can complicate things for any troublemakers down there...or at least improve our chances of overhearing anything they have to say.”

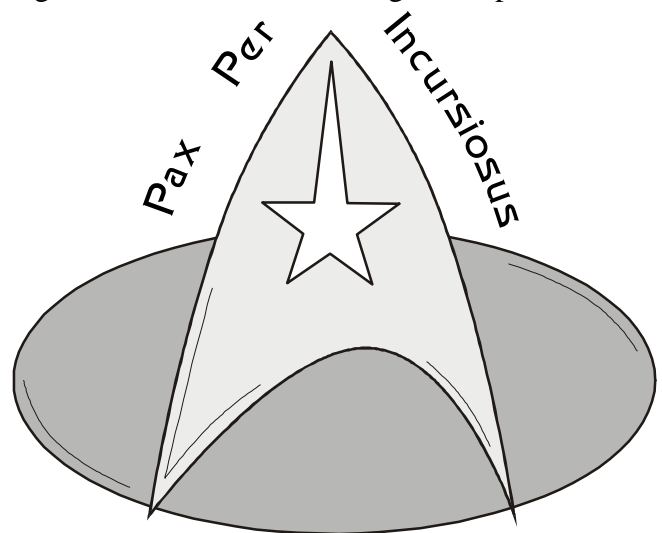
Derrick allowed himself to share Reed’s grin. “Aye aye, sir!”

Marla looked about, her nerves starting to catch up with her slightly. So many places in this chamber could conceal a sniper, or provide a conveniently hidden point for an armed force to beam into. She made a mental note of that.

She came back to the situation as the inquest was called to order by a Klingon whose voice made her think of gravel rolling around on a drumhead. There was some degree of confusion for a moment, before it was explained that the accused had not yet arrived.

“This is an affront to the Council!” shouted out one Klingon just to Marla’s left. She thought about QurtIS’ warning, and considered the thought that this could be one of the Romulan collaborators...until he turned and she saw the network of battle scars that sealed his left eye closed. No one who had fought enough to get that many scars would be so stupid as to ally themselves with the Romulans.

On the other side of the room, another Council member arose, striding out and raising his hands to quiet the din. “The purpose of this inquest was to discover the details behind the destruction of the crew of the VaQwI’. We do not need her captain present to begin. We have orders, intelligence reports, and other



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



data which we can look at. We also have ‘character witnesses’,” he stated with some distaste. He looked directly at Marla.

The officiator followed the gaze, then pointed at Marla. “You! Human! Step forward!”

Realizing it was probably about as much etiquette as she would get here, Marla moved forward, leaving behind her security personnel. If anyone was going to try and use her to create an incident, it would be now.

“What are you doing here?” the officiator demanded, in the same tone Marla might have used in interrogations. She knew better than to stand for it.

“Who wants to know?” she demanded in response. Her stature wasn’t much beside the Klingons around her, but she made the most of it. There were a few appreciative laughs from the back of the Council. The officiator was not amused.

“This inquest wants to know, human!”

“My name is Marla Trowbridge, Captain, USS Rendezvous. I’ve fought alongside your people before...and I’m here to do it again.”

The officiator snorted. “There is no battle here, Captain.” He made the title sound almost like a slur.

Marla gave her most ferocious grin. “Yes, there is.” As the officiator opened his mouth, she interrupted. “A battle to see if traitors to the Empire will succeed in removing one of your most loyal and dedicated combat commanders from his command!”

A vocal maelstrom erupted. It was impossible to match voices to mouths in the din, but it was apparent that the most outspoken members of each faction were trying to blame each other, either for treason or for the concept of bringing a human officer to make such a claim.

The noise died down as the sounds of a shuttle approaching for a landing roared over the voices. Someone managed to make it known that the shuttle sent to retrieve Captain QurtIS was settling for a landing.

Marla tapped her comm badge in a rapid sequence. Some of the Klingons moved to the entrance, to verify for themselves that it was QurtIS arriving, and there was a limited amount of chaos again...chaos into which the security detail fanned out, taking strategic positions throughout the chamber. Outside, on the roof of the building, Josh Walker was materializing in a transporter beam with the rest of his SEAL team on the roof of the Council Hall. And, unseen by anyone, in a back corner of the chamber, another transporter beam shimmered...while on the other side of the chamber, several Klingons turned to each other in a worried exchange.

The sound of the engines wound down...and the sound of a phaser shot was heard outside, followed by several more. Marla held her breath for a moment. The phaser fire died down...or, at least, was subdued beneath the outraged voices of Klingons demanding to know what right the humans had in coming to their homeworld in force of arms. Marla resolutely ignored them, her eyes fixed on the door, her breath suspended for a moment.

The door flew open, pushed aside as Ross muscled his way through against the crowd. Marla let herself start breathing again. The Andorian had the strength to be pushy with Klingons, and he used it. As the outraged voices gained in volume, the officiator beat the metal sphere which served as a gavel on his stand. Slowly, voices died down.

“Captain Trowbridge!” he barked out. “You realize that this could be seen as hostile action?”

Marla stepped forward. “Yes, I do. However, I thought it vital to present certain evidence to the Council...evidence which certain members of the Council do not want seen!” She gestured to Ross, who used his comm badge to signal to others outside.

“First,” Marla began, not waiting to be invited, “I realize my charge of treason cannot be taken lightly. Therefore, I bring to you the pilots of the shuttle you dispatched to bring Captain QurtIS to this inquest!”

On cue, a detachment of four men carried in the corpses of the pilots. Again, outraged cries sounded. As the officiator quieted them, another Klingon in the Council turned a hostile tone on Marla.

“Bringing us corpses proves nothing...other than the fact that you have been meddling in Klingon affairs! How can we know that this is even the pilot?”

Marla was prepared for that one. “Who sent the shuttle? Have that council member come forward. He should be able to identify the shuttle we have outside as the one dispatched, and the bodies we found aboard as the crew of the shuttle.”

There were murmurs that rippled through the crowd...and the tone changed slightly. This human was much too certain that the shuttle could be identified with someone on the Council for it to be some kind of stunt. Finally, from the back of the room, a lone Klingon came forward. First, he looked outside, and claimed the shuttle as one of his own. When it came to the crew, however, he could not be so certain.

The sudden evasiveness won some contemptuous looks from most of the Council...not all for the same reasons. Co-conspirators began questioning the competency of their chosen agent.

Marla pressed him, gesturing at the two bodies. “Are these, or are these not men you sent to retrieve the Captain?!” she demanded.

“I honestly can’t say!” he answered. “This looks like one of my people,” he responded, “but I don’t recognize the other one.”

Marla gave him a snort of dismissal. “Then perhaps you can tell us how this pilot came to be killed by a Romulan assassin?”

Roars burst out again. It took moments for the order to be restored. Marla shattered it again by gesturing to the co-pilot. “By THIS Romulan assassin!”

She continued shouting above the din. “This is not a Klingon! It is a Romulan, probably Tal Shi’ar, surgically altered to pass for a Klingon. If we had not cleaned up the corpse, you’d be able to tell by the color of the bloodstains!”

Another Council member managed to get himself overheard after a few moments. “How do you know he is the one that killed the pilot?”

“Because he also tried to kill me!” A voice boomed out of the back of the chamber.

QurtIS strode forward, pushing his way through the reluctant crowd. “Had it not been for the skill and courage of this Captain’s crew, my body would be rotting in the hold of some Romulan warbird!”

Voices cried out again, some trying to shout down the others, all trying to find out when QurtIS had arrived and why he had defied convention. Once the noise subsided to a degree, he managed to explain.

“One attempt has already been made on my life, by following the prescribed methods of appearing before the Council. Another attempt was made just



moments ago...or, at least, someone thought they were making an attempt on my life.” He held up Ross’ arm, showing a superficial phaser burn. “This Andorian piloted the shuttle here. The would-be assassin is outside, in custody of more Federation personnel.” As voices began to protest, QurtIS shouted above them.

“I had to use Federation personnel! They were the only ones I could trust, after having my life endangered.” He turned to Ross as the noise died down. “Bring him inside,” QurtIS suggested.

The Klingon Captain began to stride around before the Council, stating his thoughts very clearly and carefully. This latest bit had been a calculated gamble on his part...but it had played into his hands. “We all know that it is dishonorable to kill an opponent from a distance...that the only truly honorable means of combat is direct and face-to-face.” There were murmurs of approval, and QurtIS continued. “That is why Klingons make such poor assassins.”

The SEAL team came through the doors, escorting a Klingon in armor, who appeared to be recovering from a heavy stun. QurtIS walked toward the Klingon. “So poor, in fact, that they often neglect to conceal for whom they are working!” He reached out and ripped one of the insignia from the warrior’s collar, striding rapidly toward the officiator.

“This House is the one responsible for this whole situation! The House of Qa’ reS! They sent the order to the VaQwI’! They provided the shuttle! And this warrior, which was their last line of attack to prevent my appearance here, is one of their own!”

Howls of outrage erupted, accusations and denials flew back and forth...but it soon was apparent that the House of Qa’reS had managed to sneak out of the chamber somehow. The only other member remaining was the lowly emissary that had come forward to identify the shuttle... both were led away for what would assumably be a slow and very painful execution. Ross barely heard his comm badge chirp at him in the midst of the confusion.

Ross spoke up, after having Reed’s call from the Rendezvous repeated a couple of times to make certain he had the details straight. “We don’t know where they are; but they haven’t left the planet yet. We’ve been watching for anyone to break orbit. We do have some very interesting messages on file now, however...tight-beam transmissions into Romulan space. We’ll be happy to turn any and all information over to the Council.”

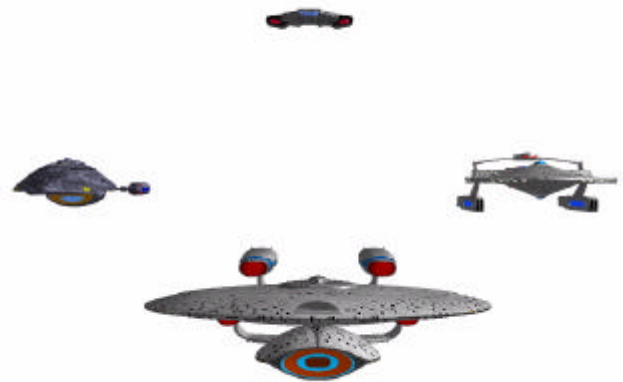
The officiator managed to subdue the noise again. “Captain QurtIS. In light of this evidence, this inquest exonerates you of any wrongdoing. You will be reinstated as Captain of the VaQwI’ as soon as her refit is complete and a crew is found. Until then, you are free to conduct your own affairs, provided you remain available for service should earlier need arise due to hostilities.” The gavel banged again, and bodies surged forward. Before the first wave could catch them, however, the Klingon Captain stepped forward, grabbing Marla and Ross by the arm.

“My thanks,” he said simply...but the sincerity in his voice could not be mistaken.

Ross gripped the Klingon’s arm in return. “Glory to the Empire,” he replied.

As the crowd closed in on them, QurtIS leaned closer. “I have only one more request to make of you, now,” he said. “My life is not safe within the Empire.”

Marla grinned wickedly. “Consider yourself a guest of the Rendezvous until such time as your ship is ready for your return.” Then they were engulfed by a wave of Klingons congratulating them for defense of the Captain’s status, and revealing the Qa’reS plot. It was hours later that they were finally able to return to the Rendezvous...with an extra, temporary crew member.





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

**<http://www.usu.edu/~startrek>**

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