

A Summons for Bail 25 ASW4 (19 Jun 2001) Bail Solaris receives a frustrating holoovid message by droid courier. (Bail) (Narsus Prime)

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As the pending mission on Branzet drew nearer, Bail Solaris was readying himself -- cleaning weapons, checking equipment, and procuring explosives. A droid delivering a holomessage signaled at his door.

"What is it?" the tech gruffly demanded of the robot, annoyed at the intrusion.

"Special Message for Bail Solaris. Identity verification required," the droid intoned, unfazed by Bail's disgruntlement.

"I'm Bail Solaris. Gimme the mess--"

"Identity verification required," the droid droned, interrupting Bail in mid-rant.

Solaris sighed, and allowed his retina to be scanned, tapping his foot impatiently while the robot processed the scan.

"Identity Verified. Solaris, Bail. Message playback commencing."

About time, too, thought Bail as the holographic image flickered into view. Sitting behind a drab, government issue desk was the form of Tal Syquess, Bail's parole officer.

Uh-oh, thought Solaris as the image began to speak. "Mr. Solaris, I hope that this message finds you well. Under the terms of your parole, you are to refrain from associating with personnel claiming allegiance to the remnants of what is called the Empire. Recent reports have placed you in the vicinity of one Shel Abadan, renegade Imperial, wanted in several systems. These reports have you in his vicinity on more than one occasion. Due to these allegations, we find it necessary to review your whereabouts on these dates, and to review the conditions of your parole. You will come to the nearest penal facility with your various documentation on the following date..."

"Wonderful," Bail said aloud. "The only penal facility is three days' trip away in another system... Oh, man!" The date flashing in mid-air coincided exactly with the date of the Branzet raid. "Droid, is there any way to reschedule?"

The robot blipped and bleeped a couple of times, and the message jumped as the playback re-indexed. "Rescheduling is out of the question," the holographic image of Syquess replied. "If you fail to appear at the given time, a warrant for your arrest will be issued, and your parole will be revoked." The image looked around, presumably checking the office which the holoovid was recorded in, and continued quietly. "Listen, Bail, this isn't my idea, nor is any of this up to me. It's coming down from higher up somewhere. My hands are tied." Tal's image straightened

up quickly, as if spotting someone approaching. "Remember, Solaris. Be ready with your documentation on the assigned date, or you must suffer the consequences. Syquess out."

Bail sat, head in his hands, for fifteen minutes before the droid requested permission to leave. It left with a large dent in its outer hull, and Solaris nursing a sore foot. He sighed, began canceling his orders for ordnance, and began composing a letter to his fellow team members.

"Message to: Group- Rat Pack. Regarding: Our upcoming vacation. Message begins..." He paused in his dictation, waiting for his apartment's com'droid to catch up. "... My fellow mouseketeers, due to unforeseen and inescapable circumstances, I cannot participate in the upcoming vacation activities. I have already returned my party supplies, and will be unavailable for the duration of your trip. Have fun, and good luck. Please contact me upon your return, if possible. Yours, Bail. Message ends. Scramble with security key set 'Narsus.' Transmit." He waited for a few minutes until the com droid beeped its successful compliance, then sighed, as he began the much longer task of providing documentation for his whereabouts...