

The Fate of One Planet

by Ian Dow

Chapter 9

Home

The wedding limousine that Jay had hired to get him home arrived at his house. He got out of the Bentley, thanked the driver, turned towards his front door and swore. The door was ajar.

Everything had been thrown on the floor, including the fridge and freezer contents. Jay's house had been completely turned over!

It took several hours to put things straight and throw out the spoilt food. Jay switched on his computer, changed all the passwords and did an antivirus sweep. Trojan software was still bound to be installed, so he knew he had to rebuild his computer system. He did an online shop for the next morning's delivery and thought about a takeaway meal. The phone rang.

"Hello?" Jay answered.

The voice at the other end said, "Beer eight."

Jay said, "Yes," and hung up. The entire call had taken less than two seconds.

His bike had been left in front of the garage. He put it away, made the house and garage secure and left for the pub in his car. However, after only two turns, he noticed a Range Rover following him.

"A tail, there's a surprise. Ok, fatty, follow me if you can."

The Corrado VR6 was old with many hundreds of thousands of miles on the clock, but the old girl picked up her petticoats and buggered off. The Rover gave chase.

"Ok, I bet you can't do this," Jay said to the image in the rear-view mirror.

To stop commercial vehicles from taking a shortcut through domestic neighbourhoods, the Local Council put in six-foot six-inch wide width restrictions, using two large steel posts often decorated with unlucky peoples' car paint. Jay did not blink or slow down for the width restriction, which he took at double the speed limit. The Range Rover driver bottled out, braked too late and added black paint to a post. Jay had an intimate knowledge of the local roads and so after a few quick left and rights, the Range Rover was lost. He slowed down and doubled back on his actual course to the pub.

Jay walked into the saloon bar. His friend Gea was sitting at the bar talking to the Landlord. He got up and greeted Jay with a hug.

"It's been a long-time, man."

When the hug went on a bit too long, the Landlord suggested they may be more comfortable in the gay bar down the road. His reward for which, was that they both flicked him the Vs. The three of them sat at the bar with pints of Adnams, and Gea began to quiz Jay.

"Even working in South Africa, I hear that Jay here has been sacked from his surveying job for sticking his boss's head down the loo."

Jay winced, "Well, that's quite a spin on the story."

"Spill the beans," said the Landlord.

"Ok, I was at work, going to the loo. As I went through the door, I pulled a tissue out of my pocket, and a penny fell out of my pocket and rolled under a cubicle's door, with some unfortunate timing with my line manager."

"The one you previously described as a useless fuck wit, with the IQ of a teddy bear, who had brown-nosed his way into a position? That he was only allowed to keep because his incompetence meant he was no threat to the idiots above him?" interjected Gea.

"Yes, that's him." Continued Jay. "Unbeknownst to me, he had just unlocked the door, then quickly turned around and bent down to pick up the coin. I walked into what I thought was an empty cubical. There is a collision between me, the door and my line manager. I fell off balance and tried to arrest my fall by putting one hand on the back of the manager's head and the other on the

flush handle. Of course, no one believes it was an accident and just unlucky timing. HR put me on paid gardening leave till they decide what to do."

Gea was holding his ribs with tears rolling down his face. "You must be a hero at work," he splutters.

"Yep," says Jay, "I am a legend in my own lunchtime."

The Landlord said, "That story is almost as good as your disastrous date with Bea."

"What!" said Gea, "Our boy fucked up a date with the girl of his dreams. Now, why am I not surprised?"

Jay noticed the black Range Rover drive past the window and pull into the car park.

"Bugger!" said Jay, "there must be a tracker on my car."

Gea sobered up his mood quickly and asked, "Is there a problem, mate?"

"My house was turned over, and a black Range Rover is following me."

"Why?" asked the Landlord.

"Well, I kind of got abducted by aliens and then escaped from a secret military base this morning." Jay told them everything he knew.

"And you didn't think to lead with that story?" queried Gea.

"Well, you seemed so interested in my employment status, and I really needed this pint."

The Landlord laid out the facts. "The military knows something entered and left our atmosphere. The police know you did 249 miles an hour. The Prime Minister knows you were in contact with something unknown, even for a short while. All these people and their advisers will think you are lying because you went home. The other World Powers have probably seen the unknown object on their radars and satellites. With their spies homing in on you. I'm surprised there is only one dodgy car following you. You, my friend, are about to become

the most important man on this planet."

"You could tell them anything," said Gea, "You may not know anything, but that is not what they want to hear. You could con the whole planet, and the world would lap it up. You could ask for the most ridiculous things, and the people in power will bend over backwards for you."

"Or," said the Landlord, "they could kidnap you again. Lock you away with some fake scientist trying to justify their extravagant funding by sticking things up your bum while faking they know something about the subject they are bullshitting about, to clueless morons in charge of them, who panic about remaining in control."

"What's with you and sticking things up people's bums?" said Gea.

"Really," replied the Landlord, "that is what you took out of my statement!"

"A guy in a lab coat did try and take my temperature that way," said Jay, "a quick bark at him put him off that idea."

"See," said the Landlord, "next time, they will strap you down, and the bastards won't even warm it up first."

"Are you talking from personal experience?" Gea asked the Landlord.

"I resent that," said the Landlord, who walked bow-legged down the bar to serve another customer.

This made Jay snort his pint.

"Spray it again, Sam," said Gea, as he brushed the beer spray off his jacket.

The Landlord returned and said that he had looked at his CCTV and there were more cars in the car park than customers on a good night.

"I had better go," said Jay, "I don't want trouble from this to rub off on you guys."

"Ahh! That's sweet," said the Landlord in a mocking voice. "But," he added, "I have a plan." Whilst holding up his index finger with a wide-eyed stare about

the room.

"Well, if you put it like that, I'm in," said Gea.

"*But*, I haven't even told you my plan yet?" protested the Landlord.

"Ok, as long as it has nothing to do with BUTTS, I'm in," replied Gea.

"It was not that type of, oh never mind," said the Landlord.

Jay shook the Landlord's hand across the bar and gave Gea another hug.

"Is that your dick against my leg?" enquired Gea.

"DUDE! Eww!" Jay struggled, but Gea would not let him go.

"You have had it now," said the Landlord, "one of Gea's infamous inappropriately long hugs. I love the way people get so uncomfortable so quickly. It feels so good to watch them squirm."

Jay was released just before Gea got punched. He took him by the shoulders and said, "What I really don't get about you, mate, is, you don't believe me about not sticking my boss's head down the loo on purpose, but alien abductions, and you are all in."

Gea replied, "That is because the second one made you sound stupid."

"...er," added the Landlord.

Jay pointed at the Landlord and said, "Lay off the beer, mate. It will make you fat."

"...er," added Gea.

Jay and Gea walked out to their cars. So many big black vehicles with tinted windows, noted Jay.

When the Corrado pulled out of the parking space, Gea's car pulled in tight behind him. Subtlety ended as thirty plus vehicles all fired up their engines at once. Jay and Gea drove out at normal speed from the car park at the rear of

the pub and down the exit road at the side, whilst the Landlord stood in the middle of the wide pavement at the side of the pub. Jay waved goodbye as he passed, but Gea turned his car sideways, blocking the road next to the Landlord.

The Corrado was gone. The queue of Black vehicles was stuck and leaning on their horns. Two heavies got out to try to make Gea move his car. He decided to lock it and run into the pub.

The scratched Range Rover mounted the wide pavement by the pub and drove at the Landlord to get passed the traffic jam. The two men in black suits made the 'get out of the way' hand signals at the Landlord, who shook his head and waggled his index finger at them. The Range Rover accelerated hard at the Landlord. Who was forced to dive out of the way at the last second.

Jay's favourite pub had a nautical theme. Even though Hertfordshire is a long way from the sea, someone at the brewery had ordered old naval cannons to be used as bollards around the building. They had made a mistake and ordered a nine-foot cannon when they only needed a four-foot-high bollard. The builder would not get his grinder through all that metal, so he made the new boy dig a five-foot deep hole for it. Digging a hole is an art form. Any idiot can make a big muddy crater, but it takes skill to dig a neat two-foot diameter, five-foot deep hole by hand. The builder had failed to pass on these skills to the new boy, so he got a seven-foot deep, seven-foot-wide crater with an employee covered in mud. There was half a mixer lorry of concrete leftover at the end of the day. So, the five cubic yards of concrete were used to hold the one long cannon. The occupants of the Range Rover didn't see the bollard till the Landlord leapt for his life.

In the safety videos, the airbags inflate in silent slow motion. In real life, it is a big firework in a bag, and they went off with one hell of a BANG! The front of the Range Rover had eaten the bollard in the same way a large bottom eats the back of a thong. It was now nowhere to be seen. As the Landlord got to his feet, he smiled at the pre-called police car arriving with perfect timing at the pub.

Jay got home without incident and was met by a different police car. The policeman and his partner, who did not like Jay, were waiting outside his house for him. Jay put his car in the garage and walked out to talk to them.

"Hello," he said, "Yes, I have been drinking, officer, but I only had one pint, yes, I am willing to submit to a breath test, but it will be negative."

"That will be not necessary, sir," said the officer and he handed Jay the ignition key for the Ducati.

"Thank you for safely returning my bike," Jay nodded goodnight to the officers and went into his house.

In the middle of the night, Jay sat up in bed and said, "What? The earth is going to be destroyed!"

And with that, five different listening devices picked these words up.