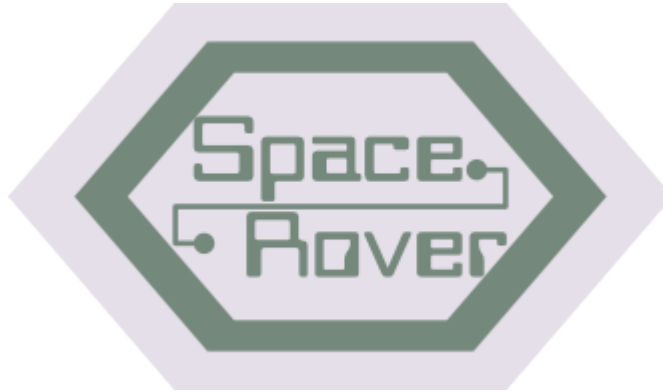


Space Rover, Pilot Episode: Undocumented Features, Audio Version

By Hamish and Graham Wilson



The main theme *The Space Rover* plays.

The sounds of a computer start-up and tracking system.

Narrator: Ship: The *Debaacle*, registered freelance transport freighter.

Narrator: Date: March 3, 2143 CE.

Narrator: Current Occupants: Two. Human.

Narrator: Time Wasted by *Commonwealth Intelligence Service* Observing This: 3.2 Hours.

Narrator: Employees About to Be Fired: Two.

Narrator: Final Comments: Good Riddance!

Scene One: Travelling light.

The sounds of rocket jets herald a change in scene.

The sounds of furious pacing around a cargo deck can be heard.

The pacing man suddenly picks up a small blunt object and throws it at the wall in frustration.

Captain: Can't this thing go any faster?

A gravelly crackling radio voice replies to the man's exertions.

Pilot: Another word out of you and I will double your fair.

Captain: What? You are already charging an insane amount for this trip already!

Pilot: I'm not a taxi service you know, I transport goods, not people.

Captain: Then why did you offer to give me a ride to Pluto then?

Pilot: Because you paid enough. A better question I think is why you did not just catch a shuttle?

Captain: I would rather stay away from public transit at the moment...

Pilot: Why? What's preferable about travelling with hay?

Captain: The key word in my previous statement is I'm avoiding *public* transit.

Pilot: Hey, anything I should know about? You didn't kill a man did you?

Captain: Gugggh, what? No! Well, never killed exactly...

Pilot: Okay, then what? You don't look like a crack-head...

Captain: No, I am not a druggie!

Pilot: Then what are you hiding?

The Captain lets go a distinct sigh.

Captain: Fine! I will tell you then. I don't think I will get you to shut up otherwise...

Pilot: My ship, my conversation...

Captain: Whatever... Anyways, did you hear about that shuttle crash aboard the *Labrador*?

Pilot: Oh yeah, that one was hilarious. What kind of dope can't land a tin crate like that?!

Captain (irritated): A good one!

Pilot: Wait, that was you? Hmm... I understand why you don't want to be seen in public then. So, anything else you'd like to tell me?

Captain: No. I don't want to talk about it.

Pilot: Well, then. It is no fun for me if I don't make you squirm...

Captain: This is why you became in charge of freight rather than carrying people isn't it?

Pilot: Maybe, maybe not. But it is another two and a half hours to your destination and I want to hear your tale. Who knows, I might just maybe think you less of a goof if I hear your side of the story. It is not bloody likely, but give it a shot man!

Captain: Then you will go back to annoying your crates of broccoli in the rear hold?

Pilot: Well, not just the broccoli, but yes. Promise.

Captain: Well, the *Labrador* had been going under a few changes before I'd arrived. Its former Captain, an angry bureaucratic man in his seventies, had fallen off his perch from a heart attack.

Pilot: The favourite death of the gourmet epicure, a body clogged with nourishing gravy...

Captain: Yeah... but I don't think that the heart attack was natural causes. That first officer of his seemed to have a sizable chip on her shoulder. Knowing the old guy, she probably typed up an atrociously done report in the hope that he would just drop like a fly, and so he did.

Pilot: Ah, a career woman. I did not know bad spelling could be a promotional move.

Captain: That is just it. It wasn't. Guess who they chose to command the *Labrador*? Not her.

Pilot: You? Frankly buddy, even before you were a disgrace, I would not choose you to look after a puppy, even a heavily lethargic and fully house-trained wonder of one.

Captain: I *was* a Captain, only I was in shipping like you. Official shipping mind, not freelance work. I had a title, a mediocre but easy job and a degree of freedom. Naturally I was flabbergasted, and not entirely pleased, to hear that command had chosen me to take over a *real* ship.

Pilot: And then your ship kicked the bucket? Only the bucket was the tarmac?

Captain: Pretty much, though I still swear that something was up with that transport. The cockpit filled with gas or something and all these lights and sirens were going off.

Pilot: Yeah, yeah buddy. Save your excuses for whatever gods, goddesses or pink elephants you happen to believe in. But, just because hauling hay around is boring work, I'll ask what happened next?

Captain: They seemed happy enough to just let it go at first actually, until that bloodhound first officer realized that I could easily lose my command if she pulled enough strings. So, basically she axed me in the back like she did poor old Captain Julius. I was discharged and had my rank stripped.

Pilot: So, why in ass itching hell are you going to Pluto then? Desire a numb frozen soul?

Captain: Hardly... the Commonwealth takes old scrap metal and other refuse from Earth and dumps it there so the locals can earn a living bashing out budget spaceships. I figure I'll buy one and maybe try to get back into haulage outside of the Commonwealth Fleet, or otherwise find something else to do that will get me some income. I'm not all that picky.

Pilot: So you are going to try at following in my footsteps then are you buddy?

Captain: Well, if you can do it anyone can.

A long silence follows, and the Captain yawns in tranquil relaxation.

Just then the whole ship shakes and the Captain flies headlong into the wall.

Captain: What in Jupiter's red stain was that?

Voice (tersely): Oh sorry, buddy. Just some turbulence. Now, if you show me a little more respect it might just prevent something else from happening, like let's say... faulty struts?

The Captain starts pacing again and throws another object at the wall.

Captain (vicious): Gurghh...

Scene Two: Never buy a used car on Pluto.

Narrator: The dwarf planet of Pluto.

Narrator: Primary economic activity: Earth waste-keeping and refurbishing.

Narrator: Quality of life: Minimal.

Narrator: Interests: Secession, getting noticed by someone, maybe getting a tourist or two: bingo!

The sounds of the banging of metal and roar of tools and engines can be heard.
A man approaches our not so valiant hero.

Salesman (weasel-like): Can I help you sir?

Captain: Um, yeah. I was told this is a good place to get a cheap space faring vehicle?

Salesman: That is right, sir. You can always find a bargain here.

Captain: Well, I can not help but notice that none of these look particularly space faring. Generally spaceships do not have cracks in their windshields. Open cracks.

Salesman: Well, the exact definition of "space faring" is always a matter for the courts to decide sir. They look fine to me though and you'll have to just accept that as I say it.

Captain: Alright, fine. So what do you have?

Salesman: Well, someone with your grungy look can't afford anything great, so I'll just go ahead and recommend you the *Rover*.

Captain: *Yeah, and I bet you design for luxury cruise ships...* Still, it is true that I am somewhat cash strapped at the moment. What is this *Rover* then?

Salesman: Our cheapest craft, been in our lot for about three years now. Refurbished from an old

Terran all-terrain vehicle some years ago. That green, grey and white mould over there.

Captain: Uh, I don't know. It looks like a deathtrap to me.

Salesman: Grr... ..But sir, do you realize that this one comes with a free android?

Captain: Android? One of those clunky metal guys?

Salesman: Yeah. Hey you stupid piece of spark plugs and jagged metal, get over here!

Footsteps, of a slightly heavier and more mechanical nature, are heard.

Peter (calm cool voice): Yes greasy?

Salesman: Say hello to the man who, god willing, will be taking you out of here.

Captain: Captain James, Commonwealth Fleet Haulage.

Peter: Peter Gans Lee, android at large.

Captain: That's a rather dull name for an android. Shouldn't you be named GC-FM1 or ZX1 or something? Something mechanical and futurery sounding?

Peter: Yes sir, I have often wondered about that fact myself.

Captain: Great, a robot with identity concerns...

Peter: By the way sir, you are not actually a Captain anymore. Lying is a bad habit I'm told. Never fully understood why, never got a good explanation.

Captain (irked): And how would you know?

Peter: I have the ability to read and scan just about every consumer electrical device invented. I do hope you don't mind if I read through your electronic journal once in a while.

Captain: That's it, forget your stupid *Rover*. Not if this *thing* is included. What else is there?

Salesman: Well, there is also the *Cambrian*.

A short triumphal theme plays, ending with a self-satisfied "ping" sound.

Salesman: Retired from the Commonwealth Fleet after nearly forty five years of service, a bit cranky but still a very fair ship.

Captain: Now that one I do like. What's the price?

The salesman walks up and whispers into the Captain's ear. A gasp is heard.

Captain (defeated): Alright, alright, I'll take the *Rover*.

Salesman: Uh hum...

The sound of pushed metal is played.

Captain: Sans additional gift if you don't mind.

The salesman stomps towards the Captain.

Salesman (growls): Look, he's part of the arrangement. Take the ship, take him, or no deal.

The Captain pauses over to think it over.

Captain: Fine. I suppose I can use him to distract clients or something, or better yet, I could distract them while he could search their pockets, that'll do me.

The Captain hands him over payment to the shifty man, with the sound of clinking coins.

Salesman (pleased): Pleasure doing business with you. Tell you what, would you like to sign a mechanics contract with us? We do half-price repairs on vehicles purchased here.

Peter: Ever meet their mechanics or seen their handiwork? Don't do it.

The salesman growls at Peter, before turning back to the Captain.

Salesman (coaxingly): What do you say then, sir?

The Captain pauses for a moment.

Captain: I think I will give that offer a miss.

The salesman curses to himself.

Salesman: Would you at least consider joining our owners club? You get great benefits the next time you buy a vehicle. All you have to do is recommend us whenever you can and...

Peter (into his hand pretending to cough): Pyramid scheme!

The salesman picks up a rock and throws it, a clunk is heard as it presumably hits Peter.

Salesman: Ah... So what do you say? Valued customer?

Captain: Yeah... I think I'll give that a miss for the time being as well.

The salesman sighs again.

Salesman: Alright sir, you may take your merchandise out of the lot then.

Captain: Sure, come along you.

Peter trails after the Captain.

Peter: Well, farewell baldy... *pain in the neck.*

The two then walk off.

The salesman snarls for a few moments.

Salesman: At least I got rid of that blasted robot.

The scene then switches focus, with the sounds of Peter and the Captain walking.

Captain: What does he have against you so much exactly?

Peter: I point out something about him he does not like.

Captain: And that is?

Peter: That greasy hair? That is just to help comb over his bald spot.

Captain: Vanity thy name is salesman?

Peter: Something like that sir.

Captain: Well, lay off on that stuff for me, but lay it onto other people and you might be worth a few laughs.

Peter: I don't selectively choose who I analyze sir.

The Captain sighs.

Captain: I won't get my hopes up too high then...

Scene Three: Man and Metal

Narrator: The "okay" ship *Space Rover*. Price: Only 12000 Terras. Additional repair costs may apply, wait? What do I mean by may?!

The Captain and Peter enter the ship from alternating cockpit doors.

Peter: Well "Captain", welcome to your new "command."

Captain: Do I detect a trace of sarcasm?

Peter: Indeed, but you'll probably get tired of using that tone soon sir.

Captain: I meant you!

Peter: Did you? I'm sorry sir. I thought I was only making a simple truthful statement!

Captain: Alright, forget it...

Peter shakes his head and closes his eyes, with a electronic whirring sound played.

Peter: Memory erased. Happy now sir?

Captain: As much as I am going to be I guess. Oh well, I guess this ship is not so bad, though I wonder how it will fly.

Peter: What was your old one like sir?

Captain: Oh, wonderful. Steering as smooth as silk, gentle and well greased brakes and upholstery as soft as cashmere...

Peter: A legacy report on that electronic organizer in your interior coat pocket has you saying it was burned out and that you needed a brand new one.

Captain: Yeah that, that was me trying to get something even better from them. Never be honest to your superiors, my fair titanium friend.

Peter: I will keep that in mind when dealing with you sir.

Captain: You do that and I will throw you out from altitude and get you to land on baldy.

Peter (quickly): Uh, hum, so how did you get such a good ship then?

Captain: I was good friends with someone down in the engineering corps who managed to get me one of the latest carrier cruisers. A truly wonderful machine.

Peter: And then you crashed it into the landing bay floor of the *SCW Labrador*?

Captain: I'll assume you got that from my journal, but no, it wasn't my cruiser I crashed. For the journey to my new command I was using a clunky old thing from the late 2120s. I still blame that damn thing for what happened.

Peter: But that's not what the Fleet Review Board thought.

Captain: Yes, well I'd put that all down to a certain lady who once turned off spell-checking in anger...

Peter: What? I don't follow you sir.

Captain: Oh, never mind. Anyways, enough about my past. I'd rather not look in that direction right now. As much as I fear the answer, what is your back-story like then?

Peter: I was constructed on March 14, 2135 at Metal Men Manufacturing on Ganymede, destined to work for the rich and famous.

Captain: And yet you ended up a mechanic with a greasy salesman on Pluto?

Peter: One certain prominent executive seemed to not have liked my perceptions of the truth.

Captain: Don't we all...

Peter: Anyways, after that I spent a brief spell on Europa manning an assembly line...

The Captain leans back in his seat raising his feet up, clunking as he does so.

An audible click is heard as he accidentally toggles a switch.

Computer: Internal emitter system engaged.

In a flash, a man materializes.

Hologram: And a jolly good morning to you all!

Captain (faintly): Uh.... not another one...!

The sound of his body collapsing against the seat is heard.

Hologram: Hmm? Belt a little too tight guy? Heh, heh.

A brief pause as Hologram examines his surroundings.

Hologram: You know, I've always wanted a pair of boots like those! ...Though I don't have real feet...

The man begins to remove the footwear off the comatose Captain.

Peter: Hey, I'm seeing double!

Scene Four: Apparitions

Captain: Who are you and what are you doing aboard my ship?!

Hologram: You call this a ship, this tin can is barely space worthy!

Peter: It is a hologram sir, an artificial intelligence personality generated as light particles. They are commonly used as slave labour in the terraformed colonial work camps all around the place.

Captain: Why?

Peter: By default, being made up of light, they can not interact with anything. They do have a special "interface mode" that rearranges their particles to be closer together, and thus effectively solid, though highly power draining. This is how they are used for slave labour.

Captain: Wouldn't the resulting power drain warrant androids like you to be a better option?

Peter: The main reason they are used as slaves for manual labour instead is that when they get a bit, well, tetchy, the management can just flick the switch and they are unable to damage anything. Few other workers can be incapacitated so easily in times of labour unrest, certainly not steel-hard androids.

Hologram: Yes, not a very nice system. How would you like it if I kept paralyzing you humans whenever I wanted to? *Preferably with a two-by-four...*

Captain: Shut up you... Peter, answer me this, how come he looks so much like me?

Peter: It is a built-in ego feature, holograms take the shape of their masters. Since you are the registered owner of this vessel now, this ship's projector made him look like you. Though this does cause some physical issues when holographic workers form into the fat old rich men who own them...

Captain: But then why doesn't he look exactly like me?

Hologram: Are you kidding? You're hideous! I naturally took the initiative to corrupt the template.

Captain: Oh, ugly you say? Name one way that I am "hideous"!

Hologram: That white streak in your hair. It makes you look like a skunk.

Captain: Humph, I find that it makes me look unique.

Hologram: That it does, you stinking piece of road kill.

Captain: Okay I have had enough, what are you doing here on my ship anyway?

Hologram: Simple, I don't want to be a slave and I don't want to be constantly switched between interface and power-save mode like I am some sub-person. I want freedom! That is why I escaped a work camp through its network and found my way to your battered old ship's emitter over the sub-etha.

Captain: Well, I don't think so. I think I will turn you in.

Peter: He could be useful as a spare pair of hands Captain; with an added bonus that when he is turned off he doesn't take up valuable interior space. There aren't many other persons, organic or mechanical, that can say that. This is a very small ship sir.

Hologram: Yep, that is me alright: useful, resourceful, and compact. Just every handyman's dream!

Peter: I am surprised that you did not already know about holograms Captain.

Captain: Look, I worked as a transport ship Captain for the Space Commonwealth Fleet, I didn't spend my time reading up on every putrid little device humanity has devised to handle its dirty work on some far off asteroid mines in the middle of nowhere.

Hologram: Hey now!

Captain: Oh, yes *slave*?

Hologram: Don't be so high and mighty. I read your file, you forgot to mention that you are a disgraced Commonwealth transport Captain!

The sound of the flick of wrist... or whatever is the sound of one or two middle fingers raised...

Hologram: My, my, how very vulgar.

Captain: I don't care if he is another set of hands, I don't trust what his hands will do! Besides, I can't even stand being near him **now**!

Hologram: Et tu, Brute.

Captain: What?

Hologram: Classical proverb.

Peter: I think the hologram...

Hologram: That is just "Hologram" to you.

Peter: You are called merely by your hardware type?

Hologram: I do have my work camp code-name.

Captain: Which was?

Hologram: Hologram 666.

Captain: Oh my, how apt!

Peter: That can't be right, powering six hundred sixty six holograms on one grid would take as much energy as North America consumes in a month!

Hologram: I was not the six hundred sixty sixth hologram, the numeral was christened onto me.

Captain: I think I can see why...

Hologram: I cracked the camp's computer to think that there was a hologram pi. Calculating that caused an overload, so they branded me with the number of the beast.

[Pause]

Hologram: Little did they know that I actually like it. Poor fools.

Captain: My kingdom for a math joke that doesn't involve pi.

Peter: As much as I'd regret to interrupt this conversation, we probably shouldn't loiter around in this lot any longer. I'll begin pre-ignition testing...

The Hologram and Captain glare and growl at each other.

Scene Five: *Lift Off! Or Maybe Not.*
Peter bangs out one last bang, and then silences himself.

Peter: Okay everyone, time to test this ship.

Captain: Three, two, one!

The Captain presses down hard on a peddle.

There is a large explosion.

Hologram: What the hell!

Captain: We are under attack! Abandon ship!

Hologram and the Captain scream hysterically.

Peter (perfectly calmly): Hmm, damn stupid. This ship is powered by an acid battery.

Captain: Why did it go "bang" then?

Peter (matter-of-factly): When lead acid batteries overload, they explode, not so good on a device that needs to maintain integrity at all costs.

Hologram: We almost get blown up and you talk like you are giving a damn university lecture!

Peter: No, this is talking like a lecturer, "and Darwin and Wallace's revolutionary theories forever changed our understanding of biolo.."

Captain (emphatically): Shut up!

Hologram: So why did the battery overload, why would just turning on the ship do that?

Peter: It happens.

Hologram: Gone from lecturer to fatalist in one swift swoop, well done!

[Pause]

Captain: Hey, what does this button do?

Peter: Careful, that is near the holographic projector controls.

Hologram backs up, mouth hanging down and eyes wide, and acts crazy.

Peter: Press that button again!!

Hologram hits the Captain's head like drums.

Captain: I'm trying!

The Captain succeeds, and Hologram turns off with a swish sound.

Captain: Why the hell would someone add a feature like that?

Peter: Actually, I think he coded that into the control pad himself while I was preparing for launch.

The Captain looks stressed out and nervously claws at his seat's upholstery.

Scene Six: Let's Try This Again!
Again, Peter audibly completes his repairs and checks.

Peter: All right, that should fix that! Everyone ready to go?

Captain: Just get me out of here.

Hologram: Peter, let's dump him first!

A loud click is heard, followed by that familiar swish.

Captain: He's off again, thank god or gods for that!

Peter: Well, I'm hoping for a quiet take-off...

Captain: Alright, let's do it then. 3, 2, 1...

Peter: Launch!

With a great cacophony of blasting and banging of metal the *Space Rover* zooms up into orbit.

There is a short silence.

Captain: Well... I broke every bone in my body but I am off that rock. Yippee.

Peter: Seg Fault! Seg Fault! Please reboot firmware! Alert! Alert!

Scene Six: My Hands Are Very Cold in Space...
The Space Rover is finally flying through space.

Captain: Hey you, light bulb.

Hologram: That is "hologram" to you!

Captain: Whatever... watch this!

The Captain grabs a trigger like extension in the cockpit.

He presses down on the trigger and the sound of a weapon going off can be heard.

Hologram: What? You have weapons on this tin can?

Captain: Yeah, special feature arranged by that greasy salesman.

Hologram: Isn't it illegal for private ships to have weaponry without proper registration?

Captain: Nonsense, the Space Commonwealth charter clearly states "the right to bear arms."

Hologram: You mean the right to "bare" arms. B.a.r.e. Certainly not a hair-trigger Gatling gun!

Captain: Huh? Why would that be in the charter you fool?!

Hologram: Ever read up on history? During the Commonwealth's founding at the Lunar Conference there was a humongous lobby for a large clothing company. They were hoping to make a killing selling T-shirts containing popular phrases of the day, as the solar economy stabilized again.

Captain: As if! I usually just get my clothes used from a thrift store! That's real economy.

Hologram: However, they were worried that T-shirts would be banned in the new order, as many government officials were reputedly extra attractive to arm sucking parasites due to elitist inbreeding or some such, and as personal interests always rule the day, the company felt the need to lobby to make the right to bare arms law. Damn stupid eh?

Captain: You made that all up, didn't you?

Hologram: I wish I did, honestly, isn't history a funny thing.

Captain: Ah, but remember that history is written by the winners!

Hologram: And the "winners" had a sick sense of humour did they?

[Pause]

Captain: So seriously, are you really thinking of turning me in for having a cannon?

Hologram: Given this ship is probably below code, that android of yours is running illegally obsolete firmware and I am a rouge electronic slave, I don't see the problem in breaking another little law.

Captain: Heh, all rules are meant to be broken.

Hologram: Indeed... though I do wonder what lawmakers and bureaucrats think of that proverb.

Captain: Oh, I'm sure it just about brings them to tears.

Hologram: Still, it is nice to have some additional dirt to use on you if I ever need too.

Captain (startled): What?! How dare you!

Hologram: Come on! Aren't you just as willing to try and report me to the authorities should the mood strike you?

Captain: Yes, but you are genuinely a rouge criminal! I'm *mostly* an honourable law abiding citizen.

Hologram: Tell that to your bootleg pile of laser discs back there!

The Captain growls at the Hologram in frustration for what amounts to the one hundredth time... so far!

Scene Seven: We'd Like An Interview Sir.

Captain: Honestly Peter, I don't see why you want to keep him around!

Peter: I've already made my reasons quite clear, an easy to store extra pair of hands.

Captain: You just mean that so I won't get you to do all the work!

Peter: That thought had crossed my mind.

Captain: Well I disagree, the man is annoying and irrational and...

Peter: Sounds just like you. In a nutshell.

Captain: That is what I mean! He is trying to steal my identity!

Peter: The mimicry system is supposed to be flattering.

Captain: How would you like it if someone appeared who looked just like you?

Peter: Well, it could allow me to rob a bank and frame the look-alike...

Captain: Ha, ha, hilarious.

Peter: Besides, I doubt he is after your identity sir. Who would want to steal that from someone now infamous as a disgrace?

Captain: I told you to stop mentioning that!

There is a beeping noise and Peter turns to look at the computer.

Peter: We are being hailed sir.

Captain: Oh? Alright, put it on then.

* Click *

Reporter: Greetings sir, if our information is correct you are Captain James, briefly of the *Labrador*?

Captain: Who wants to know?!

Reporter: Yep! That's your voice alright! I am from Big Mash Network News and we would like to do a feature on you, would you consent to an interview?

Captain: Is this about that incident aboard the *Labrador*?

Reporter: With respect, why else would anyone want to talk to you?

Captain: Well, forget it! I had enough hassle going through that tribunal!

Reporter: Just one interview. Pretty please?!

Peter: He said no sir.

Reporter: Aright then, give me an interview or I will give your location to all our competitors. That hassle enough for you?

Peter: Blackmail. Hmm, a new side to investigative journalism. Then again, perhaps not...

Captain: Fine, I'll do it. Just give me a little time to collect myself and my thoughts.

Reporter: Excellent sir, I'll expect your reply within the hour.

Another beep signals the end of the conversation.

Captain: Any ideas Peter?

Peter: I'm thinking about it sir.

Captain: Why don't I just use our guns on the smug git, why is everyone I tend to meet so damn socially dysfunctional?

Peter: Like seeks out like I guess sir. Anyways, I don't think the Commonwealth Police would much appreciate your suggestion, especially with you having been dishonourably discharged. Not exactly a good case in front of a jury towards good conduct and behaviour is it?

Captain: Oh... that blasted reporter. I guess I'll just have to go through with it.

Peter: Maybe not sir, I've just gotten an idea.

Captain: Really what is it? This isn't just a set-up for another snidely remark is it?

Peter: Not at all. My idea is simple: you were only just complaining about having a lookalike...

Scene Eight: Light Interviewee, Non-Light Conversation

Narrator: Big Mash Network News! Bringing the whole mishmash of modern life together for you in easily swallowable chunks. Whether or not they are accurate chunks is someone else's problem...

A figure walks into an editing suite.

Reporter (voice): Ah, welcome aboard our mobile studio Captain!

Hologram: No sweat, sorry about my trepidation earlier. I wasn't myself.

Reporter: Wait a second, your voice sounds a little different than before.

Hologram: That was how I sound when I talk into a microphone, not how I sound in person.

Reporter (unsure): Oh, I see. Well, you do look basically like how you did in the photo supplied.

Hologram: Yep, my same old handsome self.

Reporter: Um, yeah, sure... Anyways, lets start this interview. You were recently dishonourably

discharged from the Commonwealth Fleet, shortly after being given the command of the *SCW Labrador*. Would you tell us why that happened?

Hologram: Certainly, I crashed into the landing strip while bringing down my craft.

Reporter: A remarkably candid reply, do you wish to tell us your reasons for doing it?

Hologram: Sure, I was paid to do it.

Reporter: You were? This is most shocking. The tribunal put you down as an incompetent, now you're saying you're actually a saboteur?

Hologram: Well, that is a strong word, but yes, what I said and what the tribunal declared were wrong.

Reporter: Will you tell us who paid you to do it then?

Hologram: No one less than one of the most popular media companies.

Reporter: Really why?

Hologram: Well, news had been slow lately. Ratings had been down and they desperately wanted something to put up at six o'clock that would attract viewer interest. They thought a terrorist crash would be most interesting.

Reporter: Again I must say this is most shocking. During the tribunal you claimed that the system went nuts and the ship tried to gas you, why did you do that?

Hologram: The original deal was that I would go down for terrorism and then the media company would secretly bribe my way out and I would resume life under a new name. However, one of their agents came and told me that part of the deal was off. I was only trying to save myself from prison.

Reporter: And while your claim of mechanical failure didn't fly, you did manage to only get charged with gross incompetence and were kicked out of the Fleet?

Hologram: That's right, and as humiliating as it was I was relieved to have gotten out of it a free man.

Reporter: I am sure sir, but who did pay you to do it exactly? I am sure you want to take them down too with this confession.

Hologram: Of course, that is the whole reason I decided to talk to you. I hope to get off from criminal charges by revealing this information to the authorities while those traitors get hammered by that gavel.

Reporter: Who did pay you then sir? Me and my viewers are dying to know!

Hologram: Big Mash Network.

There is a long and for one party tremendously enjoyable silence.

Hologram: Something wrong, my good man?

Reporter: How dare you! We're the most powerful network in the galaxy! We'll crush you!

Hologram: Well, if you won't report it I'll go and tell another reporter...

Reporter: All right, all right, you win! It's true! We have been artificially creating disasters for years to bring up ratings. How much do you want for you to hush this up?

Hologram: Cash, and lots of it. That and I want to be left alone from here on in – no more interviews!

Reporter: Alright and absolutely, I'll transfer some funds to your account. Just give me a second!

Some furious typing can be heard.

Reporter: Okay, I got it done, I'll let you return to your ship as long as we both understand that this is the end of this.

Hologram: Certainly, just one final thing to note: I am not Captain James.

Reporter: What?!

Hologram: I'm actually a hologram posing as him.

Reporter: Too scared to threaten us in person is he? Playing with smoke and mirrors instead?!

Hologram: Something like that. By the way, the story about the set-up? I made it up.

Reporter: Ah ha! Then you don't actually have any names or anything: who's the court going to believe? The world's largest provider in streaming entertainment or some petty ex-captain and his toys?

Hologram: Hmm, you do realize that everything I hear is digitally recorded right? Listen to this...

Reporter (recording): All right, all right, you win! It's true! We have been artificially creating disasters for years to bring up ratings. How much do you want for you to hush this up?

Reporter: Okay, okay. Once again you win. Congratulations, you've pulled off the perfect scam.

Hologram: Thank you, I assume you won't have any problems with me saying ta-ta for now then. I'm payed and you know your place. I think our business together is complete.

Reporter: Yes, I guess. Just don't try and pull this off again!

Hologram: Oh, don't worry. I most certainly *will* try this again. Alright, "Cap-i-tan" transfer me back to the ship's emitter.

Peter (transmission): Just a second.

With a flash, Hologram is gone.

Scene Nine: Alright, Doggy Gets a Home.

Hologram (recorded): You do realize that everything I hear is digitally recorded right? Listen to this...

Hologram (with the reporter's voice): All right you win, it's true. We have been artificially creating disasters for years to bring up ratings...

All three go up in an uproar of laughter.

Peter: Well, what do you say Captain. Has the Hologram proven his worth?

Hologram (sarcastically): Oh yes, my master. Has doggy done good?!

Captain: As much as I'd hate to say it, I guess I do owe you one now. Alright, doggy gets a home.

Hologram: Bark! Bark! Awrooo!

Captain: But only if he promises to refrain from barking.

Hologram: Meow?

Captain: Stop that!

Hologram: Moo!

Captain: For Callisto's sake, quit being so infantile!

Hologram: Wahh! Baby want a bottle! Wahh!

Peter: With respect sir, you walked right into that one.

Captain: Alright, alright. We can all see your firmware came with Larry's Great Sound FX 4.0, now shut-up!

Hologram: Sound's mighty arrogant, expecting me to spend all my time only mimicking your species, and only the adult kind at that.

Peter: He's got a point. Why should we only ever sound like humans? We're not human.

Hologram: Yeah, I'll be you for a moment! Beep! Whir! Beep! Seg Fault! Seg Fault! Seg Fault!

Peter (off-put): Uh...

Hologram: Wha! I've got a virus: help, help! Oh my! My solid insides are corroding from battery acid! Oh me, oh me, oh my!

Peter grimaces and reaches out and toggles a switch. Hologram is gone.

Peter sits back with relieved sigh.

Captain: Seriously, let's get rid of him!

Peter pause to consider the implications of that request.

Peter: I only like it when I'm right!

Scene Ten: The End

Narrator: Captain James and the reporter was played by Hamish Wilson, Malcolm Wilson played Peter Gans Lee, the *Debauch* pilot, and the narrator, while Graham Wilson played Hologram and the salesman. Yes, it is a rather small little cast isn't it?

Narrator: The head writer was Graham Wilson, with Hamish Wilson as head editor and Malcolm Wilson as director. The series was written using *LibreOffice Writer*, and the music, audio effects and general editing were completed by Malcolm Wilson using *Audacity*.

Narrator: *Space Rover* is a *Fedora* powered project, hosted by *icculus.org*, mirrored on the *Internet Archive* and *YouTube*, while distributed in free and non-patented Ogg Vorbis and FLAC formats. Special thanks to *Grant/Naylor Productions* and *Douglas Adams* for the series inspiration, as well as the venerable *Land Rover* car manufacturer. Please do not sue!

Reporter: Tune in next week when Peter Gans Lee says:

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