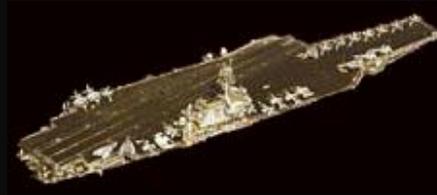


THE WRIGHT STUFF



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THE WRIGHT STUFF

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IMAGES - Title Banner

Wright Flyer from NASA/Ames PAO photo archive; *U.S.S. Kitty Hawk* (USN CV-63) from navicp.navy.mil; *Constitution* class cruiser from gwu.edu/~rljones/khawk.

IMAGE - Featured Front Page

Hubble's view of planetary nebula reveals complex structure. NGC 6891 is a bright, asymmetrical planetary nebula in the constellation Delphinus, the Dolphin.

<https://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/iotd.html>

The Center Seat

By John Troan

Let's classify this issue as the start of addressing our "better late than never" newsletter situation. ☺ As I noted in the Sep/Oct 2021 issue, it's been a very not-good last couple of years for me as I battled deepening depression and worsening anxiety. Fortunately, a combination of meds, therapy, and a few other things have helped me begin to turn things around inside the gray matter – but the battle does continue.

It's early January 2024 as I write this, so we're about two years behind on newsletter issues. We've been developing a strategy to catch up on the backlog –

- Added an additional editor to help me with proofreading.
- Still seeking an additional volunteer to help with the production, namely creating and editing the .pdf that's published to the email distro and website (which I'll still do).
- The *newsletter will become* quarterly through the end of 2024, which becomes permanent if the production side remains entirely in my hands.
 - NOTE that with the quarterly publishing schedule, the monthly meeting notes will be even more important for keeping up with what's going on. If you're not already on our general distro, just contact me to be added.
- The 2022-2023 (and at least some 2024) issues will be "short-form" with a temporary reduction in the number of articles.

Because of the split-chronology nature of the issues during the period of catching up, I'll have two sets of information for my *Center Seat and Comp Ops Report articles* –

- *In situ* to mention (most of) what would've been written back at that time. I still have all the meeting notes, so this part should still be fairly complete.
- Current coverage of the events going on as the issue is actually published.
- As the backlog is reduced, this gap will get (much) shorter to the point where I'll just start reprinting the older "current" material as the *in situ*. ☺

*** **

Dec 2021. As the year draws to a close, we've completed our annual collections for the Food Bank and Toys4Tots. A *Thanks!* to Larry C. for coordinating both collection drives. Donations to both of their websites can also be made as well.

The location for our Feb 20 anniversary dinner is TBD, so stay tuned for more info – but do RSVP to me ASAP to secure your spot(s) at the table.

Our January meeting will be ONLY ON ZOOM, but the next several after that will be both in-person and Zoomcast from the restaurant.

I've reached out to GalaxyCon about the 2022 Con, but there was interest on their part for 2021 – which I had to pass on, but did mention our intention to be there in 2022. Assuming we're there, I plan to use the Wednesday before the con starts as our setup day so that we're not rushing through it to beat the clock.

In Region 1, the R1RC election has concluded and the acting regional coordinator is now without the "acting" part of the title.

*** **

Jan 2024. As we begin 2024, we start our *thirty-fifth* year as a group, based on our 17 Dec 1989 launch as a shuttlecraft. For those wondering, October 2025 will be our 35th anniversary of commissioning as a full chapter.

In that time, the *Kitty Hawk* has launched several shuttlecraft that themselves were commissioned, and we've donated probably thousands of hours *and* dollars to numerous causes, plus our now-annual collections for the Food Bank and Toys4Tots. My *Thanks!* to Larry C. for continuing to coordinate both of these.

As we move forward into the new year, I'm going to spend the first quarter evaluating the positions that perform business functions (and earn three promotion points each month) – and there is potential for changing duties around.

A quick heads-up that our 2 March meeting will be followed by dinner (as usual) **and game night!**

One big project that we're starting to get launched is our chapter handbook. Brad and I have been finalizing [an initial basic outline](#), which is now posted on our [website](#).

Another project is a second new (but larger) banner. Mary is heading up this committee, so please contact her with ideas – and it doesn't even have to be a full drawing, just a general concept works great.

We've also got GalaxyCon 2024 coming up in July. I'm in the processing of confirming our appearance there, but we're not yet guaranteed. Assuming we're invited back, Setup Day is July 24 – followed by the Con itself on 25-28. **NOTE** that *not everyone who had a pass in 2023 will get one in 2024*; I'll have numbers once we're confirmed to be there.

If you have any questions about either of the above two items, please contact me via email.

Lastly, I'd really like us to start volunteering again and get back to our core community service mission. Remember.....

Esse Quam Videri

Computer Ops Report

By John Troan

As with and mentioned in my [Center Seat](#) article, my report will be broken into two parts – what I would've written back then and what's going on as I write the articles during this period of catching up.

*** **

Dec 2021. The biggest news is the upcoming migration of my web servers to a commercial hosting service – and out of my house. Assuming all goes well, no one will notice any changes at all – but I'll no longer have to worry about keeping the home servers up all the time. From what I've been able to figure out with the early hosting configuration, the new hosting arrangement will provide high availability so that one server can go down and all traffic will fail over to the other server.

I'm a little behind on getting our latest on-line story, *Old Friends*, posted on schedule, but should soon be catching up. I've also got a few sets of event photos in the queue to post.

*** **

Jan 2024. I'll touch first on the “new” hosting arrangement. It's been almost two full years since I switched to the new servers, and things have turned out really well. I'm now planning to renew/extend the contract when I'm able to later this year.

As part of my backlog of many things for the *Kitty Hawk*, here's what's queued up for [the website](#) --

- Event photos for the last several years. I built an overall list of which events while printing pics for GalaxyCon 2023, which includes both community service and general fun.
- Our current narrative is still *Old Friends*, and it's just a wee bit behind in getting posted.
- Newsletters, starting with this one, will be posted as they're emailed to the distro list.

Other than the newsletters, I don't yet have a timeline on when I'll get caught up. I'm *hoping* it'll be by year's end.

There may also be some new things getting posted through the year, primarily the handbook and a new crew directory.

All of the email distributions will be moving to Google Groups. I have a few pieces of setup to configure, then will be copying over the full list of subscribed addresses from the distros I use now. The reason for this change is owing to the lack of my time to work on the current platform. There are a few things with it that just aren't right that need to be fixed.

Engineering Report

By Brad McDonald

Editor's Note: This was written in Nov/Dec 2021.

Hondajet 2600 will be the first light airplane with the capability of nonstop transcontinental flight. Its range is 3,021 miles and it will cruise at 47,000 feet and 518 mph. Because of its range, it's not only capable of coast-to-coast flights but will also be able to fly between Tokyo and Hong Kong or London and Cairo. It will also be capable of single pilot operation because of advanced avionics. As an added bonus, it's more fuel efficient and therefore reduces carbon emissions.

Boeing's 787 has yet another problem that concerns airplanes built in the past three years. Some titanium parts are weak, as notified by the supplier. The weakness does not threaten current 787s in service. However, those not yet sold or delivered will be rebuilt as needed. A review process will be conducted jointly by Boeing and the FAA.

Boeing has also announced a new version of its 777 jet, the Airfreighter. It will be a direct competitor for the Airbus A350-1000 Freighter. Since regular air travel has greatly reduced lately, sales of passenger jets are at a crawl, Boeing is already in talks with five major carriers for sales of the 777X. This will help offset the expected three-year delay of the passenger version of the 777X. This is especially true considering that Boeing will discontinue the 747 cargo airplane next year. It is the leading cargo aircraft, as Boeing has 90 percent of airfreight capacity. The A350 may be at a disadvantage since Qatar Airways is having ongoing problems with them. In addition, its internal capacity is considerably less than the 777X. Cargo airplanes are in high demand owing to the backlog of cargo ships. But there are new competitors in the market, conversion of older wide-bodied passenger jets to cargo carriers. They will cost less than half the price of any new aircraft. One more note; Boeing is modifying 767s for military use for an unspecified purpose.

Not all of Boeing's news is bad. Akasa Airlines, operating out of India, signed a deal with Boeing for seventy-two 737 Max airliners. Deliveries will start in mid-2022.

Paris, France, has initiated the use of a new device called Medusa. It's essentially a sound detector radar used to identify abnormally loud vehicles, such as motorcycles and 'hot rods.' It's rather sophisticated and its multiple microphone design can pinpoint the vehicle by triangulation, making it possible to use cameras to take pictures of the offender and issue tickets. Currently, Euro 5 regulations state anything over 85 decibels is considered as noise pollution—85 decibels compares to an average household garbage disposal, so they are really serious about reducing noise!

A very large comet, Bernardinelli-Bernstein, is due in ten years. Its size is about 1,000 times normal, about sixty-two miles in diameter. It's so big that it was originally classified as a dwarf planet. Don't worry; its closest approach will be outside Saturn's orbit. It's estimated that the last time this comet paid a visit was about 3.5 million years ago.

The BepiColumbo mission completed its first flyby of Mercury on Friday, October 1. It's a joint mission by ESA and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency. It is scheduled to make six flybys and then make orbit in December of 2025.

There was another first for civilian space travel this year. The Russians sent a crew and actor to the space station to film a movie! Director Klim Shipenko and actress Yulia Peresild traveled with cosmonaut Anton Shkaplerov. But their work wasn't technically a first. Richard Garriott, a video

game developer, filmed a video short in 2008. Shipenko and Persild spent twelve days aboard ISS to complete their work.

World View is slated to begin space tourism without expensive rockets and capsules. Instead, the stratospheric balloon manufacturer will lift passengers into space aboard a space vehicle called a World View Explorer. The trip will last six to twelve hours and go to 100,000 feet. The first launch is scheduled for 2023 from the Grand Canyon Spaceport, which hasn't been built yet. G-force won't be a factor as the ascent rate is only ten to twelve mph. The landing process will use a parasail for very soft landings. World View plans to eventually have launchings all over the planet, such as at the Great Wall of China, the Amazon rainforest, and the Great Barrier Reef. The company hopes to stimulate the local economies wherever the spaceports are located. Ultimately, they plan to have twenty-eight World View Explorers making four flights a day from seven locations all over Earth. The company expects the cost of a flight will be \$50,000 per person, and they will even provide financing so more people will be able to see space. Each World View Explorer will accommodate eight passengers and two crew persons. The craft will be totally automated, but a pilot will be on hand just in case. Another crew person will serve food and drinks. The capsule will have views up, down, and on all sides. Accommodations will be nice and include restroom facilities. No space suit will be necessary, and it will be similar to current airline travel. As an added side note, a high bandwidth data link will be provided for real-time communications with friends and family. Also, a telescope will provide an opportunity to observe the stars without interference from lights. Prototypes will be ready in a few months, and test flights will start in mid-2022.

Australia is in the space race and will assist NASA by building a semi-autonomous rover for a moon mission. The mission could be as early as 2026, and its assigned task is to locate water.

The Air Force's X-37B was put in orbit May 17 and passed 500 days in orbit as I wrote this. The robotic vehicle is said to be conducting a number of classified experiments, which has been its mission since 2010. Aside from its standard instrumentation, it's also capable of carrying service modules to rotate different experiments. As part of this mission, it put a small satellite in orbit, the FalconSat08. It's also carrying out experiments to test the effects of radiation and other space conditions on various samples, including seeds. However, the most interesting experiment was a Navy research laboratory that studied the possibility to "transform solar power into radio frequency microwave energy which could be transmitted to the ground." There are two X-37Bs that are rotated in duty. While one is in orbit, the other is being serviced. The missions have ranged from 224 days to the current one.

Blue Origins lawsuit against NASA, regarding choosing Space X's Lunar Landing contract, has been dismissed by a federal court. NASA had placed Space X on hold when the lawsuit was initiated, but work will now continue. However, the hold has put the whole program behind, and the projected 2024 mission date has now been postponed with no new date announced as of yet.

NASA's latest mission, DART, will launch on November 23 and reach its destination in September of 2022. The DART (Double Asteroid Redirection Test) will be intentionally crashed into Dimorphos, a small moon orbiting the asteroid Didymos. The impact will test the asteroid deflection technology, which is being developed as part of NASA's Earth defense system. The mission will have help from the Italian Space Agency. They have a companion

satellite, the LICIAcube, a cubesat that will record the impact results and relay the data. Owing to the relative closeness of Dimorphos (6,835,083 miles), it will be possible to observe the 'before and after' results. The mission will receive another follow-up several years later by the European Space Agency's HERA mission. All these missions will be part of the international group AIDA (Asteroid Impact & Deflection Assessment). By the way, when the impact occurs, DART will be traveling at 14,763.8 mph!

Russia is being criticized for firing a missile at one of their own satellites. The test of the antisatellite missile resulted in a massive debris field that resulted in 1,500 or more pieces of trackable items and thousands of smaller pieces. That debris field caused astronauts on the space station to 'take cover.' The resulting debris field puts other technology in jeopardy as well. The official US response was a comment from the State Department as follows, "Russia's dangerous and irresponsible behavior jeopardizes the long-term sustainability of outer space and clearly demonstrates that Russia's claims of opposing the weapons and weaponizing of space are disingenuous and hypocritical." Another comment followed, "The US will work with our allies and partners to respond to Russia's irresponsible act."

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is at odds with Tesla, again. Currently, NHTSA is asking Tesla for additional data about their failure in not filing a recall concerning their autopilot system. This particular issue concerns Tesla's failure to follow a rule that states: "Any manufacturer issuing an over-the-air update that mitigates a defect that poses an unreasonable risk to motor vehicle safety is required to timely file an accompanying recall notice to NHTSA." If Tesla doesn't respond to NHTSA, they will be subject to a \$114 million fine.

That's not all: while using the self-driving mode, a 2021 Model Y SUV changed lanes and then gave the driver a 'yellow alert.' When the driver tried to turn back to avoid a collision, the car's system "took control and forced the car into the correct lane, creating an unsafe maneuver, putting everyone involved at risk." An official complaint was filed by the driver with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. What's really surprising was when Tesla was contacted, it was discovered that the company had disbanded its media relations department!

The final chapter on Tesla, at least for this report, concerns their server, which was experiencing an outage as I wrote this. So far, no cause or estimated time to repair it. Too bad, as it was interfering with many, but not all, Tesla cars, including the inability to drive them or even open the doors. The error code displayed, "500 Internal Server Error," did little to pinpoint the exact problem. Since they no longer have a media relations department, no one can find out what to do or when the problem will be fixed.

A bit closer to home, I-95 is set for a facelift with the emphasis on lift. After flooding twice (during hurricanes Matthew and Florence), the road will be raised through Lumberton. The contract was signed in October and will involve not only rebuilding eight miles of the highway but also widening it from four to eight lanes and replacing three intersection bridges. The project is part of a \$1.1 billion project to prevent flooding and provide widening on I-95 and I-40 for a total of thirty-four miles in North Carolina. Work is scheduled to start next summer and should be completed by mid-2026. If you're planning to travel next year, keep that in mind.

The U.S.S. *Enterprise* (CVN-65) has been out of service since deactivation in 2012 and decommissioning in

Pensacola, Florida, and boarded the 'Big E,' as it was called. The tour was great! I can remember standing at one end of the flight deck and looking at the other end while wondering how all that steel could float! We watched a launch and recovery (I can't remember what type of airplane it was), then toured the shops, crew's quarters, mess room, and many other areas but, sadly, not the engine room or reactors.

In related news, two additional aircraft carriers were recently sold for one cent each. International Shipbreaking Limited of Brownsville, Texas, will make money by breaking up the ships and selling the metal for scrap. The ships were in service for about sixty years, and both were used in Vietnam and up to the Gulf War. The ships are well known: the U.S.S. *John F. Kennedy* and the U.S.S. *Kitty Hawk*!!! Yup! Our namesake was decommissioned in 2009 and the JFK in 2017. Both ships have been in storage awaiting final disposition. As with the *Enterprise*, it's a sad end to very famous and long-serving ships.

Also related to the above stories is another in Russia. Two submarines are being raised and scrapped. The *K-159* sank while being towed for scrapping. In the process, several crewmen were lost. The *K-27* was unceremoniously 'dumped' in 1982 and is corroding on the seafloor. Now there is a reasonable concern regarding the nuclear reactors. Therefore, the ships will be raised and decontaminated. As with the *Enterprise*, the work will take a lot of time and is estimated to be completed some time in 2030.

There's a new Disney miniseries that looks at NASA's missions from its beginning. It is not all roses and discusses failures as well as successes. Reviews are favorable, and the new production may offset the failure of a Disney+ series about the space program that has been canceled after only one season. It marks the first cancellation by Disney+, but it's not surprising. I watched a few episodes and found it more soap opera than historic drama. It also seemed to drag quite a bit.

Titanic is back! The *Titanic II* is a near-identical reproduction of the original but three inches longer, thirteen feet wider, and 10,000 tons heavier at 56,000 tons. It will handle 2,435 passengers and 473 crew. The identical look will be on the exterior only. Inside it will be strictly twenty-first century, with radar, satellite controls, digital navigation, and more. Diesel-electric power will replace the old coal-fired steam reciprocating engines. More importantly, it will have more than double the lifeboats of the original. It will also include a helipad and a nightclub. Reproduction touches will include the famous grand staircase, dining rooms, and cafe. Cruise routes will definitely be different, such as the Middle East, Asia, and others, not the North Atlantic. It was originally scheduled to be completed in 2016 but was pushed back to 2018 and now to 2022, owing to multiple financial setbacks. However, it's not certain if the ship has even started and some feel the whole project is a giant scam!

Unsinkable Titanic is another project entirely and is being built by the Chinese. However, the *Unsinkable Titanic* won't sail; it will be a unique hotel at a major amusement park and entertainment center. It is currently under construction at the Wuhan location of Luuchang Shipbuilding Industry group. Since it won't be fully functional, its cost will be a fraction of the *Titanic II* and, accordingly, it won't be 100 percent accurate.

Viacom/CBS has discontinued its arrangement with Netflix just days before season 4 of *Discovery* was to begin. Paramount+ plans to expand to more than twenty countries, such as Ireland, Austria, Italy, and Germany in 2022. Eventually that number will expand to forty-five countries by the end of the next year. In the meantime, viewers of newer *Star Trek* programs will have to wait. Strangely, the older programs will still be available on Netflix. This is just another slap in the face to *Trek* fans from Viacom/CBS/Paramount or whomever. They treat fans horribly. Not long ago, they banned or heavily restricted fan productions.

According to data from the Census Bureau, we are now considered as part of the Raleigh-Cary metro area, consisting of 1,420,376 people, which represents a population growth of 25.6 percent between 2010 and 2020. The state of North Carolina had a growth rate of just 11.9 percent. Overall, the US had its lowest growth rate since the Great Depression, 6.7 percent. The Raleigh-Cary median household income was \$80,096, while the state median was \$57,341.

That's all for now. Live long and prosper!

ST:VOY - "A Fair Price"

By Brad McDonald

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM - ANGLE ON ENTRANCE

Janeway and Chakotay are present when Tuvok enters.

JANEWAY

How is she?

THREE SHOT – JANEWAY, CHAKOTAY, AND TUVOK

TUVOK

The doctor has been able to calm her, and she will remain with us for the time being. I have assigned her guest quarters until she is ready to return to her home. Seven is currently with her.

JANEWAY

In the meantime, we have a major problem on our hands. Aurelia has given us a very difficult ultimatum. Either we violate Maloran law and the Prime Directive, or we get sent back into space in a weakened state.

CHAKOTAY

Not much of a choice.

ON TUVOK

TUVOK

I would say no choice at all. If we follow Starfleet guidelines, we are obligated to leave at once. In this manner, we completely avoid the ultimatum presented by the lady.

ON CHAKOTAY

CHAKOTAY

And return to space with no weapons or engines? If we run into those hostile aliens again, we won't last five minutes. Even if we don't, it will take us months, even longer to reach another facility. Our power would run out long before that. If we're going to leave here, it must be under better conditions.

TWO SHOT – JANEWAY AND TUVOK

JANEWAY

So my two senior officers are at an impasse, is that it?

TUVOK

Not at all. I said if we follow standard Starfleet guidelines. In this case, I do not believe that we can do so.

JANEWAY

Are you agreeing with Chakotay?

TUVOK

I believe he is correct. In this situation, we have little choice but to do as she demands.

JANEWAY

I agree with both of you. However, I don't like the idea of a Starfleet ship and crew being told what to do by someone who is scared sick. I will agree to help, but with certain conditions. I want her to realize the consequences of what she's asking.

AURELIA'S GUEST QUARTERS – TWO SHOT – AURELIA AND SEVEN

Aurelia has calmed down, and Seven is still with her.

AURELIA

Are you from far away, too?

SEVEN

Actually, I'm from the same general area of space as the others, but my family was brought here by...others.

AURELIA

The captain said you were an important part of the crew. Why?

SEVEN

All the crew members are important. We need each other. All of us have a job to do; mine is assisting the captain as she needs, and I perform a variety of tasks.

AURELIA

Could you become a leader, too?

SEVEN

I suppose that it's possible. Each person has an equal opportunity.

AURELIA

Your captain is a woman, you could be a leader as well, and another woman is your engineer. Is that common?

ON SEVEN

SEVEN

Of course. We are all equals. It is one of the reasons I joined this crew. They have a great respect for each other and for all life forms, no matter how simple or complex. It's also why we have a problem with your 'proposal.' It goes against our basic rules. We must not interfere with your government.

Aurelia is about to speak when Janeway enters.

TWO SHOT – JANEWAY AND AURELIA

JANEWAY

Aurelia? Are you feeling better?

AURELIA

I'm not sure. Are you going to help me?

JANEWAY

I was hoping we could talk about that. Have you given your idea a lot of thought?

When Aurelia does not respond, Janeway continues.

JANEWAY
(continuing)

Suppose we help you, and then your people find out. They would lose all respect for you and your father. Without a respected leader, your people would be lost.

Aurelia looks afraid and confused.

AURELIA

No! Seven told me about your laws of non-interference. I don't care about that! You must help!

JANEWAY

Maybe we can work out an alternative arrangement. There must be another way to

—

Aurelia is now frightened again.

AURELIA
(interrupting)

If you don't help me, I'll tell the chancellor you kidnapped me! If I do that, your entire crew will be put in prison!

JANEWAY
(agitated)

I don't respond well to threats. If your idea of helping us is by threatening us, then we will leave.

Aurelia begins crying, so Janeway softens her manner.

JANEWAY
(continuing)

But we are always happy to help a new friend. Why don't we discuss the matter over one of Neelix's special dishes?

Aurelia begins to brighten, surprised.

AURELIA

You would still help me?

JANEWAY

Seven, why don't you join us?

CREW'S MESS – WIDE ANGLE – ON DINING TABLE

Janeway and Seven are seated with Aurelia while Neelix fusses over them.

JANEWAY

Aurelia? Don't you think your father knew what you were capable of doing when he named you his successor?

AURELIA

Maybe. But he's been sick for so long and Chancellor Benel has made most of the decisions...

JANEWAY

So you haven't had the opportunity to test your leadership skills.

Neelix arrives with a tray of food and begins serving.

NEELIX
(working)

Here you go! Maloran dishes prepared by myself. Hope you enjoy them.

JANEWAY
(to Neelix)

Well, when I promised Aurelia a Neelix specialty, I didn't know we'd get the chef, too. I thought you were still procuring supplies.

As he continues to serve, Neelix explains.

NEELIX
(working)

Actually, Mister Paris relieved me. He is currently engaged in making arrangements to sell a Terran delicacy, the hot dog.

Neelix exits.

TWO SHOT – JANEWAY AND AURELIA

JANEWAY

Aurelia, I must have a promise from you. If we help you get past your immediate problem, you must begin to assume more responsibility and start being a leader.

AURELIA

I'll try. I promise.

JANEWAY

Okay, now let me tell you what we plan to do.

TRANSPORTER ROOM – WIDE ANGLE

Present are Aurelia, Janeway, Torres, and Tuvok.

TWO SHOT – JANEWAY AND AURELIA

JANEWAY

You understand, Aurelia? This will take you to your room in the palace. Once you're there, tell Benel you want a private audience with your father. Once you're alone with him, contact us with the comm badge. We will bring you both here and examine your father.

AURELIA

I'm not sure I can do that.

JANEWAY

You have to. We can't. If you want us to help you, you must decide.

AURELIA

Will it hurt?

JANEWAY

Not a bit. Torres, get ready.

Janeway guides Aurelia to the right spot then steps back.

NEW ANGLE

JANEWAY

Good luck, Aurelia. Transport now.

Aurelia's form fades in the transporter effect.

JANEWAY
(continuing)

Now all we can do is wait and hope she doesn't shake so bad she gives herself away.

MALORAN PALACE - AURELIA'S ROOM

Aurelia materializes in her room. Once she gets her bearings, she opens her door and moves into the palace.

MALORAN PALACE - TALAN'S ROOM

Gathered about are Benel, N.D. aides, and other government people. Aurelia enters and goes to Benel.

AURELIA
Chancellor? Is there any change?

BENEL
I'm afraid not. Do you need –

AURELIA
(interrupting)
I'd like to be alone with my father.

Benel begins to protest, but Aurelia interrupts.

AURELIA
(continuing)
Now! And I want everyone gone. I have the right to be with him in his final hours.

A reluctant Benel motions everyone out and is the last one to exit. A very nervous Aurelia then takes out the comm badge and activates it.

AURELIA
(continuing)
Captain? I'm ready.

JANEWAY'S VOICE
Stay close to your father.

Aurelia and Talan disappear in the transporter effect.

VOYAGER – SICKBAY – WIDE ANGLE

Aurelia and Talan materialize, with the Doctor, Janeway, and Seven looking on. Talan is on the diagnostic table as the Doctor begins his work. Janeway stands by Aurelia, who is awed by the work being done.

AURELIA
Will he know what they are doing?

JANEWAY
No. Many treatments don't even require touching the sick person. He won't feel a thing.

The Doctor is working quickly while Janeway and Aurelia look on. After a few quick moments, the Doctor finishes and motions the two forward.

AURELIA
Is he done already? Will my father be all right now?

JANEWAY
Why don't you go to your father? I'll talk to the Doctor.

Aurelia goes to her father. The Doctor takes Janeway into his office.

MEDICAL DUTY OFFICE – TWO SHOT – JANEWAY AND THE DOC

JANEWAY
(continuing)

I take it, it isn't good.

DOC
I'm afraid there is little I can do. In his present state, I doubt he will survive the day.

JANEWAY
Are you sure?

DOC
Captain, I do not question your command abilities, why would you question my medical skills?

JANEWAY
Sorry, Doctor. It's just that so much is riding on this...

DOC
I am sorry, too. Tuvok has informed me of the importance. Do you wish to tell Aurelia or shall I?

JANEWAY
Leave it to me. I think I understand her a bit better now.

The Doctor sits to work at his desk as Janeway exits.

TWO SHOT – JANEWAY AND AURELIA

JANEWAY
Aurelia, the Doctor has told me that your father is very ill. He cannot help him. I'm sorry.

Aurelia begins to cry and gets closer to her father.

AURELIA
Are you sure?

Janeway begins to respond when a medical alert sounds.

AURELIA
(continuing)
What is that?

NEW ANGLE

The Doctor enters quickly and begins to scan Talan's body.

AURELIA
What's happening? What is he doing?

JANEWAY
He's checking your father. Let him work.

Reluctantly, Aurelia backs off while the Doctor works. After a few moments, he discontinues his work.

DOC
I'm sorry. We've lost him.

Aurelia becomes hysterical and goes to her father's side once more. This time, Seven comforts her.

CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM – ON JANEWAY'S DUTY DESK

Janeway, Tuvok, and Chakotay are seated around the duty desk.

ON JANEWAY

JANEWAY

Gentlemen, we have a problem. The body of Talan is in our sickbay, and Aurelia must not return with her father alone. I have to be sure she is not blamed for what has happened. Therefore, I will go with her.

TUVOK (O.C.)

Captain, you must allow me to --

JANEWAY

Absolutely not. I took a gamble and lost. I thought the Doctor could buy us some time and reassure Aurelia she wouldn't have to become a leader for a while longer. I don't want the entire crew to pay for my mistake.

ON CHAKOTAY

CHAKOTAY

I agree with Tuvok; let one of us go in your place. We can always say we took Talan without your knowledge.

AS BEFORE – ON JANEWAY

JANEWAY

And if they did learn the truth, we'd look even more guilty, and the whole crew would be held accountable. No, Chakotay. If they do hold me, you are not to attempt a rescue.

TUVOK (O.C.)

What about Aurelia?

JANEWAY

She's now the Great Unifier. The Maloran people will need her in their hour of grief. If she's implicated, their world will be turned upside down. I don't want to make the situation any worse than it already is.

TALAN'S QUARTERS – WIDE ANGLE

Materializing is Janeway, supporting Aurelia and near Talan's body. Immediately, the doors open, and Benel and his aides enter.

BENEL

What is going on here?

JANEWAY

Talan has died. I was comforting Aurelia --

BENEL

(interrupting)

Enough of your lies, I was just in here, and the room was empty. You have caused the death of our great leader!

Through her sobs, Aurelia weakly defends Janeway.

AURELIA

No, she tried to help! She tried to save him...

Too late, Aurelia realizes what she has just said.

BENEL

You violated the body of our Great Unifier?! Captain! I told you the consequences of ignoring our laws!

INT. VOYAGER – BRIDGE – WIDE ANGLE

Present are Chakotay, Paris, Kim, and Tuvok.

CHAKOTAY

She's way overdue. We better risk contacting her. Ensign, open a channel to the captain.

KIM

Sir? We have a hail. It's Chancellor Benel. Visual.

CHAKOTAY

I'll take it here.

ANGLE FAVORING MAIN VIEWER

The image of Benel appears on the main viewer.

BENEL

Commander Chakotay, isn't it?

CHAKOTAY (O.C.)

Correct, Chancellor, what can I do for you?

BENEL

We caught your captain trying to return the dead body of Talan. She has confessed this but insists she acted alone. Therefore, we will 'allow' you to leave. However, she will have to stand trial. If you choose, you may remain to watch the proceedings by visual communication only. As of now, you and your crew are confined to your ship.

CHAKOTAY

If she has confessed, why is a trial necessary?

BENEL

The trial will serve as an example to others.

CHAKOTAY

I thought you said we'd simply be asked to leave if we used our medical knowledge --

BENEL

Use your medical knowledge?! She killed our leader! What did you expect? Now, do you wish to remain under the conditions I've stated?

CHAKOTAY

Yes, we will accept the conditions.

BENEL

Very well. A final word, Commander. If you attempt to interfere with the trial or attempt a rescue, your entire crew will be subject to the same fate as your captain.

The viewer goes blank.

ANOTHER ANGLE

PARIS

Cheerful fellow. What do we do now?

CHAKOTAY

Nothing. We stay long enough to see what happens. In the meantime, we've bought some time. We continue with repairs as best as possible.

KIM
But we can't leave the captain --

CHAKOTAY
(interrupting)
We can and we will, if necessary. The captain made that an order before leaving. No rescue attempts.

Off Chakotay's words...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

VOYAGER BRIDGE – ON COMMAND SECTION

Chakotay, Paris, Tuvok, and Kim are present.

CHAKOTAY
Anything yet?

TUVOK
No, sir. I'm increasing power now.

KIM
Incoming communication, sir. It's Chancellor Benel.

Chakotay nods his approval and faces Benel's image.

ANGLE ON VIEWER – FAVORING CHAKOTAY

CHAKOTAY
Chancellor. Is the trial beginning?

BENEL
We are aware of your scans, Commander. Cease your attempts to locate your captain or you will have to leave.

CHAKOTAY
We are simply testing our equipment. I am sorry if we caused any trouble.

BENEL
Continue your 'testing' in space. The trial will begin after Aurelia is installed as our new Unifier.

The main viewer goes blank.

AS BEFORE – ON COMMAND SECTION

CHAKOTAY
Discontinue scans. It was a good try, Tuvok.

PARIS
Maybe they have her somewhere where we can't detect her.

TUVOK
The only shielded structures are the palace and main governmental complex.

KIM
She must be in one of those two places. Even with reduced capacity, our equipment should be able to pick up human life signs.

PARIS
(to self)

No palace is complete without a dungeon.

CHAKOTAY
(discouraged)
Continue with repairs. We'll have to wait to see what develops.

INT. MALORAN PALACE – THREE SHOT – BENEL, DAMAR, AND AURELIA

Aurelia is still in a state of semishock as various N.D. ATTENDANTS fuss over her.

BENEL
Aurelia. You must put your father's death behind you. You must now assume the leadership of the people.

AURELIA
I don't know...I'm not sure...

DAMAR
Chancellor? The official robes will be ready soon. Shall I begin to assemble the court?

BENEL
Yes. We will let Aurelia rest until then.

AURELIA
But...

BENEL
Don't worry, you will do just fine.
(to N.D. Attendants)
Everyone is dismissed. Please leave.

All exit, leaving a very confused and frightened Aurelia. Once gone, she searches for and locates a comm badge.

INT. VOYAGER – ENGINEERING – CONTROL PANEL - TWO SHOT TORRES AND GREY

Torres and Grey are busy at a control panel.

GREY
I think that's got it. Care to try it out?

TORRES
No time like the present. Activate diagnostics.

The panel comes to life and both smile.

TORRES
(continuing)
It's about time something worked in our favor.

GREY
Now we can really get working.

BRIDGE – WIDE ANGLE

KIM
Incoming signal, Commander. Audio only. It's the captain's comm badge!

CHAKOTAY
Tuvok, see if you can get a fix! Open a channel Kim! Captain?

AURELIA'S VOICE
No. It's Aurelia. I'm to be made the Great Unifier today. I'm not ready. I need help. Can I talk to the captain?

CHAKOTAY

I'm afraid that's not possible. She is being held by your people. She's to be tried for killing your father.

INT. MALORAN HOME WORLD – AURELIA'S CHAMBERS – ON AURELIA

Aurelia is shocked by the news.

AURELIA

I thought they let her go and asked you to leave. I didn't know! She was just trying to help me!

CHAKOTAY (V.O.)

Aurelia? Can you help her?

AURELIA

Can't you just 'transfer' her out?

CHAKOTAY (V.O.)

We can't. There is too much interference; besides, we can't locate her. You must help her!

AURELIA

I can't. I don't know how!

INT. VOYAGER – BRIDGE – ON COMMAND SECTION

KIM

Transmission terminated, Commander.

CHAKOTAY

Tuvok. Did you get a fix?

TUVOK

Yes. Do you wish to transport her?

CHAKOTAY

No. I'm not going to do anything else that might jeopardize her or the ship. At least, not for now.

INT. MALORAN HOME WORLD - GRAND AUDIENCE CHAMBER - WIDE ANGLE

Aurelia is about to be installed as the Great Unifier. The audience chamber is filled with bureaucrats and 'common' people.

BENEL

With the passing of our beloved Talan, leadership now falls to Talan's daughter, Aurelia.

CLOSE ON STAGE – ANGLE FAVORING AURELIA

As they speak, Aurelia's visible discomfort rises.

DAMAR

From a long line of leaders, she will guide us, nurture us, and take care of us so that we will be safe and secure.

BENEL

As proscribed by the laws of our world, Aurelia is now proclaimed the Great Unifier.

Applause breaks out among the spectators, and we see Aurelia is still very uncomfortable with her position.

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE - ANGLE ON VIEWER

Benel's image is on the main viewer.

BENEL

Commander, the trial is about to begin. I will remind you of your promise not to interfere.

CHAKOTAY (O.C.)

Agreed.

BENEL

Keep this channel open then, but you will not be permitted to speak.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MALORAN HOME WORLD – COURTROOM – WIDE ANGLE

The image of Benel is replaced by a Maloran courtroom. Janeway is sitting alone, with a tribunal nearby: JUDGE #1, JUDGE #2, JUDGE #3, PROSECUTOR, and EXECUTIONER. The courtroom is packed with Maloran curiosity seekers.

PROSECUTOR

Voyager, you have confessed to disregarding one of our most important laws, violating the sanctity of the body.

JUDGE #1

The penalty for this violation is death. Do you have anything to say in your defense?

JANEWAY

I was simply trying to help...someone.

The prosecutor rises to face Janeway.

PROSECUTOR

You 'helped' our beloved leader to die before his time. For any other citizen, we could not forgive your transgression. For the death of the Great Unifier, you will be made an example for the whole world to see.

An executioner appears with a traditional large ax.

JUDGE #1

Let the defense present their case.

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE - NEW ANGLE

The sight of the executioner draws reactions of shock.

KIM

We can't allow that to happen, can we, Commander?

PARIS

We have to do something!

Chakotay continues to stare at the main viewer.

TUVOK

Let me lead a team to get her out. I believe we can succeed with the possibility of few, if any, casualties.

Chakotay turns to face Tuvok.

CHAKOTAY

How big of a team?

Tuvok is drawn toward Chakotay and explains.

TUVOK
(moving)

Four. We will use phasers set at a wide dispersal stun. Once we have secured the captain, we will immediately transport back to our ship.

PARIS

I'd like to vol—

Chakotay cuts him off with a stare and a wave.

CHAKOTAY

May I remind you all, that our ship is still basically a wreck, and we are tied to the space dock with little in the way of motive power.

The bridge crew looks disappointed.

CHAKOTAY
(continuing)

But we will try anyway.

The crew becomes elated.

TUVOK

We need to act quickly.

CHAKOTAY

Take Seven, Kim, and the Doctor. I'll need Mister Paris to help get us out of here. Get moving.

Tuvok and Kim exit, leaving a disappointed Paris.

PARIS

Are you sure I'm that important?

CHAKOTAY

You got us here. Now you figure out how to get us out. And we can't use the shuttles. Contact B'Elanna, see how the repairs are coming. I'm going to try and stall the Malorans.

INT. MALORAN HOME WORLD – COURTROOM – WIDE ANGLE

JUDGE #1

It is the pronouncement of this court that you be executed immediately.

The judges rise to exit the court, and Janeway is taken into custody. The court begins to adjourn when Tuvok's team enters. They are overwhelmed and captured along with much confusion. Aurelia makes an appearance just as the Voyager team is subdued.

BENEL

(angry, pointing)

Hold them! More treachery! Now all of you will suffer the consequences!

ON AURELIA

The chaos is interrupted by Aurelia raising her hands. The room becomes quiet.

AURELIA

Stop! Everyone! As the Great Unifier, I will speak for these people!

BENEL (O.C.)

You can't do this! They are guilty!

AURELIA

Guilty of showing friendship and concern for my future. I forced them to render aid to my father. I told them if they didn't, we would make them leave without assistance.

NEW ANGLE

Benel rushes forward and confronts Janeway.

BENEL

Is this true?

JANEWAY

Yes. Aurelia was a frightened young lady, afraid of her responsibilities. You took on all the decision-making for her, preventing her from gaining the confidence she needed. But I think she's finally beginning to understand what it means to lead.

Aurelia turns to the court and speaks loudly.

AURELIA

Hear me! These people were forced to act against our laws and their own. We must let them go. I so order it as the Great Unifier!

Tuvok's team is released and their weapons returned. Janeway confronts Aurelia.

ON JANEWAY

JANEWAY

I'm glad your first act as Unifier saved me from the executioner. We will leave you and your world; we've caused enough problems. I'm afraid our Prime Directive has been bruised.

ON AURELIA

She seems shaken and disturbed.

AURELIA

Wait. It seems so unfair. After all you've been through. Can't I convince you to stay? You've taught me so much already, just in a few days. If you return to space, won't you be endangering yourselves?

JANEWAY (O.C.)

I suppose so.

Aurelia gets a gleam in her eye and smiles.

AURELIA

Then I forbid you to go! As the Great Unifier, you will be ordered to stay!

INT. VOYAGER - JANEWAY'S READY ROOM – TWO SHOT - JANEWAY AND TORRES

Janeway is reviewing progress reports with Torres and Chakotay. Torres is her former self; conversation is in progress.

TORRES

...and you'll note in my report, Grey and I were able to isolate the reason behind the catastrophic failure in engineering.

JANEWAY
(surprised)

Peterson died because of a defect?

TORRES

A one-in-a-million chance. A defect so small no one noticed it. Not the original manufacturers, Starfleet reviews, the shakedown process, routine diagnostics, me, or...

JANEWAY

...Peterson. Trained engineer or not, it made little difference.

Torres agrees with the assessment.

TORRES

So it would seem.

JANEWAY

Continue with repairs. We'll talk about this later. Dismissed.

Torres exits. Chakotay looks puzzled.

CHAKOTAY

Did I miss something?

JANEWAY

Personal matter.

(beat)

Evidently you did miss something, such as my orders not to rescue me.

Chakotay becomes a bit sheepish.

CHAKOTAY

I'm sorry. It's just when I saw the executioner and that ax --

Janeway holds up her hand.

ON JANEWAY

She protests in a friendly manner.

JANEWAY

Hold it! I understand completely. I was rather glad to see Tuvok, even if the rescue was a failure. Still, I think we were rather lucky in the long run. Our ship is being repaired and our supplies being restocked. Our crew is enjoying leave, and there is a real exchange of culture going on, all thanks to a promising new leader, Aurelia.

(beat)

I understand she even wants to introduce modern medicine to her people. Despite our doctor's failure to save her father, she was impressed by his efforts, especially regarding not needing to operate to help someone.

(beat)

Their culture won't change overnight, but it's a start.

ON CHAKOTAY

Chakotay smiles.

CHAKOTAY

And all this in exchange for a few lessons from you, B'Ellana, and Seven on leadership skills for Aurelia.

AS BEFORE – ON JANEWAY

Janeway returns the smile.

JANEWAY

A fair price indeed!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END

Upcoming Events

2022

Jan	1	Meeting, Zoom only, 4 p.m.
Feb	5	Meeting at Texas Steakhouse and Zoom, 4 p.m.
	20	Anniversary Dinner, Kanki Raleigh, 6 p.m.
Mar	5	Meeting at Texas Steakhouse and Zoom, 4 p.m.

2024

Jan	6	Meeting, Texas Steakhouse and Zoom, 4 p.m.
	14	Anniversary Dinner, Kanki Crabtree, 6 p.m.
Feb	3	Meeting, Texas Steakhouse and Zoom, 4 p.m.
Mar	3	Meeting, Texas Steakhouse and Zoom, 4 p.m. <i>Game Night follows the meal</i>

THE WRIGHT STUFF
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