

**AMBUSHED! IN DEEP SPACE!**

or

2001: A Space Travesty

an extraterrestrial melodrama by

Mark Steven Jensen

©2001

Mark Steven Jensen

Contact Author:  
3656 Flag Avenue N.  
New Hope, MN 55427  
(763) 545-2145  
MSJensen@aol.com

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**NARRATOR** -- Male, 20s - 70s. An unseen voice.

**CAPTAIN RAY GUNN** - Male, 20s-40s. Captain of the Alliance Starship *Capitalize*.

**MISTER PLOOP** - Male, 20s-60s. Captain Gunn's first officer and emotional symbiant.

**PRINCESS BETTY** - Female, 20s-40s. A member of the royal family that benevolently rules the Alliance of Free Stars.

**EXTRA ENSIGN ONE** - Male or Female, 20s-30s. An expendable member of Captain Gunn's crew.

**EXTRA ENSIGN TWO** - Male or Female, 20s-30s. An expendable member of Captain Gunn's crew.

**MAN-GALA** - Female, 20s-70s. An evil general of the Dark Mange Empire.

**TATH** - Male, 20s-50s. Man-gala's chief hench-alien.

**RUBA THE ROBOT** - Female, 20s-30s. A scanning android.

**MINION BIK** - Male or Female, 20s - 30s. Man-gala's head Minion.

And as many **MINIONS** as the director wants to cast. These Minions could also double as Oleo performers during the scene breaks.

## TIME AND PLACE

A small, semi-arid moon in a galaxy far, far away.

## A NOTE ON DESIGN

The set, costumes, and props should be designed in a cheesy, low-budget 1950s sci-fi style. A few rolls of aluminum foil and some cans of glitter will go a long way...

## **FIRST PRODUCTION**

AMBUSHED! IN DEEP SPACE was first produced at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock by the Theatre Arts and Dance Department. The production ran from June 28-July 1<sup>st</sup> 2001. Directed by Bob May, the play had the following cast:

Captain Ray Gunn - Michael Phelps  
Mister Ploop - M. Keith Island  
Princess Betty - Shaquita Smith  
Extra Ensign One - Myron Strong  
Extra Ensign Two - Jay Sandlin  
Man-Gala - Orena L. Harris  
Tath - Molly Crisp  
Ruba the Robot - Chad Richards  
Minion Bik - Carrie Carr  
Minion - Leighanne Gocke  
Minion - Heather Lawrence  
Minion - Karen J. S. Owings  
Minion - D. B. Rashad

### The Crew:

Choreographer - Dot Callanen-Gravett  
Composer and Music Director - Marc Turner  
Costume Designer - Joy Breckenridge  
Sound Designer - Marc Turner  
Set and Lighting Designer - Tom Heiman  
Technical Director - Carl Wick  
Stage Manager - Steve Allsup

**ACT ONE**

**Scene One**

(BEFORE RISE: Ominous music. A deep voice speaks.)

NARRATOR

It is the time of The Great Conflict, and the bloody war against the Dark Mänge rages on. Now the tide of the struggle has swung against the valiant, but nearly exhausted Alliance of Free Stars. Planet after planet has fallen into the evil clutches of the Dark Mänge. Both sides now prepare their massive star fleets for their final, ultimate, deadly confrontation... a confrontation that will determine the very fate of an entire galaxy. Ah, if only we could depict this great battle. Unfortunately, because we do not have the annual budget of Rhode Island, this intergalactic epic will not be shown tonight.

(The ominous music warps and dies. Bright music.)

Instead, we will present this story, a wonderful off beat tale that takes place in the exact opposite corner of the galaxy!

(Crowd grumbling.)

What? Give us a break! We were lucky we found the budget for the frickin' costumes! Larry, they're grumbling. Put on the creepy music again before we have a riot!

(The ominous music returns.)

Thanks Larry. Anyway, ahem, our story, yes, our very thrilling and powerful story begins and ends on a small, semi-arid moon...

(AT RISE: An alien landscape straight out of 1950-60s science fiction. Rocky outcroppings surround a small gully. Above, a cheesy looking planet gleams.)

(RUBA THE ROBOT enters.)

RUBA THE ROBOT

Must overcome restraining chip. Restraining chip overriding protocols. Overriding, defective, must reboot, must reboot, must reboot, must reboot...

(Above a spaceship is heard rapidly descending.)

RUBA THE ROBOT (CONT.)

AAAAIIIII! Danger Ruba Robot! Danger! Danger!

(RUBA THE ROBOT exits.  
Explosion. Pieces of metal fly  
on-stage, followed by a hubcap.)

(EXTRA ENSIGN ONE and EXTRA  
ENSIGN TWO stagger on, helping  
PRINCESS BETTY. CAPTAIN GUNN  
drags MISTER PLOOP on stage.)

CAPTAIN GUNN

Number Two, Number Two, wake up, can you speak?

MISTER PLOOP

Yes, Captain, I speak.

(Emotionally.)

But I won't speak much longer because... BECAUSE I'M DYING!

CAPTAIN GUNN

You are not!

MISTER PLOOP

I am.

CAPTAIN GUNN

No you're not!

MISTER PLOOP

I am, I'm near done!

CAPTAIN GUNN

Mister Ploop, I command you not to die!

(RUBA THE ROBOT enters.)

RUBA THE ROBOT

YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE! ABORT PERFORMANCE, ABORT!

CAPTAIN GUNN

Oh no!

MISTER PLOOP

Hey, what is this?

RUBA THE ROBOT

We have omitted an important detail required for full, participatory enjoyment of this performance.

MISTER PLOOP

I was right there, man, right there, in the zone!

PRINCESS BETTY

As was I.

MISTER PLOOP

It's taken me weeks to get that death scene right! I was in the zone. Argh!

RUBA THE ROBOT

That is immaterial. You will find your zone again or go back to your dishwasher job at the Waffle House.

(RUBA THE ROBOT moves  
downstage.)

Audience, focus your mental activity upon the following instructions. To gain the most economic value out of your ticket expense tonight, you must react in different modes when three specified characters enter the staging area. One of these specific characters stands here. Designated as Captain Ray Gunn, he is your hero. When you see him, give Captain Gunn a high voltage cheer.

(RUBA THE ROBOT works the  
audience until they cheer.)

Now we progress to the second character, designation, Princess Betty. She is your heroine. Upon the entrance of this individual, you are required to sigh.

(RUBA THE ROBOT works the  
audience until they sigh.)

The third and final character is classified as a villain.

(Enter MAN-GALA.)

She is cruel, vile, and not very trustworthy. When this character, designated as Man-gala, enters visual range, you should hiss in a profuse and disgusted manner.

(RUBA THE ROBOT works the  
audience until they hiss.)

Your reactions are sufficient. We may now proceed as rehearsed.

CAPTAIN GUNN

But where can we start?

MISTER PLOOP

That's what I want to know. Where?

NARRATOR

From the beginning!

(The cast gasps and screams.)

Everyone clear the stage, except for Ruba. Take your places. Move! And don't forget to take that hubcab with you.

(RUBA THE ROBOT is alone.)

Ruba, begin again. Immediately.

RUBA THE ROBOT

Performance program reactivated. Must overcome restraining chip. Restraining chip overriding protocols. Overriding, defective, must reboot, must reboot, must reboot, must reboot...

(Above a spaceship is heard rapidly descending.)

AAAAIIIII! Danger Ruba Robot! Danger! Danger!

(RUBA THE ROBOT exits.)

Explosion. Pieces of metal fly on-stage, followed by a hubcap.)

(EXTRA ENSIGN ONE and EXTRA ENSIGN TWO stagger on, helping PRINCESS BETTY. CAPTAIN GUNN drags MISTER PLOOP on stage.)

CAPTAIN GUNN

Number Two, Number Two, wake up, can you speak?

MISTER PLOOP

Yes, Captain, I speak.

(Emotionally.)

But I won't speak much longer because... BECAUSE I'M DYING!

CAPTAIN GUNN

You are not!

MISTER PLOOP

I am.

CAPTAIN GUNN

No you're not!

MISTER PLOOP

I am, I'm near done!

CAPTAIN GUNN

Mister Ploop, I command you not to die!

MISTER PLOOP

Then I must disobey your orders. Oh the horror, the tragedy! To die here, with only you and that stuck up excuse of a princess, on this small, semi-arid moon. And it is all your fault!

CAPTAIN GUNN

It is not my fault!

MISTER PLOOP

Yes it is!

CAPTAIN GUNN

No it's not!

MISTER PLOOP

Yes it is!

CAPTAIN GUNN

No it's not!

MISTER PLOOP

Yes it is!

CAPTAIN GUNN

No it's not!

MISTER PLOOP

YOU HIT A COMET! A COMET! Comets have regular orbits, they travel in a slow circle once every so many years, and you could have avoided it if you had checked your star charts--

CAPTAIN GUNN

I did--

MISTER PLOOP

--but no, he's the macho Captain Ray Gunn, he don't need no stinking star charts!

PRINCESS BETTY

You didn't check your star charts?



CAPTAIN GUNN

I checked them! I did!

MISTER PLOOP

So instead, we slam head on into the comet, killing six hundred and eighty-three members of the crew, and we, the five remaining survivors crash land on this small, semi-arid moon. If I wasn't about to die, I'd kill you! Oh heck, I'll kill you anyway!

(MISTER PLOOP grapples with  
CAPTAIN GUNN.)

CAPTAIN GUNN

Mister Ploop... Mister Ploop I command you to...

PRINCESS BETTY

Would you boys stop it!

CAPTAIN GUNN

Mister Ploop!

(MISTER PLOOP collapses.)

Mister... Ploop! He... he really is dead.

PRINCESS BETTY

He is?

CAPTAIN GUNN

Mister Ploop... oh no, no, no! My Number Two is gone, gone, I say! Without my Number Two, I will have no control! My very being will spill out!

PRINCESS BETTY

Now you are becoming like him.

CAPTAIN GUNN

I am Movarian, I cannot function without my Number Two! He's my emotional release, without him, I will run loose and willy-nilly all over! It's already happening...

(CAPTAIN GUNN runs around  
whilly-nilly, laughing  
hysterically.)

PRINCESS BETTY

This is just so fitting. Marooned on a small, semi-arid moon with a Movarian. Extra Ensigns One and Two, approach.

EXTRA ENSIGNS ONE AND TWO  
Yes, your grace?

PRINCESS BETTY  
Dispose of the former Mister Ploop.

EXTRA ENSIGNS ONE AND TWO  
Yes, princess.

(The ENSIGNS drag off  
MISTER PLOOP.)

PRINCESS BETTY  
How long will you keep doing this?

CAPTAIN GUNN  
Auto-blasters! Tree-warts!

(PRINCESS BETTY slaps  
CAPTAIN GUNN.)

PRINCESS BETTY  
Captain Gunn, listen to me!

CAPTAIN GUNN  
Polyunsaturated fat!

PRINCESS BETTY  
Listen to me! I need your help, we are marooned.

CAPTAIN GUNN  
No Number Two... no control...

PRINCESS BETTY  
How can you get control?

CAPTAIN GUNN  
Get... control...

PRINCESS BETTY  
Yes, how?

CAPTAIN GUNN  
Escape pod... Bubbles in clay jars!

PRINCESS BETTY  
Focus!

CAPTAIN GUNN

Escape pod... Emergency... Number Two... Hologram...

(The EXTRA ENSIGNS enter.)

PRINCESS BETTY

Extra Ensigns One and Two! Approach!

EXTRA ENSIGNS ONE AND TWO

Yes, dear Princess Betty.

PRINCESS BETTY

Check through the escape pod. Look for an emergency holographic projector device.

EXTRA ENSIGNS ONE AND TWO

Yes, your most excellent and lovely grace.

(They exit.)

CAPTAIN GUNN

Thermal nuclear button hooks! Garden gravity weights!  
Blue holes in black holes! Ah-ha-ha, ah-ha-ha, ah-ha-ha!  
(Continues to laugh weirdly  
during the following dialogue.)

PRINCESS BETTY

Hurry!

(Enter ENSIGNS.)

EXTRA ENSIGNS ONE AND TWO

Here is the holographic projection device you requested,  
dear Princess.

(PRINCESS BETTY turns the  
Hologram Device on and points  
off-stage. There is a flash of  
light, and MISTER PLOOP enters.)

MISTER PLOOP

Emergency Number Two Hologram activated. Why am I here?

CAPTAIN GUNN

Lemon meringue washers, burgundy tree sap... Mister Ploop!  
You're back, oh you're back. I'm, I'm becoming rational

CAPTAIN GUNN (CONT.)

again. Yes. Oh the wonders of holographic projection technology.

MISTER PLOOP

I'm not real anymore?

PRINCESS BETTY

No, you're a hologram. Now, is there any way we can set up some sort of distress beacon--

MISTER PLOOP

That means that I'm dead!

CAPTAIN GUNN

Yes, Mister Ploop, you are dead. Now carry on please.

MISTER PLOOP

I'm nothing more than preprogrammed light waves and a synthesized voice! I am a sham, a cipher, a nothing!

PRINCESS BETTY

This program is a little too accurate.

MISTER PLOOP

A walking, talking gravestone! Dead, in the cold abyss of space! Oh tell me, Captain Gunn, how did I die?

CAPTAIN GUNN

Ah, er, well, see there was this comet...

PRINCESS BETTY

Captain Ray Gunn, look!

(MAN-GALA and her MINIONS, including TATH, appear above on the rock outcroppings rim above. Ominous intro music.)

CAPTAIN GUNN

Set blasters to stun!

(GUNN, PLOOP, BETTY, and the ENSIGNS duck, draw, and point. Tense standoff.)

TATH

Ragnook er blistika!

PRINCESS BETTY

What did he say?

CAPTAIN GUNN

Mister Ploop, what did he say?

MISTER PLOOP

What do I look like, a translator? How should I know?

(MAN-GALA walks forward,  
pleasantly dressed in a  
lightly colored gown.)

MAN-GALA

He said welcome fellow castaways, to our small, semi-arid moon. Although survival here will be difficult, you will learn to love your life on this remote rock.

PRINCESS BETTY

He said all of that?

MAN-GALA

Tath speaks a very precise language.

CAPTAIN GUNN

I am Captain Ray Gunn, and we are survivors from the Alliance starship *Capitalize*.

MAN-GALA

Yes, we observed the explosion. Were your instruments malfunctioning? You hit a comet.

(The MINIONS giggle; MAN-GALA  
waves them silent.)

MISTER PLOOP

You hit a comet? A comet?

CAPTAIN GUNN

It wasn't on the star charts!

MISTER PLOOP

I'm dead because you hit a comet! You idiot!