[Pro Bowl V: Week Three] Scenario

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Jailhouse Blues

This was a turn up for the books. The cell he was in was chilly, but not wholly uncomfortable. The bunk was a different story, with bars and grooves seemly designed to inflict as much discomfort as possible. His back ached even before he had roused from sleep, his muscles contracting against wedges of stiffness. It didn’t help, either, that his body was entirely oversized for the bunk, his shoulders easily wider than the frame, and his left arm dangled off the edge.

The metal of the bunk groaned with protest as he jerked, the myriad of sensations wresting him from his stupor. His head swam with a mixture of pounding bass notes of a headache and a black-green bruise welling up on the back of his neck. He swooned, much to his embarrassment, having never allowed himself this function in the past, and he slumped back down on the bunk. Which promptly buckled under the strain of his machinations, dumping off to one side as the supports failed miserably.

An angry grunt emitted from his lungs as he landed bonelessly on the rough stone of the cell floor. His ribs suddenly pinched, landing on a swaddle of cloth filled with a bunch of objects. He rolled away from the bunk and wound up against the bunks on the other side of the cell. His head rocked back and forth slightly, his eyes firmly shut against the vertigo and dizziness. He didn’t want to open them, fearing the worst, but he knew that to get out this predicament, he would at least need to squint.

Cautiously he opened his eyes, glaring out at the world around him through his eyelashes. His head still pounded, roiling with waves of dizziness, which had begun to affect his stomach. Seasickness had always been a weakness of his, ever since his first days at the Academy, and he knew that a minor concussion like he had was tantamount to a choppy sea. He opened his mouth, to breathe, to curse, to groan, but all he did was sigh.

“Why?” he croaked, trying to bring some semblance of moisture to his lips with his decidedly unhealthy tongue. Somehow, it tasted like the underside of a landspeeder, somehow both oily and gritty, and it did nothing to his lips but help him realize just how parched they were. His squinting eyes stared up at the ceiling, which was flat and featureless, except for a pair of strip lights glaring back at him with their evil malicious pale blue lights. His sudden hatred for light was new, but understandable.

With the effort of a dozen nerfs dragging him, he labored his way to a sitting position, breathing heavily with the exertion. He looked around, taking in his surroundings as best as he could. He was in a cell. That was clear, or mostly clear. The iron bars were a bit of a giveaway. What was unusual was the barred door was ajar. He looked to the side, towards his collapsed bunk, to the bundle of cloth and knickknacks he’d fallen on, and the reason for his bruised ribs.

He looked down at himself, at the clothing he was wearing and his damaged knuckles. The blood rushed in his ears as he watched stared at the torn skin, that evening’s revelry coming back to him in fits and starts. The Pro Bowl had ended and the teams, along with the clans, had spent the evening at the main casino on Canto Bight. The Palatinae contingent had spent the better part of the night gambling, drinking, and jeering at the other clans.

The Palpatines among them had been especially raucous, led by the ever-flamboyant Thran. He had personally delivered a dozen rounds of drinks, plying them with charisma and not the least bit of peer pressure. Many of the neophytes had bowed out early, their livers and stomachs unable to keep up with the rest. The Equites and Elders, seasoned veterans to a man, were used to excessive drinking, and were able to keep up.

He had been among them, keeping up with Thran and Dante. He rarely drank as much as this, his vices leaning in other directions than alcohol. But he was a stout man, built like a bear, and fit, so his tolerance was significantly higher than the average man. If he thought about it, it was probably that last round of Galactic Blasters that Thran had handed out, which he readily downed. It wasn’t long after that their… riot had occurred. The police had arrived not long after, armed with stun batons and nasty coshes.

So that was where the bump on his head came from. The liquor had caused all this. And Thran. Archangel would have to remember that. He lurched unceremoniously to his feet, staggering slightly, slipping in unfamiliar boots. They were his dress uniform’s standard black affair, the leather shining and slick. He hadn’t worn them for at least three years, and they were uncharacteristically tight around his tree trunk calves.

A pair of unsteady footsteps later, he was back to the remnants of his bunk, and the bundle of cloth. He gathered it up and spilled the contents out onto the floor, taking stock of the strange assortment left for him. The cloth, it turned out, was a cape, just barely big enough to cover his huge frame. A long barrel blaster, a sporty model, was the first thing he noticed, and he checked the energy cell.

“No one seems to keep their things charged,” he muttered to himself, slapping the energy cell back into the pistol, which he holstered in the inside pocket of his uniform dress jacket. The other pockets in his jacket became home to a small recording rod, a packet of blinding dust, a polyhedral dice and a can of insect repellent. What idiot put this bundle together, he thought, staring at a remarkably accurate figurine of the current Grand Master, Darth Nehalem. He toggled the little activator on the back, and the little Evant’s fist gripped hard.

He slipped a nerf wool towel from the cloak bundle and slung it around his neck like a scarf and donned the googles. The final item, a glowrod, was a bit big for him to stash anywhere, so he set it aside before he slipped the cloak around his shoulders. He stood, glowrod in hand, mildly confused about the unusual grouping of equipment. The hinges of the open door creaked slightly as the air in the hallway beyond shifted.

Someone has orchestrated the most unusual prison break that he had ever been a part of. He was still unsteady on his feet, but moved slowly towards the door, the leather of his boots creaking with each step. The door swung open easily, allowing him to move into the hallway. He could hear some quiet chatter towards the end of the hallway to one side. It sounded like a sabacc game in progress.

The giant man moved slowly down the hallway, conscious of the quiet snoring emitting from a nearby cell. Not all the cells had been left open, it seemed, with only his appearing to be forgotten. The noise that the card players were echoing and reverberating. He stumbled slightly, and almost lost of his footing, before he caught himself on a vertical pipe. The sabacc players suddenly became quiet.

“Did you hear that?” one of them asked, followed by the distinctive sound of chairs scrapping on rough permacrete. Two sets of footprints advanced towards him, and he pushed himself against the pipe, which did almost nothing to hide his bulk. Two guards appeared around the curve of the hallway, white armored, but without their helmets. They seemed unconcerned.

As they got closer, he wracked his alcohol-dampened brain for what he could do. One of the men, a portly, unkempt looking Sergeant veered towards his patch of darkness and pipping, intent on seeking out the source of the noise. With a moment of thought, Archangel flicked up his glowrod, and flashed him in the eye with its bright beam. The man reared back, his arms coming up to cover his eyes, but was bowled over by the bulk of the Sith Warlord. His companion soon followed, a swift kick to the groan and a head slammed into a pipe.

“Sorry gents,” he said quietly, creeping up the hallway. He had made a commotion, and he was sure the other guards would be on their way. This was a moment where he had to play to his strengths. Other chairs backed up, and he could hear holsters being unsnapped, and stun rods igniting. His head was swimming, but he knew something that these prison guards did not: he was a Sith.

He let out a bestial roar and charged forward, rampaging into the trio of men who were making their way into the hallway. He burst through into the guard house and kicked one guard across the face. He turned just as a stun rod lanced out at him, narrowing missing his neck. He spun and slapped the man with the packet of blinding powder, which he spread in front of him like a screen. The googles fended off the worst of it, but the two guards nearby took the brunt of it.

With a twist, he battered the last guard on his feet aside, sending him over the sabacc table, spilling card discs and chips. Archangel stood amongst the chaos, the groaning and incapacitated men looking decidedly unhappy. He dusted his hands, trying to get the worst of the blinding powder from them, and stepped through the debris carefully. He tried to straighten his uniform, though the towel scarf he wore was not an ideal look at the best of times.

He looked down at the glowrod, busted and sparking slightly because of the melee, and he cast it aside. A moment later, he slipped out the front gate of the police station, the cool crisp air whipped up by an oncoming storm. That might help his escape. Not three steps away from the station, the alarm klaxon began to sound, his heart leaping up into his throat. So much for quick and easy.

He had an idea of where the spaceport might be, somewhere to the east, he thought. The area around the police station was still very busy, revelers moving from casino to casino, taking a chance to visit the busker stalls for a late-night snack. He tried his best to fade into the crowd, but he was huge man in a military dress uniform, he stood out like a sore thumb.

A thought occurred to him. What if… he considered, drawing the pistol from his jacket. It wasn’t strong enough to actually hurt anyone, he was sure of that. But an energy cell is an energy cell. It was a task of mere moments for him to short circuit it and lay it carefully on a barrel of very cheap whiskey, the kind used to fuel landspeeders and get you drunk very quickly. The tiny Darth Nehalem stood above the blaster menacingly.

Archangel moved away quickly; his cloak pulled up around his face. Once he had made it a half dozen steps, three police officers started pointing at him, their batons and stun guns raised. He turned and made a quick gesture. With a soft pull of telekinetic power, he depressed the activation stub on the figurine, whose mighty kung-fu grip completed the short on the energy cell. It exploded in a remarkably boisterous way, leading Archangel to believe that the whiskey had been adulterated, possibly with starfighter fuel.

Suddenly, the police officers were occupied, one had apparently caught the brunt of the blast and was now thrashing around on the ground, while the others tried their best to help. The busker stalls nearby had been engulfed as well, and most of the patrons were screaming and running around aimlessly. Archangel made his escape, slipping down a back alley which he believed ran in a roughly easterly direction.

After a few tense minutes, in which he had to dodge three firefighting landspeeders and a platoon of hazard officers rushing to the scene of the explosion, the spaceport was finally in sight. Standing at the main gates was a familiar face.

“Thran!” Archangel roared, all pretense of subtly lost in a moment’s rage, “You…”

The Warlord grinned at his fellow Palpatine and pointed at the quartet of guards standing not three feet from Archangel, encroaching slowly. He whipped his towel from around his neck and threw it at them, before sprinting towards the spaceport. Thran was already retreating, heading towards the waiting Lambda-class shuttle craft. The Palpatines and some of their closest allies had come in style for their visit to the casino.

“Come on, you old bear,” Thran said, ascending the ramp, “Fun time is over!”

Archangel charged up the ramp after him, growling obscenities which were not physically possible, but that didn’t mean that he wouldn’t at least try to make them happen. The police officers had been only mildly inconvenienced by the randomly applied nerf wool towel but had stopped in their tracks as the laser turrets of the Lambda swiveled in their direction. From the pilot’s seat, Kamjin gave the quartet a jaunty wave, and lifted off quickly, before the spaceport could close down, or scramble fighters.

The Lambda rocked slightly as it lifted, its wings locking into flight configuration and its engines building up strength to make for space. Kam negotiated the motion and swore under his breath.

“Archangel!” he shouted over his shoulder as the Lambda rocked again, “Save it for later!”

The others in the passenger hold were laughing drunkenly, though one of the neophytes had fallen into an unconscious stupor and had missed all the fun.