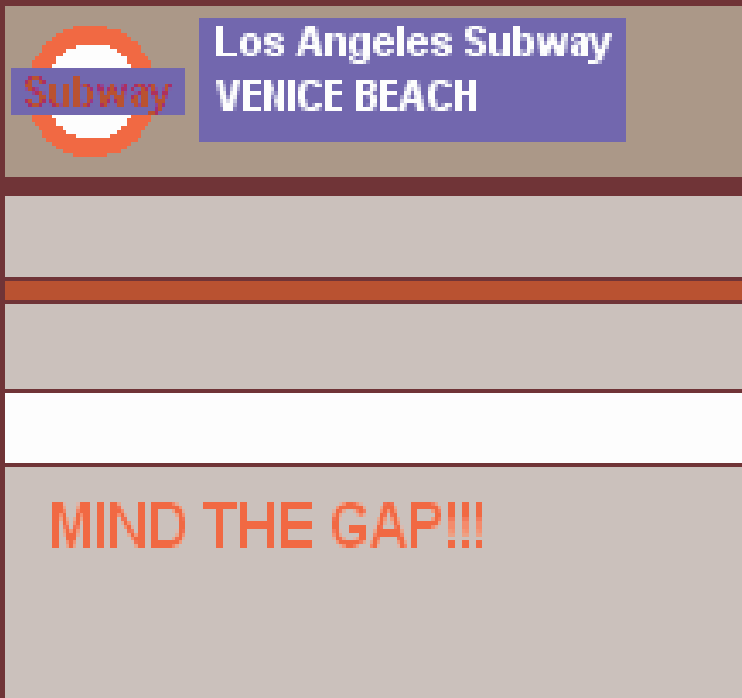


THE THREE INVESTIGATORS CRIMEBUSTERS

Down In The Tube



written by Dave Jinks

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The party and the poisoned food

The Three Investigators went on a party in the disco „PLANET USA“ in a district in Downtown Los Angeles, the Out-Of-World district a lot of ghettos stood in. The inhabitants there hated the rich guys in the neighbor district. Now they had won a fight against the „Drecky Rich Guys“ and wanted to have a party now. The Three Investigators, Jupe, Pete and Bob, had been invited by Pete’s mate Jeffrey Palmer. One of the Out-Of-World-Guys was Jeffrey’s mate who owed him an invitation to a party. Jeffrey had managed that Pete could come with Jupe and Bob. Together with them he had an agency with a lot of success in investigations. They called themselves „The Three Investigators“. They had got a business card and some strategies in their investigations Jupe had made. There were Tortilla Chips and other Junk Foods on the buffet. Jupe had a daydream, as in some parties.

„You’re so smart and logical!“, said the girl in front of him.

„And I know Judo, too!“, Jupe added.

„I guess you have got a girlfriend already.“, the girl said. „What a pity.“

„Well - “, Jupe wanted to start.

„Hey, Jupe, are you ready?“, asked a voice behind him. It was like in a previous case, „Murder To Go“, as it was called.

The voice had been Pete’s. He was standing at the buffet.

„Sorry? Oh, yeah, I’m ready.“, Jupe replied confusedly.

„You seemed not to be there mentally.“, explained Pete, „so I called you for testing.“

„Nice. Well, let’s eat something.“

„Jupe took some of the Tortilla Chips.

„They taste strangely.“, he said.

„Sorry?“

Suddenly Jupe’s face became green. He ran to the restroom. When he came back, he seemed to have vomitted for some minutes.

„What was wrong with the Tortilla Chips?“, asked Pete’s mate Jeffrey.

„I guess they are poisoned.“, Jupe replied.

„Excuse me?“, said Jeffrey.

„Yeah, Jeff, they are.“

„There is something on it.“, Pete noticed. „I guess that’s no salt.“

„Pete!“

„Yeah?“

„That’s a strange powder which is really dangerous for your body, especially if you’re younger than 18 years old!“, Jupe said.

„Oh, my god.“, said Jeffrey, „I have never thought there’s a crime like this in our party room.“

„I didn’t, too. But we have be careful. There’s a high probability who did it, did it because of us.“

„Of you? Uh, because you’re investigators.“, said Jeffrey.

„Yeah, maybe. Anyway we have to be careful. If someone poisons our party junk food with stuff like this, I don’t want to know what will happen the next time.“ With these words, Jupe went back and forth, formally flattening his underlip.

„hmm, that’s really mysterious.“, he said.

„It’s dangerous!“, Pete wildly corrected.

„Well, Pete, that’s exactly, what I wanted to say, but I thought it’s more soothing if I express it another way.“

„You have nerves, Jupe! I get panic knowing you try to express the reason I get panic more soothingly! I want to have your nerves!“, called Pete out.

„Well, my dear Mr. Crenshaw, there’s no way to avoid a risk like this. What to do? If I got panic in any little case the way you do, we would never have solved any case! Isn’t it clear to you?!“

„Absolutely, Jupe. But think of the risks I had taken only for solving a case! I’ll go now! Well, which Subway Station I have to get in?“

„Kingsley Corner, Pete.“, said Bob.

„Okay. Come on, Jeffrey, we’ll leave.“

Jeffrey and Pete left the party room and went out to the Subway Station.

„Man, thank God we depend on my ingenious flashes of inspiration during our investigations, not on Pete’s.“

„Well, Jupe, Pete has rescued you often enough when your ingenious flashes of inspiration brought you in real shit.“, said Bob.

„Yeah, Bob, you’re right. But Would we have solved any case if Pete was the First Investigator?“

„Honestly said: I don’t really guess so.“ „What did I say?“

In the hospital

Jupe could stand the strange feeling in his stomach the whole day. But in the evening he broke down in the house of the Jones Family and his aunt Mathilda called the doctor. The doctor, Dr. Newman, came and brought Jupe to the St. Richard's Hospital in Carpinteria Beach. At the next morning, Pete and Bob, who had heard about it, came to him.

„How do you do, Jupe?“, Pete asked.

„Corresponding to the circumstances, Pete.“, Jupe answered.

„You seem to do well.“, Bob noticed. „In the first moment I was afraid you could have lost your complicated way of speech.“

„Don't joke, Bob.“, said Jupe. „As first thing it's enough I had to lie here 12 hours permanently.“

„You make my worry, Jupe.“, said Pete.

„Would you describe us what you mean?“

„I mean you. The poison. What will happen if you'll have to sleep and never wake up again?“, asked Pete.

„Nothing will happen.“, said Jupe, „because the doctor told to me it's nearly harmless.“

„Excuse me?“, said Bob.

„Well, in combination with some chemical compounds and a lot of fat, this special kind of drug is neutralized. But I have to be prepared with lots of chemical medicines for the next time if I should not be careful with Tortilla Chips. A joke of Dr. Newman.“

„So diet for you.“, said Bob.

„Ha ha ha, very funny!“, Jupe said ironically.

„And will you investigate in this case when you'll be let out of the hospital?“, asked Pete.

„Of course. I want to know who has poisoned the Tortilla Chips and why. I can't let anyone poison me and do nothing!“

„That makes sense.“, said Bob.

„And I have a plan: When I'm out, we'll go back to the party room. There we can look for something which indicates who did it.“

„A reference?“

„Exactly, Pete.“

„Okay. Shall Pete and I look for references while you lie here? That would accelerate the investigations a lot.“, asked Bob. Jupe agreed.

Vallejo

Pete and Bob took the Subway of Los Angeles at the next day. They got out at Kingsley Corner and had only to go 5 minutes until they got to the party room. Jeffrey was already waiting for them. Pete had announced their arrival per phone. Jeffrey, Bob and he went into the party room. There had been no party any more after the party 2 days ago, so there was no extremely high probability someone could have removed any reference. They searched on any millimeter on the floor and on the tables. Suddenly Pete found something:

„Hey! I have found a piece of paper on the floor!“

Jeffrey and Bob came to him as fast as they could.

„There stands something on it!“, called Pete. On the paper, there was a note in a clear, legible handwriting:

I´ll come back. Keep careful. Else you´ll be dead more quickly than you can think. No word to anyone. The tour through the Tube is the only thing which could rescue you – or kill you.

Vallejo

„What does that mean?“, asked Bob.

„I dunno.“, said Jeffrey.

„Uh, honestly said, I´m against continuing the investigations in this case.“, said Pete.

„Only because of this little letter?“, asked Bob.

„No, because of *anything!*“, Pete replied. „Because of the poisoned chips, because of this letter, because no one knows what it means. I´m for giving up. Who is, too, would elevate one´s hands, please.“

No one did that, except Pete.

„Well, you really want to continue?“, asked Pete. „Well, I´ll have to give up. I´m in minority.“

„Yeah, you are, Pete.“, said Jeffrey. „Oh, poor you!“, he added ironically.

„Jeffrey!“

„Oh, sorry, Pete, but I want to help you with the investigations.“

„Oh, how soothing.“

„Don´t be skeptical, Pete.“, said Jeffrey. „When the case is solved, we´ll have our big party *without* poisoned Tortilla Chips!“

„Do you promise?“, asked Pete.

„Yeah, I do.“

„Okay. Let´s investigate. We´ll tell Jupe about the letter.“

A cool guy from hell

Meanwhile, Jupe was lying in his bed in the hospital and reading one of the books, which had been standing on his must-be-read-unconditionally-list a very long time. Suddenly Dr. Newman came in.

„There´s a visitor for you.“, he said. „He doesn´t want to be asked to go. He wants to talk to you. Do you want to receive him?“

„Yeah, sir.“, Jupe replied. „Please let him come in.“

Of course, Jupe thought it was Pete or Bob who brought to him good news about their case. But it wasn´t one of them. It was a handsome guy Jupe didn´t know. The guy was really handsome. He was perfectly styled and thinly built. Any girl would want to go with him without having to deliberate.

„Well, my name is Socrates.“

„But Socrates is dead.“, Jupe objected.

„Don´t criticize what I say!“, said Socrates.

„I´m sorry.“

„Well, of course, Socrates, the philosopher, is dead for several thousand years.“ Jupe knew it wasn´t Gulliver he knew from a previous case. „But I am his spirit. I´m from the hell.“

„Socrates came to the hell?“

„Yeah, he did. Didn´t you know that?“

„No, I didn´t.“

„Well, I have to warn you.“, said Socrates. „You are really in danger. You have to keep careful after you´re let out of here.“ Socrates seemed very sure about what he said. In Jupe´s opinion, he either was a part of the mystery in their case or was some mentally crazy. Or maybe both. Whatever. He listened to what Socrates said.

„Who poisoned the Tortilla Chips you ate, didn´t want to take revenge on you. No, he wanted to take revenge on Bob.“

„Bob? Why?“, Jupe asked.

„Because Bob has got something important for who did it.“, Socrates replied.

„Aha. And you can´t tell me accidentally, what´s the object?“

„No, I can´t.“

„Of course not“, Jupe thought to himself. But he didn´t let Socrates hear it.

„Anyway you´re in danger.“, said Socrates.

„If Vallejo should know you, The Three Investigators, investigate in him, he´ll be unpredictable.“

„Vallejo?“, asked Jupe.

„Yeah, Jupe, Vallejo. A guy who could be more dangerous than your worst enemy.“

„And how do you know about The Three Investigators?“

„I´ve read about you in the Los Angeles Post. Mr. Andrews, Bob´s father, works there.“

Socrates seemed to know very much about The Three Investigators, so much that Jupe had to think about him later.

„Well, sir, I guess you know about Vallejo. Could you tell me about him?“

„No, Jupe, that´s not possible. But I´ll try to keep you out of any dangers made by Vallejo.“

„Okay, sir.“

„Could you give to me one of your business cards with your address and your phone number?“, asked Socrates. „That would simplify the protection.“

„Okay.“, said Jupe. He pulled a business card out of his bag and gave it to Socrates. He read it:

The Three Investigators

We investigate anything

???

1st Investigator: Jupiter Jones

2nd Investigator: Pete Crenshaw

Records and research: Bob Andrews

„Well, that´s good.“, said Socrates.

„I know.“

„And now I have to go.“

„Yeah, sir, bye.“

„Bye.“

With these words, Socrates went out of the room. „If he had disappeared being caught by a mysterious cloud, I wouldn´t have wondered.“, Jupe thought.

A call from deeply down

2 days later Jupe could go out of the hospital. He met his friends at headquarters. Pete and Bob told him about the letter and Jupe told them about Socrates.

„Anything seems to be connected with Vallejo.“, siad Jupe. „That he´s dangerous, we already know.“

„Yeah, that´s right, Jupiter.“, said Bob. „And I have already researched: There are thousands of people in and around Los Angeles called Vallejo. I was nearly going to give up when I came to the idea to ask Sergeant Cota. And that, I have done. Imagine: There´s a man who called himself ‚Vallejo‘. He had been captured because of brutal violence in a public street. His real name could not be found out.

Sergeant Cota called him ‚The man without identity‘.“

„Excellently done, Bob!“, Jupe praised.

„Thanks, Jupiter.“

Suddenly the phone rang. Jupe took the receiver into the amplifier and said:

„The Three Investigators, this is Jupiter Jones?“

„Jupiter!“, a monster´s voice came out.

„I´m calling from deeply down. Very, very, very deeply down.“, the voice continued.

„What do you want?“, asked Jupe.

„I want you to solve the mystery of Vallejo. I guess you know what´s meant?“

„Er, yeah.“

„Okay. You´ll need the list of the 12 names. 12 names wll give you a clue. You´ll have to take the Tube. The Tube! D´you know?“

„Yeah, sir. But what´s your name?“

„I´m the devil himself.“

„Uh, yeah.“

„Then go your way. We´ll see.“

„Okay, sir.“

„Bye.“

„Bye.“

Jupe put the receiver back on the phone.

„I´ve to go now!“, called Pete.

„Me, too!“, called Bob. Both ran out of the headquarters.

The Tube?

In the evening, Pete and Bob went back to headquarters to meet Jupe again. Jupe was sitting on the chair, with the strange letter and flattening his underlip.

„Hello, Pete and Bob.“, he said.

„Hi, Jupe.“

„Did you find anything?“, asked Bob.

„The Tube.“, Jupe replied. „It’s the Tube.“

„Which tube?“, asked Pete.

„The Tube.“

„Which one?“, asked Pete.

„Well, Pete? I guess he doesn’t mean any tube, he means the Tube. The slang expression for the London Underground.“, answered Bob.

„Exactly, Bob.“, said Jupe.

„But London is too far away from here.“, Pete objected. „Apart from that, we’ve already been there.“

„I guess Vallejo doesn’t mean the London Tube.“, Jupe explained.

„He means the Subway of Los Angeles. He only wanted to confuse us.“

„But it doesn’t have to mean the Los Angeles Subway of all subways.“, said Pete. „It also could be the Subway of San Diego. That’s not far away. And it could also mean any subway in the world. Berlin, London, Brussels, Paris, Rome or New York.“

„But I think we should choose the L. A. Subway. If there’s no result of it, we’ll look in San Diego. Okay?“

„Yeah, Jupiter.“, said Bob.

„Okay.“

„We’ll start now!“, said Jupe.

„Well, Jupe, you have forgotten something important!“, said Pete.

„That is?“, asked Jupe.

„We cannot start now!“

„Why not?“

„Because it’s time for dinner now!“

„Uh.“

„What to do?“

„Going to dinner!“

With these words, Jupe ran to Aunt Mathilda for getting some food.

The Los Angeles Tube

The Three Investigators went to the new Subway Station of Rocky Beach. Lately a station in Rocky Beach had been built, when the government had realized that's a good way to leave Rocky Beach because the cars in Rush Hour slowly were bothering. Now T3I stood in front of the modern building of the Subway Station.

„And now? Will we simply take any line?“, asked Pete.

„Yeah, I guess there's no other way.“, Jupe replied.

They drove to Downtown Los Angeles. They observed any corner at any station permanently, maybe there could be anyone who helped Jupe, Pete and Bob investigate, but there wasn't anyone. Finally Jupe decided to use the subway to Mulholland Drive. As already said, they were in Downtown, so there was some distance to Mulholland Drive. Between the two stations, there were many stations. At Residence Corner they got out. There was McDonald's near the Subway Station. The station wasn't big, so they could see only a few monitors. There stood ‚Vacancy Rate:‘ and a number on it. Jupe explained:

„With ‚Vacancy Rate‘ they mean how many places in the trains are vacant. So if there's anyone sitting onto one of them, the vacancy rate gets less. It's similar to the parking lots, but in the case of the subways there are some sensors in the places. So if there's a higher weight on it, the sensor gives a signal to these monitors over there.“

„Ah, yeah. Very interesting.“, said Pete tiredly.

They went out of the restaurant. They saw a train to Chumash Corner and went into it. The vacancy rate was 3 before they got in, so it was full when they had gone in.

A long time later, The Three Investigators got out.

„And what to do now?“, asked Pete.

„I dunno.“, said Bob.

„There's anything wrong.“, said Jupe, flattening his underlip.

„And what should that be?“,

„I dunno. But it seems very important for our investigations.“

„Well, I don't notice anything.“

„Let's go to the inspector over there!“

„Okay.“

The inspector received Jupe, Pete and Bob in a friendly way and said:
„I´m Inspector McCloskey. I can show you anything: Cameras, which show any corner in the Los Angeles Subway Network, actual vacancy rates of any train, – “

„Yeah, sir, the vacancy rates, please! But not the actual one, but the rates of the times we passed.“

Jupe gave the business card to Inspector McCloskey. The inspector was amazed.

„Investigators? Well, what an honor.“

„Will I get a part of the fees you get?“

„We don´t take any fees.“

“Oh. Who cares? Anyway, if I can help you, I will.

Well, I have saved the rates because the statistians of the company need them. Here we have them.“

The rates showed the rates of any trains The Three Investigators had used, the vacancy rates would have been 3. So The Three Investigators exclusively had taken full trains.

„That´s interesting.“, Jupe said.

„isn´t it? Well, if you think you had been persued, you needn´t any more. No one got into the trains with you. Here are the films the cameras had made.“

The films showed that no one came together in one trin with The Three Investigators. That soothed them.

„Is that anything you wanted to know?“, asked McCloskey.

„Yeah, sir, it is.“, Jupe replied.

„Good.“

„We´re going to go now.“, said Bob. „Aren´t we, Jupe?“

„We are.“, said Jupe. „Have a nice day, Mr. McCloskey!“

„Bye!“, McCloskey called.

When they were outside, Jupe said:

„He lay.“

„Excuse me?“, asked Pete. „why?“

„Look at the films! The three guys we saw on the monitor weren´t us! The film had been made 10 years ago! The guys we saw were too old! There was no date shown on the camera, but the clock in the background showed it! I guess we have been persued! And McCloskey knew it! As if he... he was an accomplice of Vallejo!“

Nearly killed

The Three Investigators drove with the subway back to Downtown. They wanted to go to the party room for investigating there. Maybe there was a clue. In the train to Kingsley Corner they were very nervous. The train was empty, except for The Three Investigators.

„Well, boys, this case is too dangerous for us, I think.“, Pete tried to convince Jupe of giving up.

„No chance, Pete, we´ll continue!“, said Jupe. He had noticed what Pete wanted.

Suddenly someone came into the waggon. He looked scaring and had got some knives. He came towards them slowly!

„NO!“, he called. „YOU´LL STOP!“

Jupe, Pete and Bob wanted to run in the waggon next to that one, but it was too late. Apart from that the whole train was vacant.

The man had the voice of the ‚devil himself‘, the voice who had phoned The Three Investigators in their headquarters, probably from one of the phones in the stations. He was clothed as a cruiser, so he couldn´t be recognized per view.

Now the devil was throwing his knives after The Three Investigators. They stuck in the places and soon the devil didn´t have any knives any more. Now Jupe, Pete and Bob had the knives. The devil ran away, in the next waggon. Pete threw the knives after him. Then the devil jumped out, calling: „I´LL COME BACK, I SWEAR YOU!“

Pete stuck out his head and screamed bravely:

„Do it! But not so soon! We need time for running away!“

„That you shouldn´t have done!“, Jupe reprehended.

„But –“

„No, Pete! Don´t you do something like that one more time!“

„Okay.“, Pete gave up.

„Well, Jupiter?“ That was Bob.

„Yeah?“

„We´re in real danger. I´m for giving up.“

„Me, too.“, said Pete.

„We´ll continue!“

„I have the feeling we´ve been outvoted one two!“ said Bob.

„Yeah, we are! But you know“, said Pete. Then he and Bob said synchronously: „Jupe anything regulates democratically!“

Flight to Mexico

The Three Investigators drove home. Anything on this day had been very dangerous. So they fall in their beds extremely tiredly.

The next morning, Jupe sat in the dining-room with his aunt Mathilda. She looked some angry. Jupe asked her, how.

„In which very dangerous situation did you and your friends bring?“

„Why?“, Jupe asked surprisedly.

„This morning, I got out of the bed and wanted to make my coffee, when the phone rang.“, she replied. Then she continued: „Who was on the other side, he didn't tell his name and said something in a foreign language. I guess it was Spanish but I'm not quite sure. Anyway I have tried to write down what he said. I'm sorry I could only write down some words but I hope you know what's meant.“

She gave a piece of paper to Jupe and he tried to read.

„Okay, thank you!“, he suddenly called and ran out.

„Jupiter Jones! You didn't even eat anything!“

„I'll eat later!“, Jupe called. He ran into the headquarters and phoned Bob and Pete.

Only 10 minutes later, Pete and Bob arrived at the Jones Salvage Yard, on which the headquarters stood.

„Okay, Jupiter, what's up?“, asked Bob.

„Vallejo. He has phoned aunt Mathilda and said something in Spanish. What a pity aunt Mathilda could only write down some words. But they were enough for me to understand them. I'll tell to you the words and you say what do you know about it. Okay? Well,... Flight!“

„Runaway!“

„Gentleman!“

„Pete?! How do you come to ,Gentleman'?!“

„Flight – Fly! As a gentleman, it's use to have a fly!“, Replied Pete. He seemed to have his funny day today.

Jupe sighed.

„Pete! A flight has nothing to do with gentlemen! Please keep serious!“

„Okay, Jupe.“

„The next one: Mexico!“

„Tacos!“

„High Waves!“

Jupe decided not to ask Pete how he came to „high waves“.

„And now combine the words!“, said Jupe.

„Flight to Mexico!“, called Bob.

„Exactly, Bob. That’s what I mean. Vallejo is a Spanish name.

So he could be Mexican, right?“

„Yeah, Jupiter, you could be right.“, said Bob.

„They flee to Mexico!“, Pete called out. „we have to follow them!“

„We have, definitely. But we should hurry up now!“

Jupe jumped out and his colleagues followed him.

When they arrived in San Diego, there was a traffic jam on the road to the border. It had several ways and they weren’t enough for all these cars. There was also a big Island of palms between the two left ways. An area of grass was on it. Pete drove on it and stopped, directly near the border. But in the early traffic there were only a few buses. But suddenly there was an old car. It seemed as big as a giant, maybe having been built in the sixties, when the cars could not have been big enough.

„The car! Over there, Jupe!“, called Pete.

The car rolled to the border where the policemen inspected the cars. It had a Mexican license number.

The man in the car, a Mexican, gave his Identity Card to the policeman. The Three Investigators ran to him.

„Inspector! He’s a rogue! Stop him!“, Pete called.

Suddenly Sergeant Cota was coming.

„Pete’s right, Inspector Clinton! He is a rogue! He is prosecuted juristically because of trying to murder!“

Sergeant Cota said what Jupe had told him when he had dialled him.

„Jupiter Jones is an Investigator. Here’s his business card. Well, Señor Vallejo has tried to kill him and his friends several times.“

„He poisoned the food we ate and he threw with knives at us.“, said Jupe.

„Yeah, sir.“, Bob said.

Vallejo was arrested immediately.

In the evening The Three Investigators met at the beach, shortly before sunset. All over the day Jupe couldn't have been seen.

„Well, Jupe, there's one thing I want to ask.“, said Pete.

„Why did Vallejo do what he did?“

„Well“, started Jupe. He seemed to find it very good to have the possibility to conclude.

„The gang of Jeffrey and his mates we have the party together is a really accepted gang in the Out-Of-World district in Downtown L. A. It had existed for a very long time with 13 members. One of them was named Vallejo. But he was kicked out because he was something like a spy. Now the gang only contained 12 members. That was meant with the list of the 12 names. The member list of Jeffrey's gang. Several of them are Mexicans. Here I have got the list. That's why I wasn't visible the whole day. I've asked Jeffrey for the member list. He gave it to me.“ With these words he held the list, so that Pete and Bob could look into it, too. There were 12 names on it, 6 of them sounded Spanish.

„That's nearly half of the names.“, said Bob. „I have seen 5 Latinos at the party.“

„Yeah, that's because Vallejo logically was the 6th Latino, Bob.“, said Jupe. In his opinion Bob was absolutely laudible, what he couldn't really often say about Pete. Only sometimes.

„But there's no Vallejo on it.“, said Pete.

„In TV, there was an actor called Juan Ramón Fernandez. He played a man called Vallejo. And Jeffrey told me there had been no Vallejo in the gang any time. But here! There is a Gordón Fernandez! The name of Vallejo Sergeant Cota at the border arrested in fact is Gordón Fernandez! He had a false Identity card! Let's tell it to Sergeant Cota!“

„Okay.“, said Bob.

„That was a good conclusion, Jupiter.“

„It really was! You can be proud of yourself!“, said Pete.

In this second the sun set. It went dark. The Three Investigators decided to tell sergeant Cota about Vallejo tomorrow. They stood there at the beach still for a long, long time.

THE END