

Firefly 201 + script bible

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Author's notes:

The act of creating art is something I hold sacred, and I have no interest in shitting on someone else's work, especially someone I respect as much as Joss Whedon. The following spec script for "Firefly season 2" is the only work of fan fiction I've ever written, and I wouldn't be surprised if it's the only one I ever write. I only wrote it because I had a waking dream that provided a neat way to tie up several loose ends from the series/movie as well as a way to bring Wash back that performs a critical plot function and isn't just fan-service.

This was written with longer-format episodes in mind. The crazy idea I had was that Firefly would be the ideal property with which to trial a kind of in-cinema, once-a-month mini-movie format which would promote the community of fans gathering at cinemas and allow studios to recoup the costs of shooting more expensive "TV" shows – much the same way that iMAX cinemas sold out for showings of Game of Thrones episodes. The idea was a second season of 8x 80-90 minute minimovies of Firefly, shot in a LOTR style shoot and released once a month over a single calendar year. This idea is in no way necessary for this script to work, but it perhaps goes some way to explain the length of this script.

What you'll notice is that I've erred on the side of changing things considerably from the first season/movie, separating the crew and mothballing Serenity for reasons to be explained: I don't think it's plausible that we could come back to the crew 10+ years later and have it be exactly the same. I've chosen 10 years, and followed on from the idea that Zoe was pregnant with Wash's daughter (now 9) at the time of the Serenity movie. I've also given Simon and Kaylee a 5-year-old son – the two kids are essentially siblings in their extended family on board a new ship called "Reverie". I also make use of a couple of tangential elements mentioned in season 1, but whose significance becomes more important in this season (specifically the Lasseter laser pistol mentioned in "Trash", and the "synchroniser" cylinder used by Kaylee to build a shuttle in "Ariel").

The one assumption I've made which I believe is different from Joss' intention (but which I do not think conflicts with what was actually shown in the series/movie) is to suppose that Blue Sun Corporation (BSC) and the School of Parliamentary Operatives (SPO) were separate and competing elite institutions within the Alliance government. River's abilities resulted from an experiment by SPO to replicate the psychic abilities of BSC agents. Chiwetel Ejiofor played an operative of SPO sent to retrieve/kill her. Christina Hendricks played an ex-SPO operative in training who dropped out when she became disillusioned with the way the school was experimenting on new recruits such as River. The "Two by two, hands of blue" BSC agents wanted to capture River so they could reverse-engineer the process.

If nothing else, I hope you enjoy the way this episode plays out. More explanation follows after the script.

Firefly season 2 "Hands of Blue"

Episode 201 + Script bible

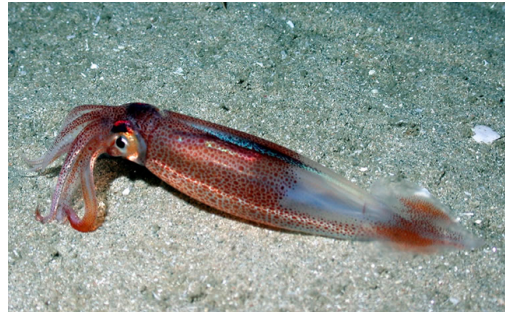
By fan Michael Le Page

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Season 2 Pilot: "Leaves in the Wind"

Opening (Act 1)

External: the Reverie flies above Ariel, ready to enter atmo. [musical cue is still western with Chinese influences, but different to Serenity - perhaps fiddle and marimba]. It is a small & flat elongated ship, vaguely resembling a short-legged squid. It is a single deck passenger craft with only minimal cargo space. In general it is cleaner/slicker than Serenity, but also feels more cramped (exactly what Zoe might buy on a smaller budget). Attached to one of the Reverie's two docking hatchways (positioned towards the rear at the "squid's eyes"), one of Serenity's shuttles can be seen. The other hatchway (which is either on the left or right side of the ship) is the entry and exit point used for all scenes with the Reverie in the background. The engine is located rear to the hatchways, with the squid "legs" coiling around the engine core.



Internal: Zoe pilots Reverie from a single console in a small cockpit in the nose of the ship. Cut to Kaylee, Simon and passengers sitting around the a breakfast bar/table in Reverie's common area:

Zoe: "Good morning everyone. We are now on final approach to Ariel City spaceport and will be arriving in 15 minutes. The weather in the city today is warm, cloudy with a chance of rain later in the evening. For those of you who have arranged further transportation once we land, they have been notified and will be waiting for you at the transfer building."

Zoe: "We hope you enjoyed your stay aboard the Reverie, and on behalf of Janice, Rigg and myself, Carla Kole, I'd like to thank you for flying with us. I'll see you on the ground."

Zoe switches off the com briskly and concentrates on the landing. Pan from Zoe to a small alcove behind her, where a ~9yo girl (Wash and Zoe's daughter Sivara) and ~5yo boy (Simon and Kaylee's son Breen) sit play with toy dinosaurs.

External: Groundside. Simon and Kaylee see off the four groups of passengers cheerfully as they wheel their luggage out one of the air locks. Zoe and Sivara watch from the background as an elderly couple, then a tattooed man and a Shepherd leave the ship. Special focus is placed on three young chinese adults; two women and a man, as they walk down the ramp. The father of the last group, a family of five, is seen thanking Simon for his help healing a cut on the shin of one of their boys. Simon demurs, but kneels to look at his work.

Simon: "That's healing nicely. You'll be fine. Maybe this will teach you to not to play on engine parts?"

The boy nods meekly before running recklessly out the lock. The father sighs before thanking Simon once more and leading the rest of their family out the airlock, carrying their luggage. After they have left, Zoe comes to the doorway with Sivara. Zoe wears a small backpack.

Zoe hands Sivara off to Simon, who crouches down to hold her at her level with a smile. Kaylee is more serious, bittersweet.

Kaylee: "We're all set, Captain... You really think Serenity's here?"

Zoe: "River says she's here. You two remember what you promised me?"

Kaylee: "Yeah."

Kaylee nearly leaves it at that, but then she looks down at Sivara and can't stay quiet.

Kaylee: "I don't like it Zoe"

Zoe: "You don't have to like it. If anything River told me was wrong, then I need you both to take care of Sivara for a while..."

Zoe: "You two have each other. You have Breen. You can go back to Persephone pick up some more passengers and get back on our route. You can go to ground if you need to, and you'll always have work. Just stay clear."

Sivara: "Mom, are you going away again?"

Zoe crouches down, but talks to her as an adult: "not if I can help it sweetie. And even if I do it will just be like that time on Greenleaf. That was fun wasn't it?"

Sivara: "Yeah I guess."

Simon (faux offended): "You guess?" He pokes her in the stomach and she giggles. "Come on... We had lots of fun, didn't we? Do I have to remind you about..."

Simon (in a voice): "...MASTER REYNOLDS and the ALLIANCE of SPACE MONSTERS?"

Sivara smiles again, clearly comfortable with Simon.

Simon (more seriously to Zoe): "Are you sure River didn't say anything else? How she is...? Where she is...?"

Zoe: "No, Simon. She never does."

After a meaningful glance at the adults and a kiss on Sivara's head, Zoe exits without another word.

Act 1, Scene 2.

External: Zoe walks alone through a crowded marketplace, purposefully avoiding the hawkers who yell at her. When she gets to the outskirts of the stalls, she slips down a small alleyway and pulls out an ID card, inserting it into a reader by a doorway. When it accepts her, she speaks softly as she opens the door.

Zoe: "Okay Kaylee, I'm in. I'll see you on the other side."

Kaylee sits in the pilot chair of the *Reverie*, with Simon beside her.

Kaylee: "Good luck"

The com channel has turned to static as the door shuts behind Zoe.

Zoe walks through corridors, stopping occasionally to check a map as she moves forward, avoiding the occasional guard as she does.

Eventually she walks through a door that opens out into a vast warehouse: hundreds of small, medium, and large ships are parked nearly in rows, each one bracketed by large electromagnetic nets. The air hums with the sound.

Zoe walks amongst the ships, eyes searching. She's about to walk to the next row when she sees it. There, three rows over and a couple ships across, she can see *Serenity's* neck and cockpit poking up over its neighbours. [cue *Serenity's* thematic guitar chords/fiddle]

She glances around to see that she is alone, then beelines for *Serenity*.

[flashback: "6 years previous"]

Internal: the kitchen of *Serenity*. Mal and Jayne are arguing while Zoe, Inara and a pregnant Kaylee stand tensely. Simon walks into the room, defeated, holding a note.

Mal (to Simon): "where *is* she? We need to go!"

Simon hands him the note.

Simon: "River's gone. I found this."

Mal (reading quickly - soon voiced over by River): "Ge ge. I'm leaving, but you shouldn't worry. Because of you I am healthy. Because of you I now see what I need to do. You have Kaylee, and I have a path I must take. Tell the others goodbye, and I'll miss them. We will all be together again."

Jayne: "Great. Well that's just shiny. Can we go now?"

Simon (worried): "How can we know she wasn't under duress when she wrote that?"

Mal leads the rest of the crew in looking at Simon incredulously: "I don't know of a duress in the 'verse big enough to cover your [chinese insult] sister. She's a big girl now Doc. She'll be fine, and we will never find her on this moon if she don't want to be found. We've got a job to do. Zoe get us out of here."

Zoe: "Sir" and exits to cockpit.

Mal: "Kaylee and Simon, you double-check you have what you need in the spare shuttle by the time we hit atmo on Blackwood. You're going to be there over a week while Jayne and I do the run, and I don't want Zoe buying supplies she normally wouldn't. Got it?"

They nod as Mal hands River's note back to Simon. Mal turns to follow Zoe to the cockpit, but Inara stops him.

Inara: "Mal."

Mal stops her before she says anything more. "We are not having this conversation."

Inara: "Well when else do we have it Mal? You didn't ask me back to Serenity just to stay silent when you're being a [chinese insult]. This job is crossing a line, even for you."

Mal (exasperated/sarcastic): "it's just a job. And you even get nine days on Blackwood. Have some fun at party for me, don't hit anyone."

Inara: "It's gun running Mal, for people who call themselves Browncoats. If the Alliance traces it back to you they'll come after you with everything they've got."

Mal: "...which is why I'm leaving my ship transponder, my first mate, her kid, my doctor, my pregnant mechanic and a very fancy ship whore behind as an alibi. As far as anyone is concerned, Serenity never leaves Blackwood. This conversation is over."

He exits in the direction of the cockpit, leaving Inara fuming.

Kaylee places her hands on Inara and Simon's backs comfortingly.

Kaylee (somehow cheerful): "He sure do have a way with words, don't he?"

They both look at Kaylee, then walk away in opposite directions cursing in Chinese. Kaylee sighs.

[end flashback]

Zoe walks around the side of Serenity quietly, finding a hidden panel and opening it. Dust floats away in the light as she places a small transponder inside. She walks further around the perimeter, and places another transponder in another hidden compartment. For a moment she touches the hull and looks up at the ship fondly, then turns and walks away amongst the other ships.

From the camera angle it is clear she has walked most of the way across the warehouse when she hears something that makes her nervous, ducking behind the pillar of another ship. Checking that the coast is clear, she starts moving again (cue edgy music, and camera angles that suggest she is being watched).

Zoe now feels she is being followed. She checks her map again, then spots her exit door in the distance between two ships.

Wash: "Zoe"

She turns to face the voice, and her face instantly turns to horror and confusion, with not a shred of warmth.

Zoe: "You..."

Wash steps out from behind the ship, his hands clasped behind his back. He is dressed unusually with a high, stiff collar and formal suit, and his face and voice, while expressive, are distinctly odd.

Wash: "Honey, it's me."

Zoe's mouth moves wordlessly.

Wash: "Do I get to get to meet our child?"

Zoe's look of revulsion turns to anger and fear.

Zoe (yelling): "*You are not Wash!*"

Then she turns and runs for the door like her life depends on it. Another figure steps up beside Wash casually.

BSC Agent: "Don't worry Wash. You'll get her back eventually."

Wash turns to the other Blue Sun agent and slaps a blue-gloved hand on the agent's back. He smiles at his partner.

Wash: "I know."

Camera angle on his other hand as he brings a Blue Sun wand into view.

Wash: "Shall we?"

The two set into a fast walk, following after Zoe.

Back with Zoe, she runs through a maze of corridors, and up stairs, somehow only managing to stay a little ahead of the Blue Sun agents. She repeatedly finds doors locked in front of her, her access card no longer working. Keeping moving, she eventually finds herself at a dead end in a long corridor with another locked door in front of her.

She turns to see Wash enter the end of the corridor, and quickly hides behind a bulkhead. The look on her face says her normally cool demeanour is in danger of cracking.

Zoe (a prayer): "River, if you're watching I could really use a hand right now."

In answer, the door clicks in front of her.

She pushes through to find herself in a corridor looking out windows on the side of a building. A first, then a second and a third door unlock in front of her, and suddenly she finds she's outside on a landing pad, but with no ship present and no other exit visible.

She runs to the middle of the pad, looking up into the sky for a ship, then down over the edge of the building, but the fall is impossibly far and there is no help in sight. She has no idea what to do.

The lights on a neighbouring residential tower short out noisily and come on again with a thrum, drawing Zoe's attention to one of its balconies; An unadorned concrete ledge on the level below her is empty and inviting, but the yawning gap between the landing pad she's standing on and the balcony seems impossibly far.

Zoe: "River... no... I can't make that."

The door behind her clicks open and the two Blue Sun agents come out onto the pad. Zoe has no other choice.

She runs towards the edge of the pad at a sprint, yelling as she does, and makes the jump across the precipitous gap. The camera watches her running through the air for a moment before she lands on the balcony and rolls back up to standing roughly. Before she goes inside she looks back to see Wash at the edge of the platform looking wistfully after her.

She forces herself away from the sight and into the building. She has escaped, for now.

[main title – I can only assume someone offered to fully orchestrate the Firefly ballad as a orchestral fanfare for the Serenity film, and it was decided not to use it because of tone, but I think having the theme as a full brass fanfare would properly express the level of triumph that the fans would feel with getting season 2]

Act 2, Scene 1

Internal: An artificially lit prison cell. A figure lying on a bed is clad in an orange jumpsuit. Grunting and puffing sounds are emanating from somewhere nearby. Mal rolls over on his bed, toward the camera, with bleary-eyed annoyance.

Mal: "Jayne!"

Dolly to Jayne (also in an orange jumpsuit) in a neighbouring cell, doing push ups.

Jayne: "Yeah!"

Mal: "What time is it?"

Jayne: "No. Eye. Dear. Mal."

He finishes the set and rolls onto his back to do sit-ups.

Jayne: "Did I wake you?"

Mal (clearly lying): "No no."

He sits up wearily.

Mal: "I just thought it might be breakfast sometime soon."

Jayne (perking up): "Yeah? Well, I sure could do me some hash browns. You like hash browns don't you Mal?"

Mal (deadpanning): "Sure... And I'd like them flown to me on the backs of Selenian swans. Under a summer moon. With pepper."

Jayne: "Well don't get too fancy Mal. The Alliance ain't exactly room service."

Mal (resigned) "No, they ain't."

Jayne (sitting up): "You know Mal, what does it say that I'm eating better in an Alliance jail than I ever did on your ship?"

Mal: "It says you're in an Alliance jail."

Jayne (proud): "Yeah, but I didn't have to be. "

Mal concedes the point: "No, you didn't."

Jayne: "Well now. Just count yourself lucky it worked out that way."

Mal: "How is it you figure that?"

Jayne: "This way, you've got the three of us for company."

Mal looks in Jayne's direction, question on his face without needing to say anything.

Jayne: "You've got me. Number 1..."

He kisses one bicep.

"And number 2."

He kisses the other bicep. Mal rolls his eyes and is about to lie back down when a loud buzz sounds and the gates open. Guards walk in to stand at the doorways to their cells.

Alliance captain: "Malcolm Reynolds and Jayne Cobb. You are being transferred to the cruiser Unity under executive order L215."

Mal and Jayne stand up and place their hands on their heads so the guards can cuff their wrists and place shackles around their ankles. It is clearly a routine they are used to. They are then escorted out of their cells.

Mal speaks as he shuffles towards the captain

Mal: "Executive order huh? Been getting those for a while now, haven't we?"

The captain is a study in not reacting, so Mal pauses to trash talk him.

Mal: "You know what's funny? We're the ones in chains, but you're the one on the leash."

Captain (gruff): "Keep them moving."

Mal is shoved in the back, but gets one more line in.

Mal (mocking): "Which is it this time? An operative of the parliament, or the Blue Sun fun?"

The captain restrains himself from saying anything.

Jayne follows behind, nearly saying nothing but wanting to get his own dig in.

Jayne: "I bet you don't even *have* hash browns."

The consternation of the captain turns to confusion.

Act 2, Scene 2

External. Dawn campfire in forested mountain area. Two figures sit by it, eating.

Close up on a hash brown being cut on a plate. Whoever is cutting it doesn't seem to notice when the knife is all the way through. A voice that is initially blurry gradually becomes distinct.

Companion: "Inara!"

Inara looks up from her plate surprised. She is a picture of grace as always, but clearly dressed for practicality on a hiking trip rather than clients. She makes a visible effort to bring herself back into the present: "Yes Sue-Lynn?"

Sue-Lynn: "You were somewhere in this 'verse I think, but it was a long way away."

Inara smiles at her hiking partner: "Would you like to come with me next time?"

Sue-Lynn (faux-noncommittal): "Depends. Would I be scared?"

Inara laughs: "Probably. But I don't know why. You're the mountain climber."

Sue-Lynn smiles and shrugs: "Mountains don't shoot back at me."

Inara: "There is that."

Inara (darkly): "They also don't try to eat you alive."

Sue-Lynn (does not miss a beat): "You haven't met those mountains yet. Give me another year, I'll have you climbing those monsters too."

Inara laughs again: "you can try."

They conversation pauses naturally while they both eat.

Sue-Lynn: "So. Are you going to give me another year? Or are you going to take Osiri prince up on his offer?"

Inara: "Oh you heard about the offer... Surely you know me better than that?"

Sue-Lynn: "There was talk. And yes I do. So you're still waiting for your jailbird to get out?"

Inara turns somber. "Maybe."

Inara (bright again, but fake): "Or maybe I'll keep coming out with you forever. Tell me about the climb today."

Sue-Lynn lets it go. She sets up projection of a 3D holograph of the mountain and begins.

Sue-Lynn: "we start up the western ridge here, until we reach this escarpment..."

House Priestess walks out from between the trees.

HP (interrupting): "Inara."

Inara and Sue-Lynn rise quickly to their feet. "House Priestess."

HP acknowledges Sue-Lynn briefly before speaking.

HP: "I'm sorry for intruding on your personal time..."

Inara: "If this is about the prince."

HP: "No. I already know about that. We have another benefactor who has requested you by name."

Inara (confused): "Okay. But surely you did not come out here just to tell me that? Did you send the profile to my shuttle?"

HP: "There is no profile for him Inara, and you won't be going to him in your shuttle. I need you to come with me right now."

Inara (respectful but incredulous): "Now?"

HP: "Yes. You will also be forbidden from speaking about this meeting."

She gives a pointed look at Sue-Lynn

HP: "...to anyone."

Inara: "this is... very unusual."

HP: "He is... a very unusual man."

Inara: "And if I refuse?"

HP (strained): "I know this is sudden, and I cannot force you to go, but please know there is much riding on this. He is not... an unkind client. When you meet him you will understand the need for secrecy."

Inara glances at Sue-Lynn with uncertainty.

Sue-Lynn: "I'll pack up here. We can come back and do this climb when you're finished. I'll take good care of your shuttle."

Inara: "Thank you Sue-Lynn. I'll see you soon."

She walks with the HP back to a shuttle perched on the side of a cliff.

Act 2, Scene 3

External, the Reverie remains in the spaceport. Zoe checks the surrounding area before making the last dash to the airlock. She still looks rattled. Simon meets her at the doorway as she flies past him. They move through the central eating area to the cockpit as they talk.

Simon: "Zoe! You're late."

Zoe (retorts): "you're still here."

Simon: "Kaylee wanted to give you another hour."

Zoe: "An hour too long. They know we're here."

Zoe (yelling): "Kaylee, are we good to go?"

Kaylee jumps out of the pilot seat as Zoe comes in.

Kaylee: "All yours captain."

Zoe: "Get in the engine room. We may need to run."

Zoe flips switches as Kaylee leaves. [Audio of the craft powering up].

Zoe: "Simon, are Sivara and Breen okay?"

Simon looks in on the children playing with a video game on his way past the crew quarters (attached to the cockpit). Easter egg for viewers: a panel off to one side shows a floor plan of the Reverie, indicating where people are - 6 blips on the panel show that one of the passenger quarters (off the main eating area) is occupied, but he doesn't notice since he's looking out the windows for anyone outside.

Simon: "We're all here."

Zoe: "Good. We're leaving."

External as Reverie lifts off from the pad and soars skywards. Simon is looking at radar panels. Kaylee is inside the engine room (a smaller, cleaner version of Serenity's).

Zoe: "Simon, I don't see anything following. Tell me I'm not wrong."

Simon: "No, nothing to be seen."

He navigates his control panel with ease. Zoe has clearly taught him a thing or two in the intervening years. At this point he notices the extra blip on the panel.

Simon: "Wait..."

Zoe: "Talk to me."

Simon runs up and sticks his head into the cockpit.

Simon (quietly): "Stowaway in passenger room 6."

She gets up immediately.

Zoe: "The ship is yours. Let me know if anything appears."

Simon slides into the chair with ease that indicates he has done this many times before. (No such thing as a three-person crew without everyone knowing a bit of everything).

Zoe (over intercom): "Kaylee, we have a Saffron."

They both arrive in the central eating area from opposite directions, holding guns. Kaylee doesn't look exactly happy with a gun in her hand, but definitely has a much larger sense of proficiency than when last we saw her. Zoe has obviously been drilling both of them.

Zoe takes the lead in bursting into the passenger room. The young Chinese man who was with two sisters previously on the ship is alone in the room. He holds up his hands timidly and backs up against the wall.

Jason: "Please... Don't take me back."

Zoe looks back at Kaylee when it is obvious this man is no threat.

Jason: "I can't go back to the family! Don't make me, please."

Act 3, Scene 1

Internal: A Spaceport. Inara and the House Priestess are walking towards an airport-like gate from which passengers are embarking onto a large cruise ship.

House Priestess: "Inara, let me say again how grateful the house is to you for doing this. I do hope you will enjoy yourself as well."

Inara (shrugs and smiles): “Well if nothing else this will be a first for me. I’ve never been to Yunnan.”

HP (surprised): “Truly? I thought you were born on Sihnon...”

Inara: “I was, and I’ve been to the other three moons as well, but none of my clients were ever exclusive enough for Yunnan. This will give me the set.”

HP (laughs): “In that case, I won’t delay you any longer. You know the schedules these cruise ships keep.”

Inara (also laughs): “Indeed.”

They arrive at the gate, and HP hands Inara a communication device.

HP: “I can’t be certain this will work everywhere, but if you trigger this, we should be able to get to you within a day.”

She holds Inara’s hand as she takes it.

HP: “Do take care Inara. My experience was quite pleasant, but there are... stories.”

Inara (smiling): “I always take care. Send my regards to Sue-Lynn.”

They embrace. Inara then walks through the gate and onto the ship.

Act 3, Scene 2

Internal. Sitting around Reverie’s common area. Jason is sitting with his hands on his lap, still defensive but slightly more relaxed now that Zoe’s gun is sitting on her lap rather than pointing at him. Kaylee and Simon are standing beside her.

Zoe (polite but firm): “On the manifest you said your name was... Jint Tenner?”

Jason: “You said your name was Carla Kole. People lie don’t they?”

Zoe: “I’m asking the questions.”

Jason: “I told you earlier, my real name is Jason, I have no reason to lie.”

His eyes drift to Kaylee, then Simon, searching for an ally. Finding nothing positive, his expression turns to resignation.

Jason: “Look I don’t care where you’re going, but please don’t send me back. I won’t be trouble.”

Zoe: “It’s a big ‘verse out there. You might not want to go where we’re going.”

Jason: “It can’t be any worse than where I was headed.”

Kaylee: “Really?”

She pauses as the others look at her.

Kaylee: “But your sisters seemed to care so much about you.”

Jason (coughs dismissively): “my *cousins* just want some more influence in the family. That’s why they volunteered to come after me.”

He looks away in space, apparently coming to a decision.

Jason: “Look, I really need to disappear for a while, and it sounds to me like you do too... I could work for you... pay my way.”

Zoe, Simon and Kaylee exchange a meaningful look. They have evidently talked about taking on a fourth crewmember before. Finally Simon speaks.

Simon: “What can you do?”

Jason looks about the room gesturing.

Jason: “Oh, I’m pretty handy with lots of things.”

He pauses, looking around the room, and trying to think of something convincing.

Jason: “But what I’m really good at is studying people.”

Zoe: “You ‘study’ people...?”

Jason (looks at Simon pointedly): “Well maybe Simon...” he pauses to check, “It was Simon, wasn’t it?”

Jason (continues when Simon nods): “Maybe Simon, being a core-world fugitive himself, he would have heard of the Tao Simonyi Institute. That’s where I studied.”

Simon is immediately suspicious but tries to stay nonchalant

Simon: “What makes you think I’m from the core worlds?”

Jason takes on the tone of a congenial professor

Jason: “It’s still quite obvious Simon. The way you moved through procedure when that boy cut his leg? If you didn’t study at a core world medical school, I’ll eat my [chinese: excrement]. More to the point, you grew up on Osiris... I’d guess somewhere in the Xiao’sha district.”

Simon’s suspicion becomes edged with confusion

Simon: “How could you possibly know that? I left Osiris over ten years ago. You must have seen my Alliance profile.”

Jason holds up his hands in protest

Jason: “No, no. Please believe me, I didn’t even know your real names until I overheard you before. I say you’re obviously from Osiris because of the way you held your bowl when we were eating [chinese: food names], and mostly it’s only people from the gated Xiao’lan communities that mix a Heinlein cocktail the way you did the first night we left Persephone.”

Jason doesn’t get any further reaction from Simon so he moves onto Kaylee

Jason: “So Simon might have a file but Kaylee...?” (pauses while she nods) “Kaylee wouldn’t have a file, right?”

Simon (still suspicious): “not that we know of...”

Jason: “Well even if I had seen such a file, I couldn’t know the significance of the song I heard you singing when you put Breen to bed the other night?”

Kaylee (taken aback): “My mom sang that song to me as a child.”

Jason: “Exactly, and that was on Silverhold.”

Kaylee: “Yeah.”

Jason smiles amiably, sure that he’s about to convince them of his worth.

Jason: “And like most border worlds mechanics, you got most of your experience on some junker vessel before upgrading to this fine ship, right?”

Kaylee (reflexively angry): “Hey! Watch it.”

Jason sees he’s touched a nerve and speaks quickly.

Jason: “I only say that because you’ve got the main alternator coil aligned with the aft gravity synchroniser, right?”

Kaylee (through gritted teeth): “yeah.”

Jason keeps explaining, but realises he’s offended her.

Jason: “That’s why you feel the gravity field fluctuate when you go to hard burn. It’s something border worlds mechanics often do because they’ve grown up on...” he hesitates, “er... older... ships, to get a bit of extra speed, but with these newer squid-class vessels doing that interferes with the synchroniser automation state, and it doesn’t really help unless you’re already red-lining anyway.”

Kaylee (still bristling): “You don’t say.”

Jason: “If you want, I could show you how to align it better for these types of ships...”

Kaylee gives Zoe a look of disbelief and responds with forced politeness.

Kaylee: "Maybe later... And watch what you say about Serenity. That was a damn fine ship."

Zoe has been watching silently, waiting to see how it would play out. Neither Simon nor Kaylee have positive body language toward Jason now, and Zoe looks unlikely to overrule them. She is however getting an idea of Jason's usefulness and betrays a hint of curiosity.

Zoe: "Okay then Jason. Who am I?"

Jason is resigned: he thinks he's lost them but starts talking anyway

Jason: "Zoe?... Captain... honestly I've found you a hard one to read. I mean, you're obviously ex-military, ex-Browncoat. and if I had to I'd guess by your mannerisms, I'd say you grew up on a ship somewhere in the Kalidisa system. Thing is; when you fly, you ramp up your engines using Popper's technique, which is usually only something done by pilots trained in the Murphy system, so for all I know, you might be someone else entirely, and just be pretending to be someone I can read."

Close up on Zoe's face shows that he scored close to the bone. Her eyes close as she calms herself

Zoe: "No. You're right about growing up on a ship around Kalidisa. It was Wash who taught me Popper's ramp."

When her eyes open they hint at tears.

Zoe (understanding): "You study people... You can stay with us for now in one of the passenger rooms. You don't enter the crew quarters, and if you want our attention you use the intercom. If you cause trouble you'll be out the airlock."

Simon and Kaylee begin to protest but Zoe silences them with a look.

Jason: "I... I don't know what to say. Thank you."

Zoe: "Don't thank me yet. We're going to Blackwood."

Simon and Kaylee restart their protests. This obviously has a different significance.

Kaylee: "Zoe, I thought we agreed we were never going back there. Not after the deals we had to pull to get this ship."

Zoe: "Yes we did. But I need some answers."

Kaylee: "Answers about what?"

Zoe is about to respond when they are distracted by Jason. Incongruously, he is chuckling, shaking his head and smiling.

Now Zoe is irritated; "What's so funny?"

Jason (holds up his hands in apology): “I’m sorry. Truly. But I just remembered the strangest thing: Back when I was first thinking about running from the family, I was walking through a street market when this woman, a fortune teller, appears out of nowhere and takes my hand. She tells me that the next time I was between moons, I’d have a chance to go. Sure enough, next time I was on the cruiser on my way home to Yunnan from a semester at Tao Simonyi, some of the students asked me to help them hijack a shuttle and see how far we could get. They just thought it was a bit of fun, but I was thinking about making a run for it at some point. Anyway, three weeks and five planets later, we had made it to Persephone, but that’s where my cousins caught up with me and we met you.”

Jason: “Anyway, You just made me remember that there was another thing the fortune teller said: ‘your path will twist and turn, but when you find yourself on Blackwood, that’s where you’ll find your answers.’ And now you say we’re going to Blackwood.”

Jason chuckles as he finishes the sentence.

Simon (smirks despite himself): “A fortune teller, game enough to tell a Tao Simonyi student on Yunnan that he’ll end up on Blackwood.”

Jason is glad he’s finally found someone who gets the joke.

Jason: “I know... right?”

Simon glances at Kaylee, who is even further irritated at this newfound camaraderie

Simon: “Stranger things have happened, I guess. Still, that’s a gutsy fortune teller. What was her name?”

Jason (smiles): “Oh it was something very in tune with nature.... Was it Stream? No... Stone? No, that wasn’t it.”

Jason slaps the bar when he remembers:

Jason: “That’s right; her name was River.”

Act 4, Scene 1

[Flashback, “6 years previous”]

Internal. A bar. The patrons are scruffy. Mal walks in alone and settles down on a barstool at the counter. The bartender pours him a drink without asking. Mal slaps a token down on the bar and drinks, casually casting an eye around the place.

He spies Jayne, sitting at a table with a pretty, local woman who seems rapt in the story he’s telling. Mal and Jayne’s eyes meet momentarily, with the barest of acknowledgements. Jayne continues without missing a beat.

Mal watches as another man settles into a barstool beside him wordlessly, receiving a drink in the exact same procedure.

Mal (casually to the bartender): “Let me get that one.”

Mal slaps another token on the counter. The other man nods his thanks.

Mal: “It’s a terrible thing to be dry on Unification day. One way or another, everyone has something to drink for.”

The other man shrugs agreeably.

Mal: “I wonder if you might be able to help me. I’m looking for a man called Chester.”

Chester nods curtly, “Speaking.”

Mal: “You know who I am?”

Chester nods again.

Mal: “Then you know why I’m here?”

Chester (brusque): “You know the rules... the cargo?”

Mal: “You have the payment?”

Chester nods to the bartender, who brings a boxy suitcase with two handles and places it on the counter.

Chester: “Instructions are within. Half payment is now. Half on delivery.”

Mal’s expression is one of slight disbelief that everything is going so easily.

Mal: “Exactly what I understood to be the case. A pleasure doing business with you.”
He places a hand on either side of the case to grab the two handles.

Chester: “Such a pity”

Chester slaps a pair of cuffs across both of Mal’s wrists, their connection buzzing in the same way as with electromagnetic ship nets. Chester’s voice changes markedly.

Chester: “Captain Malcom Reynolds, under bylaw 51-36 of the Alliance weapons treaty, I am placing you under arrest for weapons trafficking. Your co-conspirators will be tracked and your ship will be impounded. Do you have anything to say for yourself?”

The residents of the bar don’t flinch: they’ve seen this all before. As the announcement is happening, Mal’s eyes find Jayne’s. Jayne is torn between the woman he is with and making a run for it, but after a moment’s hesitation he rolls his eyes, jumps to his feet, and sends his table flying. Drawing two laser-pistols from holsters in his jacket, he levels one at Chester, the other at the bartender, and marches over to where Mal sits.

Jayne: “I do. Here’s a counter offer: You un-cuff my friend here, we’ll be on our way, and you get to keep your heads atop your shoulders right where they belong.”

Woman: "Here's a counter-counter offer."

Angle shot reveal that the same woman Jayne was chatting up now has a laser-pistol placed on the back of Jayne's head.

Woman: "Put down your weapons Jayne Cobb, accept your arrest peacefully, and you may even live to tell another ridiculous story."

Jayne flinches as her gun barrel nudges his head, eventually pointing his pistols upwards.

Jayne: "All right... All right... But it wasn't that ridiculous."

The woman moves around to the side, never lowering her weapon, to where he can see her raise an eyebrow incredulously: "Jaynestown?"

Jayne (petulantly to Mal): "No one *ever* believes that."

Mal (exasperated): "Why *would* they?"

Wide shot as Jayne is cuffed too.

Jayne: "Gorram it."

[End Flashback]

Internal. Another prison cellblock: Malcolm and Jayne sit on opposite ends of adjacent cells. Jayne hums the tune to the Hero of Canton. Mal moves his head in time but silently: he's heard Jayne do it so many times he even knows subconsciously where Jayne will put the pauses.

Cut to tracking shot as "Saffron" marches down corridor after corridor purposefully in Alliance uniform. Her face remains obscured. As she enters each of several checkpoints, she presents documentation on a tablet, and is passed through. Finally, she enters the prison cellblock and addresses the officer on duty. Her voice, when she speaks, is instantly familiar.

Saffron: "Prisoner transfer order R751, Malcolm Reynolds and Jayne Cobb are to be transferred to the Alliance facility on St Albans."

Officer: "This is highly unusual. They only just arrived this morning."

Saffron: "Here is the documentation."

The officer on duty looks at it. Angle shot of the documentation reveals it is nothing but a large smiley face. (Now pan up to reveal Christina Hendricks' face).

Officer: "This all seems to be in order."

Saffron (indicating the cell doors): "Good. Well if you wouldn't mind..."

As the doors open, Malcolm and Jayne are already in a position with hands on their heads to be cuffed, but none of the guards seem to be moving to do anything about it. They are stunned to see Saffron.

Saffron (sarcastically): "Hello my love. I'll be arranging your transfer today."

River (Voice Over): "Mal, Jayne; She's working with me."

Mal and Jayne walk out of their cells and look at each other, confused, and then notice the vacant expressions of the guards.

Mal (shrugs): "If you insist. Lead the way."

They follow Saffron out of the prison block, un-cuffed, in orange jumpsuits.

Act 4, Scene 2.

Internal: Reverie's common area. Kaylee watches as Simon grills Jason about River.

Simon (in earnest): "I need you to think. Did River say anything else to you?"

Jason: "Uh... no I don't think so."

Jason (repeats from memory): "'your path with twist and turn, but when you find yourself on Blackwood, that's where you'll find your answers.' Then she just walked back into her tent."

Simon: "Okay then, what answers did she mean?"

Jason (shrugs): "Answers? I have no idea. I don't even know what the question is!"

Simon (agitated by his casualness): "Surely you must have some idea?"

Jason: "Look, I'm sorry. I didn't realise it was your sister okay? I hardly paid her any thought at all until today."

Zoe enters: "Change of plans"

Simon (stands up to meet her): "Zoe. Jason has told me the exactly where River's tent was. If we go right now..."

Zoe: "Simon, she's not on Yunnan."

Simon: "How can you know that?"

Zoe: "Because she said so in her message just now. She's meeting us at a landing pad on St Albans. It's not far out of our way. She sent me coordinates."

Simon suddenly looks hopeful.

Zoe: “She has Mal and Jayne. We’re picking them up.”

Kaylee and Simon jump to their feet.

Act 4, Scene 3.

Saffron, Mal and Jayne are coming down off a ramp from the cargo bay of an Alliance transport ship. Saffron still wears her military uniform, while Mal and Jayne have changed into some kind of menial work uniforms and are moving a large transport container down the ramp as Saffron watches.

Jayne (looking around to check no one is listening): “Tell me again why we couldn’t just take that ship?”

Saffron (dismissively): “It’s a tagged Alliance ship Jayne. You wouldn’t make it a day before they caught you. River had me take you here, where she’s arranged our pickup.”

Jayne lapses into silence momentarily while they reach the bottom of the ramp and keep moving.

Jayne: “And there’s another mystery. Where is our guardian angel in all of this? She hasn’t even shown her face.”

Jayne points to the container they are moving as he speaks.

Jayne (mouthing the words silently in an exaggerated manner): “Is she in here?”

Mal (dryly): “No Jayne... That’s linen.”

Saffron, looking at her map, leads them down several sparsely populated corridors to the room where they deposit the container. They move further down the corridor, approaching a corner.

Saffron: “The landing pad where we’re being picked up should be just through here.”

In response, Mal enthusiastically takes the lead. When he rounds the corner, he is confronted with a room full of people in military uniform, all sitting at desks or standing looking at displays. 50+ heads turn to glance at him.

Mal smiles a big fake smile and gestures like he forgot something, then moves back to where Jayne and Saffron are approaching the corner.

Mal: “Slight problem.”

Saffron and Jayne take turns to peak around the corner, then face each other.

Jayne: “Well Mal, I just want to say that...”

River (Voice-over): “Jayne.”

Jayne looks up, as if caught in a lie.

River (VO): "It will be okay. I can't make them all ignore you, but they won't remember you either. Just don't do anything unusual."

They glance at each other, coming to a silent agreement.

Extended tracking shot as the three of them round the corner with big fake smiles and move through the room towards a doorway on the opposite side. There is a "bubble" effect as they move through the crowd. As they approach each group the Alliance personnel look at them, each behaving as though they are seeing an old acquaintance for whom they can't just place why they recognise them. Then, once they have passed, the Alliance personnel they act as if they just remembered something important that they had forgotten about. At various points Mal issues nonsensical greetings ("How's your dog?" "Looking sharp", "Give my best to Rita"). The other two smile and nod as necessary.

As they come to the two guards on the doorway, Mal salutes them, and they salute in return. The door opens, and they walk out to see the Reverie settling onto the landing pad. One of the side airlocks on Reverie opens and Zoe is seen to look out the hatchway, then come out to greet them. Shortly afterwards Kaylee and Simon are visible too.

Viewer perspective on the reunion changes to that of River's: She is concealed on a ledge/balcony a few buildings away, watching the two groups meet each other for the first time in 5 years. From her expression it seems that she is satisfied at having achieved this much, and that part of her desperately wants to show up at that meeting, but she places the feeling aside because there are more important things to do.

She steps back from the ledge, turns around, and nearly walks straight into Wash. He is dressed in the same high collared suit, his hands are clad in blue gloves and he holds a Blue Sun wand.

Her shriek echoes amongst the surrounding buildings.

Wash (friendly, still odd): "Hello River."

Act 5, Scene 1.

Internal of cockpit as Zoe pilots Reverie in to land on the pad. Zoe flicks on the com.

Zoe: "Kaylee, you leave it running hot. The Alliance doesn't have a large presence on St Albans but you better believe they can get here fast. As soon as they are on board *we are leaving.*"

Simon (looking out the windows): "There's no one down there that I can see. You're sure it's this pad?"

Zoe: "One way to find out."

Simon: “Wait. The door’s opening... It’s them. Mal... Jayne... and.... That’s not...”

Zoe finishes landing the ship, flicks several switches and jumps up out of the chair. She slings a laser rifle around her neck, strides past Simon and Jason, meeting Kaylee at the hatchway. Zoe exits the ship, eyeballing the surrounding buildings even as she strides towards Mal, turning a full 360 as she walks. Mal, Jayne and Saffron meet her halfway and they talk as they walk back towards the ship.

Zoe: “Good to see you Sir.”

Mal (casts his eye over the ship): “That’s a nice ship... Captain.”

Zoe: “Thank you Sir...”

Zoe (turning to Jayne): “Jayne.”

Jayne: “Zoe”

Zoe and Saffron make eye contact but don’t say anything before Kaylee comes barrelling down the ramp for a hug. Now Mal does stop briefly.

Kaylee: “Captain!”

Mal (smiling): “Kaylee.”

Kaylee: “Jayne!”

Jayne (gruff but pleased at the reception): “Kaylee.”

Simon (nods stiffly to each of them from the ramp): “Mal. Jayne. Where’s River?”

Mal (bemused that Simon hasn’t changed): “Nice to see you too Doc.”

Simon (anxious, to Zoe): “I thought you said she was with them.”

Mal (jovial): “Oh she’s around here somewhere... our own little guardian angel. You should have seen some of the stuff she was pulling. All the brass in there are a bit [chinese: crazy]” (+ circling finger gesture meaning crazy) “because of her mental [shenanigans]”

Zoe: “Still, we need to go now. Is she coming?”

Saffron: “I doubt it. This is the twelfth job she’s given me and she only ever talks to me in my head.”

Jayne (wastes no time boarding the ship): “Okay then.”

Mal and Saffron, followed by armed Kaylee and Zoe, march into the hatchway where Jason waits, Simon watching on in disbelief, his eyes scanning the surrounding buildings. He looks like he wants to yell out her name, but thinks better of it.

Finally Mal comes back and puts a friendly hand on Simon's shoulder: "Relax Doc. She was the one who rescued *us*, remember. She'll be fine"

River's shriek echoes across the buildings. Simon recognises it instantly.

Simon (yelling). "River!"

When there is no immediate response, Mal's shoulders slump slightly: "Or maybe not."

Back with River and Wash. They are having a moment of tense standoff.

Wash: "If you come with us without fighting we'll let the others live in peace."

River's look of disbelief turns to fury as she looks intently at Wash. Slowly, and with clear resistance, Wash watches as his arm extends in front of him and he is made to drop the wand. He looks at it as it falls. When he looks back up he is kicked in the head by River.

She turns back to the ledge, but is blocked by Wash's partner. They engage in a short bout of evenly matched hand-to-hand combat, ended when River psyches him into tripping over his own feet in an uncharacteristically unco move, getting himself tangled in some cables. Seeing her chance for escape, she makes for the ledge, jumping down onto a pathway that leads to the landing pad, setting off at a full sprint. [Impression should be that she is now more than a match for either one, but the two Blue Sun agents together could take her]. Wash's partner is seen to help Wash to his feet.

Zoe slides back into the pilot's chair and starts flicking switches, [sounds of Reverie's engines "revving" up]. In the background we see the doors to the landing pad slide open and the two guards come out to investigate:

Guard 1: "What's going on here?"

Simon (ignoring them completely when he sees River running towards Reverie): "There she is!"

Mal, also ignoring them, sticks his head out to look for River, sees her, then sees Wash as a silhouette in the distance and begins to squint.

Simon (into com on hatchway): "Okay Zoe, River's nearly here. You can start lifting off now."

Zoe: "Working on it."

Guard 2 (draws his weapon): "Stop where you are!"

Reverie rises a foot off the ground as River arrives at the pad, but she still takes a moment to glance pointedly over at the guards as Simon hoists her up into the hatch.

Guard 2: "Oh! I'm so sorry sir. Carry on."

Guard 1 looks at his fellow guard strangely, but changes to an expression of recognition when Mal leans out of the hatchway and performs another salute (sarcastic smile on his face). As an afterthought, Mal looks back in Wash's direction, disbelief growing on his face as he recognises him.

Both guards stand at attention as Simon shuts the hatch and Reverie soars into the sky and speeds towards the horizon.

Act 5, Scene 2

Internal: Reverie common area.

Mal (agitated, to River): "That man... That looked like Wash just now."

River is sitting on a chair in the fetal position, shock setting in. She looks visibly affected by the encounter, but appears relatively in control: she is less incapacitated by the presence of Blue Sun agents than the audience has known her to be previously. Simon is standing protectively over her.

Zoe (flicks on the shipwide com): "River! Talk to me. Are we expecting pursuit?"

River visibly makes an effort to come out of her shell. She looks at Mal and answers both questions: "Yes. It's Wash. And yes. He's coming."

The others look around at each other with varying levels of confusion.

Zoe (agitated over com): "Kaylee. Cockpit. Now."

Tracking shot as Kaylee walks through into the cockpit to take the controls of the ship. Zoe has already vacated the chair before she gets there. Following Zoe as she comes back into the common area.

Zoe (spitting the words at River, accusatory): "That *thing* is not Wash. Wash is dead!"

When River doesn't say anything, Mal responds: "Uh... Zoe, it did look a lot like him."

Zoe: "It isn't him."

Saffron: "How can you be so sure?"

Zoe (rounding on Saffron): "Because the first time I saw *it* was when *it* appeared to me in a video message, and *asked to see my child*. So I left Simon and Kaylee on Greenleaf while I went back to his gravesite, and *I dug up his bones*. It's *not him!*"

Reaction shots.

River (softly): "It *is* him. Those weren't his bones that you found."

Zoe's head snaps around at River.

River: "Two weeks in the ground he'd been when they found him and made him alive again. Now he's one of two, with hands of blue." (shuddering).

Simon (disbelief): "Two weeks?"

When River nods, Simon continues: "Then Zoe is right. He is dead."

When Mal looks at him questioningly he continues: "Look, I saw some pretty amazing medical technology when I worked in the core world hospitals, but two weeks is two weeks. That might be his living, breathing body out there: The same DNA, the same birthmarks. But his brain would have been rotting by that stage. Whatever that thing is: the Wash we knew is gone."

River (again softly, tilting her head as if to clarify a technical point): "Mmm. Mostly gone."

Close up on Zoe. Horror, hope, and fury at the fact she feels anything at all plays across her face.

Kaylee (over com): "Captain! Zoe I mean. We have company."

Zoe immediately moves to return to the cockpit, but Jason stops her.

Jason: "Wait! Before you go. These are Blue Sun agents after us?"

Zoe: "Yes"

Jason: "Then I must have access to your engine room. With your permission?"

Zoe doesn't understand but makes a quick decision: "Okay."

Jason and Zoe leave the room in opposite directions, leaving Simon holding River protectively, but Mal, Jayne and Saffron are looking at a loose end.

Jayne (looking off where Jason went): "Who *is* that guy?"

Mal (shrugs): "No. Eye. Dear. Jayne."

In the cockpit, Zoe takes over from Kaylee. "Best get back in the engine room: I may need you. I told Jason he could be there. Stop him if he tries anything stupid."

External shot of a Blue Sun craft catching up to the Reverie, as they race along, approaching a mountain range.

Zoe grits her teeth starts flicking switches on the dashboard: Reverie's engines are heard to take on new tones.

Zoe: "Fine. Let's see if you can fly like Wash you [extended chinese insult]"

Act 6, scene 1.

External shot as Reverie leaps forward at greater speed and down towards the foothills of the mountain range. The Blue Sun craft is seen to follow at a distance, still closing.

Extended flight sequence of shots as the two ships manoeuvre through the mountain peaks, shockwaves rippling across the forests and canyons, all the while Wash's ship is gaining ground.

Finally Wash comes on the com.

Wash: "Zoe I know you're flying that ship. All I want to do is talk. Please land or I'll have to shoot you down."

Zoe: "You can try."

Double down sequence: More spectacular flying. The Blue Sun ship proves very capable of keeping up as Zoe flies through gaps, loops over ridges, and guns it down beside sheer cliffs, flying through high mountain waterfalls.

Wash: "Last chance Zoe"

Zoe looks about to risk it but a voice comes from the alcove behind her. Sivara and Breen have stopped playing, watching events up until now without interfering, but at this point Sivara speaks.

Sivara: "Mommy. Who's the man?"

Zoe doesn't answer but instead decides to comply, slowing the ship down to land on a flat area atop a scenic mountain peak. The Blue Sun ship puts down a short distance away.

A moment later Wash is walking up the hill towards the Reverie. Zoe comes out of the cockpit and is walking towards the hatch, but Mal stops her in the common area.

Mal: "Don't Zoe. I'll do it."

Mal exits the hatch and walks down towards Wash.

Wash: "Mal! Good to see you! You're looking well."

Mal: "Wash! You're looking somewhat less dead than I had imagined."

Wash (laughs): "What can I say? Blue Sun Corporation gave me my life back. I owe them everything. I work for them now."

Mal: "So I see. Nice gloves by the way."

Wash (shrugs as he looks at his blue-gloved hands back and front): "Yes! There is that. Well I suppose if coming back from the dead has a price to pay, there could be worse ones, right?"

Mal doesn't have an answer to that.

Wash: "So... Down to business. I know River is in there. Is she going to come out peacefully? Or do I have to kill you all?"

Wash casually brings out the wand.

Mal: "See. Right there. The Wash I know would never say that."

Wash: "That was ten years ago Mal. People change. I don't want to kill you. Really. But she is important to us."

Mal: "You knew that before you died. But you still gave your life, fighting against people like Blue Sun, because you believed in something. What happened to that?"

Wash: "I was blind, Mal."

Mal shakes his head in disbelief.

Wash: "What? You don't believe the *real* me would say that? Go on then. Ask me a question only I would know the answer to."

Mal (trying to think): "Where were you born?"

Wash (immediately): "Shadow."

Mal: "What were your parents names?"

Wash: "Troder and Vissiny"

Mal: "Who did you first fly for?"

Wash: "Seargent Astor Trevany, but he preferred to be called 'The Van.'"

The rapidity and accuracy of the responses clearly unsettles Mal. Wash looks pleased and thinks he has won him over. He looks to the side when Zoe marches out of Reverie's hatchway, and moves towards him, her laser rifle trained on his head.

Wash (pleased to see her): "Zoe!"

Zoe (with venom): "What was your kid sister's favourite ice cream Wash? You know, the one you *told* her you were going to get for her when you lied and ran away to flight school instead; And you always justified it in your head because you were going to *buy it for her* when you returned. *What flavour was it Wash?!?*"

Wash (smiles and shrugs): "I don't know. I must have lost it with the..."

The rest of the sentence is drowned out when Zoe opens up with the laser rifle, dozens of plasma bolts deflecting harmlessly off the force-shield that surrounds Wash. Seeing that it isn't working, Zoe adjusts a setting on the gun and it starts firing heavy bolts, charging up for a second each time before the blast ripples off the shield. This goes on for another half dozen blasts.

Close up on Jayne watching from the hatchway.

Jayne (smiling appreciatively): “Gotta get me one of those.”

Mal’s voice can be heard under the fire: “Zoe... Zoe... Zoe!”

Zoe stops firing at last. Wash remains unhurt.

Mal: “Undead homicidal psychopath or not... *he’s still your husband.*”

Zoe casts an eye sideways at Mal, as if thinking about blowing him away with her rifle. Mal puts up his hands in submission.

Wash: “Enough of this.”

Wash (calls out loudly): “River! Come out now or they all die.”

Mal: “Come on Wash. You’re not really going to...”

Wash activates the wand briefly. The others all cry out in pain, putting their hands to their faces.

Mal: “All right, all right!”

Mal wipes the trail of blood from his nose and looks at Wash as if he were a monster. Defeated, he starts walking back to the hatchway as Zoe holds the rifle pointed at Wash, angry and helpless.

Low camera angle as Jason steps out of the hatch and underarm throws a small cylinder from the hatchway. It rolls and bounces towards Wash, who stops it with his foot. Wash looks at it curiously, and then at the man who threw it.

Wash: “Who are you?”

Mal (turns back to Wash): “That’s what *I’ve* been wondering.”

Mal (to Jason apologetically): “Haven’t had the time to ask, sorry.”

Wash studies the cylinder more carefully

Wash: “That’s not a bomb.”

Jason: “No, it isn’t.”

Wash (confused): “It just looks like a gravity synchroniser...”

Jason: “That’s exactly what it is.”

Wash looks up at Jason, still confused, but not feeling threatened. Jason gives him a small wave, and presses a button on a remote control fob.

Much to Wash's surprise; he finds himself flailing comically as he begins to fall *upwards* into the sky. Several successive shots track his path, zooming out on the Reverie and the Blue Sun vessel as Wash picks up vertical speed, with the shot eventually settling on a distant, scenic view of the mountains. Wash's body is seen to trace a parabolic arc that will level off at an altitude significantly above the tallest mountains.

Mal, and the others look back at Jason. Mal snorts with disbelief and decides not to question it, instead nodding his thanks to Jason as he reboards the ship.

In the moments that follow, the wind is heard to start picking up, rippling the sparse grass on the mountaintop. A few pebbles are seen to start fly up into the sky. Jason presses the button on the fob once more to deactivate it and goes out to collect the synchroniser, carefully waving his hand in front of him and walking slowly, like someone feeling for spider webs in the dark. Getting to it without incident, he picks it up, flips it over in his hand, and walks back to the hatchway, whistling.

Zoe remains staring into the sky in a daze. When Mal realises she hasn't come inside with them, he comes back out to see her.

Mal: "Captain Zoe Washburne. Shall we get out of here?"

Zoe (shakes herself): "I think that's a fine idea Sir. Got anywhere in particular you want to go?"

Mal: "Anywhere that isn't in a cell would be just shiny."

Zoe: "I think we can manage that."

Mal lets her pass him in the hatchway, then looks back out over the mountains. Camera shifts to wide shot in closing.

Mal: "And for the record, *I want my ship back.*"

Act 6, Scene 2.

A Blue Sun ship passes over a few trees and settles in a clearing. Wash's partner exits the ship and walks up a small incline, between trees. Once he gets to the top of the incline, he looks down into a small ditch where Wash's body lies, broken on rocks and clearly dead. He makes his way down into the ditch, monologuing...

BSC Agent: "Oh Wash. When are you going to learn? Trying to be an individual in this work just gets you killed."

He reaches down to check Wash's pulse, but it is a formality. Reaching into a jacket pocket, he pulls out a small package wrapped in foil, and unzips it to reveal several needles and number of small vials of blue liquid. He continues as he prepares the injection.

BSC Agent: "Also, it is against our creed..."

He enunciates the next bit like it is really profound.

BSC Agent: “*Two by two. Hands of blue. Not one... two.*”

Very shortly after the needle goes in, Wash’s broken body flexes like it has been electrically shocked, then begins to knit itself back together.

Close up on Wash’s face as he takes his first breath. Instantly his eyes are moving around and searching for familiar faces.

Wash: “*Zoe!*”

Agent (brightly): “Welcome back to the land of the living!”

Wash: “*Oh god Zoe I’m so sorry!*”

Agent (slightly annoyed by the outburst – speaks in a commanding voice): “*Agent Hoban Washburne Numeral Five Nine Four Zero... Restore Conditioning.*”

Wash’s eyes glaze over as the conditioning takes effect. Eventually a smile works its way across his face.

Agent (gently): “There we are. Feeling better?”

Wash nods his assent.

Agent: “And what do we say? Two by two?”

Wash (swallows and answers the call with a smile): “Hands of Blue!”

The agent helps Wash to his feet and they start walking back to the ship.

Act 7, Scene 1.

External: Reverie flies through space.

Internal: The whole crew (including the children) sit together in Reverie’s common area, eating, but the mood is mixed. Everyone is shaken to some degree. Zoe has a thousand yard stare on her face. River also looks fragile. Jayne alone looks truly happy.

Jayne: “Hey Mal?”

Mal: “Yeah Jayne”

Jayne: “Have you ever seen a synchroniser used like that before? I mean, *ever?*”

Mal: “No. Can’t say I have.”

Jayne: “What about you Kaylee?”

Kaylee (shakes her head): “I just use ‘em. Like everyone else: On ships, on planets. They make the gravity right. We just use ‘em. Never tried to *understand* ‘em.”

Jayne (to Jason): “Well before everyone gets all touchy-feely, I just want to say ‘that was awesome’... and I mean more awesome than Zoe’s gun...” (then to Zoe) “which was also pretty awesome, don’t get me wrong.”

When no one else speaks, Jayne grows uncomfortable with the silence following his honesty: “Okay, I’m done.” He gestures that they continue.

Eventually it’s Simon that speaks to Jason.

Simon: “So... How is it that you *do* understand them? I’m pretty sure they don’t teach that stuff at Tao Simonyi.”

Jason (nervous that his secret is about to come out): “No, they don’t. I learnt about synchronisers from my father... my father, who invented them.”

Mal: “Okay, I’ll bite. Who *are* you?”

Jason: “My name is Jason... Lasseter. Son of Kang Lasseter, inventor of the gravity synchroniser.”

Saffron: “But... I thought Lasseter was the inventor of the original laser pistol?”

Jason (shrugs): “Laser pistol... Synchroniser... (said like ‘po-tay-to, po-tah-to’), There’s not much difference really.”

Everyone looks at him strangely (as far as they’re concerned there’s quite a big difference). So he goes on:

Jason: “The way my father once explained it to me, was ‘once you understand how to create a gravity lens, the principle stays the same no matter what you use it for.’ So here on a ship, or on a planet or moon, the gravity lenses create a linear field of the right strength. The force shield Wash was using was just a field in the shape of a spinning Mobius strip, and a laser pistol is just where the field is temporarily recursive. Same principle: different applications.”

Jason (like as if it’s the most obvious thing in the world): “Make sense?”

Looking at the faces of the crew, it clearly doesn’t. But Saffron interrupts with a new thought.

Saffron: “Hang on. Wasn’t Kang Lasseter born on Earth that was?”

Jason: “He was.”

Saffron: “So how can he be your father? I mean, he must be over 400 years old. For that matter, *how is he even alive?*”

River (deeply sarcastic): “How do you think?”

Act 7, Scene 2.

Inara sits meditating in front of an altar with incense, in a room of rich textures and artistic decorations. She is dressed for a client: a vision of beauty. When the attendant enters the room she does not flinch. Only when the attendant clears her throat does Inara show any sign of recognition.

Attendant: "The master will see you now. I will escort you to his entertaining suite."

Inara: "Thank you. I will join you outside in a moment."

The attendant leaves the room, and Inara takes care to extinguish the three burning incense sticks and place each in a special receptacle. She rises and calms herself, then moves to join the attendant outside her room.

They walk down a corridor splendidly adorned with paintings, sculptures and other works of art, before arriving at a final door. The attendant opens the door for Inara, bows as she walks through, then shuts the door behind her.

The room is dimly lit, but clearly adorned with treasures of even greater value. Occupying prime position in the centre of the room is a glass cabinet with a Lasseter laser pistol inside. Seeing no one in the room, Inara moves towards it, at first curious, then amused as she realises what it is.

The voice reverberates in the room.

Kang: "Inara Serra. Even more beautiful in the flesh than I could have possibly imagined."

Inara's eyes search the room once more to find the source of the voice, finally seeing his silhouette in a darker part of the room.

Inara: "Thank you. It is an honour to be invited."

Kang: "I see you are drawn to the pistol. Have you ever seen its like?"

Inara (stifling a laugh, but deciding to be at least partially honest): "I have, actually."

Kang: "Oh?"

Inara: "A demonstration at a party. Unfortunately it did not live up to its promise."

Kang: "A pity, given its age, but understandable. Not my greatest invention, but certainly the one I am most famous for."

The penny drops with Inara as a moment of panic crosses her face

Inara: "Your... invention?"

Kang steps forward out of the shadows. He appears as a charismatic, middle-aged Chinese man, with a high collared suit, with his hands clasped behind his back.

Kang (amused): “Did they not tell you who you were coming to see?”

Inara (apologetic): “I am sorry for the lapse.”

Kang: “Do not be sorry Inara Serra. I am glad that the security arrangements were performed as instructed: I prefer it this way.”

Angle shot on her hands as he takes them in his, *blue-gloved* hands. “I am Kang Lasseter. And believe me...” He leans down to kiss her hands, twice on the knuckles of each, “the pleasure is all mine.”

Inara’s face is pleasant, but still shocked at this figure of history come to life. She does not necessarily realise the significance of the gloves.

Kang looks up at her with a handsome and mischievous smile: “Come now! We will drink, and be merry, and make love to each other until all the stars in the ‘verse go dim. Inara Serra, welcome.”

Inara’s regains her composure, and the final shot is of her following him as he leads her by the blue-gloved hand into the darkened room next door.

Scene End.

Cut to credits.

Side note: Booyah!

Afterthoughts:

I think bringing Wash back in some way is necessary for any future version of Firefly. It would stretch plausibility to have both Shepherd Book and Hoban Washburne come back, but to have one can be justified given the whole rationale I’m using behind Blue Sun agents: The Blue Sun serum is the extremely expensive, extremely addictive, life regeneration/restoration potion that can extend life indefinitely. In some people it causes psychic abilities, and these are extorted/indoctrinated into becoming BSC agents. This is

the process that SPO imitated and improved on with River. The reason BSC agents always travel in pairs is so that one can bring the other back to life in case they are killed.

Basically, I imagine that at the time Wash died in *Serenity* movie, some decision maker high up in Blue Sun Corporation decided it could be useful to revive Wash in order to have some emotional leverage over the group of people who know River best. A future episode might even offer Zoe the chance to have Wash back in exchange for her turning River in. This would be a bargain Zoe would consider out of anger at the way River has put the children in danger, and other actions (eg with Saffron) that erode some of Zoe's trust in River.

Also, I'm not suggesting killing Wash should become a regular plot device, but doing this at least once more in subsequent episodes and having him revived would effectively neutralise the fact that he died in *Serenity*, while giving the chance to elaborate on the very expensive/ secretive / addictive nature of the Blue Sun serum (such that even a core-world trained doctor like Simon does not know the specifics of what it is). Having Wash be more "himself" after the revival suggests that killing him is going to be a part of any "rescue" plotline that eventuates.

I like turning River into a "Luke Skywalker" analogue (if a more malevolent one), since having her be so helpless really gets old after a while given how powerful she theoretically can be. River as a grown woman is much more independent and much less mentally fragile, and sees herself as a puppet master, indeed, an operative, but one working on her own to fulfil Mal's vision of decency and independence, not the government's idea of civilisation. From time to time she should leave the group to execute her larger, only gradually revealed plan to destabilise the Alliance itself, (this also serves the functional purpose of removing River from the crew when there are many things/heists where it would just be too easy for her to achieve the outcome by herself). Because of this I expect Summer Glau would have relatively little screen-time, at least in the early episodes.

River recognises that her manipulation may trigger resentment in others, but she also recognises how unique (?) her ability is, and believes hard (as she was conditioned to) that this is the right thing for her to do. This element of malevolence in River will come back to haunt Mal, since he is not entirely comfortable with some of the means River deems necessary to achieve his ends (eg Reavers). Zoe especially could become quite antagonistic towards River for knowingly putting the children in jeopardy, yet will always retain respect for her abilities.

Making Jason the new "weak" character, who nonetheless is able to find strength in the group and as a result be very useful to them, is useful as a driver of character development. Characterising him as someone who can give actual scientific explanations to the happenings in the *Firefly* 'verse is somewhat risky (since some scriptwriter will actually have to come up with technobabble that's believable), but I think as long as that is not overused it will not be a problem. Conversations between Jason and Simon will allow more exposition on core world culture. Jason's intuition for technology also leads to a semi-antagonistic kinship with Kaylee (with techno babble mainly played for comic effect).

Kang Lasseter is *the* Lasseter, physicist and inventor extraordinaire, whom everyone remembers for creating the original Lasseter laser pistol, but more importantly was the developer of the principle behind the "synchroniser" machines (mentioned in episode

“Ariel” by Kaylee) which is used for manipulation of gravity fields aboard ships or on planets: It is one crucial technology that makes planetary terraforming, and therefore the Firefly ‘verse, possible. This invention has made him and his dynasty very wealthy, and has allowed him to extend his life for hundreds of years through the use of the Blue Sun serum.

Jason is on the run because he is terrified of becoming addicted to the Blue Sun serum, an expected part of his wielding power in the family. Kang has fathered dozens of children, most of them by companions. The things Jason has witnessed as a result of family politics (it is strongly hinted his mother was murdered by another of the ex wives) means that he wants nothing to do with them, but being the most recent of Lasseter's children and a favourite child has led to a host of relatives attempting to meddle in his life. He is someone with a lot of theoretical knowledge, but very little street-smarts, and that makes him someone that Simon will take pity on, since he sees so much of himself in Jason. He is lost in more than one sense, which is why being with the crew of the *Reverie* is immediately appealing to him.

Unfortunately we miss the time-period in which Simon and Kaylee were new love-birds, instead fast-forwarding to the point where they bicker (but do so amusingly – serving the role that Wash and Zoe did previously). The presence of Sivara and Breen should be a grounding presence, but make also be a point of weakness that is explicitly or implicitly exploited by various episode antagonists.

I have set up Zoe and Mal’s “Sir/Captain” exchanges as something that places them on a more even footing than ever before. Old military habits will still remain, but Zoe’s subservience to Mal will be an interesting topic to explore going forward. The spec script is a relatively Zoe-heavy episode, and I don’t think that’s a bad thing.

I really hope Christina Hendricks would come back as part of main cast, and there would be a lot for her to do if it turns out she’s the perspective by which the audience gets to find out more about the conflict between BSC and SPO, and how that resulted in the experiments on River. As stated above, I imagine that she was training as part of the SPO to be an operative like the antagonist in the *Serenity* movie, before she defected to a life of crime, mainly because she knew the higher ranked officers were doing to the new recruits like River, and was disgusted by it.

One thing that would be hilarious is to have River out “Saffron’s” real name at some stage during an argument in the presence of the crew, with a simple “Shut up Nancy” or similar retort by River, followed by an emotional response by “Saffron” (I always thought there was a lot more to be explored with that character – her name was obviously just one of many walls she had created).

The overall series arc would be driven to its conclusion by further conflicts between BSC and SPO, and the various core worlds that support them. The preference for BSC is more historical, given that many Alliance leaders are still addicted to the Blue Sun Corp serum: that allows near indefinite life extension. In addition to its addictive nature, the serum has side effects: it makes parts of the body almost impossibly sensitive to light exposure (hence the blue gloves).

During the time in which Mal and Jayne have been moved from cruiser brig to planetary jail to lunar penitentiary, one thing they have witnessed on a continual and increasing

level is the friction between various operatives and the alliance military, which Mal takes as a sign that not all is well within the alliance government.

As Mal correctly guesses, the Alliance itself is beginning to fracture into several factions from within, not least because of the implications of the Serenity movie ("The Reaver broadwave") as to the extent of government interference in people's lives, but also because of various trade conflicts between capital worlds. The alliance military is a multi-headed beast, which capitulates to both SPO and BSC directives, but alliance admirals individually have ties to one or the other depending on the core world they came from, and disagreements are frequent. Both the SPO and BSC regard the military as beneath them, and Mal sees that various military figures resent being treated as pawns in a larger political game. The characters in Firefly may never meet the main players of these political games, but they will feel their impact.

As a result, the Firefly 'verse is now one where the independents who fought the war are still distrustful of any and all Alliance, yet some in the Alliance are starting to feel that they were on the wrong side. A flashback in a future episode from Mal's prison time would depict an admiral pulling him out of his cell for "questioning", but basically admitting as much to Mal, while also praising his courage during the reaver broadwave. More generally, independents with friends in high places among the alliance are now working to bring the alliance down from within, and this means that the crew of Firefly might just get help from unexpected places, if only they can conquer their own demons.

All of this fits together in a plot arc in my mind that lasts for perhaps 15-20 hours. A significant amount of time passes before Serenity herself is recaptured, (the first scene of the crew around the dining table has to feel earned). Every job/heist performed during the early part of the season aboard the Reverie (each progressively more illegal than the last) has this final outcome in mind. A significantly iconic shot of the season would be of the Serenity and Reverie flying in formation down a canyon over horses, as the crew escapes from the heist which recovers Serenity, accompanied by a fully orchestrated fanfare version of the Firefly theme.

One arc with a more technology-centric angle that I would like to explore, 1) because I think it could form part of a satisfying finale and 2) because the tone of Firefly has always implied that there was a scientific explanation for everything (even River's psychic abilities), revolves around the "synchroniser" machines that both Jason and Kang Lasseter have intimate knowledge of. The idea is that Kang Lasseter, through Inara's interactions, becomes more aware of the tragic consequences of choices he has made in order to facilitate his addiction to the Blue Sun serum, and is shaken by the implications of the Reaver broadwave to the point that he decides to quit taking the serum, give up his effective immortality, and become another influential figure working to bring the alliance down from within.

Inara will be the viewpoint by which the audience sees Kang go crazy during his withdrawal from the serum. He begins to believe that the only way to achieve his goal is through gravity field terrorism against certain core worlds.

Being one of the inventors, he knows how to disrupt the planetary synchronisers, which normalise all worlds to Earth-level gravity: the deactivation of even a few of these installations would have truly horrific effects on the planet in question. This leads to an unexpected and unlikely final confrontation where Mal and Serenity are fighting *with* the parts of the alliance military (with a recurring appearance by the Alliance admiral who

questioned Mal in the flashback earlier, this man now has reason to seek out Mal's help) in order to stop Kang Lasseter from attacking a core world planet (Osiris?) and taking tens of millions of lives - all whilst SPO and Blue Sun are fighting to understand how to use gravity field synchronisers as weapons. It also provides a legitimate reason why Mal and Inara stay largely apart and pining for each other until the end of the series, then results in a coda where the audience can imagine that (at least most of) the Firefly crew might actually get some form of peace in the end.

More importantly than any of the specifics above, I still want to see the crew pulling regular heist jobs and maintain the traditional Firefly humour, but with characters who have clearly grown in interesting/unexpected ways in the intervening years. I have not mentioned Reavers much here, but since they were more or less “explained” in the Serenity movie, my idea for them is to not use them at all in the early episodes, but save them until they arrive at a truly unexpected plot point and have that entire episode hijacked with a “survive-the-reavers” plotline. By adding a certain level of complexity to the template it becomes a show of the 2010s and hopefully dodges the monkey paw effect, while still being a restoration of something people love.

I think that's it. This has been a labour of love that I think has turned out quite well. I truly hope no one feels I have shit all over these beloved characters. That would not be shiny.

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