

## Spoof the Spectacular

Inspector Spoof awoke with a start when Charlie Gumpinson struck his pillow with the yellow plastic bat. The Inspector leapt out of his dinosaur bed covers, placed his Sherlock Holmes detective hat on his head, and grabbed his own wiffle bat. He raised it over his head and screeched his high pitched battle cry. He pounced at his partner and attempted to tackle him. Gump deftly side stepped, and the Inspector flew straight into a bookcase that toppled down on him. Gump ran down the hallway and into the living room. He hid behind a curtain in front of Inspector Spoof's large front window.

Inspector Spoof crept into the room on tiptoes. He bent down and looked under his couch in search of Gump.

"Where are you Gump? Come out, come out, wherever you are!" called Inspector Spoof. Inside of the curtain Gump sneezed. The Inspector whirled around.

"Aha!!!" he cried. He took a dive at the curtain, bat in hand ready to strike. Gump spotted the incoming missile and dodged the bullet at the final moment. Inspector Spoof sailed and crashed through his front window, somersaulting into the birdbath in his front yard. Dazed, he sat there for a few seconds, then hopped up brushing the shards of glass off of his shoulders.

The front door opened, and Gump sprang out. His square glasses were steamed up and he growled as he pointed his bat at Spoof. Spoof pointed his bat down towards his feet in a defensive style, prepared to battle his brown suited foe. The two leapt at each other, dueling, swinging blows at each other, blocking whacks to their heads that would have caused ugly bruises. Gump gave Spoof a whack in the foot. Spoof started wailing. He clutched his foot as he hopped around in circles. Gump aimed a finishing blow at the

Inspector's head, but instead hit the detective's statue standing behind him, breaking the bat. Weaponless, Gump ran off to hide from Spoof behind a tree.

He was followed by Spoof, who chased him around and around the tree. The fourth time around, Gump clamored up into the fork of the tree. It took Spoof a few extra laps to realize that Gump was gone. He stood confused and scratched his head.

"Ah HAH!" Gump yelled. He sprang from the tree and tackled Inspector Spoof. They began rolling when they hit the ground. They rolled all the way to the corner of the house, which had a clothesline attached to it. Spoof pushed Gump off of him with his feet. Gump rolled under the clothesline. Spoof picked up his waffle bat. Brandishing it high above his head, He smashed it down hard, in a victory blow.

Instead, the bat hit the clothesline before it reached Gump's head and bounced off the line landing some twenty feet away. Gump scrambled to his feet and snatched up the waffle bat. Spoof started running towards the front door to get back inside. When he got to the sidewalk, however, he slipped on a banana peel and fell to the ground. Gump walked over casually and pointed the bat at Spoof's face.

"I win!" Gump declared as he bent down to help Spoof up. Spoof dusted himself off from head to toe when he arose, and rubbed his hands together.

"That was a very good workout, Gump! Very good indeed! I especially liked the part with the banana peel. That was a nice touch!" said Inspector Spoof.

"Thank you, sir! I liked the banana peel too! I slipped it out of my pocket and onto the sidewalk when I first came out of the door!" Gump remarked.

"I must have missed that. Very sneaky of you, Gump!" replied Inspector Spoof.

The mailman walked up the driveway towards the two men. He was wearing a blue suit and a blue mail hat and was holding a stack of letters. Spoof and Gump told him good morning and chatted with him.

“Beautiful morning isn’t it?” the mailman said. “I’ve got some letters for Inspector Spoof and for Mr. Gump, too!” he handed Spoof a stack of ten letters and just one to Gump.

“It is a pretty morning! Oh blast it! These are all speeding tickets!” Inspector Spoof frowned as he stuffed the letters into his pocket. Gump was carrying on a detailed conversation with the mailman facing away from Spoof. The Inspector glanced down. He noticed his wiffle bat sitting on the ground only a few feet from Gump. Spoof slowly tiptoed towards the bat, bent down and grabbed it.

“AHA! Who has beaten whom now!!??” Inspector Spoof screamed. He hurled the bat towards the back of Gump’s head. Hearing his scream, Gump whirled around fast in time enough to see the bat was headed for him. He ducked and the bat whooshed right over his head. Not having time to duck, the Mailman never knew what had hit him. The bat smacked him square between the eyes, and he toppled to the ground. Gump and Spoof bent down beside him helping him up.

“Oh my goodness, I’m sorry, sir!” Spoof said to the mailman. “I didn’t mean to hit you!” he handed the mailman some letters that he had dropped.

“That’s quite alright, quite alright. Don’t you worry about it. I know you didn’t mean to hit me.” The mailman said. “Well, I must be going now. Lots of other people need their mail, you know.” He began to walk off.

“Are you sure you don’t want some ice for that bump?” Gump asked the man.

The mailman declined the offer, and walked toward the next house. Spoof and Gump exchanged a look and shrugged.

“It’s about lunch time isn’t it, Gump?” Spoof said. Gump picked up the wiffle bat and some letters and the two of them headed inside.

Spoof opened up a drawer beside his stove when he got inside and pulled out a roll of duck tape. He went into his living room and began to tape up the hole that he had made when he missed Gump and crashed through the front window.

“Gump, we’re going to have to call the window repair man.” said Spoof. Gump was fiddling with his brown mustache as he always did.

“Okay, I’ll call him.” Gump said. He picked up the telephone and pushed his glasses back up on top of his nose with his finger. After a few minutes of talking on the phone he put it back on the receiver and said “I made an appointment for Wednesday.”

“Wednesday? What are we going to do until then?” Spoof said. He scratched his long sideburns and gazed up at the window. “I guess I’ll just have to put up some more duck tape.” He started taping the window again.

“I don’t know about you, but I’m hungry! I’ll go make some tomato soup for lunch.” Gump said.

“Oh boy I love tomato soup! Good thinking, Gump.” Spoof said. This seemed to inspire some enthusiasm in him, and he started whistling while taping the window. A few minutes later Gump and he sat down at the kitchen table to eat their soup. Spoof had three whole bowls. Spoof was ready to turn on the television, when the phone rang. Gump got up to answer it.

"Hello, Inspector Spoof's residence. Oh, hello Chief. How are you today? Yes he's right here, hold on." Gump handed Spoof the phone.

"Hello? Yes sir. I think so sir. Yes sir. We'll be there right away!" He slammed down the phone in excitement. "Chief Murphy has an important case for us to solve and he wants us to report to headquarters immediately!" Gump got up and grabbed his brown sports jacket. Spoof placed his detective hat firmly back on his head.

"Let's go." said Gump.

"It's the Chief's birthday today so don't forget his present." Spoof told Gump.

"I've got it right here." Gump said, holding up a large fruit basket.

"Good." Spoof said. They walked out of the door and hopped into Spoof's sleek black neon and zoomed off.

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Chief Montgomery Murphy was sitting at his desk twirling his pen. He was waiting for Inspector Spoof to arrive so that he could brief him on the case. He put down his pen when the mailman walked in holding a vase full of blue flowers. He had a big bandage between his eyes and staggered when he walked.

"These are from your wife," the mailman said. "Happy Birthday! There's some more stuff out there for you." He pointed in the direction of the door as he walked out. Chief Murphy's secretary walked in holding a huge heap of birthday cards. He dumped them onto The Chief's desk.

"Ah yes, this is quite nice. I love birthdays!" the Chief said.

"I bet you have some fun plans for later on," the secretary said.

“Oh yes, my wife and I are going to a nice open-air restaurant. It’s right beside the bike course. We’re going to watch a bike race during dinner!”

“That sounds fun. Have a good time.”

“Oh this is going to be the best birthday ever!” Chief Murphy said with a smile. Then his smile took a flipped upside down, and he began twirling his pen again. “Just don’t let Spoof know that it’s my birthday. Somehow or another every single blasted year he’s found a way to ruin it! Take last year for example, Spoof wanted to throw me a surprise party. I walked into my apartment, and he sprang out of a hole he had cut out of the floor and yelled ‘Happy Birthday!’ I was so taken by surprise that I jumped backwards through the air and fell out of my open window. I would have fallen into heavy traffic and gotten hit if Mr. Gumpinson hadn’t been standing below for me to land on!”

“I’ll make sure that he doesn’t think that it’s your birthday, don’t you worry sir!” the secretary said. He walked out and closed the door.

A couple of minutes later Inspector Spoof and Charlie Gumpinson burst through the door. “Whose special day is it?” the inspector shouted. He placed the giant fruit basket on the Chief’s desk. The Chief began spinning his pen a little bit faster. He looked at the basket and pulled out a speeding ticket of Spoof’s that had “please reject this ticket, will ya chief?” scribbled on the back of it.

“So tell me what the important case that you want us to solve is.” Inspector Spoof said. He sat down at a chair in front of Murphy’s desk. Gump did the same.

“Well, I just got a call from the museum. It seems that the priceless Green Gem has been stolen.” The Chief said, handing a newspaper clip to Spoof. Spoof examined the

clip, which had a picture of important looking people bunched around the empty place where the gem had been. They were scratching their heads. "The only thing left behind was an index card with the letters B and B. He then handed Spoof an index card. Spoof's eyes got bigger when he looked at the card. He then passed it on to Gump.

"What do you make of it sir?" Gump asked. The Chief stopped twirling his pen in his hands and tilted his head at Spoof.

"I know exactly where this card came from!" he said. "It is the property of the Black Bandit. I've been trying to catch him for years. He is a notorious bank robber and jewel thief. He leaves this card behind only when he feels that his theft was too easy."

"Are you up to tracking this guy down, Spoof?"

"Am I? I'll jump at any chance I can get to track down the Black Bandit. He's very annoying, you know. Every time I almost have him in my grasp, he outsmarts me with some kind of diversion or decoy. The last time I was tracking him down I was chasing him around a tree. After several times around the tree, I finally tackled him. But when I jumped to my feet to handcuff him, I realized that this was only a mechanized dummy on rollerblades! The real Bandit had slipped away after the first few rounds!"

The Chief began twirling his pen again he looked at his watch and rolled his eyes.

"That's a nice little story, Spoof." He said. The Inspector rose to his feet and declared that he must get on the case. "Well Goodbye, happy hunting Spoof." The Chief said. He sounded unenthused.

"And a Happy Birthday to you!" Spoof replied.

"What makes you so sure that it's my birthday?" The Chief demanded.

"Why, your birthday is always on the fourteenth, isn't it sir?" Gump replied.

“No, it’s not! It’s on the twenty fourth.”

Spoof placed his hands on the fruit basket. “My mistake Chief. If it’s not your birthday, I guess I’ll just take back this nice basket.” He turned towards the door. It swung open with such force that it knocked Spoof back, causing him to throw the basket into the air. All kinds of fruit flew over the room. The secretary had swung the door open, and he was holding another bundle of cards.

“Some more birthday cards for you sir.” the secretary said.

“Aha! So it is your birthday!” Spoof proclaimed.

“What? I told you not to let him know it was my birthday! Get out! Get out all of you!” the Chief roared. He slammed his pen down. The cap broke, and ink squirted all over his shirt. He then chased Spoof, Gump and the secretary out of his office. Spoof stepped on a banana on the way out, causing the fruit to squirt against the wall. The Chief slammed his door with such force that it shattered the glass.

Spoof looked at him through the hole. “Sir, what’s gotten into you?”

“You have gotten into ruining my day! Now get out! Get out!” the Chief yelled.

“You shouldn’t get so mad on your birthday.” Spoof said, waving a finger at Chief Murphy.

“It’s not my birthday!” Chief Murphy yelled. He began to charge at Spoof, but he slipped on the banana peel that was lying on the floor. Spoof and Gump fled the police station, hurried to the car and sped away. Chief Murphy lay on the floor, his face red with a banana peel plastered to the bottom of his shoe. “How will that imbecile ruin my birthday this year?” he thought.

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Inspector Spoof was driving, and Gump was sitting in the passenger seat. Spoof scratched his long sideburns; he was deep in thought. Gump pulled a cloth out of his coat pocket and started cleaning his glasses. Spoof's cell phone rang.

"Gump, could you answer that for me?" Spoof asked. He was still scratching his sideburns. Gump put his glasses back on and picked up the cell phone.

Spoof heard Gump talking: "Hello? He has? Highway eleven, huh? Who is this? Oh, Okay. I'll be sure to tell him that. Thanks, bye!" Gump put the cell phone back down. "Some guy said that he just spotted the Black Bandit driving down highway eleven. He said for me to tell you that he was S. J. He said you would know who he was." Gump glanced at Spoof, eager to learn who this was.

"Oh, good old S. J. He is my watcher. He helped me when I was last tracking down the Bandit. To highway eleven!" Spoof floored his gas pedal, and zoomed down the entrance ramp to the highway.

"The man said that the Bandit is driving a red Volkswagen." Gump said. Spoof spotted one, and gunned the gas again to catch it. Sure enough, a man dressed in a black suit with a big black rimmed hat was at the wheel.

"That's him!" Spoof declared. He tugged on the steering wheel and pulled right alongside of the Volkswagen. The Bandit's windows were open. Spoof rolled down his window. "Stop in the name of the law!" he yelled. The man in the red wagon slammed his foot on the break pedal and slowed to a stop on the side of the road, next to a wheat field. Spoof jumped out of his car, and walked up to the Bandit's car with a pair of handcuffs.

“Get Out!” he yelled at the man inside the red vehicle. The Bandit took one look at Spoof and then hit the gas pedal. The red wagon took off into the wheat field. Spoof was left standing in a cloud of Volkswagen exhaust fumes clutching his handcuffs. He ran back over to his car, and hopped in.

“Follow that car!” Spoof shouted at Gump.

“But you’re driving, sir.” Gump said. Spoof noted that he knew exactly who was driving his car. He drove off of the highway in pursuit of the red Volkswagen. They drove right up behind the vehicle, knocking down stalks of wheat as they went.

“We’ve got him now.” Spoof said with a grin. The red vehicle took a sharp veer to the right, and disappeared behind some stalks of wheat. “Where did he go?” Spoof demanded. He slammed on the breaks. Gump’s seatbelt snapped from the force of the stop, and he slammed up against the front windshield.

“This is no time to clown around in the front of the car Gump, sit down!” Inspector Spoof said. Gump pried his face off of the glass and climbed back into his seat. He dusted off his brown suit, and pushed his glasses back up on top of his nose. He squinted in resentment at Spoof’s comment.

Spoof was looking on all sides of the car to try to see where the Bandit had driven off to. Suddenly, the red Volkswagen spun around out of the wheat where it had been hiding. Now it was behind Spoof’s car. The red wagon’s hood popped open, revealing a set of six shiny rockets. Two of them shot out of the car straight towards the Inspector and Gump.

“What’s that funny hissing sound?” Gump asked. “It sounds like something is flying through the air behind us. Spoof looked out of his rear view mirror. He clearly saw

the two missiles headed for them. Below the mirror was an inscription that read

“OBJECTS IN MIRROR MAY BE MORE EXPLOSIVE THAN THEY SEEM.”

“Those sounds are missiles! Get out of the car, Gump!” Spoof shouted. He and Gump rolled out of their car doors just as the rockets hit the car. Gump leaped into a row of wheat stalks, and ducked down. Spoof stood in horror watching his car burn. The car burned for a second, and then the gas tank exploded. The force sent Spoof flying back, flailing his arms and yelling as he went. He landed right on top of Gump. After lying dazed on the ground a few seconds, the two of them staggered to their feet. The Black Bandit’s Volkswagen drove right by them and the burning heap of metal. The Bandit rolled down his window as he passed by. He waved and gave his hat a tilt. Then he zoomed off.

“That lousy scoundrel!” Spoof growled. He bent over what was left of his car.

“Hey, this thing is still intact!” he picked up a small credit card sized bit of metal. It had the name of his car dealership and a phone number on it. “If your car gets totaled within five years of your purchase and you still have this card, you can get a car of whatever kind you want for free from the dealership!” Spoof smiled and put the token in his back pocket.

“What do we do now?” Gump asked. He wiped off his glasses, which were completely black from the smoke of the fire. His brown suit had a hole burnt around its edges on the right shoulder.

“We back track.” said Spoof. “I took the liberty of placing a tracking device on the Bandit’s car as he drove by us.” Spoof explained. He pulled a device out of his the pocket of his hoodie. It looked like a calculator with an antenna on it. He pressed a

couple of buttons, and numbers popped up on the screen. “You see? We have his exact coordinates.” Spoofo smiled and slid the device back in his pocket.

“So how do we get to him?” Gump asked.

“We’re going to need a car, and we’re going to need one quick. Let’s head back the same way that we entered this wheat field.” Spoofo said. Gump and Spoofo walked away from the twisted remains of the car, and emerged from the wheat field. They walked alongside of the road until they came to a gas station.

“Well what do you know?” said Spoofo. “Gump, come back here. We don’t need to borrow a car now!” Gump walked over to Spoofo to look at what he was pointing at. There was a dark blue car parked right under a sign that read “Free Car.” Spoofo opened the door and hopped into the driver’s seat.

“Come on in, Gump! The keys are in the ignition!” Gump walked over to the car nervously. Spoofo hit the gas and they took off. When the smog from the exhaust cleared, the entire sign was revealed from where the car had been parked in front of it. It read “Free Car Wash.”

The clerk from the gas station ran out and waved his arms yelling: “Come back with my car! Come back with my car!” Spoofo and Gump were already zooming down the highway and didn’t see or hear him.

Spoofo and Gump chased the Bandit down the little country road for hours. It was about five o’ clock when the Bandit took an abrupt turn into a parking lot. At the end of the parking lot stood a building. It had a red neon sign above it that read “Bike Racing & Diner.” The Black Bandit got out of his car and ran around the back of the building. Spoofo and Gump jumped out of their car.

“Gump I’m going to chase him around the side of that building. You go inside and look for him in case he goes in there.” Spoof said. Gump nodded and headed towards the building. Spoof ran around the building where he had seen the Bandit go. Spoof saw the Bandit run past an open gate and jump onto a bicycle. Spoof saw that there were dozens of bicycles leaning against the gate. He didn’t notice the sign that said “Bike Course This Way.” Spoof hopped on a bicycle and took off through the gate after the Black Bandit.

Gump went inside of the building. He looked around at the people inside. It was dark except for a dim red glow. Gump sat down at a table for a few seconds. Then he noticed that there was a deck area where people were sitting and watching a bike race. Gump got up and walked out onto the deck. He glanced at the tables and saw Chief Murphy and his wife sitting at one of them. Gump smiled and walked over to the Chief.

“Hello, Chief!” he said. The Chief whirled around and looked very surprised when he saw Gump.

“Gumpinson! What a surprise seeing you here!” The Chief said. “What are you doing?”

“I’m looking for the Black Bandit. He’s here on these premises.” Gump replied. The Chief started to say “Oh,” but he did a double take.

“Wait a minute. Charlie Gumpinson. The Black Bandit. Spoof! Wherever you and/or the Black bandit are, Spoof is sure to be! Is Spoof here?”

“Yes. Of course sir. He is chasing him right now.” Gump said.

“Oh no!” The Chief muttered.

Spoof was peddling as hard as he could to catch up to the Bandit. This bike course was full of ramps and hills that Spoof wasn't fond of flying over. Pretty soon a trick ramp was coming up. A row of judges sat on a deck that connected to the restaurant. A man up ahead rode off of the ramp, did a flip and landed. The judges held up a six, an eight and a ten. The Black Bandit went over. He also did a flip and landed. Spoof went off of the ramp. He didn't stop flipping. He flipped himself right off of the bike! He soared through the air. Spoof and the bike fell towards the deck careening towards a certain dinner table.

Chief Murphy and his wife jumped up from their table right before Spoof and his bike collided with it. The table broke in half and all of the food on it flew everywhere. The glasses broke and sent glass shards flying. The judges held up three ten cards. A small crater was left in the floor under the broken table where the bike had struck. Inspector Spoof pulled himself up and crawled out of the hole. Amazingly, he was not harmed in any way!

"Oh, hello Chief!" Spoof said when he noticed the Chief standing beside Gump with his mouth hanging open. "I'm terribly sorry about your dinner." Chief Murphy leapt in Spoof's direction. Just then a group of waiters holding a birthday cake ran up to Chief Murphy. They circled around him and started singing a birthday song. Chief Murphy busted out of their circle and jumped in front of Spoof.

"You've done it this time, Spoof!" he screamed. He curled his fingers and started to move them towards Spoof's throat.

"Now, Chief," said Spoof, "I know this is horrible and everything, but you can still have a nice birthday!"

"It's NOT my birthday!" Chief Murphy yelled.

“Oh really?” asked a waiter. “I guess we’ll just have to take this birthday cake back to the kitchen and eat it ourselves!” the waiters turned and began to walk back inside with frowns on their faces.

“No! No!” shouted Murphy. “It is my birthday! Spoof just ruined it! I do want cake! I DO!” he ran after the waiters. He tackled the cake off of the platter. He squatted down on the floor and started eating pieces of it with his hands.

“You have a nice night, ma’am.” said Spoof. The Chief’s wife nodded at him. She stood staring at her husband, who was eating cake off of the floor like a pig.

Spoof and Gump went back to the parking lot. The gas station man was standing in front of the car that they had “borrowed.” He yelled at them for stealing it. Then he got inside it and drove away.

“Gump call a taxi, will you? We’re going home. I guess we won’t be catching the Bandit tonight. A few minutes later a taxi pulled up Spoof and Gump got in and rode home.

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The next morning Spoof and Gump were sitting at the kitchen table eating breakfast when the phone rang. Gump stood up and answered it then passed it to Spoof.

“Hello? Really?” Spoof said to the person on the other end of the phone. “Okay thanks.” Spoof said. He put the phone back on the receiver.

“That was our friend S. J. he says that the Black Bandit checked into and is currently staying at Sleepy Joe’s Hotel out on route eleven.” Spoof informed Gump.

“Wait a minute. Does S. J. stand for Sleepy Joe?” Gump asked. Spoof nodded his head. “The same Sleepy Joe that owns that hotel?”

“Yes, Gump. Joe is a very good friend of mine. He sometimes works undercover and gives me helpful tips about stuff.”

“So do we go to the hotel now?” Gump asked.

“Not quite yet. I’ve got a plan.” Spoofo said. He went over to a book shelf and pulled out a notebook. He opened it to a blank page and began to sketch something. In a minute he held up a diagram of his plan. “Okay. Here is Sleepy Joe’s Hotel.” Spoofo pointed with his pen to a box on top of a hill in his drawing. “You will check in there this afternoon. I will stay down here.”

He pointed out a triangle on the bottom of his sketch of the hill.

“I will camp out on the grounds of the hotel tonight to make sure that the Bandit doesn’t leave or try any funny stuff. In the morning, you and I will chase the Bandit out of his hotel room and into the pool.” He slapped his pen onto a square with wavy lines drawn inside it beside the hotel. “You will then call a S.W.A.T. team that will be stationed near the hotel. And, voilá! We’ve captured the Black Bandit!” Spoofo slapped down his pen and smiled at Gump.

“That sounds like a good plan.” Gump said.

Meanwhile back at his office, Chief Murphy was drawing up a plan of his own on a piece of printer paper. His secretary walked in with the mail.

“How did your birthday dinner go, sir?” he asked.

“Horrible.” the Chief said. “Thanks to that darn Black Bandit, Spoofo showed up chasing him, and he ruined my whole night!”

“Well that stinks.” the secretary said.



“You’re telling me!” Murphy said. “Now I’m fired up at this Bandit and I want to catch him! So I’ve drawn up this plan.” Murphy handed his secretary the piece of paper. “A friend of mine, James Geronimo is his name, was staying at Sleepy Joe’s hotel, and tells me that the Black Bandit is staying there.”

The drawing looked considerably like Spoofo’s drawing. Murphy then explained to his secretary the exact same plan that Spoofo had told Gump, minus the part about Gump checking into the hotel. The secretary raised his eyebrows and nodded his head in confirmation.

“That sounds like a pretty good plan.” the secretary said.

Later that afternoon, Spoofo and Gump arrived at Sleepy Joe’s Hotel. Gump checked into the Hotel as planned and Spoofo went down the hill to pitch his tent. He put up a green tent, so that it would blend in with the grass. A few hundred yards away from him, Chief Murphy was setting up his own green tent. He did a double take when he looked over and saw Inspector Spoofo waving at him. Murphy ran over to Spoofo.

“What are you doing here, Spoofo?” the Chief demanded.

“I heard that the Bandit is here. This is part of a plan I’ve come up with.” He pulled his notebook out of his tent and handed it to Murphy. Murphy looked at Spoofo’s diagram.

“This is the same plan that I came up with!” Chief Murphy pulled his piece of paper out of his pants pocket and handed it to Spoofo. The two men stood there scratching their chins in puzzlement for a few seconds.

“Well, if we’re following the same plan, then we may as well move our tents together!” Murphy said. The Chief went over to his tent. He dragged it over beside Spooof’s and nailed it into the ground.

That night Spooof and Murphy got in their tents. Both of them were asleep when out of the woods came a group of five bearded men wearing torn grey rags. One of them wore an eye-patch across his left eye. Apparently he was the leader of the bunch.

“What have we here?” the eye-patched man said. “Some camping folk. I bet the have lots of goodies in those tents. Who wants to beat ‘em up?” The other men howled with delight. “Then, charge!” the leader yelled. “Attack, Wood Dwelling Hoboes, Attack!” The men ran at Chief Murphy’s tent. They opened it up, and jumped inside. They stole food from his food sack, punched him all over and did things like tickle him until he cried. Inspector Spooof got out of his tent to see what was the matter. He was holding his gun. The hoboes immediately retreated back into the woods.

“What on Earth happened?” Spooof asked.

“Some crazy hoboes came out of the woods and attacked me!” Chief Murphy said. Spooof comforted the Chief and got him calmed down. After a while they got back in their tents. Just when Murphy was about to drift back to sleep, he heard a voice cry

“Attack Wood Dwelling Hoboes, Attack!” the hoboes ran back out of the woods and ransacked Murphy’s tent again. Spooof sprang from his tent and fired a shot from his gun into the air. The hoboes immediately ran back into the woods.

“Switch tents with me!” Chief Murphy said.

“What? Why?” Spooof asked.

“Don’t ask why! I’m your boss! You do whatever it is I say you should Do!”

Murphy unzipped Spoofo’s tent and climbed inside. Spoofo shrugged his shoulders and got inside of Murphy’s tent. Again, just before Murphy went back to sleep, he heard the cry.

“Attack, Wood Dwelling Hoboes, Attack! Attack!” the Hoboes began to charge.

“Wait a minute!” the leader said. All of the Hoboes stopped in their tracks.

“We’ve gotten this tent twice already. Let’s get the other guy!” The Hoboes began their attack again and charged at Spoofo’s tent, which Murphy was in. They beat up the Chief yet again and took his slippers. The leader of the Hoboes yelled “That’s enough for tonight, boys! Let’s head on home!” The Hoboes ran back into the woods for the last time.

Murphy crawled out of the tent with ruffled hair and a lot of bruises. Spoofo stepped out of the other tent, and looked at his boss.

“That’s it, I’ve had enough! I’m checking into the hotel! Good night to you, Spoofo.” He limped up the side of the hill towards Sleepy Joe’s Hotel almost in tears.

“Good night Chief! And Happy Birthday!” Spoofo called. Chief Murphy let out a groan from halfway up the hill. Spoofo got back inside of his own tent and went back to sleep.

When the sun rose at Sleepy Joe’s Hotel, Gump walked out with a towel draped across his shoulder. He took a minute and looked at the golden glow of the rising sun on the water before he dove in. He swam around for a few minutes before getting out and lying down on a blue lawn chair.

Down the green grassy hill away from the hotel on the edge of the woods stood Spoofo’s green tent. The tent flap unzipped and Inspector Spoofo stepped out. He was clad

in a green and brown speckled camouflage suit. He placed his detective hat on his hat and stepped out of his tent. He tiptoed over to the foot of the hill, his eyes darting around to make sure that nobody saw him. When he reached the hill, he got down on his hands and knees and began to crawl up it. He inched his way up to the foot of the parking lot. He stood up when he got to the parking lot, and unzipped the camouflage suit. He wore a red suit underneath. He threw the camouflage suit over his shoulder.

Spoof looked across the parking lot at the pool. He then waved his hands over his head to try to get Gump's attention. Gump stood up when he noticed Spoof and gave Spoof a thumbs up. Spoof returned the signal. He walked across the parking lot, and towards the red carpeted lobby of the hotel. He smelled freshly baked cinnamon rolls from breakfast inside. When Spoof walked through the door he saw some cinnamon rolls on a platter. He grabbed one and stuffed it into his mouth really quickly. Then he walked up to the desk clerk.

"I'd like to speak with Sleepy Joe, please." he said.

"There is no Sleepy Joe here, sir. It's just the name of the hotel." the clerk informed Spoof.

"Listen here, mister. You and I both know who Sleepy Joe is. Now I want to talk with him!" Spoof said.

"Alright, alright fine. What's the password?"

"Fuzzy smelly pickle bagels." said Spoof.

The desk clerk walked through a door behind the front desk. A few minutes later a man with a beard that went down to his hips and an orange shirt walked out of the door.

His hair was all tangled and flustered and he looked like he could use a few extra hours of sleep.

“Sleepy Joe! How nice to see you again. How are you, your wife, and all your little sleepy kids?”

“Oh, they’re just fine. It’s good to see you too. Listen. The Black Bandit is still in the building. He’s on the fifth floor, room three twelve.”

“Thanks my drowsy friend!” Spoof said. Just then Gump walked up beside him. They walked down the hall and to the elevator. As they rode up to the fifth floor, Spoof pulled out a fake mustache and put it on his face. He handed Gump a funny straw hat.

“These are our disguises. The Bandit can’t know who we are. We’ll answer the door as room service, and then chase him out as detectives! I might even use my karate leap on him!” said Spoof.

They stepped off onto the fifth floor and walked up to room three twelve. Spoof knocked on the door.

“Room service!” He called out the door swung open. “Ayah!” Spoof screamed he did a flying drop kick at the man who answered the door. But the man wasn’t the Bandit, he was Chief Murphy! Spoof and Murphy collided. Murphy flew backwards and landed on his bed. The bed broke from the force of Spoof’s fall. Spoof skidded to a halt when he realized who this was. His fake mustache fell off “I’m so sorry Chief! I thought you were the Bandit!” he exclaimed.

“I’ll Bandit you!” the Chief shouted. He chased Spoof around the room yelling, “I’ll kill you! I’ll kill you!”

“Help! Help! The Chief’s gone nuts!” Spoof yelled while flailing his arms in the air. “Gump, press the little white button on the telephone!” Gump did so, and a few minutes later two men wearing white coats came and grabbed Chief Murphy.

“I’ll get you Spoof! I swear I will!” Murphy said as he was being dragged away. The white coated men told Murphy that he wouldn’t be able to get Spoof in the mental hospital. Spoof shook his head.

“Going crazy. What a horrible thing to happen to somebody on their birthday.” Gump and Spoof then headed back down to the lobby. Sleepy Joe was still standing there.

“I’m sorry, I told you wrong! The Bandit is on the third floor, room two twelve.” He smiled at Gump and Spoof as they jogged back the elevator.

Spoof decided to take a different approach this time. He banged his fist on the door and said “Open up in there, this is the police!” After a moment of silence, Spoof took a few steps back, and did his flying karate kick at the door. The door opened, and Spoof went sailing over the head of the Black Bandit.

The Inspector crashed into the wall on the other side of the Bandit’s room from the door. Gump ran at the Bandit and tried to grab him, but the man in black ducked running under Gump’s feet. He ran out the door and down the hallway.

“He’s getting away, sir!” Gump yelled.

“Not if I can help it.” Spoof said.

The two men chased the Bandit down the hallway. The Bandit began to run down the staircase. Spoof aimed another of his flying kicks at him and this time he hit him. He and the black menace toppled over each other down the staircase, with Gump following

close behind. When they hit the bottom of the staircase, the Bandit landed on his feet. He kept running and ran out the door into the pool area. Gump helped Spoof up.

“He’s gone out the door, sir. We’ve lost him.” Gump said.

“Oh no we haven’t. He’s run into the pool area. We’ve got him right where we want him.” said Spoof. He and Gump slowly walked out towards the pool. There were six or seven people there now. Spoof glanced around. There was a man sitting in front of the pool in a chair reading the paper. Gump and Spoof couldn’t see his face. Spoof noticed a black piece of leather sticking out from behind the paper.

“That’s him!” Spoof declared. “Call in the S.W.A.T. team, Gump! Call in the S.W.A.T. team!” Gump pulled out a radio and talked into it. The Bandit jumped up. He looked all around him very quickly. He turned and jumped into the pool. Spoof ran and leapt in after him. Spoof swam after the Bandit. The Bandit proved to be a faster swimmer. He jumped out of the other end of the pool. Spoof reached up and grabbed a hold of the Bandit’s shoe. The Bandit ripped his foot out of the shoe. He ran over and jumped the fence surrounding the pool. He had gotten away.

Spoof stood fully clothed in the middle of the pool hanging his head in defeat. He held the black shoe in his hand and stared at it. Gump stood at the foot of the pool still clutching his radio. He looked concernedly at Spoof. A helicopter flew overhead. A hundred S.W.A.T. team combatants dove from the copter and parachuted down into the pool. They splashed into the water around Spoof. One paratrooper splashed down right in front of Gump, completely drenching him.

Spoof noticed something green and shiny at the bottom of the pool. He dipped under the water to pick it up. Gump saw him go under. "Don't drown yourself Spoof!" he thought. Spoof emerged from the water holding a green jewel in his hand.

"Ah, Hah!" Spoof said victoriously. "I've got it! I've got it! I've got the Green Gem!" He threw his arms around one of the paratroopers and gave him a big hug. He then climbed out of the pool and ran over to Gump.

"Bravo, sir! Bravo!" said Gump, with a grin so big it looked like his mustache would rip in two. He Spoof a pat on the back. Spoof handed Gump the gem. Then he ran over to the pool.

"Cannon Ball!" he yelled. He splashed a bunch of paratroopers. The swat team swam around in the pool before Gump radioed and explained that the Bandit was not there.

Later, the Commissioner of Police congratulated Spoof and Gump for retrieving the priceless Green Gem from the clutches of the Black Bandit. He had heard about Spoof's car being blown to bits, and he awarded Spoof with a new silver mach five, one of the only ones left in the world! He informed Spoof that it had some special detective features on it, so that in his next encounter *he* would be the one doing the missile launching at the Bandit. Spoof took his medal coupon that he had retrieved and got a new black neon from the dealership to replace his old one. He ended up giving it to Gump, though.

\* \* \*

Back at his house Spoof watched as the window repair man put the finishing touches on the new front window.



“Well, we solved the case and got a new window, Gump!” he said. The window repairman announced that he was all finished. “Gump, fetch the man’s check off of the kitchen table, will you?” Gump went and retrieved the check for five hundred dollars. The window repairman said goodbye and went out of the door.

“I can’t believe that the Bandit was carrying the gem in his pocket the whole time, sir.” Gump said.

“Well, what can I say? The Black Bandit is a fool. And it takes a real fool to track down such a fool. Or maybe that’s vice versa.” said Spoof.

A few minutes passed, and the doorbell rang. Spoof opened it and saw the mailman standing there with a brown box. The bump on his head was looking better.

“Here’s a package for you mister Spoof!” He said. Spoof thanked him and closed the door. He excitedly ripped open his parcel, with Gump looking over his shoulder. Spoof pulled a black ball with a string on it out of the box. There was a lighter on the inside of the box, and it sparked when Spoof slid the ball out of the box and lit the string.

“Sir, that’s a bo-” Gump began.

“Oh look, there’s a note attached to the string!” Spoof interrupted. He began to read it. “You may have found the gem, but you didn’t catch me! You came close, but you didn’t light your cigar. Now I’m going to light it for you! Signed the Black Bandit!” Spoof stood holding the ball.

“Get rid of that thing quick, sir! It’s a bomb! It’s going to explode!” Gump screamed as he ducked for cover.

“Did I hear you say something about a bomb?” Spoof said, looking up from the note. He looked at the black ball that he held, and his eyes bulged.

“AAAAAAAAGGGGGGHHHHHHHH! This is a bomb!” The Inspector threw the ball away from himself right as the last inch of fuse burned down. The bomb exploded in mid air. The blast carried Spoof backwards through the air. He crashed through the glass of his newly repaired window. He landed outside in the birdbath again.

Gump came out of the house covered in dust from the explosion. He was surprised and relieved to see that the Inspector was alive and unharmed. Gump helped the Inspector off of the birdbath. Gump went back inside and called 911. In a matter of minutes an ambulance, a police car, and a news crew had arrived. A News lady came up to Spoof with a microphone and began interviewing him.

Thirty miles away Chief Murphy was lying in his bed in his room at the mental hospital watching the news. He jumped up when he saw Inspector Spoof on the television.

“I’m just happy to be alive, ma’am.” Spoof said to the News lady.

“Who do you think did this?” she asked him.

“It’s not a matter of who I THINK, but a matter of who I KNOW.” said Spoof. “I know that it was the Black Bandit. He left a note with his exploding present.”

“Oh, well is there anything else you would like to say?” the woman asked.

“Yes, I would like to wish my boss and my good friend, Chief Montgomery Murphy a happy birthday!” Spoof said.

The Chief’s face turned bright red when he heard this. He leapt out of his bed.

“It’s not my birthday! It’s not! It’s not! It’s not! He yelled and screamed at the television set. He jumped back onto his bed, bounced and took a flying dive at the television. He pulled it down to the ground, and it smashed into a million pieces.

“What’s all the commotion in here?” asked a doctor that entered the room. He looked at the mess and at Chief Murphy who was rolling around on the floor saying:

“Darn that Spoof, darn that Spoof!”

The doctor looked at a chart on the wall.

“It looks like somebody’s overdue for his shot!” the doctor said. He pulled a large needle from the broom closet, and filled it with a green fluid. “Oh, boys!” he called out. The two tall, strong looking men in white coats that had taken Murphy away walked in, and held Murphy down backwards on his bed.

“No! Not the shot! Not the shot! It’s not my fault, it was Spoof! It was all Spoof!” Murphy pleaded. The doctor injected Murphy with the liquid right in the rump. Murphy then calmed down and went to sleep.

“Nighty night you poor, poor crazy man!” The doctor said.

THE END