

Star Trek: Eras ©

***To Err Is Human....  
To Really Mess Things Up,  
You Need A Directive***

*Story by Jim Caswell  
Audioplay by Jim Caswell and Doug Zeitlin*

**Episode Summary**

While Captain Connerly faces a board of inquiry, Evori reflects back on his own encounter with walking the fine line of the Prime Directive while aboard the USS Iliad.

**Starring**

Evori	Jim Caswell
Patrick Michael Connerly	Matt Hallaron
J'hos T'minear	Ric Steele
Lieutenant J.G. Koe Lineer	Beth Hallaron
Lieutenant J.G. Resheen D'Conn	Denise Denell
Leigh Adamas	Marti Smyth
Doctor Sevar	Erick Greeva

***Featuring***

Commander Daniel Kais	Pete Nottit
Commander Blitman	Ken Hallaron
Tribe Elder	Doug Zeitlin
Tribesman	Ken Hallaron
Captain Mitchell Thomas	Kirok of L'Stok

**Stardates**

Deep Space 5	57228.5	August, 2380
U.S.S. Iliad	42448.3	October, 2365

## PROLOGUE

**SCENE 1 – ENTER INT.: Conference Hall – Deep Space 5**

SOUND: Background sounds of conversation

KAIS

On behalf of the Judge Advocate General's Office, I hereby call this hearing to order.

SOUND: Background noise fades.

KAIS

I have asked Captain Gerald Reign of the Maelstrom, Captain Mitchell Thomas of the Kismet and Captain Neville Longfellow of the Sarek to join us today for this inquiry. Admiral Evori has chosen to abstain from serving on the judicial tribunal, instead serving as Counsel for the Defense. Are there any questions?

EVORI

No, Commander Kais.

KAIS

Very good. Would counsel like the charges to be read?

EVORI

We waive that right for now, Commander. We know why we're here, and would just as soon get this hearing started so we can move on to more important business.

KAIS

Admiral Evori. There is nothing more important than the upholding of the Prime Directive.

EVORI (quietly)

Spoken like a lawyer.

KAIS

And I would greatly appreciate it if you would refrain from such comments, as they could be taken as trying to influence the tribunal.

EVORI

Of course, you are correct, Commander. My apologies. I would never want to think that the captains under my command would be swayed by my opinion.

KAIS

Admiral! Do I need to find the defendant a different representative?

EVORI

No, Commander. My apologies. From this point forward, I order Captains Reign, Thomas and Longfellow to ignore my snide remarks for the duration of this inquiry and to remain impartial in their decisions.

T'MINEAR (in the background, whispering)

How can he order them to be impartial? Is that something that can be ordered?

ADAMAS (also whispering in the background)

Shhhh.

KAIS

Thank you, Admiral, for the effort. I would still appreciate it, however, if you could refrain.

EVORI

Of course, Commander.

KAIS

Now, if we can get back to business, I will formally start this inquiry. Captain Connerly, you stand accused of violating the Prime Directive. How do you plead?

CONNERLY

Not guilty.

SOUND: Cue Intro music and monologue.

## ACT I

**SCENE 1** – *ENTER INT.:* Connerly's DS5 quarters – Deep Space 5

SOUND: Door opening.

CONNERLY

That could have gone better.

EVORI

No, it was fine. We got our point across.

CONNERLY

Do you think I have a chance?

EVORI

Oh, yeah. The worst they would do is give you a reprimand. But I don't think it will come to that.

CONNERLY

Why?

EVORI

These men know you. They've served beside you and they know that you would never act immorally.

CONNERLY

Good points, if there were justice in the universe.

EVORI

Oh, there's justice, and I don't want to hear you thinking otherwise. Do you remember that time I was brought up before committee?

CONNERLY

You mean after Cherubis Two?

EVORI

Yeah. I was taken in for that event, and I made it out again.

CONNERLY

They really aren't the same.

EVORI

They are both violations of the Prime Directive. Remember? We were getting ready to pick up the Cultural Observation Crew. The team leader was just reporting in ....

SOUND: Flashback music.

**SCENE 2 – CUT TO INT.:** *Teleporter Room 3 – USS Iliad*

EVORI

Welcome aboard, Commander Blitman. Did you have a nice stay?

BLITMAN

Relatively speaking, Captain, yes. It was a great opportunity to study a culture during the equivalent of Earth's Upper Paleolithic era. Their development has greatly improved since the last team's visit thirty years ago.

CONNERLY

How so?

BLITMAN

Well, for one thing, they've switched from using flaked rock during hunting to actual hand-made flint blades. It took humans thousands of years to develop to that stage. They've made the advancement in mere decades.

T'MINEAR

May I ask a question, Captain?

EVORI

What is it, Mr. T'minear?

T'MINEAR

I'm not overly familiar with the study of ancient races, but what does all of that mean?

BLITMAN

It means, Lieutenant, that if this society were to continue at this level of development, they would, theoretically, develop at a much faster rate than any other species we have ever encountered. Metaphorically speaking, it's like a six-month-old infant winning a national spelling bee.

T'MINEAR

A spelling bee? That's an odd prize. And how would a flying insect spell? Are you saying it's able to speak, or form the letters in some other fashion?

CONNORLY (laughing lightly)

No, J'hos. A spelling bee is an earth contest to test a child's capability to spell.

T'MINEAR

My apologies, Commander.

CONNORLY

No problem.

EVORI

The equivalent for your tribe would be an infant going on the Great Hunt.

T'MINEAR

Ahhh. I see.

BLITMAN

But we digress.

EVORI

Do you plan to recommend that Starfleet send out another observation team in another few decades, Commander?

BLITMAN

That won't be necessary, Captain.

EVORI

Why not, Commander? By what you've described, I would think they would have advanced even farther in that time, perhaps even entering their own Mesolithic era.

BLITMAN

I'm afraid that's not going to happen, sir?

EVORI

Why not?

BLITMAN

They are currently a society of complete carnivores. At their current rate of consumption and population growth, we don't foresee their food sources lasting another two years. In that time, they'll hunt the planet's animals to extinction.

CONNORLY

With their advanced development, might they discover farming?

BLITMAN

The introduction of farming is a key part of the Mesolithic era. But, for all of their advancement in other areas, they haven't taken even the first step needed there. And they may not. Ever.

CONNERLY

Now it's my turn to not understand. Isn't a diminished food source usually one of the ignitions of farming? It leads people to take the seeds from vegetation and raise them in a controlled environment.

BLITMAN

In most circumstances, yes, but this environment is unusual. While there is edible vegetation in the area, most of it's either located at the tops of the trees or appears more dangerous than it actually is.

T'MINEAR

Dangerous?

BLITMAN

The rine is tough and covered with sharp spines.

CONNERLY

So while they could gather it and eat, they have no incentive to ever even try it.

BLITMAN

There are also edible roots. Obviously they're underground, but the natives haven't had a reason to go digging in the dirt for food. When I said "complete carnivores," that's precisely what I meant.

EVORI

So you're saying that, because these people will be five years short of discovering food that is good for them....

BLITMAN

They will all be dead within three years.

T'MINEAR

Let me get this straight, for want of some fruit....

EVORI

The kingdom is lost.

BLITMAN

Very George Herbert of you, Captain.

EVORI

It's something that shouldn't be allowed to happen.

BLITMAN

There's nothing that can be done, Captain. It's natural evolution for this planet.

T'MINEAR

No, its not. It's a cruel trick of nature.

BLITMAN

Lieutenant, I don't believe you understand the extent of the situation.

EVORI

Actually, Commander, I think my Chief of Security has a very firm grasp of the situation. He understands that, because these people are lacking a single piece of knowledge, they're going to die.

T'MINEAR

And who knows what they would be capable of contributing to the universe in the future. You said that they are advancing at an incredible rate. They could prove to be a superior race if given the chance.

BLITMAN

Hypothetically speaking, I suppose you're right, but none of that matters. They lack that piece of knowledge, and therefore their fate is sealed.

EVORI

Not necessarily.

SILENCE: 2 count.

BLITMAN

Captain. I hope you aren't insinuating what I think you're insinuating.

EVORI

Connerly. Tell Koe to go over the observation team's research and double-check it. I also want projections on the advancement of this species. I want to know what they may be capable of. I know that it'll have to be generalities; I just want potential probabilities.

BLITMAN

Captain. What you're suggesting goes against the Prime Directive. We cannot interfere in the natural development of this species.

EVORI

That's debatable, Commander.

BLITMAN (irritated)

No, it isn't Captain. Your assignment was to come here and pick my team up, delivering us back to Star base 36 for debriefing. I am sure that there was nothing in those orders about artificially advancing this species to their next stage of development.

EVORI

I'm not usually the type to pull rank, Commander, but it isn't up to you to interpret my orders. I can do that just fine on my own.

BLITMAN

But... but....

EVORI

Connerly. Assist Commander Blitman with recovering the rest of his team and equipment, after you have relayed my orders to Koe. When you're finished, meet Koe and I in my ready room, in, say, two hours.

CONNERLY

Two hours. Aye, Captain.

SOUND: Doors opening.

BLITMAN

But....

SOUND: Doors closing.

BLITMAN

What just happened here?

CONNERLY

You committed a cardinal sin aboard a starship.

BLITMAN

What's that?

CONNERLY

Telling the Captain what he can't do.

SOUND: Transition music.

**SCENE 3 – CUT TO INT.:** *Captain's Ready Room – USS Iliad*

SOUND: Door chime.

EVORI

Enter.

SOUND: Door opening.

CONNERLY

Are you ready for us, Captain?

EVORI

Ah, Connerly. Yeah. Come in.

KOE

Good afternoon, Captain.

EVORI

Koe. Did you have any luck?

KOE

Depends on your definition of luck, sir.

SOUND: Door closing.

EVORI

Let me guess. Blitman's projections are correct?

KOE

Every I is dotted, every T is crossed. We couldn't blow a hole in his theory with a photon torpedo.

EVORI

I was afraid you were going to say that. I was really hoping that nature would give us a hand on this one.

KOE

I'm sorry, Captain.

EVORI

What about the other part of the project?

KOE

Please keep in mind that I can only do so much with the present data.

EVORI

Understood, Lineer. Just tell me what you've got.

KOE

To be honest, Captain, the theoretical variables are too high to calculate. There is no way of telling what will happen in the next ten thousand years. Between now and then, their sun could go supernova. They could be oppressed by an alien race.

EVORI

I understand, Lineer. Just give me your best-case scenario.

KOE

Well, theoretically, if they remain unimpeded in their development, they will probably surpass standard Federation development in roughly eight centuries.

CONNERLY

Impressive. To go from Cro-Magnon to spaceman by the 32<sup>nd</sup> century.

KOE

Theoretically.

CONNERLY

Theoretically. Of course. So where does that leave us, Captain? I mean, technically, Blitman's correct. To do anything to help them will be a violation of the Prime Directive.

EVORI

Theoretically.

CONNERLY

I'm sorry, Captain, but no. There's nothing theoretical about that one.

EVORI

I've been sitting here thinking about that. The biggest problem that these people have is the fact that they don't realize that they have the food they need all around them.

KOE

That's a rather large problem, Captain.

EVORI

We need to come up with a way to show them without actually revealing ourselves. The last thing they need is a benevolent provider to become dependant on.

CONNERLY

You mean that isn't God, eh, Captain.

KOE

Or the Prophets, Sir.

EVORI

Correct. I don't want them worshipping us.

KOE

Do you have any idea as how we would pull this off, Captain?

EVORI

Well, the first step is to get them to recognize the vegetation for the food it is. Once they find it and try it, hopefully they'll like it and seek out more of it.

CONNERLY

Are you suggesting that we just lay out a trail of fruit for them to follow?

EVORI

Sort of. But there is going to be a lengthy progression from picking to planting. We also need to introduce them to the roots as well.

KOE

Teaching them how to fish.

EVORI

Rather than giving it to them, yes.

KOE

But according to Blitman's report, the fruit is at the top of the trees. How are they supposed to get it?

EVORI

The old fashioned way. Climb. Plus, we'll need to leave the more accessible, spine covered fruit open so it can be eaten.

CONNERLY

All while not being seen. Simple.

EVORI

Put together a team, Commander. Report in every half hour while on the surface. Take a security detail with you, and make sure you're not seen.

CONNERLY

Yes, Captain. Koe, you're with me.

EVORI

Oh, and Commander....

CONNERLY

Yes, Captain.

EVORI

If anyone asks, you're simply following orders. If anything's going to hit the fan around here, I'd rather make sure that I'm the only one who's going to be downwind.

SOUND: Transition music.

## ACT II

**SCENE 1** – *ENTER INT.: Bridge – USS Iliad*

SOUND: Bridge background noise.

EVORI

D’Conn. How long has it been since the away team checked in?

D’CONN (speaking in a catlike purr)

Twenty-eight minutes, Captain. Two minutes lat-rrrr than the last time you asked.

EVORI

Very funny. I’m worried about them. They’ve had a few too many close calls for my taste.

ADAMAS

Commander Connerly knows what he’s doing, Captain.

EVORI

I know, Leigh. But this was my idea. I should be the one down there taking the risks.

ADAMAS

Captain, you know as well as I do that he wouldn’t have let that happen.

EVORI (under his breath)

Better than you know.

ADAMAS

I beg your pardon, sir?

EVORI

Nothing. Just remembering.

D’CONN

Captain. The command-rrrr is checking in.

EVORI

Put him through.

SOUND: Communication chirp.

CONNERLY

*Am I on time this time, Captain?*

EVORI

Don't get smart, Commander.

CONNERLY

*A wise man at the academy once told me, don't be any less than you are.*

EVORI

I'll have to remember to find that man and reward him properly someday. Report.

CONNERLY

*We've managed to seed the area pretty well with the various forms of fruit in various stages of development. Hopefully they can learn from them the best ways to pick and eat them. We also managed to trim down some of the foliage so they can find the higher fruits and want to go after them on their own.*

EVORI

Sounds good. How much longer do you think you're going to need?

CONNERLY

*Probably a couple of hours. We are going to send someone up soon to get some signal enhancers. There are minerals in some of the areas that play havoc with our surveillance equipment, and we're going to need it if we're going to track their progress.*

EVORI

Understood. Any idea how T'minear's team is doing?

CONNERLY

*No sir. I believe you've heard from them more recently than we have.*

EVORI

When they last reported in, they were getting ready to get closer to the tribe's encampment to dig towards the root systems.

CONNERLY

*I hope they remember to make it look natural.*

EVORI

They were told to make it look as though one of the natural wildlife had torn up the area. It's likely to spook them a bit, thinking animals have gotten close to their encampment, but it's worth it.

CONNERLY

*Agreed. Well, its time to get back to work. We'll be back in touch shortly.*

EVORI

OK, Commander. Iliad out.

SOUND: Communication signal end.

ADAMAS

Sounds like they're having a nice shore leave.

EVORI

How long until T'minear's group is supposed to check in? <beat>  
D'Conn?

D'CONN

I'm sur-rrrr-e they will be calling any moment, sir-rrrr.

EVORI

How long?

D'CONN

Two minutes ....

EVORI

Oh, OK.

D'CONN

... ago.

EVORI

What?

ADAMAS

I'm sure they're fine, Captain. They probably stumbled into one of the mineral deposits the Commander spoke of and need to find a clear zone.

D'CONN

Maybe they'r-rrrr-e too close to the people and don't want to be found.

EVORI

Or maybe you two are trying to keep me calm, and I appreciate it, but we need to make sure. D-Conn. Find them through their com-badges.

D'CONN

Wor-rrrr-king.

ADAMAS

I'm sorry sir. We were just trying to help.

EVORI

I know, Lieutenant, but one day, when you have a command of your own, you'll realize that there are times for calm and times for action. When someone as reliable as J'hos fails to check in on time, it's time for action.

D'CONN

I think I found them.

EVORI

Explain.

D'CONN

Well, the signal's weak, because of the deposit.

EVORI

Is it enough to get a location?

D'CONN

Yes. It's in the middle of the natives' encampment.

EVORI

Can you get a transporter lock?

D'CONN

Negative.

EVORI

Well, they weren't supposed to go that near, so we're going to assume they've been captured.

ADAMAS

T'minear?

EVORI

It's their terrain, and he knows that I don't want them hurt. Once discovered, he would probably surrender before taking the chance of doing even more damage, counting on us coming after him when he didn't check in. D'Conn, raise Commander Connerly again.

D'CONN

Aye.

ADAMAS

Do you think they'll hurt our people?

EVORI

I don't think so, and in spite of how I may want to help these people, J'hos wouldn't let one of his own get hurt.

D'CONN

I've got him, Captain.

SOUND: Communication Chirp.

*CONNERLY*

*Miss me already, Captain?*

EVORI

No time for jokes, Commander. T'minear hasn't checked in and sensors show him in the tribe's camp. I need you to take your group and go get our people.

*CONNERLY*

*Understood, Captain.*

EVORI

Do what you can to not hurt them.

*CONNERLY*

*Of course. Connerly out.*

SOUND: Transition music.

**SCENE 2 – CUT TO EXT.: Forest – Cherubis Two**

SOUND: The gentle rustling of movement can be heard, but quietly. A tricorder is also audible.

KOE

Commander.

CONNERLY

Yeah, Koe, what is it.

KOE

I've lost the tricorder signal again. We must be near another deposit.

CONNERLY

Keep trying to scan. We'll probably pick up the signal again in another few meters.

KOE

Yes sir. <beat> How do you think it happened?

CONNERLY

What?

KOE

How did these untrained, uneducated people capture a group of Starfleet security personnel? Especially T'minear? I mean, he's used to this type of life. Have you seen his stones?

CONNERLY

I beg you're pardon?

KOE

The hunting stones he used during his rite of passage.

CONNERLY

Oh. Yes.

KOE

Do you think he lost his edge somewhere along the line?

CONNERLY

No. He's still one of the most capable security officer's I've ever met. What you need to remember, though, is that he is fully in control of his situation, in spite of the evidence to the contrary. These people are probably operating out of fear, which makes them more difficult to predict.

KOE

I suppose.

CONNERLY

Put yourself in their shoes for a moment. Creatures that are so far above you on the evolutionary scale are suddenly found. The universal translators may or may not be working; depending on how far along their level of communication has developed. Our people aren't able to explain themselves, making weird, incomprehensible sounds. They're wearing the skins of animals you've never seen. All you've known, in the way of survival, is to hunt lower life forms, and suddenly it appears you may have become a lower life form.

KOE

Fight or flight instincts kick in.

CONNERLY

Exactly.

SILENCE – except for background noises – 2 count.

KOE

You know that I grew up off of Bajor.

CONNERLY

Though you are Bajoran.

KOE

But I've done research into what my family, what my people, went through. We were a peace-loving people before the Cardassians came. We were devoted to science, music, art, and culture. We weren't prepared for an invasion. But we became warriors, learning to fight and survive. There has always been the question, though: if things would have been different, if we were more.... I don't know.

CONNERLY

Savage.

KOE

Sort of. Yeah.

CONNERLY

I think you understand the situation here better than you think.

SOUND: A tricorder chirp

KOE

Commander, the tricorder is working again.

CONNERLY

Good. How much farther do we have to go? <beat> Koe?

KOE (concerned)

Another three hundred meters to the campsite.

CONNERLY

What's wrong?

KOE

I'm getting some weird reading, sir.

CONNERLY

Weird?

KOE

There are life signs approaching.

CONNERLY

From what direction?

KOE

All directions, sir. I think....

SOUND: Several not-quite-human howls.

CONNERLY

We're surrounded.

SOUND: Transition music.

## ACT III

### SCENE 1 – *ENTER INT.: Bridge – USS Iliad*

EVORI

Captain's log, stardate 42448.3. Things have gone seriously wrong. The inhabitants of Cheribus Two have captured my Chief of Security, and my First Officer and Chief Science Officer are late in reporting in from their rescue mission. I'm afraid that they have been captured as well. I am recording this log because I have every intention of leading the next away mission. My crew is in this situation because of my decisions, and I refuse to send anyone else down there while I stay here. As such, I want it to be on the record that the decision to help the people of Cherubic Two, in direct violation of the Prime Directive, was solely my decision and that no one on my crew should be held accountable for actions taken under my direct orders. End log.

SOUND: Bridge background noise.

EVORI

What's the away team's progress, D'Conn?

D'CONN

They've stopped moving, Captain. They've been with the other-rrr team for-rrr five minutes.

EVORI

Far longer than it would be if they'd freed them.

D'CONN

That would be a fair-rrrrr assumption, Captain.

ADAMAS

Out of the frying pan, Captain?

EVORI

I'm afraid so, Lieutenant. Bridge to Doctor Sevar.

SOUND: Communication chirp.

*SEVAR*

*Sevar.*

EVORI

Doctor, meet me in transporter room four. Bring your med kit. I'm not sure if your skills will be needed, but I want you along just in case.

SEVAR

*If you insist, Captain.*

SOUND: Communication signal end.

ADAMAS

Do you think someone's been injured?

EVORI

There's no way to tell. I want him on hand, though, just in case.

ADAMAS

For their sake, I certainly hope not.

D'CONN

Won't Sevar-rrrr-'s alien-ness be star-rrr-ting to the inhabitants?

EVORI

This coming from a Caitlan?

D'CONN

My apologies, sir-rrrr. I didn't mean....

EVORI

I know what you mean, D'Conn. But seeing that they have encountered humans, a Tiburonian and a Bajoran already, I don't think Doctor Sevar's Vulcan-ness or personality will affect them too much more.

ADAMAS

That's being generous, Captain; claiming he has a personality.

EVORI

He has one, Lieutenant. It may not be one that most of you appreciate, but it is there none-the-less.

D'CONN

Captain. Is it best for you to go down to the sur-rrr-face? Shouldn't you send someone else instead?

EVORI

I've ignored so many protocols on this mission; what's one more?

SOUND: Door opening.

EVORI

Adamas, you have the bridge.

ADAMAS

Me sir?

EVORI

Why not? We're in standard orbit around a class-M, level 1 planet. Nothing you can't handle. If anything comes up, call Lieutenant Commander White in engineering. Besides, it will give you some experience for the day you get to assume the big chair.

SOUND: Door closing.

ADAMAS

Yeah, like I'm in any hurry to move up the chain of command.

SOUND: Transition music.

**SCENE 2 – CUT TO EXT.: Forest – Cherubis Two**

SOUND: Transporter fades in and out. The chirp of a tricorder activated.

EVORI

Good. We're only a hundred meters from the campsite.

SEVAR

And why couldn't we beam directly into the camp?

EVORI

First, the camp is built on a mineral deposit that is fouling up our equipment. That's why the observation team needed to amplify all of their equipment while they were here. Even if the transporters had been able to set us down right in the middle of their camp, I wouldn't have wanted to. Situations are bad enough. The last thing these people need to see is us appearing out of thin air.

SEVAR

That is highly illogical, Captain. This society has already been contaminated due to your interference in their development. How much more can be done?

EVORI (slightly irritated)

I was trying to save lives, doctor. Certainly you can understand that line of thinking.

SEVAR

It is a... worthwhile goal, Captain, but has been clearly noted as being against the Prime Directive.

EVORI

Yes, yes. Everyone loves to use the Prime Directive as a reason to not get involved. But what about the fact that we're capable of saving these people's lives?

SEVAR

You are approaching this situation emotionally, Captain. That is not my area of specialty.

EVORI

But the care of other life forms is, doctor. Don't we have the moral obligation to help them in their time of need?

SEVAR

I provide mending to bodies, Captain. I do not need to care about how they feel about it. That is what we have Counselor Tali for.

EVORI

And it's that mindset that keeps you from advancing to command. I want you to learn that there is more to all of this than knowing that the hipbone is connected to the thighbone.

SEVAR

The pelvic bone contains the hip joint, which connects to the femur.

EVORI

You know what I meant.

SEVAR

I am as the Kolinahr made me, Captain.

EVORI

Are you joking with me?

SEVAR

There is no need to get insulting, Captain. I was simply stating the facts.

EVORI

We had better get moving, before we're found by a patrol or hunting party.

SOUND: The gentle rustling of movement can be heard, but quietly.

SEVAR

If you are worried about the natives seeing transporter technology, Captain, why did you bring pattern enhancers?

EVORI

A backup plan. I want to try to talk to the tribe elder, see if we can work this out without further contamination, but if it isn't possible, I want to be able to get our people out, no matter what.

SEVAR

If you use them, though, the enhancers will be left behind. Leaving advanced technology on an underdeveloped planet will potentially increase the contamination. It could be more harmful than beaming their leader aboard the Iliad and letting him walk around.

EVORI

I know. I said "backup plan." That's why they're in the knapsack. <beat> When we get there, I want you to discretely examine our people and make sure that they can travel. Provided our crew is reasonably safe, I want you to gather up all of the equipment the away teams had with them: tricorders, phasers, communicators, everything. As you've so clearly stated, we can't leave anything behind.

SEVAR

That is very logical of you.

EVORI

Thanks.

SEVAR

It was not a complement, Captain, merely an observation.

EVORI

Of course. My mistake. <beat> Hopefully, we can get out of this without our visit falling into the annals of future folklore.

SEVAR

It would more likely be mythology.

EVORI

That's what I'm hoping to avoid. Or worse yet, theology.

SILENCE except for walking and tricorder – 5 count.

SEVAR

Captain. You seem to be concerned about these people deifying us.

EVORI

Correct.

SEVAR

Why?

EVORI

Because, doctor, we're explorers, not gods, and I don't want anyone to think of us as such.

SEVAR

Why? You seem to have little problem with playing God. Why not let them think of you as such?

SILENCE except for walking and tricorder – 2 count – then fade to Transition music.

**SCENE 3 – CUT TO EXT.: Campsite – Cherubis Two**

SOUND: A fire crackling.

TRIBEMAN

Strangers awake.

TRIBE ELDER

They make noise?

TRIBEMAN

No. Cover mouths so cannot speak.

TRIBE ELDER

Good. Scare little ones.

EVORI (whispering)

Apparently the universal translators have managed to get enough of a sampling to work.

SEVAR (whispering)

But did not work earlier, to allow either team to be understood. It needed a strong sampling for it to translate from.

EVORI (whispering)

Exactly.

TRIBEMAN

What we do with?

TRIBE ELDER

Don't know.

TRIBEMAN

We kill them. Burn as offering to sun god.

TRIBE ELDER

No. May be from sun god.

TRIBEMAN

No. Sun god send creatures with our words.

TRIBE ELDER

You saw. First ones throw fire from sticks. Make marks on ground, but not burn earth.

TRIBEMAN

Monsters.

TRIBE ELDER

No monsters. Did not fight.

SOUND: Tribesmen continue to argue "monsters / no monsters".

SEVAR (whispering)

Would it not be more logical to avoid direct interaction with the natives and simply remove our people from the area?

EVORI (whispering)

Probably. But then there will be more mystery surrounding us. Maybe if I speak to the elder, show them we aren't monsters or gods, it can minimize the impact we've had here.

SEVAR (whispering)

Highly illogical, Captain.

EVORI (whispering)

I know. It isn't the first time, and it won't be the last. Go find the away teams. Make sure everyone is OK and get them ready to leave.

TRIBEMAN

We kill them.

TRIBE ELDER

No. Will not allow.

TRIBEMAN

You lead us, or let someone else lead.

TRIBE ELDER

I tribe leader. I oldest. My words rule.

TRIBEMAN

Let us do what must be done.

SOUND: The gentle rustling of movement can be heard, but quietly.

TRIBE ELDER

Must think more.

SOUND: More rustling of movement.

TRIBEMAN

Elder! Monster!

EVORI (calming voice)

I'm no monster. I am a friend.

TRIBEMAN

Monster!

TRIBE ELDER

He speaks. We hear words.

EVORI

That's right. You can understand me. We learned your words.

TRIBEMAN

Demon!

SOUND: Movement as a crowd begins to gather.

TRIBE ELDER

Quiet! We listen.

EVORI

Thank you, great elder. My people and I come in peace. We will not fight you.

TRIBE ELDER

Why here?

EVORI

We come from a place far away from here and traveled long distances to meet you. We watched from afar to learn from you.

TRIBE ELDER

We see your magic. What we teach you?

EVORI

We don't have magic. We just do things differently than you. We have different ways. It doesn't make us better than you.

TRIBE ELDER

Say nothing about better! You not better!

EVORI

No, not better. Wrong words. Just different. <beat> I want to take care of my tribe, just like you take care of yours.

TRIBE ELDER

I guard tribe. Protect.

EVORI

That's right. You and I, we are the elders of our tribes, and its up to us to guide and protect them. Make sure they don't come to harm. And make sure they don't do anything wrong.

TRIBE ELDER

Hard.

EVORI

Yes. Sometime's its very hard. Hard to make the right decisions, but not hurting my tribesmen was the right thing. It was good.

TRIBE ELDER

They no hurt.

EVORI

That's right, and I thank you for not hurting them.

TRIBE ELDER

No. They no hurt us.

EVORI

Ahhhh. I understand.

TRIBEMAN (mimicking)

Ahhhhhhhh.

EVORI (snickering)

That's right. Because they didn't harm your tribe, you didn't harm them.

TRIBE ELDER

Yes. That what said.

EVORI

Of course it was. As one elder to another, I ask that you let my people go. I want to take them back to our home.

TRIBE ELDER

You go far away?

EVORI

Yes. We will go far away and not disturb you again.

TRIBE ELDER

First we eat. Elders feast and talk peace.

EVORI

Thank you. <beat> Do you have fruit or roots to eat?

TRIBEMAN

Eat meat! Not plants. We not animals!

TRIBE ELDER

Silence. <beat> Plants not good. Make tribe sick.

EVORI

I know, but not all plants are bad. Some are good.

TRIBE ELDER

What plants good?

EVORI

What if you allowed my people to help and we gather good plants and eat together?

TRIBEMAN

Poison. They try to poison us.

TRIBE ELDER

No. They not hurt us.

TRIBEMAN

You not leader. You not guard.

TRIBE ELDER

I guard. Tribe know I guard. I speak for tribe?

SOUND: People cheering.

TRIBE ELDER

I speak for tribe. Not you. Tribe not follow you. Take to caves and hold. Wait until friends leave.

SOUND: Tribeman being pulled away.

TRIBEMAN

You not lead tribe! Not go to caves!

EVORI (after the screaming has faded)

Will he be fine?

TRIBE ELDER

He fine. Will hold until calm. Take care of tribe. Even stupid ones.

EVORI (laughing)

I know the feeling. My tribe's healer is with my people....

TRIBE ELDER

You know where people are? You not take them?

EVORI

No, I didn't take them. I wanted to show you respect. Have you release them.

TRIBE ELDER

Respect. I show respect. Release your people.

EVORI

Thank you. <beat> Sevar! You can bring them out now.

SEVAR

Yes Captain.

EVORI

Is everyone all right?

CONNERLY

Yes sir, much to all of our relief. No one wanted the good doctor practicing on them. Is everything all right out here, Captain?

EVORI

Yes, Commander. Do we have everything we came in with?

T'MINEAR

Other than a bit of bruised ego, yes sir.

EVORI

You did the right thing, Lieutenant. In the end, everything is going to work out OK. We are going to help this tribe gather food to eat for a feast before we go far away.

KOE

We're going to help them gather fruit and roots, Captain?

EVORI

Exactly. After we eat a feast together and they realize how tasty they are, our mission.... er, visit will be complete.

T'MINEAR

How...

EVORI

That's why they pay me the big bucks.

TRIBE ELDER

What pay?

SOUND: Flashback music.

**SCENE 4 – CUT TO INT.:** *Connerly's DS5 quarters – Deep Space 5*

CONNERLY

I remember at the senior staff debriefing, White made comments about how we didn't do anything that wasn't done for humans during our Mesolithic era and for the Egyptians. And then he started in on the whole Ferengi / Area 51 thing again.

EVORI

Yeah. He's a great engineer, but sometimes his conspiracy theories are a bit out there. But, in the end, the Cherubis's learned about the fruit and roots, so everything was worth it.

CONNERLY

You had us drop relay buoys before we left orbit. Does the Federation ever check in on their progress?

EVORI

Starfleet has placed a ban on the star system. It's a no fly zone.

CONNERLY

Oh. <beat> So, how are they doing?

EVORI

Just fine. The previous elder passed away three years ago. The loudmouth tried to take over, but was overruled. The new guy seems good.

CONNERLY

Do they still talk about us?

EVORI

Occasionally, but only as their neighbors from a far away land. I figure the stories will fade within a couple of generations; especially once they start exploring their own continent more.

CONNERLY

I still can't believe that Blitman filed charges against you, though. I'm not sure which pool had higher odds: you getting court-martialed or that the ship was going to get attacked by some hostile alien while all of us were planet-side. Fortunately, we came out of it just fine, just as you did at your hearing.

EVORI

Something like that.

SOUND: Communication Chirp

*ADAMAS*

*Admiral Evori. Captain Connerly.*

EVORI

And now we'll see how yours went. Go ahead, Leigh.

*ADAMAS*

*The tribunal is ready to resume session. They've made their decision.*

SOUND: Connerly sighs.

EVORI

Thanks, Leigh. We're on our way.

SOUND: Transition music.

## EPILOGUE

**SCENE 1** – *ENTER INT.: Conference Hall – Deep Space 5*

SOUND: Background sounds of conversation

KAIS

This hearing is hereby reconvened. Please come to order.

SOUND: Background noise fades.

KAIS

Thank you. Is the defendant ready to hear the verdict from the tribunal?

EVORI

Yes Commander.

KAIS

The charge is violation of the Prime Directive; specifically the removing of an indigenous, pre-warp life form from Lambda Three before it was destroyed. Captain Thomas, what is the tribunal's decision?

THOMAS

Due to the extenuating circumstances and the care that Captain Connerly took in ensuring that the inhabitants were made unaware of the relocation process, we find that he acted in good conscience, if not adhering to the letter of the Directive. As such, we find Captain Connerly innocent of any wrongdoing.

KAIS

Congratulations, Captain. You're free to go.

**SCENE 2** – SOUND: Background sounds of happiness.

CONNERLY

Thank you, Evori.

EVORI

Don't thank me, Captain. They found you innocent because what you did was right.

CONNERLY

It may have been right, but so was Commander Kais. What I did was a violation of the Prime Directive.

ADAMAS

How can you be beating yourself up, Patrick Michael? You won.

CONNERLY

But the fact is that the Prime Directive says I shouldn't have interfered. Can we really win if the law can cost lives?

EVORI

What you need to remember is that the Prime Directive, while more than a suggestion, is not a be-all, end-all. It takes people with wisdom and morals to interpret it and make sure the spirit is adhered to, if not to the letter. The problems occur when people go to one extreme or the other, making it an absolute or ignoring it completely.

ADAMAS

The Tridoras needed your help. If you hadn't gotten involved, their entire race would have been wiped out. You moved them from their dying planet to Lambda Four, a more stable environment within the same system.

T'MINEAR

You did the right thing.

EVORI

And the captains saw that. They made sure that right won out over bureaucracy.

SILENCE – 1 count.

CONNERLY

Your inquiry was a closed session, Evori. I don't remember ever hearing the verdict. How did you get off?

EVORI

I didn't.

CONNERLY

What?

EVORI

I was found guilty. There's an official reprimand on my record to this day. They didn't see a need to remove my captaincy, but they also wanted to make a point with me.

ADAMAS

To be honest Admiral, I don't remember any significant change. It must not have worked.

EVORI

Oh, but it did. I learned that even Starfleet could make mistakes, even as good of a system as it is. After all, a part is only as good as the whole. I also learned that, if it was in my power, I would make sure it didn't happen again.

SILENCE – 2 count.

T'MINEAR

Admiral, are you saying that you fixed this ruling?

EVORI

I'm saying that we must learn from our mistakes. If we don't, we are doomed to repeat them. And saving lives is never a mistake.

CUT: Ending music and credits.

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