

# A Mark of Excellence

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Jinkies, Markfans – be on the lookout for alien invaders!! “Scooby Doo and the Alien Invaders,” that is! Mark has turned in yet another fine (or should I say, “groovy?”) performance in this funny and ::ahem:: out-of-this-world Scooby video.

A beautifully rendered tour of our solar system starts the movie, with the view eventually zooming in towards Earth and finally focusing on several giant satellite dishes in a desert somewhere in the Southwest U.S. These satellite dishes are operated by SALF: the “Search for Alien Life Forms” organization. Mark voices the role of Steve, one of SALF’s technicians. In the first few moments of the film, we see Steve and his co-workers, Laura and Max, joking about how they get to take a rest whenever they’re on duty, since they’ve never yet heard any signals from “outer space.” Their discussion ends with Steve taking over monitoring duties, and Laura and Max going off-duty.

Scooby and the Gang (which includes Shaggy, Velma, Daphne,

and Fred, for those unfamiliar with Scoobydom) come into the picture when their “Mystery Machine” van drives into a blinding sandstorm one night, causing them to take a wrong turn onto “restricted government property.” Just moments before the



van comes to a bumping halt against a cactus, they see what appears to be a UFO. The UFO soon flies off, and the Gang turns their attention back to their van, which they realize has been damaged and needs to be towed. Fred spots a town glowing on the horizon, so he, Daphne and Velma decide to walk to it, leaving Scooby and Shaggy to “guard” the Mystery Machine.

While watching the van, Scooby and Shaggy squabble over their last “Scooby Snax” biscuit (that

they just had to have, because it had been, like, 14 hours in dog time since they’d had dinner) which causes the biscuit to go slipping out of their fingers right into the paws of a “jackalope.” The jackalope runs off with the biscuit, so Shaggy and Scooby run after it, tracking it down to a cave. They see an odd glow in the cave – not to mention two giant, green aliens that loom up suddenly behind them!! (Zoiks!!) This leads into a classic Scooby Doo chase scene, complete with Jennifer Love Hewitt singing a new version of the original Scooby Doo theme song. Shaggy and Scooby escape from the aliens (whew!) by scrambling towards the town that the rest of the Gang had headed towards. They stumble into a Diner and find Fred, Daphne, and Velma already there.

When Shaggy and Scooby start a frantic recounting of their alien encounter, the locals at the Diner tell the Gang that lots of people have heard strange noises and seen all kinds of bright lights up on Scorpion Ridge. One of the

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townsfolk, Lester, even claims to have been abducted, questioned, and “experimented on” by the aliens.

The Gang strikes up a friendship with Lester, who invites them to stay the night at his home. Shaggy and Scooby take sleeping bags up to Lester’s roof, and after they fall asleep, the UFO reappears and takes Shaggy and Scooby on board. They awaken to find themselves strapped down to tables and aliens hovering ominously over them. (Jinkies!!) Scooby manages to free himself, and yet another Scooby-style chase scene ensues. Eventually, Shaggy and Scooby are recaptured by the aliens and are knocked out. They awaken in the desert the next morning, unaware of how they arrived there, to see a beautiful (and totally groooooovy) girl and her dog standing over them. The girl introduces herself as Crystal, a nature photographer, and her dog as Amber – and it’s instant love for Shaggy and Scooby (complete with throbbing heart eyes popping from their heads). Shaggy is so lovestruck that at first he introduces himself by his real name, “Norville,” but then says he’s called Shaggy. (Now there’s a fun bit of Scooby trivia for you!) Crystal gives Shaggy and Scooby a ride back to town in her groovy set of wheels (a.k.a. a psychedelically painted jeep) and they hit it off very well, with Crystal telling Shaggy that he’s “one funny cat,” and “a riot, man!”

Meanwhile, the rest of the Gang and Lester have wakened to find Shaggy and Scooby missing, and

they head to the Diner where they assume the endlessly hungry duo will be. To their surprise, Shaggy and Scooby aren’t there, but they pull up almost immediately in Crystal’s jeep. Crystal drives off, and Shaggy and Scooby join Fred, Velma, Daphne and Lester in a booth. Shaggy and Scooby are so infatuated that they don’t feel like eating (zoiks!) and they don’t even remember to tell the Gang about their abduction. Shaggy launches into a song (appropriately entitled “How Groovy”) about his feelings for Crystal. (The song is actually pretty funny, with hilarious lines like, “I’d even help her shopping, that’s the depth of my devotion,” (now that’s love!) and “Our house will be very fine; we’ll fill it up with stuff from 1969.” <G>)

Finally, after finishing his song, Shaggy remembers to tell the Gang about the aliens (“waliens” as Scooby calls them). The kids decide to investigate Shaggy and Scooby’s “abduction,” but first need to stop at the local car mechanic’s garage to arrange for work to be done on their van. The mechanic, Buck, acts very unpleasantly towards them, but agrees to fix their van. After the Gang exits the garage, they meet the SALF technician, Max. He agrees to give them a tour of the SALF installation, right after he finishes buying (lots!) of motor oil that he says is for the SALF satellite dishes. Right then, Crystal drives up and invites Shaggy and Scooby to hang out with her, so the Gang splits up with

Velma, Daphne and Fred going on the tour, and Shaggy and Scooby on a date.

Crystal, Shaggy, Scooby, and Amber drive out to the desert to look around Scorpion Ridge where Shaggy had first spotted the jackalope. While there, they are apprehended by some government MP’s, who open Crystal’s camera (which appears to be VERY high tech, but she says is “just digital”) and they warn the kids to get off the property. As the kids walk away, Crystal confesses to Shaggy that she’s a government agent investigating the alien sightings, so they backtrack to the Ridge after the MP’s leave and enter the cave that Shaggy had seen the jackalope run into.

Back at the SALF installation, Max gives Daphne, Fred, and



Velma their tour, and they meet Max’s co-workers, Steve and Laura. Steve describes SALF’s research as “the biggest collection of static in the world,” then goes on to say that the government has sent teams of investigators to check out the alleged “alien presence” near the SALF installation. He later jokes that this investigation is “wasting government money,” which prompts Laura to dryly quip, “Unlike us?”

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## Blast From the Past

### *Britannia Hospital* 'Red'

Directed by Lindsay Anderson

1982

In this hilarious comedy, Mark plays the part of Red. He is one-half of a film crew along with an investigative reporter at a local hospital to find out just what is going on. Administrators are dealing with striking workers, picketers, a mad scientist doctor, a foreign leader hiding out in hospital, and patients losing body parts, all the while attempting to prepare for a visit by one of the Royals. The officials are trying desperately not to let any of the problems become public knowledge, so the impending occasion will not be cancelled.



Red and his mate Sammy set up shop in a lorry parked down the road from the hospital. Getting out the Nicaraguan special and the Af-



ghan Black, they decide to party while waiting for something interesting to develop. Travis, the investigative reporter has managed to infiltrate the hospital, and vainly attempts to contact Red and Sammy. They are laughing uproariously at a documentary on chickens instead of recording Travis' report.



Once the documentary is over, their concentration shifts to the steadily growing group of demonstrators, Red noting that this is 'epic'. They decide to do a bit of investigative reporting on their own, and drive into the crowd, towards the gates in front of the hospital. Sammy climbs on top to start the

filming, Red decides they would be better off moving and begins to drive. Sammy, of course, falls off into the crowd. The windscreen is smashed, and Red is dragged out by his jacket, and held aloft similar to mosh pit participants.



The Royal visit ensues, with HRH and her entourage being smuggled into hospital by ambulance and stretchers.

*Britannia Hospital* was filmed on location at Friern Hospital, colloquially known as Colney Hatch, after it was closed. It had the longest corridor in Europe, and possibly the world. (Great for gurney races.) The site has been split up slightly, with the building restored as a frontage. It's a listed building, thus cannot be torn down. The main building has been converted into massively expensive flats with a health club.

Following the tour, the Gang leaves the SALF building just as Lester drives up in his truck, and he offers them a ride. At Velma's suggestion, they head off to Scorpion Ridge to do some sleuthing, because she has observed that the SALF staffers all had dried mud on their shoes (which seems a bit odd as they're in a very clean office all day, which is smack in the middle of a very dry, sandy desert). She also deduces that the load of oil that Max had bought couldn't possibly be used on the SALF dishes because it is the wrong kind of oil for the hydraulics that the dishes employ.



Steve, Max and Laura!

Steve pulls off his "alien" mask and confirms Velma's



Lester drops the kids off at Scorpion Ridge and they hike towards a river gorge, trying to find where the mud has come from. They discover that the riverbed is dried up, and has apparently been so for years. But does that stymie our intrepid Gang? No way!! They discover vehicle tracks on the roadbed, which lead them straight to a muddy cave filled with mining machinery – and cans of motor oil.

As Fred, Daphne, and Velma continue to search the cave, they discover its mysterious secret: it's a massive gold mine! No sooner do they make their discovery when the aliens – and the government MP's – reappear, and (you guessed it!), another "far out" Scooby chase scene begins!

During all the running and dodging, they bump into Shaggy, Scooby, Crystal and Amber, who are themselves being chased. After several minutes, the aliens manage to catch Fred, Daphne and Velma in a giant net which hangs from a crane, while the MP's chase Shaggy, Scooby, Crystal and Amber over a cliff. (Zoiks!) As she swings in the net, Velma confronts the aliens and reveals their true identities:

they are the SALF staffers, Steve, Max and Laura!

guess, confessing that the SALFers had stumbled upon this mother lode of gold and started mining it themselves. To keep their operation a secret (since the mine was on government property and obviously didn't belong to them), they – along with the help of two friends, the fake "MP's" – had come up with the idea of using "aliens" to scare everyone away from the mine. The "alien presence" helped masked the drilling and blasting noises they made, and they even flew around in a helicopter "dressed up" to look like a UFO to "take care of" people who got too snoopy. Following these revelations, Steve turns nasty (which Mark voices

sooooo well) and threatens to drop Velma, Daphne and Fred down a deep hole.

In the meantime, the "MP's" find Shaggy, Scooby, Crystal and Amber. The "MP's" try to attack them, so Shaggy and Scooby bravely (well, sort of bravely) try to protect Crystal and Amber from them. Suddenly – and behind Shaggy and Scooby's backs – Crystal and Amber take hold of the "peace" medallions that they always wear, and morph into REAL aliens. (Double jinkies!) This frightens off the "MP's," so Shaggy and Scooby – with Crystal and Amber back in their human forms – chase af-

ter them and arrive back in the main cavern just in time to see Steve starting to drop the rest of the Gang down the hole; their arrival distracts Steve from completing his murderous deed. (Whew!) However, when the MP's try to attack Shaggy and Scooby again, Crystal and Amber morph into alien form once more, this time in plain sight of everyone, which causes them all to go into a panic. (Double, triple jinkies!!) However, the appearance of real aliens causes Steve and Laura to hatch yet another devious plan: if they capture Crystal and Amber, they'll make even more money than their gold mine could provide them. More chasing begins, with all the usual Scooby hijinks involved and Steve doing his dastardly best to get Crystal and Amber, until – finally – the

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## Future Watch

Mark is reprising his role as the 'Divine Rod' on an upcoming 'Son of the Beach' episode.

As reported last newsletter, he is doing a voice on 'Time Squad', playing Larry 2000.

It will air on the Cartoon Network in the autumn..

Disney has a new cartoon series scheduled to begin airing on ABC Saturday mornings this coming fall. 'Teamo Supremo' features

three elementary school superheroes, their motto being 'Doing the right thing makes you super.' Mark is one of a number of guest voices doing the villainous roles.

## Notes From the Editor

In the first ever awards honouring movies made-for-video, DVD or Internet release, Mark and Bruce Timm have won in the Best Animated Character Performance in a Video Pre-

miere category, combining voice recording and animation, for their work in 'Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker'. Mark did the voice of the Joker, Bruce Timm is the character designer for

the Joker. The Video Premiere awards were created by Video Business, a trade magazine for the home entertainment industry.

### *Scooby Doo*

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"bad guys" are subdued by Scooby & Co.

Crystal then has a heart to heart talk with Shaggy, and confesses that she truly is a government agent – she just happens to be one from another world, sent to investigate the signals coming from Earth. (Some of which originated in the 1960's, which is why she had such a far out style. Re-allllly far out. Unearthly even.) Just then, their spaceship – a real spaceship – appears overhead. Moments before "beaming up," Crystal and Amber point at Shaggy and Scooby's heads with glowing fingers and give them instructions to "Beeeee Gooooooood." (Hehehehe – just

kidding!) They give Shaggy and Scooby goodbye kisses, and then they beam up.

Following Crystal and Amber's



departure, the kids call the police (and was that our Mark doing an uncredited cameo voice as the police investigator, too?), who round up the bad guys. As Steve is led away into the police van, he utters a classic Scooby-villain line: "Nyah... and we would have gotten away with it,

too, if it hadn't been for you meddlin' kids!" (That must have been fun to say, eh, Mark?!)

As the police drive away with the ex-SALF staff, Shaggy and Scooby look mournfully up into the sky, missing their far out girlfriends. A moment later, Buck (the unpleasant car mechanic who actually turns out to be a really nice, flower-lovin' guy) drives up, towing the repaired Mystery Machine behind him. As the Gang gets into the van, Velma finds a box of Scooby Snax, which instantly cheers up Shaggy and Scooby Doo, and they all happily drive off into the sunset, leaving behind them one more exciting mystery solved.



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## The Last Word

*A Mark of Excellence* is the quarterly newsletter of the **International Mark Hamill Fan Club**. Yearly dues are \$15 US, and include 4 consecutive issues of the newsletter, a membership card, access to the fan club area on the website, and special mailings as appropriate. For more information, please send a SASE to:

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