

Wedding Day Greens

1 - Gray Wray

Lt. Marc Martin was having a wonderful time. He was completely smashed out of his skull, but he didn't mind. Well, let's say he was so drunk he forgot to be concerned about being drunk, which was quite unusual for Lt. Martin, but then, it's unusual to be getting married the next day.

The CD player hiccupped whilst it finished the last track of the 70's disco hits album, and moved onto the next disc in the clip. Marc used the brief interlude in the music to home in on his friends John, both of whom were helping themselves to another glass from out of both punch bowls.

"John mate, have I ever told you what a great pal you are? No really, you're the best mate a bloke could have."

"Marc, old pal. I think you might have had enough for the evening, don't you? Here, let me give you a lift home."

"What did I tell you, you are a REAL mate." John helped the madly waving Marc into the elevator and then keyed the Sub-basement car park button; pulling Marc's arm back inside the elevator car just as the doors threatened to remove it.

The lift doors opened into the dimly lit parking lot, and by some super-human effort John got the alcohol-laden bag of jelly that was Marc into the back of his classic Oldsmobile. Then taking a quick check on his passenger over his shoulder, John turned over the engine and reversed out of the bay. Smoothly moving the car into drive he headed up out of the underground car park, and out onto highway 12, ready to drive Marc back to his apartment in the next town, just 20 miles away. Highway 12 had been driven straight through a heavily wooded area, and John enjoyed the drive at night. It was also a very quiet road, with no houses, and very little traffic. Had there been anyone around to look at John's car, they would have seen the semi-comatose face of Marc Martin pressed up against the rear window, lips pressed back into a sort of demented smile, eyes closed, clearly dead to the world.

2 - Rob Hemmings

An involuntary yawn began somewhere in the Moonbase commander's lower back, flirted with her stomach, then briefly enjoyed a short life before being stifled in Lt. Gay Ellis' palm.

"Gosh, Jan, it's been so quiet for weeks now. Hey, isn't Lt. Martin getting married tomorrow?".

"Mm." uttered Jan.

"I wish I could go Earthside - I love weddings!" said Gay as her boredom rapidly evaporated. Jan still hadn't turned to face Gay as she again replied "Mm."

"I do believe you're jealous, Janice!"

"I suppose I am, a little, but that's not really what is bothering me... Look at these comm-link readouts; somehow they don't look right."

Gay looked across "They look fine to m.... what's that? A one- millisecond delay in the Utronics link from SID? There must be a fault - ask SID to diagnose from his end."

Jan taps a few keys. "SID this is Moonbase control. Perform comm diag 3-alpha."

"This is Space Intruder Detector". "Responding"... "Diagnostic confirms an error in your module T26".

Gay and Jan look at the latest readouts, then at each other. "Hey! That's not right - look - there's a delay of two milliseconds now - BOTH WAYS - that's impossible!"

Back on Earth, the tannoys in SHADO control burst into life as Gay's voice booms: "Shado control -go to full alert - we have a problem with SID. Take over ALL operations NOW!".

3 - Yuchtar

A bleary-eyed Ed Straker walked into SHADO HQ barking orders and demanding information . . . "Get me Moonbase on line NOW! What's going on? Why have they rerouted control here? And where the hell is Martin?!"

"Lt Martin is getting married tomorrow, Sir" Ford answered. "Erm, rather, tonight, sir. They had a stag bash in his honour," he added a little forlornly, since he hadn't been able to attend.

"Right . . ." Straker recalled.

"Commander!" cried Ayesha. "Word from Mobile three, sir -- they've found Lt Martin -- wandering aimlessly in a wood near Yorkshire."

"What?!"

"A car was found nearby -- registered to a John Mattingly, but no trace was found of him. Seems Lt Martin is out of sorts -- can't recall anything at the moment. Dr Jackson is on his way out."

"If it's not one thing, it's another," remarked Colonel Freeman as he walked in at the tail end of the message.

4 - Benito Flores-Meath

Straker was mulling around his office when the call from Moonbase came in.

"Sir, we have traced the Utronics time delays to magnetic ripples near the earth's northern polar regions." reported Lt. Ellis. "As SID's orbits pass through them, the signal is distorted and delayed."

"Has SID reported any UFO contacts?"

"We have not detected any UFOs." said Lt. Ellis. She seemed relieved that nothing else was happening.

"Have you determined if there was any additional damage to SID?" inquired Straker.

"No, sir, but we are continuing to check his systems."

"Fine, keep me updated every 2 hours on your progress.", and after a short pause, "Gay, please be careful".

Straker was concerned. SHADO's dependence on SID's sensors for early detection was never so apparent as now. Straker felt naked when he didn't have his back covered. "Ayesha, get Alec in here fast."

Impatient as ever, Straker was about to call out again, when Alec entered the office. He poured himself a glass of something sweet and pale green and sat down.

"This problem with SID is the last straw. I've been trying to get the SID updated for the last two years and they just won't give me the budget." Ed Straker certainly didn't like not being in command of a situation. "If General Henderson would have allowed us to finish the next generation of SID, we wouldn't be in this mess. As it is we're going to have to dispatch a work crew for repairs, and that will take at least 24 hours."

"Ed, the lunar transport is just returning to Earth. Maybe we can divert it for repairs." As always, Alec fills in the gaps.

"Alec, get the flight plan and work on modifying it. Who is piloting this flight?"

"Paul."

"Good." thought Ed. Paul wasn't just an ordinary pilot. When you came across a problem, something unusual and unexpected, he always rose to meet the challenge and succeeded.

With a serious look, "Alec, I'm going to see if I can't get Henderson to change his mind. They've got to listen to me now." Now Straker had a grasp on a plan of attack. A whole lot better than just sitting around. Now it was time to throttle Henderson.

5 - Grant Wray

"I DON'T KNOW. I keep telling you. I was asleep, drunk if you must, but if you keep me here any longer I'm going to miss my wedding." Marc hit the desk with his fist for emphasis. It was wasted on Straker, but it did cause Alec to wince a little. He remembered how he lost his fiancée the same way what seemed so many years ago now; he was marked for life as the man who jilted Cathy, but it wasn't his fault.

"Come on Ed. Let him go. We'll send Bendix and Taylor to look after him."

"Alright, but you mark this Martin, I want you back here in two weeks, not a day longer, and Bendix and Taylor go with you. Alec, have a car made ready, you and Bendix take him to wherever he needs to be. I'll follow on in my car with Taylor."

As the tan coloured SHADO car pulled out of Harlington-Straker studios, the peace of the nearby woods was disturbed by the building whine of a UFO taking off. The UFO rose, undetected, above the woods, and skimmed along at tree-top height following the car. Shado HQ was oblivious to the UFO's presence, due to the continued failure of SID.

As the woods opened out to reveal the wider roads that fed the motorway the UFO dropped down in front of both SHADO vehicles, and let loose its deadly golden beam.

Martin looked in the rear view mirror as the beam passed over his vehicle, and slammed straight into Straker's car, turning it into a flaming ball instantly. The SHADO driver was already reacting, yanking the steering wheel over to the left to try and get the car off the road, throwing the passengers over to one side.

At that moment, the radio crackled into life. "All units. Red alert, red alert. This is moonbase, we are under attack. Fleet of UFO's has appeared out of nowhere, space just seemed to unfold and there they were, about thirty of them. SID is destroyed. Foster's shuttle was lost en route to SID. There are about another dozen heading for Earth. Launch SkyDiver to intercept. We can't hold out any longssssssshhhhhhhhh....klik." Alec's face was frozen in panic. Everything he knew was gone, he didn't know what to do. He fingered the butt of the SHADO pistol he'd drawn as soon as he saw the UFO. The car lurched again as it left the road, then stopped as the driver blew the gull-wing doors off using the emergency escape lever. The UFO had turned and was heading towards them now. Martin had already rolled out of the car, but he could see Alec struggling to get out from the back seat. The driver had jammed his foot under the pedal and was trying to free himself.

The UFO's beam lashed out again, and the car burst into flame, showering the area with debris.

As the flaming metal fell from the sky onto Martin, he looked up and saw a line of twenty UFO's descending into a circling pattern above the trees, around the area where SHADO HQ was. Above the roar of the flames, he heard the sound of a UFO landing. He lowered his gaze to the road and looked at Straker's car burning fiercely, and from the corner of his eye he saw a red-suited figure approaching him. Then, surrounded by the flaming wreckage of his own car, bruised and bleeding, he passed out.

6 - Rob Hemmings

"Hey, Marc! C'mon mate!"

"Give him another cup of black coffee."

"You're joking - another? - it could be dangerous."

"Only cure.... Look at the colour of his skin! Anything would look better than that. And there's not a doctor around that we could trust."

"Hmm.. it's green.. very green. D'you think it was anything to do with that liquid we found near the suit?"

"Could be."

"OK, try the coffee - but try and make him drink it, rather than swim it this time."

As the Johns' realised what they'd both done, they looked guiltily at each other, and then at Lt. Marc Martin.

"Dr. you-know-who will make hell when he finds out!" uttered John.

"Yeah, but who's gonna tell him?" said John, stifling a smirk.

"No problem - he uses gallons of the stuff - he'll never miss it!" Both Johns' looked to the couch, again seeing the uncomfortable looking sleeping-garment surrounding Marc's body. They could still make-out the letters: 'A??NI' on a strip which had been torn, at a seemingly impossible angle, from the left to right knee, via the crotch, and now appeared to be making a new life as Lt. Martin's neck-tie. The battered suit still looked better than Marc's body though, which had now attained a yellowish shade of violet. An almost simultaneous thought crossed their minds: "Shower."

Whilst waiting, John picked-up the morning paper. The front page read:

'MASS AMNESIA SCARE AT CITY NIGHTSPOT'

'Dozens of strangely dressed people were found aimlessly wandering the city streets in the early hours of this morning. A statement issued by the Police reads 'We have traced them to a certain nightclub, although we admit, we are completely baffled.'

A manic grin appeared on his face, making him appear like a cross between 'The Cheshire Cat' and Jack Nicholson in one of his less-sane characterizations. He quickly pushed the newspaper under his chair.

As Lt. Martin finally became semi-conscious, memories began to dawn. Unfortunately they only seemed to involve things. Red things. Green things. Definitely things.

"Er.. Marc?.."

Noise. More neurones re-connect. The aural stimulus put a spark to the wick of Marc's understanding.

"It's John."

"and John.."

"Look, mate, do you remember the bar?.. the club?"

"Cough."

"You remember.. the fancy dress.. the.."

"The proper way to make a Vodka-Creme-de-coconut thingy..."

"And the proper way to drink 'em!"

"The fight with that club bouncer.. you remember - the one dressed-up in that Canadian Mountie uniform?"

Marc thoughts settled down a little at this point. Instead of scurrying around the edges of his mind, they decided it was time to deliberately cross it. John and John. I only ever get to see

these guys on Marsbase or at Christmas, birthdays, weddings,... WEDDINGS!

"W..w..what day is it??" he stuttered.

Looking at the faces of his two friends, his consciousness recoiled as he began to realise the true horror of... The Night Before!

"Calm down, Marc - we've got a good hour and a hal.. Well a good hour anyway." Lt. Martin's SHADO training suddenly sprang into life.

"John - call a taxi. John - call a tailor...NOW!... And don't be shy with your credit card details, you pair of #*stlg~?\$ds!!!!"