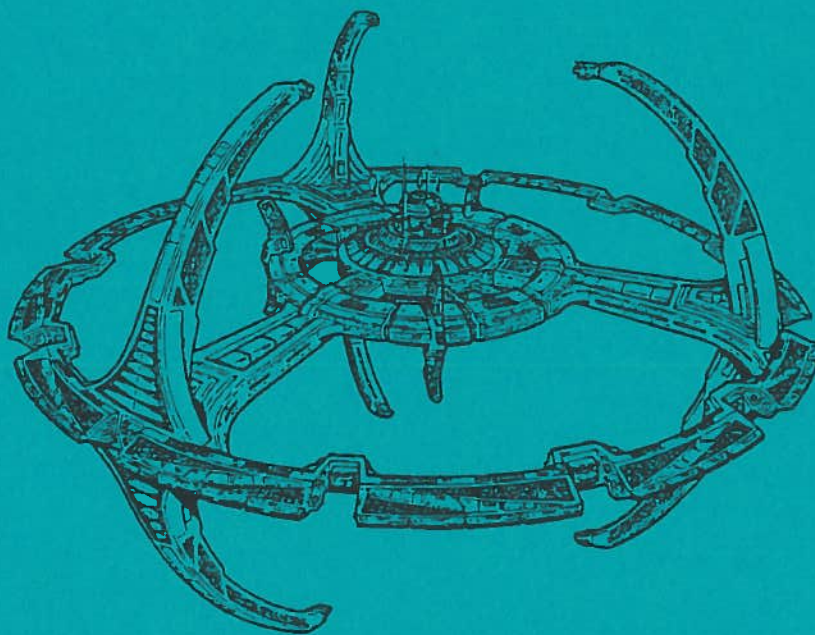


STAR TREK

DEEP SPACE NINE



"Hard Time"

FINAL DRAFT

JANUARY 24, 1996

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

"Hard Time"
(fka "Untitled O'Brien")

#40510-491

Story
by
Daniel Keyes Moran & Lynn Barker

Teleplay
by
Robert Hewitt Wolfe

Directed
by
Alexander Singer

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FINAL DRAFT

January 24, 1996

STAR TREK: DS9 - "Hard Time" - 01/24/96 - CAST

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

"Hard Time"

CAST

SISKI

EE'CHAR

KIRA

RINN

BASHIR

MUNIZ

DAX

O'BRIEN

ODO

QUARK

WORF

JAKE

KEIKO

MOLLY

COMPUTER VOICE

Non-Speaking

Non-Speaking

N.D. SUPERNUMERARIES

STAR TREK: DS9 - "Hard Time" - 01/24/96 - SETS

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

"Hard Time"

SETS

INTERIORS

DEEP SPACE NINE
CAPTAIN'S OFFICE
CARGO BAY
HABITAT RING CORRIDOR
INFIRMARY
MAINTENANCE CONDUIT
O'BRIEN'S QUARTERS/BEDROOM
OPS
PROMENADE/SECOND LEVEL
QUARK'S
TURBOLIFT

RUNABOUT

ARGRATHI CELL

EXTERIORS

DEEP SPACE NINE

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

"Hard Time"

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

ARGRATHI

ar-GRATH-ee

ARGRATHA

ar-GRATH-a

DAHKUR

duh-KOOR

EE' CHAR

ee-CHAR

K'PAR RINN

kuh-PARR RINN

PARADANS

pah-RAH-dahns

ESEEKA

eh-SEE-kuh

SINGHA

SING-uh

TELNORRI

TELL-nor-ee

CHEE' LASH

CHEE-lash

REETA

REE-tuh

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

"Hard Time"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. ARGRATHI CELL

1

This is an alien security cell, with rough-hewn stone walls and a smooth sandy floor. There are no beds or other furniture, just a heavy metallic windowless door of alien design. The light in the room is an odd blue-white, colored to match an alien sun. There's a hole dug in the ground in one corner of the room that provides a crude toilet.

The room's only inhabitant is a male PRISONER in his mid to late fifties, with an unkempt beard and a tangled mass of white hair. We don't get a good look at his face, but he seems familiar. He's dressed in the ragged remains of a gold Starfleet uniform, but it's barely recognizable from decades of wear and neglect.

The Prisoner is squatting on the floor, drawing an elaborate mandala in the sand. It's a beautiful abstract pattern and he works on it with great care.

The Prisoner puts a finishing touch on the mandala as if rushing to beat some kind of deadline. Just as he finishes, a KLAXON SOUNDS, followed by an announcement from a disembodied voice.

ARGRATHI COM VOICE

All offenders prepare for
decontamination. Decontamination
will proceed immediately.

The Prisoner braces himself.

2 NEW ANGLE (OPTICAL)

2

A wall of coherent light passes through the room, sweeping everything inside, including the Prisoner and his sand-drawings. As it passes over the Prisoner, he doubles over, gritting his teeth and choking back a moan of pain. The beam obviously causes him great agony.

It also completely erases the mandala, smoothing the sand as it progresses across the room.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

The Prisoner shakes off the effect of the beam with some effort, taking a moment to catch his breath. The sand floor is now completely smooth. With resigned determination, the Prisoner begins drawing a new mandala.

But he hasn't gotten far when the cell door opens with the sound of sliding bolts and the flash of a forcefield disengaging.

The Prisoner stands up and backs cautiously away from the door, eyeing it with suspicion.

3 ANGLE ON THE DOOR

3

As it opens, revealing a formidable-looking PRISON GUARD back-lit by a blinding blue light. The Guard ENTERS the cell. He's an ARGRATHI, a humanoid alien of a type we've never seen before. He carries a high-tech looking baton and watches the Prisoner warily.

The Guard is followed by a second Argrathi, an older male dressed in a style that conveys authority. This is K'PAR RINN, the chief administrator of this alien prison.

RINN
Miles Edward O'Brien.

4 NEW ANGLE

4

Close on the Prisoner, who we finally recognize for the first time. It's CHIEF O'BRIEN, aged and worn from two decades in prison.

RINN
The Argrathi Authority has been
conducting a review of your case.
Do you wish to add anything to the
official record?

O'Brien looks frightened and broken. All he can manage is a shake of his head.

O'BRIEN
(barely a whisper)
I... I'm sorry.

Rinn allows himself the barest trace of a smile.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

RINN

No matter.

(a beat)

Your correction is completed. You
are free.

O'Brien reacts with surprise and disbelief.

O'BRIEN

Free?

RINN

The crime of espionage requires a
minimum of fifteen cycles of
correction. You've been here for
twenty. It's time for you to go.

The older O'Brien makes no move to exit his cell. He
looks haunted, a shadow of the man he once was.

O'BRIEN

But I can't leave. Where would I
go?

RINN

That's not my concern.

Rinn gestures to the guard, who steps toward O'Brien.

5 NEW ANGLE (OPTICAL)

5

For a second, it looks like O'Brien might resist but
then the guard shoves his baton into O'Brien's gut and
it discharges like a high-tech cattle prod. O'Brien
collapses to the ground.

RINN

Remove him.

The guard yanks O'Brien to his feet and shoves him out
the doorway and into the blue light, and suddenly we...

CUT TO:

6 O'BRIEN'S FACE

6

As he opens his eyes and shouts in horror as if awaking
from a nightmare. O'Brien is now completely normal in
appearance, no longer twenty years older like the
O'Brien we've just seen. But all is not well. We...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

7 NEW ANGLE

7

That we are still in the Argrathi cell, but this time O'Brien is strapped into some kind of alien device that looks vaguely like an electric chair. Wires run from his temples and various other parts of his body to the chair. An Argrathi Technician operates the chair while Rinn and KIRA look on. A Guard (not the one we saw before) restrains Kira.

RINN

There. It's done.

O'Brien looks up at Rinn and Kira in astonishment.

O'BRIEN

Major?

KIRA

It's me, Chief.

O'Brien is confused and disoriented. What he's seeing doesn't make any sense.

O'BRIEN

But... it can't be. It's been twenty years. You haven't changed at all.

The Technician begins unstrapping O'Brien.

RINN

No time has passed during your correction.

O'Brien looks at Kira and at his own body, with his intact uniform and younger man's hands.

O'BRIEN

I don't understand.

Kira knows O'Brien's disoriented and tries to help out.

KIRA

Chief, I know this is going to be hard for you to accept, but... you haven't been in prison. What you experienced was an artificial reality, an interactive program that created memories of things that never actually happened.

O'Brien reacts, not really understanding.

O'BRIEN

What?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

RINN
The Major is correct.

Rinn could care less whether O'Brien adjusts to this information or not. For him, it's a simple fact, a technological approach to dealing with prisoners that he's rather proud of.

RINN
We punish our offenders by giving them memories of incarceration customized to fit each offender's personality. It's more efficient... and much more effective than maintaining an extensive prison system.

8 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

8

As he tries to absorb this. Kira can tell that he's been shaken by his experiences and is having a lot of trouble grasping what he's being told.

KIRA
(gently)
Which means everything you think you experienced in prison, everything you remember, didn't really happen. It wasn't real.

O'Brien looks up at Kira, a shattered, broken man. She might as well be speaking another language. For him, the time in prison was all too real.

O'BRIEN
(simply)
It was real for me, Major. It doesn't matter what anyone says. It was real for me.

Hold on O'Brien's haunted look for a beat, then...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

(NOTE: Episode credits fall over opening scenes)

9 INT. O'BRIEN'S QUARTERS

9

SISKO is breaking the news of what happened to O'Brien to KEIKO. Keiko's a few months pregnant and is just starting to show. She's trying not to overreact, but Sisko's news is pretty grim.

SISKO

Apparently he got curious about some Argrathi technology and asked a few too many questions. Argrathi security arrested him and charged him with espionage.

KEIKO

That's not right. Miles would never break a law intentionally.

SISKO

(sympathetic)

I know that. But by the time the Argrathi told us what'd happened, they'd already given him the artificial memories.

Keiko shakes her head. The whole thing doesn't quite seem real.

KEIKO

Can the memories be removed?

SISKO

The Argrathi claim it's impossible, but Doctor Bashir will do his best.

KEIKO

What if the Argrathi are right?
What if they can't be taken away?

Sisko doesn't want to think about that alternative.

SISKO

Whatever happens, I promise you, we'll do everything we can to help. If there's anything you need...

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

Keiko tries to be strong.

KEIKO
(nods)
When can I see him?

SISKO
As soon as Doctor Bashir gives his
okay.

KEIKO
Thank you, Captain.
(a beat)
I'd better try to explain this to
Molly.

Sisko knows she'd like him to leave, he nods and EXITS.

10 CLOSE ON KEIKO

10

As she lets her guard down and shows how worried she
really is.

11 EXT. SPACE (OPTICAL)

11

The Runabout emerges from the wormhole.

12 INT. RUNABOUT (OPTICAL)

12

Kira is at the controls of the Runabout, O'Brien is off
to one side. (During this and the following scenes,
O'Brien will favor his left hand, holding his right arm
close to his body.) Kira brings the Runabout around
and Deep Space Nine fills the Viewscreen. O'Brien
stands up and looks at the station in amazement.

O'BRIEN
We made it. We're really here.

KIRA
Just like you left it.

O'BRIEN
I used to dream about this. Being
on a Runabout, coming through the
wormhole, seeing the station
again. I keep expecting to wake
up and find myself back in my
cell.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

KIRA
Being in your cell was the dream.
This is reality.

O'Brien nods, but he still can't quite believe this is really happening.

KIRA
(to com)
This is the USS Rio Grande to Deep Space Nine. Permission to approach for landing?

COM VOICE
Permission granted, Rio Grande. Runabout Pad "C" is cleared for landing.

KIRA
(to com)
Understood. We're beginning our approach.

Kira operates the controls and the station starts getting larger in the Viewscreen. O'Brien looks out at DS9 and realizes he isn't ready to go aboard just yet.

O'BRIEN
Could you bring us to a stop... just for a minute.
(a beat)
I want to get a good look at her.

KIRA
Of course.
(operates the controls)
All stop.

Deep Space Nine stops getting larger in the Viewscreen.

13 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN (OPTICAL)

13

As he looks at the station for a long beat as it revolves in front of him, obviously deeply moved. His eyes mist up and he blinks away the tears. Not wanting Kira to see him cry, he turns away.

O'BRIEN
(embarrassed)
I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

KIRA
Don't be. I know how you feel.
After I got out of the Singha
Resettlement Center, I took a trip
back to our old village. It'd
been abandoned for years, but
seeing those old buildings nestled
against the Dahkur Hills...

She trails off, not wanting to step on his moment, but
he knows what she's getting at.

O'BRIEN
It's just... I forgot how
beautiful it was.

Kira nods in agreement. She stands there quietly and
lets O'Brien absorb the view for a beat, then...

KIRA
Come on. Let's get you home.

O'Brien nods, never taking his eyes of the station.

14 EXT. SPACE - DEEP SPACE NINE (OPTICAL)

14

As the Rio Grande returns to DS9.

15 INT. AIRLOCK CORRIDOR

15

O'Brien and Kira ENTER the airlock corridor from the
Runabout.

16 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

16

As he takes in the station, looking at it like a long
lost friend. O'Brien runs his hand over the bulkhead,
as if checking to make sure it's real. Half of him
expects the whole place to vanish at any minute.

BASHIR (O.C.)
Chief?

O'Brien looks up and sees...

17 NEW ANGLE

17

BASHIR, standing at the end of the airlock, waiting for
him.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

O'BRIEN

Julian?

O'Brien realizes it really is Bashir and embraces him.
(He uses only his left arm, while favoring his right
one, something Bashir notices.)

O'BRIEN

It's really you.

BASHIR

(smiles)

It's me.

Kira looks from O'Brien to Bashir. She knows the Chief
is in good hands.

KIRA

He's all yours.

She pats O'Brien on the arm, trying to give him one
last bit of support, then EXITS. O'Brien looks at
Bashir for a long beat, not quite believing this is all
real.

O'BRIEN

I never thought I'd see you again.

BASHIR

I was pretty worried about you,
too.

O'Brien looks around and sees that Bashir is alone.

O'BRIEN

Keiko?

BASHIR

She'll see you in a little while.
I want to run some tests first
thing... see what we're up
against.

O'Brien nods, almost relieved that he doesn't have to
interact with Keiko just yet.

BASHIR

As for everyone else... they send
their best. They'd be here now,
but I didn't want you to get
overwhelmed. You should take
things easy for a while... Let
yourself get used to the place
again. All right?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

O'BRIEN
Doctor's orders?

BASHIR
Absolutely.

O'Brien nods gratefully. Bashir glances at his right arm, and sees how he's keeping it close to his body.

BASHIR
What happened to your arm?

O'BRIEN
I broke it.

Which seems like a clear enough explanation at first, but O'Brien realizes it's not so simple.

O'BRIEN
(trying to make sense of things)
Or I thought I broke it. A year ago. Maybe two.

During the above, Bashir examines O'Brien's arm, lightly feeling it for fractures.

BASHIR
It seems okay, physically.
(a beat)
Come on. I'll have a look at it in the infirmary.
(they start walking)
You'll be kayaking again in no time.

O'Brien brightens a little.

O'BRIEN
(without thinking)
Is the Holosuite still running?

As soon as O'Brien's asked the question, he realizes how ridiculous it is, but Bashir takes it at face value.

BASHIR
Last time I checked.

Bashir looks at O'Brien. Physically he's the same man who left the station only a week or two earlier, but Bashir knows O'Brien's experiences will have lasting psychological effects.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (3)

17

BASHIR
(sympathetic)
I can't imagine what it must've
been like. Twenty years.

O'BRIEN
It was bad.

BASHIR
In all that time, were you able to
talk to anyone? See anyone?

O'Brien shakes his head. The memory obviously pains
him.

O'BRIEN
I was alone. Completely alone.

And as soon as O'Brien utters these words we...

CUT TO:

18 INT. ARGRATHI CELL - FLASHBACK (OPTICAL)

18

O'Brien, still young and in a clean uniform, is flung
into the rough stone cell by an Argrathi Guard. He's
been starved, beaten and abused during his
interrogation and looks terrible.

O'Brien collapses to the floor as the cell door is
closed and sealed with a forcefield.

19 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

19

As O'Brien lays there, semi-conscious and in tremendous
pain, a hand reaches out and squeezes juice from an
alien-looking piece of fruit onto O'Brien's lips.

O'Brien reflexively drinks the juice and slowly comes
around. He looks up to find out where the juice is
coming from, and pries his eyes open to see...

20 NEW ANGLE - O'BRIEN'S POV (OPTICAL)

20

Which is blurry and obscure at first but slowly comes
into focus. O'Brien is looking up at the face of an
Argrathi prisoner, about the same age as O'Brien, but
lean and grizzled from years of confinement. This is
EE'CHAR. He's been imprisoned for a long time, and
knows what O'Brien's going through.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

And despite being tough enough to survive in this nightmarish setting, he still has a kind face and looks down at O'Brien with sympathy.

EE'CHAR

Eat this.

(holds out the fruit)

It's chee'lash fruit. It'll help you feel better.

O'Brien takes the fruit.

O'BRIEN

(still fighting the pain)

Thanks...

EE'CHAR

I should be the one thanking you. I've been alone in here for six cycles.

O'BRIEN

(shocked)

Six years?

EE'CHAR

I know. It's a wonder I'm not insane. But you learn to survive.

(a beat)

My name is Ee'char.

O'BRIEN

Miles. Miles O'Brien.

EE'CHAR

(smiles)

Hello, Miles. Welcome to hell.

O'Brien studies Ee'char. He knows he's in a bad situation, but maybe, just maybe, he's found a friend.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

21 INT. PROMENADE - SECOND LEVEL

21

Keiko and Bashir walk and talk. Bashir is trying to explain O'Brien's situation.

BASHIR

The bottom line is... there's not much I can do. The Argrathi didn't just install memory implants. They ran O'Brien through a time compressed simulation of the prison experience. In his mind, he actually lived those twenty years. He reacted to what was happening, felt pain, fear, hatred, made choices and decisions that affected the outcome. And as a result, those memories are real. The only way I could get rid of them would be to wipe his entire memory clean... and I can't to do that.

Keiko tries to hide her disappointment, but it's not easy.

KEIKO

I understand.

Bashir's just as disappointed as she is. But he tries to put the best spin on O'Brien's situation.

BASHIR

Listen, Keiko, he's been through some terrible things in his life... during the war on Setlik Three, as a prisoner of the Paradans, during his trial on Cardassia Prime. And he's always survived.

(trying to convince them both)

In the long run, he's going to be okay. It's just going to take time.

Keiko nods. She believes in her husband. But she also knows his recovery's not going to be easy.

22 INT. INFIRMARY

22

O'Brien's on the bio-bed, having just finished being examined. He's flexing his right arm, trying to get used to the idea that it's not broken anymore. He's lost motor control of the arm and has to use his left arm to move it around. As he's working on his arm, he walks over to a replicator to get something to eat.

O'BRIEN
(trying to remember how
to do this)
Computer, a piece of chee'lash
fruit please.

But nothing comes out of the replicator.

COMPUTER VOICE
Replicator patterns for "chee'lash
fruit" are not available. Please
provide specifications.

O'Brien tries to come up with a description of chee'lash fruit, for a beat, then gives up.

O'BRIEN
I don't have the specifications.
(a beat)
Cancel the request.

KEIKO (O.C.)
Miles?

23 NEW ANGLE

23

O'Brien turns and sees Keiko standing at the door. Bashir, having just escorted her in, steps aside and leaves the two of them alone.

Keiko looks at O'Brien, tears welling up in her eyes.

KEIKO
Oh, Miles.

They embrace. For a second, O'Brien holds her close, completely caught up in the moment. He never thought he'd see Keiko again and loves her dearly. He's overwhelmed.

After a long beat, O'Brien pulls back. Keiko looks up and sees the look of confusion on her husband's face.

KEIKO
Miles, what's wrong?

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

O'Brien stares at Keiko, a look of deep sadness on his face.

O'BRIEN
You're pregnant.

KEIKO
(smiles)
That's right.

He reaches out and tentatively touches her belly, which is just starting to swell.

O'BRIEN
It's been so long... I'd forgotten.

Miles has tears in his eyes. Keiko embraces him, trying to comfort him, but she's hurting too.

KEIKO
It's all right, Miles.
Everything's going to be all right.

24 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

24

As he accepts his wife's embrace, trying to take comfort and give comfort in return. But his face is troubled. He looks confused and lost.

And on this haunted look, we...

CUT TO:

25 EXT. SPACE - DEEP SPACE NINE

25

Re-establishing.

26 INT. O'BRIEN'S QUARTERS (OPTICAL)

26

O'Brien, Keiko, and MOLLY are at dinner. Molly's eating quickly, and Keiko's almost done, but O'Brien's only eaten a small portion of his food. He's meticulously cutting every piece of food on the plate approximately in half, then taking the smaller piece and cutting it into even smaller pieces and eating the small pieces one at a time.

MOLLY
I'm done. Can I go color?

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

Keiko nods.

KEIKO

Make sure to put your plate in the replicator.

MOLLY

Okay.

Molly picks up her plate and puts it in the replicator. It disappears. She tugs on O'Brien's sleeve.

MOLLY

Do you want to come color with me?

O'BRIEN

(trying to be present)

Maybe in a little while.

Molly nods. She understands. She EXITS.

27 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN AND KEIKO

27

O'Brien watches Molly go. Now that she's not looking at him, he collapses a little, showing how difficult it is for him to maintain appearances. Keiko can see the strain.

KEIKO

You did great.

O'Brien looks up confused.

KEIKO

With Molly.

O'Brien isn't so sure.

O'BRIEN

Do you think so?

Keiko nods. But she looks worried. She knows O'Brien must be having a hard time adjusting.

KEIKO

It must be strange.

(off O'Brien's reaction)

To suddenly have a family again after all these years.

O'Brien relaxes, relieved to know Keiko understands.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

O'BRIEN

It's just... I've been alone so long.

Without really being conscious of what he's doing, O'Brien begins taking the half pieces of food he set aside and piling them in his napkin. Keiko watches it for a beat, then...

KEIKO

Miles?

O'BRIEN

(still sorting)

Uh-huh.

KEIKO

What are you doing?

O'BRIEN

Nothing.

KEIKO

I mean with your food.

O'Brien looks down at the napkin. He realizes he's been acting out habits he developed in prison, without even thinking about it.

O'BRIEN

(embarrassed)

Oh... that. I'm saving it.

KEIKO

Saving it. For what?

O'BRIEN

For later.

O'Brien shakes his head. He knows this isn't much of an explanation.

O'BRIEN

It's just a habit I picked up.

(trying to explain)

When I was in prison... the guards didn't much care if I lived or died. Sometimes they wouldn't deliver food for days... even weeks. So when they did get around to feeding me... I'd eat as little as possible and save the rest.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

The full extent of what O'Brien suffered is beginning to sink home for Keiko.

KEIKO
That's horrible.

O'BRIEN
You get used to it... after a while.

O'Brien doesn't want to admit how much his prison memories are affecting him. He tries to brush past what's just happened.

O'BRIEN
I'll clean this up.

O'Brien begins clearing off the table. Keiko goes to help him.

KEIKO
You don't have to.

O'BRIEN
I want to.
(smiling)
I haven't been able to clean anything in twenty years.

28 EXT. SPACE - DEEP SPACE NINE (OPTICAL)

28

Re-establishing.

29 INT. O'BRIEN'S QUARTERS - BEDROOM

29

It's late. O'Brien is sitting on the edge of his bed, dressed in nightclothes, looking a little lost. Keiko ENTERS, wearing a nightgown.

KEIKO
(re: Molly)
Sound asleep.

O'BRIEN
I can't believe she's still just a little girl. I think that's one of the things that hurt worst... knowing she was growing up and her whole life was passing me by.

KEIKO
(reassuring him)
You haven't missed a thing.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

But O'Brien isn't especially heartened by Keiko's reassurances. The pain of his experiences is still very much with him.

O'BRIEN
(trying to recapture the
past)
I was a good father, wasn't I?

KEIKO
You are a wonderful father. Your
daughter loves you very much.

O'Brien shakes his head. Maybe he was a good father once, but now...

O'BRIEN
I keep worrying that I won't know
how to do it anymore... how to be
a father... a husband.

KEIKO
You'll know. Just give yourself
time.

Keiko goes to kiss him, but O'Brien suddenly tenses up. Keiko pulls back, not sure what she's done wrong.

O'BRIEN
Keiko... I...

O'Brien trails off. He doesn't know what to say. O'Brien knows he should lay down with his wife, but he's paralyzed by anxiety. He's been dreaming of this moment for years, and now that it's here, he can't overcome his fears. Keiko realizes what he's going through.

KEIKO
Don't worry, Miles. There's no
rush.
(a beat)
We should get some sleep.

30 NEW ANGLE

30

As Keiko slips off her bathrobe and we see (from behind) that she's naked. She takes O'Brien by the shoulders and guides him into bed, cradling him against her.

It's a loving tender gesture and O'Brien cuddles up against his wife, finally finding some measure of peace.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

KEIKO
(to com)
Lights.

The lights go out and suddenly we're in...

31 INT. ARGRATHI CELL - FLASHBACK

31

It's a few weeks after the last memory sequence.
O'Brien's uniform is starting to get a little dirty.
He watches as Ee'char bundles up leftover scraps of
food in a rag, then hides it in a crack in the rock
wall.

EE'CHAR
For later.

O'Brien looks at Ee'char with admiration.

O'BRIEN
How'd you manage... six years in
this place all by yourself.

EE'CHAR
You find ways. I exercise, tell
myself stories, draw Eseekas on
the ground.

*

O'BRIEN
Eseekas?

*

EE'CHAR
They're geometric patterns.
Drawing them is a way to relax the
body and occupy the mind.

O'BRIEN
That helps?

EE'CHAR
It helps me.

O'Brien thinks about this for a beat, then...

O'BRIEN
Show me how.

EE'CHAR
It's not easy.

O'BRIEN
I've got plenty of time to learn.

Though O'Brien's remark is bitter, Ee'char nods.
There's wisdom in it.

32 NEW ANGLE

32

As Ee'char picks out a relatively flat, sandy spot in the cave so he can show O'Brien what he means.

EE'CHAR

Here. This is a good spot.

O'Brien sits by the spot Ee'char's indicated, then Ee'char goes to find his own drawing surface.

EE'CHAR

(demonstrating)

You start by drawing a circle.

Copying Ee'char, O'Brien draws his own circle in the sand.

EE'CHAR

Now gaze into the circle.

O'Brien looks at Ee'char skeptically.

EE'CHAR

Do you want to learn or not?

O'Brien turns his attention to the ground.

O'BRIEN

I'm gazing.

EE'CHAR

(picking up where he left off)

Relax your mind. Imagine that the circle encompasses your whole world. Let it become part of you.

(waits a beat, then...)

Now allow your hand to make a mark inside the circle. Expand on the mark. Let it evolve into a pattern.

O'Brien draws a few slashes in the sand, but nothing very artistic. He looks so serious, so un-relaxed, that Ee'char can't help but laugh.

O'BRIEN

What's so funny?

EE'CHAR

You look like a reeta-hawk picking at a corpse.

Ee'char hunches over, imitating O'Brien, tensing his shoulders and neck. Then he breaks into a bird imitation.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

EE'CHAR

Awk... Awk...

Ee'char laughs some more. O'Brien can't help but smile.

O'BRIEN

How can you do that?

EE'CHAR

Do what?

O'BRIEN

Laugh... after six years in here.

Ee'char smiles.

EE'CHAR

After six years in a place like this, you either learn to laugh... or go insane.

And suddenly it isn't so funny anymore.

EE'CHAR

I prefer to laugh.

Just then...

ARGRATHI COM VOICE

All offenders prepare for dormancy period. Any offender still active during the dormancy period will be corrected. Illumination will be suspended in five pulses.

EE'CHAR

Quickly.

Ee'char takes up his sleeping position, lying on the floor on his left side, with his back to the wall and his eyes fixed intently on the door.

O'Brien follows suit, taking the same position.

EE'CHAR

Sleep well, Miles. And if you feel like laughing in the middle of the night... go ahead. I'm a heavy sleeper.

ARGRATHI COM VOICE

Dormancy period initiated.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: (2)

32

The lights go down and we hold on O'Brien, eyes wide open trying to come to grips with his nightmarish situation. Hold on him for a beat, then...

CUT TO:

33 INT. O'BRIEN'S QUARTERS

33

The room is dark. Close on Keiko as she rolls over and then wakes up to the realization that O'Brien is no longer in bed.

KEIKO

Miles?

Keiko looks around and finally sees..

34 NEW ANGLE

34

O'Brien lying on the floor, asleep with his back to the wall, in the exact same sleeping position he used in the Argrathi cell.

35 CLOSE ON KEIKO

35

As she reacts to this disturbing sight, then goes to get O'Brien a blanket, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

36 INT. QUARK'S

36

O'Brien, still dressed in civilian clothes, is playing darts with WORF, who is trying to act like he's enjoying himself. Worf pulls the darts from the board and hands them to O'Brien.

WORF

Your throw.

O'Brien gets ready to throw, then looks at the board blankly. His head's not in the game.

O'BRIEN

Do I need one seventeen, or two?

Worf wasn't really paying that close attention.

WORF

I'm not sure.

O'BRIEN

Neither am I.

Even though darts aren't Worf's favorite activity, he doesn't want to let O'Brien down.

WORF

We could start again.

O'Brien shakes his head. It's clear that Worf is just humoring him.

O'BRIEN

That's all right. I know darts isn't really your game. And to be honest, I don't feel much like playing either.

Worf looks disappointed. He was hoping to find a way to reconnect with O'Brien.

WORF

Perhaps there's something else we can do together.

O'Brien leads Worf over to a nearby table.

O'BRIEN

Look, if you really want to help... maybe you can answer a question for me.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

WORF

Of course.

Worf looks to O'Brien expectantly.

O'BRIEN

Who am I?

This isn't the kind of question Worf was expecting.

WORF

I do not understand.

O'Brien knows Worf deserves more of an explanation. He tries to oblige.

O'BRIEN

It's just... I've been back here for a week, and every day I see faces of people who look familiar to me, people who know my name... and I can't remember them. And the worst thing is, after twenty years, I'm not even sure I remember myself.

(a beat)

I need to know who I was before Argratha. What kind of man I was. I need someone to tell me.

Worf knows how important this question is to O'Brien. It's just not one he's sure he can answer.

WORF

Perhaps you should ask Keiko.

O'BRIEN

It would just worry her, and if I asked Bashir... he'd run a bunch of tests and send me off to see Counselor Telnorri.

("please")

You've known me longer than anyone on board. Who am I to you?

WORF

(trying)

You're an engineer... a soldier... A good crewman, a father.

This isn't what O'Brien was looking for.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

O'BRIEN
No. That's what I did. I need to
know how I thought, how I felt.
Who I was.

Worf tries to come up with something, but it's not
easy.

WORF
You were very... human.
(a beat)
In the best way. You were
honest... creative...
confident... loyal...

And Worf means it, but from the look on O'Brien's face,
none of those descriptions are ringing true.

WORF
You look skeptical.

O'BRIEN
I believe you. I'm just not sure
where that Miles O'Brien went.

WORF
(with conviction)
You will find him again. All you
have to do is look.

37 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

37

As he tries to take in Worf's words of encouragement.

38 INT. CARGO BAY

38

O'Brien and JAKE are in an otherwise unoccupied cargo
bay. O'Brien's got a box full of tools spread out on
top of a cargo container. He picks one up and stares
at it for a beat, then...

O'BRIEN
Interphasic Spanner (TECH).

Jake nods. O'Brien picks up another tool and looks at
it. This one's a little harder. Finally, he takes a
stab at it.

O'BRIEN
ODN Recoupler (TECH).

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

JAKE
(encouraging)
You got it.

O'Brien picks up a third tool. He looks at it for a beat, but he's obviously drawing a blank. Jake can't stand seeing the look of doubt and confusion on his face.

JAKE
It's a--

O'BRIEN
(cutting him off)
Don't tell me. I'll get it.

O'Brien stares at the tool for a beat longer. He's determined to get this right.

O'BRIEN
(tentative)
A... Quantum Flux Regulator.
(with more confidence)
Mark Three.

Jake looks relieved.

JAKE
Perfect.

O'Brien picks up an unfamiliar looking object. He has no idea what it is.

O'BRIEN
(frowns)
This one's a... a...

O'Brien can't believe it. He hasn't got a clue.

O'BRIEN
I don't know.

JAKE
(embarrassed)
It's a Ferengi ear-cleaner.
(apologetic)
You told me not to make it too easy.

O'BRIEN
It's okay.
(a beat)
Let's go through them again.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

JAKE

Chief, you know this stuff. You don't have to worry about it.

O'BRIEN

Maybe I know these tools well enough to impress you, but I don't want to embarrass myself in front of the repair crews.

JAKE

Even if you get one wrong, I'm sure no one'll think anything of it. You may be a little rusty, but you're still the Chief.

O'Brien's not reassured.

O'BRIEN

If I'm still the Chief... then I say we go over these again.

Jake smiles.

JAKE

Whatever you say, Chief.

Jake gets ready to go over the tools one more time.

39 EXT. SPACE - DEEP SPACE NINE (OPTICAL)

39

Re-establishing.

40 INT. MAINTENANCE CONDUIT

40

O'Brien is back in uniform and hard at work on an open panel in one of the conduits. He's concentrating on an especially tricky repair with grim determination, back in his element and happier than we've seen him in the entire episode. He completes the repair.

O'BRIEN

All done here.

Crewman MUNIZ (last seen in "STARSHIP DOWN") comes to check his work. There are two other crewmen at work further down the conduit.

MUNIZ

That was quick.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

O'BRIEN
I re-(TECHED) the (TECH), saved us
the trouble of replacing the
entire unit.

Muniz runs a quick test on the unit with a tricorder.

MUNIZ
Good as new.
(kidding)
Keep up the good work, crewman.
In another week or two you'll be
running this place.

O'Brien smiles.

O'BRIEN
(good-natured)
And don't you forget it.

Muniz smiles back. As far as he can tell, O'Brien's
better already.

MUNIZ
We're about done here. If it's
all right with you, I was going to
dismiss the crew for lunch.

O'BRIEN
You go ahead. I want to take a
look at a couple things down
here... brush up a little more.

Muniz nods, then turns to rejoin the other crewmembers.

MUNIZ
(to others)
Let's go.

They start to leave.

O'BRIEN
(calling after him)
Hey, Muniz.

Muniz turns around.

O'BRIEN
Thanks for showing me the ropes.

Muniz shakes his head. He's a little uncomfortable
having to play teacher to Chief O'Brien.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

MUNIZ
Don't worry about it, Chief.
You'll be back up to speed in no
time.

Muniz turns to go.

MUNIZ
(catching up with the
others)
All right, who's turn is it to
pick the restaurant?

41 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

41

As Muniz and the other crewmembers EXIT, O'Brien
slumps. Even though he seemed to be back to normal,
we see now that it's just an act. He looks tired, worn
out, and still very troubled. He glances down at the
tool in his hand, then tosses it aside in frustration.

Just then, Bashir climbs up a ladder and ENTERS the
conduit.

42 NEW ANGLE

42

As Bashir joins O'Brien.

BASHIR
Chief... There you are.

O'Brien tries to put back on his "everything's okay"
face, but he doesn't have the energy.

O'BRIEN
Hello, Julian. Here to check up
on me?

BASHIR
Should I be?

O'BRIEN
I'm fine.

O'Brien goes to retrieve his tool. Bashir looks at him
skeptically.

BASHIR
Counselor Telnorri says you
haven't been in to see him in ten
days.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

O'Brien glares at Bashir. He doesn't want to talk about this.

O'BRIEN

So?

BASHIR

So you're supposed to be seeing him three times a week.

O'BRIEN

What for? You know Telnorri. All he ever does is sit there and listen to me tell stories. You should see him, hanging on my every word like it's some kind of ancient radio play. And as soon as I finish one, he asks me to tell another. It's like I'm there to provide him with entertainment.

BASHIR

Then maybe we should bring in a Counselor you'd like better.

O'BRIEN

What, spill my guts to some complete stranger? Not bloody likely.

BASHIR

If you'd like, you could always talk to me. I did receive a Counseling Certificate as part of Starfleet Medical--

O'BRIEN

(cutting him off)

Julian, I couldn't care less about your Certificate. I don't want to talk to a Counselor. All I want is to forget what happened on Argratha and get on with my life.

Which is the end of the discussion as far as O'Brien's concerned, but not for Bashir.

BASHIR

You can't just forget twenty years.

O'BRIEN

(getting angry)

Twenty years that never happened.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (2)

42

BASHIR
You're telling me that what
happened on Argratha isn't
affecting you anymore?

Bashir's tone implies that he believes the exact
opposite. O'Brien explodes. As far as he's concerned,
this is no business of Bashir's.

O'BRIEN
I'm telling you I can handle it...
on my own. I don't need
counseling or relaxation or time
to adjust. So just leave me
alone.

O'Brien grabs his tool-kit and heads for the ladder.
Bashir makes one last attempt to reason with him.

BASHIR
Chief, wait. Just listen...

That's the last straw for O'Brien. He turns on Bashir.

O'BRIEN
(interrupting)
No, you listen. If there's one
thing I didn't miss over the last
twenty years, it's your smug,
superior attitude. Now I said I
wanted to be left alone and I
meant it. So if you know what's
good for you you'll stay the hell
away from me.

And with that, O'Brien EXITS, leaving Bashir shocked
and more than a little concerned.

43 INT. TURBOLIFT

43

O'Brien ENTERS the lift. He's furious at being
interrogated by Bashir and furious at losing his
temper, and vents his anger by flinging the tool box
into the wall of the lift. As O'Brien leans back
against the Turbolift wall we...

CUT TO:

44 INT. ARGRATHI CELL - FLASHBACK

44

Close on Ee'char as he carefully adds a line to one of
his mandalas.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

O'BRIEN
(irritated)
Would you stop doing that?

45 NEW ANGLE

45

To include O'Brien, pacing around the cell. Almost ten years have passed since O'Brien's incarceration and both Ee'char and O'Brien are showing signs of age. O'Brien's agitated and clearly looking for fight.

EE'CHAR
I didn't know my drawing disturbed you.

O'BRIEN
It's all you ever do. I'm sick of it.

EE'CHAR
(still drawing)
Tell me about Keiko again.

O'BRIEN
I've told you about her a hundred times. What more is there to say?

EE'CHAR
I like hearing about her. Besides talking about her always relaxes you.

O'BRIEN
What if I don't want to relax?

EE'CHAR
Then maybe you should exercise.

But that's not what O'Brien wanted to hear.

O'BRIEN
You want exercise. I'll give you bloody exercise.

And with that, O'Brien kicks the drawing, spraying sand over and completely obliterating it.

O'BRIEN
There. Happy now?

EE'CHAR
That wasn't necessary.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

O'BRIEN
Who made you the judge of what is
and isn't necessary?

Ee'char knows he's not the cause of O'Brien's anger,
just a convenient target. He tries to defuse the
situation.

EE'CHAR
(reproachful)
Miles...

O'BRIEN
Don't "Miles" me. I'm sick of it.
I'm sick of your drawings, I'm
sick of this place, and I'm sick
of you.

EE'CHAR
Calm down.

But O'Brien won't be mollified.

O'BRIEN
I don't want to calm down. I've
had it with this place. I don't
belong here.

46 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

46

Who suddenly steps over to the door of the cell and
shouts out at the unseen Argrathi authorities.

O'BRIEN
(shouting)
Did you hear that? I don't belong
here. I didn't do anything wrong.

There's no response.

O'BRIEN
(shouting)
I know you're listening.

O'Brien begins pounding on the cell door.

O'BRIEN
(shouting)
Get me the hell out of here. I
don't deserve this and you know
it. I didn't do anything wrong.
Let me out.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

O'Brien continues hammering on the door. Soon, other prisoners in the cell block begin following his lead, shouting and pounding on their own doors and walls. Ee'char knows this will only cause trouble.

EE'CHAR
(a warning)
Miles.

But Miles just keeps pounding until...

ARGRATHI COM VOICE
Offender number five three five oh
six four one. You are causing a
disturbance. Cease immediately or
you will be corrected.

But O'Brien couldn't care less what happens to him now.

O'BRIEN
Correct this you son of a--

But before O'Brien can pound on the door again...

47 NEW ANGLE

47

Ee'char grabs O'Brien and pulls him away from the door. O'Brien tries to fight back, but Ee'char forces him up against the door and covers his mouth with his hand to keep him from shouting.

EE'CHAR
Be quiet before you get yourself
killed.

As O'Brien struggles, the screams of other prisoners being "corrected" echo through the cell block.

This takes the wind out of O'Brien's sails.

His energy and anger spent, O'Brien slumps into a sitting position with his back against the wall. Ee'char sits down next to him, exhausted. The flashback ends and we....

CUT TO:

48 INT. PROMENADE

48

O'Brien EXITS the Turbolift. ODO is not far away, talking to one of the station residents. He sees O'Brien, excuses himself, and intercepts the Chief.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

ODO
(trying to be friendly)
Chief. How are you doing?

O'BRIEN
(angry)
I wish people would stop asking me
that.

O'Brien immediately realizes he's been too harsh with
Odo and tamps down on his anger.

O'BRIEN
I'm sorry, Constable.
Everything's fine. I've just...
had a tough day.

O'Brien EXITS, headed for Quark's. Odo watches him go,
not at all mollified by O'Brien's explanation.

49 INT. QUARK'S

49

The bar's busy. QUARK is working as quickly as
possible to keep up with demand. He places a pair of
drinks on a waiters tray, then makes eye contact with
an impatient patron at the end of the bar.

QUARK
That was a Black Hole straight up,
right?

The patron nods and Quark begins mixing his drink.

O'BRIEN (O.C.)
A synthale please.

Quark glances up and sees O'Brien standing over him,
but doesn't stop mixing the Black Hole.

QUARK
Be right with you, Chief.

Quark moves off to get an ingredient for the Black
Hole.

50 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

50

He tries to wait patiently, but Quark's seemingly
oblivious to his needs and continues mixing drinks for
other patrons. After a couple beats of this...

O'BRIEN
Quark. What about that synthale?

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

QUARK
Just another minute.

Quark goes off to fill another order. O'Brien waits impatiently until Quark drifts by him again.

O'BRIEN
Quark.

But Quark's got his own problems.

QUARK
(gruff)
Look, Chief, I'm a little busy
right--

O'Brien's had it. He reaches over the bar, grabs Quark's wrist and slams it to the counter, then applies pressure to what looks like a very painful hold.

O'BRIEN
I'm in no mood for games, Quark.
So why don't you give me my drink
now or I'll break every bone in
your worthless little body.

Quark looks up at O'Brien, not quite believing what he's just heard.

QUARK
(trying to be
reasonable)
Chief, just because your life's in
shambles is no reason--

But O'Brien just increases the pressure on Quark's wrist.

O'BRIEN
I mean it.

Quark is about to talk back again, but he sees O'Brien's serious.

QUARK
One synthale coming right up.

O'Brien lets go of Quark's wrist and Quark pours O'Brien his ale and serves it as quickly as possible. As soon as O'Brien's walked away, Quark mutters under his breath.

QUARK
(bitter, to himself)
And I hope you choke on it.

51 NEW ANGLE

51

On O'Brien, as he takes a seat at a table, alone.

EE'CHAR (O.C.)

Miles?

O'Brien glances to the seat next to him and we pan over to reveal...

52 EE'CHAR

52

sitting at the formerly vacant seat, wearing his prison garb.

53 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

53

As he reacts to Ee'char, confused and a little worried.

O'BRIEN

Ee'char? What are you doing here?

EE'CHAR

I'm worried about you, Miles.

O'BRIEN

Look, you're not here. Just go away.

EE'CHAR

I can't go away. I'm your friend, and you need me.

O'BRIEN

(defensive)

You're the last thing I need.

EE'CHAR

You're wrong, Miles. You need me. Now more than ever.

54 NEW ANGLE

54

On Quark, who's been talking to Odo through his window, and nods toward O'Brien.

55 NEW ANGLE - ODO AND QUARK'S POV

55

Of O'Brien, sitting alone at the table looking agitated, with no sign of Ee'char. He was a hallucination. As O'Brien takes another nervous pull on his drink, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

56 INT. O'BRIEN'S QUARTERS 56

O'Brien is just finishing getting dressed for work. He pulls on his boots and checks himself in the mirror.

57 NEW ANGLE 57

To include the mirror which reveals Ee'char standing behind O'Brien.

EE'CHAR

Miles, what are you doing?

O'Brien barely even reacts to Ee'char's appearance.

O'BRIEN

(dismissive)

Going to work.

O'Brien puts on his combadge.

EE'CHAR

Miles, I'm your friend, remember?
And as your friend, I want you to know, I'm worried about you.

O'BRIEN

Don't be. I'm home, I'm working,
and for the first time in as long
as I can remember, I feel good.

EE'CHAR

Then why am I here?

O'Brien loses his patience.

O'BRIEN

I don't know why you're here. And
I don't care.

O'Brien EXITS. Ee'char doesn't follow.

58 INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE 58

O'Brien ENTERS Sisko's office and finds Sisko hard at work.

O'BRIEN

Captain, can I have a word with
you?

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

SISKO
Actually, I was about to call you.
Have a seat.

O'Brien sits down at Sisko's couch. Sisko joins him.

O'BRIEN
I don't want to take up too much
of your time. I just wanted you
to know, work's been going pretty
good. Crewman Muniz has helped
bring me back up to speed again,
and... well, if it's all right
with you, I'd like to go back to
my old job again.

Sisko thinks about it for a beat, then...

SISKO
That might be a little premature.

O'BRIEN
Premature? In what way?

SISKO
I understand you had a
confrontation with Doctor Bashir
yesterday.

O'Brien knows he can't deny it, so he tries to dismiss
it.

O'BRIEN
That? That was nothing.

SISKO
Not according to Doctor Bashir.

O'BRIEN
(minimizing)
We had a little argument. Julian
and I are always arguing.

SISKO
According to Constable Odo, you
also had an incident with Quark.

O'BRIEN
(loses it for a second)
Did that little--
(catches himself, pulls
back)
Look, Captain... I'm sorry.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: (2)

58

O'BRIEN (Cont'd)
I know I let things get a little
bit out of hand. But it won't
happen again.

SISKO
Bashir also tells me that you've
stopped seeing your Counselor.

Sisko lets the accusation hang in the air. O'Brien
can't deny it.

O'BRIEN
(defensive)
I guess I've been a little busy
lately, and--

Sisko cuts O'Brien off. He's worried about O'Brien,
too worried to let him get away with trying to justify
his mistakes.

SISKO
(without heat)
The agreement was, you were to see
a Counselor on a regular basis.

O'Brien knows that Sisko's got him dead to rights, but
he still tries to smooth things over.

O'BRIEN
You're right. I'm sorry. I'll
make an appointment to go see him
tomorrow.

SISKO
You'll see him today.
Immediately.

O'BRIEN
(trying to put it off)
Sir, I've got a lot of work to do
today...

SISKO
The work can wait.

Sisko didn't want to do this, but O'Brien's resistance
makes it clear that he has to take strong action.

SISKO
As of now, you're relieved of
duty.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: (3)

58

SISKO (Cont'd)

I want you to report to Counselor Telnorri and begin attending daily counseling session for as long as he thinks it's advisable.

O'Brien can't believe what he's hearing. He expected Sisko to be an ally.

O'BRIEN

You're blowing this all out of proportion.

Sisko can see that this is killing O'Brien, but his main concern is making sure O'Brien gets help.

SISKO

You know that's not true. You're not yourself, Chief. What happened on Argratha affected you a lot more than you're trying to let on. And it's not going to get better overnight, no matter how much you want it to. You need help.

O'Brien realizes he's skating on thin ice. He makes one last attempt to talk himself out of trouble.

O'BRIEN

Captain, please. I'm asking you, as a personal favor to me... just give me one more chance.

SISKO

I wish I could.

(no nonsense)

But right now, in the judgement of this station's Chief Medical Officer, you are unfit for duty. Which means you are on medical leave, effective immediately. And if you don't begin attending counseling sessions on a regular basis, and cooperating in every other way with your supervising physician, I will have no choice but to have you hospitalized for your own protection. Is that clear?

O'Brien realizes that any more argument would only get him even deeper in trouble.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: (4)

58

O'BRIEN

Yes, sir.

Sisko looks at O'Brien with concern. He's been much rougher on the Chief than he'd wanted to be, but O'Brien left him with no other options.

SISKO

Dismissed.

59 INT. OPS

59

O'Brien ENTERS Ops. DAX, who knows more or less what's just happened, turns her station over to an N.D. and intercepts O'Brien.

DAX

Chief, I was just about to head down to the Replimat and I was wondering...

O'Brien knows Dax is trying to make an excuse to talk to him, but right now, that's the last thing he wants.

O'BRIEN

(cuts her off)

Not right now, Commander.

O'Brien walks right by her and EXITS into the Turbolift.

60 INT. TURBOLIFT

60

As he ENTERS, he yanks off his combadge and flings it into the wall of the lift.

O'BRIEN

(to com)

Promenade.

61 INT. INFIRMARY

61

Bashir is at work, scanning some test samples. O'Brien comes storming in.

O'BRIEN

What the hell did you say to him?

Bashir looks up at O'Brien, disappointed, but not surprised to be having this confrontation.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

BASHIR

I take it you talked to Captain Sisko.

O'BRIEN

I talked to him all right. And he relieved me of duty.

Bashir expected this reaction, but he firmly believes what he did was necessary.

BASHIR

It's for the best, Miles.

O'BRIEN

How would you know what's best for me? You don't have any idea what I've been going through.

BASHIR

You're right. You were alone in that cell. I wasn't there with you. I didn't see what they did to you. But I do know you suffered. And that you're still suffering right now. And I'm trying to help.

O'BRIEN

I never asked for your help.

BASHIR

You didn't have to ask. I'm your doctor... and your friend.

Just then...

62 NEW ANGLE

62

Ee'char steps out of the shadows.

EE'CHAR

(urgent)

You should listen to him, Miles. He cares about you. Just like I did. Don't make the same mistake with him that you did with me.

O'BRIEN

(to both of them)

Don't you get it. You're not my friend. Not anymore. The O'Brien that was your friend died in that cell.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

62

BASHIR
(gently)
He's not dead. He just needs a
little help, that's all.

Bashir takes a step toward O'Brien. But something's
eating at O'Brien and being around Bashir is only
making it worse.

O'BRIEN
(blowing up at him)
Stay away from me. I don't want
your help, I don't want your
friendship. I just want to be
left alone.

O'Brien EXITS.

63 INT. PROMENADE

63

O'Brien ENTERS from the Infirmary and immediately loses
himself in a crowd of people. Bashir follows him
outside.

BASHIR
(calling after him)
Chief... Chief...

We follow O'Brien as he winds his way through the
crowd. Ee'char is right behind him.

EE'CHAR
Where are you going?

O'BRIEN
(a harsh whisper)
I told you to go away.

EE'CHAR
Miles, please, don't do this. Go
back there and talk to him. He
wants to help.

O'BRIEN
Like you did?

O'Brien approaches the Turbolift.

EE'CHAR
That's right. We're both your
friends.

The Turbolift doors open and a crowd of people come
onto the Promenade.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

O'BRIEN
Yeah. And look what happened to
you.

O'Brien pushes his way upstream through the crowd and
ENTERS the Turbolift.

64 INT. TURBOLIFT

64

O'Brien hits the door control and closes it before
anyone can join him. As the doors close, he watches
Ee'char, still out on the Promenade.

The doors shut, leaving O'Brien finally alone. He
looks exhausted and relieved.

O'BRIEN
Habitat Ring.

65 INT. HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

65

The Turbolift door opens and O'Brien ENTERS the
corridor to find Ee'char waiting for him.

EE'CHAR
You know, sooner or later, you're
going to have to tell someone
about me.

O'BRIEN
Like hell I will.

O'Brien doesn't even break stride; he just walks by
Ee'char.

66 INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE CORRIDOR

66

O'Brien rounds a corner and almost runs into Ee'char,
who's there waiting for him. But there's no malice in
Ee'char's pursuit. What he's doing, he's doing for
O'Brien's sake alone.

EE'CHAR
You can't run from me forever.

This time, O'Brien doesn't even acknowledge Ee'char.

67 INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR

67

O'Brien comes into another corridor and once again
Ee'char is there waiting.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

This is getting to be too much for O'Brien.

EE'CHAR

Just talk to me, please.

O'BRIEN

Don't you get it? I don't want to talk to you or about you. I don't even want to think about you. I just want to forget you even existed. So why don't you just go away and leave me alone.

He walks by Ee'char.

EE'CHAR

(from behind O'Brien)

You want me to leave? I'll leave.
Send me away.

O'Brien reacts, startled at the idea that he has control over Ee'char's appearances.

EE'CHAR

But don't you see? If I keep coming up, it's because some part of you keeps bringing me here.

68 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

68

On some level, as much as he doesn't want to admit it, O'Brien knows this is the truth. He turns back toward Ee'char.

69 NEW ANGLE

69

And Ee'char is gone.

70 EXT. SPACE - DEEP SPACE NINE (OPTICAL)

70

Re-establishing.

71 INT. O'BRIEN'S QUARTERS

71

O'Brien ENTERS to find Keiko waiting for him. Molly's across the room, coloring. Keiko looks worried.

KEIKO

Miles, Julian's been trying to contact you for an hour. Where have you been?

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

O'Brien looks exhausted, at the end of his rope.

O'BRIEN
Walking... thinking.

He sits down. Keiko tries to comfort him.

KEIKO
I heard what happened. I'm sorry.
I know how much your work means to
you.

O'BRIEN
(tired)
Try telling that to Julian.

Molly, who doesn't really understand what's going on,
tugs on her father's sleeve.

MOLLY
Daddy, come see what I drew.

O'BRIEN
(to Molly)
Not right now, honey.

But Molly won't be dissuaded so easily. She keeps
tugging at O'Brien.

KEIKO
(trying to reassure him)
I'm sure this is only temporary.
You'll be back at work before you
know it.

MOLLY
(insistent)
Daddy. You have to come see.

O'BRIEN
(to Keiko)
Look, I said I don't want to talk
about it.

Molly, who could care less what's going on, keeps
pulling on her father's sleeve. All she wants is
attention.

MOLLY
Daddy, come on.

O'BRIEN
(exasperated)
Not now.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (2)

71

MOLLY
(whining)
Please, Daddy, please.

O'Brien's had about all he can take. Without warning,
he grabs Molly and shakes her.

O'BRIEN
(shouting)
I said not right now. Do you hear
what I'm saying. Not now.

Before O'Brien even completely realizes what he's done,
Molly starts to cry. Keiko protectively pulls her away
from him.

KEIKO
(accusatory)
Miles, what are you thinking?

72 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

72

As he gets to his feet, looking in horror from his
angry wife to his sobbing child. He realizes that if
Keiko weren't there, he might've actually hurt his
little girl.

O'BRIEN
I'm sorry.

O'Brien starts to back away.

O'BRIEN
I'm sorry.

And with that, he turns and leaves.

73 INT. CARGO BAY

73

O'Brien, furious at himself, is venting his anger by
tearing apart the cargo bay. As he tumbles a pile of
cargo containers, he uncovers a small case set in one
of the walls. It bears the label "WEAPONS LOCKER,
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY."

74 CLOSE ON A PHASER

74

As O'Brien adjusts the setting. An LED readout
indicating the power level goes all the way to the top.

75 NEW ANGLE

75

To reveal O'Brien, standing by the open Weapons Locker,
and slowly raising the phaser to his head.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

76 INT. CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

76

O'Brien raises the phaser, placing it under his chin, before he can fire...

BASHIR (O.C.)

Chief?

O'Brien turns his head and sees...

77 NEW ANGLE - ON BASHIR

77

Standing at the entrance to the bay. Julian hits his combadge.

BASHIR

Bashir to Keiko. I found him.
He's in Cargo Bay Eight.

O'BRIEN

Get out of here, Julian.

Bashir sees what's going on. He tries to stay calm, and holds out his hands to show he doesn't have a phaser.

BASHIR

You don't want to do this, Chief.

O'BRIEN

The hell I don't.

BASHIR

Why don't you give me the phaser?

Bashir steps a little closer, holding out his free hand to take the phaser.

78 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

78

As he tries to decide what to do for a beat, then shoves the "muzzle" of the phaser deeper against the underside of his chin.

O'BRIEN

Don't come any closer.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

BASHIR

Look, I can't claim to know what you're going through, but whatever it is, it's not worth dying for.

O'BRIEN

Don't be so sure.

Bashir continues talking quietly and calmly, not making any sudden moves.

BASHIR

Listen to me, Miles. You've got to think about Keiko and Molly. If you pull that trigger, you won't just be hurting yourself, you'll be hurting a lot of other people who love you and depend on you.

O'BRIEN

You don't understand at all. I'm not doing this for me. I'm doing it for them. I'm not the same man I was twenty years ago. I'm out of control... dangerous. And if I stay, I'll only end up hurting them.

BASHIR

I don't believe that. And I know if Keiko were here she'd tell you the same thing.

But O'Brien doesn't agree.

O'BRIEN

I almost hit Molly today. Did you know that? All she wanted was a little attention and I almost hit her.

BASHIR

But you didn't. You're a good man, Miles. You don't deserve to die.

O'BRIEN

(forgetting himself)
You sound like Ee'char.

Bashir looks surprised. He doesn't recognize the name.

BASHIR

Who's Ee'char?

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (2) 78
Just then...

79 NEW ANGLE 79
Ee'char steps out from behind a crate of cargo.

80 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN 80
As he reacts to Ee'char.

O'BRIEN
(pained)
No one.

But Bashir can tell from the way O'Brien's acting that this may be the key to his behavior.

BASHIR
How can he be no one if I remind you of him.

O'Brien watches as Ee'char silently takes a seat on a pile of cargo.

O'BRIEN
He wasn't real. He's a memory... that's all.

Bashir's beginning to put the pieces together.

BASHIR
A memory from Argratha.
(a beat)
Who was he? Another prisoner? A guard?

81 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN 81
This is the last thing that he wants to talk about right now, but Bashir's questions and Ee'char's appearance trigger a flood of memories.

CUT TO:

82 INT. ARGRATHI CELL - SERIES OF CUTS 82
A series of silent scenes from various times during O'Brien's imprisonment. O'Brien and Ee'char's age changes from scene to scene.

-- Ee'char laying against the wall.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED:

82

-- An older Ee'char pulling out a stash of food to share with the older O'Brien.

-- The older Ee'char struggles against a guard, who restrains him as a second guard clubs the older O'Brien with his baton.

-- Ee'char showing O'Brien how to eat a strange Argrathi fruit.

-- O'Brien pacing around the cell and talking (M.O.S.) to Ee'char.

CUT TO:

83 INT. CARGO BAY

83

Close on O'Brien as he reacts to the rush of memories.

O'BRIEN

He was my cellmate. And my friend.

Bashir reacts in surprise.

BASHIR

You told me you were alone in that cell. Twenty years with no one to talk to.

O'Brien knows he can't lie anymore.

O'BRIEN

Only at the end. A week, maybe two. But the rest of the time... there was Ee'char.

BASHIR

What happened to him? Why did he leave?

O'Brien looks to Ee'char, who waits expectantly for the answer.

CUT TO:

84 INT. ARGRATHI CELL

84

Ee'char watches as O'Brien draws an Eseeka. O'Brien's gotten pretty good at it. It's been twenty years since O'Brien's imprisonment, and both men look gaunt and worn down. O'Brien adds another line to the mandala, which is almost finished.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

84

He considers it for a beat, then angrily wipes it out.

EE'CHAR
(re: the mandala)
Why did you stop?

O'BRIEN
It wasn't helping.

EE'CHAR
You have to concentrate more.

O'BRIEN
It doesn't matter how much I
concentrate. I'm still starving.

Ee'char seems to deflate a little. He's just as hungry
as O'Brien.

EE'CHAR
I know exactly how you feel.

They sit there for a beat, feeling sorry for
themselves.

O'BRIEN
You're sure there's nothing left?

EE'CHAR
Not unless you've got a hiding
place I don't know about.

O'BRIEN
We ate the last of mine a week
ago.

Ee'char nods. He was afraid of that. O'Brien's angry.

O'BRIEN
We should've saved more food. We
should've planned for this.

Ee'char shakes his head. He knows getting angry won't
do any good.

EE'CHAR
We saved all we could. It just
wasn't enough. They've never let
us go this long without food
before.

O'BRIEN
What if they've forgotten about
us... or just decided to finally
let us die?

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: (2)

84

Ee'char thinks about O'Brien's question for a beat, trying to think of a way out. But in the end, he knows there isn't one.

EE'CHAR

Then we die.

O'Brien knows Ee'char's right. There's nothing they can do.

ARGRATHI COM VOICE

All offenders prepare for dormancy period. Any offender still active during the dormancy period will be corrected. Illumination will be suspended in five pulses.

Ee'char slowly assumes the sleeping position.

O'BRIEN

What are you doing?

EE'CHAR

What's it look like I'm doing?

O'Brien can't believe Ee'char would just go to sleep at a time like this.

O'BRIEN

(outraged)

It looks like you're going to sleep.

EE'CHAR

(shrugs)

Maybe I'll dream about food.

O'Brien sits down with his back against the wall, realizing Ee'char isn't going to help him find an answer to their problem.

O'BRIEN

You're crazy.

EE'CHAR

No. Just hungry.

ARGRATHI COM VOICE

Dormancy period initiated.

The lights go down. O'Brien sits there, watching Ee'char sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

85 INT. ARGRATHI CELL - LATER 85

The cell is dark and O'Brien is asleep. But the noise of movement in the cell awakens him. Trying not to move too much so it'll seem like he's still asleep, O'Brien glances around the cell.

86 NEW ANGLE - O'BRIEN'S POV 86

Which reveals, Ee'char moving around on the other side of the cell. As O'Brien watches, Ee'char moves a rock from the wall, revealing a small cubby-hole (a different one than we've seen before). He reaches in and takes out a small bundle of food, then squats and places it on the ground in front of him.

87 CLOSE ON EE'CHAR'S FACE 87

As he begins unwrapping the food. Suddenly, O'Brien steps up behind him and gives him a double-fisted smash to the head. Ee'char spins and collapses against the wall.

O'BRIEN
I knew it.

88 NEW ANGLE 88

O'Brien yanks Ee'char to his feet.

O'BRIEN
You pretended to be my friend and
all this time, you've been holding
out on me.

O'Brien goes to punch Ee'char again, but Ee'char recovers just in time and counterattacks. Ee'char connects with a punch that knocks O'Brien to the ground.

EE'CHAR
Now who's acting crazy?

O'Brien lunges at Ee'char. But Ee'char manages to fend him off and fling him into the wall, then kicks him hard and sends him to the ground.

EE'CHAR
After all I've done for you. You
ungrateful...

But O'Brien's not giving up, he digs his hand into a half-erased Eseeka...

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED:

88

And throws a handful of sand into Ee'char's eyes.

89 CLOSE ON EE'CHAR

89

Ee'char is blinded. O'Brien is on him instantly. Ee'char struggles, trying to get back at O'Brien, but O'Brien grabs his cellmate in a chokehold. Ee'char pushes back against O'Brien and the two men roll across the floor, Ee'char struggling violently and O'Brien holding on for dear life. And when they stop...

90 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

90

As he lets Ee'char loose and slowly struggles to his feet. He's battered and bruised, but in one piece. He looks over at the food Ee'char had hidden.

91 CLOSE ON THE FOOD

91

It's a single piece of bread with a crude stone knife stuck half-way through it. Ee'char was trying to cut it in half so he could share it with O'Brien.

92 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

92

As he realizes his mistake. He looks over at Ee'char, who still hasn't gotten up from the ground.

O'BRIEN

Ee'char?

O'Brien goes over to Ee'char. But the Argrathi prisoner lies still. O'Brien shakes him softly.

O'BRIEN

Ee'char?

But there's still no response. O'Brien shakes harder.

O'BRIEN

(urgent)

Ee'char, wake up. Ee'char!

But as O'Brien shakes his cellmate, the Argrathi's body rolls over, his head dangling at an unnatural angle. His neck is broken. O'Brien has killed him.

The only human contact he's had for twenty years is gone.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

92

O'BRIEN
(in tears)
Ee'char.

O'Brien gathers the body up in his arms and holds him close and suddenly, we're back in...

93 INT. CARGO BAY

93

As before. O'Brien's got the phaser aimed at his throat. Bashir looks at him, dumbfounded.

BASHIR
You killed him?

O'BRIEN
He was cutting that food in half.
He'd been saving it... for me.

O'Brien looks over at Ee'char.

O'BRIEN
(a confession to
Ee'char)
And the worst part of it was...
the next day, the guards started
feeding me again. I'd killed him
for nothing... for a scrap of
bread.

BASHIR
It was a mistake. You didn't mean
to do it.

O'BRIEN
No. I meant it. When we were
fighting... I wanted him to die.

94 NEW ANGLE

94

During the above Keiko ENTERS the cargo bay in response to Bashir's call. She's not in O'Brien's line of sight, and Bashir signals for her to wait.

O'BRIEN
I keep telling myself it doesn't
matter. That it wasn't real. But
that's a lie. After twenty years
in a place like that, I would've
done anything to survive.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

94

BASHIR
(to O'Brien)
No one blames you for that.

O'BRIEN
But don't you see. If it'd been
you... you instead of Ee'char...
it wouldn't have made any
difference. He was my best
friend. And I murdered him.
(a beat)
When we were growing up, they used
to tell us that humanity had
evolved. That mankind had
outgrown hate and rage. But it's
all a lie. In that cage... in
that moment... I wasn't an evolved
human, a Federation citizen, a
Starfleet Chief of Operations. I
was an animal.

This is the core of self-doubt and self-hatred that's
driving O'Brien to suicide and Bashir knows it.

BASHIR
No. An animal would've killed
Ee'char and never had a second
thought, never shed a tear. But
not you. You hate yourself for
it. Hate yourself so much you
want to die. And that's what
makes you human.
(steps closer)
But what also makes you human is
the ability to go on. To accept
your mistakes and to find
forgiveness.
(reaches out to O'Brien)
You've been punished enough. You
don't deserve to die.

Bashir gently takes the phaser away from O'Brien, who
makes no move to resist. As he takes the phaser,
Bashir signals to Keiko, who comes forward.

KEIKO
Miles?

95 CLOSE ON O'BRIEN

95

As he looks and turns to face his wife.

KEIKO
Miles.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: 95

Bashir steps back and Keiko and O'Brien embrace.

96 CLOSE ON KEIKO AND O'BRIEN 96

As they hold each other close, O'Brien looks over Keiko's shoulder and sees Ee'char, now standing.

O'BRIEN
(to Keiko and Ee'char)
I never meant to hurt you. Never.

97 NEW ANGLE (OPTICAL) 97

Ee'char looks at O'Brien for a beat, then smiles.

EE'CHAR
Be well, Miles.

And with that, Ee'char turns and walks away. As he walks, he begins to fade from sight until he finally disappears.

98 CLOSE ON KEIKO AND O'BRIEN 98

As they embrace and we...

CUT TO:

99 INT. HABITAT RING CORRIDOR 99

O'Brien and Bashir are walking and talking. Bashir hands O'Brien a hypospray.

BASHIR
Thirty milligrams twice a day.
Take it religiously for a month,
and if everything goes well, we'll
experiment with a lower dosage.

O'BRIEN
You sure this'll work?

BASHIR
It's a treatment, not a cure.
It'll prevent the hallucinations
and take the edge off the
depression. But that's all it'll
do. It won't take away the
memories... or the feelings.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

O'BRIEN
Now's the part where you tell me
I have to start seeing Counselor
Telnorri again.

BASHIR
Unless you want to talk to me.

O'Brien smiles. Not likely.

O'BRIEN
Telnorri will be fine.

They reach the door to O'Brien's quarters. O'Brien
knows he's got a long road ahead of him, but thanks to
Bashir and his family, he's taken the first step.

O'BRIEN
Thanks, Julian. For everything.

Bashir smiles, glad to see O'Brien is starting to heal.

BASHIR
What are friends for?

The door opens...

100 INT. O'BRIEN'S QUARTERS

100

Molly sees Bashir and O'Brien at the door and goes
running to her father.

MOLLY
Daddy's home, Daddy's home.

O'Brien scoops Molly up in his arms. He sees Keiko
standing back, smiling.

O'BRIEN
How's my little angel?

MOLLY
Mommy and I were coloring. Do you
want to color too?

O'Brien looks from Molly to Keiko. He smiles, his
first genuine smile since he got back.

O'BRIEN
I wouldn't miss it for the world.

Bashir pats O'Brien on the shoulder and EXITS, and as
O'Brien joins his wife and child, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END

