

A SHADO on Paradise

written by Pamela McCaughey (2007)

based on UFO (1969-1971) created by Gerry & Sylvia Anderson and Reg Hill
and Hawaii 5-0 (1968-1980) created by Leonard Freeman
and Magnum, P.I. created by Donald Bellisario and Glen A. Larson

Chapter One - July 1982

Lt. Gay Ellis entered Commander Straker's office. She was clad in street clothes instead of a SHADO issue uniform and purple wig. She stood waiting while Straker signed a stack of documents and orders.

"Lieutenant, please sit down," Straker told her, gesturing to the seat in front of his desk, "I presume you've already had your first briefing..."

"Yes, I understand I'll be part of an extermination team."

"Good. I realize this is your first occasion to take part in this type of operation. We've been trying to facilitate co-operative training between SHADO and Omega. You'll be met in New York by Allan Leslie, your team leader, and continue on to Hawaii, where you'll all connect with Colonel Foster and the rest of the team. As you know, he's been training with Omega since late last year."

"The nest has been confirmed?"

"Yes, that's why we're shipping you out today. Time is of the essence. I look forward to reading your report when you get back!"

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Al Leslie was giving Lt. Ellis a final go-over of the material on their private SHADAir flight to Hawaii. He spread out some satellite photos for Gay's perusal, "The island of Oahu was formed from two main volcanoes, Waianae and Koolau. Waianae is 'bout 2.2-3.8 million years old and Koolau is 'bout 1.8-2.6 million years old. They're now "dead" volcanoes. 'Bin centuries since either one of 'em erupted. The one we're concerned with is Koolau. We're not sure how long the aliens have had a nest there. Satellite photos confirmed there's somethin' in that volcano cone, and it's not an American installation or research station, or anythin' put in there by any other international group."

"Do you think that the Americans have any idea the nest is there?"

"If they've seen it, they're not talkin' and they're not doin' anything about it, so that's good for us - the less hassle we have from the local authorities, the better," Al pulled out some plastic file folders, "Sensor reports from the last recon team confirmed the presence of alien type readin's from their equipment and power source. We've done spy plane sweeps of the area."

"How many are there going to be in the team and how will we meet with them?"

"There's gonna be twenty five in the team, includin' you and me. Colonel Foster is comin' from the mainland US, and he'll meet us at our Omega operative's safe house. His code-name is Robin Masters. The rest of the team is gonna get dropped off by *SkyDiver* along the coast of Oahu, near the volcano site. They'll set up a base camp and we're all gonna hike into the site on foot so we don't give ourselves away to the aliens. Our cover story, as far as the locals are

concerned, is that we're a National Geographic film crew doin' a show on volcanoes. We've got all the necessary bogus paperwork and permissions from the state."

"What do we do with the nest once we "neutralize" it?"

"Normally, we'd do a remediation of the site, but this time we can't treat it as an environmental mess to be cleaned up. It's too close to human habitation for that. So we've gotta land some containers from the air, and float 'em out at night, loaded with alien stuff. There'll be a ship waitin' to stand by for them - the *Miranda*, one of our surface ships. It covers as an environmental vessel. The *Miranda's* crew is gonna provide some assistance for us and take the others off the island when we're finished."

"What happens if we capture prisoners?" Gay asked anxiously. She knew it would be a feather in the team's cap if they were able to bring home a live alien for interrogation!

"Don't count on that happenin'. The greenies never let us take 'em alive! They prefer ta off themselves before they let us take 'em prisoner!"

"Do you think there will be much resistance from the aliens?"

"They don't like us gettin' our hands on any of their technology. I've been on teams when the aliens have blown their own nests up rather than let us get a gander at their gadgets. It can be damn dangerous! But, the good part is that so far, they don't seem to know we're on to 'em as yet. And, the big deal with any extermination ops is to get in and get out without the regular authorities knowin' or the aliens catchin' wind of it till it's too late!"

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"What's on for today, Danno?" Hawaii's top crime cop asked his second in command, while he hung his dress jacket over the back of his chair and helped himself to a cup of freshly brewed coffee. He liked to have his breakfast at the office while he went over the day's agenda.

"Well, Steve," Dan Williams paused to take a sip from his own mug, "You're due in court later this afternoon to testify on that Wo Fat accomplice case, and there's a stack of HPD reports for you to go over," he placed the file folder on McGarrett's desk.

The former Navy officer, turned police officer extraordinaire, sat down and started to peruse the contents of the file folder, flipping through each set of stapled sheets. He looked up at Williams, "This is odd," he indicated one set of reports, "I'm surprised HPD would handle such a case. You'd think this would be one for the state rangers."

"Which one is that?"

"The case here about the missing hikers."

"The state rangers started out looking at it. They handed it over to HPD because they found evidence of foul play up there near the foot of the Koolau volcano. I think they felt a little out of their element. Rangers look for forest fires or environmental problems."

"I wouldn't think HPD would be prepared to work a case like that alone."

"They're not - the state rangers have been helping out. Read further."

McGarrett finished the sheets and looked back up at his fellow officer, "Definitely sounds like something bad went down up there..." even in 1982, McGarrett was still using 60's slang. It always amused Williams that his boss thought the usage of slang like that made him sound hip, "What about the blood and the organ evidence?"

"I can get the lab reports if you'd like to take a look at them."

"Yeah, do that. How remote is that area out there?"

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The dapper, moustachioed British major domo greeted Leslie, Foster and Ellis at the front

door and ushered them inside, "Mr. Masters is waiting for you."

Led into an elegant drawing room, the three SHADO-Omega staffers came upon an older man, massive in height and weight, seated at a huge mahogany desk. He looked up, "Ah, Higgins, thank you," he gestured for the three to take chairs facing him, "Please make sure the "Robin 3" is gassed up and ready for our guests' use, please. Magnum can see to it if you're busy." He looked back to Leslie, Ellis and Foster, "I know you are on a short time frame here, so I won't hold you up. Insofar as I can ascertain, there has been no change in the status of the target in question in the volcano cone. They are still there, and no other military or police body appears to have noticed them as yet."

Foster leaned forward, "We don't expect to take any prisoners, but, if we do get lucky, can we hide them here for a day or so before taking them off-island? We may have to effect some medical work and interrogation, as you know."

"Yes, you can have the guest wing here in the house. I've arranged for my security man to keep a watch up, although he doesn't know why I require such tight security. He's an ex-Navy man, and smart, so do watch your step around him. No escapes, please. The rest of the world thinks I'm Robin Masters, the famous author, and I find it a most effective cover story. Please give my best regards to your Commander Straker."

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Returning to the front door, the three were seen out by Higgins, and found a dark green Jeep waiting for them. It had been loaded with the backpacks and gear they'd left at the front door.

"Here she is, the 'Robin 3'. I checked her over, and she's fully gassed up and ready to go," the handsome American smiled at them. He too wore a moustache - a very bushy one, "Higgins tells me you're off to tour the local sights."

Ellis smiled up as he eased her into the back seat with a gentlemanly grace, "I'm sure we'll enjoy seeing everything the island has to offer, Mr...?"

"Magnum, Thomas Magnum," he grinned back, "Don't forget some sunscreen. Most Brits aren't used to the Hawaiian sun here. You can get a nasty second degree burn if you're not careful."

Allan Leslie, who was at the Jeep's wheel, rolled his eyes and, with a jerk of the clutch, they were rolling down the broad driveway of Robin Master's estate and out onto the main highway.

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"I rather think Mr. Magnum had his eye on you, Lieutenant," Foster smiled back at Ellis, "He must have a thing for British birds, eh wot?" he exaggerated his accent to sound very plummy.

"Get the map and the GPS out, and we'll navigate our way to the base camp," Leslie told Foster, "They should be set up by now and doin' final recon."

Foster set the GPS carefully and traced their route on the small map in hand, "Should only take us a couple of hours or so to get up to the camp..."

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McGarrett had finished reading the lab reports and he didn't like the evidence. The hikers were still missing, but some clothing possibly belonging to them had turned up, and something far more sinister - human remains - a spleen and a woman's female organs. The HPD labs had determined the organs to be of human origin, not animal, and although it was clear those human remains had been exposed to the elements for more than 24 hours, they had been

removed with surgical precision, not spilled out by animal attack. Besides, there were no wild animals living in the Koolau area which would pursue human beings or do that kind of damage. Done safely and carefully, hiking in the Koolau area was popular with some tourists - the kind who really wanted to get away from it all and experience the true unspoiled nature of the island.

"Danno, I'd like to have a conversation with the rangers who found the remains. Think you can arrange that for later on today?"

"Sure, Steve, I'll put in a call to the rangers' station and ask for them to come down here to the office. I don't know what else they could say that wasn't in their report."

"Sometimes a person's gut instinct about a case doesn't get into the reports, y'know? I'd like to have their take on this. And, do me a favour - check with HPD and see if the island's ever had a problem with black market organ sales."

* * *

Thomas Magnum took his favourite seat at the King Kamahemaha's bar. He asked if Rick was around. In a couple of minutes, while he was sipping a club soda, Rick came out of the back office, "Sorry about that, I had a couple of suppliers on the phone. Geez, you wouldn't think it'd be that hard to score a box of those little paper umbrellas for drinks, wouldya? So what's new in your little world?"

"Robin's in town for a few days. Wanted me to make sure the security on the property was tight - tighter than usual. He's also got some house guests - Brits. They say they're here to take in the local nature sights, do some hiking."

"I've heard that tone of voice before, Thomas Magnum. You don't believe they're here for the island's scenic beauty, do you?" Rick leaned forward over the bar and whispered confidentially.

"Whatever they're here for, they've got some heavy-duty military equipment - some of it I'm not even sure I can identify!"

"How do you know this?"

"Higgins asked me to gas up the 'Robin 3' and stow their gear for them before they left. I helped myself to a peek in their backpacks. You don't need weapons of that sort if all you're doing is going hiking! They had a short meeting in Robin's study and then they took off. I also had Higgins tell me to keep off the property for the next few days and just make sure the perimeter was secure. Now you tell me - doesn't that sound suspicious?"

Rick considered Magnum's comments, "Didn't you tell me once you thought Robin Masters had been with MI 5 during WWII? Maybe he's been reactivated or something. Maybe he's doing his old employer a favour by housing some current agents on a private mission."

"Yeah, it could be any of the above, or it could be something else. Or it could be nothing at all. If they are MI 5 agents, what would be so dangerous about going for a hike in the foothills of a dead volcano? And, Robin doesn't usually restrict me from the grounds of the estate."

"He knows you're ex-Navy. If this is some British government operation, he probably doesn't want you to get involved."

"Does that mean this operation, if that's what it is, is something even the American government doesn't know about?"

"I thought our secret service and the James Bond types were all buddies. They shared information and all that."

"Not necessarily. We're all nominally on the same side, but that doesn't mean we share

everything. After that Brit agent was found to be a doubler - selling secrets to the Soviets - I understood our guys were pretty careful about what they passed on to the MI6s."

"Well, don't get Robin pissed at you over this. You've got a sweet deal over there, and it isn't worth you snooping around. If he wanted you to know, he'd tell you. He always does - sooner or later."

* * *

McGarrett waited until the two rangers were seated to start asking questions. They told him how they found the discarded clothing, and the human body parts. The more he listened, the more McGarrett just couldn't fit the pieces of the puzzle together. Finally, he said, "Other than turning in the evidence to HPD, what else have you been doing on this case?"

"We figured until we knew more about the missing hikers, or found their bodies, it wasn't safe for other hikers to go up there. No point in raising the body count. We've posted the area as unsafe for the time being. In other words, no hiking is allowed up there. We had a few tourist operators who took hiking groups up there complain, but we didn't tell them why we said it was off-limits. Didn't want to start a panic or anything."

"Good, good," McGarrett intoned, sitting on the edge of his desk facing the rangers, "What's your gut reaction to this case?"

The two men shifted uneasily in their chairs. "Well?" McGarrett asked.

"Look, Mr. McGarrett, we don't normally end up handling anything like this. That's why we brought everything to HPD and their labs. We're really at a loss. No bodies uncovered, just body parts, and no proof that the organs we found belong to the missing hikers. We don't even know when they went up there or how long they were there. Their hotel didn't even report them as missing until at least 2 days after they went up the mountains. When we handed the case over to HPD, we figured they'd take it from there."

McGarrett nodded, "Thank you, gentlemen, for coming in today."

When the two rangers left, Dan Williams came back into the office, "Get anything useful?"

"I get the feeling there's more to this than they're telling, but they don't want to cop to anything except the facts of the case. I think it's time we took a closer look at this scenario. Let's put together a task force and find out who's killing the hikers. And, let's get up there for a personal look-see. I want to be ready to roll within the hour." --

Chapter Two - July 1982

The SHADO-Omega base camp was off the main road and located in an area accessible only by GPS. Fortunately the Robin 3 was the perfect vehicle for traversing such terrain. The Koolau mountains were made from a dormant basaltic volcano, but the area surrounding much of the cone had been lost to a giant landslide centuries before.

However, the terrain leading into the volcanic site was an intoxicating tangle of tropical forests, sparkling waterfalls that tumbled into gurgling streams, chattering birds and sweet-scented flowers. Seeing it all on the drive up, Gay Ellis found it hard to remember that this paradise was in urgent danger - from an unmentionable alien evil.

The tents all bore the world famous National Geographic logo, and Gay smiled, thinking how amusing it was that NG was being represented, bogusly, at a site they would probably salivate over finding - the entrance to a space alien nest - she could almost see the front cover of their flagship publication's headlines in her mind's eye.

Foster and Ellis were left at the command tent to listen to a briefing, while Allan Leslie headed out with a final recon party up the volcano. As a specialist geologist, Leslie might pick up on some details of the area that the others hadn't.

Ellis was surprised to see Mark Bradley at the briefing, but wisely said nothing. They'd both been given new postings after the incident at MoonBase, but that didn't mean their feelings had stopped. She sat down across from Mark and listened attentively to the latest recon reports and how the extermination team would run the ops.

"We plan to start the operation as soon as this latest recon team returns," Colonel Virginia Lake explained, referring to Al Leslie and his rekkie team, "Lt. Ellis, you and I will be remaining behind to run Base Camp here and provide communications support. We'll be calling in air support if necessary from the SHADAir Force, stationed on the west coast of Canada, Sky One is stationed just off the island here, and the Interceptors will be on standby in case any UFOs manage to escape our little welcoming party here on Earth. Colonel Foster and Lt. Bradley will be the leaders for Teams One and Three, Al Leslie will lead Team Two. You'll be outfitted with all the special equipment, ordinance, and weapons necessary," Virginia paused briefly, folding shut her briefing notes, and then continued, "Our objectives are fourfold in this operation: One) neutralize the nest and make sure the aliens can never operate from this site again; Two) capture any and all alien technology for our labs to investigate, Three) remove all evidence that the aliens or we were ever here, and Four) capture a live alien. I don't have to tell you how important it would be for this ops if we were able to capture some live aliens for interrogation. I know there have been failures before, and capturing the aliens is easier said than done. They're like the old Japanese Kamikaze pilots from WWII - they're too willing to commit suicide, rather than end up alive in our custody. But, if possible, do what you can to take at least one alien alive. You're dismissed, and the ops will begin in precisely," she looked at her watch, "Three hours - under cover of darkness."

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McGarrett and Dan Williams paused from their grueling hike. They'd been on foot with the two Hawaiian State Rangers they'd talked to earlier in the day for the last hour. Danno poured a bit of the water from his hip flask over his head, "How much further till we reach the site where you found the organs?"

"Another 40 minutes or so," replied Takosama, one of the Rangers, stopping to take a reading with his compass.

Five-0's chief had been scanning the horizon with his binoculars, "What's that down there?" he asked.

"Down where?" Ranger Ho tried to follow McGarrett's pointing fingers.

"There, through the trees..." McGarrett moved further over and crouched down to move some of the tropical foliage to get a better look.

Laid out like a small village was a series of seven tents, put up in a circle, and bearing a familiar-looking logo on each tent roof. There was movement, a couple of people milling about. But, these people were dressed in tropical fatigues, and helmets, along with military style gear.

McGarrett sat down on the ground at a good vantage point and the others crouched down with him, to remain out of sight, "What the hell is National Geographic doing up here? I thought you people made this area off limits to all tourists and hikers?"

"We did! I don't remember seeing any paper work about the press being up here. I'd remember something like this. The NG is known all over the world!" Takosama explained.

"They don't look much like press people, Ranger," McGarrett told him, "They should be wearing cameras and carrying videotape gear. The ones I can see look like military commandos!"

All four of them were by now looking at the encampment through their binocs, "Geez, Steve, wouldn't they have to have permission from the state to come up here? Especially since the Rangers just declared the area off limits?" Dan ruminated.

"Ok folks, today's nature trip is cancelled, you're comin' with us!"

The four turned to see a commando unit, pointing high powered rifles at them, "Let's check 'em for weapons and get 'em outta here," Allan Leslie told his team, then he took out a communications gadget, "Base Camp, this is Team Two checkin' the perimeter. We're goin' to be bringin' in some visitors!"

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Colonel Lake looked at the IDs laid out in front of her, "I think Al caught us some big fish, Paul. One of them is Steve McGarrett, the head of the Hawaiian State Police Force."

"Think the ID is bogus?" Paul asked. He didn't want any complications on this mission and already they'd uncovered some snoopers.

"I don't think so. I wired a photo of him back to GHQ and they say he's the real deal. The others are a pair of state rangers and the blonde man is one of McGarrett's own officers."

"What do we do now?"

Virginia looked at her watch, "I don't see any reason we can't start the ops on time as we'd planned. We'll just...keep our little friends here where they can't see anything. And deal with them after the mission is over."

Foster shook his head, "We take out the head of the state police and the the proverbial shit will hit the fan. They'll be looking for them, I bet. Someone of his standing doesn't make a move without making sure everyone else knows where he is. Do we have any idea of why they're even up here?"

"As best I can get out of the rangers, they were investigating the deaths of a couple of hikers several days ago. That's all they'll say."

"It sounds legitimate, but what if they're up here snooping because of us?"

She shook her head, "I've given them our cover story. We might be able to give them a dose of amnesia drug and take them back down to their vehicle and leave them there to recover. That'll buy us enough time to clean up and get the hell out of here."

"Well, we don't want them in the way right now - what do you suggest?"

"Let's offer them some SHADO issue coffee, appropriately spiked...and see what kind of stall tactic works best."

* * *

"I hope we haven't been too remiss in our hospitality, gentlemen," Virginia smiled, carrying in a tray of SHADO "issue" coffee and some sandwiches, "We're very busy here covering the volcanic conditions here on the island for a TV documentary we'll be airing next year..."

"You can cut the National Geographic crap anytime, lady," McGarrett told her, "Who ever you are, you're not the press! Not dressed like commandos and talking about perimeters. I'm ex-Navy, and I'm well familiarized with military operations."

"Mr. McGarrett, I..."

Steve got up out of his camp seat, "And, do you really think we're dumb enough to drink your coffee? It could be drugged... What's going on out there? Does it have anything to do with those dead hikers?"

Virginia sat the tray down on the small camp stool, "I assure you, Mr. McGarrett, we are not going to drug you or otherwise injure you and your people. We are sending some of our cameramen up into the volcano and we're..."

"Oh, come on! How stupid do you think we are?" he leaned into her face when he spoke, invading her personal space intentionally. He was quite tall and she had to look waaay up to stare into his intense blue eyes.

"We made arrangements for this trip with the appropriate state government officials. I'm sure someone in your own office just left you out of the loop accidentally..."

"I don't think so. My people are more on the ball than that! There's something going on here that has nothing to do with TV documentaries, and I want to know what it is!"

Virginia knew it could come to this. SHADO point one: the small lies often make the most impact, "We're an anti-terrorist group. We've received reports from Interpol and the CIA that there is a gang of them holing up in the volcano cone. We're here to eliminate them and get out of here asap. It's a hush-hush mission."

"What terrorists would bother hiding here in Hawaii?"

SHADO point two: use their own knowledge against them. SHADO HQ had run a quick computer check on Five-O and discovered McGarrett had come up against some pretty wiley characters in the past, "Does the name Wo Fat mean anything to you?"

"Wo Fat? He's in jail. I put him there - personally!"

"He may be in jail, but that doesn't mean his... associates aren't still active. His spy organization is based on the idea of terrorist cells - each group works independently and none of them knows anything about the others - who they are, where they work from, what missions they undertake. The terrorists here are, we believe, planning to kidnap the Governor."

"Look, we deal with intelligence agencies all over the world, and nobody has told us any of this," McGarrett scowled at her.

"If you'll excuse me, Five-O is a local police force. Our organization has a more... international approach. We are in possession of information that normally never filters down to your level."

"And, if you're right, and these so-called terrorists of yours *are* planning to kidnap the Governor, what would they hope to gain by this action?"

"They'd use the Governor as a bargaining chip to negotiate the release of Wo Fat into

their custody of course."

McGarrett pounded his right fist into his left palm, "Wo Fat is in a top security facility on the mainland. They'd never touch him there!"

"Exactly why they need a hostage to use as a negotiating piece," Virginia explained. Sometimes it was almost amusing how a man's own obsessions could be used against him. Steve McGarrett had spent more than a decade trying to capture Wo Fat, a former Red Chinese operative, bent on gaining control of the Pacific for his government.

"Wo Fat won't be of any use to them anymore."

"It's not him as a person they really care about at this point. They want to know how much he's told your people about the organization he belonged to, the operations they've mounted, you name it. They consider Wo Fat a security leak of the worst kind. They want him back to counter any efforts by the West to interrupt their own missions."

McGarrett was silent for a moment as he listened to Virginia. It all sounded very plausible. He had even wondered if Wo Fat's confederates might try to liberate him from prison, but he had never considered they might kidnap someone like the Governor to force the release of Wo Fat. "If this really is about Wo Fat, then we want to be in on your mission. We know how they work. We could help you capture them," he said finally.

"I'm sorry, Mr. McGarrett, but this mission is not for civilian peace officers. We can't risk you getting hurt. You'll have to let us handle this operation in our own way. I hope we can depend on your co-operation?" Virginia smiled.

Dan Williams looked up at her, "Do we have any other choice in the matter?"

"Not really. Our people are trained in anti-terrorist action. You're not. It could jeopardize the whole mission if we permitted untrained personnel to participate."

McGarrett nodded slowly, "We'll co-operate...for the moment..." he slumped into one of the camp chairs again.

Exiting the tent, Virginia was approached by Paul Foster, "Did you manage to handle our friends in there?" Foster indicated the tent where McGarrett and his men were quartered.

"I told them we're going after a terrorist group associated with Red China. I think they believed me this time. We shouldn't have any trouble. McGarrett thinks we're going after the associates of an old nemesis of his and he's keen for us to take them out. Let's get this operation on the road and get it over with."

* * *

"Think this tent is bugged?" Dan asked McGarrett as they four of them pulled their camp chairs into a circle.

"I don't think they've had time for that. They obviously weren't expecting 'company'. I don't believe for one minute that these people are from some under the radar anti-terrorist group. What terrorist would hide in a volcano cone, for Christ's sake?"

"What can we do?" queried Takosama.

"They've relieved us of our weapons and our compasses, so I don't think they're planning to let us go right away," Dan replied.

"That Lake woman gave us a cock and bull story about Wo Fat and some of his pals trying to kidnap the Governor. First off, I can't imagine anyone getting past the Governor's security and body guards - they're CIA trained and as tough as they come. Secondly, I agree with Danno - I don't think letting us go is part of their agenda. And, lastly, no matter how they're trying to cover their tracks with us, I figure their real purpose up here has more to do with those missing hikers than Red Chinese terrorists. They're likely involved in some sort of

criminal activity," McGarrett said.

"So what's our next move?" Ranger Ho questioned.

"We've got to get out of this camp somehow and bring back enough reinforcements to foil whatever operation they've got going here!"

Chapter Three - July 1982

"Think you can handle our 'guests' by yourselves?" Foster asked Colonel Lake as the extermination team prepared for their mission against the alien nest.

"I don't want to hold anyone back from the mission that maybe needed - I think Gay and I can manage things here. Once the ops is completed, we can send Mr. McGarrett and his friends packing."

"That McGarrett doesn't strike me as the kind of bloke who sits idly by, and he's very suspicious of us and what we're doing here. He didn't buy our covers - either of them."

Virginia Lake smiled grimly, "I don't care what they believe as long as we can keep them from interfering in the mission. By the time they get back to Honolulu, they'll have been dosed with amnesia drug. If anyone starts asking nosy questions, we'll be long gone."

Al Leslie stuck his head inside the tent, "Mission countdown begins in five minutes, people!"

Foster nodded and buckled on his helmet - he and all the other combatants were outfitted in state of the art flak equipment - as were the other members of the extermination team. They all carried full body armour, and a plethora of personal gadgets to help them stay in touch, and fight the aliens...

* * *

The assault on the alien nest was long and bloody. Several of their own operatives were killed in action, and a good number of the aliens committed suicide rather than fall into enemy hands. In the end, the SHADO-Omega teams prevailed, but it was costly. Al Leslie and his team stayed on site and kept it secured while the other two teams went back to base camp to regroup and take the dead, both human and alien, out with them. Virginia Lake had choppers standing by to take the bodies and some of the smaller bits of alien equipment they captured out to the *Miranda*, which would land the materials at Omega HQ in New York City within a few days time. Because the aliens had no air support or a ship to escape in, Skydiver was not needed and left to pursue another set of orders.

Now, all that was left was to deal with McGarrett and his companions.

Lake and Foster headed for the tent to take care of that situation. Gay Ellis had been sent in with more drugged food and drink over an hour ago, so hopefully all they'd have to do was place the men in their vehicle, which had been discovered several miles outside their perimeter, and leave them there to wake up, with no memory of what had taken place or how they'd gotten back there.

"Ellis!" Foster saw her legs on the ground inside the tent, and dashed in, Lake in hot pursuit.

Paul lifted her up, "The men from Five-O are gone!" they could both see where the tent had been pulled out of the ground from the back so they were able to slip away unseen.

"How could this have happened? Gay came in to feed them drugged refreshments - I was sure they'd take them after so many hours..." Virginia was stunned at the apparent negative turn of events.

"There's soda pop all over her fatigues, Virginia - maybe they force-fed her some of it!"

"We've got four witnesses on the run - we have to get them back!"

* * *

"What?" Straker bellowed into his phone receiver - he practically swallowed his cigarillo. Alec could see the scowl on his face, "How the hell did this happen, Paul?" There was a pause

as obviously Foster was on the other end of the line making excuses. *Hell to pay*, Alec thought to himself.

The silver haired commander slammed the phone back down into its cradle and got up to pace the office. Alec saw him hug himself as he walked back and forth - another bit of body language that did not bode well.

"Do I dare inquire as to what has pissed you off?" Alec smiled grimly.

"This is no joke, Alec. Four witnesses - *four* - two of them police officers - and they let them get away!"

"I'm sure it wasn't intentional, Ed," Alec tried to smooth over the very ruffled feathers as best he could. The old Freeman charm could be called upon to lower Straker's temper from white hot to at least just code red! Time to accentuate the positive, "But, the mission - they cleaned out the nest, right?"

"Oh, yes, they cleaned out the nest - all the aliens ended up dead and we lost one of our boys in this action, too. Everything for the research guys went out with the *Miranda* - it's headed to NYC as we speak."

"So things may not be as bad as you think..."

"Worse. One of those escaped witnesses was Steve McGarrett, head of the state police, Hawaii Five-O - this is a man others will listen to - and depending on what he's seen and heard - he could blow SHADO's cover sky high!"

"Well, get the team mobilized to find these four men and 'neutralize' them as usual," Alec suggested.

"It's not that easy! If someone like McGarrett disappears or dies, there will be too many questions and the island could get sealed off before our people can get out. We can't risk that. But we have to silence them somehow!" Straker picked up his phone again, "Yes, Miss Eland, I need you to place a long distance call for me - Mr. Robin Masters, in Hawaii. Yes, I said Robin Masters."

Alec stood up and leaned over the boss' desk, "What are you going to do, Ed? We can't compromise Masters at this point!"

Straker looked up at his best friend, "I need a place to stay while I oversee this mission. Alec, the Responsibility Seat will be yours until I get back!"

* * *

Even doing their best, Straker's connecting SHADAir flights still took 18 hours to get him from Great Britain to Hawaii. Waiting for him at the airport was Paul Foster. The others had been sent out asap to avoid any trouble with the local police forces, the Coast Guard or the military. Choppers had taken the teams out, and landed them on the deck of the *Miranda*, but although they'd removed all evidence the aliens had been in the volcano, they had not been able to complete their entire remediation of the site. That would have to wait now upon the success of silencing McGarrett and his men.

"Robin says we can both stay at his place," Paul informed Straker, who was dressed casually in a pair of slacks and a matching shirt. He'd left the severe suits behind in England, "We'll have the use of any of his vehicles we want and whatever monies we'll need."

"You've ID'd all the men with McGarrett?"

"Danny Williams, McGarrett's second on command with Five-O, and Takosama and Ho - two Hawaii State Rangers. All well educated and intelligent men. Obviously resourceful - we found out they rushed Gay and forced the drugged soda pop on her. Once she was knocked out, they scrambled out from under the tent on the other side and managed to get away,

despite the fact we still had personnel on the ground." Paul didn't want to tell Straker they'd committed all their personnel to the nest extermination mission - it could mean a court martial for Lake. They had simply underestimated the Five-O men and the Rangers - a dangerous mistake as it had turned out.

"Where can we find these gentlemen?"

"Al Leslie has men staking out the homes of all four, but so far none of them have shown up. It's been less than 20 hours since they escaped. You'd think they'd turn up somewhere."

"What about Hawaii Five-O headquarters?"

"Downtown Honolulu. Al has a man watching that location as well. No sign of any of our escapees as yet."

"With a 20 hour lead on us, those four have had plenty of time to rally the troops. We could be in for big trouble, Paul."

Fifteen hours earlier...

"Kono, Chin, George... get in here!" McGarrett barked. As his top officers filed in, they noticed their boss looking a little the worse for wear, and Danny and two state Rangers were in attendance as well.

"We've got big trouble," Steve told them tersely, "Danno and I and our Ranger friends here just got back off that volcano - there's a military presence up there, gentlemen and it isn't American. They claimed first they worked with the National Geographic and then they said they were an anti-terrorist group - get this - they said they were after a band of terrorists who were intending to kidnap the Governor to use as a negotiating chip to get Wo Fat out of his jail on the mainland!"

"Sounds like a load of BS, Steve," Kono replied.

"Yeah, they shovelled it on pretty thick, but it was obvious there was something else going on for real - they just weren't about to tell us."

"How did you get away, boss?" Chin asked.

Danny took up the story, "One of their people brought us in food and drink - we figured it was drugged, so we rushed her and forced her to drink one of the sodas - she passed out quick and we got our butts outta there."

"What d'you want us to do next?" George wanted to know.

"Kono, get over to immigration, the state department, the military and the FBI offices - find out what, if anything, they might know about this situation. Chin, get to the Governor's office - if it is true, and terrorists were planning to take him out, we need to put 24 hour protection on him immediately. George, we took a weapon off that girl Danno mentioned - get it to the lab and have it worked - prints, identification, whatever," Steve handed Gay's SHADO issue hand gun over, "I've never seen a weapon like this before - I want to know what it is and which government it belongs to - asap!" he looked over at the two Rangers, "I need to you to give full statements about what you saw and heard," he picked up his desk phone, "May, get a couple unis up here - to take statements," he looked back at the Rangers, "Just wait out in the outer office - they'll be here soon." he grabbed the phone again and punched in a number, "I'd like to speak to General Cardell, please - tell him it's McGarrett from Five-O." There was a pause while Steve waited for the General to come on the line, "Yeah, General I need you to scramble an assault force and send them up to the Koolau volcano asap! There's been an incursion up there of some sort - not our guys - maybe terrorists - maybe not - but you need to get in and ambush them before they can get away...yes, I'm sure about that - I just got out of there myself - it's something the military has to handle...thank you, General..."

McGarrett sat down in his seat behind his desk and leaned over to put his head in his hands.

"Anything you want me to take care of?" Danny said quietly.

"Yeah, Danno, take my statement while my mind is still clear..."

* * *

It had been agreed that the two Rangers would remain in protective custody with the Five-O people until things had been settled. They were permitted to call their CO and their families and tell them they'd be back home when they could get there.

"OK, Kono, tell me what you got," McGarrett sipped his umpteenth cup of coffee.

"Every avenue came up blank, brudder. I talked to 'em all - the feds, military, the lot - nobody knows anything."

"Or they don't want to tell us - but that doesn't make any sense!" McGarrett replied, "I

can't remember any time when those other agencies made a point of stonewalling us on anything this big."

Chin spoke up, "I'm afraid I've got some more bad news for you, boss. George just called me from the lab - they lifted prints from the gun, but couldn't match them to anything American - they're sending the prints through to Interpol. As for ID-ing the gun - they can't - it doesn't match any known weapon configuration we can check - it isn't a NATO nation gun, and it isn't Soviet, Red Chinese or African."

"That gun had to be manufactured somewhere, Chin! It wasn't a homemade weapon - I handled it myself - it's quality workmanship." Steve shook his head, "You talked to the Governor?"

"I've arranged a 24 hour body guard detail for him as of one hour ago. I apprised him of the threat and what you told us about the terrorists possibly wanting to trade him for Wo Fat. He was skeptical of course, but he was willing to go along with the protection to make life easier for us, too."

Steve got up to pace the length of his office, "Let's recap: Danno and I and the Rangers went to the volcano to check on the situation with the missing tourists and the body parts that were found. That was *our* reason for being there. Those people who captured us - they were after bigger fish - but I don't necessarily believe they told us the truth - why would they? And we bugged outta there as soon as we could because we honestly didn't know if they were planning to kill us or not. We couldn't take any chances! So if they lied to us about why *they* were there, what they *really* there for?"

"I called the mainland jail where Wo Fat is incarcerated," Danny said, "I put them on alert and said they should put a special watch on him just in case. Maybe those people we escaped from were the terrorists themselves."

"I thought of that, Danno," Steve nodded at him, "But, they were too well organized to be terrorists, and how the hell did they manage to get onto the island with all that gear and all that firepower and not get picked up by the military or the Coast Guard?"

The phone rang and Steve picked it up, "Yeah? You're kidding? Nobody could bug outta there that fast - especially from such a remote location! They had a major set-up there - a base camp...alright, General, I understand...yes, ok..."

"What is it, Steve?" Danny asked.

Hanging up, Steve slumped into his chair, "General says his men didn't find any base camp at the volcano - some disturbed ground - no other signs. It's like they were never there, Danno!"

"How the hell could they get out that fast? They'd need choppers and..."

McGarrett cut him off, "Hell, Danno, they'd need a frigging army to pull down that camp and amscray in such a short time! Who's got that kind of drag? Short of the American military!"

* * *

"We appreciate your assistance in this matter on such short notice," Straker shook hands with Robin Masters.

Waving them to a couple of seats, Robin spoke in his deep mellifluous voice, "Not at all, Ed. I understand your situation. There are several very private rooms here on the estate which might serve you well if you decided to have a confidential chat with some of the people you're after. However, I do caution you. McGarrett and Williams are fixtures here in Hawaii. They are well known and intelligent, resourceful men. If they end up dead, believe me, there will be

a major investigation. The Island would be shut down - you might find it hard to remove yourselves."

"We hadn't planned to eliminate McGarrett and Williams in the usual way for just those reasons. What we need to do is eliminate or manipulate their memories of whatever they saw at our base camp."

"I can assure you that they have probably set a full scale investigation into this matter themselves. They've had the luxury of time you have not. Hawaii Five-O is a state police force - they have ties to the FBI, the State Department, the military, the Coast Guard - you name it - they have a lot of resources at hand. You may find *yourselves* under investigation."

"What would you suggest, then?"

"McGarrett and Williams and the other two have never seen you, Ed. You might be able to walk into the lion's den and get back out again..."

Chapter Four - July 1982

Commander Ed Straker had dressed carefully for his meeting. Eschewing his severe designer suits he normally wore for his role as Harlington-Straker's executive officer, he put on a black two piece suit, a black shirt and a red and black power tie. Robin Masters had instructed Tom Magnum to drop him off a block from the Iolani Palace, headquarters for Hawaii 5-0's offices. Robin had instructed Magnum not to question the silver haired Commander about anything and to do whatever he told him to do. Magnum was to drop Straker, get out of the red Ferrari, give him the keys and take a cab back to the Masters estate.

Still watching the building were Al Leslie and one of his men, carefully keeping an eye on all the comings and goings. They'd managed to plant a small bug once it was dark, just under the window of McGarrett's office - not an easy task that - with all the activity there - but the bug was able to pick up conversation inside the office and they were able to relay what was being discussed to Straker and Foster, to give them a heads up. Foster was staying back with Leslie and the other operative, as McGarrett and his men had already seen him. It would be too dangerous for Paul to be observed and identified.

Just how Straker planned to handle this matter was questionable. He knew he needed to lure McGarrett out of the building, and back to Robin's estate, so he could be questioned and given false information which would seem reasonably realistic. If Straker could compromise what McGarrett believed he knew about the incident, he could avert a crisis and bring McGarrett on their side without ever telling him the truth. McGarrett was ex-Navy - he would be inclined to understand covert ops, security considerations and perhaps once convinced, he could be impressed upon to close down the investigation altogether.

By all information, McGarrett was a 'hard ass' and Straker was one too, so they'd be evenly matched. McGarrett's fanatical anti-crime stance was as strong as Straker's anti-alien point of view, and the only real difference was that of resources. Straker had the upper hand in this area. He had command of resources both on the island and internationally, that McGarrett could only dream of.

When McGarrett's secretary opened his office door and ushered Straker inside, the blinds were still down from the night before. 5-0's top cop looked tired, unshaven, but alert and asking for another cup of java.

"And you are?" McGarrett asked, gratefully accepting a steaming mug.

"My name is Straker. I'm with the National Geographic."

McGarrett's tired but steely eyes went over Straker intently. He noted the black suit, the crisp tie, the stylish silver hair, the Cortina watch on his wrist, "Really? And you're here why?"

"I thought perhaps I might be able to clear up some misunderstandings with your and your people about a recent job my people were on."

McGarrett laughed and shook his head, "Whoever those people were up on the volcano, they were not National Geographic film-makers!"

Straker looked down and fiddled with his watch for a moment, "Alright, then, I still might be able to give you some... assistance... with your investigation of the matter..."

"Unless you can tell me who those people were, what they were doing up there, and how the hell they got away so fast and so cleanly, I don't think we have anything else to talk about."

"How much is this investigation worth to you? How much of a risk can you take to get the information you want?" Straker loved dangling the carrot.

Taking a swig of his coffee, McGarrett sat back in his seat and closed his eyes for a

moment, "Who are you?"

"Does that matter as long as I can help you crack this case?"

"Yes, it matters, goddamn it!" McGarrett stood up, his gun holster still buckled over his shoulder, "Because everyone associated with this case has his or her own agenda! You've come here to me, offering to give assistance, but what's in it for you? There has to be something in it for you, or for whoever sent you here, or else you wouldn't be here in the first place!"

"You know, you and I aren't that different. We both want this case closed. We both have something to gain by putting this case out of sight. You're the kind of man who wants answers - I can give them to you."

"But, on *your* terms, eh?"

"As it turns out, yes, I'm afraid so."

"And how much money do you want for this so-called information?"

"Actually, money is not my concern in this matter. Closing the case is of paramount importance. Money can't buy that kind of security."

"What do you want from me, then?"

"I want you to take a little drive with me. Just you and me, nobody else. Not Dan Williams, not Kono, nobody."

"Why would I put myself in the hands of someone I don't know and have no reason to trust?"

Straker tilted his head to one side, and shrugged, "I guess that would depend on how badly you want this case taken care of."

McGarrett was silent for a few moments, wrestling mentally with the issue at hand. As a cop, of course he wanted answers and to find out just what had been going on up at the volcano. As a man, he was careful and wary about this stranger who'd just come into his office and offered him the answers he craved - but with obvious strings attached. He wasn't Hawaii's top cop all these years for nothing!

"I could call my men in here and have you arrested for what you've told me already. You know too much about this case for you not to be involved in it at some point yourself."

"Yes, you could do that. You could try to interrogate me. You could try to find out who I am. But, you'd be no further ahead. You'd learn much less than what I am willing to give you if you take that drive with me."

McGarrett took the gun out of his holster, opened the pistol and checked the bullets. He took another cartridge out of his desk drawer and put it in his pants pocket. Then, he picked up his jacket and put it on, "No funny stuff. I'm a good shot. And you're a very easy target."

* * *

Straker watched McGarrett's eyes widen as they got into the red Ferrari. The car belonged to Robin Masters, but he rarely if ever drove it himself. Most of the time it was used by his security man, Thomas Magnum, who kept the estate's perimeters well cared for. Robin was a world-famous author, who travelled the world, and he didn't spend much time in paradise, but between Magnum and Higgins, his major domo, he could rest assured that all was well at his Hawaiian home.

Gunning the Ferrari into reverse and then into drive, Straker, took the street down to the freeway and then down the interstate, heading to Masters' estate.

"You National Geographic people make enough money to buy luxury sports cars?" McGarrett said the words with a sardonic smile on his face.

"Actually, this is a loaner. My real car is a gull-winged DeLorean," Straker smiled too, remembering his own vehicle back in England.

"Where are we headed? I know where we are, we're on the interstate highway."

"Be patient, McGarrett," Straker signalled so he could pass another car, "Patience is obviously not your strong point."

"I still have that gun in my holster," McGarrett reminded him, "This drive could be a really short one if I make you pull over."

"You won't kill me. I'm too important to you at this moment."

"Sez you. How do I know this isn't just some wild goose chase, calculated to throw off the investigation?"

"You wouldn't have come along if you'd thought that."

"I'm just curious, brother, and curiosity is one of my strong points. And I certainly didn't leave the office without telling my staff I was going to check out something with you. They know I'm with you and they know what you look like."

"That wouldn't help them find me. Once you and I have our info session, I'll be out of here post haste. I won't need to hang around and get caught."

"We can police even private airfields, you know. There's no way into or out of these islands we can't check out."

"I'm not too worried, as I said. I think the information I give you will ensure my departure."

"I think we could start that info session right here and now," McGarrett pulled the gun out of his holster and aimed it at Straker's head, "Like who were those people on the volcano? Did they have anything to do with the dead people our Rangers found up there? Was there ever really a threat to the governor's life? Were they terrorists working for Red China? Why were they so eager to drug us?"

"I don't intend to tell you anything with a weapon at my head," Straker didn't even take his eyes off the road, "You'll have to wait until we get to our destination."

"Pull over." McGarrett's tired eyes were cold, "I said, pull over to the side of the road! NOW!" his gun was pressed up against Straker's skull.

Without flinching, Straker wheeled the Ferrari over to the shoulder of the highway, well off the asphalt and out of the way of traffic. He turned the key off and the car shut down with a soft sigh, "What now?"

"You're going to tell me where we're going, who's going to be there, and why. And, I want to know who you are and why you know so bloody much about this case! You have to be one of those terrorists or whoever they were!"

Straker looked at McGarrett and his own blue eyes were steely, "I am not a terrorist, I can assure you. Those people you encountered on the volcano were not terrorists either. They are part of an elite squad of anti-terrorists who work internationally."

McGarrett nodded, "They said as much to us when we were captured, after we told them we didn't buy their stupid National Geographic put up job."

"You could have believed them. They meant you no harm. They only wanted you out of the way so they could carry on with their mission."

"And, what mission was that? Look, we have enough problems in these islands with drugs coming into every port, mob activity, you name it. Foreign interventionists who don't identify themselves or report in to us about their reasons for being here are going to be considered suspect. How do we know they aren't criminals, looking for a place to start more trouble, or to

use Hawaii as some sort of halfway house to process other criminal activities? It's the job of 5-0 to keep the bad guys out. Surely you can understand that."

"What I understand, is that you want answers. Are you willing to let me do that? I have to do this *my* way, not your way."

McGarrett stared out the windshield for a second or two. "Fine. Let's get to where the answers are." He holstered the gun. Straker flipped the key on the car and the Ferrari purred to life...

* * *

Rounding the tree lined corner, Straker brought the red sports car flush with the front door of Robin Masters' home. It was a large, well cared for estate, with tons of exotic flora and fauna, and an oceanside view. McGarrett seemed to realize where he was when they drove in.

The two men got out of the car. Straker tossed the keys to Thomas Magnum, and saw the recognition in his eyes of Hawaii 5-0's commander in chief. He made a small gesture to Magnum to keep quiet. Magnum nodded and got into the car, driving it off.

Opening the door, as if their appearance was expected, was Higgins. He ushered them inside and offered them refreshment. Straker watched McGarrett's eyes taking in the location. What questions must have been on his mind?

"You can use the drawing room, gentlemen. I'll bring in a tray of coffee in a moment."

Robin Masters' elaborate drawing room was filled with heavy oak furniture, an immense native stone fireplace, and an assortment of artworks, both paintings and sculpture. McGarrett's eyes, ever alert, danced over the the images of ships and ocean travel. He did not sit down.

"I believe you know this house?" Straker asked.

"I'm aware of who Robin Masters is. I've never met the man."

"He's a famous writer."

"If he's supplying his house to you, he is most definitely more than just a famous writer. How does Robin Masters figure in this business?"

"Actually, he doesn't. He's merely a... friend to the cause, you might say. He permits us to use his home as a base whenever we have work to do in your state."

Higgins returned with a silver tray, a silver coffee service and a tray of sweets. The china cups and saucers were of the most expensive type. Straker took a seat on the divan in front of the coffee table and poured two cups, both black. He held one up to McGarrett.

Reluctantly, McGarrett took the cup but didn't drink from it. He was being doubly cautious. He'd already encountered people who'd tried to drug him. He wasn't about to relax his guard at this point.

"It isn't drugged," Straker took a sip of his own brew to prove it to McGarrett.

"No thanks. I'd rather talk than drink," McGarrett got up from the seat he'd taken across from Straker to examine a large painting of an elaborately rigged sailing ship, "So what is this information you've been so eager to tell me?"

"You can ask me your questions."

"If your people really are an anti-terrorist group, what the hell were they doing up on that volcano?"

"They discovered that a Red Chinese cell had infiltrated the islands and were building a small base there. They were stockpiling weapons and explosives. We're still not really sure what they intended to do here in Hawaii, but we knew we had to remove them. We had intel that had them making an attempt on the governor's life and holding him hostage in turn for

getting Wo Fat back. I believe you know who Wo Fat is."

"We were told basically the same story by your people up on the volcano. It sounded then, and still sounds, pretty crazy."

"In my business, crazy is often closer to reality than we'd like to admit. We had to act - just the fact they were here at all justified us going in after them."

"What country do your people work for? Some of them spoke with a British accent - they weren't Americans."

"The squad is made up of staff from all over. It's a special NATO forces group. That's why they were able to get in and get out of the islands under the radar. They had military help."

"I had General Cardell and his men go up to that site - he said you couldn't even tell there had been a base camp there."

"Sad to say," Straker lied glibly, "General Cardell had to misinform you."

"You mean Cardell was in on this?" McGarrett exclaimed incredulously.

"We try not to compromise the local people. That's why 5-0 was not given any details about the mission. It had to be carried out as secretly as possible. We've been concerned about security leaks. As a former Navy man, you should be able to appreciate our concerns about such things."

"What connection does this all have to the mutilated bodies my Rangers found up on the volcano?"

"We knew about that, too. It seems the Red Chinese did it to scare people away from their installation. They probably thought it would slow or halt the amount of tourist traffic into that area for a time."

"Where are the Red Chinese agents now?"

"Dead. Our people killed them. We had no choice."

"And, why should I believe any of this... story of yours?"

"Because it's the truth," Straker replied simply.

"If this squad of yours really does exist, and they really were here to clean out a nest of Red Chinese agents..." McGarrett said out loud.

"Then, there is no further need for a criminal investigation to be carried on. As chief of 5-0, you can close the case down and forget it. The people who killed the tourists are dead. Your governor is safe, and Wo Fat stays in his mainland prison."

"What about our being held by your people? They were planning to drug us."

"That was purely for safety's sake. You would have been released unharmed, had you not taken it upon yourselves to drug one of our people and make your escape."

"How can I be sure you're telling me the absolute truth?"

"Oh, you can't," Straker smiled, "You just have to take it on faith. Your silence on this matter would be of inestimable assistance to us."

"My silence would also be of great assistance to you and your people if you were all involved in some sort of criminal activity, as well." McGarrett countered.

"Did I entice you out of your office at gunpoint? Did I make any threats on your life or the lives of your officers? I think it was you who waved a gun in my face. Believe me, if I'd wanted you dead, we wouldn't be standing here talking about it."

McGarrett sat down across from Straker, "So, if what you're telling me is the truth, what do you want me to do with this information?"

"Close the case."

"And what am I going to tell my officers who are going wonder if I've suddenly lost my mind?"

"You can tell them you've had a conference with the military. Tell them you've been assured that nothing criminal, requiring 5-0's involvement, went on up there. End of story."

McGarrett's tired eyes swept the room, almost absently. He drew a hand over his forehead, obviously exhausted from the ordeal on the volcano and the days without sleep since, "Get me back to my office. Case closed."

Epilogue

"Steve, I was able to retrieve that recording bug you placed in Robin Masters' drawing room. It wasn't easy, but we got one of our undercovers to pose as a worker steaming rugs."

McGarrett looked up from his paperwork, "Can we listen to what it recorded?"

"Sure thing. I just picked it up from the lab. They transposed it to tape."

McGarrett took the proffered tape and slapped it into his player on the desk. Ed Straker's voice came out loud and clear, as did McGarrett's own tones, "Fast forward, Danno, I want to hear what happened in that room after I left..."

Dan Williams stopped the player and hit the FF button, then he snapped it on again and cranked up the volume.

"You can tell them you've had a conference with the military. Tell them you've been assured that nothing criminal, requiring 5-0's involvement, went on up there. End of story."

"Get me back to my office. Case closed."

"There - that's where I got outta there..." McGarrett nodded.

The tape continued with Straker's voice, *"Alec? Yes, it's me. I just finished with McGarrett. Anything new I should know about? Paul and I will be taking separate flights back to the UK. Al and the others are already gone...yes, the alien nest was completely cleaned out - our guys managed to pick up some equipment - the exobiologists at Omega will have plenty of bodies to do post-mortems on - I just wish we'd been able to get one of the aliens alive...to interrogate. Every time our people take out a nest I keep hoping against hope we'll get lucky and catch one of those green bastards. No, there was no ship. They must have been dropped off there. Paul told me it looked like the aliens were digging up lava, of all things, probably for transport back in space, but what would they want lava for? Doesn't make any sense...I'll see you tomorrow..."* There was the sound of a telephone receiver being replaced into its cradle, and footsteps leaving the drawing room.

Williams and McGarrett looked at each other.

"Did he say aliens?" Danno asked quietly.

"And he said 'transport back in space', didn't he?" McGarrett returned the question. 5-0's commander was thoughtful, "Y'know, Danno, when I was in the Navy years ago, there was talk - I thought it was just bullshit - about some case in '47 on the mainland - something about a spaceship landing in New Mexico, and the government hushing the whole thing up."

"Yeah, Steve, I've heard of that - Roswell, New Mexico, right?"

"That's the place," Steve was ruminating, "Would exobiologists be scientists who work with bodies not of earth origin?"

"I don't know. Why would anyone, human or alien, want lava samples? I mean, lava flows out of a volcano at incredible temperatures. When it finally cools, it forms volcanic glass, or obsidian. It's not valuable. It's virtually worthless. I know some jewellery makers and local artisans use it to make stuff to sell to the tourists. They pick up the little pieces of round lava stones called Pele's Tears and sell them as souvenirs."

"That's just a money-making scheme, it's not something that has to be kept secret and it's certainly not illegal to go up there and get lava flow."

"What was that he said about 'those green bastards'?"

"But, when he says 'aliens' on that tape, does he really mean little green men or illegal immigrants?" McGarrett pondered, "Green cards are vital for illegals if they can get them under the table and stay here in the U.S. I don't think we should jump to the wrong conclusions

about what he's saying on that tape."

"Did you ever find out who he was, Steve?"

"No, and the CCTV cameras in the outer office photographed him when he came in. I had his photo run through the FBI, OSI, the military, Interpol, everyone who might have some sort of bead on this guy. Came up empty-handed. He's like the man who never existed."

"So we got nothing?"

McGarrett popped the tape player and put the tape back in its plastic case, "Take this Danno, and file it. We've got lots of real cases to work on right now."

The End