

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

13x05 - "Elvis Has
Re-Entered the Building"

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and on the *Star Trek* tie-in novels
by Pocket Books

TNG 18x05 - "THE TIPPING POINT"

With the leaders of Deneva and Alpha Centauri both onboard, *Enterprise* arrives at Pacifica, where Crusher and Kadhata are working with the refugees. Given one wanted to return to Earth, and the other was already unhappy with Starfleet, both leaders are furious. They arrive to find tensions in the camps boiling over into violence. The Pacifican authorities suggest erecting a fence to keep people away from infected water, which Crusher fears will be seen as ghettos. Food replicators are overtaxed - they will have to reuse waste matter, no matter the distaste. Kadhata tries to keep the peace, but she somehow ends up surrounded by armed Pacifican soldiers. Luckily Choudhury beams down and defuses tensions. While the crew of *Enterprise* work hard to help the refugees, the Denevan and Centauri leaders explore the camps. They realise the state of affairs in the Federation, and that none of them can afford to be selfish...

TTN 2x05 - "OVER A TORRENT SEA"

Since the universal translator hurts them, Y'Lira and Eviku decode the squal's language, and Lavena learns to "sing" it. Riker worries they broke the Prime Directive by contacting these people, so with Troi heavily pregnant, Riker himself accompanies Lavena to "talk" to the squal. An asteroid approaches the planet, so Vale tries to deflect it using phasers and tractors. But the asteroid's radioactive composition causes a feedback pulse, damaging the ship, and the asteroid impacts the planet, killing hundreds of squal and causing tsunamis that trap Riker and Lavena on the surface. *Titan* loses contact with them, and nobody knows if they are alive or dead. Mid-counselling session, Troi and Tuvok are injured in the accident. Unfortunately Dr Ree's reptilian child-rearing instincts take over - the giant Pakhwa-thanh doctor abducts the counsellor, rampaging through the ship until he can steal a shuttle and whisk her away...

VOY 11x05 - "THE DISTANCE"

B'Elanna is struggling to hold her tiny slipstream shuttle together. She received Tom's secret message with coordinates for a rendezvous. Tom plans to quit as *Voyager's* XO, rejoin his family, and then disappear into the Delta Quadrant never to be

bothered by Klingon cults again. B'Elanna arrives at New Talax, glad to catch up with Neelix and explain everything he missed. But little Miral seems to be ill, and the Talaxians can't help her. *Voyager's* new chief engineer Nancy Conlon (formerly of USS *Da Vinci*) reports to Captain Afsarah Eden that the fleet's benamite crystals, a vital part of the slipstream drive, are wearing out much faster than expected. Security chief Harry Kim detects anomalies in the comm system - Tom's secret messages to B'Elanna. Seven is given a neural inhibitor by the Doctor, and must undergo sessions with Counsellor Cambridge. Worried about Miral, B'Elanna is desperate to rendezvous with *Voyager*, but when she sets course, she is intercepted by a Borg cube...

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EST. FERENGINAR

The Ferengi homeworld's capital city - if we could get a different view from the usual that would be nice - although still as overcast, rain-sodden and downright damp as ever.

2 INT. FERENGI SUPERMARKET

A local corner-shop grocery market with three aisles packed with all types of standard Ferengi foods - the kind of place one might drop into on the way home from the office to pick up a couple of essentials you forgot earlier.

The door SLAMS open and two Ferengi males bustle in, eager to get out of the RAIN that hits the commercial-filled windows of the store. These are JOQ and BINDU, the two bickering work colleagues from 9x11 "Sale of the Century".

SHOPKEEPER

Hey! No getting my floors wet!

The SHOPKEEPER peeks out from behind his plastic shield to point angrily at the machine on the wall beside the door. Muttering, Joq and Bindu both wrestle a SLIP OF LATINUM out of their wringing wet jackets and pop it into the slot.

A HATCH opens and the machine SPITS out small hand-towels. The two Ferengi fumble to catch the towels, then use them to pat down their big bulbous heads and their work suits.

The used towels go back into the machine, which tries to SNAP their hands off as it closes. Muttering, Joq and Bindu move into the shop and start browsing.

BINDU

I can't believe I let you drag me out into this *thlopper*ing weather.

JOQ

I told you, I need some ungaberry sauce to put on my ChiggaBurgers.

BINDU

I don't know how you can eat that
Betazoid filth. Plus the prices
in this place are ridiculous.

A nervous glance towards the Shopkeeper, who of course
overheard and is glaring at them unhappily. Bindu puts his
head down and moves on, as Joq inspects the shelves.

JOQ

You pay for convenience, Bindu.
This place is right next to my
apartment block.

BINDU

I don't know why you didn't just
order from the train and have
Donk's Deliveries bring it right
to your front door. It would have
been there by now, and I wouldn't
have got *thloppered* on.

JOQ

They don't have the kind I like.

Bindu sighs and shuffles on down the aisle, not really
paying attention.

JOQ

By the way, did you hear about
Lump getting fired? They caught
him embezzling from the annual
Gint Day party fund.

BINDU

How many times - don't believe
everything you hear, Joq.

JOQ

It makes total sense, though. I
mean, how many times has Lump got
caught? He's an embarrassment.
Everyone knows if you're going
to embezzle, you do it from the
manager's birthday gift fund.

A sound from the next aisle over - the high-pitched and supremely irritating GIGGLE we first heard way back in 1x11 "The Nagus". It sounds exactly like former Grand Nagus ZEK.

Joq pauses in his shopping, his big round ears perking up.

JOQ

Did you hear that?

BINDU

Of course I heard it. So what?

JOQ

That sounded like Grand Nagus Zek.

BINDU

Now you really are losing your lobes. Zek is dead, Joq.

JOQ

So FCN said. But you just said not to believe everything you hear.

BINDU

I think a planet-wide vid in which you and I both watched his body get desiccated, chopped up into two-hundred-and-eighty-five pieces and sold off to the highest bidder is pretty conclusive evidence.

Joq creeps up the aisle, shuffles a step at a time to the end, and peeks secretly around the corner...

...where a FIGURE in a heavy cloak stands in the next aisle with a jar in each wrinkly hand, comparing them. The cloak hood hides most of his features, but it *could* be Zek...

Joq peers around the corner like a super-spy, oblivious to the fact that his giant ears are clearly sticking out.

JOQ

He's looking at the beetle snuff aisle. Everyone knows Zek loved beetle snuff.

Bindu stands openly in the aisle, utterly unimpressed with Joq's secret mission or this mysterious figure.

BINDU

Zek also ran a bulti-billion-brick business empire and never stepped foot in a rip-off merchant's place like this his whole life. Plus, did I mention he's dead?

The figure GIGGLES again, still comparing the two jars of beetle snuff and apparently vastly entertained by them.

Bindu spots what he wants on the shelf, grabs it.

BINDU

Here's your ungaberry sauce. Just buy it and let's go, okay? "The New Adventures of Slug Boy" is on in an hour and I haven't even insulted the writers online yet.

Not waiting for a reply, Bindu grabs Joq and drags him right past the figure towards the Shopkeeper's counter. Joq tries to sneak a look under the hood without being seen. Bindu slams the ungaberry sauce packet onto the counter.

BINDU

He's paying.

The Shopkeeper disdainfully rings up the purchase. Joq is still gazing at the cloaked figure - Bindu punches his arm. Joq pulls out his wallet, flips through all his cards.

JOQ

Right. Do you take Plinkie Points?

SHOPKEEPER

No.

JOQ

Crump Card?

SHOPKEEPER

No.

JOQ
Torg Tokens?

SHOPKEEPER
No.

JOQ
Love 2 Scrimp?

SHOPKEEPER
No.

JOQ
Dibble's Discount?

SHOPKEEPER
(grudging)
...Yes.

JOQ
Great!

Joq hands over a certain card - the Shopkeeper takes it like it's targ dung and swipes it into the cash register.

INSERT - CASH REGISTER

The total figure is displayed in FERENGI SCRIPT. As we watch, it counts down - by the smallest possible amount.

BACK TO SCENE

Joq seems nevertheless delighted by this. The Shopkeeper hands him back his card, shoves the ungaberries at him.

JOQ
No bag, thanks.
(beat; re
cloaked figure)
That guy over there - do you know
who he is?

SHOPKEEPER
Never seen him before.

JOQ

Don't you think he looks like
Grand Nagus Zek?

SHOPKEEPER

I think he's been trying to pick
his beetle snuff for ten minutes,
and you're frinxed in the head.

BINDU

We're leaving now. Sorry to bother
you. Thanks for the ungaberries.

Bindu grabs Joq and drags him impatiently to the door.

BINDU

Will you shut up? You go around
telling people you saw Grand Nagus
Zek buying beetle snuff and you're
the next one who's going to get
fired - and you'll probably find
a way to drag me down with you.

JOQ

I'm telling you it's him.

Bindu mutters, unconvinced. Joq shoves his berries into his
coat, Bindu opens the door, and they both plunge cringingly
back out in the rain, the door SLAMMING closed behind them.

In the aisle, the cloaked figure GIGGLES again...

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Standard establishing shot - *Defiant* in place, but not as many freighters or passenger ships as before.

4 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

QUARK is schmoozing through one of the screens behind the bar to a male Ferengi business associate, GLORF.

GLORF (screen)

This is a smaller order than last month, Ambassador. I hope you're not buying your fresh sand peas from some other supplier.

QUARK

Perish the thought, Glorf. No, it's just that business is not as busy now as it was last month.

Quark gestures around the room behind him for Glorf to see. Life is getting back to normal on the station, for the most part. The bar is busy but not insanely rammed.

QUARK

(continuing)

No point ordering sand peas if there's no-one to eat them.

GLORF (screen)

Of course, Ambassador. Although I would also point out that I have yet to receive your payment for that last shipment.

QUARK

Your payment will come directly from the Nagal Treasury as a diplomatic expense - or at least it will once my idiot brother signs off on it.

GLORF (screen)

(licks lips)

The Nagal Treasury, eh? I'll have to include that in my advertising. "Official supplier to the Grand Nagus" sounds even better than "Official supplier to the Ferengi Ambassador to Bajor". No offence.

QUARK

(laughing)

Of course - rule two-thirty-nine.

GLORF (screen)

(grin)

"Never be afraid to mislabel a product".

QUARK

So how is life on the homeworld these days? Still as damp and squelchy as ever, I hope.

GLORF (screen)

(nods eagerly)

The mold's coming in really thick this year. And business is better than ever, especially since so many came home after the Borg.

QUARK

Disaster-stricken survivors always make the best customers - they'll take any old expired garbage. But yeah, my mother managed to escape before the Borg blew up Risa. Last I heard she was on her way home.

GLORF (screen)

Ah yes, the former Grand Nagus's widow. You've heard the rumours, of course.

QUARK

Rumours, what rumours?

GLORF (screen)
You didn't hear? Oh, Quark - it's delicious! Word on the streets of the capital is that Grand Nagus Zek himself has been seen - alive!

QUARK
That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard. Rule one-ninety.

GLORF (screen)
I know, "Hear all, trust nothing." But that's what they're saying.

QUARK
(shakes head)
Glorf, I dismembered Zek's corpse myself. I suggest you pay less attention to swamp tales and get on with filling my order.

GLORF (screen)
(shrug)
There's time for both. Until next time, Ambassador!

Grinning, Glorf signs off. Quark shakes his head in amazed disbelief, turns back to the room...

...and JUMPS to see Commander RO standing across the bar from him. Her arms are folded and her lips are pursed.

RO
Disaster survivors make the best customers?

QUARK
Just business banter, Commander. Don't want to upset the supply chain, do we? Now, what can I get for you - glass of *pooncheenee*?

RO
Let's go crazy - spring wine.

QUARK

Ooh! Party night. Coming right up.

As Quark sets to work making her drink, Ro takes a seat.

RO

So what do you think about that rumour?

QUARK

I think there's a disc of vacuum-dessicated Zek hanging on the wall of my quarters right now. And another one on your desk.

RO

Well, in my drawer. I tend not to keep pieces of dead body in plain sight if I can avoid it. I just think it's interesting that that's the story someone came up with.

Quark smiles as he hands her the glass of spring wine.

QUARK

Laren, trust me - there are very few people as thoroughly dead as the former Grand Nagus Zek.

CUT TO:

5 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - HALLWAY

ZEK throws back the hood of his cloak with glee.

ZEK

Ishka, my sweet!

ISHKA runs up to him, pulls him deeper into the house.

ISHKA

Zekkie! How many times have I said you can't go out on your own? It's not safe out there!

Behind, the huge and silent Hupyrian servant MAIHAR'DU closes the door against the rain - he is the one who went out to bring the borderline-senile elderly Ferengi home.

(NOTE: this is a small, unobtrusive door, the servants' entrance. Too risky to be seen coming in the front door.)

ZEK

But I wanted beetle snuff!

ISHKA

(more patient)

We have beetle snuff, Zekkie. I make certain the pantry is fully stocked every day. You only need to ask Maihar'du.

ZEK

I couldn't find him...

Ishka looks to Maihar'du, who can only shrug helplessly back at her - he does his best to keep the old man under control. Ishka sighs, knowing how difficult Zek can be.

ISHKA

Well, no harm done. I'll tell you what, why don't you go and enjoy a nice, warm mud bath?

ZEK

Will you come with me?

ISHKA

In a little while, yes. Go on with Maihar'du, now.

Zek allows his servant to lead him away. Ishka watches him go with worry, then turns to walk into...

6 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

Ishka enters this lavish and monstrously over-decorated room in the Ferengi royal palace, where ROM and LEETA wait anxiously on the couch, their 3-year-old half-Ferengi half-Bajoran daughter BENA cuddled up on Leeta's lap.

LEETA

Is he okay?

ISHKA

He's fine, doesn't even realise anything's wrong. But we can't keep going on like this.

ROM

I don't even know how he keeps getting out of the house.

ISHKA

He may be old and senile, but he's still the man who ran the entire Ferengi Alliance. He's wily, Rom.

LEETA

And the more he does it, the more people will inevitably end up seeing him, and these rumours will just keep growing and growing.

ROM

And the public will accuse me of lying to them - again.

ISHKA

Rom, stop worrying. The entire Alliance watched the Ceremony of Divestiture. These rumours are just so much tabloid white noise, no-one takes them seriously.

CUT TO:

7 **MONTAGE**

-- An image starts small and distant, then quickly ZOOMS in closer, "hitting" the screen with an audible SLAM. It is a low-res picture of a cloaked FIGURE, half-stepped out of a rain-soaked alley so that barely any face is visible.

VOICEOVER

(super dramatic)

Is. Zek. ALIVE ???!!!

-- A second image forcibly PUSHES the first off the screen sideways - another low-res screen cap of security footage from the supermarket. The same cloaked figure stands there holding his beetle snuff, completely unidentifiable.

VOICEOVER

People on the street say - YES !!!

-- A Ferengi MAN ON THE STREET, ordinary everyday citizen who has been stopped by a low-rent shock jock and a mic shoved in his face. But he is nevertheless unwavering in his certainty while the constant rain slaps his face:

MAN 1

It was definitely him. He was getting his ear-hair trimmed at Bork's Barbers, I'd know those ears anywhere.

-- Now a Ferengi WOMAN 1, nervous that she is actually being allowed to talk in public. The mic gets shoved right up to her mouth to catch her quiet, hesitant account:

WOMAN 1

Um... he works in my bank.

-- Ferengi WOMAN 2 is loud and effusive however, eager for the camera to hear every detail of her outrageous story:

WOMAN 2

He was always my favourite Nagus! You know he picked me up at Slirp's Cocktail Bar last night, and let me tell you, for an old guy, he sure knew how to make a lady's lobes tingle!

-- Joq the bickering businessman takes his turn, while behind him, Bindu tries to hide his face out of shame:

JOQ

Yep - buying beetle snuff just as bold as you please.

(beat)

I am getting paid for this, right?

-- A professional headshot of Zek from his former glory days as the Grand Nagus on the left side of the screen, with an image of QUARK posing beside the dead body taken from 12x11 "Death of a Salesman" on the right side. A big "rubber stamp" SLAMS down over the whole screen - **DEAD**

VOICEOVER

The mainstream media told you Zek
was DEAD !!!
(echoes)
...dead... dead... dead...

-- The official SEAL OF DISMEMBERMENT as created by Quark himself. Another "rubber stamp" SLAMS down over it - **FAKE**

VOICEOVER

Is it fake news? Is the former
Grand Nagus still ALIVE ???
(echoes)
...alive... alive... alive...

-- A four-way split screen of the four witnesses - the Ferengi Man, Woman 1, Woman 2, and Joq. Another "rubber stamp" SLAMS down over the whole thing - **INSANE**

VOICEOVER

Or have the ordinary people of
Ferenginar gone INSANE ???
(echoes)
...insane... insane... insane...
(beat)
We reveal the TRUTH tonight on...

-- Three words in big block letters SLAM onto the screen one by one, forming a LOGO, as the Voiceover reads it out in loud, hyper-dramatic tones:

VOICEOVER

THE. SEVENTH. RULE.
(tagline)
Our ears are always open.

-- One last Ferengi MAN 2, buck-toothed and goofy-looking, gazing gormlessly into the camera:

VOICEOVER

But first! This man says he knows
the real reason Zod resigned from
the Economic Congress of Advisors
- could it be... ALIENS ??? More
to come on The! Seventh! Rule!
(super-quick)
Sponsored by Plinkie Points, for
the plinkiest deals on Ferenginar.

CUT TO:

8 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

QUARK switches off the wall screen on which he was just watching this, and turns back to Ro with an exasperated chuckle and roll of eyes. How stupid are these people?

CUT TO:

9 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

ISHKA switches off the much grander screen in the Nagus's living room on which she had just been watching this, and turns back to Rom and Leeta with an expression of worry. This is only getting worse...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

10 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Focusing on the habitat ring...

11 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S QUARTERS

QUARK potters around his room, wearing his Ferengi pyjamas, getting ready for bed after a long day on his feet.

COMPUTER
Incoming subspace signal for
Ambassador Quark.

QUARK
Ugh - fine, accept.

Quark slumps to his computer console, presses the button, and the screen reveals SPODE (12x11 "Death of a Salesman"). The intrepid Ferengi reporter launches straight into it:

SPODE (screen)
Ambassador Quark! Spode, FCN.
You're on live for our viewers
across the Alliance.

QUARK
...I'm in my pyjamas.

SPODE (screen)
And very flattering pyjamas they
are, Ambassador. Now, what can
you tell us about the rumours of
Zek's miraculous survival?

QUARK
Oh, for the love of Gint. This?
Don't tell me FCN is taking this
nonsense seriously.

SPODE (screen)
Are you telling us you don't
believe the rumours?

QUARK

Of course I don't believe them!
They're ridiculous! You filmed
Zek's dead body yourselves.

SPODE (screen)

You performed the ceremony. But
what if the ceremony was faked?
That would place a big stain on
your reputation.

QUARK

An even bigger one on all the
businessmen - business people -
who bought a piece of him. Do you
really think I pulled a scam on
the entire Ferengi Alliance?

SPODE (screen)

We're just trying to get to the
truth, Ambassador.

QUARK

I'll show you the truth.

Quark gets up from the desk, disappearing off screen for a moment as Spode looks on with a fake toothy smile for his audience. Then Quark returns, carrying his MEMORIAL DISC of Zek's remains. He brandishes it at the screen...

QUARK (cont)

There - that's the truth. Zek's
vacuum desiccated remains. And see
this? The Seal of Dismemberment.

SPODE (screen)

(unflapped)

So as an important figure in the
Ferengi government, will you be
opening an investigation into
where these rumours came from?

QUARK

There's nothing to investigate.

SPODE (screen)
So you're telling our viewers you
refuse to support FCN's efforts to
uncover the truth - interesting.

QUARK
(facepalm)
What do you expect me to do?

SPODE (screen)
It's not my job to tell you how to
handle your business, Ambassador.
We just report the facts.

Quark glowers, backed into a corner...

12 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

RO strides down the Promenade, having been "summoned". On
her way, she encounters BASHIR emerging from the Infirmary.

BASHIR - any idea what this is about? RO - not a clue.

They continue together, entering...

13 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

...where EVIK sits behind the security desk, working, with
QUARK already in the guest seat, back in his day clothes.
Quark jumps to his feet all gentleman-like at Ro's arrival.
Bashir notices this and smirks.

QUARK
Laren...

EVIK
Thank you for coming, Commander.
I apologise for the late summons,
but the Ambassador insisted.

RO
What's going on, Quark?

QUARK
It's this Zek business.

BASHIR

What Zek business?

RO

(not taking it
seriously)

There are rumours he's been seen
alive on the Ferengi homeworld.

BASHIR

That's impossible.

QUARK

Thank you! But I just had a call
from FCN themselves wanting my
take on the story.

RO

What did you tell them?

QUARK

That it's impossible, obviously.
But they implied their coverage
would not be favourable if I
didn't look into it anyway.

BASHIR

What could they possibly say?

QUARK

That I defrauded everyone by
selling fake Zek instead of real
Zek. Do you realise what kind of
effect that could have on my
business portfolio?

EVIK

I've been checking through the
security records, Quark, and there
is a report from Constable Odo
that you were accused of exactly
that once before - a holography
entrepreneur named Plegg?

QUARK

That was never proven.

EVIK

(chuckle)

And the constable's vexation over that comes through loud and clear. But he remained suspicious...

QUARK

Oh please, they'll put that on his tombstone - "Here Lies Odo - He Remained Suspicious."

BASHIR

Can't argue with that. But I also remember questioning how come you wouldn't let me examine Zek's body before the ceremony.

QUARK

And I told you it's the Ferengi custom. You never interfere with the body before dismemberment - it risks lowering the asking price.

BASHIR

Very convenient...

RO

Now hold on a minute. We were all there, we all saw the body. It certainly looked like Zek to me. And don't forget this is all coming from the least respected news outlet on Ferenginar - which is saying something.

BASHIR

What, FCN?

QUARK

No - The Seventh Rule.

BASHIR / EVIK

(super-dramatic)

"Our ears are always open."

Bashir and Evik both laugh - this is clearly a well-known catchphrase that does not inspire respect or confidence.

QUARK

Stop laughing! This is serious -
it could ruin me.

RO

Alright, you two, settle down.
Quark, what d'you want us to do?

QUARK

Open an investigation, of course.
Prove me innocent.

Quark digs in his pocket and pulls out the Memorial Disc,
hands it to Bashir.

QUARK (cont)

Here - there should still be
enough DNA in this to confirm it
was his body, right?

BASHIR

In theory, yes.

QUARK

Okay then.

(to Evik)

Commander, you can check all the
records - death certificate, seal
of dismemberment, transport logs -
and prove it was all above board.

EVIK

Very well. But I'll need complete
access to your personal files.

QUARK

Fine, whatever you need.

EVIK

Of course, you realise that if I
do find evidence of fraud, I'll
have no choice but to pursue it
according to the law.

QUARK

Diplomatic immunity, remember?

RO

That only means we can't charge you under Federation or Bajoran law. We can still expel you and provide all the evidence to the Ferengi authorities. If it comes to it, Quark... you can't rely on our friendship to protect you.

QUARK

It won't come to that, Laren, because I'm innocent. And to prove it, I want you to come back to Ferenginar with me.

Oh Prophets, anything but that. Ro looks to Evik and Bashir - no sympathy from either. She looks to Quark - so earnest that she can't really say no. She sags in resignation.

RO

I only just dried out properly from the last time, but if you need me... then I guess I'm going to Ferenginar. Fantastic.

Off Ro's extreme displeasure at that prospect...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

14 EXT. SPACE - RUNABOUT

A runabout flies through space at warp...

15 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

QUARK picks up a fancy, colourful drink from the replicator at the back, and comes back to the front seats, where RO is driving the ship. She glances at the drink...

RO

A Samarian Sunset? A bit strong
for this time of the morning,
isn't it?

QUARK

I'll need fortification before I
meet my mother - and my brother.

RO

As long as you don't spill it on
the console.

QUARK

Won't last long enough for that.

Quark knocks back the entire drink in one, gasps as it goes down. Ro just shakes her head in amusement.

RO

Quark... why did you want me to
come with you for this? Surely a
Ferengi investigator would be more
appropriate than a Starfleet one.

QUARK

I trust you more. You uncovered
the conspiracy against Rom so the
Economic Congress will respect you
even though you're a female, and
you're a neutral party.

RO
I'm not that neutral, Quark...

QUARK
(firm)
Right now you are. No offence,
Laren, but at this moment I don't
want any preferential treatment
because of our relationship. I
want you to save my business.

RO
(quietly relieved)
I can do that. Assuming you are
actually innocent, of course.

He looks askance at her - she grins back.

RO
So let's start at the top. Why
would anyone start this rumour?

QUARK
To discredit me. What I don't get
is why anyone believes it.

RO
(shrug)
It happens sometimes. Some people
find it easier to believe in wild
conspiracy theories that their
hero is still out there than to
accept he died before his time.

QUARK
Before his time?! He was over a
hundred.

RO
It's a strange time, Quark. People
have just been through the most
devastating event of their lives.
They're looking for comfort.

Quark looks askance at Ro again - something about the way
she said that makes him curious.

QUARK

Are we talking about Ferengi...
or you?

(no reply)

I did notice you don't wear your
earring anymore. I assumed you'd
tell me why when you wanted to.

RO

(deep breath)

I've been thinking about some
things, yeah. Since the invasion.
Not sure I'm really ready to talk
about it yet.

QUARK

Okay. Well, if and when you are...

RO

Thanks, Quark.

They go back to watching the stars as they fly...

16 EXT. FERENGINAR - NAGAL RESIDENCE

A large, fanciful building that shines like gold in the
constant rain, as seen in 9x11 "Sale of the Century".

17 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - HALLWAY

In the background, half a dozen Ferengi SERVANTS rush about
straightening portraits, dusting knick-knacks, generally
bustling around preparing for their visitors. Meanwhile ROM
comes stumbling down the corridor, a-flap with worry.

ROM

They'll be here any minute!

LEETA takes hold of him, steadies him...

LEETA

Rom - calm down. Your mother's
settling him into the east wing
of the house right now.

ROM

Right, right... but what if Quark
and Ro go looking?

LEETA

It's a huge house. You've lived
here for years and you still get
lost. We'll be fine.

ISHKA enters from a side corridor, big and blowsy as ever.

ISHKA

She's right, Rom. Zekkie's got his
financial market updates and his
Marauder Mo serials, and Maihar'du
is keeping an eye on him.

Rom tries to believe her. A servant steps up and whispers
in Rom's ear...

ROM

Their car just pulled up.

Deep breaths all round, game faces on.

18 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - ENTRY HALL

The big round main front door opens, revealing Quark and Ro
shaking the rain off them. Ro ducks through the low door...

ROM

(nervous)

Brother! It's good to see you!

QUARK

All I can see is rain...

A servant quickly offers towels - they pat themselves down.

QUARK

That's better. Well, come on -
gimme the waivers and let's get
the formalities over with...

The servant takes the towels and hands them pads instead.
Ro and Quark thumb them and hand them back. Over this:

ROM
My house is my house...

QUARK
As are its contents, yeah yeah.

ISHKA
You're as cheerful as ever, Quark.

QUARK
Moogie - it's probably your fault
I'm here at all. I'm not quite
sure how yet, but give me time.

Ro rolls her eyes, steps forward...

RO
Grand Nagus Rom, Leeta, thank you
for taking us into your home.

LEETA
You're welcome, Commander. Come on
in and dry off.

They move into the house, Quark muttering, Rom glancing
around nervously...

19 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - BEDROOM

A FLUSH off-screen, and Maihar'du emerges from the bathroom
back into the bedroom. He stops, jaw drops in horror...

...the bed is empty, the TV still playing, the door open.
But Zek is nowhere to be seen. Oh no...

20 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - CORRIDOR

ZEK creeps down the corridor in his own pyjamas, GIGGLING
at the excitement of escape. He reaches an intersection,
peeks around it...

Rom, Leeta and Ishka are just guiding their guests through
another intersection further down. They don't see him.

Zek creeps on, giggling...

On ROM as he looks around nervously, just missing Zek...

ROM
You didn't bring Nog?

RO
That's my fault - sorry, Rom. The station's power distribution took a battering from all the refugees, and I needed him to focus on that.

ROM
(proudly)
My son, the chief engineer.

MAIHAR'DU runs down the corridor, hunting for Zek...

Back to Quark etc, none the wiser...

RO
What about Prinadora? I thought she came back with you...

ISHKA
I sent her out to look for new houses for me and Z- ... for me and her.

QUARK
I thought she could barely read?

ISHKA
Just because she's uneducated doesn't mean she's stupid, Quark. Give a female a chance, and she's just as capable as any male.

RO
Almost sounds like there's a lesson there. Eh, Quark?

Ishka chuckles. But then Maihar'du is there, worried and urgent. Ishka smoothly manoeuvres him out of sight so that Rom can lead the others on. Once they are out of earshot...

ISHKA
What, what is it?

Maihar'du gestures wildly, in a panic, trying to explain.

ISHKA
Wha - I... Show me.

21 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - BEDROOM

Maihar'du opens the door, to show Ishka the empty room. She realises the problem.

ISHKA
Oh, f-

22 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - CORRIDOR

Quark et al...

QUARK
That must be fun for you, Rom -
the current wife and the ex wife
under the same roof...?

LEETA
(pointed)
Prinadora and I get on perfectly
well. She's been helping me with
my charity work. Once I explained
what charity actually was, anyway.

ROM
(tight smile)
Yes. It's great. We're all one big
happy family, brother.

As they pass another intersection, Ishka and Maihar'du dash unseen across the next intersection down, both in a flap...

23 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - HALLWAY

Zek cackles his way towards the back door - freedom! But moments before he reaches it, Ishka and Maihar'du catch up, grab hold of him, pull him away.

ZEK

No, I wanna go outside!

ISHKA

You can't, Zekkie, you have to go back to your room. I'll take you out tomorrow.

ZEK

But I wanna go now, and I'm the Grand Nagus!

ISHKA

Maihar'du, take him back -

Too late - Rom, Leeta, Quark and Ro cross the corridor at another intersection further down.

MEEPing in fright, Ishka and Maihar'du quickly jump in front of Zek, Ishka pulling out her big dress as wide as it will go to hide him...

Rom glances their way, frowns...

Ishka smiles back, teeth showing in a desperate grin...

Then they've gone. Ishka sighs - got away with it, for now.

ISHKA

No way to get back to the east wing now without them seeing us. Follow me...

She leads on - Maihar'du drags the grumbling Zek along...

24 **INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - CORRIDOR**

Quark *et al*...

RO

I forgot how big this place is.

LEETA

Seems like you can walk forever down these corridors, doesn't it?

25 **INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - BEDROOM**

Rom and Leeta guide Quark and Ro into another bedroom.

ROM

This is one of our finest guest suites. I'm sure you'll be very comfortable here, brother.

QUARK

It'll do.

LEETA

(awkward question)

We weren't sure if you would be sharing a room...

QUARK

No, we're not.

RO

I'll stay here, then. Thank you.

QUARK

Fine. I preferred the room I stayed in last time anyway.

Quark heads back out into the corridor. Ro offers a wince of apology for Quark being such an ass...

RO

I'm sorry - he's just distracted by this Zek business.

Rom and Leeta both chuckle nervously - what ever could she be talking about?

26 **INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - CORRIDOR**

Ishka and Maihar'du SHOVE Zek into another room, and quickly SLAM the door, locking him inside. They both breathe a sigh of relief, then turn and MEEP...

...because Quark is striding down the corridor towards them, with Ro, Rom and Leeta in his wake.

QUARK

Where did you two get to?

ISHKA

Oh you know, just a problem with the kitchen. Nothing to worry about. How's your room?

QUARK

I want this one instead.

He points to the same door they just locked Zek behind. Ishka immediately moves to block it.

ISHKA

You can't go in there.

QUARK

Why not?

ISHKA

(winging it)

The sheets haven't been changed. Isn't that right, Rom?

ROM

Uh, I don't think so...

ISHKA

(grits teeth)

Yes, it is, Rom.

QUARK

Well I want that room anyway. It has a better view over the city.

Quark pushes past his mother, opens the door...

ISHKA

No, Quark, don't -

27 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - BEDROOM

...But the room is perfectly normal. Quark bustles in, none the wiser.

Unnoticed by the others, Ishka and Maihar'du share a look of confused horror - Zek is not in the room.

Quark moves to sniff the bedsheets...

QUARK

Hmm - these do smell a bit musty.
I guess that's why you left the
window open.

Realising with horror what must have happened, Ishka and Maihar'du run to the open window, while Quark sets up the room, and the others watch from the door.

QUARK

See? Told you - much better view.

Ishka and Maihar'du look out of the window at the view of the rainy city in the middle distance, the expansive swampy grounds between the house and there...

...and no sign of Zek.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

28 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

A SERVANT carries a tray of drinks into the room and passes them out to the four figures present.

RO - businesslike, here to work. QUARK - pacing the room.
LEETA - curled up comfortably. ROM - perched nervously.

RO

Thanks. I'm not sure I'd ever get used to having servants.

LEETA

It's no different to what I used to do in the bar. I presume you left Treir in charge?

QUARK

And if we don't figure out who's trying to frame me for fraud, she'll be running it permanently. Where did moogie vanish to again?

ROM

She's... ah... fixing a problem with the cellar damp-proofing.

QUARK

The kitchen, the bedsheets, the cellar - I thought that was why you had servants.

As Quark knocks back his drink, Rom smiles tensely...

29 INT. FERENGI SUPERMARKET

The door slams open and ISHKA dashes in, sodden from the unending rain...

ISHKA

Maihar'du! He's in here!

The huge silent manservant also dashes in, equally sodden.
The SHOPKEEPER yells...

SHOPKEEPER

You again! Don't you dare get my
floors wet!

ISHKA

(bigger things
to worry about)
Maihar'du, give him some money.

Maihar'du goes to the counter, pulls out a BAR of LATINUM
and hands it to the shopkeeper, who snatches it up fast.

Zek spots Ishka coming after him, and runs down the aisle,
cackling all the way. Ishka follows, Zek dodges - it's a
game of hide and seek around the supermarket aisles.

On Maihar'du and the shopkeeper as they HEAR the sounds of
Zek giggling and Ishka chasing him. Something SMASHES - the
shopkeeper glowers, Maihar'du sighs, hands him more money.

30 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

Handed another drink by a servant, Quark knocks it back.

RO

Quark, slow down.

QUARK

(spins on Rom)
Why aren't you more worried? Your
reputation will be ruined just as
much as mine.

ROM

I... I... I...

RO

Of course he's worried, Quark. But
turning on each other won't help.

LEETA

And keep your voice down - Bena's
in bed.

The servant dashes back in again, whispers in Rom's ear.

ROM
There's a call from DS-Nine.

Off Quark's dawning hope...

31 INT. FERENGI SUPERMARKET

Zek dashes between the supermarket aisles like he did the corridors in the house, too excited by the chase to spot...

...the PUDDLE of rainwater on the floor. He runs right into it and goes FLYING...

Maihar'du and the Shopkeeper cringe with every subsequent off-screen SMASH, CLANG, POP, OOF and WHIZZBANG...

The Shopkeeper holds out his hand - Maihar'du resignedly places another bar of latinum into it.

32 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

The screen shows BASHIR and EVIK in the security office on DS9, the Promenade behind them. Ro listens to the report.

EVIK (screen)
Good news, Commander. All the data records check out - there is no evidence of any attempt at fraud on the Ambassador's part.

BASHIR (screen)
The same for the memorial disc. It's hard to be a hundred percent because we're dealing with vacuum desiccated remains rather than a fresh body. But all indications are that that was definitely Zek in that stasis unit.

Unseen behind them, Leeta grips Rom's hand in comfort - see, told you it would be alright.

RO
Thank you both, that's great work.
Could you forward me your results?
In case I need to convince anyone.

EVIK (screen)
(works panels)
Of course, Commander, on their way
to you now.

A BEEP at Ro's end of the signal...

RO
Received. Thanks again - I'm sure
we'll be back on the station soon.

EVIK (screen)
Safe journey, Commander.

BASHIR (screen)
(waves)
Nice to see you, Leeta!

LEETA
(waves back)
You too, Julian! Bye!

And the signal drops. Ro turns to Quark...

RO
There - that must make you feel
better, surely?

ROM
Yes, definitely.

They all turn to Rom - she wasn't talking to him.

ROM
I think...?

33 INT. FERENGI SUPERMARKET

Zek sits on the supermarket floor, surrounded by smashed debris of bottles and jars, his rain-soaked pyjamas now also streaked with spillage. And he is CRYING.

Ishka steps closer, overcome with sadness and pity for him. She crouches down and sits beside him in the mess.

ISHKA

Are you okay?

ZEK

No! I hurt my leg, and I wanted beetle snuff, and you won't let me get it! You just keep locking me in rooms. It's not fair!

ISHKA

I know, Zekkie. I know. None of what's happened is fair. We were supposed to be living out our days in luxury and privacy, but those forever-frinxed Borg ruined it.

ZEK

I mean it's not fair that I used to be the Grand Nagus and people stared in awe wherever I went. Now they stare like I'm a monster.

ISHKA

You're not a monster, Zekkie. You're just... confused.

ZEK

Sometimes I look at you... and I can't even remember your name. Sometimes I know exactly who you are but I can't find you, and I get so worried that you're lost.

ISHKA

I'm never far away from you. If you can't remember anything else, remember that. I love you.

ZEK

I love you too, Ishka. See? I remembered your name.

ISHKA

Sure did. And I promise we'll go out together as often as you want once we find a new place to live.

ZEK

But I live here. That's my house.

ISHKA

Not anymore, Zek. I'm sorry.

Ishka gets to her feet, helps Zek up as well...

Maihar'du pulls out a full BRICK of latinum, doesn't hand it over yet. He points up into the corner of the store, at a security CAMERA. His intentions are clear.

The Shopkeeper sighs, goes to a machine, ejects the TAPE and hands it to Maihar'du, who nods and hands over the brick of latinum. The huge gentle manservant then CRUSHES the tape in his fist. The Shopkeeper GULPS.

Ishka leads the downcast and limping Zek back out into the unending rain. Maihar'du goes to follow them, but at the door, he turns back, dark and threatening...

...and does the "I'm watching you" gesture, fingers and eyes, then leaves. The Shopkeeper gulps again...

34 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

Quark CLINKS another refilled glass together with those of Ro, Rom and Leeta, and knocks it back - in celebration now.

QUARK

Proof that Zek really is dead.
If we give that to stupid FCN,
they'll have to leave me alone.
My business is saved!

LEETA

And Rom's Nagushood.

QUARK

Yeah, sure, that too.

RO
We'll contact them first thing in
the morning.

Messenger servant is back to whisper in Rom's ear again. He
looks terrified...

ROM
Um... I gotta go.

Rom dashes off screen...

QUARK
What was that about?

LEETA
Oh, I'm sure it's nothing.

QUARK
It's never nothing with Rom.

Quark heads out of the room...

LEETA
Quark, don't -

RO
Leeta... let him go.

Leeta looks back to Ro, strangely calm. Does she know?

35 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - HALLWAY

At the far end of the hallway, Rom is just helping Ishka
and Maihar'du to manhandle Zek in through the back door.

ISHKA
Quick, let's get back to the east
wing before they see us.

QUARK (o.s.)
Before we see what?

Rom and Ishka MEEP again, and quickly step in front of Zek
to block Quark's view. Quark eyes them suspiciously...

RO (o.s.)
Isn't it obvious, Quark?

Ro has followed him, with Leeta behind her. They can all see the same desperate cluster of people by the door...

RO
(continuing)
Before you see that Zek really is still alive after all.

QUARK
Are you drunk? You just got the proof that he's dead.

LEETA
Rom, sweetie - just let it go.
She already knows.

Rom, Ishka and Maihar'du look back and forth - should we? With a sigh they step aside...

...and reveal ZEK in his wet, stained pyjamas.

ZEK
Quark!

Quark gapes in amazement...

...then falls over backwards with a THUD.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

36 INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

Quark WINCES and YELPS as Leeta dabs a home-made remedy onto the BUMP on the back of his big bulging head. Ro sits watching with amusement, while Rom bites his nails.

LEETA

Oh stop whining, you big baby.
Bena made less of a fuss when she
skinned her knee.

QUARK

Was I hallucinating? Was it the
knock on the head?

RO

You're not hallucinating, Quark.
Zek really is alive.

ROM

How did you know?

RO

I'm sure you're a perfectly fine
Grand Nagus, Rom, but you are not
a good liar.

ROM

Sorry.

LEETA

I'm not.

QUARK

But how? I just saw Bashir tell us
it was his body. DNA doesn't lie.

RO

I'm assuming clone. The no autopsy
followed by the vacuum desiccation
are perfect for hiding any tell-
tale signs, just like Bashir said.

QUARK

No. I refuse to believe my idiot brother is capable of anything that... devious.

ISHKA entering...

ISHKA

Quark! Be nice to your brother.

QUARK

Oh, of course, it was all your idea. I should have known.

RO

Is Zek okay?

ISHKA

He's fine, thank you for asking Commander. Maihar'du is putting him back to bed. Good job figuring it out, by the way. You were bang on the money - it was a clone.

RO

...Which you paid to have created before leaving Risa, so all the transport records were genuine.

ISHKA

And then we retired to an isolated chateau so no-one would ever know.

(to Quark)

And lay off your brother, he had no idea until I landed back here.

QUARK

Yeah, that I believe. But why?

ISHKA

I just told you. So that Rom would be the only Nagus around, so that Leeta could have the money to run her women's rights charities, and so that we could retire in peace.

Quark stands, starts pacing and flailing again.

QUARK

Well, that's it then. We're all frinxed. As soon as this gets out, every one of us will be ruined. We'll never work again. We'll be lucky to get hired cleaning waste extraction pipes with our tongues.

LEETA

Thank you for that mental image...

RO

You're not seriously suggesting admitting to any of this?

QUARK

FCN are on the case, Laren!

RO

So? If you let them know that the former Grand Nagus's consort - a female - pulled off a scam on the entire Ferengi Alliance, you'd be effectively overthrowing the most stable government in the Alpha Quadrant right now. As a Starfleet officer I can't let you do that.

LEETA

Not to mention we'd probably have to give all the money back, and that would bankrupt the charity.

ROM

And I don't wanna go back to waste extraction...

ISHKA

Exactly. Quark, you cannot let them know. Promise me, Quark!

Off Quark seething at all this...

37 **EXT. NAGAL RESIDENCE**

Quark, Ro and Rom now stand just outside the grand front door to the Nagal Residence, sheltering under the porch overhang while a gaggle of REPORTERS stand in the rain...

QUARK

I am Ambassador Quark, official representative of the Ferengi government to the world of Bajor, and brother of Grand Nagus Rom.

Rom waves half-heartedly at the reporters.

ROM

Hi.

QUARK

I have been asked to comment on the ridiculous rumours that my brother's predecessor, Zek, is still alive, despite millions of people watching his Ceremony of Divestiture from my Embassy.

Ro takes a deep breath, worried how this will go...

QUARK

I can now conclusively confirm that the rumours... are false!

Reporters buzz among themselves; Ro sighs relieved.

QUARK

This is Commander Ro Laren of Starfleet. Commander?

RO

(holds up chip)

On this chip is proof that Zek's body was brought from Risa to Bajor, laid unmolested according to Ferengi tradition, and was desiccated in the Embassy by the Ambassador. I will be passing this proof on to all news outlets soon.

SPODE

How much did he bribe you?

QUARK

The Federation is a moneyless economy, Spode. The commander cannot be bribed.

SPODE

If the female doesn't take money, why should we believe her? How good can she be?

QUARK

Ro Laren is an investigator with decades of experience and a legal obligation to remain neutral in the affairs of other worlds. She is more trustworthy than any investigator on this planet.

(Ro smiles,
flattered)

Now that this nonsense is put to bed, I have nothing more to say.

Quark and Ro turn away back to the house, but the reporters clamour for more...

SPODE

Grand Nagus! Do you have any comment on the Ferengi people wanting Zek back?

Quark worries how Rom will mess this up, but...

ROM

Zek was a great Nagus. But all you people insisting that Zek is still alive are insulting my mother, who is still mourning his death. You never insult a Ferengi's mother.

(beat)

Oh, and uhh... buy Glorf's Nuts, and stay in school, and uhh...

Go Acquisitors!

All three turn back and enter the house, leaving the reporters to squabble on the doorstep.

38 **INT. NAGAL RESIDENCE - HALLWAY**

Inside, out of sight of the reporters, Ishka and Zek wait with Leeta and Maihar'du. Ishka nuzzles Rom's nose...

ISHKA

Rom, that was a very sweet thing you said. Thank you.

QUARK

Well, I suppose having all of this to deal with does explain you not approving my diplomatic expenses. Explain, but not excuse.

ZEK

Ha! I always knew you were my favourite son, Quark.

Just skimming over the awkwardness of that...

LEETA

What are you going to do now?

RO

(hands her chip)

Can I trust you to get this out to the press?

LEETA

Of course.

RO

Then we'll get back to DS-Nine and get out of your hair.

She's talking to Ferengi, looks away rather than comment.

ISHKA

And I'll make sure we find a new house out of the way so Zek can wander to his heart's content.

ROM

So it's over? We're safe?

QUARK

You're safe, Rom. Laren and I have once again saved all of Ferengi civilisation as we know it.

ROM

Okay, good. Just checking. Thanks.

They chuckle, and exchange hugs of goodbye.

QUARK

Moogie... I gotta say, I'm proud and impressed. You pulled off one hell of a scam.

ISHKA

Yes I did. I fooled you, I fooled Rom -

QUARK

That's hardly difficult.

ISHKA

- and I fooled the entire Ferengi Alliance.

RO

Truly a consort fit for a Nagus.

Ishka nods her thanks for the compliment. Quark turns to Zek, stands gazing at him in wonder for a moment.

QUARK

It's a miracle. The Nagus is back.

ISHKA

Quark!

QUARK

I'm going, I'm going...

Quark and Ro turn towards the front door, it OPENS...

...and dozens of LIGHTS and cameras are in their faces. They immediately retreat, letting the door close again.

RO
Back door?

QUARK
Back door.

The party head back into the house...

39 EXT. SPACE - RUNABOUT

The runabout is warping back the way it came...

40 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Quark sits in the passenger seat, pondering, while Ro flies the ship. Eventually he says what's on his mind...

QUARK
Laren... why did you lie to the press about what you knew?

RO
What kind of question is that? To protect you, obviously.

QUARK
I said I didn't want you to protect me.

RO
Okay then, I was protecting your business. If Rom goes under, you go under with him.

QUARK
But... you said people need to believe in Zek... in something. Haven't you just taken that away?

RO
I don't think so. If I know my conspiracy theorists, any evidence

that goes against their theory
will just be "proof" that there's
a conspiracy to hide the truth.

QUARK

So only crazy conspiracy theorists
need something to believe in? That
sounds like Old Ro, not New Ro.

RO

No, that's not what I'm saying.
I'm saying that for the people who
like hard facts, they have the DNA
results to prove Zek is dead. And
for the ones who work on faith...
well, they still get to believe.

QUARK

...He's still out there.

Quark smiles out to the stars...

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW