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Firefly: Season 2, Episode 10 – “Captain Jayne”

Tentative Air Date: Wednesday, November 12th 2003

Code: 2AGE12

Episode Summary:

A-Story: Jayne must use up all the chits that the crew had been forced to give him after having saved their asses in the final scene of “Hands of Blue” (Second Season, Ep. 4, Aired Oct 8, 2003).

B-Story: The crew has a pick up and delivery job – Get four frozen embryos from Anson’s World and deliver them to a reclusive mining baron named Cornelius Stalmer living on Highgate, a moon orbiting the border planet, Paquin. However, when the crew shows up to get the cargo, they’re surprised to discover four newborns instead.

Episode Outline:

Scene 1: Jayne’s Request

Open on crew sitting around the galley table, staring dubiously at the food in front of them, and even more dubiously at Jayne who has donned a flame-singed apron and an ill-fitting chef’s cap. He encourages them to dig in.

Wash: “Did you poison it?”

Jayne, miffed, walks over and takes a bite from Wash’s plate.

Jayne: “Satisfied?”

With all eyes on Wash, he takes a miniscule bite, his face mottles, and he quickly downs the glass of water in front of him, gasping.

Wash: “Could you poison it?”

With little prodding, Jayne reveals that his mom is coming to visit and he could really use their support. With some gentle ribbing, they all assure him he has nothing to worry about. They’ll all be supportive. He really didn’t have to cook for them. And they’ll be on their best behavior. As one, they all get up to leave (with no one touching the food, of course). Then Jayne, clearing his throat, lets the other shoe drop – he told his mom he was the captain.

Mal: “Shame your mouth wrote a check you can’t cash.”

To much derision, Jayne’s request is dismissed out of hand. At which point he calls in the once-in-a-lifetime-never-to-be-repeated chit he earned in the “Hands of Blue ” episode.

Scene 2: Mom on Deck

Planet: Anson’s World

Open on crew waiting in front of Serenity, ramp lowered. They’re at a spaceport similar to the one on Persephone. Jayne, wearing uncharacteristically nice duds and weapons conspicuously absent, stands at the center of the group, chest comically puffed out.

Kaylee: “Where’s your gun? You’re kind of all nekked-like without it.”

Jayne: “Ma don’t like guns.”

A van pulls up. The back doors swing open and large, burly woman, covered in tattoos and wearing overalls jumps onto the tarmac, looks around and spits. Mal steps forward and puts out his hand.

Mal: "Pleasure to meet you, Mrs. Cobb."

Jayne slaps Mal on the back of the head.

Jayne: "That ain't my ma." He indicates a diminutive elderly woman being helped to the tarmac by the burly woman. "She is."

As "Captain" Jayne leads his mom up the ramp, (followed by Kaylee, River, Shepard and Simon) a clearly enraged Malcolm Reynolds is held back by Zoe and Wash, who remind him that it's imperative they clear the debt with Jayne as soon as possible.

Another van immediately pulls up and a driver pops out.

Driver: "Serenity, right?"

Mal answers in the affirmative.

Driver: "I have a delivery for Captain Malcolm Reynolds."

Mal: "That would be me."

Driver: "Great. You'll need to sign for the four little darlings."

The driver opens up the side door to reveal four screaming newborns. Two of which are placed into Mal's arms before he can even react. Wash and Zoe take the other two.

Mal: "Wait a minute. These are supposed to be embryos. I didn't sign up for this."

Driver: "Well, yeah." He points to Mal's signature on the clipboard. "You did."

Wash: "Oh my...captain ain't gonna like this."

Scene 3: Cue Doc Holiday

Simon Tam walks into the medical bay and is surprised to find crates and weapons piled high on practically every surface. River squeals with delight as she opens up a crate.

Simon: "Don't...."

Jayne pokes his head in.

Jayne: "Ah...good. You're here. Don't ask, but these are all yours now."

Jayne leaves. One second later he pokes his head back in.

Jayne: "And don't let anything happen to Vera."

He pops back out.

Simon: "Vera?"

Jayne now returns with his mother in tow.

Jayne [to his mom]: "And this here's our infirmary."

Mrs. Cobb looks around and is clearly disturbed by what she sees.

Mrs. Cobb: "Jayne, you know I don't approve of firearms, nor," she continues, leveling a cold glare at Simon, "those who use them."

Jayne: Well, ma...you know how it is. When dregs is all you got..."

Mrs. Cobb and Jayne: "You make lemonade!"

They leave.

Simon: "Lemonade?"

River is now juggling four hand grenades in a perfect circle.

Scene 4: Baby Blues

Inara is meditating in her shuttle when the incessant buzzing of her doorbell destroys her peace and tranquility. She sees from the screen that it's Malcolm Reynolds.

Inara: "Mal?"

Mal [whispering loudly]: "Can you let me in?"

Inara: "What?"

Mal repeats his request, only this time whispering a tad louder.

Inara: "Since when have you ever asked permission?"

Mal [still whispering loudly]: "Since I can't open the hatch."

Inara quirks an eyebrow, gets up and opens the hatch. Mal is holding two babies in his arms with one strapped to his front. They're all sound asleep.

Inara: "Weren't ...

Mal: "Sh...sh...sh..."

Inara [whispering]: "...weren't there four?"

Mal turns around and shows her the fourth baby, strapped to his back.

Inara: "Uh...Mal, why are there four babies strapped to you like...like...limpet mines?"

Mal: "Cause they wail something fierce when they're with anybody else but me."

Inara: "And?"

Mal: "I've tried everyone else...except Mrs. Cobb, and only 'cause Jayne won't let anyone near her."

Inara: "And?"

Mal: "Why do you insist on repeating yourself like some kinda Bāgē niǎo? [myna bird in Chinese]."

Inara: "I don't know. Why can't you just ask me for help, Mal, like a normal person would?"

Mal: "Fine. Can you help me...purty please?"

Inara puts her arms out for one of the babies – there's clearly trepidation in the gesture. Mal hands her one and it immediately wakes up and starts shrieking. Inara hands it back to Mal.

Inara: "Go!"

Scene 5: Battle Call

Mal is with the babies in the galley when he hears Wash's voice over the intercom, "Captain Cobb, sir...please come to the bridge, sir!" We cut to Jayne showing his mom around the ship. He's ignoring the intercom (not being used to ever hearing himself referred to as "Captain Cobb").

Mrs. Cobb: "Well?"

Jayne: "Well what?"

Mrs. Cobb: "Aren't you going to the bridge?"

Jayne: "Huh?"

The intercom once again calls for Captain Cobb.

Jayne: "Oh, yeah. Right. The bridge."

We see Mal attempting to negotiate Firefly with all the babies in tow. He's the last one on the bridge as Wash explains the situation: A garbage trawler has been stalking them. Wash has been going slower so that the trawler can keep up.

Mal: "Why would you let a garbage trawler follow us?"

Zoe clears her throat and indicates to Mal that Jayne and his mom are on the bridge.

Jayne: "Uh...yeah. Why are you letting a garbage trawler follow us?"

Wash: "Well Captain Cobb, sir. Since they were doing such a bad job of it, I figured you'd want to be informed. So, well you know...you could tell us how to handle this possible threat, Captain Cobb, sir."

Jayne: "Well...uh...maybe we should..."

Wash: "Sir, allow me to interrupt. They seem to have fired on us."

Mal: "Seem to have?"

Wash: "It's going very slow."

Jayne: "How slow?"

Wash: "At its current rate of speed it should hit us...in oh, about half an hour. Give or take."

Jayne: "Uh..."

Wash: "Captain Cobb, sir. Might I recommend the Newton Maneuver?"

Zoe, Preacher and Doc each grab a baby and strap in tight. Jayne gets a concerned look on his eye.

Jayne: "Uh...yes?"

The ship begins to spin, gyrate and twist wildly. River expertly protects Mrs. Cobb with gymnastic grace. Jayne, on the other hand, seems to hit everything that has a hard metal edge to it. The babies giggle happily through it all. The ship suddenly stops.

Wash: "Good news, Captain Cobb."

Jayne groans.

Wash: "The missile appears to be unguided. Looks like we didn't need the Newton maneuver after all."

Mal: "So you're saying that this ship poses no threat whatsoever and that we can lose it at any time...which...is...what Captain Cobb would ask if he wasn't so concussed."

Wash. "Yup!"

Cut to exterior scene of Firefly engine glowing, then zipping away.

Scene 6: Baby Run

Planet: Dyton

The crew soon realizes that they'll never make it to Highgate before they run out of the limited formula and diapers they'd been given. They set a course for Dyton to pick up the needed supplies. After landing, Kaylee informs the crew they'll need more than diapers and formula if they want to complete the run. It turns out Wash's Newton Maneuver messed up the Grav Dampener and they'll be delayed at least a day until it can be found and replaced.

Kaylee: "Next time, a little more warning please."

While scavenging for the part with Wash, Zoe notices a garbage hauler parked next to the junkyard.

Zoe: "Honey?"

Wash: "Yes, apple of my eye?"

Zoe: "What do you think of that hauler over there?"

Wash: "I think we need to be looking at ships *in* the junkyard, sweetums. People tend to take a dim view of their ships being taken apart while still operational—especially people with weapons."

Zoe: "That's not what I meant."

Wash: "Ah...this one of those times when I'm expected to read your mind and I get in trouble when I don't, right?"

Zoe: "Exactly."

Wash [sighing]: "It's a garbage hauler."

Zoe: "Go on."

Wash [starting to get it]: "Do you know how many thousands of haulers there are flying around this part of the system?"

Zoe: "Why yes. Yes, I do."

Wash: "So why do you think that might be the one that was following us?"

Zoe gives him a look.

Wash [on a second take]: "Because...it's...got...a missile launcher welded to its front side!"

Zoe lights up.

Wash: "I hate to tell you this but we're in the Zhu Que system – a veritable mecca of drug smugglers. Welding missile launchers to ships is not uncommon."

Zoe: "Look closer."

Wash does and his face lights up.

Wash: "That's a dumbfire missile launcher."

Zoe: "With?"

Wash: "One missile launched!"

Zoe smiles once again.

Zoe: "Better call the captain. The *real* captain."

Wash: "Does this mean we get to have 'I got it right' sex tonight?"

Scene 7: Brainwashed

The crew decides that there's nothing to fear from the hauler (since they can easily outrun her) but that it would be best to get out of Dyton ASAP – and they do.

One day out from Highgate, Wash once more sends out an alert over the intercom.

Wash: "Captain to the bridge."

Mal and Jayne arrive at the same time. Zoe is already there.

Zoe [looks at Mal]: "Captain, the babies?"

Mal: "Turns out Mrs. Cobb is good at more than just knitting caps."

Mal [to Wash]: "What's the problem?"

Wash: "You know that garbage hauler we could easily outrun?"

Mal: "Yeah?"

Wash flips on the monitor. Sitting square in its center is the garbage hauler from Dyton.

Wash: "It's in front of us."

Mal: "Exactly how much in front of us?"

Wash: "Close enough to float over some baby formula."

Jayne: "How in the verse?"
Zoe: "Look what's welded to the top."
Just then Kaylee enters the bridge.
Kaylee: "That's a Valfran 312."
Mal: "English, please."
Kaylee: "A piss-poor thrust pod if ever there was one. Ain't hardly reliable on Sandfly Transport much less a garbage hauler. They're lucky they ain't dead."
Mal: "Who are these guys?"
Wash: "Beats me."
Mal: "If anyone's got an idea, I'm listening."
Jayne: "Uh...we could just talk to 'em."
Everyone looks at Jayne, surprised. It's actually a good idea.
Mal: "Hail away."

We see a woman, prim and proper on the monitor. Her hair is tied neatly in a bun and her blouse buttoned up to the neck.

Woman: "Give up the children or face the wrath of the Lord."
Jayne[laughing]: "Sister, I hope your Lord has something more than that dumbfire missile system."
Mal: "Jayne, best fetch the Shepard."

Cut to Shepard on the bridge.

Shepard: "Ma'am, my name is Shepard Book. I understand you're a might angry. How can I be of assistance?"
Woman: "You're no Shepard."
Shepard: "I don't doubt that there are many who'd agree with you."
Woman: "What's a Shepard doing with a lot such as these pirates, thieves and leaches?"
Jayne: "Who you calling a leach?"
Shepard: "Can you think of any better place for a Shepard?"
Woman [grudgingly]: "Those babies you have on board..."
Shepard looks at Mal who nods his permission.
Shepard: "What about them?"
Woman: "I will not let you bring them to their deaths."
Shepard: "I assure you, ma'am that they're in good hands. Protected from all who might do them harm. You have my word on that."
Woman: "Ha!"
Mal: "We're just transporting them to their father in Highgate."
Woman: "Father?! Cornelius Stalmer not their father. They're clones and he's their progenitor."
Mal: "You seem a might sure of yourself."
Woman: "I should be. That spawn of Satan is my brother. He's going to raise those children long enough to harvest them for parts so that he can maintain his own hedonistic and lecherous existence."

Shepard: "How can you be so sure?"

Woman: "How do you think we managed to track you across the verse? The babies were tagged like common cattle and then sold on the black market. Fortunately, for those poor innocent lambs, one of our church members spotted the manifest, realized what was happening and informed me as to the evil being perpetrated."

Cut to medical bay. Mal, Simon, Jayne, Mrs. Cobb and Shepard are there.

Simon: "Yup. They're tagged."

Mrs. Cobb: "Poor dears. Anything we can do for them?"

Simon: "I suppose I could take 'em all out...Captain."

Mrs. Cobb: "You beast! Why would you kill these poor innocent things? What is wrong with you?" Jayne, don't let him do it!"

Simon: "I just meant..."

Jayne: "Remove the tracking devices, doc. No need to get all violent like."

Simon: "I...how..."

Alarms go off. Wash [sounding VERY worried]: "Captain to the bridge!!"

Visible through the forward viewport is the garbage hauler being swarmed by Reavers.

Mal: "How the hell did they sneak up on us?"

Wash: "My fault, Captain. They came in cold and didn't power up till they were right on top of us."

Jayne: "Wait a minute. Reavers don't sneak up; they just...you know...show up. How do we know they ain't just pretending to be Reavers?"

Wash turns on the communication channel and they hear horrible sounds of rape, torture and what is most likely humans being eaten alive. Mal motions with his hand and Wash turns it off.

Sheppard begins to utter a prayer when the communication board lights up again. Mal nods for Wash to answer it. A well-dressed man appears.

Stalmer: "I believe you have my children."

Shepard: "Don't you mean 'property?'"

Stalmer: "The distinction is moot, sir. Your choice is to get paid or die – the latter of which I imagine would be in a most unpleasant fashion."

Mal: "We're not the unreasonable sort, Mr. Stalmer. But I dare say it would be hard for a Reaver to tell the difference between one of my crew and the baby strapped to their chest."

Stalmer: "I see your point, Captain Reynolds. What do you propose?"

Mal [smiling broadly] "Well, for one thing, a hell of a bigger payday."

Stalmer [waits a beat]: "I think we can come to an arrangement."

Mal: "Second..."

Stalmer: "Second? You don't get to..."

Mal: "I think I hear the babies crying, Stalmer. They sure are mighty ravenous beasts."

Stalmer [coldly]: "I'm listening, Captain Reynolds."

Mal: "Get your Reaver buddies to back off a good ways."
Stalmer: "I'll to see to it..."
Mal: "I'll wait."
Mal indicates to Wash to flip off the com link. He does.
Zoe: "What's the plan, Captain?"
Jayne: "Don't look at me!"
Zoe [dryly]: "I wasn't."
Mal [to Wash]: "How many minutes you figure till he calls our bluff?"
Wash: "Five tops. More like two, though."
Jayne: "What the hell are we gonna do against a whole Reaver armada in two minutes?"
Mal: "We gotta find out which ship Stalmer's on..."
Wash points at a blip on the radar screen.
Wash: "That one."
Shepard: "How in the name of the Lord?"
Wash zooms in the screen.
Wash: "See that weird EM dish?"
Shepard: "Yeah."
Kaylee: "Ain't never seen anything like that before."
Wash: "Exactly. Anyone wanna bet that if we take that out we solve a lot of problems?"
Jayne [disgusted]: "With what? Don't have no weapons on this ship."
Zoe [looking at Wash]: "Actually, we do."
Wash: "Thanks, honeybuns. One Newton coming up."

Exterior scene: Serenity blazes directly towards Stalmer's ship. By the time the Reavers power up their weapons Wash has already breached their armada and Serenity scrapes Stanton's hull, clipping off the EM dish.

The Reavers proceed to ignore Serenity as it makes good its escape and, as one, swarm Stalmer's ship.

Scene 8: Goodbyes

Back on Anson's World Mrs. Cobb, with all four babies securely fastened into proper strollers, says goodbye to the crew. She has made them all horrendously ill-fitting knitted caps. All, that is, but Simon, who is quite happy to be left out of the honors. Mrs. Cobb insists on a group picture. The crew – with Jayne still front and center in his Captain's outfit - does its best not to show their discomfort with the ghastly headwear (except for Jayne and River who seem quite pleased).

As Mrs. Cobb is about to leave, she pulls Mal aside and whispers, "Thank you for taking care of my boy...Captain."

The end