

The Not Again Affair

Based on "UFO" the science-fiction TV series created by
Gerry and Sylvia Anderson and Reg Hill (1969-1970)
and "The Man From UNCLE"
created by Norman Felton and Sam Rolfe
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Continued from "Straker Stalker"

Chapter One

In the wilds of Vermont...

"Whoa. Stop. I've got something," Denise Feltcher said quietly, holding up her small Omega-issue instrument. It was an experimental gadget, fresh from the Omega Corp. labs, but it had to be tested somewhere.

UNCLE agent Illya Kuryakin looked down at the instrument Denise was using. It was registering something quite obviously, "What?" he asked.

"Ahead. About seven hundred feet thataway. Contact Paul and Napoleon. Give them our co-ordinates," Denise snapped open her GPS finder and read off the satellite information to him, "And, tell them to keep quiet and to keep out of sight as much as possible."

Fifteen minutes later, Foster and Solo arrived behind the same set of bushes Denise and Illya had taken refuge behind, "What have you got?" Paul queried in a whisper.

Denise nodded ahead, "The Metalometer is registering alien materials about seven hundred feet in that direction. It's not a ship. They'd have fired on us by now if it was. This is something else. Something under the soil."

"An underground installation?"

"Whatever it is, I can bet von Drammel and his lady friend must have gotten too close for the aliens' comfort. The readings are practically off the scale."

Napoleon looked at Denise's Metalometer, "Are you sure you can trust that gadget to give you the right information? You said it was a prototype."

"I'm as sure as our science can make it."

Solo ruminated, "I thought the aliens preferred underwater bases."

"They do, but underground temperatures are usually lower than above ground, especially in this climate. This could be some sort of facility, not a ship."

"How could they dig down deep enough to build a whole facility without being found out? Any project of that magnitude would be sure to bring unwanted attention," Illya replied.

"I don't know...," Denise mused aloud, "But, there's something down there alright. I think we'd better check in with our respective command structures and let them know what's going on here."

* * *

Several hours later, twilight was upon them. Owls and bats began to leave their homes and commence their night hunting. In fact, the night was alive with the sounds of the woods - from the hooting of the owls to a chorus of bullfrogs in the distance.

Omega SOPs stipulated that they were to investigate under cover of darkness if possible.

The UNCLE agents were along for the ride. With only the stars and a bright full moon for illumination, the quartet moved out of their concealed location, to track the alien facility, using Denise's Metalometer. It was a silent instrument, registering only a small blinking light on its scale. They kept themselves down out of sight as much as possible, and traversed the distance between their starting point and the point of greatest metal detection. They were crouched behind a copse of trees when they spotted some activity.

Moonlight flooded the small depression directly ahead of them,. They watched silently as what appeared to be a large rounded tree stump flipped over. It was obviously the opening to something. Then they sat dumbfounded as a pair of orange and silver clad aliens crawled out of it and walked through the woods, weapons at the ready.

"Napoleon, Illya," Denise whispered, "Follow those two and report in when you find out their final destination. We're going to need to know what they're up to." She handed an Omega-issue communicator to them.

Napoleon nodded, "And you two?"

Foster's expression was grim, "We're going down into that hole. Now I know how Alice felt."

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Foster opted to go first down the tree trunk hole "*Shades of Hogan's Heroes*" he thought to himself with a grim smile. Denise followed him down and pulled the tree trunk closed behind her. There was a ladder leading down into the bowels of the earth. As they climbed down, they could feel it getting cooler and cooler in temperature. They finally made it to a landing. At the landing, dim lights allowed them to see where they were.

Paul and Denise were standing at what looked like a T-intersection. Corridors went off in three different direction. Signposts in what was obviously alien script marked them, and Denise broke out her miniature camera to take silent photos. This was the first time either of them could ever remember seeing written alien language.

They were loath to speak and perhaps bring unwanted attention to themselves, so they resorted to ASL - American Sign Language. All SHADO and Omega people learned ASL so they could communicate without having to verbalize. It was always a handy means of avoiding making noise.

Paul signed, "*What now?*"

"*I think we're going to have to split up,*" Denise signed back to him.

"*Any chance the aliens are holding von Drammel down here?*"

"*If they are, I can bet he's already been carved up into pieces.*"

Foster made a face, "*I'd like to be able to find enough proof to satisfy the UNCLE agents that von Drammel won't be testifying for them at that Nazi war criminals trial.*"

"*Proof is nice, but you and I both know that's not our main mission here.*"

"*Alright. Let's synchronize our watches so that we can meet up again.*"

Denise looked at Paul seriously, "*Don't play the hero, Paul. If I'm not back in the specified time, you've got to get out of here and report what you've seen. Either one of us is expendable - but one of us has to report to Headquarters.*"

"*What about the UNCLE agents?*"

"*Let's hope they don't end up on the hook like von Drammel and his girl friend.*"

* * *

Napoleon and Illya remained within visual sight of the aliens, but tried to track them as quietly as possible. They weren't certain how well the aliens could hear sounds through their

heavy silver helmets. The aliens walked for some distance until they came to a lakeshore. There, they stopped, and utilized some sort of communications signal device.

As the two UNCLE agents watched from behind some thick foliage, a spinning silver ship can churning to the lake's surface. It took off, gathering speed and momentum, until it had spiralled off into the night sky. This was odd. Both men were sure the aliens would have boarded the ship, but they hadn't. The aliens slowly sloshed into the lake itself, until their helmets disappeared under the surface. Where they hell were they going like that?

"Think we should check in with Paul and Denise?" Illya whispered.

"I don't know. If we contact them, our broadcast signals could be picked up by the aliens. We might be tipping the bad guys off to their presence there."

"If we sit and wait for the aliens to return, we could be here the rest of the night - or longer."

"Let's go back and investigate the alien facility. We're not going to learn anymore here."

* * *

Paul flattened himself against the wall in a darkened spot. He was carrying his comm device, a weapon, and several pounds of plastique concealed on his person. "*Were such simple Earth-type explosives even capable of destroying such a facility?*" he wondered.

He had to chalk one up for the aliens. This was a sophisticated installation. How the hell had they managed to build it without getting caught? Wouldn't the equipment necessary to drill out the earth make some kind of noise? Wouldn't the work be visible from the air by planes at least? What kind of power source had the aliens utilized to run their equipment? There were many incredible questions to be asked. Never had he known the aliens to take such chances in setting up a beachhead. He and Commander Straker had managed to destroy a subsea base the year before, but the aliens had the privacy of deep water that time. This was a far more dangerous proposition, and from its complexity, it had to have been in the works for many months.

He slipped down the corridor, noting the door-like apertures along the smooth, opaque-ish walls. Even alien architecture was different. Their obviously advanced technology permitted them to design seamless walls and exterior spaces, as was evidenced in their underwater base. And, although this base was under the ground, Foster couldn't help feeling a grudging admiration for the exceptionally simple and yet functional structures they'd created.

The sound of footsteps coming sent Paul through one of the door apertures, and he watched from inside in silence as a pair of orange and silver clad aliens marched by, weapons holstered. As they disappeared around a corner, Paul was dismayed to realize that light was growing in the room. His entrance had obviously triggered the lighting mechanism inside and he didn't know how to turn it off!

As the light expanded his range of vision, he realized he wasn't alone.

* * *

"Are you sure we should go down there, Illya?" Napoleon asked sotto voce as his partner lifted the tree trunk hatch to the alien installation.

"No, I'm not sure of anything at this point. I just know we aren't going to get any valuable information by staying up here."

"You know what we could be getting ourselves in for, don't you?"

Illya started down the ladder inside the hatch, and laid a finger against his lips, "Shhhhhh."

* * *

Denise moved down her own corridor, grateful for her Omega-issue shoes which muffled her footsteps, so she could pad about as noiselessly as a cat. She shifted her comm device to 'vibrate' so no errant sounds would signal the aliens to her presence. Like Foster, Denise was amazed at the alien technology. It was years ahead of anything humans could have devised.

She heard a soft noise and ducked in the corner, just in time to see an alien exit a room. As he walked down the corridor ahead of her, she could make out the interior - it looked very much like a laboratory. The light was still on inside, but it was beginning to dim by degrees. Nobody else was in there, so she opted to slip in and have a peek.

The light returned to full strength as she eased her way through the odd doorway. While she understood little of the alien technology personally, she'd had enough briefings to know she was in the presence of some sort of scientific equipment. Worried that the alien would return and catch her, she took a quick look around. There were what appeared to be storage units ranked along one wall. She pressed a button on one panel and a small window slid down.

Her stomach lurched to one side. The window on the storage container showed her what appeared to be a human heart floating in some sort of liquid substance. It wasn't the typical green breathing liquid the aliens subsisted on, it was a bluish colour, and the organ had taken on some of the liquid's tone. She closed the window immediately. It wasn't hard to make the leap intellectually to what was likely in the rest of the containers.

* * *

Foster almost jumped back from the face until he realized that it was encased in a glass-like tube. There were in fact a multitude of glass tubes, all human height in size, some empty, some filled with bodies. Were they dead or alive? He didn't see any chest movement - why had the aliens held them? Their thoracic cavities were still intact. These humans, at least, had not been carved up yet. Maybe they were being held until the aliens could get around to harvesting their organs.

He wondered if one of those bodies was Erich von Drammel. He'd never seen a photo of the former Nazi official, so he couldn't make an on-site identification. It would certainly be an odd sort of irony if von Drammel really did end up as alien fodder. The Nazis had hideously used and abused millions of European Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, intellectuals, gays, clerics and mentally challenged individuals in cruel experiments in the name of Nazi science. The men von Drammel was going to testify against were some of WWII's worst butchers in the concentration camps. It was really too bad he wouldn't be able to rat them out. The trial would have to go ahead without its star witness, Foster surmised, looking at the bodies in the glass tubes.

Where was Denise? She could ID von Drammel if he was in the room. Paul pressed the call button on his comm device and hoped he wasn't catching her at an inopportune time...

* * *

Denise's Omega-issue comm device vibrated against her chest inside her jacket. She pressed the com-link button and whispered into it, "Yes?"

"Paul here," came the whispered reply, "Can you make it back to the T-intersection and come down to my location? I've got something here you should see."

* * *

Napoleon and Illya had split up in the interests of covering more area of the underground installation. Solo took the left hand corridor, and Kuryakin headed down the right.

The Russian UNCLE agent was about to turn a corner when he sensed someone coming towards him. He ducked back in the shadows, and was stunned to see Denise stealthily

padding down the corridor. Illya didn't want to startle her, but he did want to make his presence known. He stepped out as she passed and grabbed her quickly, placing his hand over her mouth as a precaution.

"Good God!" she hissed, "I almost had a heart attack!"

"Sorry about that," Illya whispered back, and drew her into the shadowed corner with him, "Napoleon and I followed the aliens as you requested. They went to the lake and walked in until they were out of sight. And, one of the alien ships actually came out of the lake and took off."

Denise considered his words for a moment, "If the aliens walked into the lake, there is either another ship down there, or another facility, similar to this one. We've got to get out of here and warn Omega so they can clean them out."

"What about Paul and Napoleon?"

"Come with me - I'm headed to meet Paul up the other corridor."

* * *

The two worked their way up the corridor to the T-intersection. Illya explained the direction in which Napoleon had gone, and Denise suggested he fetch Napoleon back so they could all exit the alien base. She told him they should get out as quickly as possible and hide in the woods until it was light, then make their way back to civilization. If for any reason Denise and Paul didn't follow them out, it was imperative that the base and its location be reported to the SHADO and Omega people.

Denise slithered along until she met Paul in a corner. He signed to her in ASL, *"There's a room a few feet ahead with bodies - they're intact - but I think they're dead. One of them may be von Drammel. I was hoping you could make an ID and at least confirm his whereabouts for the UNCLE agents."*

She nodded and they proceeded to the storage room. As the lights went on, Denise did a quick scan of the faces in the glass tubes. She shook her head and signed, *"He's not here."*

Suddenly, Denise's comm device vibrated again. She opened the channel to hear Napoleon's voice whispering, *"We've found von Drammel. Alive."*

Chapter Two

Meanwhile, back in England...

"The judge has agreed to permit us to have Dr. Jackson examine Ms. Corey for our side," John Pollabauer informed SHADO's silver-haired commander.

Straker smiled grimly, "I'd like to be a fly on the wall of *that* interrogation!" Jackson had a reputation for being a nasty, manipulative psychiatrist - one who could worm the innermost secrets out of anyone, "He even managed to make Paul Foster look bad, and that's going some. Paul is true-blue!"

"Well, I'm sure if anyone can demolish this mental defect defence Ms. Corey is going with, it will be Jackson."

"I take it she intends to air the dirty laundry about her relationship with her lawyer, Irvine?"

"Yes, but of course he isn't representing her this time. She's got another mouthpiece - one named Earhardt. I received permission also to put my detective friend, Randall, on the stand for this trial as well. he'll be able to prove that Irvine's wife knew what was going on and hired him to tail both her husband and Ms. Corey, and that Corey was using Irvine financially. I really can't see how Corey expects to make this mental defect defence work. You'd think her current lawyer would tell her that."

"What about the stalking business? Can you get that into the trial?"

John sat back in his chair and steepled his fingers, "I've spoken with some profiling experts at Scotland yard. They're rather interested in this case. They'd like a chance to examine the evidence, and if they think it's a clear case of stalking, then they'll end up as expert witnesses for our side. I've made arrangements for them to see our documentation and the transcripts from the last court case. However, there is a very fine line we're treading here. If the Yard is convinced out Ms. Corey really is a stalker, and most stalkers have been found to be mentally disturbed so far, this could backfire on us and she might be able to get away using the mental defect defence after all. People like Mark Chapman and that Hinkley fellow who tried to assassinate President Reagan, ended up in state-run funny farms, instead of serving their time in penitentiaries."

"Do you really think Corey would want to end up in either place?"

"That's just it. It may end up playing out as to which level of crazy she lives on. But, let's face it, a psychiatric hospital is a far cry from a gaol cell, and if she could convince her doctors there that she's 'cured', she could probably get out sooner. Either way, she ends up in one place or the other."

"Well, do what you think best, John. I'd rather not have to appear in court personally, but I suppose I can't avoid that now."

"The case will have more emphasis if you do make an appearance. You can describe your problems with the defendant and your injuries and make a very sympathetic victim," John smiled, knowing the word 'victim' did not in the least apply to a man like Straker.

* * *

Back in subterranean Vermont...

"He's alive. We just don't know how to get him out of here in his condition. Any ideas?" Napoleon looked at Denise and Paul over von Drammell's body. The former Nazi official was strapped onto some sort of alien examining table, with tubes running here and there in and out of him. It was clear he was breathing, but unconscious.

Paul glanced at Denise. They both knew someone had to say it, "Look, Solo, I'm sorry, but we can't take von Drammel out of here."

"I admit it's a bit of a stretch, but surely we can figure something out," Napoleon replied.

"We've taken a lot of chances just to get this far and not get caught. There is no way we can get an unconscious man out of here - hell - I don't even know how to unhook him from all that alien medical equipment without killing him outright. Your mission is over - as of now. As far as we're concerned, von Drammel is dead. The aliens will see to that in due time. Our main job from here on in is to get the hell out of here and report what we've seen to SHADO and Omega."

"Fine. We won't stop you. We can work this out on our own," Napoleon's dark-eyed gaze was as fierce as Paul's.

"You can't. You'll get caught. You almost ended up as alien-bait once before. I don't have to tell you how the aliens operate - literally and figuratively. They see us as fresh meat and nothing more," Paul told him, "If you get caught, there are no second chances. The cavalry will not come over the hill! If you leave now with us, you stand a better chance of survival."

"If von Drammel doesn't testify at that trial in The Hague next week, Nazi war criminals stand a good chance of getting away too - getting away from justice."

Illya shushed them with a whispered "nyet" in Russian, "Every moment we spend debating this issue decreases our chances of escaping this place alive," he looked at Napoleon, "I'm sorry, old comrade, but this time I have to agree with our SHADO colleagues. Getting out alive is our paramount concern now."

Denise lowered her voice, "If we can get out of here, we can in the troops to take care of this place. We can tell them to search for von Drammel and see if he's still alive at that point. But, we can't do anything in here. It's time for us to go."

* * *

Getting four people out of an underground installation, without getting spotted, was going to be difficult. Denise postulated that the reason they hadn't yet been caught was perhaps because the aliens were on some sort of rest period, or involved in organ reclamation surgery elsewhere in the facility. There was also the two aliens who'd vacated the site and gone to the lake. When would they return?

Illya and Denise formed one team and Solo and Foster formed the second team. They planned to hide and watch for their best opportunities to escape. Team One opted to go first.

Slipping down the smooth-sided corridor, Denise and Illya headed for the T-intersection and the ladder which would lead up to the escape hatch. Paul and Napoleon would follow them out tens minutes later. If Team One made it out ok, and there were no sounds of running battle or a capture by the aliens, Team Two would chance it.

But, things so far had been too good to be true...

* * *

Omega Headquarters in New York City

"They've been gone the requisite twelve hours. Should we send in an extraction team?" Joan Harrington asked. She'd been transferred briefly from Moon Base to get some experience working with SHADO's sister organization.

"What about their last communication? Do we have their co-ordinates?" Colonel Lake asked. Like many other SHADO personnel, she was required to spend a stint with Omega as well.

"We have co-ordinates of where they entered the Vermont woods around the spa, and

also the GPS for an underground alien site they were going to investigate. But, they haven't called in for some time now."

Colonel Lake ruminated a moment. It was time to take action, "Call up our best extraction team. If they've run into alien trouble, they may not be in a position to get a message out to us. Let's get those men down there on the double!"

* * *

Trouble in the hole...

Denise and Illya had barely gotten to the apex of the T-intersection when their good luck evaporated. Three orange and silver-clad aliens appeared - weapons at the ready. They helped themselves to the gadgets hanging at Denise and Illya's belts - comm devices - weapons - explosives, etc. There had been no time to duck and fire on the aliens - it had all happened too quickly. Neither Illya nor Denise wanted to give it away that their compatriots were hiding just down the corridor, but they wanted to give some sort of signal that the way was not clear. Denise shouted as the aliens dragged her and Illya down the other passageway, demanding to know, but not expecting any answer, what the aliens were going to do "with us?"

Still in hiding, Napoleon and Paul heard Denise's voice and knew the worst. They stared at each other in the semi-darkness. Would it be safer to venture out now that the other two had been captured and the aliens were occupied with them, or were there more aliens lying in lurk, hoping to snag them as well? Would the aliens manage some type of interrogation which would force the knowledge of Solo and Foster's presence inside the installation? Foster thought back to what Denise had said earlier about their mission: *"Don't play the hero, Paul. If I'm not back in the specified time, you've got to get out of here and report what you've seen. Either one of us expendable - but one of us has got to report in to Headquarters."*

He knew what was expected of him. He even knew that he had to get Napoleon out if possible. But, Paul was finding it hard to stomach leaving Denise and Illya behind to the cruelties of the aliens. He knew what awaited them in in alien hands. Interrogation and death - and not an easy death, either.

Foster and Solo waited for another 15 minutes. There had been no alien activity in their direction. Did that mean the aliens still had no idea they were in hiding? Why had the aliens not utilized an intruder alert of some sort? Or were they so intent on capturing humans that they let them freely roam the complex until they felt ready to apprehend them? They certainly couldn't wait there forever. They either had to make a dash for freedom or stay there in the hopes that they could effect a rescue. And, while Paul was reluctantly willing to try an escape, Solo had dug his heels in and was refusing to leave without Illya and Denise, and Foster couldn't disagree with him. He also knew that the four of them dead wasn't going to be of any help to Headquarters.

"It's inhuman just to leave them here - you can't tell me you could leave them to suffer what the aliens will do to them? You've seen what they did to von Drammel and others," Napoleon whispered furiously.

Paul's face worked as he whispered back, "No, I don't want to leave them here, but standard operating procedure means one of us has to get out to inform Headquarters - so the Omega extermination squads can come in and take this place down!"

"Look, we've still got some plastique explosives with us, we could create a diversion. While the aliens are scrambling around, trying to reinforce damage control, we could find Illya and Denise and get the hell out of here. At the very least, we'll take some of the aliens out with us if our rescue attempt doesn't go as planned, and maybe either destroy this complex or do it

irreparable damage."

It sounded reasonable, and dovetailed with what Paul had been thinking himself. It wouldn't have been the first time he'd ignored SOPs since he joined SHADO, "And, what about maintaining security? If we take this place out, it could all go up a lot hotter than we expect. We don't even know what kind of power source the aliens are using to keep this place running?"

Napoleon and Paul knew the location at which their partners had been apprehended by the aliens - at the T-intersection. They also knew Denise and Illya had been alien-handled down one of the other corridors out of sight.

"Here's what we're going to do," Paul told Solo, "You're going to go down that corridor in search of Illya and Denise. I'm going to start planting plastique. I'm hoping the fact we've been out of contact with Headquarters for over 12 hours means they'll be sending an extraction team in here after us," he looked at his watch, "Once they get mobilized, they don't take much time. The thing is, we can't *count* on the cavalry - they could get here waaaay too late for all of us. So, our priorities are to get all of us out alive and put this place out of commission."

* * *

Major Allan Leslie scanned the horizon as his SHADO-Omega mobile led the others through Vermont's wooded terrain. Mark Bradley was in the mobile closest to his, and Lew Waterman was taking a break from his usual posting with a Skydiver submarine to head up this extermination-extraction effort.

"Mobile One closin' in on the last GPS co-ordinates," Leslie intoned into his wireless headset, "we'll be goin' in on foot shortly. I don't want anyone to get trigger happy here, 'cause we got four agents in this mess. They're equipped with plastique explosives - they might just blow that place sky high. So keep a sharp eye and keep down outta sight. Waterman and Bradley, Keith, Norris and Williston, yer with me. The rest a ya, keep a tight watch on things and if ya get signals from us, bring the mobiles right up - we might need the cavalry ta come over the hill. Let's roll!"

Chapter Three

An office in the local holding prison...London, England...

Claire Corey eyed the psychiatrist, Dr. Jackson, warily. She was sitting down in a comfy chair opposite him, for once aware that her short skirt and deep cleavage blouse would not do her any good here. The good doctor seemed totally oblivious to her appearance and her perfume, her long fingernails, her bouffant, over-moussed hairstyle. It was not something Ms. Corey was used to. And, she'd gone to considerable effort to make herself presentable for this interview, too.

"The lawyers tell me you believe you have a mental condition," Jackson smiled at her when he spoke. It was a frightening smile. In fact, it had a downright sinister quality.

"Uh...that's right. I snapped." There was something in Jackson's eyes that told her she was out of her league here when it came to getting around the truth. Best to say as little as possible!

"And, that you were stalking Mr. Straker? That's why you shot him?"

"I wasn't myself. I...was having personal problems."

"Yesssss," Jackson extended the word until it sounded like a reptilian hiss. Corey felt a shiver run up her spine suddenly, "And what personal problems were you experiencing?"

"I was involved with a married man...and he was...threatening to leave me...to take away all the financial assistance he'd been offering.."

"I seeeeee," Jackson again extended the word when he spoke, "And, you were in this relationship for the money?"

"Well, I...uh...he's a powerful lawyer. I mean, it's not like I'm the first girl he's ever had on the side or anything. You think his wife'd be used to that sort of thing by now! But, he paid for my apartment, my car, he got me my job, he bought me nice clothes..."

"And, what did he get from *you* in return?"

Corey smirked, "What does any man hope to get in return for that sort of thing?"

Jackson gave her that sinister grin again, "Why don't you tell me all about it? I don't think I understand this 'sort of thing'."

She gave him an odd look. Was he pretending to misunderstand her inference? Did he not realize what such relationships entailed on either part of the deal? "He paid for everything I wanted, and I...let him take it out in trade."

"Trade? What was being traded? Information? Some sort of commodity?"

Corey decided he must have been playing obtuse on purpose and it pissed her off, "Alright, I was trading...sex. Lots of sex. Tons of sex. Anywhere and anytime he wanted it. And, believe me he wanted lots!"

"So you were actually trading your body for money and other considerations?"

"You could say that."

"And these considerations involved your living arrangements, your car, your clothing, your job."

"I wouldn't have had any of it if he hadn't coughed up. He got me my job. I never finished my school O levels. I wouldn't have gotten into ITC if it hadn't been for him knowing someone who could slip me in without having to look at a resume."

"I understand you were involved briefly in the film industry. That is how you met Mr. Straker for the first time?"

"Yeah, well I had a few gigs doing skin flicks and Joe decided I should get outta that kind of stuff and move into mainstream. He set up a few interviews for me with some small artsy

fartsy companies, but I took myself around to some of the better ones, including Harlington-Straker. I mean, with my looks, I figured I could get something good, y'know? Some of these studios don't just do film work. They make TV shows too. Someone once told me I looked like Tanya Roberts, so I figured it was worth a try. You know who Tanya Roberts is, right?"

Jackson stared at her, "Tanya who?"

"She's an actress on American TV."

"Riiiiight," Jackson intoned, conveying his lack of interest in such petty things as American television stars, "So, let me get this down pat - your whole existence was tied up in this one man who paid for your lifestyle?"

"Until he decided I was too much trouble and his wife had incriminating photos of us together. He figured his wife would be able to use the photos to take him for everything he was worth and then some. She even sikked a private detective on us! Some Randall guy..."

"What happened then?"

"Around then I ended up in court the first time. He took my case for free then, but since this other stuff has happened, and his wife knows all about us, he's dropped me like a hot potato. My rent came due, and I didn't have enough to pay it. I live in a high rise condo. And, the payment on my car came up, and again, I didn't have the money. if it hadn't been for that business with Straker, I'd have been enjoying the good life."

"It sounds to me as though the real culprit in your misery is your lover's wife, not Straker. You did, after all, end up dropping the original assault charges against Straker and your court case did not go well, from what I understand."

Corey jumped out of her chair, "Straker wouldn't let me into films! He thought his studio was too good for someone like me! He started all my troubles! It's all his fault!"

Jackson stared her down, and like a snake being controlled by its charmer, Corey sat back down and swallowed a long draught from the coffee cup by her seat. She made some attempt to compose herself, smoothing down her short skirt over her thighs, and checking the buttons on her low-cut blouse. She leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes for a moment.

SHADO's top shrink moved out from around the desk and sat on the corner of it, closest to Ms. Corey. Her heaving bosom had no effect on him whatsoever. He waited a few moments before speaking again, then he quietly said, "Are you ready to continue?"

Corey's strange green eyes looked even stranger as she looked up at Jackson, "I feel so tired all of a sudden..."

"Yesssss, but that's natural, considering all you've been going through..." he paused to take up her hand and check her pulse, then he continued, "Sleep and be refreshed. It'll all seem so much clearer in the morning..."

* * *

"Ed, I thought you'd like to know there's been an interesting 'development' in the case against Claire Corey," John Pollabauer smiled as he entered the SHADO commander's office, deep underground.

Straker looked up from his paperwork, "I could use some good news right now, John. We've got an incident in Vermont with four agents trapped and we've had to send the mobiles in after them."

The lawyer nodded, "Anyone I know?"

"Paul Foster for one. I've got Lt. Ford monitoring the rescue effort right now."

"Well, this piece of information might make you feel a bit better - you remember we had Claire Corey scheduled for an interview with our Dr. Jackson yesterday morning?"

"Yes, that's right. With all this business in the States, I'd kind of forgotten about that."

"Well, Corey's lawyer just called me. Seems as though our girl has decided to give up her mental defect defence and plead guilty on all counts and save us the trouble of another court case!"

The silver-haired commander grinned from ear to ear, showing perfect white teeth, "That calls for a fresh cigar, my friend!" he immediately pulled out his cigarillo package from inside his Nehru jacket and offered one to Pollabauer, who refused politely, "No thanks, Ed, I don't smoke." He watched while Straker lit up one up, sat back in his chair, parked his feet on the edge of the desk, and inhaled luxuriously, "Yes, indeed, that is good news!"

"It also means you won't have to make a court appearance."

"Even better!"

"You realize what happened in this case, I hope?"

"Of course I do, " Straker puffed, "Jackson worked his usual magic again. I may not like the bastard, but he sure gets the job done!"

John smiled and got out of his seat, "I'll have some paperwork for you to sign off on in this matter, but you can consider it finished as of right now."

* * *

Closing in on the alien installation...

The GPS signals had led them into the same copse of trees in which the alien nest was located. All were dressed in camouflage gear to blend with the darkness. Leslie had in hand an alien Metalometer, similar to the one Denise had been using. He let the gadget track him into the spot where the tree trunk hatch sat amidst the foliage.

He leaned over to Norris and whispered, "Reg, I think we got some sorta hit. The metalometer's off the scale for alien metal - but it's all underground..."

Reg looked at the gadget in Leslie's hand, "Well, there's gotta be some way o'gettin' to it," he parked his behind on the tree stump and felt it move under him. He stood up again, "Tree trunks aren't supposed to do that..." he bent over and ran his fingers around the circle of the trunk, and discovered he could lift the top right up and over, "Bingo!" he whispered back, smiling up at Leslie.

"I guess the cavalry's gonna come over the hill after all...", Leslie grinned and waved the other men into position, then he spoke through his headset, "Mobiles Two and Three, lock onto our signals and head on over here - we got some extermination' to do!"

* * *

Foster had unloaded all his own plastique in a dark corner out of sight and was busy getting the detonators ready. They were equipped with quick charges and the resulting blast would provide quite a display, and hopefully disorient the aliens enough so that they'd all be able to make their escape out of the installation. He'd have preferred to have laid charges in different areas of the base, but beggars couldn't be choosers. They'd be lucky to get away alive...he hoped Napoleon would be able to find Denise and Illya and get them out...

* * *

Leslie, Norris, Williston and the others slipped down the tree trunk entrance on silent feet, their weapons at the ready. They had no idea how many aliens might in the installation, but they also knew the lives of four agents were also at stake. There was always the chance they might be able to take alien prisoners, but they'd not had any luck for years. Most of the time the aliens either fought to the death or committed suicide to avoid capture. On this mission, what was uppermost in their minds was finding the four agents and getting them out of

there. So, it was going to be a 'shoot first, ask questions later' scenario.

Waving his men to move down the different wings of the T-intersection, Leslie's head jerked around hard when he heard the first explosion! "Shit! What was that?" he said to himself, his own voice drowned out by a subsequent series of blasts, deep within the alien installation. He wondered if the other men had heard him in their headsets..."Heads up, fellas, we got some action goin' here!"

* * *

Foster had managed to remove himself from the location he'd planted his explosives, and had timed them all to go off in 10 second intervals - he was running towards the T-intersection when he saw three Omega operatives lumber towards him - chased by a phalanx of aliens, firing projectile weapons.

"Get down!" Leslie's deep voice bellowed, as he reached Foster first and pushed him to the floor. The other men fired repeatedly with their assault rifles and with a splash of green liquid, two of the aliens dropped - their helmets smashed by bullets.

The Omega men managed to drag Foster around the corner with them, "You ok?" Norris panted at Paul.

"Yeah, I'm in one piece so far!"

"Damn greenies must be blowin' the place up!" Leslie yelled, in between firing around the corner at more aliens.

"No, I set off those blasts - I used plastique!" Foster screamed above the sounds of battle.

"Great - take any of them out?"

"I don't know - I set it as a diversion - Denise is still back there somewhere with Napoleon and Illya!"

"Sheesh - we gotta get 'em outta here!"

* * *

Waterman and Bradley were dealing with their own problems. They'd split off from the main group they'd come down the hatch with to flush out stragglers, only to get cut off by a recalcitrant alien who had them pinned down under fire.

Stashing themselves inside a darkened room, they realized that the light was slowly growing and within moments they'd be totally visible to the alien outside.

"Lew! Look at this!" Bradley called his attention to the man lying on what appeared to be either an examining or an operating table. A variety of tubes and other equipment were hooked up to him, "I think he's still alive!"

"Well, none of us are going to get out of here alive if we don't get rid of this damn alien in the corridor - cover me!" As Bradley held his weapon at the ready, Waterman pulled a small grenade from his belt pouch, pulled the pin, reached a hand out to make the door slip open a crack and used his rifle butt like a pool cue to scoot the pineapple down the hall. He smiled at Bradley when their efforts were rewarded with a resounding blast.

The two men crawled on all fours out of the sliding door and noted to their satisfaction the dead alien, his helmet faceplate cracked and leaking green liquid, lying on the floor. They crept over him and kept going...

* * *

Within thirty minutes, it was all over. The aliens were all dead. While Leslie and Norris and the others had handled the clean up, Waterman and Bradley took Foster back to the room where they'd found the man hooked up to the machines and tubes.

"That's von Drammel. We found him earlier - before Denise and Illya got caught."

"Is he still alive?" Bradley asked.

"He's breathing alright, but I don't know if he can be resuscitated. He looks like he's in some sort of alien-induced coma. We need the medic down here to take a look at him."

The door slid open and Norris burst in, "We've found Denise and Illya - Napoleon too!"

"Thank God!" Paul's face wore a profound expression of relief, "Are they ok?"

"Leslie's got the medics workin' on them!"

* * *

Foster entered a large alien room to see Denise, Illya and Napoleon lying on a trio of beds, similar to the one on which von Drammel had been laid out. However, they had fewer tubes attached to them, as though the Omega extermination operation had interrupted whatever procedure the aliens had been planning for them.

Lt. Chesser, the medic, looked up at Paul, "I've called for an Omega med-evac chopper - we might lose them when I try to disconnect them from this alien equipment. I don't want to risk anything until I know that we can ship them outta here to our facility asap!"

Paul nodded, "You're right - we don't know enough about what this equipment is doing to them...if you have a minute, could you take a look at the man in the room next door? He's in a similar situation..."

EPILOGUE

Poking his head in the door, Paul smiled at Denise and handed her a bouquet of gardenias, "Hey, you look great!"

Denise smiled and sniffed the posies, "I feel great too. I'll be ready for duty in a couple of days, Illya and Napoleon are back on their feet, and thrilled to be able to take von Drammel to The Hague for that war crimes trial!"

"And, thanks to some amnesia drug, von Drammel doesn't remember a thing about those nasty aliens or his dead girlfriend."

"Let's just hope his long term memory is still intact and he can testify against those Nazi bastards next week."

"Denise...I hope you didn't think I was planning to just leave you guys to the mercy of the aliens..."

"Remember - it was me who told you not to play the hero..."

"I know, but..."

"That's the hardest part of doing a mission like that, Paul, making the judgment call."

"Well, this time the cavalry *did* come over the hill."

"Our boys make Teddy Roosevelt's Roughriders look like a bunch of candy asses," Denise laughed, "How is the clean up at the installation going? Did they find any UFOs in the lake?"

"I read a report from Al Leslie - they've got all the equipment they can cannabilize out of the site and they're in the process of taking the installation apart. They didn't find any UFOs in the lake - they may simply have been using it as a secret location to keep their spacecraft hidden."

"I'll still never understand how they managed to build such an elaborate base without being seen or heard. I know the area was somewhat remote..."

"Al's report said they found holographic projectors that were used to keep the area looking clean and undisturbed from the air, and once they got down as far underground as they needed, they didn't have to worry too much about the noise factor."

Denise shook her head, "They're so ingenious. I was really amazed at the technology I saw down there in that installation - so many little things that would be convenient and useful for us too."

"They've been doing a thorough engineering study - trying to figure out how to adapt some of the aliens' simpler technology for our use. And, the med people have been poring over the tables we found you and the UNCLE agents hooked up to."

"You know, I really don't remember much after the aliens grabbed us. Maybe the aliens have their own amnesia drug."

"It was pretty scary unhooking you all from the alien equipment - Lt. Chesser was sweating bullets until you all pulled through!"

"He dropped by yesterday to see me - apparently he's getting a promotion as a result of his work on this mission. They want to take him out of the field and put him into research and development."

Paul looked down at his watch and made a face, "I'm sorry to chat and run, but I'm scheduled to take a flight to Los Angeles. I have to see a medical examiner by the name of Quincy and talk him into giving me a couple of bodies the aliens left behind. Fun stuff."

* * *

Commander Straker looked up as Lt. Ford walked into his office and placed a newspaper on his desk, "Thought you might like to see this today, sir," he smiled and left again.

Flattening the paper on his desk, Straker scanned the front page headlines. One of them read "Former Nazi Snitches At War Crimes Trial". Further down the page was another, "Film Exec Stalker Goes To Jail". He paused to take out a cigarillo, and lit it. Then he settled back in his padded chair for a good read. It was nice to see that, from time to time, the good guys won.

THE END