

UFO - The Battle Continues
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TARGET REACQUIRED Chapter 9

by **Jeff Stone**

"You must get your facts right, and you can't tell the people." - Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, on the subject of flying saucers, 1994

"There's UFOs over New York, and I ain't too surprised..." - John Lennon, *Nobody Told Me*

[ARCHIVE NOTE: Due to the chaos and disruption of the period known as 'Black Christmas', precise timings for the events that follow are not known. Please refer to Caesium Atomic Clock Chronometric Disruption Phenomena File 1-39-612, SHADO Archives]

SHADO HEADQUARTERS SUSSEX, ENGLAND

As always, the sound was the first indication that a UFO was approaching.

It had been lost in the wind blowing around the studio until now, and what had been a half-heard background hiss that made heads turn was now an undeniable *tone*. Getting louder.

The attack was on its way.

"Alright, here they come. I don't think I have to tell you that it'd be nice if we could keep them out of the base for at least a little while. Rocket teams are our best bet, but they will get through. So, conserve your ammo, go for headshots and don't get dead."

Alec Freeman had to shout the last words of his advice to the miserably small number of SHADO personnel gathered with him just inside the doors of the studio lobby, as the noise of the approaching UFOs blotted out any other sound. The coming storm.....

No-one was really listening that hard anyway; not because they lacked any faith in Freeman's words, but because they knew what they had to do. This was, literally, the thing they had been training for their entire lives. There had been mass attacks by the Aliens before, certainly, but not one of those strikes had ever come close to a landing. Today was the day when that lucky streak came to a definitive end.

The power blackout made matters even worse.

Not only were Freeman, Lake and the rest under-armed and (probably) grossly out-numbered, they were also going into battle in pitch blackness, with an overcast sky, and no nightscopes or image enhancement gear.

It had proved difficult even to find a battery-operated torch that worked.

We're going to lose this one, Freeman admitted to himself.

They'll walk right over us.

That is, if they even bothered to land.

The Aliens could just as easily blow the base to pieces from the air.

The next few minutes would tell, at any rate.

Freeman lit a cigarette and tried to push the feeling of suppressed panic he was feeling down into the pit of his stomach.

Alec, you old bastard, you're SCARED, he realised with some shock.

But on the other hand, it was good that he could still feel surprised about his fear.

It showed he was alive. After so much, to feel real dread again was almost like an old friend coming to call.

By now, the oscillating whirr of the approaching saucers (no-one could agree on what exactly the noise sounded like; the best approximation that had been put forward was an 'unearthly whistling') was so loud the men and women could feel it resonating inside their bodies.

"Any second now!" Lake shouted; there was the clatter of rifle bolts being cocked.

"Teams 1 and 2 get moving. Good luck!"

And then, they appeared over the trees.

Four saucers, the teardrop-shaped vanes around their bases blurred into a solid line by their rapid spinning.

Freeman and Lake each fired off a Very pistol, and night became stark day as the magnesium-phosphorus flares burst in front of the descending spacecraft.

Teams One and Two had radar-homing chemically-fired 'Flying Fist' rocket launchers at

the ready, and they launched off a salvo of six rockets apiece the second the flares exploded. The hardened targeting system steered the missiles in drunken smoky zig zags that looked like an upward-falling airshow display.

The first shot is always going to be your best shot, as the saying went, and the saying held true. Two rockets slammed straight into the closest of the UFOs, blowing it sideways into a copse of trees.

Wood and greenery creaked and snapped as the crippled saucer careered earthwards, finally exploding just before it hit the ground.

A third rocket hit a second saucer side on and sheared off a large chunk of its' spinner vanes.

For a moment, the craft sagged in the air like a drunken titan, and looked to be plunging also, but somehow it regained stability and moved swiftly back in the air to avoid a final rocket.

Its spinning was now like a warped record's, dipping and rising regularly as if in heavy swells. The wreckage of the crashed UFO, simmering for the past thirty seconds or so, decided suddenly to finish the job, and promptly exploded into a thousand pieces.

A ragged cheer rose up from the SHADO troops, but Freeman was in no mood for celebration. "Shut up, you bloody idiots!

"You'll give away your positions!" he almost screamed down his radio. He sighed and focussed again. The damaged UFO and its intact brethren were now slowly descending, losing off energy bolts to suppress further fire. Landing was underway. Now Freeman's troops were going to get it in the neck.

"Move to your cover positions now, all of you!" he roared. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see his team fanning out in the semi-darkness.

The flares had long sputtered out, and another volley of rockets from the bazooka teams had failed to hit their marks, all zipping over the rounded top of the damaged craft with a metre or so to spare.

The ships had now all gone behind tree cover.

That's our last best chance gone Lake thought. *But who the hell can fire straight in these conditions?* Seconds ticked by, during which the SHADO teams had fanned out and taken up new and better cover positions in and around the studio car park. Driverless vehicles and concrete bollards concealed watchful men and women. All eyes were focussed on the enemy in the trees; fingers were poised on triggers. The UFOs opened fire again, but not at the ground. Bolts of energy stabbed out through the trees, literally plowing through the sturdy trunks as if they were made of paper.

The target of the bolts was the studio building, and the toughened glass and steel gave way under their impact no less readily. There was a tremendous concussion as compacted rubble and air tried vainly to take the brunt of hyperaccelerated energy focussed into small areas. The ground heaved beneath the defenders' feet, car windows shattered into razored spider webs. Half a second later, the gas central heating pipes in the structure ruptured and the already half-wrecked frontage bulged and burst like an egg.

Huge chunks of rubble hailed down on the car park, burying some of the SHADO troops closest to the building front.

Dust billowed around in choking clouds, coating everything with a pallid veil of particles. Within ten seconds, the entire centre wing of the office complex measuring a little over two square miles had been reduced to a truncated and smashed shell akin to the ruins of Berlin in

1945.

The dust-clouded air was now starting to rain drizzles of fluttering paper, the documentation of a decade now surreal confetti for the Aliens' arrival.

How many people had still been in the building Lake wondered. *Ten, twenty?*

She couldn't even see the wreckage now through the murk.

It was like she was marooned in a fogbank, one filled with the noises of chaos and suffering.

While one saucer remained airborne, firing off energy bolts seemingly at random targets, the other craft lowered to the ground and spun to a stop. Freeman fired off another flare, and caught glimpses of red-suited figures running to and fro among the blasted tree stumps.

"All teams, choose targets." he muttered, knowing that the others would be looking at the same thing. "Fire at will."

Thirty sub-machine guns barked into life at that moment, hurling a veritable wall of lead at the invaders. Most of it, however hit the often man-height tree stumps, and only two or three of the helmetted figures were knocked down and stayed down.

The others retreated in good order under the second volley of shots and dove to the ground out of range.

What little Alec could see suggested they were digging in.

What are they waiting for?! Freeman thought. They had SHADO over a barrel. To not immediately counterattack invited destruction for the overflying UFOs, as the bazooka teams would be able to reload and fire at almost pointblank range.

But the attack still didn't come. A saucer-launched energy bolt sizzled over Freeman's head, making him duck even though it was a good two metres clear of him. The air was disturbed near him, though, and he shuddered.

God, how could something that feel cold *and* hot at the same time?

He fumbled in his combat tunic and pulled out the hand grenades he hadn't been sure he'd remembered to bring. He risked a look at the woods. The Aliens were still milling about in there, as if scared to come out. They *had* to know they had the advantage here, and they were just *sitting there*.

On the other side of the parking lot, Lake gritted her teeth. *God, what I'd give for one IR scope.*

The device in question lay inert and useless in a weapons case at her feet. She'd been sure all the armament gear was EMP hardened, but clearly not.

Despite the situation, Lake could not help feeling a tinge of respect for the invaders that had nothing to do with the fear of the present crisis. They could freeze time, resurrect the dead, knock out a whole planet's power at once; that was probably only the tip of the iceberg. What sort of people fight a battle with one hand tied behind their back?

Once again, she briefly wondered why SHADO had lasted this long, before wrenching her attention to the unwinnable situation before her. *This is pointless unless they get in closer, and they're not going to do that when they can just smash us to pieces like this. But they're not pressing the attack. That's crazy.*

Someone loosed off a volley of 'Flying Fists' at the treeline. The projectiles shot up normally, but then veered off course abruptly and went in every direction possible other than at the ships.

The already decimated studio front and trees took the impact of the weapons instead.

Jamming device, Lake thought. *Shit.* As she finished the bitter curse, the third saucer

abruptly ceased fire and began descending.

The ragged fire from the Alien troops died down.

Lake looked around in the gloom for her teams; shadowy movement showed the dazed survivors of the energy bolt fusillade were seeking better cover to fire from. Ironically, this meant ducking behind the newly created wreckage from the studio building's front. Jagged chunks of steel and concrete lay like Easter Island moai all around, metal pipes or beams jutting out of some at lethal angles. Freeman was sneaking forward with Lts Anderson and Rawlings towards the trees, taking advantage of the lull - *why aren't they attacking anymore?!!* - to infiltrate the Alien landing site and plant demo charges. The trip totalled maybe 60 metres in almost total darkness, but those 60 multiplied a billionfold in the mind when one knew the invaders had nightvision and focussed energy weapons.

They had almost reached the first row of trees when the sun decided to come up many hours early above them.

The whole car park was suddenly a mass of white and shadow, instant brilliance as if noon had struck in a moment.

Freeman was not alone in clutching his eyes; panicked, he hit the dirt and waited until his sight returned.

If it ever did. Lake had been searching in a knapsack when the light had exploded in the sky, and so, literally, had kept her vision due to blind luck. Startled, she peered through her slightly fanned fingers at the scene unfolding before her.

The Aliens were strolling out from the trees, completely exposed, as if they had not a care in the world.

Everyone but her was writhing on the ground helpless; adrenaline made her heart leap painfully.

She was alone and pinned down.

Thirty Aliens were heading straight for her.

A bass tone like the gates of Hell opening erupted from the sky, and as it sounded the light began dimming to tolerable levels. Something was descending; Lake goggled as a UFO bigger than any she had ever seen before parted the low cloud and came to hover directly over the studio building.

The whirr of this leviathan was almost as deafening as the light had been blinding, and the wind vortex blown up by the ships' giant vanes was turning rock, glass and even paper wads into deadly missiles.

Three ports irised open on the bottom of the megasaucer, and Lake could just see the shapes of standard-sized craft within.

Is this how they bring the UFOs to within strike range of the Solar System? Carrier ships would be what I would do...

Lake had almost forgotten the oncoming Aliens, dazzled as she was by the mighty statement of extraterrestrial superiority seemingly displayed for her alone in the sky.

But they had not forgotten her; one of them took her gently but firmly by the forearm and pulled her to a standing position. Lake dragged her gaze from the megasaucer and tried to eyeball the Alien holding her.

The emerald-stained face behind the plastiglass and murky air-liquid was as dead as the surface of the Moon.

The shielded eyes were blank spheres. "Good fight," she said to the creature in a fractured monotone.

"I imagine this means you've won."
The Alien said nothing.
The megasaucer was coming in to land.
All was wind, pain, noise, dust.

SIBERIAN PLATEAU RUSSIAN DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION

Waterman's arm was still hurting like hell, even after the PZJ medic had set the fracture and given him a proper painkiller.

The first agonies of frostbite were also making themselves known. but right at that moment his discomfort was a trivial side issue compared to the sight before his eyes. *An intact UFO* he kept telling himself.

Holy bloody shit, an intact UFO.

There it was, just a pane of glass and a few metres from him; the answer to every question that this war had posed since the formation of SHADO.

Well, almost every question. He turned, almost having to rip his eyes from the window, and stared straight at Voskov.

The Russian smiled broadly at his bemusement. "Pretty damn exciting, yes?" Waterman was trembling.

"You could say that." The next words came out almost as a splutter. "How in the name of hell did you get your hands on a UFO?! You're not going to tell me you just came across it, are you?"

His face reddened despite the biting chill.

"More to the point, why didn't you tell me about this right away?!"

"Mr Waterman," Voskov said, gesturing to a chair next to the hut door.

"Please sit." The SHADO pilot did so, still looking stonily at the man who now also sat and proffered a hipflask from a coat pocket. "This will keep out cold. It is in fact Soviet Russian vodka, I am sad to say. We feel we have to buy as much of it as possible to make Reds feel less miserable about losing so badly.

Their glorious Five Year Plan is largely built around us buying this..." he took a slug and grimaced. "...ugh .lighter fluid. But, it does warm you up."

The two men drank and talked while the storm blew outside the tent.

Voskov hailed from the Ukraine, a region that had suffered badly during the Eurasian War of 1974-6.

The Ukraine always suffers, as the people there said. That now independent nation-state of the RDF bordered on a strip of terrain that separated the huge social democratic Federation from the tiny Soviet Communist enclave in Georgia, Kasakhstan and the Chechen provinces. The almost constant border skirmishes from not only the Soviets but a motley assortment of separatist movements in the upper Middle East had lasted for three years after the war ended.

It had bred a new toughness in Ukrainians.

This steel was never very far from the surface in a people so tried, of course. After talking to Voskov for only a few minutes, and even then about small domestic details and gentle complaints, Waterman felt instinctively that he could trust this man. He was too...well, artless to be deceptive. Soon enough, matters turned to business.

"Hard as it may be for you to believe, we of PZJ are not exactly, what is term, rank amateurs at flying saucer game. We have been tracking UFO movements in this area for several months; that is why we are here now. In all our powerless majesty."

The inhabitants of the camp bustled around the two men, intent on their own affairs.

Not one of them seemed (to Waterman, anyway) to care that a craft from another planet was sitting in a rough shed next to the mess tent. That, the SHADO officer mused, took Slavic

stoicism just a little too far. "We picked up huge track of activity above us yesterday," Voskov was saying.

"Ah, we think, something big is happening. Blips all over the screen like mayflies. Maybe Reticulans being mysterious as usual, or maybe Berenicians, we dunno. We watch your jets fight UFOs, then - POOF!"

He clapped his mittened hands together. "Our systems go completely dead. Just before blackout, radar indicates that saucer has come down close to camp. So, we go out to take look, find it abandoned."

"Abandoned? You mean you've taken a look inside it?!"

"Oh no, craft is sealed tight. ut no-one comes out when we approach, nothing blasts us when we lash horses to it and drag it all waycamp. We know they have self-destruct system, so we have not tried to open it so far."

Voskov pointed to the shed.

"Without electricty, it is impossible to remove air from hut. Cold seems to slow disintegration process, however. So we have put it in here, and our next job is to figure out how we get itbase. Weather, ach, too bad for long trek. UFO is hardly damaged now, but time is short."

Waterman bent forward and frowned as a new question assembled itself in his head.

"The craft was just sitting there. Where had the crew gone?"

"That is strange part, my friend. Damn thing is sitting there in shallow crater as if it had crashed. But it is intact, there are no gouge marks or scrape patterns in snow round it, and there are no footprints leading from it. As if it simply dropped onto ground like stone. We figure crew died on impact, and did not have time to activate self-destruct."

That was suspicious in itself. But it would have to wait. "Well, we have got to haul the craft out of here and get it into a water tank. Fast." A sudden thought occurred. "Do your diesel tractors and SnowCats have cartridge starters?"

They would be unaffected by EMP, of course, having no electrical components to disrupt.

"We thought of that already," Voskov admitted grouchily. He snorted with wry humour.

"Turns out we have been given wrong size cartridges! Ha! First f--king time RDF supply structure efficiency gets up to scratch since forever, and they hand us us wrong sized cartridges."

Waterman smiled. "That's not a problem. All we need to do is take the standard cartridge and shape them to fit."

Another idea came to him. "How far is the landing site from here?"

"About ten kilometres. Why?"

"We're going to go take a look at that site."

"We are?" Voskov asked flatly. "You are in no shape to travel, my friend. You need bed rest."

But Waterman was already on his feet and reaching for his new cold weather clothes.

Voskov sighed and stood up himself. "OK. You English are funny in head. Too damn eager to kill yourselves."

CENTRAL MANHATTAN, NEW YORK CITY

Why are they taking things that don't work? Angelo Brunelli wondered as the crowds poured into Macy's through the smashed front windows. That part of the operation had been a happy accident; at the moment of the blackout, a suddenly dead-engined and unsteerable 4WD jeep had skidded across the street and ploughed through a display full of mannequins. Their dismembered faux-bodies had been crushed underfoot by a stampede of humanity intent not on the rescue of the jeep driver but the wholesale stripping of everything the vast store had to offer.

This was human nature at its finest, Brunelli had mused sarcastically; Jesus, he was a thug of the first order, and even *he* would've checked to see if the poor mook in the yuppie-jeep was still goddamn breathing. He wasn't, of course...Brunelli had pushed his way closer to the vehicle in a burst of uncharacteristic selfless humanity at odds with the frenzied greed around him, and recoiled at the sight of a glass shard the size of a toaster sticking out of the driver's throat.

Of course, the reversion to pillage had not been instant. Brunelli had been heading home slightly drunk from a family meeting in Upper Manhattan and, like everyone else on the street at that instant, stopped dead in their tracks as the city that never slept dove nosefirst into a coma.

After the darkness had come the panic, then the explosions, the noise (Oh God, the noise) as metal impacted steel and glass and flesh. The ants' maze that was New York had been picked up and shook by some angry giant, then abandoned to pitch blackness.

From a subway steam vent, Brunelli could hear the yelling of trapped passengers.

Suddenly, being up here in all this madness seemed a lot easier to take.

As in so many other cities across that hemisphere of the planet, the fires that broke out became about the only reliable way of making out anything in the night. The weather had been terrible the past few days, and tonight had been the worst one of the lot.

Maybe there was something in that, Brunelli wondered. Magnetic storm? The problems facing the Macy's looters were primarily how much merchandise one could cart off manually on the spur of the moment and what one should take. Brunelli observed them hauling massive TV sets and stereo systems out through the tangle of Christmas tinsel, shopfront, jeep and mannequins.

The blackout made those electrical items utterly useless, as he had already realised; they oughta be taking them furs and thermal gear in the Camping section.

They'd be far more useful when the fires finally went out and the temperature plummeted than a shiny brand-new Blaupunkt that could do precisely jack-all. The police were nowhere in sight, naturally, but this time it was because they were as crippled as anyone else. No cars, no APCs for riot control (as if you could control THIS!), not even a frikkin' flashlight. Besides, anyone trying to deal with this hell right now without a division of tanks, a lake of tear gas and a small nuke or two would be committing suicide.

These streets would see horrors tonight. There it was again; Brunelli had caught a flash of something in the sky out of the corner of his vision. Earlier on, just after the lights went out, he could've sworn he'd seen a huge round object sail through the air between two office blocks. It'd been too dark and overcast to make anything out, and he'd not been all that attentive to the sky at that moment.

But dammit, there was a split-second glimpse of what looked like that ball of light again.

He decided not to go too deeply into connecting what was happening to weird-ass lights

in the sky; there were more immediate matters to deal with.

Such as, how the hell to get home to his wife and kids through a city on fire full of millions of panic-stricken and violent citizens where no cars or trains worked.

Deciding that any sort of purposeful motion was better than just standing around, Brunelli left Macy's to it's jackals and headed of the street in the direction of the 49th Street Bridge.

This would have to be the one f--kin' night I don't bring my piece. He patted the area on his chest where the Magnum .445 Auto would normally have holstered and sighed.

But then, y'don't turn up to a meeting of capos packing a hand-cannon, do ya?

A brief vision of Frankie Massito, the wiseguy who was sponsoring him, came before his eyes.

What was Frankie doing right now?

Was *he* home with his kids? The meeting had still been going when he left....Brunelli tried to imagine the scene of half the city's dons scrabbling about in the blackness of a windowless, bug proof room with electric doors.

After turning the corner into a side street to avoid a multiple car pile-up (there were many bodies among the twisted metal; Brunelli didn't look too closely), he was suddenly immersed in quiet.

This street was dark but undamaged, with no sign of life or damage. The contrast to the flaming death only a couple of hundred metres away was startling.

Brunelli picked up the pace, throwing his feet forward in a march of the nervous.

The black houses and stores either side of him held fearful threats and dangers; the atavistic menace of the monsters under the bed for a child, still there, expressed in shadowed doors and shuttered windows. Brunelli had always hated the goddamn dark.

About half a block later, he ran into a white-haired man fleeing the other way. He'd come out of nowhere, and Brunelli had let out a most unmanly shriek when the collision happened.

Both men tumbled to the sidewalk; Brunelli was the first on his feet and he gingerly helped his companion up.

As soon as he was standing, the old man angrily swatted off Brunelli's helping hands and glared redly at him.

His features were hard to make out in the dark, but there was enough light for Brunelli to see the beads of sweat on the man's face, the hollow gauntness of mental trauma in his slackened features and staring eyes.

"Get off me!" the man roared huskily; he sounded like he smoked two packs a day. "You may be infected! Hell, you may be one of them!"

This seemed to strike the man as hilarious, and he let fly with a terrible, dragging cough of a laugh that sent shivers up Brunelli's spine.

"Hey old man, I don' want trouble. I'm going home to my family. I'm sorry." The young mobster tried to back away, but the man abruptly lept forward and took his forearm with a grip of iron.

They locked eyes, Brunelli wondering if he should just take the old bastard out right now. He didn't look like more than 90 pounds soaking wet. Break him like a twig.

Don't make me do this, ya old fart... He could now see that the old man was wearing a torn lab coat with dark stains on the lapels. But the man was talking, not fighting. Not with his body, anyway.

Some sort of wear was going on in his head, and Brunelli felt madness was winning by a Noo Yawk mile.

"Family? Huh, I was in a family, yeah!" Another terrible, dragging, wet, chest-deep laugh-cough.

He was still holding on to Brunelli as if his life depended on it.

"A biiiiiiig cosy family. We made magic, but then we were caught with our dicks in the wind! (hack cough) And, poff, it all went wrong..."

The words trailed off, the man suddenly caught by a wave of remorse. His face collapsed into melancholy like butter into hot pancakes.

His eyes slitted in angered frustration. "We had to go too soon, you know? You understand?!" His voice was now at fever pitch, the clutching fingers digging deeper. "Ronson told me! I had to do it! There was the vial! And those film studio bastards were getting suspicious!"

"What the f--k are you talkin' about, you crazy bastard?! Lemme go!" Brunelli roared, shaking off the grip.

The freak shrank back, and toppled over weeping. *Oh shit. I broke the loonie* The younger man stood over the pitiful human wreck and frowned. Words tumbled out.

"Look, I dunno what the hell you're on, gran'pa, but you better keep it together! I don't have time to kick your loopy ass, you gettin' me? Some serious shit is goin' down, and I gotta get the hell outta here!"

Straightening up his by now ruined suit, he made to leave.

He was halted by the man's parting words as he rose to his feet once again. They were spoken in a measured, clear tone so different from the feverish croak he'd used before, the effect was palpable.

"It's too late. I'm sorry. They've been looking for me ever since this happened, and they were going to ste...oh, here they are." To Brunelli's surprise, an unmarked paddy-wagon similar to a bank truck, the first moving vehicle he'd seen since the power cut, came round the corner and halted in front of them.

The thing's grilled headlights had totally destroyed Brunelli's night vision, and he stood frozen like a game animal in the actinic blaze.

Forms appeared out of the light. They resolved themselves into six human figures dressed in what looked like chemical suits. Red ones, with metal ring links all over the place.

They walked straight past Brunelli and took hold of the old man. He now seemed utterly composed, and made no struggle as they led him away. As they passed Brunelli, the man looked straight at him and yelled: "If you remember anything, remember this!"

He drew breath and said loudly and firmly: "Lemuria Eternae! Queen Maud must be saved! Remember that!"

"What..." Brunelli said drunkenly, thrown into almost spaced-out conditions by the series of bizarre events that had taken place. On top of the blackout, this was...just too damn much for one night.

But now, the man was gone and being bundled into the van. Brunelli willed his feet to move and he backed away from the lights and tried to walk off in the direction he had come from.

His path was blocked by a man in some sort of kinky-dinky blue uniform. There was...a bird symbol on his chest?

It was too dark to see properly.

"Guess what?" the stranger said, levelling a gun at Brunelli's chest. "Your day just got even worse." There was a hiss, a sudden coldness in the chest, and Brunelli fell into a storm of

hissing sparks. The man in the suit holstered his pistol and watched the suited men pile into the van after their captive.

Doors shut, the vehicle backed up before wheeling in a circle and racing off out of sight down the dark street.

Only when it had been swallowed wholly by the crimson-flickered blackness did he devote any attention to Angelo Brunelli's inert form. He'd crumpled like they usually did, on his back.

Good; he hated it when they fell on their faces. Messy.

"What a story you won't be able to tell in the morning, pal," he muttered. He checked Brunelli was breathing and then marched off into the night.

Three of them had escaped when the maglocks at the base had failed, (despite the boys up top saying all their gear was EMP proof) and they weren't going to capture themselves.

There was another flash of light in the sky, but this one passed unnoticed by the insensate apprentice mobster, now alone in that quiet part of hell.

It did, however, make the Medic Alert bracelet on his wrist, that warned of serious allergies to certain anaesthetics, glimmer briefly.

To Be Continued