

Please send any corrections via ask to eponymous-rose at tumblr! Thanks to etathetaandiota for correcting me on the captain's name and providing the news ticker info, blaze-edge for Halo canon input, and roosterteethtrash for catching an exchange between Stasney and a prisoner.

Establishing shot: space. A faint chiming is ringing out--a distress signal. We pan down to a Pelican with its running lights disabled.

Voice [off-screen]: There she is.

We pan further to reveal a much larger ship, the Tartarus.

Voice [over the radio]: Unidentified Pelican dropship, this is Captain Mayers of the the UNSC *Tartarus*, responding to your distress signal. Come in, over.

Cut to the bridge of the Tartarus, with the caption "Present Day..."

Mayers: Unidentified Pelican, please respond.

His readouts show 57% damage to the Pelican's external thruster.

Comm Officer: Ehh. Comms are acting kinda funny. Maybe they can't hear us?

Bridge Officer: *[leaning back, watching a broadcast of Malcolm Hargrove on a nearby monitor]* Or maybe they fell asleep at the wheel.

Mayers: *[sighs]* Pelican, can you just give us a sign that you're reading us?

The Pelican's running lights flash once.

Comm Officer: Oh, hey! She lives.

Mayers: Pelican, are you able to make your way to our starboard docking bay? We'll be able to assist you from there.

The Pelican flashes its running lights again.

Comm Officer: Well, there you go.

Mayers: *[turning to the bridge officer]* Stasney, meet up with Blanton and Kilgore in Docking. Let's see what this is all about.

Stasney: Wait, how the hell you know that meant yes? What if two flashes means 'yes' and one flash means 'stay away! alien zombies!'

The Pelican moves off toward the docking bay.

Mayers: You were saying?

Stasney: F-fine. Signal sucks out here, anyway.

Close-up of the monitor he was watching, where Hargrove is quoted as saying "We are still at war". A news ticker at the bottom reads "[...] Continue to rise between human and alien colonists. Halcyon cryogenics to reveal "ground-breaking technology" this afternoon. Grifball players' strike entering fourth week, commissioner still refuses to comment."

Hargrove: *[on the monitor]* ...and we should all prepare ourselves for whatever may come next.

Cut to Stasney walking into a massive cargo bay... full of cells. There's a lot of general chatter and jeering from the prisoners.

Prisoner: Hey Stasney, why're we stopping?

Prisoner: Lemme guess, you're letting us go?

Stasney: Quiet down. Just picking up what I hope are hitchhiking cheerleaders.

Prisoner: In your dreams, asshole!

As Stasney walks past the cells, we linger on the back of someone's head; half-shaven, with a tattoo at the base of his neck.

Cut to the starboard docking bay, where Stasney is meeting up with two crewmen who are, presumably, Blanton and Kilgore.

Crewman 1: C'mon, Stas, hurry up. It's just... weird, seeing a military bird on her own out like this, y'know?

Stasney: Ooh, maybe it's some top-secret covert ops! Some hush-hush you-never-saw-us type of shit?

Crewman 1: Yeah, and if we're lucky they'll kill you and keep this quiet.

Crewman 2: Hey, we got a deadline to meet, all right? Ready up!

Crewman 1: Pelican crew! You may now open your bay door and slowly exit the vehicle.

The bay door opens. It's Felix.

Crewman 2: Hands in the air.

Felix: *[complying]* Yes, sir.

Stasney: It's... just one guy?

Felix: Won't find anyone else on this ship.

Crewman 1: C'mon out! Take it slow.

Stasney: You all right?

Felix: Yeah! I'm just glad you found me.

Stasney: *[to Crewman 1]* This guy don't sit right with me.

Cut back to the bridge, where Felix is laughing with the crewmen.

Stasney: This guy's my fucking hero!

Felix: Oh, c'mon, you tell me every single one of you wouldn't have done the same thing, I mean, come on, am, am I right?

Mayers: That is a hell of a story, son, but it's time we got you fixed up and well on our way. Lord knows we wasted enough of the UNSC's time.

Felix: Well, hey, are you hourly?

Stasney: Now that's what I'm talkin' about!

Felix: Seriously, though. This ship looks like a fucking antique. Higher-ups couldn't spare the extra cash to fix her up?

Stasney: Yeah, right!

Mayers: Military prison transport isn't very high on their budgetary priority list. No use wasting money on cryo for lawbreakers. So they threw together a skeleton crew to make sure the cargo just makes it over alive.

Felix: Yeesh. Kinda scary.

Mayers: Nothing these men can't handle.

Stasney: Yeah, we got guns and the purge if things get bad, but the real killer out here's the fucking boredom.

Felix: Wh-what about the disappearances all over the news? Ships never making it to port? I mean, what do you do if you're attacked?

Crewman 1: I doubt anybody's coming for our cargo.

Stasney: That ain't scavengers! I think it's them fuckin' aliens, man!

Crewman 1: Not this again.

Stasney: Oh sure, they say we're at peace, but you know them squid-heads'd put a laser through our heads faster than greased lightning if we gave 'em the chance.

Crewman 2: Hey, that's intolerant!

Stasney: You're intolerant!

Mayers: Quiet! Truth be told, no one gives a rat's ass about the people on this ship. Anybody out there really wanted 'em, they could have 'em.

Felix: All right. I'll take 'em.

Stasney: What, uh. What'cha mean?

Felix: I mean, I'm going to kill you and take your prisoners.

Stasney: Huh?

Mayers stares at Felix for a moment, then reaches for his pistol. Felix kicks it aside and it hits Stasney in the face. Felix hits Mayers again so he goes down, then turns to kick Stasney in a sensitive place, and then in the face.

Crewman 1: *[sneaking up behind Felix]* C'mere!

He attempts a couple punches and gets thrown into Crewman 2, knocking him down.

Crewman 1: Gah! Sorry!

Felix grabs him in an armlock and puts him in a position to be punched by Crewman 2's next attack, then drops him. In the background, Stasney is scrabbling for his pistol.

Stasney: C'mon, c'mon.

He fires... and accidentally takes down Crewman 2.

Stasney: Oh.

Felix snarls and takes him down, then pulls a knife and throws it all the way up to hit the Comm Officer in the face. Mayers manages to reach for the alarm switch on his console.

Cut to the prison, where alarms are sounding and the prisoners are getting restless.

Cut to the docking bay, where one crewman is guarding the Pelican as the alarm goes off. He has just enough time to jump at the sound before Locus, cloaked behind him, breaks his neck. At least eight space pirates uncloak behind him.

Locus: No survivors.

Cut back to the bridge, where two guards are walking in.

Guard 1: Captain Mayers!

Felix holds Mayers' body up, then drops him to the floor.

Felix: At ease, gentlemen.

He opens fire with his pistol, taking them both out. On the floor, Stasney reaches for one of their rifles.

Felix: Calm down, Stasney. I'm not gonna kill you.

Stasney: Y-you're not?

Felix: No. He is.

Locus walks in and points his shotgun at Stasney.

Stasney: Oh, son of a bitch.

He fires.

Cut to Felix and Locus walking to the prison hold. The space pirates are securing the area.

Space Pirate 1: *[over the radio]* Sector 1, clear.

Space Pirate 2: *[over the radio]* Sector 2, clear.

Space Pirate 3: *[literally just having finished punching a dude in the background]* Sector 3, clear.

They arrive at the prison. Locus picks up the mic to the PA system.

Locus: Quiet.

Everyone stops talking.

Locus: As of this moment, we are the new crew of this ship.

Prisoner: Well, who the hell are you?

Felix: Why don't you let the people person handle this, okay?

Felix swipes the mic from Locus.

Felix: Listen up! We're looking for soldiers who aren't afraid of killing lots of people for lots of money. We don't care who you are. We don't care what you've done, because, quite frankly, we've probably done a hell of a lot worse. All we want are men who can follow orders and hold their own on the battlefield. We're going to war, folks. Now, our enemies are weak, but there's a lot of 'em. And they've got a couple of badass Freelancer agents on their side. But if you survive, you'll be rich enough to live out the rest of your lives as free men.

The prisoners murmur to each other.

Felix: Now. If this totally awesome idea doesn't sound like your kind of job, we'll let you off the ship. But if you're ready to fight for your freedom, then please, firmly grasp the bars of your cell in a sign of solidarity.

Some of the prisoners do as instructed; others do not.

Felix: Well. All right then.

He hits a button marked "PURGE" and vents the atmosphere from the ship. The prisoners who weren't grasping the bars (and some who weren't grasping firmly enough) fly out into space. The boots of Locus and Felix's armor keep them stuck to the deck. Eventually, Felix hits the button again and the area repressurizes.

Locus: Congratulations. You're hired.

He and Felix walk back to the bridge, leaving the terrified prisoners in their wake.

Felix: Before you say anything, yes, I know they triggered the alarm, and yes, I did have more fun because of it, thank you for asking.

Locus: These prisoners lack our men's discipline.

Felix: Control wants to even the numbers. You got a better idea?

Space Pirate 3: Locus. Felix. We've got a prisoner who doesn't really look up to par. Smartass put two and two together and tied his bedsheets around his waist before the purge.

Felix: Quick thinking.

Space Pirate 3: He asked to speak with you. Says he has something you need.

Locus: Bring him in.

The prisoner is brought in. He's a familiar face. He glances down briefly at the bodies on the floor, then moves toward Felix and Locus, apparently unperturbed.

Prisoner: Gentlemen. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Aidan Price.

Felix: ...okay. Well, Price, here's the deal. We're looking for soldiers. Not... whatever the hell you're supposed to be.

Locus: You say you have something we want?

Price: No. I have something you need. The Freelancers you mentioned. Am I correct in assuming they are Agents Carolina and Washington?

Locus: How would you know that?

Price: I know everything there is to know about my agents. As the... former Counselor of Project Freelancer, I helped mold them. Psychiatric analyses. Medical histories. They're all housed...
[He taps his head] ...right here. And I can give them to you.

Felix: Hate to cut your lifeline short, Counselor, but we've already got access to all of Freelancer's confiscated records.

Price: If you're referring to the documents recovered by the UNSC, you should know that is merely the tip of the iceberg.

Felix: *[Draws a pistol]* I think you're bluffing.

Price: Did you know Agent Washington refuses Artificial Intelligence access to his neural implants? Or that Agent Carolina's 57% more likely to neglect her teammates when presented with a competitive scenario. No? Then I also doubt you realize there is another inmate aboard this ship that shares a history with the Freelancers. One who would undoubtedly prove useful to you if he were... properly guided.

There's a tense standoff for a moment, then Felix lowers his pistol.

Felix: Quick thinker and quick talker. We're gonna get along great!

Locus: This second inmate. Take us to him.

Price: Of course.

In the background, the monitor finally regains signal; Hargrove is still speaking.

Hargrove: *[on the monitor]* Now, now. That's enough questions for today. Remember: all good things must come to an end.

Cut to the cell with the mysterious tattooed man. He stands. He has a scar across half his face and a variety of shark- and fire-themed tattoos, including one that's straight from a particular set of armor we saw several seasons ago... Sharkface is back.

Cut to the title card: RED VS BLUE: SEASON 13. It's all very dramatic.

Grif: Caboose!

Cut to a hallway.

Caboose: Gah! What!

Grif: Have you seen... wait a minute. What the hell were you doing?

Caboose: You ever get the feeling something really... really... bad is going to happen?

Grif: Only every single fucking time I have to talk to you.