

Station to Station Episode 6, "LEGACY SYSTEMS"

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Scene 1. Miranda's Cabin

MIRANDA

Log, uhm. Thirty. Day forty, 2030 hours. It's...It's been quite a week. I've made some progress on the case of the disappearing research partner, just not in the direction expected. I am not dying to find out just how much weirder it can get around here.

I mean, an undercover fed and a journo now trying to root out a network corporate spies? That's not- that doesn't happen in real life, that's something off the telly. Just how many people on this ship are actual scientists?

I, uh. I've been blanking out recently. I think it might just be insomnia kicking in again.

It feels like he's slipping away from me. I keep trying to hold on to...whatever I have left of Jon in my head just to- just to make sure that I can, I guess. A memory, a whisper - anything to prove that he was alive. And the more I try, the more disoriented I get. I'm losing him - the deeper into this I go, the farther away he feels.

2. Reva's Cabin

REVA

Field notes, May 6th. Progress report. The current list of persons of interest is 17 people long, narrowed down from 30. I have no doubt that Mallux have their own people onboard, and that 1) they would all know each other and 2) have been sent to keep an eye on the researchers. Whatever front this is for, it is also an investment.

Newfound assets in the investigation are Dr Miranda Quan, biochem researcher and Nelly Cochrane, undercover reporter. I honestly do not know who I trust less.

Cochrane's been around talking to people more than I have, but she's... stingy and coy. As for Quan...she has certain...ideas about what we're dealing with that, er, will require discretion on the part of...

What am I doing. This whole thing is insane.

3. Nelly's Cabin

NELLY

Audio log of Janelle Cochrane, research ship Astrid, May 6th. Ohhhhhh, boy. Where do I start.

4. Team Meeting
(MIRANDA'S Cabin)

NELLY
(EXASPERATED)
You still don't believe us, do you?

REVA
(EQUALLY SO)
You realise what you're talking about is literally impossible.

NELLY
You've seen what it does — you came banging at my door at 4 AM, don't just walk away now because you don't like the explanation we gave.

REVA
I am not— I am not rejecting it, but you have to admit that as far as explanations go, this is kind of a lot to wrap my head around.

MIRANDA
(GETTING MORE UPSET NOW)
What do want us to say? That it was some kind of psychiatric drug, a mind trick, that we just hallucinated the people we've spent years with?

REVA
No, of course not— of course I don't think that. Just — just let me get my head around this. When did you realise that it was— what it was?

MIRANDA
I had a- feeling that it was. Okay, that sounds stupid. I looked through the notes and calculations, and I think they built something using this altered version of the Juday engine that had the ability to warp space.

REVA
(SKEPTICALLY)
Right....what else?

MIRANDA
That's it- that's all I've got. There were also some drawings in Jon's notebook that pointed to the engine room.

REVA
(DRILY)
So you went to investigate.

MIRANDA

Yes, I went down to investigate.

REVA

Hmm. Good riddance to that.

MIRANDA

And I've been through everything — I've pored over every note, every scribble I have. They built something, Mallux. In secret and on the sly, and they hurt a lot of people. A entire research crew disappeared. You said this ship was packing too much food? That's because we're 20-30 people short than originally planned.

NELLY

We've shown you ours. Time for you to fess up.

REVA

(SIGHING, SHE RELENTS)

We started this investigation about 8 months ago — at first it was irregularities with credit reports and IRS files, transactions to companies they'd made no plans to invest in — nothing that had us on high alert, but enough for us to dig deeper. Then, about a week before mob, I get news that the CEO's bought a research vessel from the Canadian government.

MIRANDA

Bought a research vessel — as in, this ship is owned by—

REVA

Marcus Bealy, yeah. Oh, he went through all the loopholes and shell corporations necessary but it all leads back to him.

NELLY

(NOT TAKING THIS SERIOUSLY)

Hang on— is that why the ship is called the S.S. Astrid, and not R.V. Astrid?

MIRANDA

...Oh yeah. Now that you mention it— yeah. That is weird.

REVA

We're getting off topic!

NELLY

...Yeah. So...tax fraud.

REVA

Yes, tax fraud. Sorry that my explanation is not as...colourful as yours.

MIRANDA

So...what now? What would you do now, if you were investigating this with your team?

REVA

In a normal investigation - I'd start canvassing. Knock on doors, ask people who saw what, that kinda stuff. But this is not exactly a normal investigation, so...

NELLY

...So we improvise?

REVA

Look, it can't get weirder or worse than this, so tell you what — you can start with talking to the scientists. Find out more about them, where they're from, what they're working on — get friendly. Anyone that sticks out — go with your instinct.

MIRANDA

There's like 80 people-

REVA

I've narrowed it down to about a dozen. Potential witnesses, suspects, collaborators - anyone who might be of interest

5. Necessity

(An Empty Lab)

MIRANDA

I figured it out. The gaps in memory, the- secrecy, that- that long, unending corridor. They built something. That lab facility, wherever it is, they built something there with the ability to warp space, but I think there's more to it. I think it's been erasing people from time.

I- I know what I'm about to do is not ethical. I'm not proud of having to do it, but- out of necessity, and out need to arm ourselves with whatever knowledge Mallux has- The following experiment is an attempt to understand the technology.

If anyone is listening, if this comes of use in any way, to anyone - may you forgive me for this.

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

Scene 6. Wiring Up

(REVA's Cabin)

NELLY

Testing, testing- What are you doing?

SOUND: THERE'S A RUSTLING SOUND AS SHE ADJUSTS HER WIRE

MIRANDA
(UNCOMFORTABLY)
This thing is itchy.

REVA
Stop that- you're gonna damage the microphone.

MIRANDA
Why do we all have to wear a wire? Isn't it enough that just Reva has one? We have recorders.

REVA
Look, the more you try to adjust it, the more uncomfortable it's gonna get. Just let it be, will you?

MIRANDA
I'm trying- it's just a bit-

NELLY
Oh, bugger- I think mine is stuck on my bra- just gimme a sec-

REVA
...Christ, you two! Hold still. Cochrane, come here.

NELLY
(NOT LETTING THIS CHANCE SLIP BY)
Whoa, okay! Buy me a drink fir- oh my GOD your hands are cold!

MIRANDA
Seriously, Reva has one already, why do we all have to wear one?

REVA
Because you're now officially part of the investigation, we need to record everything you say or hear for evidence.

MIRANDA
(DISGRUNTLED, BUT RESIGNED TO HER FATE)
You mean you don't trust us not to muck this up.

NELLY
Did you just have two more of these things on you? Just...carrying it around?

REVA
I like to be prepared. And can you blame me? Your display of interrogation skills was not exactly, shall we say, exemplary.

MIRANDA / NELLY
(TWIN SOUNDS OF INDIGNANCE)
REVA

And these are earbuds - you'll be able to communicate with each other, in case you have to split up. They only work on short distances, but should be good in pinch. Be careful with them, I only have one pair of these.

NELLY
Testing, testing - so is it working?

REVA
...it's working. You're ready to go, I'm gonna be late for my shift. Again.

Scene 7. Experiment Setup
(An empty lab)

MIRANDA
11PM, unofficial log. All the signs have here all along, literally everything has been under my nose and I've refused to look at it because I was- scared and angry and-

Once subject disappears from temporal residence, all belongings and objects related to the subject also disappear. This includes all recordings of the subject over time, their previous possessions, and any and all records of their being. They have, effectively, never existed.

However, based on experience, there is a grace period before everything is gone. Lab setup are as follows:

Subject is a common albino lab rat, *Rattus norvegicus*. Subject will be sent into the lower deck at precisely 2400 hours, the time remaining before all traces are erased will be precisely recorded using various methods.

Variables are as follows:

Variable One - A drawing of experiment subject, pencil on paper.

Variable Two - A digital photograph of experiment subject, on phone.

Variable Three - A recording of the subject's squeeks, footsteps and rattling around the cage, both digital and on cassette tape.

Variable Four - A pawprint that the subject made, ink on paper.

Variable Five - 6 pieces of hair from the subject's body. This concludes the methodology and setup.

Scene 8: Playing a hunch
(McKinnley's Lab)

MIRANDA

McKinnley's not even on the list, do you really think-

NELLY

She said to go with our gut, didn't she?

MIRANDA

Yeah, but we could be wasting time. And stealing his lab notes while he's asleep? That's not nice.

NELLY

Then you go after someone on the list, I'll focus on McKinnley.

MIRANDA

What are you expecting to find on him, exactly?

NELLY

I'm playing a hunch.

(MIRANDA HUMMS IN MILD DISAPPROVAL)

NELLY

Alright - better explanation. He's shifty. What institution's he from?

MIRANDA

...I don't think we've ever talked about it.

NELLY

See? Have you seen him talk or socialise or even interact with anyone else?

MIRANDA

Well...I heard him having a row with Simmons last week. Something about- he was accusing her of trying to steal his results or something. I just thought he was a bit of an arse.

NELLY

Right, but aside from that? Nothing, right? I snuck a glance at his work once, nothing at all to do with ocean research. Didn't make sense before but...if Mallux has people on board...

MIRANDA

It's still a stab in the dark, though-

NELLY

Yeah, let's be honest with ourselves. Do you really think Santiago knows more about this than we do? She's been looking into white-collar criminals. The people behind this - secret test facility, dubious experiment, bloody...holes in the fabric of timespace - do you think they'd be middle-management types?

MIRANDA

(DISAPPOINTED)

...No. No, you're right. She was this- last, desperate grab at the light and turns out it's another dead end. We're not getting any closer, are we.

NELLY

Well, that's not what I mean. This is just a bit out of her area of expertise, so--

SOUND: MORE SHUFFLING PAPER, A DRAWING OPENING AND SHUTTING,
THEN THE MOVEMENT STUTTERS TO A STOP.

NELLY (cont'd)

Oh, hello...

MIRANDA

A leather notebook?

NELLY

A smoking gun.

SOUND: MORE PAGES FLIPPING

MIRANDA

Let me see - it could just be a work log, but...there's no significant timestamps. Four-number sequences. Do you think they're some kind of cipher?

NELLY

Let's just take some photos first, we can look through it later. Here, hold the light.

SOUND: IPHONE CAMERA SOUND

NELLY

(ALARMED)

Shhhhh. Ugh, I forgot to mute it.

MIRANDA

...and your storage is full.

NELLY

Yeah, I know-

MIRANDA

Oh, for- hold the light, I'll use mine.

(A BRIEF PAUSE)

SOUND: PAGES FLIPPING FOUR TIMES, WITH A PAUSE IN BETWEEN

MIRANDA (cont'd)

I got it. Let's go.

SOUND: A FEW QUICK FOOTSTEPS, A DOOR CLOSING

NELLY

(TO THE DOOR)

Shhhhh. Come on, let's get back to mine.

MIRANDA

Not yet - I have an idea.

SOUND: THE RECORDING CUTS OFF

Scene 9: Nelly's Diary

(NELLY'S cabin)

NELLY

Hey Aya. Sorry it's been a while, hasn't it? Nothing to worry about, I promise. I figured you didn't need a blow-by-blow of me sliding around my bunk every couple minutes during the storm. There weren't even any good food updates —it was just three days of make-your-own sandwiches and cold cuts.

It's all fine now, anyway. Nothing to worry about. I... I already said that, didn't I?

I, um. I've been having a lot of weird dreams this week? Nothing — nothing that interesting. Just work-related, mostly. Like, I'm the deck of the Astrid, helping this marine biologist bring her plankton net in — picture like a giant butterfly net.

Anyway, so dream me asks her, 'what's so interesting about plankton?' You know, just making small talk. And she gives me this look like I'd, gosh, she looked at me like I was the stupidest person. The strange part is, I remember thinking in my dream, oh, that's just who she is. She's always like that. No point in caring what she thinks. But I didn't — she's not someone from the lab, Aya. I've never seen her in real life, but it was so vivid. I knew so much about her. That's weird, right?

I don't know. I guess my subconscious thought I needed some imaginary French woman to insult me in a way I wouldn't care about. Geeze — maybe I should have told you about those cold cuts after all...

Scene 10. Break-in, again
(Outside the admin office, a corridor)

SOUND: A DOORKNOB, JIGGLING RAPIDLY

NELLY

So pilfering some stuff from a lab is bad, but B&E into the admin office for personnel files- that's all dandy?

MIRANDA

Hey, it's your hunch I'm following.

NELLY

You're lucky I've always disliked the bloke who does the admin, stuffy old geezer always looked at me funny-

SOUND: THE DOOR OPENS WITH A CREAK

NELLY (cont'd)

I'll keep watch. Go get what you need.

MIRANDA

Thanks

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS, THEN RUSTLING PAPERS

MIRANDA

Adison McKinnley. Senior researcher, 7 years. Worked directly below Eugene Loshank.

SOUND: MORE PAPER SHUFFLING

MIRANDA

Loshank, Loshank- there you are. Eugene Loshank. Project leader for Risk Management- Risk Management? Hmm. You're not on the manifest. Who are you...? Why do you have a personnel file? Let's see. CV, application, research material request...what's this?

SOUND: MORE PAGES TURNING.

MIRANDA (cont'd)

Looks like activity readings from a Juday engine, over a 3-4 month period. But those spikes are... those figures are not possible...

And what are these labels? 7:17, L.D. 13:05, R.C. Are these commands? Input codes? What the hell are they? S.D., D.W, R.A., J.C.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS COMING BACK OUT OF THE ROOM

NELLY

Hey, have you got everything, or...? ...Oh. Oh, that's not a good look.

MIRANDA

You were right about McKinnley, he's- he knows something. The numbers from this ledger over here - I think they're timestamps. We need to match them to whatever's in the notebook.

NELLY

Let me have a look. So, if the ledger has timestamps, do you think the other one could be dates? We just have to find out which is correlate to which, maybe match it to graphs or soething. And another page with...random letters?

(SLOWLY REALISATION DAWNS, ALONG WITH HORROR)

No...no, Miranda, those are initials.

MIRANDA

Those are also the ones marked with asterisks.

NELLY

Let's get back to my cabin first- Miranda?

MIRANDA

April 7th. It has an asterisk. April 5th, too.

NELLY

What? Look, we can figure this out later.

MIRANDA

They're activity logs. Astersisks corresponds with the graph patterns. They mark the times when- when it- when it took someone.

(SUDDENLY WITH MORE DETERMINATION)

Take these back to Reva, make copies - as many as you can. I need to find McKinnley.

NELLY

Wait- wait!

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF.

Scene 11: Results Log
(An empty lab)

MIRANDA

0140 hours. Results log one. First trace of subject to disappear is variable Four - a pawprint that the subject made on paper. Results: Paper devoid of any imprint.

Stupid thing. It waled into that deathtrap corridor like it was mesmerised - I thought I'd have more trouble, but...

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

MIRANDA (cont'd)

0300 hours. Results log two. Second trace of subject to disappear is variable Two - A photograph of experiment subject , on phone. Results: the phone froze and needed a reboot at 2:37 AM. When it restarted, all digital traces of subject one were gone

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

MIRANDA (cont'd)

(NOW SLEEP-DEPRIVED AND SLURRING HER SPEECH A LITTLE)

0700 hours. Results log three. No changes to either of the drawings or the audio recordings yet. I don't want to miss it when they go...I wish I had someone to trade off with.

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

MIRANDA (cont'd)

(SUDDENLY A LOT MORE FOCUSED)

0900 hours. Results log four. Third trace of subject to disappear is variable three, a tape recording of the subject's squeaking. The digital recording just plays static, but...huh, this is weird. The analogue recording still has sound, playback almost the same quality as before. Variable one, pawprint of experiment subject, pencil on paper, appears to be degrading. There's a smudge- no. Oh. No that's jmy fingerprint.

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

MIRANDA (cont'd)

1200 hours. Results log five. Last trace of subject to disappear is variable five - fur from the subject's body is gone after 23 hours and forty minutes. Variable three, the tape recording, is still playing. It's- fine. So is the drawing. Everything else has faded from memory, but both of them are fine.

Scene 12: The chase
(Corridors of the Astrid)

SOUND: RAPID FOOTSTEPS, A DOOR OPENING AS MIRANDA BARGES INTO A
RANDOM LAB

SCIENTIST #1
Hey, Quan, I thought you were-

MIRANDA
Hey, have you seen Adison McKinnley pass by?

SCIENTIST #1
Uhhhhh.....

MIRANDA
You had a...bit of a tiff with him, a while ago?

SCIENTIST #1
....Not ringing a bell. You wanna check with a lab tech or-

MIRANDA
No, but thanks.

SOUND: RAPID FOOTSTEPS, COMING INTO THE MESS HALL.

MIRANDA (cont'd)
Hey, have you seen Adison?

SCIENTIST 2
...who? What field's he in?

MIRANDA
You share the same lab bench- Never mind, I'll find him. Thanks!

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

Scene 13: Memory loss
(McKinnley's lab)

SOUND: SHUFFLING, RUSTNG PAPERS

SIMMONS
Dr Quan?

MIRANDA
(SURPRISED, CAUGHT IN THE HEADLIGHT)
Dr Simmons!

SIMMONS
You're up early. You looking for something?

MIRANDA
Dr. McKinnley, actually. I lent him a reference book, and I really need it back. He's not in his cabin, thought he might be in his lab.

SIMMONS
Uh...who? You mean McKensey? The lab tech?

MIRANDA
No, Adison McKinnley, from, uhm. From...New York? He was- tall, and- he had- he's got dark hair, glasses. He...he worked in the lab next to mine.

SIMMONS
...Not ringing any bells, here. Are you- whoa, you okay? You look like you're about to vomit.

MIRANDA
Yeah. I- I feel-

SIMMONS
We should get you to Dr Sun, this could be serious-

MIRANDA
No, no, I need to find Reva, I-

SIMMONS
You're shaking, let's get you to the medic room. This could be serious.

MIRANDA
No, I'm fine, I'm-

SOUND: MIRANDA COLLAPSES

SIMMONS
Whoa, Jesus, okay - Uuup we go!

SOUND: A FEW STUMBLING FOOTSTEPS. A DOOR OPENING AS THEY GO INTO THE CORRIDOR

FREDRICKSEN

Hey do we still have space for the new batch of- Whoa. She hit her head or something?
What's going on?

SIMMONS

I found her like this. It's fine, I'll get her to the medic. Office is just down the corridor.

FREDRICKSEN

...you look like you're about to drop her on her head.

MIRANDA

I can walk-

SIMMONS

She's just a bit-

SOUND: A MUFFLED THUMP, THAT SOUND OF CLOTH PASSING OVER A MIC

SIMMONS (cont'd)

Whoa, Jesus! Okay, grab onto me- not so tight-

MIRANDA

(GROANS SOFTLY)

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

Scene 14: Rescue

(The Medic bay)

SOUND: RAPID FOOTSTEPS, COMING TO A STOP TO MUTED VOICES

DR SUN

...no sign of concussion at least. This is something I've seen in migraine patients and certain patients recovering from stroke, I might need to keep her here for a while, in case she need more urgent medical attention. Did anything...happen to her?

SIMMONS

I have no idea, I found her stumbling down the corridor, asking for some lab tech? I thought she was sea-sick, but then she got this blank look on her face, like she was having a seizure, so-

FREDRICKSEN

...I heard that she was looking for someone.

SIMMONS

She was babbling and incoherent - should one of us stay with her?

DR SUN

That's very nice of you, but I think I can-

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS, AS NELLY BARGES IN

NELLY

Doctors! I'm here to pick up Dr. Quan and see her to her room!

(BRIEF, STUNNED SILENCE)

DR SUN

Uh, she's unconscious right now.

NELLY

That's okay, I'll wait right here until she wakes up, then I can sign her out. Can I see her?

DR SUN

This isn't a hospital, Ms Cochrane, there's no need to "sign her out". I'll see to it that she finds her way back to her cabin when she's awake and lucid.

FREDRICKSEN

(SUSPICIOUSLY)

...how did you know she was down here?

(NELLY IGNORES HIM.)

NELLY

(PUTTING ON THE BEST ACT OF HER LIFE)

I really need to speak to her, I've been so worried. Please, Doctor, I just want to make sure she's alright!

DR SUN

(RELENTING SLIGHTLY)

...Five minutes. She's in need of rest. As for the two of you, I think she's in good company. Thank you for bringing her to me.

NELLY

(LAYING IT ON THICK)

Thank you so much!

SOUND: A DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING

MIRANDA

Laying it on a bit thick, weren't you?

NELLY

I'm glad you're awake. We should go, can you walk?

MIRANDA

...mmhmm, yeah. Help me up.

NELLY

Here we go, on three- what's on your arm?

MIRANDA

Uh...what?

NELLY

McKinnley is gone?

MIRANDA

I'm...I don't...

NELLY

(URGENTLY)

Miranda, look at me. Do you remember writing this?

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

Scene 15: The Wind-down

(NELLY's cabin.)

SOUND: CLOTHES RUSTLING

NELLY

Here we go, easy, easy.

SOUND: CLOTHES RUSTLING, MIRANDA SITS DOWN ON THE BED

MIRANDA

...I suppose that could have gone better.

NELLY

That was a colossally bad idea! You scared the living daylights out of me, Miranda. Your wire started scrambling in the middle of it, right after you they started dragging you to Sun's office. I was ready to start kicking down doors.

MIRANDA

I'm sorry! I just...I knew I was getting close, I didn't know to what. I should have legged it the moment I twigged something was wrong, but I just thought- I just...I couldn't leave it at that.

NELLY

Yeah, I know. Did they see your mic?

MIRANDA

I don't think so. I walked to the medic office pretty much on my own, might have grabbed a wall for support, then collapsed. I lost an earbud, though. Reva might be mad at me. Nice timing, by the way.

(NELLY HUMPHS, SLIGHTLY DISGRUNTLED)

MIRANDA (cont'd)

(QUIETER, CALMER - SUDDENLY WHAT JUST HAPPENED IS HITTING HER)

McKinnley's gone. I think I knew - it was just this gut feeling, like I could feel it happen. He- I felt him fade away, quick as a light, I literally felt him disappear and leave this- this gap and... there was nothing I could- I couldn't even-. God, that was the most horrible thing I've ever...

NELLY

Hey, hey- it's alright. You're safe. You're safe.

SOUND: THE RECORDING STOPS