

The Fate of One Planet

by Ian Dow

Chapter 3

Probed

The helicopter banked hard, and very close to the ground. Jay watched the pilot's skill for a few seconds and then turned to the captain, who handed him a headset. The first thing out of Jay's mouth was to whistle the first five notes of a 1977 sci-fi movie's theme tune.

This brought a wry smile to the captain's face, "Good, so you are human and from this planet. Are you physically OK or do you have any problems?" he asked.

"I am still trying to process what just happened to me. How much time did I lose?" asked Jay.

"Not long because the cops clocked you at 249 miles per hour between losing sight and seeing you again."

"Cool, so tuning up my old bike worked then." They both laughed.

"Look, you will have to undergo some serious questioning. This is the first, erm, for want of better words, *the* first real close encounter."

Jay nodded back and asked, "Where?"

"Believe it or not, we actually have a special secret facility in case this event ever arose," answered the captain.

Jay sat back, relaxed and watched the route from the air. Heading north, he noted, passed *that* town, following *that* road, over the end of the Chilterns. "Oh! it's *there*," thought Jay.

Finally, the helicopter landed at the secret facility. The captain wished him luck and handed Jay to waiting men in white coats. He was photographed, videoed, Geiger countered, medically examined, bled, stripped and given a, too short

for his six-foot-five frame, paper gown that fastened up the back.

"What, no paper knickers?" he quipped.

"Hey!" he shouted at a man in a white gown who tried to take his temperature. "The Aliens stuck nothing up there, so you can't do that either, mate."

Jay was then taken to a room and interviewed by the rudest, most unpleasant woman he had ever met. He barely got to finish a sentence. Everything he said was met with derision, while she huffed and puffed with her own self-importance. Jay quickly went from helpful citizen to stoic silence.

"Well! If you don't tell me *what* you learnt from them, we can hold you here indefinitely."

Silence.

"You will tell me what you know, or I can employ other means," she threatened.

Silence.

Jay sat cross-armed and legged, staring at 'Interview Woman'.

She threatened his freedom, finances, livelihood (she obviously did not know about that situation), and his friends and family, all to no avail.

A flustered man burst into the room, obviously afraid of this obnoxious woman.

"Errr," he stammered.

"Er, *what*?" she shouted back.

"The er, Prime Minister is on the phone and wants you to talk to him now."

"What? That public schoolboy twit!" She rolled her eyes. "If he must, I suppose. I need a cup of coffee anyway...."

Still staring at the Interview Woman, Jay exaggeratedly uncrossed his legs, and 'Sharon Stoned' her before getting up to follow the man out of the room.

The flustered man took Jay to a room with a landline phone and the prime minister on the other end. Jay pleasantly greeted the man he voted for and then proceeded to tear him a new one about being detained. Then, he calmed down and told the Prime Minister the very little he knew. The Prime Minister did the right thing. He shut up and listened. This was then followed by an apology, whilst insisting that Jay had to stay at the secret facility, and then he hung up. The landline phone burred with a dialling tone, so Jay called a local cab firm, who said they would be at the main gate in fifteen minutes after taking his credit card details.

Jay walked out of the room to see the flustered man standing in the corridor. He clapped his hands together, gave the flustered man a winning smile and said, "Ok, take me to my belongings, please."

"What?" he replied.

"My stuff: clothes, boots, bags and crash helmet." Jay insisted.

"What?" he repeated, robotically.

"Oh, don't you know? The Prime Minister said that as I do not know anything, I should go home." Jay lied and gave the flustered man a winning smile.

"In fact, he has sent a car for me to the main gate." The flustered man took Jay to his stuff. He put on regular clothes and packed his bike gear in the bag, which he politely asked flustered man to carry for him.

They walked out the quarter of a mile to the main gate nodding and smiling at everyone they met as you would greet colleagues and equals. The guards on the gate straightened warily as Jay and the flustered man walked towards them. Jay distracted them by pointing at the approaching car and lying again by saying, "Wow, the Prime Minister sent a Bentley for me."

This had the guards looking back and forth between the car and Jay. He did not walk around the end of the barrier, but stopped and smiled at the guards. After a few seconds of Jay's confident and smiling gaze, they raised the barrier. He walked out to the wedding limousine driver, who looked smart in his cap

and jacket; he put Jay's bags in the boot of the Bentley, opened the rear door for Jay and drove him home.