

Episode #: 1AGE01

Story #:

# *Firefly*

"The Train Job"

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SHOOTING DRAFT: July 8, 2002

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FIREFLY

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"The Train Job"

TEASER

1 INT. BAR - DAY

1

It's a small, disreputable place, doing a brisk but low-key business. Most of the people here are probably up to something they don't want other people to know about. The dark wood and clutter suggest a Western space, but it is definitely multi-cultural: a bellydancer makes her way about the room, and everyone's mode of dress is diverse -- though none is too fancy.

We follow a BELLY DANCER's undulating belly through the space, coming to a table with three people sitting at it. ZOE and JAYNE are more or less facing us, MAL has his back mostly turned. The three are concentrating on a game we can't see.

Those who look carefully will spot the bellydancer's hand as it slips Mal a piece of paper, which he slips in turn into his pocket.

JAYNE

(to Mal)

Your move.

Camera ARMS UP to see the game on the table is Chinese Checkers. Mal moves.

ZOE

That's a bold move.

MAL

I live on the edge.

Zoe makes a much better move.

JAYNE

(to Mal)

Nice work, dumbass.

MAL

I've given some thought to moving off the edge, it's not an ideal location... might get a place in the middle...

VOICEOVER (O.S.)

A toast!

(CONTINUED)

The VOICE is surly, loud. Trouble waiting to happen. As it speaks, Mal turns back towards camera and we see him in closeup. Calm, assessing the danger.

ANGLE: The guy who spoke, LUND. A drunken dick, holding court at the bar.

LUND

A toast. Shut up! Quiet, I'm, I got words. I'm say, this is an asspishus day. We all know what day it is...

ANGLE: The gang. Mal is stone-faced, Zoe the same. They clearly know where this is going. Jayne has no clue.

JAYNE

Suspicious? What day is it?

LUND

A glorious day for all the proud members of the Allied planets. Unification Day! The end of the Independent scumbags and the dawn of a new galaxy! Yeah-huh!

He downs a shot.

Mal is grabbing his empty glass, rising.

ZOE

Captain...

MAL

Just feeling the need for a drink.

JAYNE

(not paying attention)  
What month is it?

Mal moves to the bar, far from Lund.

MAL

(in Chinese)  
< Can I have one more glass of Ng-Ka-Pei, please? >

Lund, naturally, sidles up to him.

LUND

You gonna drink to the Alliance with me?

Mal looks at him, looks away.

(CONTINUED)

LUND (cont'd)

Six years today... The Alliance  
sent the browncoats running,  
pissing their pants.

Mal is not biting. He gets his drink, tosses a weird looking  
bill on the bar.

LUND (cont'd)

Your coat's kind of a brownish  
color...

MAL

It was on sale.

He drinks.

LUND

You didn't toast! You know, I'm  
thinking you're one of them.  
Independents.

MAL

And I'm thinking you weren't  
burdened with an overabundance of  
schooling. So why don't we just  
ignore each other till we go away?  
He turns back to the bar. Lund  
pursues.

LUND

The Independents were a bunch of  
inbred, cowardly pisspots shoulda  
been killed off a every world  
spinnin'.

Mal turns, ready for the fight.

MAL

Say that to my face.

LUND

I said, you're a coward and a  
pisspot. Now what're you gonna do  
about it?

Mal smiles casually.

MAL

Nothing. I just wanted you to face  
me so she could get behind you.

Lund spins and Zoe SWAPS him with the butt of her sawed-off.  
He goes down.

(CONTINUED)

Mal and Zoe smile grimly at each other as she holsters the weapon.

MAL (cont'd)  
Drunks are so cute.

Suddenly, seven GUYS stand up, seeing what happened to Lund. They are not wearing colors like Mal and Zoe's.

MAL (cont'd)  
(continuing; in Chinese)  
< Oh, this is a happy  
development... >

Zoe turns, sees the coming fight.

ZOE  
Jayne...

ANGLE: Jayne: Sits, unconcerned.

JAYNE  
Hey, I didn't fight in no war.  
Best of luck, though...

MAL  
Fine. Lets do this.

Mal goes flying through the front window -- only it's not glass, rather an ionized field that CRACKLES and REFORMS after he passes through.

He rolls in the dirt, stops. Looking up, he hears the sound of fighting within -- we might notice at this point that the sky contains THREE MOONS, one so close it looks like another planet on the horizon.

Mal shakes off the punch, pulls out a transmitter.

MAL  
(into transmitter)  
Wash, we got some local color  
happening... a grand entrance  
would not go amiss...

Zoe comes flying out the door, takes two others with her, giving them hell.

Mal rises, helps her put them down.

(CONTINUED)

MAL (cont'd)

Is Jayne even --

Three guys come backwards out of the bar, driven by the table Jayne is wielding. Another comes behind and he elbows him into dreamland without even looking back. Jayne is an incredible fighter.

Our gang ends up side by side, facing an angry bunch of at least ten guys. We might notice our three backed up at the EDGE OF A CLIFF.

MAL (cont'd)

Well, there's just an acre of you fellows...

(to Zoe)

This is why we lost, you know: superior numbers.

ZOE

Thanks for the reenactment, sir.

Lund forces his way through the crowd and pulls his gun. This changes things. Our gang look at each other.

JAYNE

Them ain't kosherized rules...

Others pull guns (even though they feel odd about it). Our gang don't yet.

LUND

I'm thinking someone should put you down, dog. What do you think?

MAL

I'm thinking we'll rise again.

It is at this moment that SERENITY rises from behind the cliff, dwarfing our combatants.

Wind rips through everyone, the assailants starting back in fear (and grit in their eyes). An amplified voice (WASH's) comes over a loudspeaker:

WASH (O.S.)

Every man there go back inside or we will blow a new crater in this little moon.

Lund and the others back off, grumbling but cowed.

ANGLE: Behind our heroes.

(CONTINUED)

2

CONTINUED: (2)

2

The airlock door opens and our gang step onto it from the cliff face.

3

INT. AIRLOCK/CARGO BAY - CONTINUING

3

The doors shut behind them. Mal and Zoe head upstairs as Jayne wanders off, saying:

JAYNE

Damn yokels can't even tell a transport ship ain't got no guns on it.

(chuckling)

"Blow a new crater in this moon..."

4

INT. FOREDECK HALL/BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

4

Mal and Zoe are entering the bridge as Kaylee is coming up the hall behind them, grease on her face and some unidentifiable ship part in her hand. She's thrilled by the drama.

MAL

(to Wash)

Nice save.

WASH

Pleasure.

MAL

How are our passengers?

KAYLEE

They're fine. What happened? Was there a terrible brawl?

ZOE

(eyeing Mal)

Oddly enough, there was.

WASH

You getting my wife into trouble?

MAL

What? I didn't start it. Just wanted a quiet drink.

ZOE

Funny, Sir, how you always find yourself in some Alliance-friendly bar come U-Day, looking for a "quiet drink."

(CONTINUED)

MAL

See, this is a sign of your tragic  
space dementia. All paranoid and  
crotchety, it breaks the heart.

WASH

Well did we least make a contact?

Mal smiles, produces the piece of paper handed him by the  
bellydancer.

MAL

Ladies and menfolk, we got  
ourselves a job.

He hands the paper to Zoe.

MAL (cont'd)

Take us out of the world, Wash.  
(looking ahead)  
Got us some crime to be done.

As it blasts past camera, heading out of the atmosphere.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

6 INT. LABORATORY 6

Flashes of bright lights, of people in masks approaching camera with weird-looking instruments -- classic operation nightmare.

ANGLE: RIVER

Strapped to a chair, with electrodes on her, needles attached to wires stuck into her head, ears, nose, blood trickling from each wound, terror in her eyes as a man's voice speaks slowly:

VOICEOVER

I'm not going to speak. I'm not going to SAY a word...

She opens her mouth to scream and --

7 INT. INFIRMARY 7

-- wakes up on the operating table, freaking, scrambling off as SIMON approaches her tenderly.

SIMON

River. River. It's okay. It's me.

She says nothing.

SIMON (cont'd)

You know who I .....

RIVER

(duh)

Simon.

SIMON

Were you dreaming? Did you dream about the Academy?

RIVER

(scattered, muttering)

It's not relevant.

SIMON

If you can talk about what happened there... I know it's hard but the more I know, the faster you'll get better. I promise. She gets up, looks around.

(CONTINUED)

RIVER

This isn't home.

SIMON

No. No, we can't go home. If we go home they'll just send you back to the Academy. This is safer now.

(cheerfully)

We're on a ship.

RIVER

Midbulk transport, standard radion-accelerator core, classcode 03-K64, "Firefly".

Mal enters at that moment, saying:

MAL

Well, that's something. I can't even remember all that.

SIMON

I'm always amazed at what she knows. River, this is Captain Reynolds.

MAL

(to River)

Mal.

She curtsies with exaggerated elegance. A beat, as Mal doesn't know what to do. Then he curtsies back, somewhat awkwardly.

SIMON

(slightly amused)

You bow.

MAL

What?

SIMON

From the waist.

(he demonstrates)

The lady curtsies, the gentleman bows.

MAL

Well, I'm not overly gentle.

He makes his way to the sink, starts rinsing his bloody knuckles.

SIMON

Need a weave on that?

(CONTINUED)

MAL

It's nothing.

SIMON

I expect there's someone's face  
feels differently.

MAL

(smiles in reverie)  
They tell you never hit a man with  
a closed fist, but it is on  
occasion hilarious.

SIMON

I suppose so. The fight didn't  
draw any... any attention?

MAL

No feds. Just an honest brawl  
between folk. Ain't none of us  
want the Alliance on us, Doctor.  
That's why you're here.

SIMON

I thought I was here because you  
needed a medic.

MAL

Well, not today.

He exits, River watching him. After he goes:

RIVER

Mal.  
(turns to Simon)  
Bad.  
(looks after Mal)  
In the Latin.

Mal is about to head upstairs when Book comes down the hall.

MAL

Shepherd Book.

BOOK

Captain. How's the girl?

They look back at the pair in the infirmary.

(CONTINUED)

MAL

Still kinda whimsical in the brainpan. Seems calm enough, though.

River hurls a metal container on the ground with a great crash, starts crying as Simon tries to soothe her.

BOOK

That young man's very brave.

MAL

(whatever)

Yeah, he's my hero...

BOOK

Give up everything to free his sister from that... place... go from being a doctor on the central planets to hiding on the fringes of the system... There's not many would do that.

MAL

Suppose not.

Mal starts up the stairs, but:

BOOK

There's not many would take him in, either.

He's going somewhere with this. Mal turns back.

BOOK (cont'd)

Why did you?

MAL

Same reason I took you on board, Shepherd. I need the fare.

He starts upstairs, the Shepherd following him.

BOOK

There's neither of us can pay a tenth of what your crew makes on one of your "jobs".

MAL

Are you referring to our perfectly legitimate business enterprises?

(CONTINUED)

BOOK

I'm wondering why a man who's so anxious to fly under Alliance radar would house known fugitives. The Alliance had her in that institution for a purpose, whatever it was, and they will want her back. You're not overly fond of the boy, so why risk it?

Mal turns, with all mock seriousness.

MAL

Because it's the right thing to do.

He looks in at the engine room -- which is an unholy mess of wires and patchwork and tools lying about.

MAL (cont'd)

Will you look at this? Kaylee.

BOOK

I begin to wonder if you yourself know why you're doing it.

MAL

What about you? How come you're flying about with us brigands? Shouldn't you be off bringing religiosity to the Fuzzie-Wuzzies or some such?

BOOK

Oh, I got heathens aplenty right here.

MAL

(smiling)

If I'm your mission, Shepherd, best give it up. You're welcome on my boat. God ain't.

He turns to go, grumbling to himself:

MAL (cont'd)

Where the hell is that girl...

We see Kaylee in close up, eyes closed, a dreamy smile on her (still grease-stained) face. Soft, classical music is playing.

(CONTINUED)

Widen to see that she is sitting on the floor of Inara's sumptuous chamber, and that Inara herself is on the couch behind her, brushing Kaylee's hair.

INARA

Do you want me to put it up?

KAYLEE

Mmmmmmm... that's okay...

INARA

You have lovely hair.

(knowingly)

I'm sure the doctor would agree.

KAYLEE

Simon? No, he's much too... I'm just... do you think it looks better up?

INARA

We can experiment... We might even get wild later and wash your face.

Kaylee smiles, shutting her eyes again.

KAYLEE

Do you ever do this for your clients?

INARA

Very occasionally. Not all of my clients have enough hair to get a brush through.

KAYLEE

I shouldn't much like a bald lover... some bald men have awfully furry backs.

INARA

Yes, hair often doesn't disappear so much as migrate south.

KAYLEE

Have you ever had to service a really hideous client? With boils and the like?

INARA

A companion chooses her own clients; that's guild law. But physical appearance doesn't matter so terribly.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

INARA (cont'd)

You look for a compatibility of spirit... there's an energy about a person that's difficult to hide, you try to feel that...

MAL

(entering)

Then you try to feel the energy of their credit account. It has a sort of aura...

INARA

What did I say to you about barging in to my shuttle?

MAL

That it was manly and impulsive?

INARA

Yes, precisely, only the exact phrase I used was "don't."

MAL

Well you're holding my mechanic in thrall and Kaylee what the hell is going on in the engine room? Were there monkeys, some terrifying space monkeys that maybe got loose?

KAYLEE

No monkeys, mister funny -- I had to rewire the grav-thrust because somebody won't replace that crappy compression coil.

MAL

Well get the place squared away. It's dangerous in there and I ain't paying you to get your hair played at.

Kaylee rises, grumbly, and exits.

KAYLEE

< Horrible old tyrant... >

MAL

We work before we play.  
(to Inara)  
You're servicing crew now?

INARA

In your lonely, pathetic dreams.

(CONTINUED)

MAL

How would you know what I dream about?

INARA

It never occurred to me that you did. What do you want?

MAL

We got a job.

INARA

Congratulations. This job wouldn't be on a decently civilized planet where I could screen some respectable clients, perhaps?

MAL

Respectable clients? Seems a contradiction --

INARA

Don't start.

MAL

We don't have the location yet. We're docking on a skyplex in a bit, it's run by a fellow called Niska.

INARA

Never heard of him.

MAL

Well I have, and while we're there you'll stay confined to the ship.

INARA

Is the petty criminal perchance ashamed to be riding with a Companion?

MAL

Niska has a very unlovely rep. If he's got work for me, fine, but I don't -- I'm not sure you'd be safe.

INARA

Mal, if you're being a gentleman I may die of shock.

Mal bows, slightly, and leaves. Pops his head back in:

(CONTINUED)

10

CONTINUED: (4)

10

MAL

Have you got time to do my hair?

INARA

Out.

He goes.

11

EXT. SPACE - LATER

11

We see serenity docking on a large space station, Niska's SKYPLEX. It has docks for at least eight ships, and though somewhat dingy, it is bustling.

12

INT. BRIDGE - CONTINUING

12

As Wash settles her down.

13

INT. HALL/NISKA'S OFFICE - LATER

13

Mal, Zoe and Jayne are walked through the hall by two armed goons. The three are quiet and watchful. One of the goons knocks on a door and it is opened.

Standing behind it is CROW. He is as mean and large a tattooed motherfucker as ever stood behind a door. He stares grimly at the crew a moment, then:

NISKA (O.S.)

It's fine, Crow, they can come in.

The accent is Heavily European, and the man (NISKA), when revealed by Crow stepping aside, is a slight, old, bespectacled fellow -- looks more like Gepetto than the Godfather. He comes from around a desk, looks our gang up and down as they enter.

NISKA (cont'd)

Malcolm Reynolds is which?

MAL

I'm Captain Reynolds. My first mate, Zoe, and this is Jayne.

NISKA

Very nice. I'm Adelai Niska, you've seen Crow, he loves to stand at the door to say "Boo!", but he is, you say it... my Good Right Hand.

(CONTINUED)

MAL

We got word you might have a job for us.

NISKA

Yes, yes, an exciting job -- a train! Has something I need. You've worked a train before?

MAL

We've hit a few.

NISKA

Are you going to ask me what it is I need?

MAL

As a rule, no.

NISKA

Yes, good, you have a reputation. You do the job, no complications, that's what. Malcolm Reynolds gets it done, is the talk.

MAL

Well I'm glad to hear that.

NISKA

Do you know what a reputation is? It's people talking, gossip, it's not... to hold, touch it, you can't. Not from gossip. Now I also have reputation, not so pleasant, I think you know. Crow.

Crow opens a door to another room.

ANGLE: in the room

is a man hung from the ceiling, clearly dead from being hideously tortured. Crow steps in, brandishing a curved blade that is his trademark weapon.

Our gang sees this, takes it in. None of them pleased, but all of them silent.

Crow starts cutting down the body as Niska shuts the door, shaking his head sadly before he turns to the group.

NISKA (cont'd)

Now, for you, my reputation is not from gossip. You see this man, he does not do the job.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NISKA (cont'd)

I show you what I do with him and now, my reputation for you is fact, is... solid. You do the train job for me, then you are solid. No more gossip. That is strong relationship.

MAL

Right...

NISKA

You do not like I kill this man.

MAL

Well, I'm sure he was a... very bad person.

NISKA

My wife's nephew. At dinner I am getting an earful, there is no way out of that. So. The train job.

He moves to his desk, hits a piece of clear paper, the train schematic appears.

NISKA (cont'd)

Here in fifth car, two boxes, Alliance goods. You don't mind taking from the Alliance, I think. From your reputation.

He smiles at Mal, who doesn't really have it in him to smile back.

NISKA (cont'd)

You get on the train at Hancock, heading to Paradiso, I give you cover story in case of questions, but you are not bothered, I think. You get the boxes off before you reach Paradiso and you deliver to Crow... here.

He touches the paper again and a map appears, with a point marked a few miles from the train line. (where the city, PARADISO, is also clearly marked!)

NISKA (cont'd)

Half the money now, Crow gives you the other half at rendezvous point. Anything goes wrong... then your reputation is only gossip, and things between us are not so solid. Yes?

(CONTINUED)

Off Mal's look...

14 EXT. DESERT - DAY 14

We see the quiet countryside --- and the train WHIPS through frame. It has an old, wrought-iron and brass feel to it, but it HOVERS above a lit track, a series of slim metal dorsal fins arching out from the undercarriage, just above the ground.

15 INT. TRAIN - CONTINUING 15

Mal and Zoe, dressed in civvies that look not terribly unlike their usual clothes, sit in the crowded car.

MAL  
How long til we hit Paradiso?

ZOE  
Another twenty minutes. We should be at the foothills in five.

MAL  
Best get to work.

They rise, start toward the back.

ZOE  
He's a psycho, you know. Niska.

MAL  
He's not the first psycho to hire us, nor the last. Do you think that's a commentary on us?

ZOE  
I've just got an image in my head of a guy hanging from the ceiling.

MAL  
And I got an image of it not being me. Let's do the thing.

They reach the end of the car, are moving into the next one:

MAL (cont'd)  
It's a simple job. And we're simple folk, so it shouldn't be a problem.

He is finishing that sentence as they enter the next car.

(CONTINUED)

ANGLE: THE CAR

is entire filled with a regiment of Alliance soldier/cops  
(called FEDS), all facing this way. All armed.

ANGLE: MAL AND ZOE

stop and stare.

MAL (cont'd)

Hi.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

16 INT. DINING ROOM - DAY 16

Inara enters to find Book sitting at the dining room table, reading his bible distractedly. He rises, nods to her.

INARA  
Shepherd.

BOOK  
Good day.

He sits again. She fusses about getting food. A beat.

BOOK (cont'd)  
So, how do you think it's going?

INARA  
(slightly amused)  
The "caper"?  
(less amused)  
Mal knows what he's doing.

BOOK  
How long have you known him?

INARA  
I've been on the ship eight months now. I'm not certain that I'll ever actually know the Captain.

BOOK  
(laughs a bit)  
I'm surprised a respectable companion would sail with this crew.

INARA  
It's not always this sort of work. They take the jobs they can get. Even legitimate ones. But the further you get from the central planets, the harder things are. So this is part of it.

BOOK  
I wish I could help. I mean, I don't want to help, not help help, not with the thieving, but... I do feel awfully useless.

(CONTINUED)

INARA

You could always pray they make it back safely.

BOOK

I don't think the Captain would much like me praying for him.

INARA

Don't tell him.

She turns a bit, says, mostly to herself:

INARA (cont'd)

I never do.

17 INT. TRAINCAR - CONTINUING

17

Mal and Zoe are still standing in front of the feds.

There is a beat, and then the door at the other end opens, an immigrant-looking family coming through towards Mal and Zoe. They take the opportunity to move as well, heading back and passing the family. A couple of feds eyeball them, but there is no comment made.

18 INT. THE NEXT TRAINCAR - CONTINUING

18

This one is filled with poor, immigrant families. Mal and Zoe take a moment, make sure they're out of earshot.

ZOE

Sir, is there some information we might maybe be lacking? As to why there's an entire fedsquad sitting on this train?

MAL

It doesn't concern us.

ZOE

It kind of concerns me...

MAL

I mean they're not protecting the goods. If they were, they wouldn't be letting people past 'em.

ZOE

You don't think it changes the situation a bit?

(CONTINUED)

MAL

I surely do. Makes it more fun.

ZOE

Sir, I think you have a problem with your brain being missing.

MAL

Come on. We stick to the plan, we get the goods and we're back on Serenity before the train even reaches Paradiso only now we do it under the noses of twenty trained Alliance feds and that makes them look all manner of stupid. Hell, this job I would pull for free.

He starts off, she follows.

ZOE

Then can I have your share?

MAL

No.

ZOE

If you die can I have your share?

MAL

Yes.

19

EXT. DESERT - DAY

19

We are moving with the train - - and we suddenly move laterally, over low hills, to find Serenity flying low at the same pace, some three hundred yards away.

20

INT. BRIDGE - CONTINUING

20

Wash is piloting. Jayne is with him.

WASH

We start flying with the hatch open, keeping her steady is gonna be a job of work, so you strap in.

JAYNE

You get me killed, I'm a come back as a ghost and punch your liver out.

(CONTINUED)

WASH

Well, there goes Plan A...

JAYNE

I'm not messing around. You'd best run straight or you'll get a boxing.

WASH

You sound like my father. Which is weird because you look more like my mother.

JAYNE

One of these days --

A beeping. Wash looks at his monitors.

WASH

We're close. Get down there.

JAYNE

(as he goes)  
Hell, I ever call you out, you'd probably just hide behind the Mrs.

WASH

(working the panels)  
Go.  
(a beat. To himself:)  
My liver?

21 INT. CARGO BAY - CONTINUING

21

Kaylee opens the bay doors. She drags over some cable and winches, starts attaching them to the walls.

Simon appears, tentative.

SIMON

Hey.

KAYLEE

Oh hey Doctor.

SIMON

You really should just call me Simon.

KAYLEE

I'll do that then.

He a little bit causes the shyness in her.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

So what are we doing?

KAYLEE

Oh! Crime.

SIMON

Crime, good. Okay. Crime.

KAYLEE

It's a train heist. We fly over the train-car, The captain and Zoe sneak in, We lower Jayne onto the car, they bundle up the booty and we haul 'em all back up. Easy as lyin'.

SIMON

You've done this before?

KAYLEE

(laughing)

Oh Hell no!

(serious)

But I think it's gonna work. The captain's < an absolute genius > when it comes to plans.

SIMON

Is there anything I can... something I should be doing?

JAYNE

(entering)

Staying the hell out of everyone's way.

We can see he's added some layers, including a hat tied around his chin and a scarf to pull over his face. Gonna be windy.

KAYLEE

No call to be snappy, Jayne.

JAYNE

(to Kaylee)

Are you about to jump onto a moving train?

She backs off. He turns back to Simon.

JAYNE (cont'd)

Captain's not around, I'm in charge.

(CONTINUED)

KAYLEE

Since when?

JAYNE

(ignoring her)

Just 'cause Mal says you're medic  
don't make you part of the crew.  
You just play at figuring what's  
wrong with that moon-brained  
sister of yours till we call for  
you, < understand? >

ANGLE: UP ON THE CATWALK

is River herself, sitting and watching the exchange. It's impossible to tell if she even understands what she's hearing. Simon stares at Jayne a beat, weighing the advantages of arguing.

SIMON

Right.

He turns and goes. Kaylee starts strapping Jayne in.

KAYLEE

You shouldn't be so rude to him.

JAYNE

Why, 'cause he's all rich and  
fancible?

KAYLEE

He's not rich. Alliance crashed  
his accounts when he snuck out his  
sister.

JAYNE

Yeah, well, we could all be rich,  
we handed her back.

KAYLEE

You're not even thinking that!

JAYNE

Mal is.

KAYLEE

That's not funny.

JAYNE

He ain't stupid. Why would he take  
on trouble like those two if there  
weren't no profit in it?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (3) 21

JAYNE (cont'd)  
Captain's got a move he ain't made  
yet. You'll see.

He tests his straps and such. They're good.

JAYNE (cont'd)  
Time for some thrilling heroics.

22 INT. TRAINCAR - CONTINUING 22

Mal and Zoe are at the door marked: STORAGE. NO PASSENGERS.  
Mal pulls out a keycard.

MAL  
Niska's sources better be good...

A beat, and he inserts the card.

23 INT. TRAINCAR WITH FEDS - CONTINUING 23

One of the feds gets up, stretching, and heads back to where  
Mal and Zoe are.

24 INT. TRAINCAR - CONTINUING 24

The panel lights on the corners of the door turn from orange  
to purple. We hear locks withdrawing and the door swings open.

ZOE  
Shiny.

She pulls a gas canister out of Mal's bag, prepares to hurl it  
as Mal readies himself and whips the door open.

25 ANGLE: INSIDE THE CAR 25

There are no guards. Just a room full of various crates and  
baggage. They enter, pulling the door shut behind them -- but  
leaving it slightly ajar, as Zoe fiddles with the canister and  
some wire at the bottom of the doorway.

Mal moves to the center of the car, pulling what looks like a  
wicked powerful screw gun from his bag.

MAL  
Find the cargo.

He steps up on some boxes. The ceiling is separated into three  
corrugated iron panels, all about eight feet by four.

(CONTINUED)

Mal puts the gun to one of the rivets in the center panel, triggers it, and we hear a ripping/sucking sound. He pulls the gun down, rivet stuck in it. Removes it and starts on the next.

ANGLE: ZOE  
is going through boxes. Rips a tarp off some and sees two big metal crates with the AngloSino flag printed on top. They are the burnished purple of the soldiers uniforms.

ZOE  
All hail the great Alliance.

26 EXT. DESERT - CONTINUING 26

We are with the train as serenity appears right above it, keeping pace with it.

27 INT. AIRLOCK/CARGO BAY - CONTINUING 27

The doors are closing behind Jayne and Kaylee as the front hatch is opening, letting in daylight and a shitload of wind. When the hatch is open all the way, Jayne gets down and crawls to the edge of it, looks over. He has three different cables attached to him.

ANGLE: OVER JAYNE

We see the train some twenty feet below. Everything is moving very fast.

28 INT. BRIDGE - CONTINUING 28

Wash pilots, hands tight on the wheel, ship bucking slightly.

29 INT. AIRLOCK - CONTINUING 29

Jayne gives the thumbs up to Kaylee (who is also bundled up and tied on). She hits a lever on a winch and it starts letting out cable as Jayne

jumps --

30 EXT. DESERT - CONTINUING 30

-- from the ramp to the car twenty feet below, cables trailing out above him. He hits hard but holds on, keeping his head down. Waits.

31 INT. TRAINCAR - CONTINUING 31

Mal pops the last rivet and he and Zoe lower the panel down as gently as they can. It makes a bit of clatter as they lower it to one side --

32 INT. TRAIN - CONTINUING 32

The fed who moved back hears the noise, starts in that Direction, curious...

33 INT. TRAINCAR - CONTINUING 33

Jayne flips in through the big hole in the roof as Zoe and Mal drag the crates in a net to right under the hole. They start pulling cable off Jayne and securing it onto the corners of the net. Jayne hops on top (still with his own line on) and calls into a walkie:

JAYNE  
Fifteen seconds!

ANGLE: KAYLEE  
Ready to reverse the winch.

ANGLE: WASH  
Piloting. Tense as hell.

ANGLE: THE FED

sees the door ajar, pulls his rifle off his shoulder, approaches the door.

Zoe hops on the crate with Jayne, about to buckle onto his line, as Mal is finishing his end of the net --

The soldier stands by the door, rifle ready, and rips it open -  
-

ANGLE: THE GAS CANISTER

is popped when the wire is pulled.

(CONTINUED)

It shoots gas up into the Fed's face before he can see anything. He shoots blind (the sound is a series of muffled pops), Mal moving towards him as Zoe dives off the crate for cover as boxes splinter by her head from stray bullets. One hits Jayne's leg, he sags but holds on.

ZOE  
(to Jayne)  
Go!

JAYNE  
(into walkie)  
Go! Go now!

Kaylee hits the winch --

And Jayne goes up with the netted crates, out of the traincar as Mal gets to the blinded soldier, fights him in the smoke. Mal is precise and brutal, and though it's messy, the guy is unconscious in moments.

MAL  
(to Zoe)  
Come on'.

They head out of the traincar, towards the front --

34 EXT. DESERT - CONTINUING 34

As Serenity moves away from the Train, Jayne and the crates still being pulled up.

35 INT. TRAIN - CONTINUING 35

Mal and Zoe reach the car -- full with poorer passengers -- between them and the car full of soldiers. They roll out a couple of gas canisters.

Gas billows up just as feds are entering from the other side. Mal and Zoe blend in with the other civilians, choking and keeping low, as the soldiers pass them.

36 INT. CARGO BAY - CONTINUING 36

Jayne climbs up, the crates pulled up by the winch. As soon as the door is shut, Kaylee unhooks herself and moves to him, finally able to speak without the rushing wind:

KAYLEE  
Where are the others?

(CONTINUED)

JAYNE

Shot my gorramn leg!

KAYLEE

Jayne? Are they on the train?

Are they gonna be okay?

The train has stopped. Many passengers have climbed off, still red eyed and coughing from smoke. Mal and Zoe are among them. Behind them, though paying them no particular mind, is Sheriff BOURNE, talking to a fed.

FED

Our man didn't get a look.

BOURNE

Well, Jesus, can someone at least find out what they took?

(calls out to a deputy)

Pendy, keep these people together!

And quiet 'em down!

Mal is listening, but his attention is also drawn to:

ANGLE: A group of families, mostly women and children. Clearly very sick, clearly waiting for something on that train. Someone comes to talk to them and several of the women start crying, clutching their children to them.

A deputy comes up to the sheriff, and Zoe and Mal hear very clearly.

DEPUTY

It was the medicine, sir. All the supplies.

BOURNE

They stole the gorramn medicine?  
We been waiting -- all of it?

DEPUTY

Every ounce.

BOURNE

God help us.

Zoe looks at Mal. Mal looks stone-faced.

ANGLE ON: The crying women. The sickly children.

(CONTINUED)

MAL

Son of a bitch...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

38 EXT. SPACE - ALLIANCE CRUISER 38

A giant Alliance Cruiser moves slowly through space.

39 INT. ALLIANCE CRUISER - CONTINUING 39

Big. Clean. Corporate. No bantery chit-chat to be had. The crew is dressed in the same formal Alliance attire we saw the soldiers wearing on the train car.

An OFFICER looks over an ENSIGN'S shoulder to a viewing screen.

OFFICER

What's the fuss?

ENSIGN

All network alert. Cargo theft. Medical shipment lifted off a train in the Georgia System, en route to Paradiso.

OFFICER

(eyeing screen)

Two crates of Pascaline D. Right. Get you a tidy fortune on the black market.

ENSIGN

Paradiso's a mining community, sir. Most there are afflicted with Bowden's Disease. The miners pass it on to their children.

OFFICER

(almost to himself)

And yet they insist on breeding...

(then)

Tag it received and bounce it back. Locals can deal with it.

ENSIGN

Sir, there is a regiment holding in Paradiso. They were on the train, headed to the installation.

OFFICER

Then get 'em back on that train and get it moving. Who's holding them there?

(CONTINUED)

ENSIGN

Sir, the Sheriff requested we  
deploy a few to help him inves --

OFFICER

Those are Federal Marshals, not  
local narcotic hounds. They have  
better things to do. And so do we.

The Ensign nods as the Officer moves off.

40 EXT. DESERT - NIGHT - SERENITY 40

is parked in a canyon, away from prying eyes and spying  
probes.

41 INT. SERENITY - INFIRMARY - CONTINUING 41

Simon is patching up the wounded Jayne who's on an operating  
table. Kaylee is nearby, trying to keep him steady while Simon  
works. We may or may not notice River quietly sitting in the  
b.g. On Wash's entrance, Jayne pulls away from Simon, starts  
to rise.

SIMON

(re: wound)  
I'm not finished.

JAYNE

(ignoring Simon, rises)  
Why you got us parked here? This  
ain't the rendezvous spot.

WASH

It is now.

JAYNE

Niska's people're waitin'. They're  
not partial to waitin'.

WASH

Let 'em read a magazine. We don't  
make the sale until Mal and Zoe  
are back on the boat.

JAYNE

These are stone killers, little  
man. They ain't cuddly like me.

WASH

I'm not flying anywhere without my  
wife.

(CONTINUED)

KAYLEE

She'll be okay. She's with the  
Captain.

JAYNE

See there? Everybody wins. Gahh!  
(to Simon)  
Dammit, Doc, I need a pop to quiet  
this pain some.

Simon goes for the medicine, loads it onto the hypo as he  
talks.

SIMON

What about the authorities? We're  
sitting here with stolen Alliance  
goods.

(no one denies it)  
Won't they be looking for us?

WASH

They buzz this canyon, we'll hear  
'em before they ever see us. I  
figure we're good for a...

RIVER

Won't stop. They'll never stop.

That was unnerving. Everyone just looks at her.

RIVER (cont'd)

They'll just keep coming until  
they get back what you took.

She laughs softly to herself, her eyes betraying fear.

RIVER (CONTINUING) (cont'd)

Two by two, hands of blue... two  
by two, hands of blue...

JAYNE

(to River)  
How's about you keep your crazy  
mouth shut? Is that a fun game?  
(to the others)  
Now I'm in rutting charge here and  
I'm telling you how it works.

Simon injects him with painkiller as he continues.

(CONTINUED)

JAYNE (cont'd)

Niska doesn't get the goods on time he will make meatpies of the lot of us. I ain't walking into that.

BOOK

This Adelai Niska you're talking about?

JAYNE

Now how would a Shepherd know a name like that?

BOOK

As I've heard it, he made a deal with the Captain. If the Captain's not there to finish it -- If Niska finds out he's being held and may speak as to who hired him... I think we're better off being a little late.

A beat, as Jayne takes this in.

JAYNE

Fine. We wait. For a spell. Then we make our appointment.

That's good enough for Wash, for now.

Mal and Zoe sit stiffly next to each other.

MAL

This is a nightmare.

ZOE

Nothing points to us yet, Sir.

MAL

That ain't what I'm talking about.

WIDER - we see they're currently sitting alone. About them the place is a hive a activity. Hill-Street-Blues-meets-Rio-Bravo-by-way-of-Blade-Runner. The understaffed constabulary is working its way through questioning the train passengers.

And more of the sick women and children are near Mal and Zoe, a constant reminder of their crime.

(CONTINUED)

The SHERIFF, no-nonsense, tired, finishes questioning A COUPLE that we might recognize from the train. He thanks them perfunctorily. They take their luggage, exit.

MAL (cont'd)

Whatever happens, remember I love you.

ZOE

(shocked)

Sir?

MAL

(you idiot)

Because you're my wife.

ZOE

Right. Sir. Honey.

The sheriff confers with a Deputy, who checks a list, points to Mal and Zoe. Sheriff crosses to them. Has the train manifest.

BOURNE

Car 3, row 12. Mister and Missus... Raymond.

Mal is suddenly the protective young husband.

MAL

Can you tell us what's going on? We've been here for so long. Did someone on the train get killed?

BOURNE

No, no. Nothing like that. I see here your fares were purchased by a third party...

MAL

My uncle. A wedding gift.

BOURNE

(it's unheard of)

Wedding gift... You spending your honeymoon in Paradiso?

ZOE

Actually we're here looking for work.

BOURNE

That right?

(CONTINUED)

MAL

My Uncle said he knew a Joey Bloggs out here. Said he might have an opening. Thought we'd try our luck.

BOURNE

You a miner by trade, either of you?

MAL

Not really.

BOURNE

Haven't seen many folk choose this life weren't born to it.

ZOE

Well, work's real scarce for a couple just starting out.

MAL

How come there's so many sick here?

BOURNE

Bowden's Malady. You know what that is?

ZOE

Affliction of the bone and muscle. Degenerative.

BOURNE

Very. Every planet that's been terraformed for human life has its own little quirks. Turns out the air down underground, mixed up with the ore processors, it's a perfect recipe for Bowden's. Everybody gets it: minors, dumpers -- hell, I got it and I ain't ever set foot in a mine. It's worst on the kids, of course.

ZOE

But it's treatable.

BOURNE

There's medicine, Pasceline -- works on the symptoms. Person could live like a person, they get it regular.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BOURNE (cont'd)

But our shipment got stole right off that train you was ridin' in. which is why you won't be seeing a parade in town today.

MAL

(feigned shock)

Stolen? Didn't we see an entire regiment of fine young Alliance Federals on the train?

BOURNE

You did. The same regiment that let the medicine get swiped from under their noses and then took off for their camp without so much as a whoopsie daisy.

MAL

That sounds like the Alliance. Unite the planets under one rule. Everyone can be interfered with or ignored. Equally.

BOURNE

Alliance ain't much use to us on the border planets. But they ain't the ones stole that medicine. I find those people, they'll never see the inside of a jail. I'll just toss 'em in the mine, let 'em breathe deep for the rest of their lives.

MAL

Can't argue with that.

BOURNE

Mind telling me when it was you last spoke to Joey Bloggs? Mal tenses, senses the trap.

MAL

Never did myself.

BOURNE

Right. Your uncle. And it was indicated to you that Joey had an opening?

MAL

Any job would do...

(CONTINUED)

BOURNE

Funny your Uncle never went to mentioning the Bowden's problem. Or that Joey Bloggs ate his own gun 'bout eight months back.

MAL

Did he.

BOURNE

Yep. Blew the back of his head right off.

MAL

(a long beat)

So... would his job be open?

The Sheriff gives a wan smile. The game's afoot and they both know it, neither one about to be so rude as to say so openly.

BOURNE

Say, I don't suppose you folks would mind if we took a retinal scan? We're doin' it with all the folks we don't know by sight. Just to make sure they are who they say.

Jayne comes barging into the bridge. Wash is there, with Kaylee. Wash stands up, knowing this will be unpleasant. Simon follows Jayne.

JAYNE

That's it. We waited long enough. Get this bird in the air.

WASH

No rutting way.

SIMON

(to Jayne)

You really should sit down...

KAYLEE

We can't just leave the Captain and Zoe here.

JAYNE

They ain't coming! We can't walk in there and get 'em so they're done.

(CONTINUED)

Jayne shoves Wash back toward the controls.

JAYNE (cont'd)  
Now fire it up.

Wash flares. He'll get trounced, but he's ready to fight.  
Inara and Book appear in the doorway.

INARA  
What's going on?

JAYNE  
(without looking at her)  
Strap in. We're takin' off..

WASH  
We're not.

JAYNE  
Captain'd do the same if it were  
one of us --

KAYLEE  
Not in a million years --

JAYNE  
Shut it!

His intensity shuts them down. Wash is quiet but firm:

WASH  
Listen to me --

JAYNE  
Do you know what the chain of  
command is? It's the chain I go  
get and beat you with till you  
understand who's in rutting  
command here.

Wash is truly scared, but not backing down.

JAYNE (cont'd)  
Now we're finishing this deal and  
then maybe -- MAYBE we'll come  
back for those... morons... got  
themselves caught and you can't  
change that just by gettin' all  
bendy...

WASH  
All what?

(CONTINUED)

JAYNE

(drifting)

You got the light, from the console to keep you, to lift you up... they shine like little angels.

He topples forward., hits the floor hard, chin leading. Out like a two ton light. Everyone just blinks. Except for Simon.

WASH

Did he just go crazy and fall asleep?

SIMON

I told him to sit down....

KAYLEE

You doped him!

SIMON

It was supposed to kick in a good deal sooner. I just didn't feel comfortable with him in charge. I hope that's all right.

The look on everyone's faces tells him it is.

BOOK

So how do we get the others?

WASH

Jayne was right about them not making contact. Chances are they got pinched getting off that train.

KAYLEE

And we can't just waltz in and pull 'em out.

BOOK

Someone respectable enough might be able to.

WASH

A shepherd can't just demand they hand over - -

BOOK

I know. I wasn't talking about me.

44 INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

44

Mal and Zoe still cooling their heels. The Sheriff in the near distance conferring. Eyeballing them. There is a buzz of activity. A Deputy moves to the Sheriff.

ZOE

You figure Serenity's still waitin' for us?

MAL

If they are, everyone's fired.

ZOE

And if they're not?

MAL

Everyone's fired.

ZOE

So how you wanna play this?

There is a buzz of activity. A Deputy moves to the sheriff with some news. He reacts with surprise. Mal and Zoe watch, curious. Commotion as someone pushes through the deputies --

INARA - appears, the bearing of a monarch. Mal reacts to the sight. So does Zoe. Inara strides magnificently over to Mal. He opens to his mouth to speak --

MAL

What the h--

SMACK - she slaps him hard across the face.

INARA

Don't you dare speak to me.

A deputy has given the Sheriff Inara's official papers. He peruses them as he crosses to her.

INARA (cont'd)

Sheriff, I want this man bound by law at once. That's assuming he hasn't been already...

BOURNE

No one's been bound. Not yet.

INARA

Well thank god you stopped them.  
(to Mal)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

INARA (cont'd)

Did you honestly think you could access my accounts and I wouldn't find you?

(sadly, to Zoe)

And Zoe... what would your husband say if he knew you were here?

ZOE

I was weak.

BOURNE

(not surprised)

So I take it they ain't newlyweds?

INARA

Hardly. Malcolm's my indentured man. With three years left on his debt. I imagine we'll have to add another six months after this little adventure.

The deputies stare in awe and whisper amongst themselves, as they have been since her entrance. Inara glances to them. Gathers herself with tremendous dignity.

BOURNE

You'll have to pardon them. Don't think a one of 'em's ever seen a Registered Companion before. Fancy lady such as yourself don't pass through here everyday.

INARA

I apologize for my manner.

BOURNE

Not a bit.

INARA

(to Mal and Zoe)

Though I've half a mind to leave you both here. If your debt weren't so large, I would.

(then)

Should I contact my ship? Will you need to hold them very much longer?

BOURNE

Looks to me like we're done. We're having some unrelated trouble. And his story had kind of an odor to it...

(CONTINUED)

INARA

Yes. It's not the only thing about him that does.

Mal refuses to show that it burns him how much fun she's having.

INARA (cont'd)

Thank you very much, Sheriff.  
(to Mal and Zoe)  
Come along.

Mal and Zoe rise, follow her out.

The Sheriff watches them go. Something not sitting just right with him.

BOURNE

(to the deputy)  
That's a hell of a lady. Her files were all in order?

DEPUTY

Ran 'em twice.

BOURNE

(lets out a breath)  
Let's get started with the rest, then.

Mal, Zoe and Inara all step off the shuttle. Kaylee and Wash are there to greet them. Zoe and Wash hug, make with smootchies.

KAYLEE

How'd it go?

MAL

She hit me.

He starts downstairs, they all follow.

They all react now to see Jayne sprawled out/propped against the stairs/catwalk. He's sort of in and out of consciousness. A floppy puppy. They have to step over him. Mal does a take.

KAYLEE

(approaching)  
We tried to get him to the infirmary. He's just heavy.

(CONTINUED)

Mal doesn't even ask.

WASH

Kept the engine running. We're good to go.

MAL

We're not going.

WASH

Not what? Not why?

MAL

We're bringing the cargo back.

Astounded looks from all save Zoe. Jayne moans in his full-body-novocaine stupor.

JAYNE

(slurred)

What? Whaddya mean back? I waited for you!

ZOE

Let's get this on the Mule.

WASH

What're you talking about? What about Niska? Won't that put him more or less in a killing mood?

Mal hits a button and the cargo bay ramp starts to lower.

MAL

There's others need this more.

INARA

My shuttle is faster --

MAL

You risked enough flying in there once. And I don't wanna get slapped around no more.

(to Wash)

Far as Niska goes, We'll just have to explain the job went south on us when we return the money.

Jayne groans.

WASH

You wanna explain, now's your chance...

(CONTINUED)

He's seeing something that Mal doesn't. Mal turns, following Wash's gaze to see --

At the bottom of the ramp, just outside the ship are CROW and THREE MEN. Every man large, every man pissed.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

47 INT. CARGO BAY/AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

47

Mal looks down on Crow and his men. They start to walk up the ramp. Mal takes a step forward.

CROW

You didn't make the rendezvous.

MAL

Ran into a few complications.

CROW

You were thinking of taking Mister Niska's money and his property, maybe?

MAL

Interestingly -- neither.

Crow furrows his brow.

CROW

I don't understand...

MAL

Yeah. Look. Here's what it is: deal's off.

Still with the brow furrowing from Crow.

MAL (cont'd)

We changed our minds.

CROW

You entered into an arrangement with Mister Niska. There is no mind-changing.

MAL

'fraid that's where you're wrong. We just, we can't take this job. So you just relax, and we'll get you the money Niska paid us up front, you return it to him and call it even.

CROW

And there is no "even."

MAL

Is that right?

(CONTINUED)

During all this...

MAL'S HAND

Has been drifting toward his gun, as --

CROW

whip quick, releases his curved knife -- buries it in Mal's right shoulder. Mal rears back, big pain.

And all hell, as they say, breaks loose --

Zoe is pulling her weapon, as...

Crow's men storm the cargo bay, guns out and firing...

MAL

Suddenly Crow is there, pulling out the knife, then slamming his fist into the wound. Mal fights back.

ZOE

Zoe has her gun out, takes out one of the guys right off, then lunges at Kaylee, pulling her down behind some cover as she avoids getting hit by the return fire. She looks over to make sure Wash is okay.

He is, nods to her from behind some crates, as...

CROW AND MAL

Crow just fucking wails on Mal, driving him staggering back up-grade back up the ramp with each bone jarring blow.

Mal's pretty much only good with his left at this point, and manages to get in a few good hits, but Crow's punishment is taking its toll on him.

Crow is distracted suddenly, as --

A ROAR

The MULE comes bouncing up over the top of the ramp, sending the other thugs scattering. Wash is driving it.

Mal presses his advantage. Gets in a few good licks. But Crow comes back strong. Sweeps up his fallen knife, is about to bury it in Mal's skull, when --

A SHOT RINGS OUT

(CONTINUED)

Crow goes down, screaming pain, a big hole in the back of his leg. Mal looks up, astonished to see --

JAYNE

Still propped in the same spot, but with his gun out, sort of lazily aimed in that general direction. He still looks like a stoke victim, desperately trying to keep his eyes open.

MAL

Nice shot.

JAYNE

(slurred)

I was aimin' for his head.

Everyone can walk, and that's everyone save Jayne, runs up to Mal.

MAL

Wash, Kaylee -- take care of these guys. Have the doctor look at Crow, here. But not until after you've got him good and tied up.

WASH

Right.

Mal and Zoe move to the Mule, climb on. As they roar out into the night...

Mal and Zoe are on the mule, Zoe driving, Mal on top of the crates, with a better view. The town becomes visible in the distance and he taps her shoulder. She cuts the engines and they get off, start untying the crates.

MAL

We're gonna have to drag 'em from here. We can leave 'em just off the street, notify the Sheriff once we're in deep deep space.

BOURNE

Why don't you tell him in person?

They draw -- but six men with rifles appear from the brush. Mal and Zoe slowly holster their guns.

(CONTINUED)

BOURNE (cont'd)

We got word of a ship not far out,  
came looking. Didn't expect to  
find you coming back.

MAL

Didn't expect to be coming.

The deputy from act two comes over as they speak, opens the  
crates.

DEPUTY

Nothin' missing.

Mal and the Sheriff stare at each other. Clearly an  
understanding, as he addresses the pair of them:

BOURNE

You were truthful back in town.  
These are tough times. Hard to  
find yourself work. A man can get  
a job, he might not look too close  
at what that job is.

(to Mal)

But a man learns all the details  
of a situation like ours, well  
then he has a choice.

MAL

I don't believe he does.

There is a moment then. The Sheriff slightly smiles.

BOURNE

(to his men)

Let's get these crates back to  
town. Make ourselves useful.

Two men each take a crate and haul them off. The Sheriff walks  
off with the rest of them, not saying another word.

After a beat, Zoe climbs back onto the mule and starts to turn  
it around.

Crow goes down in a heap onto his knees. He is on the ramp,  
the huge jet engine behind him just starting to whir to life,  
wind kicking up as the ship prepares to take off.

Mal stands before him, holding a wad of bills.

(CONTINUED)

MAL

Now this is all the money Niska gave us in advance. You give it back to him, tell him the job didn't work out. We're not thieves -- well, we are thieves, but -- the point is, we're not taking what's his. We'll stay out of his way as best we can from here on in. You'll explain that's best for everyone, okay?

Crow rises. He towers over Mal, hatred on his face.

CROW

Keep the money. Use it to buy a funeral. It doesn't matter where you go, how far you fly -- I will hunt you down and the last thing you see will be my blade.

MAL

(sighs)

Darn.

He kicks Crow back -- and the huge fellow is instantly SUCKED into the engine of the ship. It's very sudden, but the resultant crunching noise goes on for a bit.

A beat, and Zoe shoves one of Crow's henchmen in front of Mal.

MAL (cont'd)

Now. this is all the money Niska --

HENCHMAN

Oh I get it. I'm good. Best for everyone, I'm right there with you.

Mal smiles, puts the money in the man's breast pocket and pats it.

50 EXT. SPACE - NIGHT 50

As the ship leaves the planet behind.

51 INT. INFIRMARY/PASSENGER DORM/RIVER'S ROOM - NIGHT 51

Mal is being stitched up by Simon.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

You should have let me do this sooner.

MAL

I've had plenty worse. This is just a OWWW!

SIMON

Sorry.

MAL

Just be careful.

(a beat)

That was pretty fast thinking, dopin' up Jayne. Can't say you've made a lifetime friend...

SIMON

I'll deal with him.

MAL

I'm not too worried about you. How's your sister?

We begin drifting away from them as they speak, heading toward River's room as Simon's voice becomes a voiceover...

SIMON

The same. One moment she seems perfectly cogent, the next... she speaks nonsense. Like a child. It's so difficult to diagnose; I still don't know what the government was trying to do with her. So I have no idea if they succeeded.

and we land on River, sitting up in her bed and worrying the sheet with her hands, repeating to herself:

RIVER

Two by two, hands of blue, two by two, hands of blue.... over and over and

The officer we saw before steps into a starkly lit room.

OFFICER

I'm sorry to keep you waiting. there's always one crisis or --

(CONTINUED)

MAN

We're not interested.

OTHER MAN

We're here about a theft.

OFFICER

The Medicine? On that planet...  
word came up that was returned.

MAN

We didn't fly eighty-six million  
miles to track down a box of band-  
-aids, Colonel.

The officer is increasingly uneasy. We finally

REVERSE ANGLE to see TWO MEN sitting at the table. They reek  
of government. Whatever the CIA is in the future, it's these  
guys. They are blank as slate.

OTHER MAN

We're looking for a girl. This  
girl.

As he says it the first man slides a folder forward, with a  
picture atop it. The picture is of River. The hand sliding it  
forward has, incongruously, a skin-tight latex glove on it.  
Blue.

Tilt back up to the men to see they are both wearing blue  
gloves.

They stare, impassively.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SHOW