
Subject: Re: Learning The Ropes

Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Wed, 25 Jul 2012 00:01:38 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Wednesday, March 7, 2068, 3:30 p.m., Tracy Island

He was at Jeff's desk, going through the maintenance logs, trying to catch up on what he had missed while in New York, when Scott noticed Alan walking through the lounge, seemingly on his way outside. "Alan?"

Scott's voice stopped his youngest brother in his tracks. Alan sighed and turned around, knowing what was coming next, and rapidly trying to think of a way out of it. "Yes, Scott?"

"Where were you going?"

Alan didn't miss the subtle use of 'were' in his brother's question. "I was just going to check on something, and then..."

Scott cut him off. "Sure you were. Alan, you know too well that Thunderbird One needs maintenance."

"Scott, I KNOW!" Alan replied, irritated. Scott closed his eyes briefly counting to 5. "That was next on my agenda," Alan growled. "Now, if you'll let me finish what I set out to do, I'll be back here to get to the maintenance."

Alan headed past Scott, ignoring the scowl his older brother gave him, and quickly padded his way down to the pool, where Gordon was swimming long laps. He stood there for a few minutes until Gordon acknowledged his presence and swam over to him.

"What do you want, Al?" the aquanaut asked without preface.

"Don't think for a minute I didn't see you as you got up off the floor last night, Gords," Alan responded, his arms crossed belligerently across his chest. "Now, do I report it to Scott, or do you?"

"I don't know what you're talking about, Alan," Gordon protested angrily. "So get off my back."

"You and I both know that your back isn't what it should be, Gords, thanks to my harebrained idea. Now, what are you going to do about it?" Alan replied, his voice moderating.

"Nothing, because nothing's wrong," Gordon informed him curtly. "Now, can I get back to my swimming?"

Alan sighed heavily, and then turned away. "If you don't tell someone on your own, Gordon, I'll have to. And I won't be too picky about who I inform. Just remember that."

"Yeah. Whatever." Gordon turned back and picked up his laps as Alan climbed the stairs and entered the lounge again. Scott was standing by the sliding glass doors and Alan jumped back as

he entered.

"Do you like doing that?" asked Alan, annoyed.

Scott didn't answer that question, instead he came back with one of his own. "Al, what's up with you two?" Scott nodded his head, indicating Gordon who was swimming laps with a newfound energy.

"Nothing, Scott. Don't worry about it."

It didn't take a rocket scientist to detect the worry in Alan's voice and Scott wasn't going to let this drop. If something serious was going on with his brothers, he wanted to know about it.

"Alan, I saw the two of you and heard you both raise your voices. Now, what's going on?"

Alan knew from years of experience of trying to dodge Scott's interrogations that he would end up spilling all. "Really, Scott, it's nothing. I just had to tell Gordon I couldn't swim with him because I had to do the maintenance on TB1."

One look in Alan's eyes, and Scott saw through the lie. He sighed. Why, oh why do my brothers insist on keeping things from me? Scott stood there, hands casually on his hips, and stared at Alan. "Nice try, but not good enough. I want the truth, Al, all of it. If this concerns Thunderbird One in ANY way, you're going to tell me NOW!"

Alan knew it was no use. "It doesn't concern your Thunderbird, not in any way. Besides, don't you think I would have told you if anything was wrong? I am capable of that you know!" Alan was becoming rather defensive and Scott would not give him any slack.

"Then there is something going on with Gordon?"

Alan rolled his eyes. Didn't his big brother ever quit? "Well if you're so convinced of it, why don't you ask Gordon? I've got work to do!" Alan huffed as he stomped further into the lounge.

He was tired of being raked over the coals first by Scott, then by his closest brother, and then by Scott AGAIN! All he was trying to do was help. He was concerned about Gordon. Without another word, he backed up to the wall sconces and fingered the switches that turned the wall around so that he was facing Thunderbird One. He swore, and flipped the wall back around.

"What did you forget?" Scott asked. He had pursued Alan into the lounge, intent on seeing his younger brother work on the silver rocket plane.

"A disk to download Mobile Control's data. I'm sure John is waiting on it to put the log together." Alan went to a cabinet behind his father's desk and pulled out a microdisk, pocketed it, and headed back to Thunderbird One's hangar. By the time Scott had followed Alan through the wall, Alan was already in the cockpit and halfway down the maintenance tunnel that bored its way through the middle of the craft, providing access to the storage bay from the control area.

"Alan!"

Alan heard Scott calling and finally stopped halfway down the ladder in the service tunnel. Looking up, he called back "What, Scott? I'm busy." He waited for a reply, but all he heard were Scott's footsteps above him, coming down the ladder.

"Don't give me that line, Alan, I want... no, I need to talk to you." Scott was now standing on the ladder directly above Alan. He looked down at the blond head beneath him. "Do you think you could get off the ladder so I can come all the way down, please?"

Alan continued his journey and stood by the service tunnel entry hatch to give Scott enough room to descend. They were both now standing in the cramped space at the end of the service tunnel by the hatchway to the cargo bay and reactor maintenance gantry and it was not very comfortable.

"Okay, Scott, spit it out. It's cramped in here and I really need to get this disk loaded or John'll be after my head, too!"

Scott smiled slightly, hearing the exasperation in his brother's voice. "Al, if something happened to you or Gordon on that rescue that I don't know about, Dad's gonna have ALL of our heads! You know that! I'm in command when Dad's not here and I want to find out what's going on."

Alan sighed, defeated. Gordon would no doubt hang his hide out to dry once he was done skinning him alive, but Alan knew someone would find out soon, so that someone might as well be Scott.

"Listen, Scott. I don't know anything for sure because Gordon won't tell me. But during debriefing last night, he fell on the floor laughing while we were discussing code names. When he finally got up, I saw him wincing. Now, falling from the chair onto the floor wouldn't hurt him, but the way I had him launch Thunderbird Four during the rescue might have." Alan turned and opened the hatch that would take him into the cargo bay where Mobile Control was sitting, clamped down for safety. He palmed on the lights, and made his way over to the equipment. "You could ask Tin-Tin or Brandon or maybe Nikki or Dom if they noticed anything more."

He opened up the Mobile Control unit enough to turn it on and slip the disk into its proper slot. Then he ran his fingers over some keys and let the machine download the information from the last rescue onto the disk.

While the disk was being loaded, Scott was still trying to absorb what he'd been told without imploding. If Gordon's back injury had flared up again, and he was hiding it, there would be hell to pay when Dad and Dianne found out about it. Especially Mom. Scott knew why Gordon would try to hide it. Gordon hated bringing attention to himself and hated the permanent reminder of an accident that almost killed him. But keeping this from everyone was not the answer. Gordon was a team player, and Scott knew if he told his sibling he was on the 'sick list' he'd throw a fit. Scott dreaded having to face it, but Gordon would have to be on stand down. Brandon would have to take his place as No. 1 on TB4.

Alan waited for the disk to finish, hating the silence. Finally he had to say something. "Scott?"

"Mmm?" Scott turned towards him.

"Are you going to talk to one of the others or to Gordon directly?"

"I'm going to talk to Gordon, He'll have to go on stand down, Al, and he's going to hate me for doing it."

Alan almost sympathized with Scott... almost. He was going to get a lashing from Gordon's tongue as well, but nowhere near as much as Scott when Scott 'threw the book' at the aquanaut.

"Well, no time like the present to get this over with. I'll talk to you later, Alan."

"Sure Scott."

There was an awkward silence for a moment and then Scott spoke. "Thanks, Al." The words were soft and Alan wasn't sure he heard right, but acknowledged them all the same by nodding and giving Scott a small smile.

Scott started his ascent to the cockpit and all he could think of was Gordon's back. He cursed under his breath, cursed his brother, then cursed his stubbornness, then cursed himself for not being the commander he was supposed to be.

Alan sighed, and shook his head, and then a thought occurred to him. "Scott?" he called up the ladder.

"Yeah, Al?" came a reply as Scott stopped his ascent.

"You could offer him a week at corporate to rest his back," the younger Tracy suggested. "That way he'd at least feel useful. Not like he did the first months after IR started."

Scott was silent for a moment, then he said, "I'll think about it. Right now, I'd better go talk to him. And you'd better get on with the maintenance. I'll be coming through with a white glove...."

Alan snorted. "Yeah, right, Scott. We'll see what happens next time you have to take Thunderbird Three."

Scott chuckled, and tauntingly replied, "You know better than to test me like that, Al! You'll be eating your words and you know it, little brother!" The last thing Scott heard Alan mumble was a noise that resembled the sound a warthog might make!

Post by FrankieCTB2 and Tikatu on 10/09/2004
