

BADGER'S WORLD



Volume 2

The Complete Scripts

by
Nick Edwards

Episode 14: After The Fall

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 1)

Episode 15: Sick

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 2)

Episode 16: Downtime

(from The Signal season 4, episode 3)

Episode 17: Ink

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 5)

Episode 18: Coffeee!

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 7)

Episode 19: Lights Out

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 10)

Episode 20: Convention

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 11)

Badger: Dodgy Geezer or**Misunderstood Philanthropist?**

(Article from The Signal, season 4, episode 15)

Badger's World LIVE! (2008)

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 17*)

Episode 21: Omens

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 18)

Episode 22: Posh

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 19)

Episode 23: The Noob

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 20)

Episode 24: Pigeons

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 21)

Episode 25: Beginnings Part 1

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 22)

Episode 26: Beginnings Part 2

(from The Signal, season 4, episode 23 Holiday Special)

(* Recorded live as part of The Signal Live at Dragon Con 2008)

Badger's World Volume 2

Written by Nick Edwards

Edited by Nick Edwards,
with thanks to Jill Arway
and the crew of The Signal

Cast:

Announcer - Kevin Bachelder

Burt - Nick Edwards

Harry - Les Howard

Chen - Miranda Thomas

Susan - Kari Haley

Mrs Badger II - Carolyn Parkinson

Seamus O'Flaherty - his own self

Bobby Badger, Con Runner, Billy,

Henchman 3 - Wayne Hutchinson

Bobby's Groupies - The Edwards Clan

Henchman 1 - Kev Bayer

Henchman 2 - Ben Edwards

The Mechanic - James Parkinson

and Mark Sheppard as Badger

Badger's World Theme:

Eavesdown Docks

by The Bedlam Bards

Serenity Soundtrack excerpts

by David Newman

Badger's World is inspired

by Joss Whedon's Firefly

and is a non profit fan production

The Signal's homepage is:

<http://serenityfirefly.com>

The Lost Tales

(unpublished ideas, notes, outlines and musings)

What's in a Signal: Badger's World

(article from The Signal, season 5, episode 1, including full credits for Badger's World)

Episode 27: 'Tis The Season (Badger's World Holiday Special I)

(from The Signal, season 5, episode 21)

Episode 28: Notes From The Edge (Badger's World Live 2010)

(from The Signal live at Dragon Con 2010, season 6, episode 14.4)

Episode 29: Deck The Halls (Badger's World Holiday Special II)

(from The Signal, season 6, episode 20 Holiday Special)

Episode 30: Flying Visit

(from The Signal, season 7, episode 20)

Episode 34: Out to the Black

(from The Signal, season 10, episode 6, Signal: The Movie)

Introduction

The second season of Badger's World was something of a shock. Firstly, I had never imagined that it would continue beyond maybe a dozen episodes at the very most (but the characters had other ideas) and secondly, I took on the not inconsiderable job of editing the episodes. This would have been nigh on impossible for me at this stage - as a barely experienced audio editor - had not Jill Arway laid the groundwork and created the whole feel of the segment. She also physically handed me a hard drive with all the currently used Badger's World sound effects and around two hundred thousand other varied sound effects that she had accumulated over time.

Appropriately enough this was over a pint in a pub.

This meant that assembling my first ever full audio drama edit was not quite such a demanding task as I had feared. The editing I had done in season 3 of The Signal was invaluable experience and editing season 2 of Badger's World would continue to develop my editing ability to a level that I was happy with and which seemed to be adequate.

The first seven episodes of season 2 followed on directly from episode 13, giving me the chance to do a "previously on..." intro. These followed the now established format and largely, though not exclusively, took place in Chen's Throat Emporium. "Sick" was inspired by an episode of the BBC 80's comedy The Young Ones, "Ink" by Wayne Hutchinson's and other various browncoats' tattoos. "Coffee" by a London Shindig after the 2007 CSTS screening there and chatting with Odile Thomas (later to become the other half of the Sending A Wave podcast with Wendy Scott). "Lights Out", by a UFO song and "Convention" by just about any sci-fi con you could think of.

At that point, I ran out of ideas. Almost.

The hastily written BW Live show performed during The Signal Live at Dragon Con 2008, was in some ways a repeat of Convention – only this time "HenchCon 2518" – and initially was meant to be an unconnected one off episode. Hearing it performed live (as I was unable to attend Dragon Con until 2010) and getting the audience reaction was a big boost to my confidence in continuing with the segment and it indirectly led to the final story arc, written mostly on holiday in Scotland during the 2008 Olympics and The Signal's summer break. While my ideas for episodes in the established format had indeed run dry for now, this new arc allowed me to extend the story and characters further than I had previously and bring it to what I hoped would be a satisfying conclusion. The last 6 episodes got progressively longer and more complex and involved some of the most challenging and satisfying audio editing I have done to date.

The segment, What's In a Signal: Badgers World followed in Season 5 and detailed much of the origin and process of creating Badger's World, so I have included the script for that here. It also included in character credits for the main episodes to date and was, I thought, the very last outing of Burt, Harry and Chen. They of course, had other ideas.

One of the things I had done while struggling for ideas was to try and note down anything that might work, including listing potential titles that might spark an idea for a script and this gave rise to four further episodes. These were the only realised ideas from the edited "Lost Tales" notes that I have included after Ep 26: Beginnings Part 2, here. They were given the provisional numbers 27 to 30, but only Flying Visit used that in the title. With 'Live! 2008' and Episode 501: Slings and Arrows falling outside the main numbering, there are 32 complete audio episodes of Badger's World in total.

(Episode 58 in Volume 1 was never recorded, so although there are 33 scripts, episode 501 replaced this as part of the voting promotion series "Summer of Serenity" on our RSS feed for The Signal's sister podcast, Firefly Talk in the 2007 Podcast Awards. It won.)

The 2 holiday special episodes fit more or less anywhere within the existing continuity of Badger's World, but the live 2010 episode and the final episode, Flying Visit, are direct sequels to episode 26. These 4 additional episodes are:

'Tis The Season (Badger's World Holiday Special I, now correctly labelled episode 27, aired in The Signal, Season 5, episode 21)

Badger's World Live II: Notes from the Edge (performed at Dragon Con 2010, aired in The Signal, Season 6, episode 14.4 and originally erroneously listed as Episode 27, now correctly labelled episode 28)

Deck The Halls (Badger's World Holiday Special II, now labelled episode 29, aired in The Signal, Season 6, episode 20)

Episode 30: Flying Visit (the final Badger's World episode script for The Signal, Season 7, episode 20)

Prior to Flying Visit, Burt and Harry also appeared in 2 Vote! (Badger) segments written by Steve Kaszycki in The Signal, season 7, episodes 6 and 14. Harry (and Burt, "off screen" as it were) also appeared in the Shipworks episode "Of Electric Sheep" written by Jill Arroway and performed during The Signal live at Dragon Con 2011. (Aired in The Signal, season 7 episode 15.5) Those scripts are not included here, but may also be available via The Signal's website at some point.

Flying Visit is very likely the last of any normal episodes of Badger's World with my departure from The Signal at the end of season 7...but I wouldn't completely rule out Burt and Harry or even Chen showing up somewhere else at some point in the future. After all, thanks to Ben Mund, and the fine folk at QMx, Chen's Throat Emporium at least has an extended canon existence in The QMx Atlas of the 'Verse Part One officially licensed product. (Cheers Ben!)

Right there, in the Eavesdown Docks near to Badger's "offices" on Persephone.

Badger's World indeed.

Nick Edwards

December 2011

Addendum:

You didn't think I'd let it go that easily did you?

Yes, there was just one more episode (so it's 33 recorded episodes with a total of 34 scripts).

Episode 34: Out to the Black (from The Signal, season 10, episode 6, Signal: The Movie)

But that's your lot ☺

Nick Edwards

February 2015

[Voiceover] Previously, in Badger's World:

<splice together end of BW13, ending with "Oh Bugger"...KABOOOOM!

"Badger's World"
Episode 14

"After The Fall"

[Voiceover] Folk in many parts of the 'Verse are familiar with overcoming adversity. Poverty, violence, disasters natural and man made are still burdens for humanity, much as they were on Earth That Was. Meanwhile, in Chen's Throat Emporium...er.... that is, in Ziggy's Bar and Bistro (All you can eat every lunchtime for only 2 Platinum) two patrons in search of a watering hole discuss a much more serious challenge...

<FX: sounds of a **different** pub, music and voices in background>

[Burt] How the seven circles of hell are we going to explain this to Mister Badger?

[Harry] You keep asking that question Burt. It don't make it any easier to answer

[Burt] Look, he's not due back for a couple of days yet so we've got that long to come up with something.

[Harry] That's assumin' he 'aint back already

[Burt] Don't even raise that possibility Harry! Nah...I've been checking...I have my sources and he's not come in via any of the usual unlisted routes.

[Harry] So maybe he hasn't heard about Chen's getting wasted

[Burt] Oh he knows about that, can't keep something like that quiet. No. Our problem is that we haven't managed to nail down that crazy with the grudge...and I 'aint being metaphorical about the nailin' down! She blew up all the booze and half the ruttin' bar fer Buddah's sake!!

[Harry] Badger'll want payback for sure. I got me a hammer handy anyway, good for fingers too.

[Burt] We don't even know if it was Mister Badger she was trying to get the attention of. **Nobody** knows who this mad bird is! Chen and her brothers haven't had much better luck finding out.

[Harry] Well, they's too busy rebuilding. Chen won't want to stay offline for long.

[Burt] Well I should hope not. Don't want to spend yet another evening dodging bottles and having to break heads in here any more than we have to.

[Harry] Yeah, I'm fed up of having to come up with *bakshish* to get let out of the tank unofficial like. **And** that gorram stunner system gives me a headache.

[Burt] The trick is to...oh never mind. The trouble is, it's quite a good place to pick up the gen on unaffiliated ne'er do wells...at least before it all kicks off and everyone gets zapped...again.

[Harry] Hasn't done us much good these last few days that's for sure.

[Burt] You're right there matey. What's worse though, is Ziggy has no idea about how to keep a decent pint!

[Harry] So how **are** we gonna find this insane *mei mei*?

[Susan] <off mike> Hey, Burt? Harry? You guys in here?

[Burt] Hello, hello, what's our Susan want? <whistles to get her attention>

[Susan] Oh there you are. Finish your drinks. Badger's back and wants a word over at Chen's.

[Harry] Oh *go se!*

[Burt] Ah. <sigh>Well, it was fun while it lasted. Time to face the music Harry.
<they get up and leave>

<Fade into normal Chen's background>

[Chen] <laughs> Boys! Pick your jaws off the floor why don't you. You did hear what Badger said didn't you?

[Harry] I heard it, but I don't believe it.

[Burt] Mr Badger never mentioned her before. I don't understand it! His *second* ex wife?

[Harry] Her name wasn't Bridget was it?

[Burt] I don't think so. Why do you ask?

[Harry] Oh, just something I heard.

[Chen] Here, have a drink, on the house. <puts down 2 pints> Just this once mind!

[Burt] <absently> Oh ta very much Chen. Look, did you buy what Mr Badger said about that crazy lady?

[Chen] Not really. We'd just finished the rebuild when up he turns with Billy and a couple of new guys. Badger's all smiles, so I'm about to give him a piece of my mind and he says to me. "So you met the wife then?"

[Harry] Just like that?

[Burt] Quiet Harry. Go on Chen.

[Chen] Well, he said he'd heard it all in a wave from Yun Phat, who'd also supplied him with a picture.

[Harry] How'd he get that? The door system was blown to hell!

[Burt] Harry, the triads all run discrete monitoring on the streets around here for their own security. They wouldn't have given us access if **we'd** asked. Seems that deal that kept things quiet for us while Mr Badger was away goes a bit deeper than I thought.

[Harry] So, Badger recognises his ex and then gets the next legit transport home. <beat> How come he wasn't mad at us for not finding her? He actually said we'd done a good job!

[Burt] Chen?

[Chen] Not only that, he paid for the refit outright and said it was "recoverable expenses". Seems his business trip was very profitable and that this little upset was not entirely unexpected. Long as my losses are covered and he keeps his ex sweetie out of my hair, I can live with his little mystery.

[Harry] I still don't get it.

[Burt] No, but I think that we might end up having to do the recovering of those expenses. There was entirely too much of a self satisfied gleam in his eye when he said we'd done OK and not to worry. That definitely means he's got something unpleasant for us to do. There 'aint no such thing as a free lunch as they say on the Heinlen moons.

[Chen] Or here. The kitchen is running again now, so if you two want food, you pay. That drink is a one off!

[Burt] <happy sigh> Well at least things is back to what passes for normal here! Nice décor by the way!

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

[Voiceover] Next time, Burt and Harry discuss the virtues of monogamy

[Harry] So Burt, you got any ex-partners runnin' around that I should know about?

[Burt] Do you really think my missus would put up with any romantic loose ends I might have?

[Harry] Guess you're right, she'd have killed you long before now if that was the case

<end>

This was fun. After receiving all the Badger's World related sound effects files from Jill, I had to reconstruct the basic ambience and structure of a Badger's World episode in Audacity (Jill had used Adobe Audition, so I couldn't use one of her project files to adapt). This wasn't quite so tough as I'd imagined, but it took a while. Add to that the fact that I'd just blown up the previous setting and had to modify background sound accordingly and it was...interesting. Of course, the action returned to Chen's Throat Emporium by the end of the episode, so I got the basic building blocks of future episodes anyway...and an appreciation of just how much work Jill had put in creating the audio structure of season 1.

Ziggy's Den of Iniquity referred to here and in Season 1 of Badger's World is yet another direct steal from the sublime Hitchiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams. **Slim's** Throat Emporium, The Boozarama and Ziggy's Den of Iniquity were all listed as making acceptable Pan-Galactic Gargle Blasters, the best drink in existence, the experience of imbibing which was described as "like having your brain smashed out with a slice of lemon wrapped around a large gold brick". Which Burt would probably describe as "a bit poncey" 😊

“Badger’s World”
Episode 15

“Sick”

[Voiceover] Medical science has advanced in giant strides since...excuse me...<blows nose loudly and messily> (oh yuk!) ah, yeah, medicine’s good these days... I guess, but something new is always rearing it’s infectious head for the doctors to deal with, even on the core and more developed worlds. Meanwhile, in Chen’s Sore Throat Emporium, two patients go in search of a much needed, medicinal drink....

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background, punctuated by coughs, sneezes etc>

[Burt] Aghhhhhhhhh!

[Harry] Aghhhhhhhhh!

[Chen] Aghhhhhhhhh! <All, hold this for at least 3 or 4 seconds>

<these 3 lines almost sung in overlapping sequence to build to a chorus of sick sounding Ahh sounds like you’d make for the doctor when he checks your throat. Everyone in the episode should sound like they have a heavy horrible cold/flu thing>

[Burt] <seguing from the Ahhh> ahhh, <cough, splutter, hawk, spit> oh ghawd.

[Harry] Jeez Burt, spread it around why don’t you! <cough>

[Burt] <sniffs> You’re a fine one to talk. Every bugger’s got the lurgi, or hadn’t you noticed?

[Harry] There’s more’n one strain the way I heard it. I don’t want yours as well!

[Burt] The feeling is mutual, so be a responsible citizen for once in your life and cover yer mouth when you cough.

[Harry] <groans> Damn head feels like it’s going to burst!

[Burt] Well, do it outside fer Buddahs sake. <calls> Chen! We need some medicinal libation over here if you will

[Chen] <off mike> You and everybody else! Gimme a minute! <cough>

<beat>

[Harry] So, you heard any more from the Doc about this ruttin’ plague?

[Burt]<sniffs> Well Harry, if you hadn’t noticed, he and every sawbones for 10 klicks are kinda busy with everyone else in the docks right now who can pay.

[Harry] Yeah, but you said Badger had him on retainer and would give us the earliest news on account of all the business we send his way.

[Burt] Yeah, but this isn’t patching up busted heads, legs, contusions and what have you. It’s a bug. Can’t stick a medi-strip and spray tissue regen on a bug.

[Harry] But Badger said..

[Burt] <cutting him off> Mister Badger is as sick with this as the rest of us. The Doc'll tell 'im first. Soon as he knows, we'll know. The Doc has this as well, so there's enlightened self interest working in our favour too

[Harry] Well, at least it 'aint fatal, mostly.

[Burt] <sniffs> Nah, ya just wish that it was. Weird how it's got such a narrow symptomatic range, must be some variant adenovirus chucked up by that last lot of atmospheric engineering adjustments, or a mutated Rhinovirus? Every world's got some terraforming sting in the tail they say, be glad it's not worse, or permanent!

<beat>

[Harry] Just where **did** you get your schoolin' Burt? <cough>

[Burt] Oh it's amazing what folks'll tell you when you have them hanging mostly by their tender parts over a ten storey drop

[Harry] What?

[Burt] Never mind. Where's those bloody drinks <calls> Chen? Lee? Damn, I never seen the place so busy!

[Harry] <sarcastic> Must be the romantic atmosphere.

[Burt] Very funny. Ah here we are!

<Chen approaches, tray with glasses tinkling>

[Chen] Look, don't give me any grief about how long that took. You might notice, we're busy and everyone is sick!

[Harry] I didn't say a word!

[Chen] Here! <puts down drinks> <sneezes loudly and explosively>

<beat>

[Chen] Well, you gonna drink those? I don't have all day and we're short on glasses

[Burt] Er... far be it from me to ignore the delights of a well earned and paid in advance for pint, but..

[Harry] <accusingly> Didn't anyone teach you to cover your...

[Chen} <beginnings of stream of Chinese invective>

[Burt] <cutting them both off before Chen explodes> What my esteemed colleague means is that, given the current menace to public health perhaps you.....

[Chen] *Biz zhuay!* Didn't you hear the Cortex announcement from the Medical Elite? This is a temporary aberration in atmospheric adjustment upgrades. It is **not** contagious person to person, you either get it or you don't and it lasts 5 to 6 days tops. So drink your drinks and let me get on. We're doing a roaring trade in Lao Che's Patent Herbal Wellbeing and Happiness tonic and I want to make the most of it while it lasts!

[Harry] Where did you say you got your schooling Burt?

[Burt] I didn't. Thanks for that update Chen! C'mon Harry, drink up <starts glugging noisily>

[Harry] <in disbelief>Humph! Well, OK then. <drinks more slowly>

[Burt] <finishes downing pint in one, smacks it down> Ahh! That hit the spot. I do believe I'm feeling better already! Same again I think please Chen. I'll pass on Lao Che's "medicine" though, Mister Badger swears by it but it gives me wind like you wouldn't believe and the atmosphere's thick enough in here already.

[Chen] <sarcastic> Well, thank you for your consideration. Harry! I don't have all day!

[Harry] OK, OK, sheesh! Anyone would think you were losing money! Here <puts glass down> I'll just have the tonic with a vodka shot this time.

[Chen] <snippy, as she picks up glasses> Thank you!

[Burt] <cheerfully> You do like to live dangerously Harry. You've no idea what she might put in that now!

[Harry] Well, it can't make me feel much worse than I already do

[Burt] Would you like to make a small wager on that?....

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

[Voiceover] Next time, Burt and Harry discuss the advantages of a pre-planned ecology...

[Harry] <sniffs> You'd a thought they'd have got this sort of thing under control by now

[Burt] Yeah well, the environmental matrix on most worlds doesn't stabilise for decades, even with the constant monitoring, ecological feedback algorithms, accelerated biosynthetic niche management...

[Harry] Burt!? Where did you...

[Burt]<cutting him off> I told you, dangly bits and a damn big drop

<end>

Yes, it's a reference to The Young Ones episode of the same name...and the first real hints of Burt's deeper background as a thug with an education.

“Badger’s World”
Episode 16

“Downtime”

[Voiceover] Misery has been a constant companion of humanity down the years. The ‘Verse has perhaps had more than it’s fair share, given our species’ somewhat “varied” past, but folk learn to cope with the trials of life in a variety of different ways. Tribulations, both small and large, are challenges that we must all meet and overcome in our daily lives. Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium, two stalwarts of the daily struggle debate a recent, much lamented loss

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background>

[Burt] This may come as a shock to you Harry, but there are folks in this ‘Verse who are less than honest

[Harry] Hell! I know that Burt. Work with ‘em enough don’t we? But this was just downright...

[Burt] Sneaky?

[Harry] Yeah, but more than that, it was downright...

[Burt] Duplicitous?

[Harry] What?

[Burt] 2 faced

[Harry] Yeah, but it was....

[Burt] Unparalleled in it’s mendacity?

[Harry] Yeah...

[Burt] Stunning in it’s sheer devious villainy?

<beat>

[Harry] That too, but this was, well..... Low.

[Burt] Well that’ll teach you to lend your second best spare gun to a grimy little smear of a fence like Sergei then

[Harry] He better get it back by tomorrow, or I’ll introduce him to my not so second best piece, up close and personal

[Burt] I don’t know why Mister Badger insisted that we take the sneaky little sod along

[Harry] You know why. Badger wanted the stuff valued in a hurry and Sergei’s got an eye for pricing up stuff just by glancing at it

[Burt] And then flogging it to you at three times it’s value...I get it OK, Mister Badger just could chose better temporary associates is all. I keep my hands on my valuables at all times when Sergei’s around, despite the fact that he knows he’ll lose those nimble fingers if I catch him trying to lift anything.

[Harry] Look, he’s in the business, kinda. Isn’t there supposed to be honour amongst thieves or something?

[Burt] What planet did you wake up on this morning? Blimey Harry, he may have worked his way up from pickpocket to fence and even be useful at times, but Sergei's physically incapable of having anything of value in his possession without selling it on to someone before you can blink

[Harry] But it was my gorram gun! I only lent it to him because Badger insisted that everyone be carrying on this job.

[Burt] Well, hopefully you'll know better next time.

<Chen approaches>

[Chen] Hey Harry, why the long face? Burt trick you into buying him a drink again?

[Harry] Nah, I'm wise to that now...finally

[Burt] No, he's just peed off at making another fundamental misjudgement of human nature.

[Chen] Occupational hazard of being one I'm afraid

[Harry] Huh?

[Burt] Of being human Harry. You, know, "to err is human" and all that

[Harry] Oh we're not back on the philosophy are we Burt? 'Cos I 'aint drunk nearly enough to put up with that!

[Chen] My, aren't you a bundle of laughs today. So, you going to drink or just mope?

[Burt] Harry?

[Harry] Drink I guess. <beat> You know Burt, don't you wonder what the point of it all is sometimes?

[Burt] Now who's philosophising? Drinks sound good to me....

[Harry] <sarcastic> So there's a change then...

[Chen] 2 of the same?

[Burt] Looks like. There ya go Chen < money changes hands>

[Harry] I mean, I know we make a fair living working for Badger, but sometimes. I just....

[Burt] Better hurry with those drinks Chen, Harry's developing a moral conscience here...

[Chen] And we wouldn't want that now would we

[Harry] Oh you know what I mean Burt

[Burt] What then? Too many of your little sidelines coming up short is it? Feeling the pinch? <beat> It's not a girl is it?

[Harry] Nah...

[Burt] A boy?

[Harry] No!...

[Burt] A goat?

[Harry] Burt!

[Burt] Well, something's got you down and it can't just be Sergei failing to return your second best spare gun. If it 'aint money or love, then what the hell is it?

[Harry] <morose> It's my Birthday.

[Burt] Oh. Oh! Well, I just bought you a drink, what more do you want?

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

[Voiceover] Next time, Burt and Harry discuss the importance of cultural observances

[Burt] You thought I'd forgotten, admit it

[Harry] Well, not that it's important or nothin'...

[Burt] Here <thunk of gun hitting table>

[Harry] Winonna!

[Burt] Just don't go tellin' anyone alright

<end>

Yes, well spotted, "Winnona" is indeed a Farscape reference to Chriton's favourite gun. And there's even a one word nod to Mad Max II. (Specifically Bruce Spence as the Gyro Captain delivering the word "Low")

“Badger’s World”
Episode 17

Ink

Voiceover: Humanity has always had a propensity for self decoration and vanity remains a human weakness in the ‘verse just as much today as in the past. Carried to extremes by some and disdained by others, it is something we are all, at times, prey to. Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium, two, less than well groomed clients relax after the day’s exertions....

[pub sounds FX etc]

BURT: Don’t know about you Harry, but I’m absolutely wiped out. You wouldn’t think standing around looking threatening would take it out of you so much.

HARRY: Got it right there Burt, I mean, I know Badger needs us around to help out with the intimidation and all, but can’t we be intimidating sitting down?

BURT: Well, not really. Mister Badger needs to maintain the image you know, local business man, roots in the community as he always says. There’s still folk around here who’s less than respectful, and they need reminding.

HARRY: Oh I don’t mind the reminding so much. Least it keeps you active and keeps our rep in people’s minds. It’s the standing not doing much but looking mean that gets to me.

BURT: All part and parcel of the gig I’m afraid Harry. Anyway, thought you’d appreciate the easy day, the way you’ve been favouring that arm. You’ve had a bandage on that ever since you came back from that weekend pick up job over in Southdown.

HARRY: Aw, it’s just a scratch.

BURT: Well, lets see it then. That’s what folk like us do isn’t it, compare scars over a beer and laugh, evil like over the pain we inflicted while getting them?

HARRY: I told you, it’s nothin’

BURT: Nothin’ don’t have you wincing every time someone brushes past you in the street, c’mon, can’t be that bad.

HARRY: Well, not that it’s any of your business....it’s a tattoo.

BURT: What, you got drunk and got yerself inked did ya?

HARRY: Somethin’ like that

BURT: <chuckles> Oh let me guess. A big heart with “Mother” written through it?

HARRY: Not exactly

BURT: I mean, your ma’s a mad old bat but she’s still yer Mum. Wouldn’t be that bad. I seen folk put all sorts of stupid stuff on themselves, way worse than that.

HARRY: Burt, you have “Kiss Me: written on your butt!

BURT: See! What can be so bad?

HARRY: Well, it's a heart...but it don't say Mother

BURT: Well what then?

HARRY: <acutely embarrassed> This goes no further right?

BURT: Yeah yeah, OK. What does it say?

HARRY: George

BURT: Sorry, thought you said George there...oh, you did. Ah...and George is..?

HARRY: I don't know. I mean I know he was one of the guys I was drinking with, but it's all a bit hazy.

BURT: I'll bet. So, who were they then and when do we tear them a new one each?

HARRY: I dunno. I picked the take up from the bar as usual and stayed for a drink. These guys had just finished work and invited me to join them.

BURT: What were they working on?

HARRY: Not sure exactly, I think they said they were all removals technicians and had just finished a long hot shift. They had the name of some bit of furniture or something on their transport, so I assumed that was what they did.

BURT: Ah ha. And these fellas, big were they?

HARRY: Huge, I mean, I keep myself in shape but these guys were...

BURT: Tanned? Toned? Good teeth and expensive haircuts

HARRY: How'd you know?

BURT: Ah ha. Just collating data Harry. So, the bar, had there been some sort of party earlier? Lots of ladies around?

HARRY: Yeah, I think so. Something to do with chickens...

BURT: Hen Night?

HARRY: That was it

BURT: Ah ha

HARRY: <getting exasperated> Look, are you gonna keep going "ah ha" or are you gonna tell me how I ended up with one of these fellas names on my arm?

BURT: Well I think I can at least guess what kind of removal technicians they were.

HARRY: What?

BURT: Clothing.

HARRY: Huh?

BURT: Strippers Harry. You know, the full whasname for a hen night!

HARRY: Oh. <penny drops> Oh! Oh *go-se!*

BURT: So much for keeping up your rep! Don't worry, that sort of pretty boy needs to keep his looks or he's out of a job so I think you can relax about them doing anything you didn't really want to. They wouldn't risk the payback, even if one of 'em may have made an offer.

HARRY: Phew! I guess the tat was just a bit of a gag then, I seem to remember something about going on to another bar and stopping off someplace so they could all get tattoos. Musta seemed like a good idea at the time.

BURT: You must have been completely "as the newt".

HARRY: I guess. One thing I don't get though

BURT: What?

HARRY: Well, why George? Freddie was the pretty one.....

<fade to voiceover music>

Voiceover: Next time, Burt and Harry discuss the implications of....

HARRY: <cutting off voiceover> Burt! Grab your stuff, I just heard from Chen, we gotta go!

BURT: Why? What's so bloody urgent?

HARRY: Badger's been shot!

BURT: Oh bugger!....

<fade to end music>

"You got any tattoos Brad? No? How about you?" So that line from The Rocky Horror Picture Show was kind of the start, but then I know that a fair few Browncoats, including then Signal crew Wayne Hutchinson, one time CSTS global coordinator Christine George Mooney and several other online acquaintances have Firefly related tattoos. So this is also a kind of nod to inked browncoats out there while taking the opportunity of making a few gags at Harry's expense.

And no, I don't ☺

“Badger’s World”
Episode 18

“COFFEEEEE!”

[Voiceover] Stimulation is something all humans need. From the normal everyday inputs required by a developing child, to the thrill seekers and adrenaline junkies of extreme sports to the intellectual challenge of a good book, we all crave stimulation in some form. But you can have too much of a good thing! Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium, a <beat> stimulating discussion is underway....

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background. We enter in the midst of an argument>

[Chen] Will you two calm down!

[Burt] I **am** calm! <not sounding calm at all>

[Harry] <pissed off> Coulda fooled me Burt. It was just a misunderstanding.

[Burt] You said Mister Badger had been shot

[Harry] That’s what Chen said

[Chen] If you’d actually listened....

[Burt] And stuck around long enough to hear **the end of the sentence!**

[Chen] Then you wouldn’t be getting all this grief for misrepresenting what I said!

[Harry] <defensively> Hell, it was just one word...

[Burt] Yeah but that one word makes a whole **world** of difference

[Harry] <pissed off> Oh c’mon Burt, like you’ve never jumped to conclusions before!

[Burt] “Shot **AT**” Harry, “Mister Badger has been shot **at**” Still serious I grant you, but hardly a unique or even unexpected occurrence. What do you think he employs **us** for?

<pause>

[Harry] <sulky> To make sure this kind of *go se* doesn’t happen...or at least not often

[Burt] <slightly mollified> Well, yes. Glad we’re clear on that at least

[Harry] I said I was sorry already. Geez Burt, let it go

[Burt] Easier said than done Harry. One, Mister Badger was shot at and two, we’ve spent the last 3 days looking for the *huan dahn* that took the shot. Without sleep I might add because Mister Badger is understandably a bit put out!

[Harry] I still think it was probably his second ex again

[Burt] Look, we’ve been over this. It’s not her. Just shooting him is just too....

[Harry] Simple? Effective?

[Burt] Subtle. We know how she's into collateral damage all too well

[Chen] Don't remind me!

[Burt] And I have it on good authority that she's off planet and likely to stay that way thank Buddha.

[Chen] So how come he doesn't just wait for the price he put out on the shooter to do the job. That usually works.

[Harry] Because he's Badger

[Burt] Yeah, why pay a bounty to some freelancer when he can have Harry and me and the rest of the boys who actually work for a livin' do it as part of our contractual obligation to watch his *pi gu*

[Harry] Trouble is, only way we've been able to keep at this for 80 hours straight is to keep drinking your cousin's triple espresso shots

[Burt] We're basically buzzin our tits off. The only way to counteract the bloody coffee is to come in here every now and then and try to get hammered

[Harry] I reckon we're just about managing to stay sober

[Chen] But you've been hitting the spirits like it was U Day since you got in here

[Burt] Thing is Chen, your cousin's coffee is so bloody strong...

[Harry] Right stimulating you might say...

[Burt] That we're so far the other side of sober, we need the booze just to stay rational. "Knurd" believe is the term

[Harry] And tempers fray a bit

[Burt] Even though there's good reason

[Harry] <snappy> Alright already, do we have to go over this again?

[Burt] Yeah OK, ok. Hit us with one more round of Zombies please Chen and I think that should do us for another few hours of tearing the docks apart without having to contend with a perception of reality so clear that it hurts

[Harry] Plus there are some unfortunate side effects

[Chen] Like what? I thought Lin only used the really good stuff on his stall

[Burt] Oh it's good all right...

[Harry] Full of natural caffeine, no artificial additives...

[Burt] It's just the way he steams the stuff through with that nuclear heat plant of his...

[Harry] That 'aint natural fer sure...

[Burt] It's that flippin strong that I worry the little green guys won't come back with my taste buds

<beat>

[Harry] Burt? You seeing leprechauns again?

[Burt] No of course not. <beat> They've all buggered off with the hephalumps for the night

[Harry] See what I mean Chen

[Burt] They'll be back later on, you mark my worms

[Chen] <puts down 2 drinks> Mister Burt, you better drink up quick

[Harry] I've had 2 gorram days of this!

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

[Voiceover] Next time, Burt and Harry discuss the state of interspecies diplomacy

[Seamus O'Flaherty] Look Mister Burt, I told you, we was just giving them a quick polish for yez

[Burt] Seamus me old bugger, you'd better have 'em back by morning or Mr Lead Pipe will be getting some exercise on your pointy little head

[Harry] Burt? Who the hell are you talking to now?

<end>

A couple of triple espressos and a long chat with Odile Thomas at a London shindig (may have been a CSTS event, but my memory is hazy) along with inspiration from Terry Pratchett's Mort where Klatchian coffee is so strong that it gets you "knurd" (the opposite of "drunk") is where this fun episode came from.

But I deny all knowledge of Seamus O'Flaherty!

“Badger’s World”
Episode 19

“Lights Out”

[Voiceover] Humans are a resourceful species. Since our earliest days, we have found ways of bringing light to the dark. First with control of fire that also brought warmth, then with electricity and finally with the power of nuclear [fewsion] fusion up to and including the creation of a sun during the age of the Terraformers. Of course, such change has not been without cost. Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium, two figures who more often prefer the shadows discuss the weather....

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background>

[Burt] Lovely spring day it was Harry, don’t what you’re complaining about

[Harry] I got soaked!

[Burt] Oh it was barely a shower! Can’t have a bit of sun without it raining **somewhere** else

[Harry] Yeah, on me!

[Burt] Look, there’s no such thing as bad weather, just poor choices of clothing as they say on Greenleaf

[Harry] <dismissive> Humph!

[Burt] No point in moaning that we had the best of it down here in the docks while you were out doing Mister Badger’s rounds with Billy

[Harry] How come you always seem to get the best of the weather Burt?

[Burt] Must be my sunny dispostion! Hehehe, did you see what I did there, I ah..oh....no? Oh well

<pause>

[Harry] You haven’t been at that coffee again have you Burt?

[Burt] No of course not

[Harry] ‘Cos if I have to put up with that embarrassing display again, I won’t care if Badger finds it amusing, I’ll....

[Burt] <tetchy> Look, don’t see me talking to any non existant little green buggers do you?

[Harry] Not yet

[Burt] And what’s that supposed to mean? Blimey Harry, a bit of a soaking and you’re a right misery guts. Here <slides drink over> Get that down you, I’ll order another. <shouts> Chen! Same again please!

[Harry] What is with you Burt? You trying to make up for that little “incident” while we were tracking down the idiot that took a shot at Badger?

[Burt] <feigned innocence> I don’t know what you mean

[Harry] Look, I got no problem us working over the odd innocent bystander when we're working. Helps the rep and sometimes they 'aint so innocent after all. But when the third one in a row turns out to be someone Badger has an arrangement with and is all paid up for the month...and you **know** this...well, that 'aint good for business. As Badger pointed out to us...at some length as I recall.

[Burt] Yeah OK, OK. Maybe I do owe you a bit for that, but don't push it, alright?

[Harry] Yeah, I guess

<Chen approaches>

[Chen] Boy, you two are a picture of happiness...not!

[Burt] Yeah, well, Mr "Little Ray of Sunshine" here's mood must be catching

[Harry] <drinks> Alright already Burt. <beat> Ah, thanks for the drink

[Burt] And that must be mine then

[Chen] Once it's paid for

[Burt] Chen! I resent that implication

[Chen] Resent it all you like, after you've paid. Drink for coin Mister Burt

[Harry] <more cheerful> Burt, I think she knows you!

<coins being payed out>

[Burt] I dunno. You'd think after all the business I put your way there'd be a little trust

[Chen] What? With all the unpaid tabs you've run up...

[Harry] And that credit scam you tried pulling on me to get them paid off....

[Chen] Not to mention breakages...

[Harry] Compensation for innocent patrons you've hit...

[Burt] <indignant> 'Ere! Whose side are you on?

[Harry] I'm just saying Burt....

[Chen] We're just pointing out that when it come to money and alcohol you have a certain....reluctance parting with one while partaking of the other

[Burt] I don't know what you mean

[Harry] Aw, drink up Burt, we're only yanking your chain

[Burt] Humph!

<FX, power shutting down, folks gasping, surprised, some confusion

[Harry] What the hell?

[Chen] Oh, no. The power grid must be down again. That's the third time this week!

[Burt] <from further away> I can't see a bloody thing

[Harry] Looks like someone forgot to pay their bills!

[Chen] Oh *biz zhuay* you! I keep my payments up like any business that wants to stay **in** business

[Harry] Burt? Where the hell has he gone? I can't see

[Chen] <sarcastic> That wouldn't be anything to do with the fact that the power is out and it's pitch black in here would it? *Ay ya*, the backup should have kicked in by now. <shouts> Susan? Lee? Where the hell is my backup lighting? <beat> I'd better see if I can get to the room panel

[Harry] Here, I'll help.

[Chen] So you're an electrician now?

[Harry] I was thinking more beating a path through all the bodies, beatin' being the operative word!

[Chen] No offence Harry, but I don't think that would...<FX sound of powering up, a few cheers> Ah, let there be light as they say.

[Harry] Now where'd he go....oh, there he is. Behind the bar

[Chen] What! Mister Burt! You come out from there right now <strides over to bar, Harry following>

[Harry] This ought to be good!

[Chen] <mutters> If there's anything missing....

[Harry] Enjoying yourself Burt?

[Burt] What?

[Chen] Mister Burt, please remove yourself from behind my bar right now!

[Burt] Easy Chen. You might want to get Lee and Susan to drag these 2 numptys <sound of 2 bodies being kicked> out into the alley and explain to them that raiding your till as soon as the power went out was not a good idea.

[Chen] Oh. <beat> I see. They out cold? <beat> Well, I don't know what to say....thank you

[Burt] You're very welcome

[Harry] Burt, how did you know?

[Burt] Well, it's obvious isn't it?

[Harry] Huh?

[Burt] It's exactly what I'd have done when I was young and stupid

<fade through to end sequence>

[Voiceover] Next time, Burt and Harry discuss the altruistic impulse in relation to self interest...

[Harry] Admit it Burt, you only did it so Chen would give you free drinks all night

[Burt] <slurred> I don' know what you're talking about

[Harry] Yes you do

[Burt] Heh. Worked though didn't it? <FX: falls over>

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

<end>

The title is from a UFO track that I had as a headworm and we'd had a series of power cuts at home around the time I wrote this, so it all kind of went from there.

“Badger’s World”
Episode 20

“Convention”

[Voiceover] Humans are a sociable species. In the past, vast cultural divides seemed insurmountable, yet folk have always been able to find some common ground with each other. In the ‘Verse, while distinct cultures persist, those once huge differences have long since paled into insignificance in the face of humanity’s trials since leaving Earth That Was. Finding something in common with others though, continues to be a popular pastime, even in the face of resistance from some quarters... Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium, two distinguished cultural observers compare notes....

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background, noisier than usual>

NOTE: need bits of Adventure Garden music and maybe some clips of Carolyn as Romana in her kiddie presenter days

[Burt] What gets me is the lack of respect

[Harry] You’re right Burt. Kids today got no respect for the rep. Gotta beat ‘em senseless before they get the picture sometimes

[Burt] I mean, not that far back, folk knew the score. I mean, sure you have to reinforce things from time to time, even with the locals, but yours and my generation knows how it works

[Harry] Yeah, you do what Badger ...

[Burt] <interjects> or the Triads

[Harry] ...or the Triads, says, keep your payments up and everything rolls along just fine

[Burt] Exactly. I mean we all have to make a living and if that involves losening a few teeth along the way, well that’s just how it has to be sometimes if you forget Mr Badger’s standing in the community.

[Harry] Or are late with a payment

[Burt] Well that is one of the things Mister Badger does employ us for after all.

<pause> Snatches of Carolyn’s Johnny B Goode to cheers in background

[Harry] So how come it’s so busy in here tonight?

[Burt] I dunno. Lot of new faces...and...costumes it would seem

[Harry] Yeah, what’s with that? That guy over there is dressed like a gorram snail! Someone having a fancy dress party or something? Look there’s a couple of girls in snail outfits too!

[Burt] Hmm. It’s almost as if....

[Harry] What?

[Burt] Nah, probably nothing....now, where was I

[Harry] About to expand on the what’s wrong with the world...again

[Burt] Now now Harry, didn’t hear you disagreeing with anything I <Burt is bumped into> Oi!

[Harry] Hey, watch where you're <stumbles to a stop>....ah....why are you dressed up like some kinda varmint?

[BB] <muffled> Oh sorry about that, didn't see you, it's the costume

[Burt] It's the what?

[Harry] <threatening> Hey fella, take that rutting animal mask off when you talk to us

[BB] <less muffled> Oh come on now, that's hardly the Garden spirit!

[Burt] The Garden what?

[BB] Spirit! <beat>Adventure Garden? Children's Cortex Network? You know, Sammy Snail, Millie Mole, Wolfgang Worm...?

[Harry] So who the hell are you supposed to be then?

[BB] Well, isn't it obvious?

[Burt] <threatening> Clearly not. Pray enlighten us

[BB] <loudly> I'm, Bobby Badger!
<several folk close by chant "Badger! Badger! Badger!">

<beat>

<SFX: Burt and Harry simultaneously punch BB in the face who falls in a heap, shocked gasps from the Badger chanters>

[Burt] Is he taking the piss or what?

[BB] I fink you boke by doze! <backs away, disapproving mutters from Badger crowd. Chen comes up>

[Chen] Burt! Harry? You beating up my customers again? **Paying** customers?

[Harry] Dumb *huan dahn* was being' plumb disrespectful to Badger

[Chen] Oh like you two never are

[Burt] That different Chen, employee's privilege. That dozy git don't even know Mister Badger

[Chen] Oh for goodness sake! Look around you, the place is filled with these folk all eager to spend real coin while they attend their yearly convention or whatever. Nothing to do with Badger. Now no more whacking the costumed types! I'm rushed off my feet already without having to smooth out your overreaction to perceived slights to Badger's honour.....which is something of an oxymoron after all.

[Harry] <aside to Burt> What's she on about?

[Burt] <replying> She's annoyed. <to Chen> Oh alright. Er...convention did you say?

[Chen] <departing> Bi-annual thing. Look it up.

[Harry] Burt, I don't get it

<beat>

[Burt] Oh *go-se!*

[Harry] What?

[Burt] Harry look around. See all the costumes. Look. Name tags! Every one of the buggers is wearing a Romanna Rocks pin as well!

[Harry] So, what is it? Some kind of secret society?

[Burt] Oh there's no secret about it. These people are **proud** of what they do! Look at the footwear fer Buddahs sake!

[Harry] So some kind of religious cult then?

[Burt] No Harry, it's **much** worse than that.

[Harry] Huh?

[Burt] Harry, they're **fans!**

[Harry] Again I say, Huh?

[Burt] Fans Harry, as in fan-atic. About that kids show years back, Adventure Garden? Romanna something, that reporter that got iced just after the war ended? The Cortex was full of it, she presented that show. The fans had their martyr and there was no ending to it

[Harry] Oh no. You don't mean...

[Burt] I do mean Harry. They're Green Boots!

[Harry] What'll we do?

[Burt] Just leave. Casual like. Don't stop. Don't even speak to any of 'em or you'll be stuck here all night. Then we get to Ziggy's as fast as we can.

[Harry] Why there? You hate Ziggy's

[Burt] 'Cos starting a fight and waking up in the can with a headache suddenly has a strong appeal... waddaya think! They've picked their "Con Pub" Now, lets get out of here before they start trying to sign us up for the next one!

<fade out to Adventure Garden Music "The Rock Garden" by Bedlam Bards>

[Voiceover] Next time. Burt and Harry discuss the nostalgic impulse and how to avoid it...

[Harry] You know Burt, I always kinda liked Adventure Garden. Wonder if they have any souvenirs?

[Burt] Oh, no, not you too Harry?!

[Harry] Just a quick look?

[Burt] There's just no helping some people....

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

Credit must go to my wife Joy for the convention idea. She and 3 of my kids also played the part of the Bobby Badger fan-geeks. This also referenced the past history of Romana Ling from Borderline season 1 (the character had presented the Cortex kids show Adventure Garden before becoming a wartime correspondent for Yoshida Kendal Captures) and so is possibly the only episode to directly reference another Signal drama segment. (You can even hear a bit of Carolyn Parkinson singing as Romana Ling if you listen carefully.)

~

At this point, Badger's World took a bit of a break. I was out of ideas and needed to rethink where I was going with this and indeed whether I could continue at all. I decided that I would be able to carry on, but had to have some kind of story arc for what would be the final 6 episodes (which would bring it up to 13 regular Badger's Worlds in each season). With BW LIVE for Dragon Con 2008 it turned out to be 7 episodes in the end, with Beginnings Part 1 and 2 being episodes 25 and 26 respectively.

This collection of the Badger's World scripts also includes the 2 articles that dealt with Badger the character and Badger's World itself: one from the They've All Got Stories series of segments (which aired between Ep 20 and 21 of Badger's World) and the other from the What's in a Signal? series of segments that included some "in character" reading of the complete series credits.

The TAGS (They've All Got Stories) article that follows here is where it belongs chronologically and the WIAS (What's In A Signal) article is placed after Ep 26: Beginnings Part 2. The 4 extra "Lost Tales" episodes that appeared in later shows are also placed chronologically in terms of when they aired.

TAGS: Badger, Dodgy Geezer or Misunderstood Philanthropist?

By Nick Edwards

<clip> Straight out of Badgers World opener, maybe a LP scratch at the point I say “Badger’s World” © Evil. So sue me.

I know, I know. It’s me and I’m doing a character study on Badger. Predictable or what? Not too surprisingly, Badger is one of my favourite characters in Firefly. Now, he’s no BDH, far from it, but then neither are a few of the other very interesting characters that only appear in a couple of episodes. However, to me “Mister” Badger slightly has the edge as in addition to his appearances in Serenity and Shindig, he also shows up in the Those Left Behind comics. That gives him a slight lead when it comes to most frequently recurring supporting character in canon sources. Not to mention certain non-canon fan penned audio comedy...which to date he has appeared in precisely... never, except once “off camera” as it were.

Badger, like many other characters, including our own BDHs if we’re honest, appears much too infrequently in what we have of Firefly. Just 3 appearances and only 2 of those on screen. But what a lot you can glean from those all too brief scenes.

I’m going to be greedy and examine all those appearances rather than focus on how he appears in one particular episode.

In Serenity, we meet Badger for the first time. He’s examining a girl’s teeth before she is lead off to presumably a not too savoury future. This establishes him as a not too savoury character also. He has armed guards and a well appointed “office” within a stack of containers at the Eavesdown Docks on Persephone. Rough, but comfortable with several accoutrements of wealth on display. Badger is clearly in charge of the situation and is very assured of himself. It becomes clear very quickly that Badger is something of a minor crime boss...albeit with delusions of respectability. He is well known to the locals

<clip “businessman see, pillar of the community”>

But is also well connected and informed of what goes on outside his particular domain

<clip: “I didn’t flash my arse at the gorram law!”>

He sets jobs up and has the likes of Malcolm Reynolds do the actual crime while he gets his percentage. But he is also practical. When a job attracts unwelcome attention, he is perfectly willing to let Serenity’s crew take the heat and cut them dead without worrying about the loss of short term profit. It seems clear by implication that Badger has many enterprises running on Persephone. And that he can also be cold and calculating in his business dealings when things are not to his advantage.

Played brilliantly by Mark Sheppard, Badger comes over as initially a “dodgy geezer”, running a minor crime empire, but even in that first encounter, there are layers of a complex and fascinating character evident.

Badger is a snob. He clearly started at a very low rung of society and by cunning, deviousness and criminal dealings has now elevated himself to a position of at least local standing. He has been successful and shows that with his posse of loyal henchmen and such trivial details as toying with a device simply to peel fresh fruit. He sees himself as above mere criminals for hire as he views the crew of Serenity. He simply cannot stand that Mal looks down on him and delights in trying to put Mal in his place, but is also pragmatic enough that when Mal won’t be

put, he allows our BDHs an out so that he still retains the option of using them in the future...should they survive...while still saving face.

In Shindig, Badger's second appearance is even more informative of his character. He shows his pretensions of civility with a fine china tea service and neat piles of sandwiches (although the tea contains wood alcohol and you can bet it isn't cucumber in those neat little triangles of bread...not that this bothers Jayne much.)

<clip: "Hey, this 'aint bad!">

His snobbishness and pragmatism are again on display as he bargains with Mal to go to the ball to make the smuggling deal because Mal at least appears more respectable than Badger no doubt would like to be. He tolerates the insults and put downs because at the end of the day, as well as wanting to get the deal done, Badger just wants to be liked. He won't let that get in the way of business dealings but, it seems to me, that he wants to be liked as well as respected. Interestingly, the fact that Badger has such a well defined character as a rule, means that Mal can deal with him. There is an understanding, if not liking, between the two of them that means that both sides can return to deal again. Mal too is pragmatic.

The most telling scene perhaps is when Badger and his crew board Serenity to ensure that Mal goes through with the deal or dies in the attempt without Serenity's crew coming to the rescue. Again, this shows that Badger is very well informed about local events and has a ruthlessness to protecting his interests. But it is his interaction with River that gives us the deepest look into what makes Badger tick.

<clip from Shindig "Who's this then?" etc>

So, Badger comes from Dyton Colony originally, although Persephone is now his home. He has a rep. That we know, but his "hardman who's done time" image is perhaps not so solid as he'd have you believe. Badger shows that he is nostalgic for his original home, but also that River's observations leave him deeply unsettled. River's final devastating put down is shrugged off with the "Oh I like her" line. Badger has a past and a present face, but he is uncomfortable about the former while keen to preserve the latter.

Badger's final brief appearance in canonical Firefly is in issue 1 Of Those Left Behind. This seems to be typical of the encounters between Badger and Mal. The two of them actively dislike the other, but they are also similar enough and realistic enough to be able to deal profitably...at least sometimes. Mal **could** have taken Badger out on all 3 documented occasions, but he doesn't. As I said, an understanding that allows the possibility of dealing, without having to trust or even like the other party. It is significant that in the movie, when the Operative takes out anyone who has sheltered the crew of Serenity after a heist, Badger is not among those who are hit. He's far too canny for that.

~

The Signal Live podcast at Dragon Con 2008 needed an audio drama segment that could be performed by the Signal crew in attendance. This was the fairly hastily written result. Almost a retread of the previous episode Convention, it nevertheless had some unique features and the audience feedback was terrific. Enough that I felt able to persist in a few loose ideas that I had already had for continuing with Badger's World to a more natural conclusion. Burt's lines had to be pre-recorded of course as I wasn't physically there.

Badgers World Live!

By Nick Edwards

Part 1

<Playback 1: Badgers World Theme and title. Kevin should come straight in as it fades>

[NOTE: This does not need to have playback, the episode can just be announced]

Voiceover: The worlds of the Verse are many and varied. Almost as varied as the peoples that inhabit them. Yet despite this dizzying variety, folk of a similar mind or profession tend to group together and seek out the similar. The good, the bad and the Geek all have their little get togethers to swap stories, give and receive lessons and consume beer. Lots and lots of beer. Meanwhile, at HenchCon 28, a familiar presence is trying his best to fit in....

Harry: <consulting his Con book cunningly disguised as these here lines>

Now then, let's see, this is Hall G, it's the right time of day, so where's the gorram workshop on Care and Maintenance of Brass Knuckles supposed to be then?

<flips through papers>

Hmm....done the Meet and Frisk yesterday. Opening panel on Threat Management was a bit of a no brainer – “Are threats always necessary?” Well duh! The Ammo Selection Q and A was this morning, that was in Hall F.... Nope. The Knuckle Duster care workshop is definitely supposed to be in here.

HenchCon Delegate 1: Hey buddy, you looking for the Brass Knuckles thing?

Harry: Uh..yeah

HenchCon Delegate 1: Didn't you hear? It got moved to the evening slot. They figured they wanted folks mostly conscious for the afternoon panels. Different room as well.

Harry: Where's it being held now?

HenchCon Delegate 1: In the bar

Harry: <sarcastic> Oh that's going to go well

HCD1: I hear ya. I'm sick of sweeping up teeth!

<Susan enters>

Susan: Oh, there you are Harry.

Harry: Oh, Susan? Hey, fancy meeting you here. Small moon isn't it.

Susan: Not really. Chen sent me to find you.

Harry: What, Chen's here too?

Susan: Sure, she managed to get the Bar Contract for the Con.

Harry: How the hell she manage that?

Susan: Nobody else would touch it! So anyway, she managed to get top rate for the contract.

Harry: Figures. Well, I'm heading that way anyway, might as well get a drink.

Susan: Spoken like a true Con goer!

<end>

<Playback 2: Short end theme playback>

Part 2

<Playback 3: Very short "Badgers World" identifier>

Voiceover: The brewing and consumption of alcohol is an almost universal activity in many human societies. In the convention going culture, the consumption side at least has been raised to a high art comparable with the glory days of Cons on Earth That Was. A seasoned practitioner in the ways of getting unfeasibly inebriated, Harry unerringly finds his way to the Con bar where we meet another familiar face.....

Chen: Oh so look who finally showed up

Harry: Hey Chen. Any chance of a drink?

Chen: Not so fast. I got a job for you first

Harry: So, no drink then?

Chen: Here <thrusts something at him, maybe a phone/PDA>

Harry: This is not a drink

Chen: *Ay yah* Harry! Of course it's not. It's a wave from Mister Burt. How he got my Cortex ident code I'll never know, but it's encrypted and addressed to you. I need you to unlock it.

Harry: Huh?

Chen: Look. He must have arranged some kind of decryption audio interlock with you before you left

Harry: Again I say, Huh?

Chen: Say. The. Magic. Words.

Harry: Oh, right. Well why didn't you say so. <clears throat and speaks into PDA> Uh....Callahan full bore auto lock.

<Playback 4. There are tones and then Burt's voice. >

[NOTE: If playback is not possible, Harry can complain that he can't read the transcript and Chen can read this out.]

Burt: Is this thing on? Oh, right, I see. <clears throat> Harry, if you're getting this it means Chen found you to pass this on. Only you buggered off so quick to this HenchCon thing you forgot to check in before you left. Put Mister Badger in a right old snit and muggins here has been catching the brunt of it as usual. You need to get ahold of Swiss Tony and give him a damn good slap. Seems his todger's been getting him in trouble and he's been going around braggin about how "This is not the hammer"... whatever in the

name of God and all her whacky nephews that means. Anyway, Mister Badger's had to smooth a few feathers locally and he wants that priapic *huan dahn* reminded that he's contracted to sell on stolen mules and hover sleds and not to negotiate the virtue of every pretty client that happens to need some cheap transport no questions asked! Obviously, do this outside the con venue, don't want to upset all the other sensitive souls there! How is it going by the way. Never had much time for that sort of thing when I was working the Border worlds and learning the trade. But let me know how you get on. Oh and that you gave Tony that little reminder from Mister Badger.....Right, how'd you turn this piece of *go se* off?

[This bit ends with a fading tone]

Chen: Looks like you **do** have some work to do

Harry: So.... definitely no drink then?

Chen and Susan: Harry!

<end>

<Playback 5 Badgers World end theme>

I was really pleased with how well this went, so much so, that the episode actually led onto the final story arc in an indirect way. I'd had some overly complicated ideas about how to continue with Badger's World (see the Lost Tales notes for some idea of what I was tinkering with), but this made me realise that it could be a lot simpler. Kinda.

The last 6 episodes were therefore the most complicated that I had ever written or edited!

Trying to kill Badger just seemed like a good idea that needed to be re-visited....

“Badger’s World”
Episode 21

“Omens”

- (note. This actually follows on from BW LIVE, though will not refer directly to it)

[Voiceover] The past has a habit of catching up with us. Especially when we would much rather that it didn’t! Actions are often what define us and are how we measure our own worth and that of others. But sometimes, those actions have consequences that we cannot foresee. Nor can we even imagine the route that those consequences will take to find us. Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium, 2 men of sometimes questionable actions review a recent turn of events ...

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background>

[Harry] Well I’m glad to be back, I’ll tell ya that Burt

[Burt] Yeah, and not a moment too soon judging by the highbrow nonsense you waved back to me. Where’d you pick up moonbrained notions like that?

[Harry] It was a panel on...

[Burt] <cutting him off> Rhetorical question Harry. I know **where** you picked it up. I’m just surprised ideas like that took is all. Haven’t I taught you anything?

[Harry] Oh c’mon Burt. It never hurts to have all the information before making a decision. You said that yourself.

[Burt] I did?

[Harry] Frequently

[Burt] Well, I guess so. But it don’t mean you should swallow every “modern” idea without a healthy pinch of salt.

[Harry] Huh?

[Burt] Don’t believe all you hear. You’ve got good instincts Harry...as a rule... don’t ignore them just because some fancy new version of good old fashioned thuggery has things twisted around to seem all exciting and radical.

[Harry] Well, I guess we’ll see won’t we. Doesn’t Badger want us to go pay another visit to Spiny Norman later on?

[Burt] Yeah, so?

[Harry] Well, I’ll try my revised approach and then if that don’t work, you can show me the old fashioned way of.....

[Burt] Harry...

[Harry] Yeah?

[Burt] How am I supposed to do that if you’ve pissed him off by spraying his brains all over?

[Harry] Ah, that's the beauty of it. No guns. No mess.

[Burt] Are you serious?

[Harry] Dead serious

[Burt] Well, I agree with one word in that statement.

[Harry] Ah...which one?

[Burt] Dead. As in "You will be dead and of no further use to me or Mister Badger" if you go in there not carrying in your usual painfully obvious manner. Harry, you go messing with the expectations of a dangerous little wannabe like Norman and **his** instinct will be to end you out of hand and worry about me later. Course, later means he'll hit the floor dead as well a fraction of a second after you do, but that does nobody any good. Least of all you!

<pause>

[Harry] So stick to the usual "bad thug, worse thug" routine then?

[Burt] Exactly. Means he knows where he stands... or at least lies on the ground rolling around in agony after I get the drop on him first by **not** sticking exactly to the routine. Keep 'em guessing, but not so much it makes 'em dangerously unpredictable. Useful rule of thumb Harry, Negotiation and Threats 101 notwithstanding.

[Harry] <bows to inevitable> Well, OK then.

[Burt] Good. I'll drink to that. <calls> Chen!

[Harry] So, anyway, I did hear a couple of more interesting things while I was away. Ya know, networking and all that sort of stuff

[Burt] Oh please!

[Harry] Nah, hear me out Burt

[Burt] Alright, alright. Doesn't hurt to know what the current baseless rumours are

[Harry] Damn Burt, there's healthy scepticism and there's being a royal pain in the pi gu!

[Burt] Heh, OK, I deserved that.

<Chen approaches>

[Chen] Deserved what?

[Harry] Oh Burt here was getting all disbelievin' about what I was about to tell him what we heard last week.

[Chen] Oh ye of little faith!

[Burt] Ok, Ok, I'm listening. You heard this nugget too then?

[Chen] If Harry's referring to what I think he is, yeah, I heard it too.

[Burt] So, what then O great and omniscient sage is this priceless bit of information

[Harry] It's simple really. Didn't pay much mind to it to begin with, but we both heard it in various versions. All come down to the same thing.

[Burt] Which hopefully at some point you'll actually come out and tell me

[Chen] Now don't overreact Mister Burt, this might not be what it seems, but...tell him Harry

[Harry] Someone's got a contract out on Mister Badger

<beat>

[Burt] And that's it? Hardly news. Heck it's almost a professional courtesy in our line of work, kinda why we actually have a job if you think about it....

[Harry] No, Burt, that 'aint all. It's **who** has the contract out.

[Chen] It's hard to believe really. Not a name you'd expect to hear, but I heard it from 2 different sources who had no reason to spin a yarn

[Burt] But you're enjoying spinning this out aren't you

[Harry] Maybe a little, but Burt.... it's Atherton Wing

<beat>

[Burt] Well I'll be buggered!

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

[Voiceover] Next time, Burt and Harry discuss the place of the nobility in the 26th century...

[Burt] <cackling>

[Harry] Burt, this isn't funny

[Burt] <barely coherent> Oh it's better than that, it's priceless

[Harry] Burt. I also heard at least 2 genuine no hold barred assassins are interested. Reps that even I know are solid. Wing might not be on speaking terms with most of the aristos, but he's still loaded.

[Burt] <sobering> Ah, yeah, now you mention that....money is nearly all that matters to a professional hitter. *Go se*, Harry, this could actually be serious!

<end>

Spiny Norman is a nod to the Piranah Brothers sketch by Monty Python and of course this whole story arc depends on a directly imagined consequence of the Firefly episode Shindig.

“Badger’s World”
Episode 22

“Posh”

[Voiceover] The structure of a society is often defined by social stratification. Despite a number of noble experiments in humanity’s past, the Verse as a rule, is not a classless society. The very cosmology of the Verse with Core, Border and Rim planets imposes unavoidable divisions between the various societies, but even within individual worlds there can be a great variety of social organisation. One thing that hasn’t changed over the centuries though, is being able to identify the social class of an individual by the way that they speak. Exactly how one’s accent and use of grammar identify one’s class is of course open to much debate. Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium 2 exponents of the more vulgar use of language discuss weighty matters...

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background>

[Harry] It ‘aint the the way we should be doin’ stuff Burt

[Burt] Look Harry, I’ll grant you that this isn’t the usual approach Mister Badger takes, but these is extenuatin’ circumstances you might say

[Harry] Extenu-what?

[Burt] Extenuating, out of the ordinary, unusual measures required, blimey Harry, pick up a dictionary once in a while

[Harry] Look Burt, I know you had more schoolin’ than I did. Ya don’t need to rub it in. Next you’ll be talking all high falutin and correcting my pro-nun-ciation <said carefully..it’s a big word for Harry ☺>

[Burt] Ah....I was just about to tell you about that.

[Harry] About what?

[Burt] Look, Mister Badger has already decided that we need to suss out what that former toffee nosed git Wing is up to. That’s not up for discussion, right?

[Harry] Fair enuff

[Burt] I mean, an aristo like Atherton Wing would never in a million years have normally even deigned to take notice of, with all due respect, someone like Mister Badger.

[Harry] Yeah, but that was before Reynolds kicked his *pi gu* in that duel. Wing lost a lot more than face in that little “incident” and Badger was behind why Reynolds was there in the first place. Wing must have fallen a long way from the upper classes if he managed to hear about Badger’s part in that.

[Burt] But hear about it he did. Or at least spent good squeeze money finding out. We find out who it was let that info slip and a contract on **them** will be the least of their worries. Thing is, that’s about all we know at the moment. Well, that and the fact that Wing seems to have taken out this bloody contract on Mister Badger!

[Harry] Huh! So, you’ve been given the job of infiltratin’ Wing’s current ‘less than genteel’ social circle.

[Burt] I think we’ve already established that you don’t approve of such underhanded tactics.

[Harry] Oh hell, it ‘aint that Burt. Getting the drop on any adversary is all part of doin’ business, but this sort of thing, sneaking about in the wrong company isn’t what I signed on for.

[Burt] So just as well it 'aint **you** doing this job then isn't it!

[Harry] I guess. Anyway, what was this thing you was about to tell me?

[Burt] What? Oh yeah, we did kinda wander off the point there

[Harry] Well?

[Burt] Um... it's about speakin' all posh. Me I mean.

[Harry] Ah... I don't follow ya Burt

[Burt] <With an exaggerated posh accent> I perceive you don't quite follow me old chap, but one has been required to undergo elocution lessons at the insistence of one's employer.

<pause>

[Burt] Mister Badger said I gotta go learn how to talk posh

[Harry] Oh. Oh! Right. Hell Burt, fer a second there I thought you'd been at the nuclear strength coffee again.

[Burt] I wish. Nah. I told Mister Badger that I could put on the airs and graces and all, did a bit of amateur dramatics in my misspent youth truth be told <beat>...though you tell anyone else that little nugget and....

[Harry] Yeah yeah, I know, Mister Lead pipe and his associates. Sheesh Burt, lighten up will ya

[Burt] Ahem. Well anyway, Mister Badger insisted I sound like the genuine "fallen on hard times toff", so no getting away from it. I need to talk proper and not slip once. So I'll not be sounding myself for a while. This sort of behavioural implant can last weeks even if it's a one off session.

[Harry] So, who ya going to go to?

[Burt] I dunno. Deep hypno implant sessions like this need to be done right. Not having some bloody amateur mess with my head and there's no time to do it the old fashioned way. I need to find out what the hell is going on before some sharp shooter gets past the rest of the crew and actually ends the boss!

[Harry] You got all the rest of the background?

[Burt] Yeah, I know where Wing and his hangers on tend to meet. You know how well Mister Badger keeps up with all that high society *go se*. Gossip columns mostly of course. Still uptown, but not the respectable part. Word is that the contract hasn't been formally accepted, but there's interest and it's only a matter of days. Meanwhile some bleedin' freelancer might just try to collect anyway! Hence the urgency.

[Harry] Well, ya'd better get goin' then

[Burt] Blimey! Can't wait to get rid of me can you! When I've finished me drink

[Harry] You 'aint got a drink

[Burt] Oh cheers for offering. Mine's a pint

[Harry] Hey, I didn't....Oh, what's the point. <calls> Chen!

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

[Voiceover] Next time, Burt and Harry discuss the concept of social intercourse

[Harry] So, how'd it go?

[Burt] <posh> Harry my dear fellow, I'm afraid the news is far from rosy. I have however, elucidated the identity of the loose tongue that identified to Atherton that Mister Badger was at the back of his fall from grace

[Harry] You mean you know who fingered Badger to Wing

[Burt] Precisely. I'm sorry to report, that it was young William

[Harry] Billy!?

<end>

Who wouldn't want to see Atherton Wing get his arse handed to him yet again following Shindig? This was my way of indirectly addressing something that might possibly have been re-visited had Firefly run for more than one season. It didn't quite go where I expected it to, but that's half the fun of writing stuff like this.

“Badger’s World”
Episode 23

“The Noob”

[Voiceover] Loyalty is just as much a prized quality in folk of the ‘Verse as is it has been throughout humanity’s history. Loyalty to one’s family, country, friends or beliefs is generally respected everywhere. A good rule of thumb for survival is that if you ever find yourself living where that is no longer the case, then get out. Fast. Loyalty can be tested, be misplaced and even found wanting sometimes as we go through our lives and it is something that we have to decide for ourselves. And to live with the consequences if we get it wrong.

Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium, one loyal stalwart has just returned from an undercover mission...

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background>

[Harry] I still can’t believe it Burt

[Burt] <posh> Well, I must confess that the unfortunate revelation that it was young William who betrayed our mutual employer to be somewhat unsettling as well old chap

[Harry] *Ta ma duh* Burt, will you cut that out!

[Burt] <coughs> Sorry Harry. These bloody elocution lessons are a right pain in the *pi gu*. Hard to shake off when I want to talk normal like...which I guess is the point after all

[Harry] Yeah, well ya don’t want to advertise the fact either, even in here

[Burt] Quite right Harry. Glad to see you’re thinking clearly about this. Lets get our heads together about what the polka dot painted hell we’re going to do about it. Look I already ordered drinks.

<pause>

[Harry] You feeling alright Burt?

[Burt] Fine. Why?

[Harry] <amused> Oh, nuthin’ I guess

<Chen approaches>

[Chen] Here we are boys. <puts down one drink> Ah, Mister Burt, are you feeling OK?

[Harry] <sniggers>

[Burt] What? Everyone so concerned with my health all of a sudden? Ay ya, just ‘cos a fella pays for a couple of drinks up front

[Chen] Oh it’s not that Mister Burt, just...we don’t serve many of these <puts down second drink...which tinkles slightly>

<beat>

[Harry] What the hell is **that** Burt?

[Burt] <embarrassed> Its...a Companion's Knee Trembler

[Harry] <incredulous> A what?

[Burt] It's a cocktail alright! I just....developed something of a taste for it

[Harry] <sniggers>

[Burt] <cross> Look, I dropped the posh talk alright? Just difficult to get completely out of character is all

[Chen] That's some character!

[Burt] Oh don't you start! Don't know what you're complaining about. That's the most expensive drink I've ever bought in here

[Chen] Well, that's the truth. If you start a trend I'll knock a few credits off your tab, how's that?

[Burt] <acidly> Very generous I'm sure. Don't you have other customers?

[Chen] Fine! <mutters something insulting in Chinese and leaves>

[Harry] So, playing the toff fallen on hard times don't include bein' polite then.

[Burt] Oh give it a rest Harry. I don't want Chen hearing what we might have to do to Billy OK. She has a bit of a soft spot for the lad.

[Harry] Heh, yeah, ever since he first started with Badger. Do you remember?

[Burt] <reminiscing> Yeah, he was so wet behind the ears you could have grown rice back there

[Harry] I never could figure out why Badger hired him

[Burt] Some sort of favour for an old business acquaintance I think, though it's not like Mister Badger to let that sort of favour open him up to a potential threat

[Harry] Oh come on Burt, the kid was no threat back then

[Burt] Yeah, but you may have noticed over the years that Mister Badger has a somewhat "disposable" attitude to normal hired muscle. It's so loyalty don't get to the point it can be corrupted and come round to wanting to stab you in the gonads

<pause>

[Harry] So where does that leave us? Or you for that matter Burt, you've been with the boss longer than any of us

[Burt] Special case Harry.

[Harry] Yeah, you'll have to explain to me sometime just how that works

[Burt] No. I don't. But we're talking about Billy

[Harry] Yeah, remember showing him the ropes?

[Burt] And the chains

[Harry] And the thumbscrews, the leather saps,

[Burt] The buzz blades, the pain inducers

[Harry] <wistfully> Good times

[Burt] <angrily> And it clearly did no bleedin' good at all!

[Harry] Yeah, why would he finger Badger to Atherton Wing? After all Badger has done for him?

[Burt] Well, I'm afraid it's the usual reason

[Harry] What's that?

[Burt] Money

<beat>

[Harry] Oh, yeah

[Burt] And unfortunately it's going to cost him a lot more than he bargained for

[Harry] Aw shut up Burt and drink your pink...thing

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

[Voiceover] Later that same evening, Burt and Harry visit a different venue.....

<scene is Ziggy's Den of Iniquity, loud and lively>

[Harry] So, you get the sonics disabled then?

[Burt] Yeah, paid the new bar manager off a lot cheaper than I thought it would be

[Harry] It'll kick off bigtime once everyone realises the stunners aren't working

[Burt] Exactly, plenty of distraction to allow us to get Billy out of here

[Harry] Oh, look. There he is, over by the public cortex feed

[Burt] This is the bit I don't enjoy

<They approach Billy>

[Billy] Burt? Harry? Not your usual watering hole. Fancy a drink?

[Burt] Not tonight Billy, on duty

[Billy] You feeling alright Burt? That's never stopped you before

[Harry] He's got a point Burt

[Billy] So what's up?

[Burt] I'm afraid it's time

[Billy] Huh?

[Harry] As in “yours is”

[Burt] Up

[Billy] I’m still not with you

[Harry] And that’s the real problem isn’t it Billy

[Billy] <realising> Oh shit!

<Burt and Harry simultaneously deck him> <all hell breaks loose with a cheer as the denizens realise the fight suppresser system isn’t working>

[Burt] C’mon Harry, lets get him to his appointment with Mister Badger and The Accountant

<end>

Ziggy’s Den of Iniquity, as previously noted, is another direct steal from the late great Douglas Adams’ The Hitchiker’s Guide to the Galaxy. (There’s actually quite a few of those scattered throughout Badger’s World.)

A lot of The Noob was in my head for a long time, since season 1 of Badger’s World in fact, but I’d not really had anything to hang some of the lines and situations around. This final arc gave me the perfect chance to incorporate those ideas into an episode that worked properly and which had a slightly darker edge.

“Badger’s World”
Episode 24

“Pigeons”

[Voiceover] The concept of nobility being equivalent to aristocracy is one of humanities oldest vices. The idea that a mere accident of birth or acquired wealth somehow raises you above the rest of your fellow ape-descendants, is a conceit that persists to this day in the Verse. This is perhaps more the case on the planet Persephone than on any other. Here, a well established and wealthy aristocracy enjoys the benefits of the core worlds, while a large proletariat seethes within areas such as the Eavesdown Docks. There is however, nothing to stop anyone from aspiring to advance their position in society, or indeed from falling from the giddy heights when situations become less tenable.

Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium one recent foray into the rarefied atmosphere of high society, is under discussion...

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background>

[Burt] <posh initially> I must say Harry old chum I...<coughs> oh bugger these hypno implants! I can’t hardly order a pint these days without sounding like some stuck up ponce

[Harry] Order a pint? **That’s** a good one!

[Burt] Oi! Sitting right here!

[Harry] Look Burt, this whole thing is getting beyond insane. You been spending so much time cosyng up to Wing and his cronies that you’re startin’ to behave like them

[Burt] Harry, how the hell am I supposed to blend in and pick up the info we need without behaving like I never *wun gwo pee*. I know you don’t like it, but there it is. Even though that lot aren’t exactly flavour of the month with the rest of the aristocracy, they’re still a bunch of toffee nosed gits.

[Harry] Glad to hear you say that

[Burt] <chuckles> Even if they do know how to party. <slipping back into posh> There was this most amusing incident when dear old Charlie took an exquisite.....

[Harry] <cutting him off> Burt! You’re doing it again!

<Chen approaches>

[Chen] Doing what?

[Harry] Huh? Oh, evening Chen

[Burt] Oh, nothing Chen. <posh again> And how are things in the hostelry trade if one might enquire?

[Harry] <exasperated> Burt!

[Burt] Ah. I mean. So, er...how’s business?

<beat>

[Chen] Is he feeling alright?

[Harry] Just an escalatin’ case of bein’ a pain in the *pi gu*!

[Burt] *Et tu Brute?*

[Harry] See what I mean

[Chen] Look, I don't know what you two have been up to lately, but I assume you've heard the rumours circulating about Badger recently?

[Burt] This is kind of what we were about to discuss

[Chen] Well, you'd better get a move on. I have no desire to see a profitable arrangement with your boss go up in smoke because you 2 and the rest of the boys couldn't foil a simple assassination attempt.

[Harry] Nobody's made an attempt yet...well, recently anyway

[Burt] Chen, keep it down will you, this is supposed to be a confidential meeting

[Chen] But the whole of the Docks is buzzing about how the contract on Badger's been taken up today.

[Harry] What?

[Burt] I was just about to get to that bit

[Harry] *Ta ma duh* Burt! You ever going to keep me in the loop ahead of everyone else?

[Burt] If you 2 give me half a bleedin' chance! <sighs> Right, Chen, you may as well hear this as well as this could affect you directly. Sit down. Get Susan to bring over a round, so it looks like we're just chatting <Chen draws up a chair>

[Chen] <off mike> Susan! *Cha!* <tea>

[Harry] Well, tea's good, I guess

[Burt] *Xie Xie* Chen.

[Chen] *Bu ke chi* (You're welcome)

<pause>

[Chen] So?

[Burt] Like you said. Pigeons coming home to roost. The contract's been accepted. And not just by anyone. I heard it from mister high and mighty Atherton Wing himself. He wanted someone like Early to take it, but even he can't afford those sort of rates. What he has got though <beat>... is The Mechanic

[Harry] Oh *go se*. That 'aint good news is it.

[Burt] No it's not. And it gets better.

[Chen] I'm guessing this is sarcasm?

[Burt] Thank you. No, it's not just the Mechanic that's after ventilating Mister Badger now. Wing somehow is feeding info to the Triads. Info that makes it look as though Mister Badger is moving into the drugs racket.

[Harry] But, that's Triad turf. We never deal with the narcotics side of the business, at least not directly

[Burt] Exactly. That's been the arrangement that's kept things reasonably quiet for us for the last few months. But somehow, that posh son of whore has been stirring it up. Spreading all sorts of malicious rumours that Mister Badger is somehow not being entirely honest in his dealings with the Triads

[Harry] Well Burt, this **is** Badger after all

[Burt] Well, yes, but that's not the point. It makes the situation a lot more volatile. Add an assassin with a rep like the Mechanic's to the mix and the whole Docks could figuratively blow up at any minute

[Chen] With us stuck in the middle of it. This is not good news at all Mister Burt. I have to think about my position here. You know I walk a fine line. We're one of the few places that isn't paying direct protection to the Triads or Badger because we have other... "arrangements" in place. I can't be seen to be supporting you over the Triads

[Harry] She has a point Burt

[Burt] Look, we'll keep you out of it as much as possible Chen, but....

[Chen] I **knew** there'd be a "but" in there somewhere

[Burt] Yeah yeah, OK. Harry, Ya know I mentioned that I did some am dram in my mis-spent youth?

[Harry] Thought you didn't want me bringing that up

[Burt] Yeah, but thinking about it now gives me an idea.....

[Chen] What about my position?

[Burt] I'm getting to that. Your position is that you run a bar in one of the roughest most disreputable part of the Docks.

[Chen] So?

[Burt] So stuff happens. People get hurt sometimes

[Chen] Not in my place! Well...not that often anyway

[Harry] You got blown up!

[Chen] Ach! Don't remind me!

[Burt] My point is, stuff happens that is clearly nothing to do with you, out of your control you might say

[Chen] Your point being...?

[Burt] If something were to happen to Mister Badger, in here, on your premises... well it wouldn't be your fault would it?

[Harry] Burt, just what are you getting at?

[Burt] I mean, nobody would expect you, Chen, to do something to end a mutually profitable business arrangement.... even if it meant ending up on the Triad's good side.

<pause>

[Chen] You'd take care of all the details?

[Burt] Of course. Not sure we have any other option at this point.

[Harry] I'm still not sure what you're getting at Burt

[Chen] You won't like it Harry

[Harry] Well?

[Burt] What I mean is. There's nothing else for it

[Harry] <really exasperated now> What?

[Burt] We'll just have to shoot Mister Badger ourselves

[Harry] *Ta ma duh!!*

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

[Voiceover] Next time, Burt and Harry discuss

[Harry] You really think we can pull this off?

[Burt] If you're as good a shot as you keep saying, yeah

[Harry] We're gonna get bloody on this one Burt

[Burt] Story of my life mate. Story of my life.

<end>

Things would get increasingly dark as this arc progressed and Chen plays an enhanced role in all of this – so much so that one wonders again at her past dealings with the shady side of life in the 'Verse. While I was initially worried about taking what started as a comedy segment down this road, the characters and the story had other ideas and once rolling, this arc more or less wrote itself without any major re-writes. There's still some humour I hope, but to paraphrase Joss, I think that I'd earned the dark places, at least a little bit.

“Badger’s World”
Episode 25

“Beginnings”

Part One

[Voiceover] The wheel of life is an ancient concept. The idea of karma, the concepts of Fate and Destiny are all tied together. A more prosaic way of stating this is “What goes around, comes around”. This of course is nonsense. The rich still get richer and the poor still get poorer. The Wheel is just one more of humanities many ways of convincing itself that the universe is actually fair and that there is a reason for everything. The folk of the Verse are no different from their ancient forebears on Earth That Was in this comfortable self delusion, but just occasionally, enough to allow folk the luxury of belief, things actually turn out that way. Or so it would appear.

Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium, the cycle is drawing to a close...

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background>

[Harry] I still don’t see why we can’t just take out Wing!

[Burt] Harry, for the last time, there’s no point

[Harry] You’re only saying that because you’ve been living the high life undercover. Swanking off to those parties, drinking fancy cocktails all courtesy of Mister <puts on a fake posh accent> “I’m bloody good with a sword” Atherton Wing

[Burt] Keep it down Harry! Look, I keep telling you. First, knocking off nobility is always a bad idea. They never give up on chasing that down. Besides, there are other ways of taking down a troublesome hoity-toity type like Wing

[Harry] <sarcastic> Oh yeah, and we’ve seen so much of that happening

[Burt] I’ll treat that comment with the contempt it deserves. If you’ll let me finish.

[Harry] <dismissive> Suit yourself

[Burt] Second, killing Wing won’t stop the Mechanic trying to make good on the contract. Assassin’s honour or some such nonsense. I’ve been researching this *huan dahn*. He has patterns, though nobody’s ever been able to get a clear capture of his face. Always some sort of prosthetic disguise.

[Harry] Pross what?

[Burt] Never mind. It kind of helped me come up with this plan in the first place. But we’ve got to get this done right. <off mike> Chen? I need some thinking juice! Make it 2 shots!

[Harry] I just can’t believe you convinced Badger to go along with this. He’s not said a word to me about it. And I’m the one who has to take the shot!

[Burt] Ah, I was about to mention that. I wouldn’t try chatting to Mister Badger about it at all. You know, security and all.

[Harry] Oh so discussing this in the open is secure? Geez Burt, I think those Pan Galactic whatsits you’ve been hitting lately have had a permanent affect.

<Chen approaches and puts down 2 shots of Syrian Panther Sweat>

[Chen] You sure you want 2 shots of this stuff Mister Burt? Better be quick before it eats through the glass and spoils my table!

[Burt] Ah, there you are. <dropping into posh> My dear, please explain to my erstwhile colleague here the principles behind selective auditory dampening fields. Preferably in words of one syllable.

[Harry] Burt, you're doing it again

[Burt] I know. Listen. <drinks one shot. Shudders>

[Chen] Harry, this table is right under a sonic fold. It's a kind of air pressure curtain. Sounds get in, but nothing comes out unless you precede it with one of a variety of code words. Like my name.

[Burt] So we can call for drinks and folk outside the fold will hear us. Including Chen of course. The break in the fold lasts as long as the person is speaking, then re-establishes it's cone of silence.

[Harry] So...nobody can hear what we're saying?

[Burt] Exactly. Didn't think I wouldn't take precautions did you?

[Harry] Well I was beginning to wonder

[Burt] We need to maintain the impression that everything is normal. At least for the moment.

[Chen] And it's going to get pretty far from normal a lot sooner than I'd like

[Harry] Look, why hasn't Badger brought this up?

[Burt] Um...he doesn't know

[Harry] What?

[Burt] Mister Badger is not aware of our plan to shoot him down in cold blood, in public, by clever and convincing use of fakery, illusion and misdirection.

[Harry] You gotta be shitting me

[Chen] No. I didn't believe it myself when Mister Burt told me.

[Harry] <angry> How the hell am I supposed to pretend to shoot Badger and him pretend to go all corpsified if he don't even know about it?!

[Burt] You won't be pretending. And neither will he

[Harry] What?

[Burt] You'll take the shot. With a real gun, from concealment as we planned...Chen, everything in place?

[Chen] Yes yes!

[Burt] And Mister Badger falls down, bleeding heavily, with no pulse or breathing and to all intensive purposes and examinations dead as the proverbial.

[Harry] And just how are you arranging that when knows diddly squat about the whole thing?!

[Burt] It's his birthday tomorrow.

[Harry] What?

[Burt] Birthday. As in his actual birthdate. He don't advertise it, prefers to keep us on our toes by announcing one of his "official" birthdays from time to time, but on his actual real birthday, he always buys a new waistcoat.

[Harry] And...?

[Burt] And I happen to know where he's ordered it from. And I have made the necessary alterations, with Chen's help I might add. And tomorrow night, when he's in here doing the rounds and showing it off to all and sundry, I will confront him and appear to shoot him dead in a fit of anger. 'Cept of course it'll be you from over there.

[Harry] So the waistcoat is rigged?

[Burt] Exactly. Armoured and packed with real blood and bits. Real neat job too, you'd never know. And neither will the boss. He has to be doing his "popular squire of the parish" routine to the hilt and he won't if he knows what we've got planned. He'll think he's in a safe place coming down here.

[Harry] So the bullets I'll be using are rigged?

[Burt] Oh no, they're real. You need to knock him flying

[Harry] But you'll be using blanks?

[Burt] Would you trust me to miss with real ammo?

[Chen] Tell him the best bit Mister Burt

[Burt] The coat is also rigged to inject Mister Badger with a controlled dose of para-corticostat. Induces hyper-slowed brain and muscular activity almost instantly He really will appear to be dead by any normal means of examination. The rest of the lads will hustle his apparent body out of the way while you appear, all murderous and vengeful like and go after me. That deflects blame from you as only us 3 know about your job in this.

[Chen] I'll make sure there's a couple of clear routes out

[Burt] You give chase, but somehow I give you the slip. The Mechanic has his cash, I made sure of that first, so he'll not be going after quarry that's already dead. He also never returns to a world once he's taken a job there. That's a pattern he never varies. So Mister Badger lies low for a bit, which he will once he figures out what went on, makes a miraculous recovery later and everything gets back to what passes for normal.

[Harry] But you really do have to get offworld?

[Chen] No other way

[Burt] Can't be helped. I'm too well known. I'll have to lie low somewhere other than Persephone I'm afraid. Plus, can you imagine how pissed of Mister Badger will be with me at this little stunt, even if it does save his life?

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

[Voiceover] Later on, Burt and Harry discuss their motivation

[Harry] How the hell are folk going to believe that you of all people want to kill Badger?

[Burt] Simple. You and me have a blazing argument later on over money, not at this table of course, but I accuse you and Badger of bilking me out of my last bonus.

[Harry] Uh huh

[Burt] And then I'll rant on about how Mister Badger's been doing it to me for years and how he's going to get what's coming to him. I'll distance myself from you and Mister Badger and storm off in a right old snit. All in public.

[Harry] Think anyone will buy it?

[Burt] They'd better, or we're all gonna be curling our toes up for real.

[Harry] Murder by illusion. I dunno Burt, sounds like some crazy plot from one of those old re-worked movies from Earth That Was.

[Burt] I don't know what you mean!

<end>

Beginnings was originally a single episode, but it would have been too big. Having the second part as an element of our "back in time" Signal Holiday Special for the end of 2008 worked well. And so it became 2 discrete episodes. And yes, this does draw it's inspiration from the 1980's Bryan Brown movie FX: Murder By Illusion.

“Badger’s World”
Episode 26

“Beginnings”

Part Two

[Voiceover] Planning the perfect murder is an old story hook for thriller writers. Actually executing the plan, is another matter. Things come full circle and comeuppances are imminent. So could this really be the end, or just another beginning. Only time will tell.

And how **do** you execute a perfect *fake* murder, especially when even the target is unaware of his supposed fate?

Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium, Burt and Harry are about to find out...

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background. Louder than usual>

[Harry] I got a real bad feeling about this Chen

[Chen] Oh smarten up Harry. You can do this. Look you heard what happened to Wing already?

[Harry] Yeah. Even Burt didn’t let that bit of his plan slip. Though he must have had help from Badger for that.

[Chen] Of course, Madame Zizu wouldn’t do it for just anybody. Enlightened self interest Harry, surely Mister Burt taught you that much. It was worth more to her to let the captures get out than to retain them for...other purposes.

[Harry] Well of course, but how the hell did those pictures of Wing’s....unsavoury encounters make it into the gossip columns so gorrarn quickly?

[Chen] Oh there are ways. Gutter journalists are the same everywhere. Slip them a hint of juicy scandal, especially concerning one so recently fallen from the upper ranks and they will close in like hyenas.

[Harry] Nothin’ like kicking a man when he’s down eh? Couldn’t happen to a more deserving fella!

[Chen] He won’t be able to show his face on Persephone anywhere. I heard he’s already booked an “extended vacation” on Bellerophon. Money is all that matter there. Look, you’d better get ready before Badger calls you over and you can’t get away

[Harry] Yeah, the party’s started already. Shame to end it all like this.

[Chen] Think of it as a new beginning. That’s the best way

[Harry] Yeah, I’ll just keep telling myself that when I’m rotting in a Fed cell

[Chen] Go!

<fade to interlude music>

[Chen] Oh there you are Mister Burt.

[Burt] Finally. Nobody’s taken a shot early so we can all go home and forget about this insane idea?

[Chen] No. Sorry

[Burt] Didn't think so. Well here goes. And Chen? *Fay-chang gan-shyay*

<Burt approaches a loud part of the bar. A few voices are heard. "Hey, it's Burt" "Wondered where you'd got to Burt" "You puttin' on weight Burt?">

[Burt] Alright lads? Look, I just need a quick word with the boss. <under his breath> Alright then.

[Burt] Badger?

[Badger] Yes... <lifted from Serenity>

< sound of gun being cocked, a shot is heard, the impact spins Badger around and he crashes to the floor/ This may be slo mo like Romanna's death, Have to try it. See what works>

[Burt] That settles a lot of scores.<yells over the screams and panic> Outta my way! <fires more blanks adding to confusion> Move!

<Voices of crew heard "Shit, he's really dead!" "Oh god!!" "Boss, wake up!" " Get him out the back!">

[Harry] <emerging from the rest room where he took the actual shot from> Burt! You son of a whore! I'll end you!

[Burt] Move! Or I'll execute every last one of you mother....

[Mechanic] <cutting him off, up close and personal> No, you won't

< we hear a different gunshot. This is close, loud and messy sounding>

[Burt] Ughhhh! You, shot me, You bastard! I.uuuhhhh <collapses to floor>

[Mechanic] Just a keen worker. I take a job, someone dies. This time, it's you. Adios. <runs out>

[Harry] Burt?!

[Chen] Mister Burt? Susan, call a medic! Now!

[Harry] Burt? Oh hell this 'aint part of the plan

[Burt] <groans> Harry, shut up you tit, someone'll hear <groans>

[Harry] Aw c'mon Burt, not like this. Look you'll be fine

[Burt] Saved you a job anyway. Badger probably really would want my head after this little drama

[Harry] Burt. Aw shit, Burt, the blood, it's black. I...I can't stop it

[Burt] Liver shot. That's his favourite. Told you I researched the bugger. Nothin you can do Harry. Ya gotta let me go.

[Harry] Aw c'mon Burt

[Chen] Harry, here use this, stop the bleeding. I'll take it from here, You need to go see to Badger

[Harry] But Burt...

[Chen] You've done your job, make sure everyone thinks it was you. Go. See to Badger and tell the boys that you took care of Burt.

[Harry] I...*ta ma duh!* <leaves>

[Susan] Chen! The medics are on the way, but it'll be 20 minutes at least. Some major incident uptown

[Burt] More than I have. They gone?

[Chen] What? Yes, soon as you went down, the crew went back to getting Badger out of here just like you said they would

[Burt] Standard procedure, get the boss out of the way to look after him. Good.

[Chen] Burt, I...this isn't good. Ay ya, you really are bleeding to death!

[Burt] Sonuva bitch shot low, clipped the edge of the armour

[Chen] You knew he'd be here!

[Burt] Why else do you think I'd try such a crazy scheme? Desperation! Ahhhh God, that bloody hurts

[Susan] Here Burt, drink this.

[Burt] Susan? Thanks luv. Ah, Chen's finest Throat Wobbler. On the house then?

[Chen] Burt!

[Burt] What? Can't a man die with a free pint at least? I... uhhhh

[Chen] Mister Burt? Burt? Stay with me! Susan get those medics here. Burt? *Ay ya tien a!* Wake up....

<fades out into end section music>

Epilogue:

[Voiceover] Several days later, at the landing bays....

<Eavesdown Docks FX, some from Serenity, some crowd scene FX, all sorts>

[Harry] Ah, Excuse me? Miss?

[Burt] <falsetto at first> What? Oh bloody hell it's you Harry

[Harry] Aren't you supposed to be dead?

[Burt] <falsetto> I don't know what you mean young man.

[Harry] Burt!

[Burt] Oh fine. Yes, it's me. No I 'aint dead. Which you clearly knew from Chen or you wouldn't be here. Still a bit sore.

[Harry] I guess she did kinda let slip that you might be making your way off world after all. Though never thought I'd see you in something like that again!

[Burt] Harry, I swear by my that I'll....oh what's the use. Look, Madame Zizu had this other frock lying around. I hate to admit it, but around here at least, the look works and folk don't bother checking any closer less'n they're interested in that sort of shenanigans. I can usually persuade them that their best interests lie elsewhere!

[Harry] Usually?

[Burt] Oh don't start. So. Come to see me off then?

[Harry] Something like that. Burt, what would you have done if the Mechanic had taken a head shot at you, or gone for Badger before we could act out our little drama?

[Burt] Well we wouldn't be having this conversation for starters you numpty! On the plus side, I wouldn't be standing here looking like mutton dressed as lamb in a bloody dress. Again!

[Harry] Well, I wasn't going to say anything, but...

[Burt] Good! <ahem> How's "his nibs" doing then?

[Harry] Madder'n hell. You turn up not dead and I guarantee it'll be temporary. Where you heading?

[Burt] Not sure. Transport's leaving for Beylix in a few minutes, but I thought I might head for Albion eventually. Always hankered after seeing the old homeworld Mum and Dad came from. We'll see. I can go anywhere really

[Harry] Back to the old freelancing days then?

[Burt] Maybe, though I'm getting too old for this *go se*. Look, Harry, just do me the one favour.

[Harry] Anything Burt

[Burt] Keep an eye out for the missus. She does worry you know and I'll send word soon as I can.

[Harry] No problem Burt. Anything else?

[Burt] Actually, there is one more thing

[Harry] What's that?

[Burt] Well, getting' passage has eaten up all my readies. Don't suppose you can spare the price of a pint or two? I'm gasping!

[Harry] Some things never change.....

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

And there it ended.

At least, for the first time (which of course wasn't quite the end after all...)

The What's In A Signal article that follows was supposed to be the last outing for Burt and Harry. It wasn't. The Lost Tales notes that follow are a mostly unedited file that I collected some thoughts in when I was beginning to struggle with coming up with new episodes.

What's In A Signal: Badger's World

By Nick Edwards

Well, Badger's World has come to an end at last. This has been quite a ride. 26 regular episodes over 2 seasons of The Signal, plus the Summer of Serenity special - episode 501 and Badger's World Live at Dragon Con 2008. Phew!

So, how did it all start and just what goes into making the longest running Firefly audio drama segment we've ever done?

Waaaay back when I was a new crew member of The Signal in early 2007, there was some discussion amongst the crew about doing a new comedy segment for the show. We'd had good feedback about Captain Reynold's Way and Dear BDH and other light hearted segments in seasons 1 and 2 and we needed a new comedy series. The idea of doing something with Badger came up. One of the most popular supporting characters in Firefly, Mark Sheppard's wonderful portrayal of this dodgy cockneyfied crime boss was rich with comic potential. Translating this into something we could produce on a regular basis however meant someone had to play Badger himself. This really didn't work out too well.

<insert clip from my substitution of Badger in Serenity>

I just couldn't pull it off and simply sounded too unlike Mark. The plan was dropped. However, Carolyn Parkinson suggested that maybe we could do something with some of Badger's henchmen: the crew of extras that Mark had worked well enough with in Serenity, that he requested the same guys back for Shindig. With no speaking parts, they could sound however we wanted. This had potential. As soon as the "2 henchmen in a bar complaining about Badger" idea was brought up, something clicked. There was a UK comedy show years ago called "Alas Smith and Jones" with Mel Smith and Gryff Rhys Jones. One of their regular sketches had just the 2 of them at a table, face to face, almost a talking heads set up, just banging on about often mundane matters. Neither character was too bright and the snappy dialogue was very funny.

<insert clip from Alas Smith And Jones>

Almost immediately that I thought of translating this set up to the Eavesdown Docks, the characters of Harry and Burt came into being. The names were initially just convenient tags, because at this point, it was not even clear who would be writing the segment and we were still at the brainstorming stage. However, I floated a few situations and snippets of conversation past the rest of the crew and the feedback was positive. Inspired by this, I took those first few lines and went off to write Reasonable, the first episode.

<clip Reasonable>

I cannot stress enough how important Jill's input was at this stage. She took a basic script of mine that I hoped was mildly amusing and created a whole "feel" for the segment. From the opening theme using the hugely appropriate Eavesdown Docks track by The Bedlam Bards, to the background sounds of Chen's Throat Emporium (and yes that was a nod to Douglas Adams' Hitch Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy before you ask). I was gob smacked to hear my script turned into something that sounded so professional and appropriate to the very slight story that was contained in the script. Jill went on to produce and edit every single episode of season 1 of Badger's World and made it sound great.

Credit must also go to Les as Burt's counterpart Harry, Kevin as the Announcer and later on Miranda as bar owner Chen.

The way it all comes together sounds fairly straight forward. I'll give you an example.

I write a script in response to a writing assignment from the show's producer. Sometimes it almost writes itself, as the characters of Burt, Harry and Chen established themselves pretty early on. The dialogue almost spills out and requires very little tweaking to make it work. Other times it could take days bashing away trying to get the right hook. Anyway, the script, typically 3 pages, is placed in the Signal's wiki for review by all the crew. Comments and suggestions may lead to minor tweaks being made to improve the script before the show's producer sets the recording assignments. Myself, Les, Kevin and Miranda record all our lines at home, clean them up as necessary and upload them to the Signal file exchange maintained by Les. Jill then downloads these mp3 files, stitches the dialogue together in an audio editing programme according to the script, adds sound effects, the opening and closing themes and anything else needed. This also requires a fine attention to comic timing or else the dialogue falls flat. Sometimes re-dos of certain lines are required for clarity or because the emphasis was wrong or even occasionally because the original line does not work when actually acted out. The final finished mp3 segment is then re-uploaded to the file exchange for download and inclusion into the final show mix by whoever publishes the show. Usually Jill in seasons 1-3 and Miranda more recently.

Sounds like a lot of steps, but essentially straightforward, yes? Well, sometimes. I found early on in episode 7 of Badger's World, that adding different locations and settings almost exponentially increases the editing time required.

<insert clip ep 7 Dirt>

This is why generally, Burt and Harry rarely stray from Chen's bar. On a 2 weekly schedule for producing the Signal, it can't really be done any other way.

Luckily, this formula worked well and we've stuck with it till the end.

Now, just going back to the early days, the whole idea was still at the experimental stage and I had no idea if it would work or how many "blagging a pint" gags I could come up with. I was treating it as essentially a one gag setup that would probably be very short lived. After all, how long could you call something Badger's World without actually having Badger in it? Well, quite a while it turns out! J

Encouraged by early feedback from listeners as well as the rest of the Signal crew, I made gradually more concerted efforts to spin this out, bringing in pop culture references and playing around within the basic format. Towards the end of season 3 of the Signal, I began to introduce a few more backstory elements and to try and tie things a little more into Firefly continuity. Though the entirety of Badgers World almost certainly takes place between Shindig and Those Left Behind, it could really fit almost anywhere. So, the first season of Badgers World came to a satisfyingly loud conclusion.

<insert clip from BW13: The End?>

But where to go now? To put this in context, at the end of 2007, Jill Arway decided to step down as Captain of The Signal in order to concentrate on other projects such as the Dark Places audio drama. This meant that her Signal related duties had to become less onerous and time consuming. One of the things she would be passing on to others would be the editing of Badger's World. Meeting Jill for lunch over the holiday period, she handed me a very valuable item. A hard drive with all the sound effects, music and sundries used in not just the production of Badger's World, but the Signal itself. Having by this time had some experience of audio editing (the Signal was a great apprenticeship in that regard!), I was to take over editing the segment. Luckily for me, with Jill's marvellous groundwork laid out already, the transition was relatively painless, though that first episode of Season 4 of the Signal would also be my first as a producer.

And so it continued up to the end of Season 4 with the dramatic conclusion to Burt and Harry's partnership working for Mister Badger. The last 6 episodes were something of a departure, comprising an actual story arc for the first time. I wrote these over the summer break that Badgers World had - apart from the Badger's World Live at Dragon Con of course. That was really gratifying to be able to hear a live audiences response to my script, ably performed by Kevin, Les, Kari, Wayne and Miranda, with Burt

appearing in a pre-recorded section. Anyway, I had decided by this point that the segment was approaching the end of its natural life and wrote these episodes in order to wrap up the series.

It has been an absolute blast to do this segment. The writing has been immensely rewarding, the acting has been fun and folk have been kind enough to say how much they have enjoyed the segment. Even Mark Sheppard was kind enough to say it "wasn't bad", which made my year I can tell you! My CD copy of Season 1 of Badger's world with Mark's signature is one of my proudest Firefly related possessions. But it would not have happened outside of this extraordinary group effort that is The Signal pod cast or without our listeners. And so, in order to give credit where it is due, here, for one time only, is the full and complete credits for Badger's World. Including the holiday special "Permanent Waves" that replaced it in the final episode of 2007

Thank you.

<insert full credit segment>

Normal opening theme and intro

KEVIN: In season one of Badgers World, Burt was played by Nick Edwards, Harry was played by Les Howard, Chen was played by Miranda Thomas, Susan was played by Kari Hayley, the delivery kid was Elanor Edwards and Mrs Badger the second was played by Claire Musso. The announcer was Kevin Bachelder.

KARI: Permanent Waves starred Kevin Cummings as Brad and Larrisa Myhowich as Janet. The producer was played by Ben Edwards, the Miranda Disaster Fund spokeswoman was Joy Edwards and Nick was The Reaver

Season One of Badgers World was written by Nick Edwards and edited and produced by Jill Arroway.

<segue music>

LES (in Harry's Voice) In season 2 of Badger's World <beat> hell, we all played the same parts, or didn't you figure that out yet?

NICK (as Burt): Harry you numpty, just read the bleedin' script will ya

MIRANDA (as Chen) Oh for goodness sake. Here, I'll do it. In addition to the regular cast, Wayne Hutchinson played Bobby Badger <insert Badger Badger Badger bit>, the Convention Steward, Billy and Henchman 2. Ben Edwards was Henchman 3, Kev Bayer was Henchman 1, James Parkinson played The Mechanic and Mark Sheppard was Badger.

Badger's World season 2 was written and edited by Nick Edwards

<pause>

LES: So now what?

KEVIN: Next time, Burt and Harry.....

NICK: Oh no you don't. That's it. Finito Benito. End of. Done. Finished. Never again.

LES: Aw, you always say that when it's your round Burt!

KEVIN, MIRANDA, KARI: Yeah he's right, tight wad, never changes, can say that again etc etc etc

<fade to end music>

Badger's World

The Lost Tales

Can I revive Badger's World? Probably. There are several possibilities. Somewhere, I made a start on an aborted sequel story, but can't find it!!! Probably just as well.

- 1) ~~Direct Sequel: Burt is offworld and persona non grata with Mr Badger. Things are unlikely to be able to return to the comfortable evenings in Chen's nursing a pint of Brain Death. Any stories set after "The Beginning" would need to be multi scene, complex audio drama – maybe OK for a one off (I suspect the Holiday Special will be of this variety), but not a regular feature.~~
- 2) **"Between The Lines": Maybe the only viable approach for a continuation of several episodes. A sort of "Lost Tales" limited series of standard format BW that could fit anywhere in seasons 1 or 2. (Ep501 already did this effectively) The format of BW apart from the final arc allows this possibility because there's no real set time apart from a few discrete events that occur sequentially – so fitting in extra episodes only needs to take account of these in placing them in continuity. Working in S2 might be the most likely timeframe to be able to fit stuff in easily.**
- 3) ~~The Prequel: Allows the possibility of doing "origin" stories for both Burt and Harry and possibly Chen as well. First meetings, early escapades, charting Badger's rise to semi-respectability (in his perception), even tying into first jobs for Serenity. Could be tricky to handle convincingly, but if set close enough to S1, may be workable. I would need to have some more blag a pint gags (at least a couple)~~

The issue with any of these approaches, is coming up with the plot hook or gags that the ep hangs on. Done right, it should slot into existing continuity easily.

So, what are these? Good gorram question. Possibles:

Burt and Harry get bored with the mundanities of henching – again

Burt and Harry try some of Chen's new brew – with unfortunate side effects

Burt and Harry play pool (possibility of gag around "ball failure" epic ball failure?)

Burt and Harry complain about the U Day bores making speeches (what did they do in the war?)

Chen has some problems that B&H help sort out (possibly involving drains)

Chen's brother runs the bar one time ("Chen?" "Yeah" "You're not Chen!" "Yes I am" etc)

Harry has a crisis of conscience – briefly

Mr Badger is recruiting – again. B&H have to help "audition" hopefuls. (Or just moan about it "bloody newbies")

New local laws/Alliance laws cause a problem for Mr Badger's latest scheme. B&H have to get around the problem – or run headlong into it

~~BW The Musical (based on G&S – "A Henchman's lot is not a happy one, happy one")???? Nah.~~

B&H have to move some furniture for Mr Badger. (Including a piano – Burt do you know the piano's on my foot? No Harry, but you hum it and I'll play it. Tunes help you breathe more easily. Piano For Tea. Tinkling the ivories (euphemism for knocking someones teeth out???)

More stuff about fruit

Talking about that cortex show The Terraformers

Computer problems of some sort

An ep entirely from Chen's POV, sort of internal monologue. B& H feature only peripherally. Lots of acting for Miranda and Kari

An expansion of BW into the docks – how the locals deal with Badger, some local colour?

Expansions of anything to do with Persephone, doesn't need to confine itself to the docks. Could touch on Wing's fall from grace and determination to uncover anyone who was behind Mal's presence

A police/Fed procedural – officer trying to nail Badger for years, getting nowhere (turns out his boss is old drinking buddy of Burt's)

Pondering the imponderables – Burt's brush with Buddhism (The sound of one hand clapping my arse! – maybe not, possibly offensive, but if shown with Burt nevertheless retaining some of the cultural attitudes....implying he spent some time on Sinhon???)

Coffee! Prequel? They were searching for the shooter for 3 days with Burt hallucinating much of the time (Seamus o'Flaherty) there is also a reference to a little "incident" while they were tracking the shooter, made in ep 19. – Burt working over at least 3 folk who are paid up for protection from Badger

Note: there is an indeterminate gap between BW 20 Convention and BW LIVE, which is presumed to take place prior to ep 21 Omens and the final arc. Several episodes could be placed here as that gap could be several months.

~~There is potential for a "Posh Burt" story set during the final arc, but it might be a step to far – silly voices for comic effect is one thing, but to sustain as a serious undercover op? probably not. Oh, wait....~~

There is a ref in ep 7 Dirt about an unfortunate "incident" with Burt bribing the *wrong* corrupt customs official for some smuggling deal for Badger

There are several possible gaps in season 1. After Ep 12 (so ref can be made to stinky Dyton Blue Cheese) and before ep 13. Between eps 8 Food and 9 Prodigal, between 7 Dirt and 8 Food

Possible titles:

The end of the world

History lesson

Ommmm

Market Day

Stick of Rock

Rock and Roll

Christmas ('Tis the Season and Deck The Halls kinda covers this)

Parents

Sins of The Flesh

Game On

Game Over

The Trouble with Trinkets

Out To Lunch

One Stick Short of a Bundle

Of Dice and Men (gambling based obviously – something Badger probably has a sideline in)

The Good, The Bad and The Badger

Our Mrs Badger (follow up of ep 14 – recovering “expenses” assignment for B&H. Claire played Mrs Badger II, so possibilities there. Might have to go offworld for this, but that’s a chance to compare a different planet’s bars)

Deconstruction of Falling Tarts (some sort of B5/Mrs Miggins reference possibly :-)

A Badgers Tale

Much Ado About Badger

The Taming of The Badger

Once Upon a Time in the Docks

Reluctant

Persuasion

Incredulous

Complicated

'Tis The Season (completed for S5E21) My wonderful wife Joy came up with The Little Book of Calm idea, which of course itself is a direct nod to Episode 1 of the terrific UK comedy, Black Books.

Looking back now, I kind of wish that I had persisted and written some of those stories suggested by those titles, but titles were usually the easy thing. Still, there was a bit more to come yet.

“Badger’s World”

Holiday Special

“’Tis The Season...”

[Voiceover] In all the years since Humanity left Earth That Was, much has been forgotten. Old mistakes have been made anew and history has more than once repeated itself, along with some new twists that make the old errors look mild in comparison. And yet, many old traditions have continued almost unchanged since before the great exodus. Certain dates have retained their significance and the giving and exchanging of gifts remains a popular seasonal activity. With one or two exceptions of course... Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium...

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background>

[Harry] All I’m sayin’ is that it wouldn’t hurt none for him to show a little bit of...

[Burt] Harry, this **is** Mister Badger we’re talkin’ about

[Harry] Yeah but....

[Burt] Our employer

[Harry] Yeah but he....

[Burt] Does what he wants

[Harry] That don’t give him the right to...

[Burt] It gives him every right. Harry, Mister Badger is the boss. We’re just the hired help as it were

[Harry] Aw hell Burt, I know that, it’s just...

[Burt] Might be nice if he showed a little bit of common human decency once in a while?

[Harry] Well...yeah

[Burt] Be grateful for services rendered every now and then?

[Harry] That too

[Burt] Maybe even receive a gift in the spirit it was intended?

[Harry] Exactly my point Burt

<beat>

[Burt] You still don’t know Mister Badger very well do you.

[Chen] Who doesn’t?

[Burt] Ah, Chen. I was just trying to explain to Harry the finer points of what to expect if you give Mister Badger a present at this time of year

[Harry] And not explainin’ it very well

[Burt] Well, that's as maybe. Those our drinks?

[Chen] No I just carry this heavy tray around for the exercise. You got coin?

[Burt] Can't you just stick it on the....

[Chen] No tab! Not since that last little credit incident. You drink, you pay

[Burt] Yeah yeah..

<coins exchanged, drinks put down>

[Burt] And you can wipe that smile off your face Harry, it's your round next

<beat>

[Chen] So who made the mistake of giving Badger a Christmas present?

[Harry] Ah...that'd be me I guess

[Burt] And the bigger mistake of expecting something in return

[Chen] What? Your Christmas bonus a bit on the thin side this year Harry?

[Harry] Nah, it's just...

[Burt] And here we go again

[Chen] So what did you give him?

[Harry] Ah....

[Burt] Go on. Tell her.

[Harry] Ah....The Little Book of Calm

<beat>

[Chen] You're kidding

[Harry] Hey it's a genuine antique from Earth That Was

[Chen] Just like this one?

[Harry] Yeah exactly like...hey, wait a minute!

[Burt] Oh this is good

[Harry] <agitated> That's the book I gave Badger! I mean the actual copy, I recognise the stains on the cover!

[Chen] Well maybe you should take a look at page 43

[Harry] <very agitated now>What!

<sound of book being leafed through>

[Burt] Allow me. It says, “Why not try a few drops of lavender oil in your bathwater, Let the scent gently waft your concerns away”

[Harry] <not at all calm> What in the sphincter of hell is that supposed to mean?

[Burt] Or maybe the last page might be more edifying: “ If you have enjoyed this facsimile antique edition, why not pass it on” Compliments of Waffler, Tat and Kitsch, a division of The Blue Sun Corporation

<beat>

[Harry] Oh.

[Chen] Can I have my book back now?

[Burt] What? Oh sorry Chen, there ya go.

[Chen] <very slightly annoyed> Thank you!

<Chen leaves>

[Harry] Look, that still doesn't explain why Badger not only didn't even say thank you, but now he's simply passing on gifts to the next acquaintance he bumps into?

[Burt] Well it is the season of giving

[Harry] That's what I thought!

[Burt] Yeah, but you didn't think it all the way through did you

[Harry] Huh?

[Burt] You failed to take into consideration the fact that Mister Badger is a tight arsed git with all the seasonal cheer of a plague ridden Reaver and just as likely to give you a hug and a kiss under the mistletoe as acknowledge a pressie from a minion as anything other than his rightful due to do with what he wishes.

[Harry] Oh. That.

[Burt] Never mind. It's your round

[Harry] How's that supposed to make me feel better?

[Burt] It's not. But it will do me a world of good!

<fade through pub music to end title/credit>

[Voiceover] Next time, Burt and Harry discuss trust and obligation in financial transactions....

[Harry] I don't get it. That was a guaranteed authentic genuine centuries old.....what?

[Burt] Don't tell me. You got it from Sergei right?

[Harry] Ah....yeah

[Burt] I rest my case <end>

Yes, this is very much a reference to the comedy series Black Books...again... that I also did a Broadwaves review for. Hilarious and too good not to nick a few ideas from.

The second live episode of Badger's World followed. This one however would find me **able** to attend Dragon Con 2010, so I couldn't *not* write something for the occasion.

Meeting many of my fellow Signal crew members, hanging out with them, doing the live Signal show, winning a Parsec Award and being able to accept it in person, meeting Marian Call, seeing several BDHs in person and relaxing at the bar, watching my son in the parade, getting drunk with the crew of Browncoats: Redemption and all the other amazingness that is Dragon Con was very special to me. Having got back into writing mode for this, a second Holiday Special followed soon after, very much along the lines of the first one, but with a different gag.

Badgers World

Notes From the Edge

[Narrator] The desire to communicate is an overwhelmingly human characteristic - one that has found ever more varied expression as history has progressed. But sometimes the classics are the best. While sending a wave may often be the preferred form of long distance communication in the 'Verse, with cargo carriers of all sizes plying their trade between the worlds, the written word has survived as a more traditional and often more private method of communication. Indeed both Federal and independent postal services still thrive, particularly between the widespread worlds and stations of the Border and Rim. Meanwhile, absolutely nowhere near Chen's Throat Emporium...for a change...a certain employee of a certain local entrepreneur, businessman and pillar of the local community is about to receive a delivery.....

[Postie] Candygram for Mr Mongo! Candygram for Mr Mongo!

[Harry] <grumpy - it's early> Jeez Murphy, don't you ever get tired of that? It weren't funny the first gorrarn time and it sure 'aint funny this time.

[Postie] Ah, you love the chirpy top o' the mornin' banter of your local postman!

[Harry] No. I really don't. So, you got somethin' for me or do I have to suffer your terminal cheeriness right up to where it **really** becomes terminal?

[Postie] <beat - suddenly more deferential> You have a letter.

[Harry] So why 'aint I reading it?

[Postie] <slightly more unsure> Because...I haven't handed it to you yet?

[Harry] Got it. <snatches letter. Then, suddenly more excited> Hey, it's from Burt!

<slight pause, maybe a musical cue>

[Burt] Ezra Skyplex, Summer 2514. Dear Harry, don't know when this will reach you, had to use a roundabout postal carrier route for... well I'll get to the reasons in a bit... blimey, I haven't had to write a letter in a while, still, as long as you can still read, we can skip over any stylistic oddities. How's things back at the docks? I assume Mister Badger still has some sort of grudge over that little incident...

[Harry] Incident? Geez Burt, you shot him!

[Burt] ...that was entirely necessary at the time and which saved his ungrateful *pi gu* into the bargain, but I don't suppose that cuts any ice with the boss, so I shall have to stay away from Persephone for the foreseeable future I'm afraid. The missus won't be best pleased...

[Harry] You can say that again!

[Burt] ...but that can't be helped. I wrote to her as well of course. Glad to hear that you've been helping out...

[Harry] Helping out? Unpaid skivvy more like. You sure married a demandin' lady Burt!

[Burt] ...around the house from time to time, but I'm sure my little Lotus blossom appreciates it....

[Harry] <sarcastic> Uh huh

[Burt] ...and the money I sent her way should have put her in a better mood...

[Harry] Relative to what?

[Burt] ...as well as covering any out of pocket expenses you might have incurred...

[Harry] Ink what?

[Burt] ... sorry, I mean she should have slipped you some coin to cover the groceries.

[Harry] Oh, right, yeah, we're all square on that front.

[Burt] So, guess you were wondering why the roundabout way of getting in touch with you?

[Harry] The thought had crossed my mind, yeah.

[Burt] Nothing wrong with a wave of course, but they do seem to have a habit of being intercepted and directly traced back to them as what sent it, so this way is sufficiently vague and old fashioned enough that certain parties I'm currently keen to avoid are less likely to develop an unhealthy interest in it and consequently doing yours truly a mischief...

[Harry] He's doin' it again, hell Burt, say what you mean!

[Burt] I'm in a spot of bother.

[Harry] Well there's a surprise.

[Burt] I need a way to contact that cousin of yours that works the skyplex here around Ezra. I'm fine for the moment, got a nice little sideline as it happens in personal protection. Don't even need to break heads that often as Niska's goons tend to keep things in line, but folks from outsystem like a bit of extra insurance and I'm nicely incognito as just one more bodyguard for hire. Local trouble isn't the issue or I'd be doing a lot less breathing these days. But I need a friendly contact to help me slip away un-noticed like as there's a bit of an issue with my travel papers in that they're about as kosher as one of Mister Badgers curries.

[Harry] <shudder> Oh don't remind me about those!

[Burt] Point is, your cousin could smooth the way for me to move on without attracting unwanted attention from shall we say, those whose midribs are of a purplish hue.

[Harry] Oh wait, I got this one, Purplebellies!

[Burt] And I don't want to complicate it for your cousin with his boss who might take a dim view of folks leaving unofficial like without paying him his due to have his blokes look the other way, so I need you to contact him and shall we say, arrange an introduction so we can have a quiet chat.

[Harry] Recon I can do that. Dodging the Feds are ya Burt? That don't sound too smart.

[Burt] And before you make any comments about me being stupid to get the Feds looking for me...it was...necessary. I won't go into details, but while they don't have much of an official presence here, they do keep an eye on things that they're interested in and me catching a transport cross system to Greenleaf is something they would notice.

[Harry] Ah hah. And then onto a stop off at Dyton Colony by local shuttle. Hell Burt, you going back to the beginning or do you just have a hankering for that Dyton Blue *go-se*?

[Burt] And no, it's not for some cunning cheese smuggling operation! I just have something that I need to pick up before I can disappear off the Feds radar for good and maybe get to where I can actually relax for a bit. So, if you could see your way to arranging a discrete meetup with your cousin, I can get off this bleedin tin can back to a place with sky. I'd avoid sending a wave though, we don't want Niska or the Feds getting wind of this for everyone's sake. <beat> Of course, you do realize what this means don't you?

[Harry] <beat> Oh no!

[Burt] You're going to have to write a letter!

<fade into end music>

Note, the 2514 date in this is **wrong**. That is what was written and recorded, but a later check of potential continuity shows that Mal Reynolds had probably not even purchased Serenity at this time. This episode is set sometime after Ep26 Beginnings Part 2 and that in turn is set some time post Shindig and possibly even after Those Left Behind, so 2517/18 is more likely. This is the first of only 2 post Beginnings episodes, the other being at least another year further on in 2518, 19 or even 2520 and definitely after the Miranda broadwave in Serenity. (BW30: Flying Visit. The last episode of Badgers World) Serenity the BDM takes place Dec 2518 and Browncoats:Redemption in Feb 2519, so the final episode, could be contemporary with that.

“Badgers World”

“Holiday Special II”

“Deck The Halls”

[Voiceover] Celebration is one habit that humanity has never grown out of in all the years since the great Exodus. As much as it must have been on Earth That Was, people will use **any** excuse for a party. With the great mingling of cultures that occurred even before humanity left its ancestral home, every day, somewhere in the ‘Verse has some kind of holiday. But the big ones, the ones that transcend culture, religion or original ethnicity are a time for everyone to enjoy. And none more so, than that most universal celebration...the Transmogrification of Miss Mavis Garcia Cheung. For over 400 years all peoples in the Verse have celebrated this most remarkable story that arose in the ashes of a dying world and saw it's remarkable conclusion in the earliest days of the human settlement of our new home. The details of course are familiar to every child who looks forward to putting up the decorations for that magical 37 hour period once a year, but not everyone looks forward to the disruption that the festivities bring.

Meanwhile, in Chen’s Throat Emporium...

<FX: sounds of pub, music and voices in background>

[Harry] Awww cheer up Burt, it's only once a year

[Burt] It's not the perennial nature of the situation that bothers me Harry

[Harry] Well what's got you so gorram grumpy then?

[Burt] It's what Mr Badger told me after we finished that last little escapade

[Harry] Before or after he got all high and mighty about his “Eavesdown Founders Organisation Festive Fund” and how it stimulated the local economy

[Burt] Oh don't get me started on that

[Harry] Well I know Badger was lording it up about how we'd be coining it in, but it 'aint that bad an idea

[Burt] What, apart from the fact that the initials say E.F.O.F.F?

[Harry] Hehehe, that's kinda funny

[Burt] As good an indicator as any that it's something that will land us right in the *go-se*

[Harry] Aw c'mon Burt

[Burt] Oh don't get me wrong, we'll make some platinum for the first few days, but it won't last. Mr Badgers' Get Rich Quick schemes never do and you, me and the boys will have to sort out the mess as usual. So no change there. Anyway, it was after he made his “Grand Announcement”

[Harry] So what was it that's got you looking like you had to pay for a round?

[Burt] Oi!

[Harry] Well hell, Burt, you usually enjoy T day as much as anyone

[Burt] It's the Twins

[Harry] Huh?

[Burt] Oh of course, you wouldn't remember them. This was a few years back. Miles and Davis Hall. Tried to muscle in on one of Mr Badger's earliest projects here in the docks. Almost managed to corner the “insurance” game as well before we scared 'em off with a little help from one of the smaller Triads. Nasty pieces of work the pair of 'em – I mean you expect it in our line of work, but these 2 really got on my wick.

<Chen approaches>

[Chen] Who did?

[Harry] Oh, hi Chen. Burt was telling me about some of the more unsavoury characters that used to work these parts

[Chen] Ah...as opposed to all the fine upstanding pillars of society that grace my establishment these days

[Burt] Oi! Bit less of the sarcasm if you don't mind

[Harry] Aw relax Burt, she don't mean us

[Chen] <slight hesitation> No. Of course not. So what's got you so full of the joys of T day Mr Burt?

[Burt] You do remember the Hall twins don't you?

[Chen] Oh don't remind me. Them and their wretched Jazz Hands scams

[Burt] They're back. Seems they have apparently gone legit and somehow got themselves an office on the smart side of the docks

[Chen] Ai ya!

[Burt] And Mr Badger has told me to go over there and have a “quiet word”. Alone. Tonight.

[Harry] Well they can't be that tough Burt

[Burt] Oh they're not hard cases or anything, just sneaky, cunning, moderately dangerous and mainly just really, really annoying. Mr Badger doesn't want a big gunfight upsetting his big eff off launch party, so he wants someone who knows them to check it out first.

[Harry] <eager> And then there'll be a gunfight?

<beat>

[Burt] You're a man of simple tastes Harry. Look, I'd better head over there if I'm going to do this. No point in putting it off.

[Chen] Well that's one way of getting out of helping to put up the decorations I guess.

[Burt] Very funny. Look, if I'm not back in time for last orders Harry, then you can come looking for me

[Harry] OK Burt

[Burt] <muttering as he leaves> I dunno, bloody stupid errand, today of all days, flippin' Badger and his grand money making pyramid nonsense.....

<fades to musical cue to mark time passing>

[Voiceover] Later on that same evening...

[Harry] Oh there you are Burt

[Burt] Harry! So what's your poison this fine auspicious T day?

[Harry] What's my what?

[Burt] Drink Harry, what do you want to drink. I'm buying.

<beat>

[Harry] You feeling OK Burt?

[Burt] Never better me old mucker. Ask me how it went. <shouts> Chen! Round of drinks over here please! Go on, ask me.

[Harry] OK, I'll bite. How did it go?

[Burt] Well, you know how I said they'd gone legit?

[Harry] Yeah....

[Burt] Purest *fey ooh*.

[Harry] Uh huh

[Burt] About as legit as Mr Badgers latest attempt to “stimulate” the local economy.

[Harry] I get it Burt, the Hall twins aren't actually respectable businessmen

<Chen approaches>

[Chen] You can say that again! Here. <puts down drinks> So who's paying?

[Burt] Here you go Chen <coins clink> And whatever you're having <more coins> Must say the old watering hole is looking very festive now, nice job.

<beat>

[Chen] You feeling alright Mister Burt?

[Burt] Everyone's so concerned for my welfare all of a sudden

[Harry] Burt! What. Happened. With. The. Twins?

[Burt] Well, as I said, turned out this new office was just a front for a new scam – no real surprise there I s'pose – but then they had the gall to try and bribe me. Me!

[Harry] You took it of course

[Burt] Well of course I did. Who do you think is really paying for this round?

[Harry] Ah ha

[Chen] I don't get it. I mean, I get where you got the coin, but why so cheerful all of a sudden? You missed all the decorating of the bar.

[Burt] Ah but you see, when I took the bribe and then made it clear that I was going to spread it around about their scam anyway, old Miles and Davis got a bit miffed. Took it into their heads to try and rush me with a couple of chair legs. But that meant I didn't miss out on the decorating after all you see. Gave me the perfect excuse....

[Chen] Oh no, Mister Burt, don't you dare!

[Burt] ...gave me the perfect excuse to...Deck the Halls!

<beat>

[Harry] It's going to take a LOT more than one drink to make up for that one Burt!

<fade into end sequence>

[Voiceover] Next time, Burt and Harry discuss what really is the lowest form of wit

[Harry] You spent all evening coming up with that didn't you

[Burt] <cheerfully> Pretty much yeah. Happy T Day Harry.

<end>

Quite a few references in this episode: The Transmogrification of Miss Mavis Ming, a novel by Michael Moorcock, gets mixed up with part of the main protagonist's full name from The Moon is a Harsh Mistress, by Robert Heinlein to create the fictional 'Verse wide holiday. (Tim Minear of course wrote a screenplay for this brilliant novel and the Heinlein gas giant is a feature of the Map of the 'Verse from QMx). T day is of course a nod to the canon U-Day. Miles and Davis refer to the jazz trumpeter Miles Davis. And I had chutzpah to end the episode with a weak pun referencing a festive song 😊

This is an early draft (29/8/11) ongoing script together with some rough notes for what may be the actual last ep as I'm leaving my full time position on the crew as of the end of Season 7:-

Badgers World

Flying Visit

FX requirements: mainly a different country pup type ambient background. Unscrewing of artificial leg, thump of leg on table.

Rough outline: Burt returns to Persephone, but not to the Docks or Chen's. Harry is on one of his "collection runs" for Badger in the outlying townships. Burt knows Harry's usual schedule and "just happens" to bump into Harry in a pub.

Burt is back to sort something out for his missus. Family business that required a certain amount of "physical persuasion" shall we say. He has no intention of sticking around to find out if Mr Badger still wants him "living impaired"!

Burt has changed. He has lost weight...in fact he's lost a leg! (Long story... "here, hold this a sec willya" "ta mah duh Burt! You lost a leg?") and Harry genuinely does not recognise him at first. Plus of course, he's heavily disguised. (Tannin pills ref)

Lots of "you should see the other guy" comments?, excuses for coming back (not much chance of a decent pint on The Rim...but I found a few)

Comment on "so Mr Badger still getting through crew at a rate of knots?" Possible link into Those Left Behind or even Better days

Should reference back to previous BW (Live 2010 where Burt needed Harry to write a letter)

This is basically an excuse to get Burt and Harry back together for one last drink (at least until the next time) But this really could be the end of a beautiful friendship...

(Likely to be the last BW ever?)

(Note, the leg is a smuggling gimmick. Burt will get his own leg back in due course...this is a ref to The Message (his leg is almost held hostage as it were??)). Stuff smuggled is illegal nano, short half life bots for nefarious manufacturing processes. ("Look don't panic, that grey goop nonsense is just as much a popular myth now as on Earth That Was") They conveniently have the same density when inactive, of the resin used in modern prosthetic limbs and thus are immune to scans when sealed in a layer of the resin. Burt just swaps leg components when making the drop. So he's also had to get good at blending in and disguises.

Update May-11

Burt's missus took off with some other fella (which of course was in fact Burt in disguise on another run)

H: Got some bad news for ya Burt

B: Oh yeah, what's that then?

H: Well, it's your missus. She...ahh...

B: Come on Harry, spit it out.

H: Well, she took up with some new fella about a year back. 'Fraid she's moved off planet Burt.

B: I see. <beat> This geezer. Tall was he?

H: Not that tall, round about your height, but I only saw him the once from the back.

B: Any other distinguishing features?

H: About the same build as you used to be. Oh and he walked with a stick.

B: And this would have been when exactly?

H: Let's see...yeah, must have been round about the time that you stopped sending me money for her.....

Ohhh. <penny drops>

B: <sniggers> Your face!

H: Hell Burt, ya could have at least said hello!

B: What, and miss this? Anyway, much too dodgy to attract your attention back then. If you'd recognised me in the docks, you'd have never kept it quiet and if you'd got close and *not* recognised me and

realised me and the missus were doing a flit there and then, you'd have probably shot me on general principles.

H: <beat, then cheerfully> Yeah, that's true.

Completed script v1:

Badger's World

"Flying Visit"

By Nick Edwards

[Voiceover] Time passes. In the wake of the revelations about Miranda and the origin of the Reavers, things in the 'Verse are changing, too fast for some and of course, not fast enough for others...plus ça change! For most inhabitants though, life's ongoing challenges and concerns mean that things continue more or less as they have before. Indeed, most places unaffected directly by the subjects of the now infamous broadwave show little awareness of anything much outside their local concerns. In the core, politicians and commentators debate policy and argue much as they have since time immemorial. New laws are drafted and passed in the wake of public opinion. Behind the scenes however, those who lead continue to make other less... public decisions, again, much as they have since the days of Earth That Was. The balance of power may be subtly shifting, but in the Border and Rim, save for a few loud voices, such concerns are not yet evident. On Persephone it is very much "business as usual", if not for the aristocracy, then certainly for those who have less...elevated concerns...

<SFX: quiet country pub atmosphere>

[Harry] I said, you're still short Charlie.

[Charlie] No, that can't be right...here let me count again <SFX: bills on counter>...ten, twenty, thirty, two twenties, a fifty, two hundreds and a verified credit note from the Bank of Londinium for the remaining one fifty makes 500 credits. That's what we agreed with Badger!

[Harry] <sigh> I thought we'd been through this Charlie. Cashy money is the only type of credits that Badger is interested in, no matter what bank your note says it's from. So unless you wanna walk with a limp in both them legs of yours, I'd try again.

[Charlie] You can't threaten me! We pay on time every month, even when the – ah – fee goes up. I have rights you know!

[Harry] Well perhaps you can discuss them with my colleague Winnona <SFX: sound of large gun being placed on counter>

[Charlie] <gulp> Ah..no need, no...ah, I'm sure that won't be necessary...let me see...why would you look at that, I had the other 150 all the time...must have put it in my other pocket by mistake.

[Harry] Sure you did. <under his breath> Every gorram month the same *go-se*.

[Charlie] Here, let me get you another drink, no hard feelings eh Harry? Just a misunderstanding? <SFX: sound of beer pouring, glass being pushed forward>

[Harry] Whatever. <drinks> Hey Charlie!

[Charlie] Ah,,yes Harry?

[Harry] <tired sounding> Remind Lo Pan and Schmidt that they only have till midnight to get their dues to me. If I have to call back in on my return leg, it'll be double or trouble, ya get my drift?

[Charlie] Ah, sure thing Harry, double or...ah the other thing. <leaves in a hurry>

[Harry] <grumbling to himself> Gorram boonies. Wouldn't be havin' to wait around for Badger's dues in the Docks.

<SFX: approaching Harry is the sound of a man with a slight limp >

[Harry] Geez Charlie, what did you forget now? Oh.

[Burt] 'Ello Harry.

[Harry] Who the hell are you? <suspicious now> Did Lo Pan send you? <sound of gun cocking>

[Burt] Easy Harry! Blimey, I bugger off for a couple of years and you go all jumpy on me!

[Harry] <incredulous> Burt?

[Burt] Who else would know where to find you on one of Mr Badger's "milk rounds"

[Harry] Well, everyone, seein' as how I'm at the bar waitin' for 'em!

[Burt] Point. How are ya, you old *huan dahn*!

[Harry] <suddenly very cheered> Hell Burt, same as always! <SFX: sound of manly man hugs, slaps on shoulders etc>

[Burt] All right all right, steady there Harry, you'll have me over.

[Harry] What's up Burt? You look like you've lost a bit of weight. And you've shaved!

[Burt] That 'aint the half of it. Here, hang on a second. <SFX: sound of prosthetic leg being detached. Thump of leg on bar and sound of Burt settling onto bar stool!>

[Harry] Burt. <ahem> You also seem to be shy of a leg.

[Burt] Very observant. Lost it not long after I got away from Ezra. Long story, but yes, it hurt. Now if that 'ain't enough to get a sympathy pint out of you, I don't know what is!

[Harry] All this for a pint? <to barman> Hey, gimme another 2 IPAs over here!

[Burt] Oh that is music to my ears! Do you have any idea how hard it is to find a decent pint out on the Rim?

[Harry] Nope, but I'm guessing you 'aint come back just for the beer.

[Burt] True enough. Got a bit of business to sort out for my little Lotus Blossom

[Harry] Ah. You mean your missus.

[Burt] Well who else would I mean?

[Harry]: Ah... well, see...um... I got some bad news for ya Burt

[Burt]: Oh yeah, what's that then?

[Harry]: Well, it's your missus. She... ahh...

[Burt]: Come on Harry, spit it out.

[Harry]: Well, she took up with some new fella about a year back. 'Fraid she's moved off planet Burt.

[Burt]: I see. <beat> This geezer. Tall was he?

[Harry]: Not that tall, round about your height, but I only saw him the once from the back.

[Burt]: Any other distinguishing features?

[Harry]: About the same build as you used to be. Oh and he walked with a stick.

[Burt]: And this would have been when exactly?

[Harry]: Let's see... yeah, must have been round about the time that you stopped sending me money for her after that Ezra thing..... Ohhh. <penny drops>

[Burt]: <sniggers> Your face!

[Harry]: Hell Burt, ya could have at least said hello!

[Burt]: What, and miss this? Anyway, much too dodgy to attract your attention back then. If you'd recognised me in the docks, you'd have never kept it quiet and if you'd got close and *not* recognised me and realised me and the missus were doing a flit there and then, you'd have probably shot me on general principles.

[Harry]: <beat, then cheerfully> Yeah, that's true.

[Burt] I also assume that Mr Badger would still prefer to see me amongst the ranks of the severely living impaired

[Harry] Yeah, you got that right. Best do whatever it is you gotta an' git.

[Burt] You going all yokel on me Harry?

[Harry] What?

[Burt] Never mind. Look, I need you to look after something for me.

[Harry] What?

[Burt] This <taps the prosthetic>

[Harry] Your leg!?

[Burt] All right! Keep it down or they'll all want one.

[Harry] What the hell am I supposed to do with a leg Burt? What the hell are you supposed to do *without* one!?

[Burt] Get my own back.

[Harry] On the bastard that took it from you?...but wouldn't that be easier with that there pros-thet-ic?

[Burt] No, I mean get my actual own real flesh and blood leg grafted back on.

[Harry] <beat> Ya lost me.

[Burt] No change there then. Look. The leg, it's a smuggling gimmick. The resin used in the construction is the same density as a certain type of very expensive limited action nanobot composite used in certain unlicensed terraforming activities. I simply make a delivery where it needs to go with a deactivated nano loaded leg and walk back out with a real prosthetic and repeat as necessary. Scans show up nothing, my current identity is registered as having a standard prosthesis fitted at a very respectable hospital on Ariel, no alarm bells go off, everything looks above board and all the cash is by Cortex transfer.

[Harry] Huh?

[Burt] It's a variant of the old shuffle game. I just needed to genuinely have the leg removed and stored in cryo so that any medical scans all come up absolutely kosher.

[Harry] Isn't that a little drastic Burt?

[Burt] I had an offer I couldn't refuse. Not by choice you understand – I've heard all the stories about this sort of game too you know – but the money is **very** good. Good enough to retire on in fact. I just... have to convince my associates that I should be able to retire back in one piece. <beat> And still breathing.

[Harry] I see. So what do I do with the leg Burt?

[Burt] Hold onto it for exactly 2 weeks, then mail it by standard packet post to this address in New Melbourne. <SFX: rustle of paper> Use one of the small independent delivery services that have a pickup and drop at the Docks, the Lazy Eight, the Bellflower, I think John Grimes is still running the Mei Mei – any of them will be fine. Here's the coin <SFX: coins> and a bit extra for your help.

[Harry] A bit!

[Burt] I told you. It pays **very** well. I do appreciate this Harry, really. This is all you need to do. This goes onto another transfer at New Melbourne and you don't need to know the details. No way can it be tracked back to you. I've got an identical looking spare leg – except it's loaded with completely useless nano and is at least the right bloody length so I won't have the limp. I complete the drop with the mockup nano loaded leg and return to base. This is the last run for 6 months so I get my real leg back for what they think is a short layoff. Only I do a flit for real with the missus, altered identities and everything. After 3 weeks the final customers realise that they have completely inert nanobots, create merry hell with my former associates and then the real nano turns up and we collect the - ah – finders fee and disappear for good. All through dummies, anonymous drops, one off contacts, fakes, fronts, and well paid off and intimidated stooges. Even if the last bit doesn't work, we'll still be long gone with enough platinum to set us up nicely and it's hardly my fault if I completed the drop on schedule with duff goods supplied to me by my former associates. They'll have more to worry about than one courier who's overdue for his next set of delivery runs.

[Harry] You could have just said “post this package for me”

[Burt] What and miss your expression as well as a decent pint at one of our many past watering holes? Pity it couldn't be at Chen's, but this will do nicely. Not too many curious eyes, electronics and nosey parkers.

[Harry] So it was all for the beer after all.

[Burt] If I'm honest, yeah.

<fade into end music and voiceover>

[Voiceover] Next time Burt and Harry... what am I saying? <The next bit should get increasingly hysterical> There is no next time! This is it! This is the end! Oh the humanity! Oh the tragedy! <decends into a wail>

[Harry] Is he all right?

[Burt] Buggered if I know. Anyway, cheers Harry! <SFX: glasses clink>

[Harry] Cheers Burt. You know, this could be the end of a beautiful friendship...

[Burt] Oh don't you start!

<fade to end>

Kevin Bachelder deserves credit for the final ending voiceover with a hilarious ad-lib to the announcer's lines. This worked very well with the minor addition of 2 lines for Burt and Harry referencing the scene from the Maidenhead bar in Serenity. The episode now finishes thus:

[Voiceover] Next time Burt and Harry... what am I saying? <The next bit should get increasingly hysterical> There is no next time! This is it! This is... the end?! Oh the humanity! Oh the tragedy! Oh what's a voiceover guy to do?! I'll have to sell my soul and do trailers for movies! Ohhhhh... <decends into a wail and sobs>

[Harry] <over the end of this> Do you know that man?

<beat>

[Burt] I really don't

<SFX: anguished voiceover guy stumbles out of the bar>

[Harry] Is he all right?

[Burt] Buggered if I know. Anyway, cheers Harry! <SFX: glasses clink>

[Harry] Cheers Burt. You know, this could be the end of a beautiful friendship...

[Burt] Oh don't you start!

<fade to end>

And there we have it. A few references to Casablanca, Larry Niven's Known Space stories, A. Bertram Chandler's John Grimes Star Courier books (the mail vessel in the books was indeed called Little Sister) and of course the awesome Australian fan film The Bellflower. I guess there's some inspiration from a couple of wartime and prison dramas with the whole artificial leg used for smuggling thing, plus of course the Firefly episode, The Message and the bit from The Maidenhead in the BDM. There's Burt's overriding need for decent beer, Lo Pan is a nod to Big Trouble in Little China and Winnona makes a final appearance.

Thank you for listening and Keep Flyin'.....

Well of course that wasn't *quite* it. I'd quit The Signal and had said (not for the first time, it's true) that Flying Visit was the last ever, really, really, mean it, I kid you not, ever episode...but all bets were off when it became clear that The Signal itself, after 10 full seasons, would be coming to an end with the final ever Holiday Special at the end of 2014. I'd stayed in touch with the crew on the Yahoo group we used for general show running conversations, even retained access to some of the show resources, so I knew this was coming and had even suggested, along with some others on the crew that this might be a sensible course as it had become clear that the show was running out of new material and the number of episodes per season, while retaining the quality, was dropping in number. Amid the discussions it also became clear that none of the current crew (and me) had any intention of letting the show just fade away. Podfade is a well known and sad effect where essentially; real life, changing circumstances and sometimes boredom, cause a podcast to stop.

Dead.

General feeling on that being the fate of the show was "Bugger that, let's really go out with a BANG!" We knew going into Season 10 that this would be the final season as the "end game or continue" discussions had occurred during Season 9 while the struggle for fresh material became ever more evident. Even with moving to a once a month format, it had not been easy to maintain the momentum and quantity of quality material that we'd previously sustained for a bi-weekly show...for the previous seven years! With several crew not unreasonably wanting to take a break or do other things, bringing things to a planned and hopefully spectacular end seemed like the best choice.

Not surprisingly, Jill Arroway was the architect of the final Holiday Special – which actually was set in motion several months before and was even led into during the last regular Signal show (Season 10, episode 5) with a bit of fabricated technical difficulties...which weirdly almost reflected our real situation regarding being late with hosting fees! Once that had been sorted out so we could secure future availability of all our previous content, Miranda also set up the new Blog which would provide a continuing 2 way contact with listeners along with our Facebook and Twitter accounts. It would also allow us to post any new content that might become available.

Being back on the crew full time was fun, if hard work for the final push of shows – I even ended up producing and co-hosting the last Bonus show that came out just before the truly epic length Holiday Special...which did just happen to contain the very, very, last, I really bloody mean it this time, no way, not ever again, really, really, honest gov'nor, cor strike a light, end of, finite, that's it, never again episode of Badger's World.

The numbering is basically because while this would be the 33rd recorded episode, if you've read this far, you will know that the 4th Wall breaking script "Antique" was never recorded. Out to the Black would therefore be the 34th script – so, Episode 34 it was.

And it sort of bent the 4th wall. A bit.

We had it recorded and in the can by the end of November – in fact all the principle segments that re-captured past and current Signal segments were ready by then so that final show links and group calls could be recorded and spliced together in a massive final editing task taken on by Jill to fantastic effect. We were all sad to end the show, but were also gorram proud of what we'd managed to achieve over the last 9 years and that we really did go out on a high.

Badgers World: Episode 34

Out To The Black

Voiceover: A great philosopher of Earth that Was once observed that, "Time, is an illusion. Lunchtime, doubly so." But illusion or not, it still seems to pass as inevitably as the turn of the worlds. On some of those worlds, life continues much as it has and probably much as it will in the future. On others such as Persephone, great social change is in the air and a new alignment of the planets seems to be preordained in the wake of the world shattering events under discussion by 2 familiar social commentators as they meet at a popular trading post half a system away....

[FX: this could be the Maidenhead on Beaumonde (might actually change above to use that if can extract suitable FX) or the post from The Message - either way, it's a bar/cafe with distinctly different ambient sound to Chen's]

Burt: What do you mean - 'Mr Badger's gone legit'?

Harry: Exactly what I said Burt, Badger somehow managed to become flavour of the month with some group of aristos and he's legally registered as a trading agent uptown.

Burt: Badger? *Mister* Badger? As in our old boss who we used to crack heads for on a regular basis is now a legitimate businessman?

Harry: Yep. Pays taxes an' all

Burt: Well now I know you're pulling me leg Harry. Mr Badger? Pay taxes? You're havin' a laugh!

Harry: No, straight up. He's out of the docks, got a right nice setup by all accounts and is turnin' a fair profit so I hear.

Burt: Well I'll be buggered.

Harry: Never a backward glance, cut all his less than savoury ties with the Docks, settled up with Chen and moved out. He's officially part of po-lite so-ciety. Guess that's what he always wanted.

Burt: So you're out of a job I take it?

Harry: You could say that. Aw, I was kinda fed up with the whole thing with Badger anyway.

Burt: That's the spirit Harry! Hmm, funny you saying that Badger's gone legit.

Harry: Why's that?

Burt: Well, he's not the only one. <ahem>

Harry: You're shittin' me

[FX: music segue to Narrator]

Voiceover: Sometime later, when Harry has gathered up his jaw from the floor...

Harry: So, lemme get this straight. You managed to make that false leg scam thing actually work.

Burt: With your assistance I might add.

Harry: And then, not only did you claim the reward for "findin'" the missing nano tech, but 'cos the rogue Terraforming crew who'd originally hired you to smuggle it got themselves raided by the Alliance and then blowed up in a freak accident involving mysteriously reprogrammed nanotech, flammable ballgowns and a monkey with a blowtorch, you're not even on the run from them?

Burt: That was a very eloquent bit of exposition there Harry.

Harry: Well, I had to listen to you do it often enough.

Burt: Fair enough. So, yes, I managed to come up smelling of, if not actually roses, then at least not of the *go-se* I'd normally expect to find myself in after pulling a stunt like that. Made enough money to do something I've always wanted to do.

Harry: Buy a pub?

Burt: Close, but my little lotus blossom had some... firm views on that.

Harry: Wouldn't let ya, huh?

Burt: Very astute. So I bought a ship. Master and commander of me very own boat. Why do you think I wanted to meet up at this place - perfect for scaring up a nice little earner of a job for me and my crew...ah, I still like the sound of that.

Harry: Oh *ta mah duh!*

[FX: music segue to Narrator]

Voiceover: And so a new chapter begins for our esteemed protagonists as they transition from a life of crime to an adventure on the high seas of space, trading around the 'verse for honest coin, never sure where their fine ship may take them, but living for the moment out in the black as so many have before them...

[FX: fades out as B & H talk over the end of the rambling monologue]

Burt: Who **is** that guy?

Harry: I dunno. Seems kinda familiar

Burt: Anyway, it seems that you are in need of gainful employment and I am in need of a stout yeoman with which to entrust certain duties as might be required from time to time by the proud owner and principal stockholder of the Kepler Light Bulk Transport "Rocinante", namely my good self.

Harry: Huh?

Burt: You need a job. I'm hireing.

Harry: Oh. Well why didn't you....oh never mind. What kind of job?

Burt: Public Relations Officer - what sort of job do you think you dozy pillock!

Harry: Oh. **That** sort of job.

Burt: Of course, I do miss the ocaasional chance to thump someone, espeially if they're getting right on my tits - but I have to employ people to do that now otherwise it doesn't do the respectable image any good - Mr Badger at least got that bit right. But that's where you come in Harry!

Harry: Uh-huh. And this would be for a decent cut then?

Burt: Your own bunk and everything.

Harry: Everythin' being what exactly?

Burt: Ah, I see our frequent past discussions on remuneration have at least taught you to get things straight before you say yes. Very wise. What would you say to 10%?

Harry: I'd say keep talkin' - I might be listenin'

Burt: <laughs> Very good! Maybe I did teach you something. OK, 15% of every job, plus a retainer during downtime at least equal to what Mister Badger used to pay us.

Harry: I'd say I think we have an understanding.

Burt: Well I'll drink to that. Chen!

Random patron: <slightly annoyed> Who?

Harry: Ah...Burt

Burt: Oh sorry Harry, old habits you know. I do miss Chen's though. Say what you like about the decor, the disturbing experimental cocktails... the occasional explosion...she knew how to keep a decent pint. Even back in the old days. Do you remember the first pint of Throat Wobbler you ever tasted?

Harry: How could I forget...

[FX: segue into Narrator music and change of scene - sort of a pared down version of standard Chen's background]

Voiceover: Meanwhile, in Chen's throat emporium, a grizzled veteran henchman prepares to...

Burt: Oi! Less of the grizzled thank you very much!

Voiceover: ah...prepares to meet the new kid in town. <mutters> *So* unprofessional, honestly!

Burt: Evenin' Chen, pint of the usual.

Chen: Oh, it's you again. Look, no more breaking chairs over customer's heads, dong ma?

Burt: What? The idiot pulled a gun on you 'cos you wouldn't serve him.

Chen: He'd had more than enough. Besides, the safety was on. I've had worse things pointed at me.

Burt: I've no doubt. So, no thanks for performing a public service then.

Chen: [sigh] She She.

Burt: You're welcome. Would that thanks extend as far as a pint on the house?

Chen: Don't push it buster!

Burt: Burt.

Chen: Whatever. You drink, you pay - what did you want?

Burt: The amber nectar, liquid bread...no? A pint of your finest ale. Or the nearest non toxic equivalent.

Chen: I have to change the barrel. Find a table.

Burt: Fair enough - I'm meeting the new fella, better make it 2 pints - I'll claim it as training expenses.

FX: walks to table, sits.

Harry: Hey, is there some guy called Bart in here? Works for Badger?

Chen: What? Oh, him -over there.

FX: Harry walks over.

Harry: You the guy Badger said to meet in here?

Burt: Mister Badger to you sunshine. Henry I presume?

Harry: Harry! So you'd be Bart?

Burt: Oh I can see this is going to go well. Burt.

FX: Harry sits

Burt: So, let's get this straight. We drink. Then we talk business.

Harry: As long as it's beer.

Burt: Ah, I can see this may not be as bad as I thought. Yes, beer - or what passes for it in these parts. And right on cue...

FX: Chen approaches, puts down 2 pints.

Chen: Well?

Burt: Harry, it it? I believe in these circumstances it is incumbent on the new inductee to provide for refreshment.

Harry: Huh?

Burt: Pay the lady, then we'll talk

Harry: Oh right - sure - here (FX: coins handed over)

Chen: No tip?

Burt: Never serve oysters unless there's an R in the month?

Chen: Fine [stalks off, muttering opinons on questionable parentage of these 2]

[FX: segue back to the present]

Voiceover: Meanwhile, back in what passes for the real world...

Harry: Is he going to do that every time we try to remember the old days?

Burt: Buggered if I know. Look good beer aside - and I will be laying in a good stock of brew from my local on Albion, just so you know - do we have a deal? And are there any awkward questions or loose ends you need to tie up?

Harry: Burt you know I'm on board with this, it'll be fun to make some new good old times, but...

Burt: Oh here it comes

Harry: Why a Kepler?

Burt: What?

Harry: I mean why not a Komodo say? You can get a hell of lot more cargo in one of them. Or even a Firefly if you're going to go mid bulk class.

Burt: Look who's the expert now he's got a berth on a ship! Look, I'm going for low volume, high value - I learnt that lesson with the Nano episode - Komodo's too big for what I need and you may have noticed that anyone with a Mk3 Firefly still gets an awful lot of extra attention from the Feds - Reynolds has a lot to answer for on that front.

Harry: OK, so you're not going for an Orion Cruiser like the old Brutus?

Burt: I should think not, utterly fugly deathtraps

Harry: So why not a Scarab or Sandfly then?

Burt: Good choices, but the Kepler has a slightly better operational record, it's more manoeverable than a Scarab and bigger than a Sandfly - I'm not going for a packet post operation like the Bellflower. Plus the previous owner owed me a favour. I was able to knock him down to a bargain price.

Harry: What, with Mr Lead Pipe and his associates?

Burt: No. That's what I need you for. Bugger me if I haven't gone and got myself all respectable, so none of that old malarky for me.

Harry: Unless it's an emergency.

Burt: Or they really **really** deserve it.

[FX: footsteps approaching over the previous exchange]

Chen: Boy, you two never change do you!

Burt: I don't bloody believe this. Chen? How the...I mean, aren't you.... it's not...what the hell is going on?

Harry: <sniggering> Heh, your face Burt.

Chen: Harry played bodyguard on the trip out to my newest aquisition. Hmm, it's going to need a **lot** of work, I can tell. Hello Mister Burt.

Burt: er.....Ni hao Chen....I'm speechless

Harry: Makes a change.

Chen: Look, it's simple. I own this bar now. I own several on different planets in fact. Once Badger settled with me and I held full title, I didn't have to put up with his somewhat limited vision of commercial

success. Though I actually won this place in an unusually lucrative session of Tall Card.

<pause>

Harry: Burt?

Burt: Mmm? No...I still got nothing

Chen: Sorry to steal your thunder Mr Burt, I guess we both made out pretty well. We've all come quite a long way since the old days....

[FX: segue into Narrator music and change of scene - standard Chen's background]

Voiceover: Meanwhile, in Chen's throat emporium during somewhat leaner times, a noble tradition is initiated....

Burt: Evening' Chen. Er....a glass of (can't believe this) water please.

Chen: You feeling alright Mr Burt?

Burt: Bit lighter than usual in the wallet department - temporary of course. Don't suppose could you could start up a tab for me?

Chen: Oh no. Not after what happened the last time.

Burt: Wasn't my fault a flaming Sambuca got a bit out of hand! It only singed things a bit.

Chen: It burnt all my records of what you owed!

Burt: Unforseen side effect - anyway you know I pay up eventually.

Chen: The word is ocassionally Mr Burt. You ocassionally pay up.

Burt: <ahem> Yeah well - Don't suppose Harry got a round in already did he?

Chen: No.

Burt: Bollocks.

[FX:trudges over to table]

Harry: Hi Burt.

Burt: Harry. <sits>

Harry: What's up with you?

Burt: Oh nothing.

Harry: Look Burt, I've got a bit of a problem. Badger's not being exactly forthcoming with our wages at the moment...

Burt: Oh you've noticed have you. I thought your various sidelines kept you in drinking money at least.

Harry: What? Oh yeah. No, what I mean is - I don't suppose it's worth asking Badger for an advance is it? Might hurry him up with what we're already owed.

Burt: You suppose right Harry. Mister Badger is...well, I believe the technical term is a "tight arsed git". But he is our employer - also technically, but it's not always wise to bite the hand that might feed you. At some unspecified point in the future.

Harry: You could just have said no.

Burt: Well you see I have a bit of a problem too.

Harry: Oh? What's yours?

Burt: <somewhat more brightly> Oh ta very much, mine's a pint!

Harry: What - oh, oh I get it, heh, pretty sneaky of you there Burt. Well, OK, I guess you could use a drink too, but don't be tryin' that sorta thing again OK.

Burt: <slightly hurt> As if !

[FX: fade in to ending voiceover music, segue back into Chen's New bar]

Voiceover: Meanwhile, back to the future in Chen's Newest Throat Emporium...

<beat>

Harry: Right, that's it! I'm introducing him to Winnona this time!

[FX: stands, chair goes over,]

Voiceover: Much as on Earth that Was our...oh SHIT!

[FX: gun is loudly cocked]

[FX: Homer Simpson like scream of fear and loud running feet fading with rapidly increasing distance. Possibly sound of someone jumping through a window if available.]

Chen: What a strange man.

Burt: It's a strange old 'verse Chen. At least Harry's having fun.

Chen: Lotta changes coming.

Burt: You said it. I mean who'd a thought Badger would end up an actual respectable businessman. I mean it's like someone was making this all up for their own perverted amusement. Persephone really is Badger's World now -and he's bloody welcome to it. No room for likes of me an' Harry there these days and legit or not, I think I'll steer clear. Think he's forgiven and forgotten yet?

Harry: <slightly out of breath> Not a chance Burt. He might not be obvious about it, but you are still definitely persona non...whatchamacallit

Burt: Figures

Chen: Never mind Mr Burt. Here - I have something for you.

Burt: How did you know I'd be here?

Chen: Hello, travelling with Harry - he let it slip less than an hour out of port that you two had a meeting. Here.

[FX: sound of beer bottles being plonked down]

Burt: Is....that what I think it is.

Harry: Yeah, it comes in bottles now.

Burt: On the house?

Chen: On the house.

Burt: Well I'll be bugged.

[FX: fade into end music]

~

And that, my friends is that. No more The Signal and no more Badger's World ☹️

But it was quite the ride 😊

P.S. And you can't keep a good podcaster down – some of us are still doing other shows and some of us have plans for other shows. And if this whole experience has taught me anything, it is that anyone can make a fun podcast. The tools are all there ready and waiting, all it takes is the will and an interest you want to share.

P.P.S. If Serenity 2 ever gets made or Firefly The Next generation becomes likely...well, I would not rule out a return of The Signal entirely.

P.P.P.S "Mr" Burt may possibly be found plying his trade around Firefly Online at some point in the future. Look me up.