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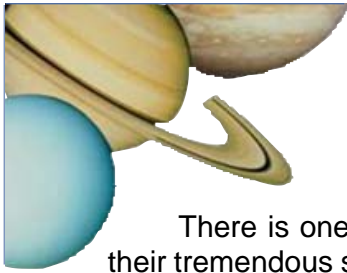
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# Space Cadets

by Robert Nieman

There is one thing about Texas Rangers that the general public seldom sees—their tremendous sense of humor. The following story illustrates this well.

Fort Worth Ranger Ted Poling was busy trying to catch up on his workload when his phone rang. His captain, David Byrnes, was on the other end of the line, and he had a case that Ted needed to work immediately. He had just received a call from a woman in Azle, a small town near Fort Worth, claiming that her baby had been stolen from a local hospital. Taking the woman's phone number, Captain Byrnes had told her that a Ranger would contact her immediately and do all in his power to assist in recovering her child.

When Ted heard this, he needed no encouragement. He was a young and energetic Ranger, and he detested perverts with a passion. To his way of thinking, anyone who would steal a baby was lower than low.

Hanging up with the captain, Ted immediately called the grieving mother in Azle. She told him that someone had indeed stolen her babies. Babies? Yes, she had twins. He asked her if she had any idea who would have done such a terrible thing. "Yes, I know who stole my babies—Martians!"

"This woman really needs help" immediately flashed through the Ranger's mind. He asked her if she was married—yes. Inquiring where he could find her husband, she said he was right there. "Could I talk to him?" As the husband was coming to the phone, Ted considered how he could get assistance for the obviously disturbed woman.

Ted explained to the husband that he knew his wife was under a lot of strain with the birth of the twins, and she believed they had been stolen by Martians. However, he was anything but prepared for the husband's answer: "That's right. Martians stole both of them." Ted had a different thought then: "How could these two idiots have ever met, let alone gotten married?"

Ted could just see his life for the next few days. His captain in Garland would be on the phone to every member of Company B. He would be howling with laughter as he told his Rangers, "Guys, I really got Poling this time. You are not going to believe the case he is working!" For the next few days, Ted knew that his phone would ring nonstop as every member of the company called for all the details of his investigation. Did the Martians leave any fingerprints? Had he been able to trace them back to their launch site? Were they were still on earth? Any tips on how to deal with them? Were they really green?

Ted did indeed get some good-natured hazing from his fellow Rangers—but don't waste any sympathy on the now-retired Ranger Poling. As a good friend of Ted's, this writer can assure you that he definitely dished it out as good as he received! And still can.



**David Byrnes**



**Ted Poling**